

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 1965

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

QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATION OF
TOWNSVILLE TOWN PLAN

Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Did the Government set up a committee to examine and report on the impact of the Brisbane Town Plan and its ordinances on the rights of the citizens and ratepayers?

(2) Has his attention been drawn to an article in *The Courier-Mail* of November 11, wherein he was reported as saying, *inter alia* "The Government had tried to be fair, not narrowly to the Council, but to the citizen and ratepayer as well"?

(3) If so, will a similar committee be appointed and similar assurances given with regard to the Townsville Town Plan, and, if not, why not?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Yes."

(3) "As the occasion demands, so the decision will be made."

PAYMENTS BY S.G.I.O. TO DOCTORS FOR
WORKERS' COMPENSATION CASES

Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

For the last twelve months for which figures are readily available, (a) what was the total amount paid by the State Government Insurance Office to doctors in respect of workers' compensation, (b) how many doctors received payment, (c) what was the average amount paid to each doctor, and (d) what was the highest amount paid to any doctor?

Answer:—

"The information requested under headings (a) to (c) is not readily available and would require a deal of research and dissection which I do not feel is justified. However, for the year ended June 30, 1965, the total amount paid to doctors and physiotherapists and chemists either directly or by way of refunds to claimants for amounts paid directly by them, was £344,105 16s. 2d. The highest amount paid to any doctor was £7,866 17s. Might I add that I am deeply touched by the Honourable Gentleman's tender solicitude concerning my health, which I can happily assure him is quite needless. Indeed, I am advised that my only risk of ever contracting

an ulcer lies in my occasional fears that he himself might suffer an aphasia, something that on balance I would infinitely regret."

BREAD MANUFACTURE IN BRISBANE

Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Industry,—

(1) How many bread manufacturing companies are presently supplying bread to the metropolitan area?

(2) In the past eight years, how many bakeries have been taken over and closed for bread making?

(3) What are the names of the companies and how many bakeries have been taken over by each?

Answers:—

(1) "There are twenty-seven (27) bake-houses presently supplying bread to the metropolitan area."

(2) "This information is not available from the records of this Department, as the Factories and Shops Acts do not require the reason to be shown for the

Answers:—

(1) "The requested information relating to the Scholarship, Junior and Senior Examinations is—

Year	Scholarship		Junior		Senior	
	Number Sat	Number Passed	Number Sat	Number Passed*	Number Sat	Number Passed*
1956	15,123	11,081	7,938	7,726	2,212	2,038
1957	17,703	12,375	9,597	9,332	2,984	2,710
1958	20,831	16,439	9,869	9,632	3,244	2,950
1959	25,753	20,393	11,809	11,477	3,876	3,578
1960	29,311	23,430	14,184	**	3,618	3,336
1961	26,511	22,211	19,003	**	4,203	3,849
1962	27,338	24,019	22,363	18,350	5,112	4,688
1963	..	..	21,861	20,472	6,586	6,057
1964	..	..	21,107	20,444	7,643	7,281

*Numbers passing in one or more subjects.

** Figures not available."

(2) "The requested information relating to University undergraduate enrolments is—

Year	Enrolment
1957	1,578*
1958	2,017*
1959	2,066
1960	2,553
1961	2,694
1962	2,821
1963	2,978
1964	3,320

*These are total new students enrolled and include some who were not undergraduates. More detailed information is not available."

vacation of premises, on the Form of Vacation Notice furnished to the Department."

(3) "There are twelve (12) companies included in the twenty-seven (27) bake-houses mentioned in the Answer to Question No. (1). It is not the policy of the Department to make public detailed information regarding occupiers registered under the Factories and Shops Acts. Information is not available regarding the number of bakeries taken over by any company."

CANDIDATES FOR SCHOLARSHIP, JUNIOR AND SENIOR EXAMINATIONS

Mr. Coburn, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) How many candidates nominated for and how many passed (a) the Scholarship Examination in each of the years from 1956 to 1962, inclusive, (b) the Junior Public Examination and (c) the Senior Public Examination in each of the years from 1956 to 1964, inclusive?

(2) What was the number of undergraduates who enrolled at the Queensland University for the first time in each of the years from 1957 to 1964, inclusive?

AVAILABILITY OF THEATRE IN BRISBANE FOR ELIZABETHAN THEATRE TRUST

Mr. Murray, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

In view of the current controversy and public concern caused by the announcement that Her Majesty's Theatre will shortly commence to show films and that the Elizabethan Theatre Trust will now exclude Brisbane from its short term planning, will he consider initiating consultations with the Lord Mayor or perhaps representatives of the Trust in order that Brisbane and Queensland can, at an early date, regain the opportunity to enjoy cultural equality with other States in the fields sponsored and encouraged by the Trust?

Answer:—

“Yes. In fact, discussions on this particular matter are already under way with the Elizabethan Theatre Trust.”

AUSTRALIAN EQUITY IN QUEENSLAND DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS

Mr. Murray, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in *The Australian* of November 11, which stated that the American Company, Utah, could not find an Australian company to share in investment in the Black-water coal development project?

(2) Will he advise whether he is aware of any other instance of failure by overseas interests to attract Australian equity in developmental projects in this State?

(3) In view of this State's vital need for and shortage of developmental capital, will he make a statement on this matter in order that overseas companies who fail in an endeavour to attract local equity will not be discouraged from investing in Queensland development by the type of statement emanating from the Opposition?

Answer:—

“It is my understanding that the basis offered by the Utah Development Company for Australian financial participation in the activities of the company in this country was not an attractive enticement, having full regard to the demands and opportunities presently existing in the investment field both in this State and the other States of the Commonwealth. However, it is also my understanding that the company has obtained the full measure of finance it sought with the result that it is fully capable of undertaking the business operation it seeks. The question of Australian equity in development has for some time been the subject of a variety of comment and observation and irrespective of the merits and demerits of particular cases that might be quoted, I feel that due regard must be had to the overall availability of funds for investment purposes and the tempo that we seek to apply to the development opportunity which is presented by this State of Queensland. Major developmental projects demand tremendous sums of money and whilst my Government is doing everything within its financial capacity to assist in this surge forward by the State, I must say that I am deeply conscious of the fact that outside funds are necessary to ensure that, in the commercial sector, the undertakings that are desirable now, and indeed necessary for the future, are brought to fruition. I am not prepared to accept isolated individual examples of particular imbalances in

the ratio of Australian/Overseas investment equities as being the general pattern applying to financial arrangements operating in this State. I view the overall scene by taking due cognisance of the opportunity offering, and of which full advantage is being taken, to the Australian investor in the field of the ancillary development that flows from the major project. These avenues, while involving a lesser capital appetite, are providing an attractive return and I would venture to say that a critical examination of the source of funds employed might provide the indication of an imbalance in favour of the Australian sector. I can give every assurance that my Government will welcome to this State all overseas capital invested with the design of assisting in Queensland development and participating in the rewards from the progress which will result. I am satisfied these benefits will justify my confidence in this State now and for the future.”

PURITY OF MT. GARNET WATER SUPPLY

Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

As Mt. Garnet residents have been advised to boil all water as a precaution against stomach upsets, as reported in *The Courier-Mail* of November 12, will he have an investigation of Mt. Garnet water made in order to ascertain what steps are necessary to ensure that the health of the people is safeguarded?

Answer:—

“The statement which appeared in *The Courier-Mail* of November 12 advising Mt. Garnet residents to boil all water as a precaution against stomach upsets was investigated by the Department's district health inspector in Cairns. There had been a few cases of mild diarrhoea in the Mt. Garnet area and the Medical Officer of Health suggested all water used by babies should be boiled. This is a routine precaution when giving water to babies. The Mt. Garnet ambulance superintendent when addressing a meeting of women advised them of the doctor's suggestion but he was misunderstood. It is understood that the statement has since been corrected.”

HIGH-LEVEL RAILWAY BRIDGES OVER MULGRAVE RIVER AND BEHANNA CREEK

Mr. Davies for **Mr. R. Jones**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

(1) Have estimates been completed for the construction of high-level railway bridges over Mulgrave River and Behanna Creek?

(2) If so, when will tenders be called for the replacement of the existing low-level bridges?

(3) If not, will he seek to eliminate disruptions to rail traffic in every wet season in the far North by preliminary planning and construction of these high-level bridges?

Answers:—

(1) "No."

(2) "See Answer to (1)."

(3) "Departmental engineers inform me that there are many other major bridges to be planned and constructed in the State with a higher priority than the two bridges mentioned by the Honourable Member."

MASTER FISHERMAN'S LICENSE IN CALOUNDRA AREA

Mr. Bromley, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

(1) Has a special license to net fish north of the boundary in Bribe Passage been granted to a fisherman? If so, why was this concession granted in view of the fact that the netting boundary in the Passage is set one mile south of Bell's Creek?

(2) Will this license, if it has been granted, affect the sport for line fishermen?

Answers:—

(1) "No."

(2) "See Answer to Question (1). A master fisherman's license has been granted in the Caloundra area conditioned so as to permit the licensee to take only bait fish such as herrings, hardiheads and gar. The license does not permit the licensee to use his bait net in waters closed to net fishing generally."

ACTION AGAINST PARENTS OF RAPED CHILD FOR NEGLECT

Mr. Dean, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

Has his attention been drawn to the report in the *Telegraph* of November 11, that five children had been left in a station sedan outside a beer garden at Nerang unprotected by their parents, who were drinking in the beer garden until 11 p.m., and that one of the children was criminally assaulted by a person named Breckenridge? If so, what action has he taken or does he intend to take against the parents for their apparent neglect?

Answer:—

"I have viewed the article the subject of the Question in the *Telegraph* newspaper of November 11, 1965, and have viewed a report of the circumstances of the case in question, but it is not considered that the actions of the parents concerned on the occasion in question were such as to amount to a contravention of the law."

ERROR IN DEPARTMENTAL REPORT

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that, an error having been discovered in the report of the Department of Works which was tabled in the House on 19 October, I have authorised an erratum slip to be issued by the Government Printing Office to all recipients of the report.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) for the year 1964-65, together with Schedules and Returns as at 30 June, 1965.

Commissioner of Main Roads for the year 1964-65.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

The State Development and Public Works Organisation Acts, 1938 to 1964.

Section 647 of The Criminal Code.

Reports—

Queensland Coal Board for the year 1964-65.

Audit Inspector's—On the Books and Accounts of the Queensland Coal Board for the period from 18 August, 1964 to 12 August, 1965.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

OFF-SHORE PETROLEUM LEGISLATION

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Main Roads) (11.12 a.m.), by leave: I desire to make a statement and inform hon. members concerning off-shore petroleum legislation.

Hon. members will recollect that over the past few years there has been considerable activity in off-shore petroleum exploration in Australian waters, and, in particular, adjacent to Queensland's coastline. As Minister for Mines, I have granted a number of off-shore authorities to prospect for petroleum. However, the legal position in relation to off-shore petroleum is confused and consequently a series of Commonwealth-State conferences has been held to resolve the position.

At the last such ministerial conference, held in Brisbane on 1 and 2 April this year, I was able to announce, as chairman, that agreement had been reached between the States and the Commonwealth on this matter. It was hoped to introduce legislation in this session to confirm such agreement. However, this has not proved possible. Accordingly, it has been agreed that today, in each State House of Parliament and in the Commonwealth House of Representatives, the respective State Mines Ministers and the Minister

for National Development will issue a common statement on this matter, and I will now proceed to read such common statement.

The Governments of the Commonwealth and of the Australian States have reached agreement on a system of legislation to control and safeguard the exploration for, and exploitation of, the petroleum resources in Australian off-shore areas, both within and beyond territorial limits.

Interest in exploring the petroleum resources has quickened considerably in recent times. However, apart from Territory ordinances the Commonwealth has at present no legislation governing this sort of activity. All States, as well as the Northern Territory and the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, have granted exploration permits under their existing legislation, and the Commonwealth has granted subsidies for exploration of some of these areas. The discovery of natural gas in the area of Bass Strait is encouraging, both to the companies concerned and to the country as a whole. It is hoped that further exploration will bring fresh discoveries of both oil and natural gas.

A series of conferences, extending over a period of more than two years, has taken place between the Commonwealth Minister for National Development, the State Mines Ministers and the Commonwealth and State Attorneys-General. The Minister for Territories has also been associated with the discussions. The discussions have been limited to resources of petroleum, whether in gaseous, liquid or solid form.

The objectives in the extensive Commonwealth-State discussions that have been taking place have been to work out a scheme that would give certainty of legal title to operators in off-shore areas who undertake the substantial expenditures involved in off-shore exploration and exploitation, and, at the same time, would enable constitutional issues to be put on one side, thus avoiding constitutional litigation of the kind that has been going on in the United States for many years. The several Governments have mutually agreed that without abating any of their constitutional claims—that without abandoning those claims—they should try to arrive at a concerted policy with common administration and with complete agreement between them as to what is to happen. This has been achieved.

That it has been possible to reach this agreement is a unique tribute to the strength of our Federal institutions, and I think that we may take satisfaction in the thought that statements similar in content are being, or will be made in all Australian Parliaments—thus demonstrating the unanimity of purpose of the several Governments.

The scheme agreed to by the Governments will be effected by Commonwealth and State legislation in similar terms which will be presented to the several Parliaments pursuant to a formal agreement between the Commonwealth and the States, setting out details

of the agreed arrangements and the basis of, and understandings behind, such arrangements and evidencing the intention of all parties.

The legislation proposed by both the Commonwealth and the States will include provision for the application in off-shore areas of the general body of law in force in the adjacent State or Territory. This will include both State and Commonwealth laws and will apply in off-shore areas in relation to the exploration for, and exploitation of, petroleum.

The legislation will also include a mining code devised by the Commonwealth and the States in co-operation, and providing for a common set of principles to apply to all off-shore petroleum operations anywhere around the Australian Coast, but allowing sufficient flexibility to enable the peculiar circumstances and problems off-shore from any individual State or Territory to be met. The administration of this legislation will be in the hands of the States and Territories, save only that the States have agreed that the Commonwealth will be consulted on all aspects which may affect the Commonwealth's own special responsibilities under the Constitution in matters such as defence, external affairs, health, immigration, customs, navigation, and so on, and that in these matters the States will give effect to Commonwealth decisions.

Because of the very natural interest in the principles of the off-shore mining code on the part of companies currently holding off-shore tenements or contemplating off-shore exploration, I propose now to give a brief outline of the basic principles which will be included in the legislation to be introduced both by the Commonwealth Government and by the several State Governments. These principles have been agreed between the respective Governments and will be submitted to the Parliaments.

The general run of existing State petroleum legislation provides for a three-stage system, that is, a permit to cover basic exploration, a licence over a much smaller area which gives permission to carry out drilling operations, and a lease to cover the production stage. The new off-shore legislation will be a two-stage system. A permit will cover all stages of exploration including drilling, and a licence (equivalent to a lease on land) will cover production.

Under the scheme a permit may be issued initially for a period up to 10 years, or, having been issued initially for a lesser period, may be extended to a total life of 10 years. If its duration exceeds two years, either as an initial grant or because of extension, such duration shall be divided into successive specified periods and there will be provision for reduction of the areas of the permit at the ends of such periods. This is to encourage companies to concentrate their efforts on the most prospective areas which they discover but not at the same time hold large off-shore areas which are not being effectively explored.

Companies holding permits will be required to carry out exploration work in accordance with programmes approved by the State Mines Ministers or by the appropriate authorities in Commonwealth Territories. There will be provisions requiring operations to be carried out in such manner as will not interfere unjustifiably with navigation or fishing, or with the conservation of the living resources of the sea and the seabed, with underwater cables or pipelines, or with mining operations for minerals other than petroleum.

Rental will be payable to the States or Territories at an annual rate of 2s. 0d. per square mile but not exceeding the sum of £1,000 for any permit area. This is a comparatively modest rate, but it is the view of the several Governments that companies should be encouraged to spend as much as possible in actual exploration. Rentals will be kept by the States.

There will be many other details customarily found in petroleum legislation, such as a requirement that operations be carried out in accordance with good oilfield practices, that proper safety procedures be observed, that reports be submitted at specified intervals, together with provisions for the voluntary relinquishment of a permit, and also for cancellation if the permittee fails to comply with the terms and conditions laid down in his permit.

I deal now with the the granting of production licences. In the event of a permittee discovering payable petroleum, he will have a preferential right to a licence for production. Licences will issue for periods of 21 years, with the licensee having the right of extension, provided he has satisfactorily carried out the conditions and covenants of his licence, for a further period of 21 years. During the first 21 years royalty will be payable at the rate of 10 per cent. of value of production at the well-head. The second 21 years will be divided into three 7-year periods, during each of which the royalty may be varied by agreement between the several Governments. Further extensions of the licence may be granted. The effect of this is that an operator is assured, provided he carries out his side of the bargain, of holding his licence area, for at least 42 years and that during the first half of this, the royalty rate will be fixed at 10 per cent. of value at well-head. Royalties will be divided on a 50:50 basis between the Commonwealth and the adjacent State. The disposition of royalties in the case of the Territories will depend on the general financial relationship between the Commonwealth and the particular Territory concerned.

The method by which areas of a licence for production will be determined is of interest. The Commonwealth and the States have agreed that there shall be established over off-shore areas a graticule system of block areas, the size of each graticular block to be 5 minutes of arc of latitude by 5 minutes of arc of longitude. In the areas

of Northern Australia this results in graticular blocks of a little over 30 square miles in size, reducing as one moves south until in Bass Strait the blocks are approximately 25 square miles. Reduction in size is of course brought about by the fact that minutes of latitude decrease in length between the equator and the South Pole.

Following a discovery of petroleum within a permit area, the permittee will be asked to nominate a graticular block which will then become the centre of a group of nine graticular blocks which, for purposes of simplicity, will be known as a location. Each side of the location will be three blocks in length. From within this location of nine graticular blocks a permittee will be entitled to select any four blocks and to be granted a production licence covering such blocks. The permittee will have at least two years in which to make his selection, and this period may be extended to four years if the State Minister (or the appropriate authority in Commonwealth Territories) considers further time is needed for adequate exploration and assessment of the area of the location. Those graticular blocks which are not selected by the permittee will be excised from the permit area and may be disposed of by the States or Territories by tender. The original permittee will have the right of first option over any such graticular blocks at the top price offered by any other tenderer, provided that if the top price offered is not considered satisfactory, allocation may be deferred and the blocks re-advertised. The proceeds from the sale of these blocks will be retained by the adjacent States.

It will be noted that this arrangement will enable the permittee who discovers petroleum to secure as of right a licence for production over an area of 100 square miles or more, according to latitude. This is the normal maximum size of a lease currently provided for in State legislation. The permittee has the right to nominate the central block of the location so that he can have the location established over the area which he thinks will most suitably cover the geological structure in which he is interested. The permittee has a second choice in that he can take his pick of four blocks out of the nine constituting the location. There will be no limit to the number of licences that may be granted to any one company. This arrangement, we believe, is fair to the permittee, while at the same time taking into account the national sentiment that the Australian people as a whole should benefit appropriately from the development of our natural resources.

If the block nominated as the centre of a location is so positioned that to make it the centre of a location of nine graticular blocks would encroach on areas already included within other locations or would encroach on other permit or licence areas, the location pertaining to the discovery and its nominated block shall be limited to that number of graticular blocks which are not already

encumbered, and the permittee will be allowed as of right to choose blocks over which he will be granted production licences according to a laid down scale. For instance, if the location is limited to seven blocks, the permittee may be granted licences over four. If the location is limited to four blocks the permittee may be granted a licence over two, and so on.

A permittee who discovers payable petroleum will also have a preferential right to a pipeline licence for the purpose of bringing his product ashore by a reasonably direct route.

I should like now to deal with the position of companies holding tenements issued by the States or Territories. Throughout the discussions between the Commonwealth and the States, the Commonwealth has made clear its intention, wherever possible, to honour tenements which have been issued by States or Territories and accepted by companies in good faith prior to the passage of Commonwealth legislation. There will be provisions in the legislation relating to the confirmation of existing tenements for the unexpired period of their life, and to this end, confirmatory permits may be issued temporarily with boundaries that do not conform to the graticular system which I referred to above.

Existing tenements are of comparatively short duration. Many will expire in 1966, a few in 1967 and 1968, while four run until 1969. As mentioned earlier, the new legislation will provide for permits of up to 10 years' duration. Some companies may therefore prefer to be issued with a new permit under the new legislation. Others whose permits have only a comparatively short time to run, may find it more convenient to have their old permit confirmed for the unexpired period of life. This will be a matter for negotiation between the companies and the State Mines Departments. The Commonwealth and the States have agreed together on the general principles under which confirmation should be handled.

This, then, is a summary of the intention of the Commonwealth and the States with regard to off-shore petroleum legislation. I emphasise that the proposed system has been designed to ensure security of title and tenure to off-shore operators, to avoid costly and time-consuming litigation, and to establish an effective and legally sound administrative regime supported co-operatively by the Commonwealth and the States.

Legislation will be brought down during the next session of Parliament.

Mr. LLOYD: May I ask you a question, Mr. Speaker? Apparently in anticipation of legislation coming forward, the Minister has made quite a lengthy ministerial statement on a matter that is of great importance. As this Parliament is to be party to an agreement with the Commonwealth Government and other State Governments, I am wondering whether the opportunity will be given to the Opposition of debating this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I will consider the hon. member's request and put it to the proper authorities.

FORM OF QUESTIONS

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) proceeding to give notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member's question is along the lines of one of which notice has just been given by the hon. member for Kedron.

Mr. TUCKER: There are other points in it, too.

Mr. MURRAY (Clayfield): Mr. Speaker, I desire to direct to the Minister for Mines and Main Roads a question that is of the same nature as the one the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked you. Is it appropriate for me to ask it?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Kedron was out of order in asking me the question. Is this a question without notice, or is it to go on the Business Paper?

Mr. MURRAY: It is a question to go on the Business Paper.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

(The hon. member for Clayfield proceeded to give notice of a question.)

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) proceeding to give notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member's question is based on supposition.

Mr. MELLOY: May I finish the question?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may finish the question. I will decide on it later.

DEATH OF MR. T. M. CROWLEY

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (11.40 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Thomas Martin Crowley, Esquire, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.

"2. That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the relatives of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss they have sustained."

The late Mr. Crowley was known to quite a number of the members of this House because of their association with him while he was a member, and also as a result

of his frequent visits here, until a few months ago, following his retirement from Parliament. During the time he was a member of this House as the Labour member for Cairns, from 3 May, 1947, to 19 May, 1956, he was a very sincere advocate for the far northern part of this State. He retained his interest in the development of the Far North right up to his death in Sydney last month, at the age of 63.

It must have been a great source of satisfaction to Mr. Crowley to know that many of the things for which he strove during the time he was in this House became realities during his lifetime. For example, he was a consistent advocate for the promotion of mining development in the northern part of the State. He sought better road communications, closer settlement and decentralisation of industry. Being a native of Innisfail and a cane-farmer in that district before entering Parliament, he was also a strong advocate for the expansion of the northern sugar industry. As a member of the Cairns Regional Electricity Board he firmly believed in the need for increasing the power-generating capacity of the North by the further development of hydro-electricity possibilities in the northern part of the State.

For many years he was a member of the Cairns Hospitals Board and was a persistent advocate for securing medical specialist services for the Far North. He played a very prominent part in public affairs in North Queensland, being an alderman of the Cairns City Council, Chairman of the North Queensland Local Authorities Association, member of the Cairns-Mulgrave Water Authority Board, Deputy Chairman of the Ambulance Brigade and northern representative of the Broadcasting Advisory Committee.

Hon. members will also remember his keen advocacy for reforestation and the fact that he never lost an opportunity to emphasise the economic and prestige value of North Queensland's fine cabinet woods.

The late Mr. Crowley's loyalty to the Far North was matched only by his loyalty to his family—he was the father of three boys and four girls—and to the Australian Labour Party, of which he was a member throughout his adult life. He was a very loyal and very dedicated member of the State. He made a worthy contribution to the progress of the State and it is appropriate that this fact should be placed on record.

I am sure all hon. members will join with me in expressing to the late Mr. Crowley's relatives our sincere sympathy in the great loss they have sustained.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (11.44 a.m.): On behalf of the Australian Labour Party and I believe, too, on behalf of Mr. Crowley's family, I thank the Premier for moving this motion of condolence. I join in many of the comments the Premier has made about the late Mr. Crowley. He was very actively engaged in all associations and

organisations which were concerned with the development of North Queensland. With his brother Dan, in Cairns, he had a very long and tremendously dedicated association with the A.L.P. I remember that when I first entered Parliament in 1951 Tom Crowley was away ill, and he asked me to attend to his correspondence and other business during his absence. He said to me at that time that his life seemed to be beset with tragedies and frustrations. I believe that could have been so. The numerous sorrows he suffered during his life and immediately after entering Parliament seemed to affect his health, and possibly his political career in Queensland.

Early in his life, Mr. Crowley was a cane farmer in the South Johnstone district. He later took on tobacco farming, and later again he went back to the sugar industry, this time in Mossman. He married the daughter of the late Percy Pease, a former Deputy Premier of this State, and had a family of seven children. He was a very kindly man, one who was fond of his family. His eldest son, Jim, served with distinction in the Air Force in the last war. Unfortunately, following his discharge from the Air Force, while Mr. Crowley was on his farm in Mossman, Jim was killed in a tractor accident. The tragedy of his wife's death in 1961 also had an adverse effect on Mr. Crowley's health.

Mr. Crowley was highly respected in this Parliament, as well as in North Queensland. He knew the value of dedicated work not only in Parliament, but also outside it. His family can rest assured that every member of this Parliament who knew Tom Crowley during the time he was with us respected him for his kindly disposition and dedicated spirit and knew the great deal he did to assist in the development of this State during his period in Parliament. On behalf of the Australian Labour Party, I join with the Premier in offering the late Mr. Crowley's family our deepest sympathy.

Mr. R. JONES (Cairns) (11.47 a.m.): I desire to associate myself with the motion. Thomas Martin Crowley was well known to me in my early association with the Labour movement and the Australian Labour Party in Cairns. As a matter of fact, my first vote on attaining the age of 21 years was cast in his favour in 1947 when he first entered this Assembly. He represented, from 1947 to 1956, the electorate of Cairns which I now represent.

Mr. Crowley was a sincere man. We all know in this House that he was a true humanitarian. He tried, to the best of his ability, to serve the Cairns electorate well. He was a hyper-sensitive and over-generous. He was certainly a most sincere and conscientious advocate for North Queensland. As a member of Parliament, he answered the dictates of his conscience and was always loyal in his support of the Australian Labour Party.

The loss of Mr. Crowley's eldest son, Jim, in a tragic accident on the cane farm in Mossman in 1958, after his retirement from the political field, affected his health and his health gradually deteriorated. The loss of his wife in 1961 was a further blow. I was informed that, like his wife, he was taken suddenly by a heart attack. In his case he was simply reaching for a cigarette when he received the call from his Maker.

Tom Crowley was the youngest of four Crowley boys born in Innisfail. Dan and John predeceased him. The eldest brother, James Gerald, better known to all in Cairns as Gerry, lives in Cairns, and is still in the brokerage business there. Gerry was a former member of the Johnstone Shire Council. All four Crowley boys attended the Good Samaritan Convent in Innisfail. The father carried on a cordial factory business there, and later sugar farming in the Goondi and Daradgee areas. When their father died, Tom and Dan moved to Townsville in about 1924 and took over the Excelsior Hotel. In those days they were avid supporters of the Rugby League code, and the Crowley Cup was well known in intercity football.

Mr. Crowley was married in Townsville in 1926 to Miss Kathleen Pease, youngest daughter of Mr. Percy Pease, who was then member for Mourilyan in this Assembly, and who later became Minister for Lands and subsequently Deputy Premier. In 1928 Mr. and Mrs. Crowley moved to Cairns, where Dan and Tom traded as wholesale wine and spirit merchants and grocers on the corner of Aplin and Sheridan Streets, and became well-known identities. Tom later conducted a forwarding and produce agency business.

In Cairns, Tom Crowley took an active interest in civic affairs. He served for many years on the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade Committee, and for 10 years was a member of the Cairns Hospitals Board. He was elected an alderman of the Cairns City Council in 1938 and served three terms till he was elected to this Assembly in 1947. He also served as a member of the Cairns Regional Electricity Board, and was an active committee member and supporter of the Far North Queensland Racing Association and Cairns Jockey Club. His interest in Rugby League never waned, and during those years in Cairns he was vice-president of the Brothers Football Club. He was one of the three Queensland appointees to the Australian Broadcasting Commission in 1947, and was vice-president of the Cairns branch of the Australian Labour Party from 1928 till 1947, when he was elected a member of Parliament. He was a good husband and a good father to his seven children, all of whom, with the exception of his eldest son, Jim, who, as I mentioned earlier, was accidentally killed when a tractor overturned, survived him.

On behalf of the people of the Cairns electorate, I express to Percy and Bob (his sons), to Val, Denise, Deirdre and Sally (his

daughters), to his brother Gerry and all his relatives and friends, our expressions of regret at his passing. I feel very sincerely that his relatives and friends will find in this motion of condolence at least some consolation in the knowledge that the Premier, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and all other members of this Assembly have, by special resolution, expressed their appreciation of his service to the State.

Motion (Mr. Nicklin) agreed to, hon. members standing in silence.

PARLIAMENTARY CONTRIBUTORY SUPERANNUATION FUND ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

LAND TAX ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES— EIGHTH AND NINTH ALLOTTED DAYS

(Mr. Gaven, South Coast, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1965-66

DEPARTMENT OF WORKS AND HOUSING

CHIEF OFFICE

Debate resumed from 11 November (see p. 1548) on Mr. Bjelke-Petersen's motion—

"That £346,354 be granted for 'Department of Works and Housing—Chief Office'."

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) (11.55 a.m.): In introducing these Estimates, the Minister mentioned with some degree of pride the total expenditure on buildings. I do not know why he did, because if one peruses carefully the report of the Department of Works for the year ended 30 June, 1965—I am sure most hon. members have done so—one sees that the expenditure has decreased by 3.57 per cent., or by £360,692, compared with that for the financial year 1963-64. This is very unfortunate in view of the following statement relative to repairs and maintenance of Government buildings appearing on page 1 of the report—

"This Department is responsible also for the repair and maintenance of Government Buildings throughout the State and has pursued its policy of general inspection that every consideration might be extended to the priority requirements of proper care of Crown assets in buildings, etc."

Unfortunately, this has not been done in the past 12 months, because the report goes on to say that there has been a decrease

of £103,109 on the previous year's expenditure on the repair and maintenance of Government buildings.

The report continues—

"It has been necessary to defer other essential projects and this action must result in additional costs as further deterioration of buildings will be experienced until funds can be made available for these maintenance works."

In the light of complaints that hon. members have received from public servants about the conditions under which they are working, I think this is a rather scandalous situation. In fact, less money has been spent not only on the upkeep of public buildings but also on the provision of improved working conditions.

Mr. Ramsden: Would you say they are any better off now than they were under Labour Governments?

Mr. BROMLEY: The hon. member for Merthyr lives in the past. He even wanted Evans Deakin's shipyards shifted. He does not wish to see progress; I do.

The Minister also mentioned the expenditure on schools and said that the amount spent on primary schools in the year ended 30 June, 1965, was greater than that spent in the previous financial year. I do not deny that; in fact, I am very happy about it. However, I am not very pleased that both the Department of Works and the Department of Education have consistently refused to spend money on two schools in my electorate—or, at least, to spend very little on them. There may be concern about conditions in primary schools throughout the State, but I shall deal specifically with the Buranda Girls and Infants' School and the Buranda Boys' School. Not one penny has been spent by the Department of Works on either of those schools.

Mr. Ramsden: Probably bad representation.

Mr. BROMLEY: It is not bad representation. If the hon. member for Merthyr says that it is bad representation, he might as well blame the Minister for Works or the former Minister. On occasions in the past previous Ministers have had the courtesy to visit the schools, with departmental officers and engineers, to see what work is required, particularly relative to the grounds. Promises have been made that this and that will be done, but the responsibility seems to be shutting backwards and forwards between the Department of Education and the Department of Works. How can the hon. member for Merthyr say that it is bad representation when the Minister has visited the schools and admitted that the work is required?

Naturally, I am very disappointed that the work has not been carried out, because when promises, either verbal or written, are made I relay them to the parents and citizens' association, to the schools concerned, to the pupils, and to everyone who

is interested in them. But nothing has been done. The people in my electorate do not say it is bad representation because very many have said that I at least am trying to do what is required for these schools.

Mr. Davies: You are a good member.

Mr. BROMLEY: Of course I am a good member. I am the first to agree with the hon. member for Maryborough.

At one time I invited the former Minister out to Buranda. He came out and looked at the tennis court. I do not wish to delay the Chamber too long on this point, but because these are small schools we cannot raise the money necessary to improve the grounds and the tennis court. The grounds have been in a shocking condition for many years. It is virtually impossible for teachers at the Buranda Girls' School to get down from the school to the oval. The only way they can do it is through the grounds of the boys' school and down some steps.

I think a flight of steps should be built in this schoolground and it should be the responsibility of the department to build it. I cannot see why it should be the responsibility of the parents and citizens' association to find the money necessary to build steps in school grounds, particularly when they are absolutely necessary. There has been so much erosion of the soil owing to heavy rain that large gutters have developed, making it difficult, if not impossible, for not only the teachers to reach the oval but the pupils as well.

At this stage I wish to pay a tribute to all the employees of the department, including the Under Secretary of the Department of Works, Mr. David Longland, for the excellent work that has been done in other places. I am not denying that some work has been done. The various reports indicate that. I pay due tribute for what has been done, even though, as I said earlier, nothing has been done at the schools to which I referred in my electorate.

Having said that, I say finally in relation to those schools that something should be done by the Minister. He should pay some attention to the matter. Quite recently he, the Under Secretary, Mr. David Longland, and other officials of the department visited the State high school in my electorate and, much to the pleasure of the principal and others, they were not in any hurry to get away. They spent a considerable time there looking over what was necessary for completion of the school grounds. I express my gratitude to them for doing that; but although copious notes were made about what they could see was required—and once again promises were given that plans that I could show to the parents and citizens' association, of which I am president, would be drawn up—I have as yet received nothing at all as a result. Some parents are getting a little impatient. Because the children told them so, they know that the Minister was out there. To quote quite a few of the

children, they reported to their parents, "We were honoured today by a visit from the Minister and his officials."

I do not know whether or not I am going to get anything out of this. Some people say that if you attack the Government you will get nothing; but if you do not attack them you get nothing anyway, so I intend to do something about it. I am not going to follow the pattern set by Government members and thank the Minister for the wonderful job he has done, or indulge in the sort of talk that goes on every time a Government member gets up to speak. I believe that something should be done and I intend to hammer the question in this Chamber.

Mr. Sherrington: Why don't you just hammer the Minister?

Mr. BROMLEY: I could not do that; he is too much of a gentleman and a scholar, and there are not many of us left.

The report of the Department of Works refers on page 4, to apprentices. It is revealed that 38 fewer apprentices were employed within the department this financial year. This is a shocking state of affairs at a time when we are crying out for tradesmen and bringing tradesmen from other countries. I am not against bringing tradesmen into Australia from other countries, but we should be giving the children in our own country the first opportunity to become tradesmen. Instead, many of them are being allowed to enter dead-end jobs where they have no future. When I was young, everybody said that a person must have a trade to succeed and to enjoy security in life. That still applies today.

That there were 38 fewer apprentices this financial year is a shocking indictment of the Government. A perusal of earlier reports indicates that the position with apprentices has been getting progressively worse year after year, with the numbers decreasing in the various trades.

On page 5 the report states—

"The increased amount of building construction in the hands of general contractors and the considerable amount of fabrication and supply of building components, furniture, equipment, etc., by sub-contract and quotation has called for a high degree of supervision in the Government's interest."

I quite believe that. The employees of the department do a tremendous job in supervising.

The report continues—

"A greater responsibility has also been placed upon the Administration in its control of the Department's effort to produce the maximum provision of Departmental requirements. It has been necessary to maintain public relations with private building contractors and suppliers of a wide variety of materials and equipment

in addition to officers in charge of Client Departments and Branches of those Departments."

From that, it appears to me that without any shadow of doubt the Government intends to do away with the expert day-labour force which in the past has been, and though decimated to a great extent, even today is a tremendous building force. It understands what is required and what is to be done. It appears to me that this Government is giving outside industry more and more work on Government buildings that could be done by day labour. Work is gradually being taken away from the competent day-labour force which was such a feature of A.L.P. administration in the past.

The report of the Queensland Housing Commission indicates that the profit for 1964-65 was £155,202 16s. 4d. compared with £124,828 14s. 3d. for 1963-64. I do not think any Government department concerned with the provision of houses for young people should have any profit motive. Profit should not come into it. If a profit is made it should be spent on the upkeep of Government buildings, but such a department should not set out to make profits.

On page 2 of the same report appears a chart giving details of home construction over the years. This is the sort of thing that annoys me when such a Government department talks about making a profit. A perusal of the table headed "House construction" discloses that in the six-year period from 1951-52 to 1956-57, under the Labour Party Government, a total of 12,208 houses were built by the Government. In a similar period, from 1959-60 to 1964-65, a total of 10,622 homes were built. This shows that 1,586 fewer houses were built in a comparable period by this Government.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: I will tell you the complete story, of course.

Mr. BROMLEY: The complete story is there.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: For that part of it.

Mr. BROMLEY: The complete story is there. The house constructions table shows it. If the Minister says that I am not telling the whole story he might as well not have this report printed, because the figures are there and I have taken them from the report. They do not show the Government up in a very good light.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: I will explain it to you later on so that you may understand it.

Mr. BROMLEY: I can understand it. I have read it thoroughly. Unfortunately, members have only 25 minutes to speak on these Estimates and we cannot go through the report word by word. For the Minister's information, I have made notes on the report and in relation to multiple dwellings, etc. I have noted that it is very good. There it is for the Minister to see—"V-E-R-Y G-O-O-D". However, when we consider the

marriage explosion among young people resulting from the rapid increase in the birth-rate after the war—I suppose some of us in the Chamber are partly responsible for that explosion—it is a shocking state of affairs that fewer homes were built by this Government than by Labour.

In 1964-65, according to the report, 1,744 homes were built by the Housing Commission. These figures cannot be contradicted, because they are in the report, yet we still see an amount of £1,370,972 underspent in 1964-65 under the Commonwealth-State Housing Fund. That is shown in the Treasurer's Financial Statement, so I am not mispresenting the figure. The table shows that there has been a continual decrease in home ownership since 1961-62. Are those the figures the Minister wanted me to speak about? They show a continual decrease.

During the year 1964-65, 1,744 homes were completed, and of that number 1,039 were for home ownership. I agree with the Minister's comment about the Commonwealth home savings grant when he said in answer to my interjection on Thursday last that it was a pity that houses erected on the Commission's land were not subject to this grant. Unfortunately, not enough people are aware of the position. The Commonwealth Government makes propaganda out of the £250 grant, yet when young people apply to purchase a home on a package deal through the Housing Commission, unfortunately they cannot claim the £250. I sometimes wonder whether there is not a racket somewhere relative to this £250. It will also be noticed that since the introduction of this scheme, rather strangely, the cost of homes has increased by a similar amount in the last 12 months.

Mr. Davies: It is a strange coincidence.

Mr. BROMLEY: It is more than a strange coincidence. In fact, there has been a similar upward trend in land prices; not only has the price of the house risen by that amount, but there has been a similar increase in the price of land. That gives rise to the thought that it is remarkable.

It might be interesting for hon. members to know, if they do not know already, that the provision of funds for housing was down a fraction at this year's hand-out at the Loan Council in June. I shall quote now from an article written by John Eddy in the "Telegraph" of 5 June, 1965. It is headed, "Housing brake disappointing," and reads—

"The disappointment of this week's meeting of the State Premiers and the Loan Council was the static allowance of funds for housing.

"Far from being increased, the provision was down a fraction."

He then gives the figures. This is a very interesting article. If I had time I would include it all in "Hansard", but as I have not sufficient time I shall content myself by reading this section—

"Certainly we do not want dearer houses but we definitely do want more of them.

The assembly line requires a continuous flow of funds."

We want more funds for rental homes as well as for home ownership. The percentage of home owners is quite good, but it should be increased. Rental homes should be made available to those unfortunate people who cannot afford to buy homes.

The Minister for Works and Housing probably gets twice as much mail as any other Minister, mostly representations from other hon. members concerning applications for State rental homes. I know that, because I have so many people coming to see me about this matter, most of the mail I send out consists of representations to him for State rental homes.

Mr. Sherrington: And most of the refusals you get come from him.

Mr. BROMLEY: Yes, they do; almost every request is refused. If I get a house through the Minister within three months I am doing well. We can consider ourselves fortunate if we get one within six months; to get one in three months it is necessary for the person concerned to have a court eviction order.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: They must have a priority.

Mr. BROMLEY: We know the priority system. The solution is to build more rental homes at the right price. We know what happens relative to private rental homes or flats. I hope the Minister will take notice of my recommendations and those of other hon. members in this regard.

I am concerned that there appears to be no definite plan in Queensland for multi-unit flats or dwellings for single aged pensioners, of whom there are a tremendous number in my electorate. Not only can they not afford to maintain a home, but they cannot live on their own because they are too ill. If they were provided with multi-unit flats, as is the case in other States, this Government would be doing a tremendous job.

Mr. Ewan: Why don't you hop into it and build them with the £2-for-£1 subsidy?

Mr. BROMLEY: When the Treasurer was Minister for Housing he said to me, "If you can get the land in your electorate I will build Housing Commission flats." Evidently I was to be his agent. With due respect to him, I say that the Minister should send a departmental officer into Norman to see for himself the number of sites for flats or multi-unit dwellings which would be suitable for these elderly people.

I make a sincere appeal to the Minister to do something for these elderly people who now live on their own, so that they can live in close proximity to the city and to transport in low-level flats, not in high buildings with a number of storeys.

(Time expired.)

Mr. RAMSDEN (Merthyr) (12.20 p.m.): We have just heard a rather amazing speech from the hon. member for Norman. In the first instance, he told the Minister that printing the annual report of this department was a mere waste of time.

Mr. Bromley: I did not say that.

Mr. RAMSDEN: Yes you did.

Mr. Bromley: I said that if the figures were not accurate, why print it?

Mr. RAMSDEN: It is not a case of the figures being inaccurate; it is a case of the hon. member's inability to read them when he sees them.

I should like to follow up what he said, particularly in relation to high rents. I believe that he has not pursued the full process of thought in facing up to this matter under the conditions of today.

Mr. Bromley: Have you been able to get many rental homes for the people in your electorate?

Mr. RAMSDEN: I hope the hon. member does not want to remain ignorant all his life. If he would be content to listen for a while, he would learn something that would help him in his future thinking.

One of the most revolutionary things about modern life is the method of financing homes. From the date of the first world war to the end of the second world war, housing was, for the most part, a private matter. It was financed in the main by insurance companies, banks, and the newly developed War Service Homes Division of the Commonwealth Government. Since World War II there have been great changes in the housing situation, caused, as the hon. member for Norman rightly said, by the sudden demand for homes following the return to civilian life of so many sailors, soldiers, and airmen who had married under the urgency of war. Had there been no second world war, no doubt the old method of financing homes would have sufficed. With the demobilisation of the armed forces, the country was suddenly faced with an urgent demand for homes at that point of time, not some time in the distant future.

The Government of the day—I refer particularly to the Government of the day in Queensland—was therefore faced with a new economic and social problem. To overcome it, old camps of the armed forces were converted to rough-and-ready dwelling units through the agency of the Queensland Housing Commission.

Mr. Davies: Was there any alternative?

Mr. RAMSDEN: No. I ask the hon. member to listen for just a moment. I think that what he suggests is acknowledged, so I ask him not to jump to conclusions. I know that he is very impatient. He would be a better member if he were less impatient and more ready to listen than to chatter.

Because of the heavy demand for homes following the war, rent control was very strictly enforced in order to protect those who had to seek rental accommodation. In the immediate post-war years the demand for materials and labour was such that little could be done to remedy the housing shortage. People therefore continued to live in substandard, temporary Housing Commission flats in former Army camps. These flats were allowed to fall into disrepair because, on the one hand, the Government did not want to waste money on temporary repairs, and, on the other, it did not wish to perpetuate this monstrous way of living which had been forced on repatriated servicemen in the post-war period. That was the position that continued till the Country-Liberal Government came to office in 1957.

Mr. Davies: Would there be a worse way of living than a "monstrous" way?

Mr. RAMSDEN: Yes. If there was a "monster" sale on anywhere now, I would sell the hon. member for Maryborough.

In 1957 we gave a pledge that if we were elected to office we would make a frontal attack on this social blot and wipe the housing camps from our midst within our first three years. History, of course, records that we did that. This meant a rapid change not only in thinking but also in policy. I might say that many officers of the Queensland Housing Commission at that time found it difficult to accept this changed thinking and changed policy; but time has proved us correct, and I am sure that each and every one of those officers now accepts this change of policy. For instance, it was realised that the second world war had in fact brought about an acceptance of the doctrine that housing was the sole function of government. Whereas for many years prior to the war housing had, for the most part, been the responsibility of private enterprise and very little the responsibility of the Government, with the coming of peace in 1945 we found the pendulum swinging to the opposite extremity and private enterprise having but an infinitesimal part of the responsibility for housing.

Mr. Bromley: It could not handle it.

Mr. RAMSDEN: No, not under the impossible conditions facing the Labour Government. I will deal with that in a moment.

It was this concept that had to be challenged and a new and more balanced approach accepted. So the Country-Liberal Government realised the problem and preached the doctrine that housing in a

modern age cannot remain the function of government alone, and we must accept that. But we must accept, too, that the private sector has its part to play in solving the housing problem in a State whose population is expanding as rapidly as is Queensland's.

In the 1954 census the total population of Queensland was 1,318,259, and it had increased to 1,518,828 in the 1961 census. It was estimated that by 1964 the population would have risen to 1,589,011. Although it may be argued that a total population increase of 270,750 is only a minor growth over 10 years, for it is only an average growth of 27,075 per annum, these figures have greater significance when one looks at the record of the State's vital statistics for the last eight years—the period in which the Country-Liberal Government has been in office—and sees that the number of marriages in that period are—

Year	No. of marriages
1957	10,271
1958	10,255
1959	10,581
1960	10,277
1961	10,392
1962	10,642
1963	11,431
1964	11,752

For every marriage that takes place a house is required ultimately, and the Government has applied itself vigorously to this housing problem in two ways, in spite of the "knocking" of the Opposition and the incorrect claims made by hon. members opposite.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. RAMSDEN: If hon. members opposite have an answer to this, let them get to their feet and give it. I am quite certain that they have not an answer.

The Government's first approach to this problem was to apply the maximum amount of money available in each year to housing, not only through the Queensland Housing Commission but also through co-operative housing societies and the older media that have always been in the housing field. This meant that the most that could be done at Government level of responsibility was in fact being done; but the Government realised, as I said, that the private sector had a part to play in the solution of the problem and could play its part if the correct encouragement was given to it.

So, on a couple of occasions, again in spite of the opposition from the benches on the other side of the Chamber, we have progressively eased up on rent control. It is quite true that, as a result of this, rents rose. At the same time, it had the desired effect. It opened the way to those with investment money available to invest it in the building of flats, home units and so on, and this facet of housing is very noticeable in my own electorate. The hon. member for Norman mentioned the units going up

in his electorate. Barely a street in the electorate of Merthyr—particularly the New Farm area—has not at least one multi-storey block constructed, or in the course of construction, since rent control was lifted.

Mr. Melloy: Who can afford to rent or buy those places?

Mr. RAMSDEN: Be patient.

Mr. Melloy: We have been patient for the last eight years and we are a bit sick of it.

Mr. RAMSDEN: Hon. members opposite were always sick of it.

Now let me say that in many streets a number of these multi-unit buildings are going up. In addition, one has only to look at the large number of private subdivisions with houses erected on them, from Mt. Gravatt to Mt. Coot-tha and from Aspley to Ipswich, to see the result of this wise policy.

I should like now to quote from Bureau of Census and Statistics Bulletin No. 60 for 1965, which was laid on the table only this morning. It states—

"Of the total dwelling units approved, 1,164 were houses, of which 998 were for private ownership and 166 for Government ownership, while 456 were individual flats, etc. (all for private ownership).

"The number of houses approved for private ownership (998) was approximately 50, or 5 per cent., more than the high number approved in each of the preceding three months, and was only slightly below the near record total for March, 1965."

I appreciate that many of the buildings of which I speak, especially the multi-storey units, which cater for the business couple or the retired couple, do little to house the family man; but surely it must be obvious to anybody with a modicum of intelligence that by housing the limited classification of people that they do, these units release the family units for those who cannot be housed in multi-units.

Of course, rents are high. They must be. If a man invests capital in building a house, or units, or flats, to house other people, he is not doing it merely to solve the housing shortage; he is doing it because, with a shortage, it is a prudent field to invest in so long as he can earn the same rate of interest as he could get from some other type of investment—in fact, a little higher if he can get it, because he has to allow for depreciation, repairs, maintenance, and, in some cases, vandalism.

The hon. member for Norman said, "Let us build more houses at cheap rentals, rentals that people can afford." I will go with him all the way, but I am afraid we must be realists. We have heard in this debate statements by hon. members condemning rentals as too high. Let us take a look at some of the interesting figures and see the reason for these high rentals.

Let us see, if we can, what are the basic factors behind the sharp rise in housing rents. I have had some figures taken out for me covering a number of points which all have a bearing on rising rentals. Firstly, of course, there are construction costs. According to the Queensland Year Book for 1956, in 1949-50 the average cost per square for brick homes was £175, for timber homes £134, and for fibro-cement homes £120. According to Bureau of Census and Statistics Bulletin No. 48 of 1965, costs for the quarter ended June, 1965, had risen to £291 a square for brick homes, £280 a square for timber homes and £261 a square for fibro-cement homes.

The latest issue of the Bureau of Census and Statistics Bulletin, No. 60 of 1965, states—

“The average estimated costs per house approved in September, 1965, compared with September, 1964, were as follows:—

Metropolitan—

	£
1965	4,154
1964	4,074

Other cities and towns—

	£
1965	3,790
1964	3,535

All shires—

	£
1965	3,715
1964	3,117

“The following were the average estimated costs per house for the nine months ended 30th September, 1965, compared with those for the nine months ended 30th September, 1964:—

Metropolitan—

	£
1965	4,148
1964	3,924

Other cities and towns—

	£
1965	3,763
1964	3,546

All shires—

	£
1965	3,386
1964	3,265.”

Two factors control construction costs, namely, building materials and labour. Dealing first with building materials, let us take the wholesale prices index for a three-year average to 1939 as being equal to 100. On page 294 of the 1951 Queensland Year Book we find this index for 1949-50 is the equivalent of 225. On page 339 of the 1964 Queensland Year Book the index for 1963-64 is shown as the equivalent of 469, an increase of 108.4 per cent. in the wholesale prices of building materials.

How do wages affect building costs? The basic rate for a carpenter, painter, plumber and drainer at 1 January, 1951, was £10 7s. a week. On 20 September, 1965, it was £24 a week. The rates I have given are for South-east Queensland. The increase in the period, amounting to £13 13s. a week,

is equivalent to 233 per cent. These additional wages affect not only the cost of new constructions but maintenance costs on existing houses as well.

Rentals, of course, must be relative to the increased cost of building materials and wages. But yet a third factor enters into calculations here. I refer to local authority rates, which I can illustrate best by referring to two actual cases I have obtained from the records of the Queensland Housing Commission. A certain unsewered dwelling in 1950-51 had a rateable valuation of £100, and the rates levied at that time were £15 9s. 11d. In 1965-66 the same dwelling, still unsewered, has a rateable valuation of £495, and the rates now levied are £40 5s. 2d. The second case is that of an unsewered dwelling whose rateable valuation in 1950-51 was £80, the rates levied at that time being £13 16s. 9d. That dwelling has since been sewerred, and its rateable valuation is £488 in 1965-66, and the rates levied amount to £48 1s. 4d.

When we take these factors into account—the cost of building materials, wages and local authority rates—and then add the yet further cost in the case of new constructions of the increased price of land, we must surely realise that the rise in rents is not in fact outrageous, nor is it due to rapacious landlords. I point out that if the Lord Mayor has his way under the Town Plan ordinances, especially those relative to the flat-rate charges for water and sewerage installations on new subdivisions, new construction will have to carry an even greater burden of present-day costs to meet the increased development requirements of local government in Brisbane.

Newspaper advertisements for rental accommodation show that the greater proportion of the rental accommodation is for one bedroom and two-bedroom flats only, which would be unsuitable for families with children. Many flats are furnished and have wall-to-wall carpets and so on, which of course, means an increase in the rent charged.

Let us now see just how rents have risen over the years. I do not want to be misquoted on the figures I am about to give. I want to make it quite clear to the Committee that the figures I quote are not actual figures. They represent the average weekly rental for the metropolitan area of Queensland, and they are obtained from the relevant census papers. It is, of course, obvious that these rental figures cannot be actual. No-one would imagine he would pay the same rental for a flat in New Farm as for one at, say, Woodridge. I repeat that the figures I am about to quote have been derived by the census people from averaging the rents throughout the metropolitan area as disclosed on the census forms.

The census disclosed that in 1947 the average weekly rental for a private dwelling was £1 3s. 10d. and for a flat £1 10s. 7d. The 1961 census showed that the average

weekly rental paid for houses of wooden construction was £3 6s. 10d.; brick £4 10s. 11d.; concrete £3 17s. 9d.; and fibro-cement £3 9s. 5d. For wooden flats the rental was £4 2s. 10d.; brick £5 8s. 6d.; concrete £4 4s. 7d.; and fibro-cement £4 5s. 6d. Not unnaturally, the average weekly rental, in view of those figures, can be expected to be higher today.

While I have the utmost sympathy for the hon. member for Norman, who wants low-priced housing and low rentals for his constituents, in spite of what the Housing Commission and the private sector of the community are doing in the field of housing, with the rising cost of labour, building materials, land and roads, I just cannot see how we can get lower rentals than those that exist at present.

It is sufficient to say that this Government, because of its changed thinking and its policy on housing generally, and by convincing the private sector that it has a part to play in the construction of homes for the people, has done a tremendous job to overcome the shortage of houses which arose as a result of the violent marriage explosion following the second world war. In spite of the "knocking" by the Opposition, and everything that Opposition members have said to the detriment of the Government, we have proved in our nine years in office that we have done a better job than Labour ever attempted to do after the war.

Mr. R. Jones interjected.

Mr. RAMSDEN: Again we have the insular outlook. The hon. member knows that I was in Cairns a few weeks ago and construction work is going on all over that city. If the hon. member visited his electorate he would know that.

(Time expired.)

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) (12.45 p.m.): The annual report of the Queensland Housing Commission gives those who are prepared to read it very valuable information on the Commission's activities. On the first page the report deals with the scope of the Commission.

In my area, where there is no co-operative housing society, we are concerned with the aspects of the Queensland Housing Commission which deal with—

Making advances available to borrowers who have their own land and choose their own design;

Commission land being made available to borrowers who choose their own design and will buy the property under a contract of sale;

The provision of rental houses; and

Rental houses the tenants of which have sufficient money to purchase them.

Every member of the Committee, at one time or another, would have been approached by constituents wanting Housing Commission accommodation for themselves and their families. I have had the experience on several occasions of a mother and father with up to seven children, with nowhere to go, seeking assistance from the Housing Commission.

Recently a mother and father with five children were given notice to vacate, before Christmas, the very unsatisfactory and uncongenial accommodation in which they are now living. They have not sufficient money for a deposit and there are no rental houses in the area which can be made available to them. That is a difficult position for anyone to be in. I realise there are many reasons for people being in such a position. Sometimes it is because of their improvidence, but very often it is because of circumstances over which they have no control. The instance I have just quoted falls into the second category. The Minister was very sympathetic and co-operative in this case. He is prepared to accept a lower deposit than is usually required and will do all he can to improve the position and provide these people with a home. Whether they will accept those conditions or not, I do not know.

I have always been a keen believer in home ownership. I have advised everybody who has approached me in this regard to do his utmost to obtain a home for himself. Rent, like the brook, goes on for ever, and creates no equity at any time. There is a difference of opinion on whether the deposit required from a borrower is too high. The Minister says that a certain specified sum of money is allocated to his department. If the amount made available to individual borrowers is increased, there must be a proportionate decrease in the number of homes that can be built. Nobody could dispute that statement. The deposit of only 10 per cent. is nominal. In most circumstances it does not apply.

Parents who have two children—one boy and one girl—require a three bedroom house. Today, a wooden house, which is the cheapest construction, cannot be acquired for under £4,200 to £4,500 with deposits of £700 and £1,000 respectively. Few people can pay those amounts, and consequently those requiring houses have to delete from their plans certain things that they regard as essential or continue to struggle till they have sufficient money for the required deposit. It is a moot point whether it would be better to increase the amount available to these borrowers or to leave the position as it is now. I am one who believes that, to assist those who today are faced with higher prices for houses, consideration could be given to increasing the amount of £3,500 now made available.

Another great difficulty experienced in my area is the refusal of most building contractors to tender for Housing Commission

homes. In the Ayr district there are some excellent, competent, reliable, and trustworthy building contractors whose work compares favourably with that of other builders anywhere in the State. Only one of them, however, will submit tenders for Housing Commission homes in the area. This means that there is no competition in prices, as he knows that there will be no opposition from the others. So inundated is he with Housing Commission work that there is a delay of 50 weeks from the time he signs a contract till he starts to dig the post holes.

I have asked the other building contractors why they refuse to submit tenders for Housing Commission houses. Invariably they tell me that too much frustration is caused by the inspectors of the Commission and by the imposing of unnecessary conditions. They say there is too much interference with what they are doing. When they put in concrete blocks, for instance, they have to wait for the inspector to arrive and inspect them. If he does not happen to be on the job or in the district, they have to wait till he comes or shift their men about, which generally disorganises their work and increases costs.

Mr. Ewan: Don't you think that is a carry-on from what went on before 1957?

Mr. COBURN: I do not know. I am speaking about what is happening now.

They also tell me that they experience difficulties in obtaining payment. They say that the Commission is too slow in making payment to them. They have to pay wages and for the materials that they use, and late payments by the Commission sometimes place them in embarrassing positions. These are things that the builders have told me, and I am sure the Minister will be pleased to hear them because he will now be able to check them and perhaps bring about a changed attitude towards Housing Commission work. The Minister knows the great difficulty that he and I had in getting contractors to build two houses at Giru. The first prices submitted were so unreasonable that they were ridiculous. Someone had to be brought in from outside the area to build those two houses.

One of the contractors in Ayr told me that he would be prepared to build a group of Housing Commission houses because he could then arrange his work in such a way that there would be no disorganisation to hinder operations. Those are the things that the builders tell me, and the Minister and I know what the position is in that area. It is true that only one contractor in Ayr will submit tenders for this work, and the one tender that was received for the work at Giru was so outrageous that it could not even be considered.

Another matter associated with the Housing Commission to which I wish to refer is the free insurance available to certain

borrowers. A man under 40 years of age who can get a certificate of good health from the medical officer and whose income does not exceed £1,040 per annum when he makes the application for the advance qualifies for free insurance. Therefore, if the owner of the house dies before the amount borrowed has been repaid in full, the house becomes the wife's property free of debt. I understand, too, that if the wife is the owner and she dies, the husband gets the house free of debt.

I have seen the benefit of the scheme already. A middle-aged man with a family of five was killed in a motor-car accident while going to work. The whole of the property was made available to his wife and family free of cost, which was of great benefit to them.

£1,040 per annum is £20 a week, which is a fairly high income. However, in sugar-growing areas in which a big expansion programme is being implemented, particularly in the mills, certain classes of workers are working an excessive amount of overtime and, consequently, their incomes are abnormally high when they apply for free insurance. I submitted one case to the Minister, who adopted a very realistic and sympathetic attitude. He said that if the overtime was something that would not last, he would regard the man's ordinary income as his usual income. Unfortunately for the man on whose behalf I made the application, his employer said that the expansion would go on for a long time and it was expected that his overtime would be fairly constant. As a result, the man could not get the benefit of the free insurance. However, I explained to him that, through the State Government Insurance Office, he could provide himself with cover similar to that provided by the Housing Commission, and I told him that if he got in touch with the S.G.I.O. it would quote him a premium for that amount of cover. I suggest to the Minister that in all cases in which borrowers from the Housing Commission do not qualify for free insurance, included in the papers sent to them should be a circular from the State Government Insurance Office outlining the premium they would have to pay to give them a cover equal to that under the free insurance scheme. Many of them neglect to take out insurance, and a wife with a number of children to care for could experience the utmost difficulty in keeping up payments after her husband died. But if her husband paid insurance premiums, financial hardship would be avoided. If the Queensland Housing Commission and the State Government Insurance Office co-operated, every borrower who did not qualify could have sent to him, when other papers were forwarded to him to sign, an advertisement showing just what was available to him if he wanted to take out an insurance policy.

All things considered, because of the great amount of work done by the Department of Works within the Burdekin electorate, I suppose I have little to complain about and much to be thankful for. However, the people in my electorate have been somewhat annoyed and frustrated by the department's refusal to provide small amenities. For instance, when there is an earth closet system, with all its dangers to health, at a school, and the department says it cannot provide a septic system because of shortage of funds, it is rather annoying to read in the newspapers that the Government intends to spend £16,000,000 on new buildings between the Supreme Court and Parliament House.

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

Mr. COBURN: As I said previously, we get tired of being told so frequently that the little necessary things that would make for more congenial living for school children cannot be provided because of lack of funds, while at the same time £16,000,000 is conjured up from somewhere to provide palatial buildings between the Supreme Court and Parliament House. I have no objection to that proposal—I think those buildings are very desirable and that the proposed park lands between them would have any sensible person's support—but there should be a placing of first things first.

When I came into this Parliament in 1950 Government departments had the same buildings as they have today, and since then have been added the Taxation Building, Harris Court, the Mansions, the large building on the corner of Alice and Edward Streets and the buildings in South Brisbane that are now in use. They seemed to house their public servants in the metropolis at that time without very much difficulty. Unless there has been a great acceleration of Parkinson's law during that period it is hard to believe that now that those additional buildings are in use it is still necessary to have in Brisbane three more buildings, to cost £9,000,000, for office accommodation for public servants. I have excluded from that figure the addition of the Health and Welfare Building, which is to be opened very shortly.

In connection with the construction of these three proposed buildings, one wonders whether it is necessary to demolish the existing buildings and replace them with structures of an architecture that is not nearly so attractive. I have not been able to make a close enough examination of the question to argue it one way or the other, but when one looks at the beautiful building housing the Government Printing Office, with its foundations of enormous granite blocks and the beautiful architecture of its superstructure, one wonders whether something ought not to be done to remodel it and to save its general design. The building that will replace it will not be of the same architectural standard as the present building. I do not know whether it is proposed to demolish the

Mansions, which are another fine example of architecture with a history attached to them. One wonders whether the Supreme Court should not be remodelled also. I think every effort should be made to preserve it for posterity because of the tradition associated with it and its beautiful architecture.

However, my point is that all these things can be done and all that money spent, yet, when I asked for a residence for the head teacher at Millaroo I was told that although it was on the list of residences to be constructed, funds were not available for it this financial year. Again, conditions at the Ayr State School are intolerable. Some of the rooms are so badly ventilated, so poorly lighted, and become so hot during the summer months that it is almost unbearable for both teachers and children and it is almost impossible to work in them.

Today a schoolroom 24 feet by 24 feet is considered necessary to accommodate 35 children. It is not hard to visualise the discomfort of teachers and children at the Ayr primary school when classrooms of the following size are provided for the number of children as shown:—

Room	Dimensions	Number of Pupils
	Ft.	
A ..	16½ x 21	40
B ..	18½ x 21	43
C ..	18½ x 21	31
D ..	18½ x 21	33
E ..	18½ x 21	44
F ..	18½ x 21	40
G ..	18½ x 21	39
H ..	18½ x 21	38

Room A, which is only 16½ ft. x 21 ft. caters for 40 pupils, which means that there is less than a square yard of floor space to each child, and that does not allow for space occupied by desks, seats, presses, tables or any other furniture.

When we ask for adequate accommodation so that conditions will be bearable for the children while they are being taught, we are told that funds are not available. Recently when asked by somebody on the Opposition side to provide something the Minister said, "If you can pull the money out of a hat we will do it for you." Some conjuror must have magically pulled out £16,000,000 from somewhere for the Government to provide the proposed buildings in Brisbane. First things should come first. Adequate accommodation and ventilation in schoolrooms is of the utmost importance so that children can work under comfortable conditions.

The Ayr High School is growing very rapidly, with 591 pupils at the beginning of last year. In his annual report the principal remarked that accommodation was stretched to the utmost last year. He said that the rooms were overcrowded because they were not

of the standard size of 24 ft. x 24 ft. All that we can get to relieve the position are two temporary rooms under the school. A new wing should have been provided.

I have no objection to the type of accommodation provided by the Department of Works. The school buildings that have been provided by it are excellent; the workmanship is good, as is the ventilation. The rooms at the old Ayr primary school were built many years ago, and nothing has been done to remodel them to present-day standards. Although we have asked repeatedly for improvements, we have been told that nothing can be done because of lack of funds.

Those who have asked us to make representations become sarcastic about the different replies that are given when representations are made on their behalf. I have a letter here which says, "I am also enclosing a plan of the school that is to be remodelled 'when funds become available'." The inverted commas used in the letter are a sarcastic reference to the fact that the writer thinks the words "when funds become available" are just an excuse for not doing what should be done. It is a vindication of their thinking when, after being told that the Government cannot find a few pounds to install a septic system or a few thousand pounds to provide a new wing to give adequate accommodation at a school, these people learn that the Government can spend £16,000,000 on buildings in Brisbane.

(Time expired.)

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (2.25 p.m.): The wonderful buildings—particularly school buildings—which have been springing up throughout the State in the last few years are a credit to the department and the Minister.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. McKECHNIE: I congratulate the Under Secretary of the Department of Works, Mr. Longland, and his staff on the very beautiful buildings that have been erected in this State over the past few years. We see instances of them in school buildings, laboratories, public utilities, and many other buildings. To cite one in particular, I mention the beautiful Health and Welfare Building.

Mr. Aikens: Don't you think we should spend a bit more money in the country?

Mr. McKECHNIE: These buildings are of very solid construction and are certainly a credit to the staff of the department.

I am very happy to have many of these new buildings in my own electorate, and I intend to refer to a few of them. Firstly, a new high school was erected at Goondiwindi and was finished only last year. I again compliment the department on a really wonderful rush job. The school had just been completed when a cyclone blew off the

roof. Within 36 hours the department was able to marshal material and employees from Brisbane, 243 miles away, to replace the roof. That exemplifies how the department reacts in a crisis. The building could have suffered considerable damage had further rain fallen.

There has been a duplication of the Stanthorpe High School. Residences have been erected for the two schools at Goondiwindi and the one at Greenup. A completely new high-top and a new State School have been built at Inglewood. There has been an extension to the Texas State School and high-top and a duplication of the Appletorpe State School. At present the Cottonvale State School is also being duplicated.

Possibly the most important aspect of the building programme is the fact that the department has taken care of the small bush schools in the form of extensions, repainting and rejuvenation. A very good job has been done to make the small schools bright places, fit for social gatherings in the tiny areas where they are situated. A really good example of the type of workmanship carried out by the department is to be found in the Granite Belt Horticultural Station, which was opened only last week. Similarly, there is the new Stanthorpe Police Station, which was air conditioned to meet the rigours of the winter climate.

In answer to the interjection by the hon. member for Townsville South a little while ago as to what we should be doing in the country, I should think that, at the same time as we are spending £16,000,000 on buildings in Brisbane—I draw attention to the fact that this £16,000,000 is to be spent over a considerable period and the expenditure is necessary for the able and efficient working of the various departments, and that it is also a matter of prestige for the capital city of the State—complementary to this building programme we must have a very heavy works programme in the country areas to balance the expenditure. After all, the country areas carry a larger population than does the city of Brisbane. There should be a complementary building programme because, for instance, the police station at Goondiwindi, which was an old building, was shifted many years ago from its permanent site to a temporary site pending the erection of a new station. I am confident that within a year or so a new building will be erected.

I draw attention to the need for the replacement of many public buildings, such as C.P.S. offices and police buildings, in some small centres, in addition to the £16,000,000 scheme that will be implemented in Brisbane. I do not criticise the spending of that amount in Brisbane. But at the same time we must spend more in order to bring buildings in country areas up to the standard set in Brisbane. I do not know, nor does the Minister I presume, over what period the £16,000,000 will be spent. But it will be a considerable period. More must be spent in country areas where the facilities are much

worse than those in the city. We need better—I emphasise “better”—conditions in the country to encourage people to go there. There is a more rigorous climate in the country; it is either hotter or colder than in Brisbane; consequently, we should provide first-class facilities in our country public buildings.

I am confident that the Minister will keep these matters in mind and that we will have this complementary building programme in the country. Most of Queensland's population is situated in the country and we must keep it there. With some buildings there is a degree of urgency; with others the work can be spread over a period.

I do not want to be pessimistic. But at the moment I can foresee, in the not too distant future, that we will have to undertake public works in country areas to tide us over until we have recovered from the effects and rigours of the present drought. The £16,000,000 building programme in Brisbane is a move in the right direction. It should be extended to country areas, not only to improve the appearance and prestige of our public buildings, but also to counter the effects of the drought and give facilities to those country areas where they are so badly needed.

I support the view that home ownership should be the policy of the Queensland Housing Commission. I do not doubt that there will always need to be some rental accommodation. With a high percentage of home ownership comes stability in the community and pride of ownership, which in turn lead to progress and are an indication of the prosperity of the State generally.

Mr. Davies: Labour had a higher percentage of home ownership.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Labour had quite a good record. In 1956, home ownership accounted for 44 per cent. of all housing. That was quite good. In 1965, we find a much better position. In that year home ownership constituted 60 per cent. of dwellings, the remaining 40 per cent being for rental. Whilst I agree with the hon. member for Maryborough that his Government did a good job, I think the logical conclusion to draw is that we have done a much better one, as the ratio of homes owned to homes rented has increased considerably. Consequently I support home ownership, whilst also realising that a percentage of houses must be provided for rental purposes.

In one town in my area houses are being built as quickly as possible. The Minister has approved of the construction of many of them, and 18 are now being built in one group. There are, however, more people wanting to buy houses than there are houses available. I therefore feel that it is essential to construct as many homes as possible for purchase, whilst at the same time providing some for rental.

Mr. Sherrington: What deposit are they asking for the houses?

Mr. McKECHNIE: As most hon. members are aware, the deposit is 10 per cent. of £3,500, plus the difference between £3,500 and the price of the house. If the house is to cost £3,500, the deposit is approximately £350. If the house is to cost £4,500, the extra £1,000 is added, and the deposit becomes £1,350. I, with other hon. members on both sides of the Chamber, would like to see the amounts required for deposits reduced by increasing the limit of £3,500. If the amount of which 10 per cent. has to be raised could be increased, that would be to the good. If it is at all possible for the Minister to do this, I am confident that he will. I agree that the amount should remain at £3,500 if the retention of this limit means that a greater number of houses will be built. But the moment sufficient finance is available to increase the basic amount, I should be pleased to see the Minister increase it so that it would be easier for people to build their own homes.

I agree with the hon. member for Salisbury that it is desirable to have as many people as possible housed in their own homes. I believe that home ownership creates stability and a pride in homes that is most desirable.

Without begrudging development in the city, I again appeal for greater attention to housing in country areas. If my memory is correct, I think 71 per cent. of Housing Commission houses are in Brisbane and only 29 per cent. in 104 centres outside the capital city. That is definitely a lack of balance and is something that we should try to correct. Only 29 per cent. in country areas is not enough, especially when there are towns in which people are prepared to buy every house that is built. Efforts should be made to serve country areas better. Indeed, I believe that would be the wish of members of all parties. Although I have not the exact figures before me, I believe that the Government has a better housing record than have Labour Governments, although none has a sufficiently good record in the provision of houses in country areas. I am confident that the Minister will keep that suggestion in mind in future building programmes. When people in country areas are prepared to buy all the houses that are built there, the need is self-evident; there is no need for me to bring evidence to prove my point.

I know that the Housing Commission has had to contend at times with a shortage of staff in implementing its building programme, but I think it would be advantageous if, in future, sites could be selected and preparations for sewerage made farther ahead of the actual building programme. In the last eight years 15,700 homes have been built—I think that is the correct figure—so it is obvious that the Housing Commission has been very busy; but I think it would be

of advantage to the community generally if the Commission could do more long-range planning for the future.

In addition, I should like to see less block development or development of complete suburbs by the Housing Commission within towns and cities in this State. In my opinion, it is desirable that, as far as possible, Housing Commission houses should be mixed with other houses in the community. I know that it is not always economical to do this and that sometimes it increases costs of construction; but towns have a better balance when Housing Commission houses are built in small groups instead of in large groups or in complete suburbs.

In conclusion, I express my appreciation to Mr. Campbell, the Commissioner for Housing, and other administrative officers of the Commission for the very humane consideration they have given to cases in which the erection of a house or a reduction in rental has ameliorated the suffering of people who have found themselves in rather awkward circumstances. Officers of the Commission generally adopt a very humane approach and endeavour to help people if they possibly can.

I say to the Minister, through you, Mr. Gaven, that I appreciate the job he is doing. I have tried to make any criticism that I have offered constructive, and I am sure that he and his officers will do the best they can with the money available to them.

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (2.43 p.m.): I place on record immediately my thanks to the officers of the Queensland Housing Commission and the officers of the Department of Works for the courtesy they have shown me when I have brought problems to their attention. As a former public servant, I realise that they cannot possibly solve every problem that is brought before them, but at least they show one every courtesy.

Mr. Windsor: You are still a public servant.

Mr. TUCKER: That is probably true; but I should say that I would be a good public servant, as opposed to the hon. member who interjected, who would be one of the worst in this Chamber.

Mr. Windsor: I am the best attender.

Mr. TUCKER: The hon. member might be the best attender, but that is the best that can be said of him.

In the Budget debate I spoke about the urgent need for additional housing in Townsville, and what I said will bear repetition in this debate, which deals specifically with housing and public works. There is no doubt that the problem is very urgent in that city.

In Townsville today there are scores of young people who are looking for housing accommodation but cannot find it. As can well be imagined, they do not have a very

high priority, and unless they have that, to use the vernacular, they are not in the race in obtaining rental accommodation from the Housing Commission. Tradesmen are beginning to move into the city in anticipation of the coming of the Army units that are to be stationed there and the fact that possibly £10,000,000 to £15,000,000 will be spent there in the next few years. These people are in a similar position in that they do not always have the necessary deposit to buy a home of their own, but they come north thinking that they may be able to obtain rental accommodation.

It is possible to find rental accommodation at a price that ranges as high as £8 to £10 a week, but it is not possible for the ordinary man on around £20 a week to pay as much as that for very long. Naturally, these people approach the Housing Commission in an effort to solve their problem and to obtain accommodation at a much lower rental than that presently obtaining in Townsville. Admittedly, rentals have been pushed up because of the presence of servicemen. They may be artificial on that account, but we must grapple with the problem as it exists and be practical in our approach. Unfortunately we are not grappling with it at all.

Those who do have the deposit to place on a house find that they cannot arrange a mortgage because the banks have clamped down and there is no chance of raising the necessary money to buy a house. These people are faced with the dilemma that they cannot buy a house on a small deposit and they cannot obtain rental accommodation from the Housing Commission unless they have been evicted and have 100 points priority, which very few young married people have.

I join with my colleague, who has claimed that there is an urgent need in Townsville for another block of 96 flats. I do not care where it goes—in Bundock Street, at Belgian Gardens, or on The Strand. I know that the Commission owns land in each of those places. I am not going to squabble or argue about where the flats should be situated, as long as we get them immediately.

At the same time, we want more finance made available to allow private builders to construct houses. There has been talk here today about private builders being able to help in the housing shortage. That is true, but if there is not the finance available to allow people who want to build their own homes to do so or to buy a home that is already constructed, private builders can do nothing about it. At the present time we in Townsville have reached an impasse in that there are people who have sufficient money for a deposit but who cannot arrange mortgages. Therefore, because finance is not available, private builders who specialise in building homes—I am not referring to builders in the industrial sphere in which a lot of work is going on in Townsville at the moment—have slowed down to a walk.

I spoke about this matter in the Budget debate and I compared Queensland's effort in the provision of homes and the amount that Queensland obtained from the Commonwealth Government with the efforts of South Australia and Tasmania. The comparison was very unfavourable to Queensland. The figures in my Budget speech indicate that we are far behind the other States when it comes to housing.

The table on page 7 of the annual report of the Queensland Housing Commission indicates that only 38 houses were built in Townsville during 1964-65. It must be remembered that Townsville is now the second city in Queensland. Over the same period 44 homes were completed in Biloela, 41 in Bunyaville, 97 in Gladstone, 68 in Lawnton, 45 in Redcliffe, and 933 in Brisbane. Townsville is seventh on the list of the number of houses built during the last financial year. The argument could be advanced that Townsville previously had a large number of houses and flats built, but we cannot look back at what we have had in the past; we must look forward to what we are likely to need in the future. What we in Townsville look at is our needs in the immediate future. The fact that we were only seventh on the list of houses built fills us with a great deal of trepidation.

It appears that the legislation passed by this Parliament a year or so ago which enabled the Queensland Housing Commission to build houses for various companies coming into Queensland has been detrimental to the rest of Queensland. When I spoke on that legislation I said I was not against the principle of the Government, through the Queensland Housing Commission, helping these companies, as long as it was not to the detriment of other towns and cities. Apparently it has been to their detriment.

Let there be no mistake about it; I have no argument against any town in Queensland getting its full share of houses. I like to see a place get all the houses it needs. But when I see a town like Biloela getting 44 houses, Gladstone 97, Redcliffe 45, I begin to wonder what has happened to Townsville. No doubt more houses were needed in Biloela because of the development of the Moura coalfields. The construction of the alumina plant and the development of other industrial enterprises in Gladstone has increased the need for houses in that city. But in Townsville, the second city in Queensland, we got only 38. I feel that in helping companies, which could and should have helped themselves, what the Government has done has been detrimental to the other towns and cities in Queensland.

I would have no argument if a small company with only limited capital was being assisted, but it is very wrong for American and other foreign companies, with assets worth millions of pounds, to be assisted by the State Government in the provision of homes at a time when we in the North are crying out for them.

I am here to say what I did when the enabling legislation was passed. The truth of my statement is borne out by a comparison of the number of houses built in Brisbane last year with the number built in Townsville. In round figures there are 750,000 people in Brisbane and 50,000 in Townsville; 933 houses were built in Brisbane last year, and 38 in Townsville. If my arithmetic is correct, 50,000 goes into 750,000 15 times. If we multiply 38 by 15 we get 570. On a percentage basis, if equivalent numbers of houses were built in Brisbane and Townsville, only 570 should have been built in Brisbane instead of 933. No-one can convince me that we are not losing ground in the North. I point out that I did not bring into my calculation a number of people who live close to Brisbane, at Bunyaville and similar places. They were not included.

The argument is advanced that Townsville is doing all right on a percentage basis, but we are not doing very well at all. We have been very unfavourably treated, especially when it is remembered—and I again emphasise this point—that an Army battle group is coming to Townsville next year. To fortify my argument, I have here a copy of the "Telegraph" of today's date, 16 November, which says—

"Multi-million talk in Townsville, Gladstone

"It is multi-million pound talk now in Townsville and Gladstone—the two places in North Queensland marked for fantastic growth during the next few years."

I think they were wrong to separate Gladstone from South Queensland.

The article continues—

"The program is well under way at Gladstone. At Townsville it is still in the planning stage, but giant steps will be taken as soon as the 'quick march' order comes on the Army battle group's project."

That is only one article. If I had time I could quote any number of articles by people who have gone to Townsville to investigate what is about to happen.

The Government has been unrealistic in its approach to housing in the North. Although it has known full well that this project was in the offing it has done nothing to cope with it. I keep warning the Government that if the Housing Commission and associated groups do not get moving shortly in Townsville, they will not get moving at all once the Army installations are under way. Contracts are being let at present. When they are let there will be a tremendous scarcity of building tradesmen. They will be lured by the big money offering under Army contracts.

Now is the time to get moving on housing in Townsville. I repeat that if we leave it much longer we will not be able to move at all. If we procrastinate further in the provision of flats and rental accommodation, although the Minister may want to help,

his hands could well be tied because the big contracts will draw away the available tradesmen in the area. Those who want to come to Townsville will look first to see if they can get accommodation, and they will find that it is non-existent. I repeat, in all sincerity, that something must be done speedily.

I am embarrassed by the number of people who ask me to put in a good word for them with the Housing Commission. I know that Mr. Dawson must receive two or three letters a week seeking consideration for these people. If he has not the houses available, he can do nothing about it. It is embarrassing to him and to me. But I do not care about that. I would be happy to be embarrassed all day long if I could do something for those who need housing in Townsville at present. The position would be eased to a certain degree if finance was available for young people who want to build their own homes.

There will always be those who want rental accommodation; for instance, those who are migratory and do not feel that it is in their interests to buy a home which they will have to dispose of in one or two years' time, possibly at a loss. They prefer rental accommodation in order to have their families decently housed. No matter what else is said or done about families, first and foremost we must put them into decent rental accommodation.

I am disturbed about the position of our senior citizens throughout the State, but particularly those in Townsville. They have to exist on limited incomes. Some are fortunate enough to be in Housing Commission rental accommodation which was built under the 1945-56 Commonwealth housing agreements. They are able to get certain rebates and are able to live reasonably well. I consider the Government has acted harshly in increasing their rents each time there is a rise in the old-age pension. Not long ago I had an instance—unfortunately I have not the letter with me—of a pensioner in my area who, as a result of a rent rebate, was paying something like £1 2s. a week for a flat. He was about to receive an increase of 10s. in his pension, and his wife, not yet eligible for an old-age pension, was to receive £1 in her allowance, and he received a letter apprising him of the fact that his rental would be increased by 7s. a week. That took nearly the whole of the increase he received. In Townsville at present many pensioners and deserted wives, and their families, are forced to accept a low standard of living because high rentals are forced upon them.

The Governments of Victoria and New South Wales are making a determined effort to tackle this problem. I have seen photographs of flats erected by those Governments, and have spoken to people who have seen those flats. They are good, clean, airy, and cheery. Senior citizens pay only a nominal rental for them. It is wrong for our senior citizens, with a low income, to have to pay

high rents in order to get a roof over their heads. It is a State responsibility to see that these people are decently housed, and the Government should make an effort in that direction.

I was under the impression that the Government could not do anything to meet this situation. We were told that under the 1945-56 agreements the Government could do something under the rebate system, but that there was nothing more it could do. Looking through the files I found a copy of a letter which was forwarded to the Parliamentary Labour Party Housing Committee on 9 May, 1963. It was signed by Roland Wilson, Secretary to the Treasury, and reads—

"I refer to your letter of 26th April, 1963, concerning housing for pensioners.

"The 1945 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement provides for the granting of a rental rebate to a tenant of limited income. Consequently, where pensioners are accommodated by the State in houses built under this Agreement they would be eligible to have their rents adjusted in accordance with the rental rebate formula contained in the Agreement. The Commonwealth meets three-fifths of any cash losses incurred by the State in its administration of housing projects built under the 1945 Agreement. Commonwealth assistance under the 1956-61 Housing Agreement takes a different form; advances to the States under that Agreement have carried interest at a rate equal to 1% less than the long-term bond rate. All tenants including pensioner tenants, benefit from that interest concession.

"The current Housing Agreement expressly provides for the erection of dwellings by the State primarily for families of low or moderate means."

Here is the paragraph that I think should be emphasised—

"The State may therefore devote Housing Agreement advances to housing pensioners. Whether a State does so is a matter solely for decision by the State Government.

"A State, or State Housing Authority, is not eligible for assistance under the Aged Persons Homes Act. Consequently, no payment could be made under that Act to a State for housing pensioners. Grants under the Act are limited to religious and charitable or benevolent organisations. For each £1 they find from private sources the Commonwealth grants £2 towards the cost of an approved home for aged persons. Specifically excluded from Commonwealth subsidy are moneys received by an organisation from the Government of the Commonwealth or of a State or from a local governing body or other authority established by a State Act.

Yours sincerely,

Roland Wilson,

Secretary to the Treasury."

Admittedly the State would not receive assistance there, but it is within its province, as the letter indicates, to build houses for pensioners. That is a matter solely for decision by the State Government.

I think the Government is too keen to make everything a paying proposition. I repeat that it has an obligation to our senior citizens. At present it is leaving this problem to churches and other organisations. In all charity, some effort should be made to emulate the other States. If doing this causes some loss, let us carry it. Let us house senior citizens in a decent way. Let us not force them into shabby back rooms that they can get for about £1 10s. a week, which is possibly all that they can afford. The Government has a moral obligation to provide for senior citizens and, from the letter that I have just quoted, it is possible to do so from the money advanced by the Commonwealth.

In the matter of public works, obviously an election is imminent. The Minister said that approximately £16,000,000 is to be spent in Brisbane in coming years. Accommodation for the courts is to be provided in Brisbane, and various other Government buildings are to be constructed throughout the length and breadth of the State.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BEARDMORE (Balonne) (3.9 p.m.): In rising to speak on the Estimates of the Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission, I sincerely commend the Minister on the way in which he has presented the Estimates for his two departments. There can be no doubt that he has quickly become acquainted with their workings and, in spite of the limited amount of money available to him, which always seems to be a problem, he has proved himself to be an able and competent administrator. Under his guidance, his departments have handled many urgent Government projects, which are a credit to the officers of the departments and to the Minister himself. I congratulate the officers on whom the Minister relies so much for advice.

The Commissioner of Housing, Mr. Campbell, and his deputy, Mr. Redwood, deserve much credit for their practical approach to the requirements of my electorate. Again, Mr. David Longland, Under Secretary of the Department of Works, with his great administrative ability and knowledge, no doubt has been a tower of strength to the Minister. It is very desirable that the two departments—the Housing Commission and the Department of Works—go hand in hand, and much good work has been done by both departments as a result of this arrangement. I thank the Minister and his departmental officers for the many good jobs that have been completed in my electorate.

During the debate on these Estimates, we have heard many Opposition members pushing a barrow uphill, as it were, in an effort

to discredit, or at least disparage, the wonderful work done by the Government in the field of works and housing. One hon. member claimed that the advance made in housing alone was just something that had to happen and that, given the same chance, the Opposition might have equalled, or even improved on, the splendid results that have been achieved. Perhaps they have not heard of the good results that have been achieved in Balonne, so I shall relate a few of them.

Recently I had the privilege of showing the Minister, Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, the wonderful advance that has taken place in the town of Tara, where not one Housing Commission house had been erected during the lengthy period that Labour was in office. True, one rather substandard worker's dwelling had been erected, but not one Commission house.

Mr. Sherrington: That is just rubbish.

Mr. BEARDMORE: No, it is not rubbish. I am stating facts; what I am saying cannot be disproved.

What is the position today, after this Government has been in office for 8½ years? Forty-six Housing Commission houses have been provided and, better still, 39 or 40 of them have been purchased by residents, mainly working people, who now proudly own their own homes—homes of an attractive design, homes in which anyone would be proud to live.

Again, only 17 houses were erected in St. George by Labour Governments during their term of office. Today there are 63 Housing Commission houses in the town and tenders have been called for a further two houses.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. BEARDMORE: Hon. members opposite do not like to hear that, but that is what the record shows. During this Government's occupancy of the Treasury benches, 48 houses have been erected; if fewer had been erected, the requirements would not have been met. This building programme has added to the welfare of the people who live in these towns and, from a civic angle, has underlined a feeling of pride that the knowledge of such progress brings.

Recently, my A.L.P. opponent visited St. George. To show just how hard up he was to find anything on which to condemn the Government, this is what he was reported to have said—

“Mr. Ward said that he was particularly disturbed at the shortage of housing in St. George, and he agreed with Branch members that much of the housing available for rental was of a sub-standard nature, and in quite a number of cases were not fit and proper places for human habitation.”

I wonder that he was so ill advised as to publish such nonsense, especially as the sub-standard dwellings to which he referred—which resemble soap boxes in design, lack

ordinary amenities, and are certainly very unattractive—were provided by a former Labour Government, the so-called champions of the working people.

Housing is not the only worthy achievement for which the Minister's department can claim credit, because public buildings seem to have sprung up like mushrooms over the length and breadth of my electorate.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. BEARDMORE: You do not like it, do you?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order! I ask the hon. member to address his remarks to the Chair. I also ask hon. members on my left to allow the hon. member to make his own speech in his own time and in his own way.

Mr. Thackeray: You mean, to read it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not allow cross-firing in the Chamber when the hon. member is making his speech.

Mr. BEARDMORE: Modern brick hospitals have been erected in Surat and Tara and, among other amenities, new fire stations have been erected at St. George, Tara, Surat, and Meandarra, and plans are in hand for similar buildings at Dirranbandi, Bollon, and Thallon.

Schools have come in for a good deal of attention. In 1957 there were no secondary departments in my electorate, but Dirranbandi, St. George, Surat and Tara all now have splendidly-equipped secondary departments, and similar departments at Goondiwindi and Mitchell also serve my electorate. Seven new State schools have been established where before there were none. What a wonderful achievement in so short a time, and what encouragement for those who choose to live in the Outback!

I have only skimmed the good work for which the Minister's department has been responsible in Balonne. There is much more, of course, equally important, and I want to thank the Minister and his officers once again for the wonderful attention that my electorate has enjoyed and that has helped me in keeping my constituents contented and satisfied. The increased Country Party vote at each election gives emphasis to that claim.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (3.16 p.m.): I want to make some remarks on the housing situation in particular and on the Department of Works in general. First of all, despite the many assertions of the Government regarding its handling of the housing situation, all the evidence today points to the fact that this Government has not in any way equalled the record of former Labour Governments.

The housing problem is as great now as it ever was, despite the assertions of the Treasurer some two years ago that the housing situation was under control. I do not

know what moved the Treasurer to make that statement, because there was no evidence, even at that time, to suggest that the provision of housing was keeping pace with the increasing population of this State.

Efforts have been made to compare this Government's record with that of Australian Labour Party Governments before and up to 1957, but the report of the Commissioner of Housing for this year bears out our contention that we at all times maintained a housing programme that cannot be equalled by the present Government. One has only to look at this year's report to confirm that statement. At no time during its term has this Government equalled the record of Australian Labour Party Governments in the construction of houses in any 12-months period. In 1952-53, 2,314 housing units were constructed by the Australian Labour Party while in government in this State. The nearest the present Government came to that figure was in 1961-62, when 2,006 units were constructed. Since then, over the years 1962-63, 1963-64, and 1964-65, the figure has been gradually decreasing. As I said, in 1961-62, 2,006 units were constructed; last year the figure was 1,744. The Government's record indicates that drop in numbers despite the fact that the population of the State increased over those four years, with a consequent increased demand for housing. The Government has provided fewer houses since 1961-62, and certainly many fewer than in 1952-53, the Australian Labour Party Government's record year in home construction.

Another undesirable aspect of this Government's policy is that very few houses are being built for rental. In reply to questions, the Minister says that houses are built primarily for purchase and that those that are not sold are allocated for rental; but almost all the houses that are built for purchase are sold. I think that the Minister includes in his figures of rental houses the houses that are built for service personnel and industrial establishments. Houses built for allocation in this manner should not be included in the number of houses built for rental.

According to the report of the Queensland Housing Commission, at 30 June, 1957, 44 per cent. of the houses constructed went to home-ownership and 56 per cent. were allocated for rental. At 30 June, 1965, the position was completely reversed. Home-ownership figures totalled 60 per cent., whereas rental homes amounted to only 40 per cent. That is an indication of the extent to which this Government is making a contribution towards housing the workers of the State.

Many young families cannot afford the deposit on a home. Even to purchase through the Queensland Housing Commission, they have to be able to provide approximately £500 deposit. Few workers can do that. Therefore they have to rent homes. If they cannot obtain homes through the

Queensland Housing Commission, they are called upon to pay £6, £7, £8, £9 or £10 a week to private landlords. If the Government is really concerned about housing the ordinary people of the State—

Mr. Graham: It is not.

Mr. MELLOY: As the hon. member for Mackay interjects, it is not. It is more concerned with selling the houses it builds because this represents a profit to the Crown. I have no doubt that the profit to be earned from the sale of houses is more important to the Government than the provision of rental houses.

The report indicates that, apart from the general allocation of houses up to 30 June, 1965, the Government advanced £39,371 to employers. At the same date the amount outstanding by these borrowers amounted to £25,251. This is in addition to the rental houses that the Government has erected for industry in various parts of the State. On page 3 of the report, reference is made to the number of houses allocated to defence personnel. The amounts made available from 1956 to 1965 totalled £3,076,550 in additional loan moneys provided by the Commonwealth and £1,423,800 set aside by the State from loan funds received under the housing agreement.

The report states that houses for defence personnel were provided for persons who would otherwise have been additional applicants for State rental accommodation to the detriment of other applicants. I do not know on what basis the department makes that assumption—and it is only assumption. There is no guarantee that the service personnel who were allocated rental houses would have been applicants for Housing Commission rental houses if they had been civilians. It is far more likely that they would have been in some form of industry, and the Commission cannot tell what their state of affluence would have been. It does not necessarily follow, or reasonably follow, that they would have been applicants for Housing Commission rental homes. In any case, when the Commonwealth Government wants houses provided for its service personnel, it should provide them. The report points out that if houses had not been provided by the Housing Commission, those people would have been applicants as civilians under the ordinary scheme. That must mean also that the money spent on housing service personnel was taken from State funds that would otherwise have been available for the construction of houses for civilians. I do not believe that the Government's policy is making any great contribution towards solving the housing problems in Queensland.

Mr. Ewan: You are referring to Brisbane.

Mr. MELLOY: I am referring to Queensland because all the figures here relate to the State.

Recently, in reply to the hon. member for Kedron in relation to the building of rental homes in certain towns in Queensland where the industry concerned had requested the construction of houses the Minister stated,

"The fact is that, whether or not we placed a responsibility on these employers to guarantee the rents, we would have had the bulk of these employees on our books as rental applicants."

I repeat that that is only an assumption by the Minister. The Government cannot claim credit for alleviating the housing situation if it has to set aside certain houses specifically for certain industries. Apparently these industries make the provision of houses one of the inducements held out to prospective employees. Probably they say, "If you accept a position with our firm in this town, we will provide a house for you." If those companies wish to do that, the responsibility should rest on them to provide the houses. They should not expect the Government to come to the party and provide them.

In his letter the Minister quoted several manufacturing businesses. He said—

"This system has encouraged the decentralisation of industry, e.g., an engineering manufacturing business on Buderim Mountain, another at Dalby."

As a matter of fact those industries were in existence before the advent of this Government, and the employees were able to find suitable accommodation in those centres. If a firm is enabled to put houses at the disposal of its employees in that way, it will throw the points priority system into jeopardy. Had that points system been applied to them, those persons would not have obtained Housing Commission houses. There is ample evidence that the points priority system is not followed religiously, because, in an answer given by the Minister during this session, he admitted that 80 houses were allotted to applicants with only 40 points. When I have attempted to assist people to obtain rental houses from the Commission, I have been told that, unless they hold a court eviction order, they are not in the race. If that is so, how is it that 80 persons with only 40 points were allotted houses during the past 12 months? I should like the Minister to explain that. In addition, people with 60 and 80 points were allotted houses over applicants with 100 points. The figures at the end of the year show that there were 209 applicants with 100 points, 20 with 80 points, and 185 with 60 points—all with higher points than the employees who were allocated houses.

The hon. member for Merthyr gave the number of multi-unit buildings being erected in his electorate and others. The money spent on the construction of those buildings must come from available sources of finance that could be used on the construction of houses for people on lower incomes. People living in multi-unit buildings are rarely on the lower incomes. Such places actually

make no contribution to solving the housing problems of ordinary workers. They do not help them to get out of substandard accommodation and get a roof of their own over their heads.

There are still thousands of people living in undesirable circumstances. Even when two or three families are living in one house, the Housing Commission is inclined to say, "These people have a roof over their heads, so we cannot give them top priority." No thought is given to the squabbles that take place when two and even four families live together, with children sleeping two and three to a bed. Apparently the Commission considers that those are not undesirable circumstances. I contend that they are, and I think that people in such situations rate higher points priorities than they have. I realise that the Government does not have houses to put them into because it has not built houses for rental purposes.

I now wish to refer again to a matter that I raised earlier in the session. Tenants of Housing Commission homes are still being threatened with notices to quit for being in arrears of rent when in fact they are not in arrears at all. I have had brought to my attention two more cases of people in Zillmere receiving threats that notices to quit will be issued if rents are not brought up to date. On investigation I have found that the rents are fully paid. They were paid to the local collecting agent, who followed the practice of remitting them to head office almost daily, so that there is no justification for the issuing of any such threats.

Whether the book-keeping system of the Housing Commission is falling down or whether there are insufficient employees to keep records up to date, I do not know. The fact is that the Commission is not aware of the position of some tenants' accounts when these notices are issued.

I have some other matters to raise, in connection with the Department of Works. There is a tendency on the part of the Government to spend most money on the high schools that are currently being erected to the detriment of those high schools and primary schools that have been built for some time. In my area several schools are urgently in need of certain work but, through lack of finance or labour or for some other reason, it is not being done. The newer schools are provided with every amenity required. Some have their parade areas bituminised and the areas in front well planned and laid out; but no attempt is made to provide similar treatment for existing high schools.

For about five months, attempts have been made to obtain an interview with the Minister for Education to direct his attention to work required at the Banyo High School. It was not till about 10 days ago that he met a deputation on this matter, and even now

we do not know the result of that interview because no assurance has been received that any of the work required will be done.

As my time has almost expired, I shall not embark on any new subjects. Perhaps I will have an opportunity of dealing with them at a later date.

Mr. EWAN (Roma) (3.40 p.m.): In speaking to the Estimates before the Committee, I congratulate the Minister on the splendid way in which he has presented them. Those of us who have known him for many years would expect it of him, because he has proved himself to be a very efficient administrator and, as my friend and colleague on my right says, a thorough gentleman. We sincerely hope that the Minister will serve us for very many years with the efficiency that has characterised the whole of his life.

I also congratulate Mr. Longland and his officers for the helpfulness and courtesy they have shown to all who have been in touch with them. The hon. member for Balonne referred a short while ago to box-like houses. A few years ago a public servant who was getting one of these houses made representations to me and I took certain suggestions to Mr. Longland relative to how it could be improved. I spoke to him for a few minutes and he explained why houses were built to this plan. It was used over the whole of Queensland so that public servants who were transferred on promotion could shift their furniture and floor coverings from place to place with the knowledge that no loss would be occasioned to them. Having heard his explanation of this and many other factors, I agreed with what he said. I took the story back to the person concerned, who said to me, "Well, at least Mr. Longland knows what he is doing." I think that describes Mr. Longland to a T.

I also congratulate Mr. Campbell, the Commissioner of Housing, Mr. Redwood, his Deputy, and the Secretary, Mr. Simpson, on the attention they give and the helpfulness they show to hon. members who make representations to them on behalf of their constituents. It is a pleasure to be associated with them.

I have listened to the speeches made by many hon. members opposite, most of whom are city dwellers and would not have the same practical experience of the difficulties associated with housing in country areas as would hon. members representing country electorates. Clerks of the court act as agents for the Housing Commission in country towns, and when I approach the clerk of the court in Roma and say, "How many applications for houses have you?" he will say, perhaps, "Thirty-five; but wait a minute. I have not heard from three or four, or six or seven, of those, and I send out a circular every three months asking whether they still want a house." When one looks into the number of applications, one finds that, although there might be 35 or

so on the books, some of the applicants are not genuine and some have left the town and have not left a forwarding address. Difficulties of that kind face representatives of the Housing Commission.

The statement by the hon. member for Nudgee proved to me that the former Labour Government was only a Queen Street Government.

Mr. Sherrington: Rubbish!

Mr. EWAN: When one reads the report, one finds that of the total number of houses built, 29·1 per cent. went to country areas and 70·9 per cent. to the metropolitan area. It is very interesting to look in the 1965 Year Book and see the population of Queensland as shown by the 1961 census. It is 1,585,036, composed of 621,550 in the metropolitan area, which absorbs 70·9 per cent. of the Housing Commission houses, and 963,486 in country areas, which absorbs 29·1 per cent. of the Housing Commission houses. Most of the complaints coming from the Opposition side deal with housing shortages, yet they are getting a far greater percentage of Housing Commission homes on a population basis than are the parts of Queensland outside the metropolitan area.

Let us compare the record of this Government since 1957 with that of previous Governments. Frequently, in country towns with which I have been associated I have seen dozens and dozens of vacant houses while people were, figuratively speaking, breaking their necks to obtain homes. I inquired why those homes were not rented and the owners promptly told me that they would not rent their homes at the rentals determined by the Fair Rents Court because in many instances the homes were knocked about by the occupants and it was impossible to keep up maintenance, pay rates, and so on, on the rents determined. And so those homes were for sale and many astute people bought them and subdivided them into flats—of course, in accordance with local authority regulations. They were the conditions obtaining prior to 1957. When we did see a few workers' dwellings in the West, they were shockingly maintained, dried out, in need of painting and no-one seemed to care whether they stood up or fell down.

Now let us consider the change that took place following this Government's occupancy of the Treasury benches in 1957. This Government first of all laid down a policy of home ownership in preference to rental because we believed that it was the inalienable right of every person to own a home, and that everyone who did own one would be a better citizen for having a home he could call his very own. How well that policy panned out will be seen by a reference to page 2 of this year's annual report of the Queensland Housing Commission. I think anything in a report that is good is

worth recording in "Hansard" so that people who have not access to the report might become aware of it. The report reads—

"The relationship of home ownership to rental at the close of each of the last nine years is:—

—	Home Ownership	Rental
	Per cent.	Per cent.
At 30th June, 1957 ..	44	56
At 30th June, 1958 ..	48·3	51·7
At 30th June, 1959 ..	51·3	48·7
At 30th June, 1960 ..	54	46
At 30th June, 1961 ..	56	44
At 30th June, 1962 ..	57·6	42·4
At 30th June, 1963 ..	58·5	41·5
At 30th June, 1964 ..	59·4	40·6
At 30th June, 1965 ..	60	40

That shows how well the policy has worked out and how the people of this State appreciate it. On many occasions it has given me great pleasure to advise young couples who have come to me seeking Housing Commission rental homes to try to "rake up" the deposit to buy a home rather than get a rental home.

Mr. Sherrington interjected.

Mr. EWAN: It is about 10 per cent.

Mr. Sherrington: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. EWAN: I have met many young men and women in the country who are becoming engaged. They come to me and say, "We hope to get married in 12 or 18 months' time. We should like you to help us get a home." I say, "First, you must save the deposit." Until recently it was £250. Today it is no more than £300 for a £3,000 home.

In many instances, with a little bit of saving these people have been able to lodge deposits, and as a result have had homes to go into when they married. Many of them have invited me to have a meal with them so that they could show me with pride the homes that between us we were able to get for them. Nobody can tell me that they are not much better citizens than those who are merely renting houses.

The hon. member for Balonne made a very fine, vigorous speech. He compared housing in country areas with that in the metropolitan area. I have already indicated the percentage of houses provided in the city compared with that in the country on a pro-rata population basis.

Let us consider Labour's infamous record in country areas, which bears out my contention that for many years it proved itself to be purely a Queen Street Government. I instance the town of Roma. The Queensland Housing Commission was formed in 1945. From that year to 30 June, 1957—a period of 12 years—only 15 Housing Commission homes were completed in the town of Roma.

Mr. Sherrington: Who was the member?

Mr. EWAN: Roma had a Labour member for 40 years before I took over. I was elected in 1950 but I was tossed out on my shell pink car in 1953. However, the people realised what a mistake they had made and three years later re-elected me with a record majority.

So that the comparison will not be lost sight of, I point out that from 1 July, 1957, when this Government took office, to 30 June, 1965—a period of eight years—this Country-Liberal Government completed no fewer than 144 houses in Roma, and there are another nine under construction. To emphasise it, I point out that 15 homes were built by the Labour Government in 12 years and 144 homes were built by the Country-Liberal Government in eight years, with another nine under construction. That bears out the statement of the hon. member for Balonne. The Labour Government tried to look after the metropolitan area, but it forgot all about the country areas.

I can remember campaigning in the Gregory electorate for the hon. member who presently represents that electorate. At that time the Leader of the Opposition was out of Parliament, just as I was. As I travelled around I could not see any Housing Commission houses. I spoke at a place called Muttaborra, where people were crying out for houses. A few weeks after Mr. Rae was elected this Government approved the construction of two houses at Muttaborra. That is how it has been all over the State. Those who travel outside the metropolitan area see improvements and development in housing and public buildings all over the State.

Without being parochial, let me give the history as it applies to my own electorate. It is only one place where there has been a great deal of improvement. Hon. members opposite should not get it into their heads that improvement is taking place only in electorates represented by Government members; it is taking place in Opposition-held electorates, although in many instances the members representing them have not even asked for the improvement. I refer, for instance, to the tremendous improvement in railway accommodation. I have already mentioned the construction of Housing Commission houses in Roma. In addition, in the last seven years we have had erected a beautiful new high school and a residence for the principal. In Labour's day residences were never built for principals. When a principal was transferred he had to rent or buy a home. If he was transferred again he probably lost money when he sold his home.

Page 3 of the annual report of the Department of Works says—

“Fifty-three (53) additional residences were constructed at a cost of £247,564 in the Programme of provision of accommodation for officers of the Public Service serving in country areas.

“The standard residence ‘E’—that is the one Mr. Longland told me about—

“has been well accepted with its provision of a floor area of 1,168 sq. ft. plus laundry and car accommodation under together with the complete fencing of the property. The residence provides spacious living area of three bedrooms, lounge-dining room, large kitchen, a well equipped bathroom and separate toilet. Each residence is supplied with an electric, gas or slow combustion stove and built-in cupboards in kitchen. The residences are of timber construction and are generally suitable for all climatic conditions experienced in this State.”

That is so, and I congratulate the department on the design. We have had residences erected, and others are being erected, throughout the country areas of the State. At Roma two beautiful wings have been added to the primary school and repairs and additions have been effected to the infants' school. Additions and repairs have been carried out to the hospital. Over £20,000 was spent to restore the magnificent old court house building at Roma. Every person who visits Roma comments on its aesthetic beauty.

Turning now to residences provided for public servants, when the Hon. V. C. Gair was Premier I pleaded with him while he was on a goodwill tour of the area for a house for the magistrate. I even showed him a house which I thought was suitable. Did we get it? I will tell hon. members what we have now: we have a residence for the magistrate, one for the clerk of the court, six new police residences, one for the manager of the S.G.I.O. (Q.), three residences for Lands Department officers, one for the manager of the Agricultural Bank, one for the regional director of education and four for officers of the Department of Primary Industries. We have also under construction a £50,000 Lands Office and Primary Industries Department building which will house Government officers at Roma. The old building was falling down over their heads; it was a disgrace. A few years ago a new State Insurance building was completed at a cost of approximately £100,000. We also have a new fire station.

I turn now to Injune, where we have a new hospital costing £50,000 and a new court house. I remember how I pleaded with the responsible Minister between 1950 and 1952 to do something about the police station. The sergeant of police had a room 8 ft. by 10 ft. on the veranda. If he had to take a “drunk” before the C.P.S., the C.P.S. sat at his table and the sergeant stood in the doorway behind the prisoner. That happened in temperatures of up to 105 and 106 degrees. It was a shocking state of affairs. However, we have rectified all that. We have a new high-school secondary department at Injune and additions to the primary school costing about £59,000. We have under construction teachers' units providing accommodation for four.

At Wallumbilla we have a new high-school secondary department and additions to the primary school which cost about £20,000. At Dulacca we have a new police station and residence, and a new school costing about £20,000. At Miles we have had repairs and additions to the hospital and new nurses' quarters, which I had the privilege to open, costing £30,000. We also have a residence for the hospital secretary. There have also been additions to the high school and the primary school, with a new residence for the head teacher. There have been additions to the court house; residences have been built for the clerk of the court, the police, and other Government officials, and a new fire station has been constructed.

At Wandoan a new secondary and primary school costing about £50,000—which the Minister for Education opened about two years ago—has been constructed. We have units for teachers and residences for Government officials, and a new police station.

At Taroom we have a new hospital which cost £50,000, a new secondary department, and additions to the primary school costing £39,000, residential units for the teaching staff, and a new fire station.

Those are just a few of the projects brought about under this Government's administration. I am proud as I travel through my electorate and through other country electorates represented by members of the Government as well as Opposition members. It brings a glow to my heart to know that I am associated with a Government which has brought about such a tremendous transformation in eight years in office. It has been such a transformation that any thinking person in Queensland can do nothing but express the hope, desire, and wish that the electors will ensure that this Government retains its position on the Treasury benches for many years to come to continue the splendid work it has been carrying out during its eight years of office.

Let me say once again, as I have said three times already, that previous Labour Governments were known as Queen Street Governments; and rightly so. I have a lot of regard for the hon. member for Townsville North, who the hon. member for Townsville South said had some affiliation with the Communists. I do not think that would be right.

Mr. Davies: Then why did you say it?

Mr. EWAN: Because I do not think it is right.

Mr. Davies: Then why did you have to bring it up?

Mr. EWAN: The hon. member for Maryborough is not my keeper. I am not responsible to him for everything I say. The hon. member for Townsville North spoke quite rationally, up to a point, about the difficulties

associated with housing what he termed our "senior citizens". Perhaps his finer feelings prevented him from calling them "pensioners".

Mr. Bromley: They prefer to be called "senior citizens".

Mr. EWAN: The hon. member for Townsville North called them "pensioners" when clarifying his statement. He claimed that neither the Commonwealth Government nor this Government accepted its responsibility in this regard. That statement is completely incorrect. I say to these city people who have no knowledge of the sympathy, good-fellowship, and desire to help that permeate the atmosphere in country areas, "Why don't you do as we have done in most western areas? You should set about collecting a few pounds and start a homes for the aged scheme." We have a scheme in Roma called the Aged Westerners' Scheme. There is also one in Mitchell and another in St. George.

Mr. Coburn: They are everywhere.

Mr. EWAN: Yes, they are everywhere. We collected roughly £3,000, which was subsidised £2 for £1 by the Commonwealth Government. That gave us in the vicinity of £10,000. We are in the process of registering letters patent to become a body corporate authorised to accept the land that the local town council is prepared to vest in us to provide homes for our senior citizens. It is our intention to build five attractive units at £2,000 each.

Is that the right approach, or is the criticism levelled at this Government and the Commonwealth Government, which is prepared to give us £2 for every £1 to carry out this laudable proposal, the right approach? When these units are built, this Government will spend £250 a unit on furniture. Is this Government carrying out its responsibility? Is the Commonwealth Government carrying out its responsibility? Through you, Mr. Gaven, I say to the hon. member for Townsville North, "Go back to Townsville, get amongst your sympathetic followers and launch a scheme such as the one we have in Roma, and many of your difficulties will be overcome." We cannot get away from the fact that every £1 that this or any other Government spends in an electorate has to be collected by way of taxation or loan and has to be repaid. It is taken out of one pocket and put into another.

Mr. R. JONES (Cairns) (4.5 p.m.): Of the total of the moneys at the disposal of the Minister for Housing, I think it is fair to criticise the proportion spent in Cairns, particularly after listening to the hon. member for Roma. It seems to me that it must be a case of spoils to the victor. As I go through my figures of the housing that has been made available in Cairns, I feel that comparisons, though often odious, are

necessary here. First let me refute the argument of the hon. member for Merthyr. In rambling round the State trying to organise three-cornered contests he must have confused Cairns with some other area. Only five homes were constructed in Cairns during 1964-65, and one was already under construction in June, 1964. In 1963 four were built.

I cannot accuse the Minister of ignoring my representations; as recently as last week—on 10 November—he said that tenders would be called for the construction of five homes in Cairns in the very near future. However, I must condemn him for not having enough homes built to meet the demand in Cairns. I realise that he has the problem of having to operate within the bounds of the finance allocated to his department by an unsympathetic Government, but surely the dire need for housing in Cairns is reflected in the figures.

The 92 applications for homes in Cairns could reflect the feeling of frustration of those waiting for housing. They become disillusioned and say, "What's the use of applying? It is hopeless to apply for a home." Nevertheless, the figures show that there are 92 applicants for homes although only 29 sites have been set aside in Cairns. In spite of that, only five tenders are to be called. I trust that the Minister will realise the plight of those waiting for homes in Cairns, and that those five homes will be only the beginning of building operations, that shortly there will be an increase in the construction of homes particularly for newly-weds and those with young families.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: I might mention that 37 are being dealt with at the moment, apart from those five.

Mr. R. JONES: In the Minister's letter of 10 November that was not stated. This is the first time that I have heard 37 mentioned. The file refers to 29 home sites available and seven other sites acquired for filling. The correspondence makes no reference to 37 homes in Cairns. However, if that figure is correct, it will bring the number of houses allocated to Cairns more into line with those made available in other centres. Cairns is the seventh city of Queensland and the figure of 37 is much more in keeping with the number of homes required there, for example, compared with Brisbane. I feel that meeting the demand for housing in Cairns would go a long way towards equalising the State's obligations in all centres.

However, this represents only one-third of the applications on hand, and I believe that approvals should be based on equity and that the number of applications should not remain static. There is no doubt that the population of Cairns is increasing and, consequently, the demand for houses will increase. If 37 houses are made available, people who are unsuccessfully looking for houses to rent will have a better chance of getting accommodation.

I point out, too, that the ordinary home-seeker in Cairns has difficulty in purchasing a house. The present maximum loan of £3,500 is not sufficient. With capitalisation of £250 a unit, Housing Commission charges, supervision fees, etc., the amount soon becomes £4,000, or about £400 a square. Land costs anything from £500 to £1,000 a block, and a young couple will begin to cut down on internal painting, battening, fencing and drainage in an endeavour to reduce the cost. Even when they have done this, they will still need a deposit of £600 to £800 before they can even consider building or buying a house in Cairns. This is too much for a young couple just beginning married life, and ordinary wage-earners are priced out of the field of home ownership. It should be a basic requirement of our society that a young couple begin a new life in a new home.

The hon. member for Cook, who represents an electorate adjoining Cairns, spoke of difficulty and the severe shortage of homes for people who transfer to Cairns from his electorate, and during the debate stated that the housing shortage in Cairns was serious. Although my interjection was not acknowledged at the time, I told him that Cairns was well represented and that he should look after the housing needs of his electorate because I was quite capable of looking after those in mine.

The provision of new houses for the Deputy Public Curator and three other public servants in Cairns is commendable. Housing for public servants, particularly members of Police Force, has been over-looked for a long time. Instead of assisting younger public servants and police officers in the lower wage brackets, Government departments have always allocated housing to members of the Police Force and public servants in higher salary brackets. If the Government were sincere in its efforts to improve accommodation for public servants, more houses would be made available for them, particularly the younger ones.

The Cairns electorate is appreciative of the extensive alterations and improvements that have been made to public buildings in Cairns. A new double-storey science school at the Cairns High School has been provided with Commonwealth funds.

I notice also that the weather-proofed access and utility recreation area between the Cairns High School buildings is being put to good use. It is rather substantial and is proving its worth to the students during rainy periods.

Within the technical college area the new accommodation and extensions to the plumbing shops are both warranted and overdue. The completely new two-storeyed unit estimated to cost £105,000 will fill a long-felt need for apprenticeship training for motor mechanics in the Cairns district. I understand a new administrative block for the new principal will be incorporated. This pinpoints an outstanding anomaly in the

recently applauded separation of the technical college from the high school. I believe that they should be completely separated, thus eliminating double services, which the school and college are inconveniently sharing. It would also simplify organisational arrangements.

The most wanted addition at this centre is highlighted and accentuated by the barn-like structure that presently houses the manual training section. A completely new manual training section comprising six rooms should be planned as an extension to the northern end of the existing high school building. There should be four rooms on the top floor with staff accommodation, and two rooms on the ground floor. This would do away with this barnlike building and link the second unit across that area with the main buildings. It would also have the effect of eliminating the "temporary" home science rooms that have become permanent features, as well as making provision for such facilities as a new library and art room. These facilities would then be conveniently situated and readily accessible to both the school and the college.

While dealing with high schools, I want to draw the Committee's attention to a problem confronting the Trinity Bay High School. These buildings were completed comparatively recently and, although of modern design, they constitute separate units, which present a hazard to most of the children who are required to move between the home science wing and the commercial wing. Many pupils are required to move between rooms in the course of a day. The existing stairways have no cover and in tropical downpours the children's clothes become wet and they have to remain in their wet clothing for the remainder of the day. I believe that the Estimates should provide for the building of a protective covering over the stairways. The lack of it causes much concern to parents and teachers as well as discomfort to students.

Another matter on which I touched during the Budget debate was the need to provide in Cairns a modern State Government administrative block and offices to accommodate the various departments centrally. This is very necessary and I again stress it. Whether the site chosen is on land adjacent to the School of Arts or opposite the Opportunity School is of no consequence. Plans and specifications should, I believe, be proceeded with as an urgent measure.

The buildings presently housing State departments in Cairns are too dispersed, inadequate, uncomfortable and climatically unsuited for the intensified activities that have developed since their erection. The lack of space, light and air, and the insufficiency of office area to cope with modern requirements—far in excess of the purpose originally intended—should be apparent even to the most casual observer. The accommodation must be very unpleasant for its occupants.

In some instances, I should say, it would be untenable. It is not what one expects as a working environment in the tropics in 1965.

All this dispersed accommodation should be superseded by one centrally located administration block on the standard of the newly completed C.R.E.B. building, which would not only enhance our city but be a worthy asset to the Queensland Government. It would be more conducive to efficiency and facilitate departmental activities in the far northern area of the State, as all transactions on one matter could be conducted under one roof. When considering such a block, some thought should be given also to the provision of furniture and office equipment of modern design and efficiency.

As I said in my speech on the Estimates of the Department of Justice, air-conditioning in North Queensland is no longer a luxury. It is being provided at such places as the Commonwealth offices and the out-patients' department at the Cairns Base Hospital.

At the present time the Department of Primary Industries is situated in Grafton Street. The Department of the Valuer-General is tucked away in Howard Smith's building. The Department of Lands is poked in behind the State Government Insurance Office. The Forestry Department is poked in behind the Public Curator Office. The Department of Harbours and Marine, the Inspector of Machinery and the Industrial Inspector are in a poky building at the bottom end of Abbott Street. If we went back into the history of Cairns we should probably find that that building was there at the time of federation. The State Government Insurance Office, the Public Curator Office and the Adult Education Office are all very cramped. The office of the Department of Health, which is responsible for the control of hook-worm in the area, is poked in behind the A.M.P.

A centrally situated office block in Cairns would better serve the requirements of the various Government offices dispersed around Cairns. At the present time it is very inconvenient for people looking for the various State offices.

I again draw attention to the need for a new police station in Cairns. Earlier in this speech, I pointed out that police housing accommodation should receive a higher priority. A new police department block should be established at the corner of The Esplanade and Shields Street. I draw attention to the old residences behind the old court house. If a lady walked in stiletto-heel shoes in them the floor-boards would be pierced. The stipendiary magistrate and one sub-inspector are in old, out-dated accommodation, and I understand that the other sub-inspector is living in a rented home.

I make the particular appeal that the Department of Education discontinue the use of the temporary accommodation at the

West Cairns State School. The use of this accommodation was a retrograde step. I make this appeal on behalf of the parents and citizens' association, and the children who are forced to play in the open during tropical downpours.

With the expected growth of industry and population in Cairns in the next few years, I believe that a new school will soon be required in the Bungalow area, and I suggest that Estimates should be prepared in anticipation of the requirements of this area.

I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to the need for a new maternity block and ward accommodation in Cairns. I understand that Gatton St. has been resumed. This work must be proceeded with, but we must look to the future for new hospital accommodation for the growing city. We cannot continue to resume streets; we must look north-eastward to the sea for reclamation to be carried out, or else build our hospitals in a different area—away from the existing Cairns Base Hospital. I do not profess to be an expert in this field but I think that the future development of the Cairns Base Hospital should be planned without continuing the trend to resume cross streets.

I should like also to compliment the officers, and those in the workshops, of the Public Works Department in Cairns for they are very conscientious and obliging. In the short time I have been a member of this Assembly, I have found that they have always attended carefully to any inquiry or representation I have made. It is one of the most efficient departments in the State. The Cairns people were loud in their praise of the fittings in the new science block in the high school. All of them, from door frames to desks, were made in the department's workshop. The tradesmen and the day-labour force employed by the department in Cairns have always been most efficient. I believe that the Trinity Bay High School was completed by day labour. It was a very worthy contribution and it justified the claims of the advocates of day labour.

(Time expired.)

Mr. CAREY (Albert) (4.29 p.m.): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat said in his opening remarks he felt forced to condemn the Minister for Works and Housing. I inform him that, like the wallflower after the ladies' choice at a dance, he will be on his own, because 90 per cent. of hon. members in this Chamber realise that the Minister is one of the fairest and most capable Ministers, bearing in mind his limited experience in Cabinet.

I was moved to join this debate because I wanted to congratulate the Minister on the excellent work he is doing.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CAREY: All members of all parties realise that fact and are prepared to join with me in saying, "Mr. Minister, you are doing an excellent job." His careful husbandry of the resources available in his two departments is well recognised by the majority of us. There are odd people who prefer to criticise all and sundry. That is their life. They like to criticise. But every now and again each one of us with any heart, soul, or true Australian sportsmanship recognises the qualities of the men we have running the affairs of this State. The Minister has done more for Queensland than most people have a right to expect of him. With the limited amount of finance available in his two departments, he does an excellent job.

I should like to see more houses built in my area. During the Budget debate I made it clear to the Minister that I would like to see a block of 10, 15, or 20 Housing Commission homes built in my area for those who are keenly desirous of obtaining them.

Mr. Sherrington: Where, on the Isle of Capri?

Mr. CAREY: There is nothing too good for my electors, and if the Minister decides to take over an area on the Isle of Capri for Housing Commission homes I will welcome it, particularly if he allows those people to occupy them on the time-payment-deposit basis.

An Opposition Member: We will all join together now and sing, "For he's a jolly good fellow."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Hon. members on both sides of the Chamber are far too facetious in their interjections. I am interested in the speech of the hon. member for Albert, and I ask hon. members to hear him in silence.

Mr. CAREY: I thank you, Mr. Hooper, for your protection. But I am quite happy to listen to the interjections from the Opposition because they are not of much use.

I congratulate the Under Secretary of the Department of Works, Mr. Dave Longland. During the 5½ years that I have been a member of this Assembly I have had no cause to complain about what Mr. Longland has done for me. Admittedly he has not done everything I wanted. If that were so, I would consider I was a favoured member. He is an excellent officer who is doing a wonderful job of work. In addition, he is an excellent citizen. Perhaps, Mr. Hooper, I am getting away from the Estimates, but I am "estimating" the qualities of this very distinguished gentleman. He does a very good job of citizenship and is interested in all matters that are for the betterment of the State.

Mr. Longland's staff must also be commended for the service they give to the State. I mention particularly Mr. Hunt, who is

the supervising officer of the Department of Works on the Gold Coast, including the electorate of Albert. There are 39 Department of Works tradesmen and assistant tradesmen in my area. I should like to see 70 or 100 of them there because that would mean that more work was being carried out in my area. I am here to represent Albert and the people of Albert, and I intend to do my best while I am in Parliament. I compliment those workmen on the wonderful job they are doing in the construction of public buildings on the Gold Coast and in the Albert electorate. I am sure that Opposition members would have no reason to criticise their workmanship.

I want to give my thanks to Mr. Campbell, the Commissioner of Housing, because he also is doing all that he can for my area. He is not, of course, doing quite as much as I should like him to do. I should like to see at least another 20 houses built, and I know he will follow the suggestion I made during the budget debate to take over immediately the 50 acres now known as Roryville, previously known as Forestry Reserve 727, and develop it to provide sites for homes for the workmen coming to my area to undertake the very important job of building on the Gold Coast.

I also wish to place on record my thanks to the secretary of the Queensland Housing Commission, Mr. Simpson, who has been very helpful in any requests I have put to him. During the Budget debate I suggested that time-payment terms be made available to young married couples who desire to purchase Housing Commission homes. I thank the Commissioner for bringing to my notice the next day the fact that the Housing Commission will give to any young person renting a Housing Commission home the right to purchase it on payment of a deposit of £25. This is something the Government has done for the working people.

Mr. Sherrington: They have to get into the house first.

Mr. CAREY: It is not all that may be desired. Nevertheless, if a person occupying a rental house makes the effort to save £25, he can pay it as a deposit on the house and become the purchaser. The Government is to be commended for this, because it is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Sherrington: That doesn't help the bloke who hasn't got a home.

Mr. CAREY: Hon. members opposite are loud in their condemnation of many things. Indeed, it is their business, and their right, to condemn things they think are not correct. However, let us stick to things that are truly correct. Hon. members opposite have endeavoured from time to time to condemn the construction of public buildings such as schools and hospitals.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. CAREY: So far as I am concerned, the Architectural and Construction and Maintenance Branches of the Department of Works as it is constituted today are doing a wonderful job. All hon. members know perfectly well that when we went to school we worked in dingy and dark schoolrooms. The colours were so drab it was difficult to see, and, in fact, I think working in dull and dismal conditions in schoolrooms was responsible for my wearing glasses today. With pastel shades of paint and excellent lighting, conditions in schools are so good today that in the future optometrists will not be receiving such profitable returns. The excellent conditions provided at schools by the Government are a great boon to parents and pupils alike.

Mr. Chinchin: And school teachers.

Mr. CAREY: That is so. Teachers probably receive as much benefit from these improved conditions as the pupils do, and certainly more than parents do. The equipment provided by the Department of Works—desks, seats, and so on—is very much better than it was when I went to school.

I ask hon. members opposite, too, to cast their minds back to the conditions in this Chamber when the Government took office and before Hon. D. E. Nicholson was elected Speaker of this Assembly. We sat on hard, uncomfortable benches placed round the walls. Today there are beautifully soft, padded cushions behind desks at which we can work while debates are in progress. How different it is from the drab, uninteresting Chamber of 1957 when hon. members opposite were in office.

As hon. members know, the Government has established canteens in all high-school buildings and provided equipment for them. This is something that hon. members opposite would like to have thought of.

Mr. Sherrington: Be truthful about this. The parents and citizens have to equip the schools.

Mr. CAREY: No. There is no doubt that the conditions at Queensland high schools are very much better than they were when hon. members opposite were attending school.

The Minister said in introducing his Estimates that the Government has spent £61,341,034 on public buildings in the eight years it has been in office. What a record! But this record will be broken because the Government follows progressive policies, and the Minister and his Cabinet colleagues will pour more and more money into projects designed to meet the requirements of the people. I draw the attention of hon. members to the fact—this may shock some hon. members opposite—that in the last eight years the Department of Works has spent £642,466 in the Albert electorate.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CAREY: I shall ignore hon. members opposite, because I want recorded in "Hansard" where this money has been spent. The Musgrave Hill school, which I had the honour of opening 12 months ago—

Mr. Sherrington: You have your name on it, haven't you?

Mr. CAREY: Yes. I am pleased to say that it is the first building on which my name has appeared. It cost £13,200. The new school at Benowa cost £16,000. Additions to the Southport primary school, at which I was educated—the teachers did a good job, I might say—cost £97,632. Additions to the Labrador school, plus a residence and new toilet blocks, cost £55,626, and at the State high school—I ask hon. members to note this particularly—£215,348 has been spent. At the present time a science block to the value of £55,000 is in the course of erection.

Mr. Sherrington: Provided by the Commonwealth.

Mr. CAREY: That does not matter. Many trade union members are getting good work from the £55,000, no matter where it comes from, and I know the hon. member commends the department for it.

Canungra, which serves both the South Coast area and the Albert electorate, has received a new school costing £28,000. We have a new maternity wing on the Southport Hospital, for which I give full credit to the Labour Government. They built the first maternity hospital but we have continued to supply the requirements of the people in the area. The new maternity wing, with furniture, will cost £30,000.

A new court house and single policemen's quarters valued £100,000 are in the course of construction. A maternal and child welfare clinic, about which I received information from the Minister about two weeks ago will be built during this financial year at an estimated cost of £30,000. The Department of Health is building a new wing onto the general hospital at a contract price of roughly £227,000.

Those are some of the undertakings going on in my electorate, and anyone would be justly proud of them.

Mr. Ramsden: Especially when you have done so much to get them.

Mr. CAREY: Yes. I worked overtime to convince the various Ministers of the necessity for these amenities. Of course, they recognise the importance of the Gold Coast and, in particular, the importance of the electorate of Albert, and they have seen fit to give these buildings to us. They realise that people are flocking to our coast. They are leaving the North and the West and are coming to the Gold Coast, and this makes it necessary for the Minister for Works and Housing to recognise the importance of the area.

Having all this money invested in valuable buildings—I should say approximately £1,000,000 worth and perhaps more—

Mr. Bromley: Is the hon. member for South Coast on your side?

Mr. CAREY: Yes, he is on my side all the way—and I am on his side.

All these valuable investments make it necessary for the Department of Works to keep State buildings in good repair and I give full credit for the work being done by the supervisors.

Mr. Davies: In view of all this, can you explain why the Liberals, including the hon. member for Merthyr, want to toss you out of Parliament?

Mr. CAREY: I am quite certain that Liberal members will be very disappointed if anybody succeeds in tossing me out of Parliament. I have many friends in the Liberal Party and, of course, all in the Country Party are my friends, and we will be retaining the seat.

Since so much money has been invested in buildings on the Gold Coast, I must recommend to the Minister and the Under Secretary of the Department of Works that they appoint a qualified pest exterminator to the area. There are white ants and termites in some of the buildings at the Southport primary school. I think it is very necessary that the State should be divided into zones and that pest exterminators be appointed to each zone to keep the white ants and termites out of public buildings.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask hon. members on my left to cease their disorderly injections.

Mr. CAREY: With your permission, Mr. Hooper, I should like to answer the interjection about what I propose to do with the termites that are trying to undermine the Country Party. There are white ants and termites in every walk of life, but I assure hon. members opposite that the Country Party has been built on solid and sound foundations. We have solid concrete stumps, so there will be no white-anting in that direction. Because of its excellent representation of the areas it represents the Country Party will retain superiority of numbers in this Chamber.

I ask the Minister to recommend the appointment of a trained pest exterminator who knows his job to carry out the necessary work in, say, the Beaudesert, South Coast and Albert areas.

Repair and maintenance work on buildings in coastal areas is always very heavy. Although I have no criticism of the work that has been done by the Department of Works, I suggest particular attention be paid to one facet of it. The guttering of houses on the coast does not last very

long. Painting deteriorates very quickly when it is subjected to salt spray. Roofs need painting more frequently on the coast than inland. I give the departmental officers full credit for doing a good job, but from time to time I receive requests for repairs to a home or building which is the department's responsibility. That should not be necessary. The inspector appointed to deal with termites and white ants could carry out the necessary supervision of public buildings and houses, and report to the Minister when work was required.

If we had no more complaints to make about Ministers and their departments than we have to make about the Minister for Works and Housing and the departments under his control we would be a very happy State. I am confident that we will continue to get bigger and better development in my area. However, I again ask the Minister to see the Housing Commission always keeps its eye on the Albert electorate to ensure that the workers have homes.

(Time expired.)

Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) (4.54 p.m.): After listening to the back-scratching speeches of the hon. members for Albert and Roma, one wonders whether this Committee is joining in a hallelujah chorus. If those hon. members think we are going to continue to pat the Minister on the back for all he has done in Country Party electorates they are making a big mistake. I am not going to be hesitant about criticising the Minister and his department, even though he may have a lot of good supporters on the Government side. It is all very well for hon. members opposite to do so much back-scratching. Afterwards they can say, "I made a nice speech for you on your Estimates. Having given you all those congratulations, I expect you will do something for my electorate." If one looks through the Housing Commission report, it is evident that that policy has been followed. The Minister has been very careful to look after the interests of his own party members. There is no doubt about that and, later on, I will try to show the extent to which it has been done during this Government's term of office.

It is all eyewash for a Minister, or members of the Government, to say that most of the things that hon. members opposite referred to have happened since the advent of the Nicklin Government. Queensland's housing policy was laid down many years before the Nicklin Government came to office. The Labour Party laid down the policy relative to home ownership, and over the years when we controlled the Treasury benches we made a better job than the present Government has of providing home ownership for those who desired it. What is more, we in the Opposition are fairer than Government members in our criticism of Government policy. We know what is

required for the welfare of the State and for its future development. We would appreciate the activities of the Government if hon. members opposite were fairer in their approach to the problems facing Queensland, especially in the field of housing, as it concerns not only Brisbane or Country Party electorates but the State as a whole. That is how the Government should approach these matters. It should not discriminate between electors because an electorate is not held by the Country Party. The hon. member for Albert falls far short of the mark in claiming credit, as he has, for all that has happened in the Albert electorate since this Government took over the Treasury benches. If my memory serves me correctly, most of the happenings in the Albert electorate were as a result of the representation by the hon. member for South Coast, Mr. Gaven. He was the man who encouraged the Government to undertake what has been done in that area. The hon. member for Albert did a little bit of back-scratching of the Minister for doing a good job, but that does not fit in with my thinking.

I admit that the present Government has spent considerably more money in its seven years of office than the Labour Government did. However, we must remember that this Government had the money to spend; there has been a definite change in Government financing in the last seven years. This Government has received much more money from the Commonwealth Government for housing allocation; it has also received much more money from the Commonwealth Government in grants for general works programme spending.

What would we expect the Government to do? There is a need for more school buildings, hospitals and homes, and the Government has a responsibility in these matters. It cannot claim credit for doing these things, because it is responsible for them. Throughout Australia every Government, irrespective of its political outlook, has done exactly what the Queensland Government has done. Every Government has spent more money on hospitals and schools. The need was there—it was a necessity—and it is useless for this Government to say, "Look at what we have done." It has done no more and no less than it should have. In many cases it has not done as much as it should have, and I will endeavour to show by the Minister's figures just how he has discriminated between electorates.

I have here a publication issued by Thomas Nationwide Transport showing the population of towns and districts throughout Queensland. I have taken from page 7 of the Minister's report the number of homes built in Brisbane and the various country

towns. The following are the statistics relative to Housing Commission homes completed and under construction as at June, 1965—

District	Population	No. of Houses	Houses under construction
Brisbane	737,000	22,375	933
Cairns	80,000	493	70
Townsville .. .	93,000	1,325	41
Rockhampton ..	68,000	1,126	117
Maryborough ..	92,000	337	16
Toowoomba .. .	90,000	1,340	104
Toowoomba including Roma ..	..	1,484	120

I do not think that Mackay is any less important than Maryborough, Townsville, or Cairns, and Mackay's housing problems should not have been neglected. It is a large city with many important industries. Development has been encouraged. Housing is part and parcel of a developmental programme. Yet the Mackay district, which includes Proserpine, Sarina, and Mirani, with a population of 57,000, has only 257 Housing Commission homes, and only two under construction.

I have complained bitterly for years about the lack of attention that has been given to housing in Mackay. The Minister claims that North Mackay is part of Mackay. More homes have been built in Whitsunday than in Mackay. I do not agree that North Mackay is Mackay. Statistics show that the Pioneer division is not included in the City of Mackay. According to the Minister's figures, homes are under construction in 75 to 80 per cent. of the cities in Queensland. Yet in Mackay not one home is being built, and not one home has been built there for some years. Not one penny of Housing Commission money was spent in Mackay until in recent months the Commission called for tenders for repairs to and maintenance of a number of Mackay homes which were falling down around the ears of the occupants. The list for one house has 70 repair items necessary to bring it up to a reasonable living standard. The housing needs of the Mackay people have been completely ignored.

I am not alone in this complaint. Many articles have been published in "The Daily Mercury", which is the voice of the Mackay people. In November last year there was an article complaining about the housing shortage. In another, the Pioneer Shire Council complained about the housing shortage. The Mackay City Council also complained about the housing shortage. Almost everybody in Mackay who has a sense of responsibility has complained about the neglect of Mackay by the Minister and the Commissioner.

The fact is that there is a shortage of homes in Mackay. The Minister will recall that when I raised this matter some time ago he sought information from the clerk of the court at Mackay and made a Press statement that there was no shortage, simply because there was a lack of applications.

The point is that it is virtually impossible to get a home in Mackay, so what is the use of applying to the Housing Commission for one? Applications have been lying in the office of the clerk of the court for years simply because the Minister and the Commissioner refuse to build homes in Mackay. Admittedly some have been built in North Mackay.

I am told that there is no land available in Mackay. Has the Commission made any effort to obtain any? Why does the Government retain two areas of land that could be used for the erection of houses? The Railway Department has held land at Paget Junction for years, and obviously it has no intention of using it. A large area of land is held by the hospital board and in all probability, because of the policy of the Government, it will never be used for hospital purposes. I endeavoured to have it made available to the Housing Commission. Ample land is available in Mackay if the Minister can gain the co-operation of other members of the Cabinet.

What is the effect of the lack of housing in Mackay? Time and time again people have come to Mackay with the intention of residing there. Work has been available for them, but because they cannot get houses they return to the South. Another effect of the shortage is that rents have risen to astronomical heights. In Mackay today people are paying rents that are far too high simply because there is a shortage of houses, and the whole situation has been aggravated by the lack of interest on the part of the Government. The back-scratching by hon. members opposite does not go down with me.

If the people of Mackay are to share in the money made available through the Housing Commission, land should be found for the construction of houses in the electorate of Mackay. There are many who, for numerous reasons, will not live on the north side of Mackay in the Pioneer Shire. Those who have the means to build will build in the city, as that is where they wish to live. I know that all houses built in North Mackay have been occupied and, because of the present shortage, none in that area are now vacant. However, the position is so acute that if 1,000 houses were built in North Mackay they would be occupied. I cannot for the life of me see why all the available money should be spent in the electorate of Whitsunday whilst Mackay is neglected.

Let me now deal with one other matter that concerns housing. Some time ago I was approached by Mrs. Corney, of Mackay, and I mention her case to show the high-handed attitude adopted by the Housing Commission inspector. Apparently it was necessary to repair the fence between her property and that of Mr. Petersen, in Mogford Street. The Housing Commission decided to build a new dividing fence. Mrs. Corney's home is privately owned; Mr. Petersen's is a Housing Commission home. The Housing Commission went in without

authority, and, without approaching Mrs. Corney or making any request of her, knocked down the dividing fence, built another, and then sent Mrs. Corney this letter—

“Dear Madam,

“Recently, new fencing was erected to the side alignment between your property and the Commission’s property occupied by Mr. Petersen, as it was considered that such fencing was necessary.”

No approach was made to Mrs. Corney; the Housing Commission was of opinion that it was necessary.

The letter continues—

“The cost of such fencing was £74 which was the lowest quote received, . . .”

Again Mrs. Corney had no opportunity of getting someone else to quote for the job.

It continues—

“ . . . and as you are the adjoining owner and responsible for half adjoining fencing costs, the Commission looks to you to meet your share of the cost of such fencing.

“Your half-share would amount to £37, and it would be appreciated if you would pay this amount to the Clerk of the Court, Mackay, quoting the reference ‘Adjoining fencing—766G(7).’”

Mrs. Corney is a widow and is not a position to pay £37 for a fence. Even if she had been, the Commission has no right to pull down a fence and then send a bill for half the cost of erecting a new one without approaching her first.

I got in touch with the Housing Commission on this matter about six or seven weeks ago but I have not yet received a reply. I rang the Commissioner, who said he was awaiting a report from his officer in Rockhampton. I do not think it should take six or seven weeks to get a report. Mrs. Corney is very concerned about the position, and the high-handed attitude of the Commission in this instance is not good policy.

Since this Government came to office there has been a continual rise in house rentals, not only in Mackay but throughout Queensland. Unlike former Labour Governments, this Government does not believe in being a landlord. Consequently, it has endeavoured to embarrass the tenants of Housing Commission rental houses by continually increasing rentals. In my opinion, the increases cannot be justified when the report shows that in two instances profits have resulted from the activities of the Housing Commission. Does the Government wish to derive profits from the Commission’s activities? If it does not, what was the purpose of these increases?

In one case that has been brought to my attention, a man in Mackay who has been in a house for nine years has had his rent increased by 16 per cent. over that period, and within the last 12 months it has been

increased by 6s. 6d. When he protested, the Housing Commission advised him that the increased charges were to cover rates, repairs and maintenance. If the Commission had carried out a reasonable amount of maintenance to rental houses over the years it would not be burdened with the high costs that it has to meet today. For many years it neglected rental houses in Mackay; it did not paint them, repair them, or replace such things as gas boilers and stoves. It is now faced with spending many thousands of pounds and, as a consequence, tenants in poor circumstances who have been paying rent for years are having to meet continually increasing charges. In some instances rent is adjusted according to income; but that happens rarely in Mackay, and many tenants are feeling the strain of meeting the high rentals that are being charged by the Housing Commission. I do not see why the Government should apply such increases to widows, for example, when it is making a profit from some of its activities.

There is another matter about which I have reason to complain. On 28 October I received a letter from the Minister informing me that a tender of £56,000 from T. F. Woolam and Sons Pty. Ltd. had been accepted for the erection of an electrical trades block at the Mackay Technical College. I was very happy to receive the letter, because extensions are required at the technical college to provide for the intake of apprentices. The Minister said that the work will be put in hand at an early date.

This letter was received by me after the work had started. I have noted that it seems to be the policy of this Government to advise its own members of work to be performed in their electorates, but not to advise Labour members. This is only one of many occasions on which I have been advised by the Minister that something is going to happen in my electorate after it has happened.

The Minister for Works and Housing has regularly referred matters to the Minister for Mines and Main Roads for publication in the Mackay newspaper, “The Daily Mercury”. I should be happy to receive similar advice when something is going to happen in my electorate. The Minister knows that I complained bitterly of his going to Mackay with the Minister for Mines and Main Roads to see something in my electorate and I think I have a right, as the member for the district, to be advised, not only by the Minister for Works and Housing, but by any other Minister, of what is going on in my electorate.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: Did you do that in days gone by?

Mr. GRAHAM: I was never a Minister and I cannot speak for what other Ministers did. But I know what the Minister for Works and Housing does now, and I have complained bitterly to him about it. It should not be allowed to continue. We

expect the Government to do what is necessary in these country areas and unless it is prepared to give recognition to country areas, unless it is prepared to build homes in areas where homes are required, it is not giving the country an equitable share. I know it has concentrated on centres where industrial development has taken place, namely, Brisbane, Gladstone, Rockhampton and Townsville. I am not opposed to that, but industrial expansion cannot take place in centres such as Mackay unless the Government is prepared to spend money there in building homes. I have asked the Minister to build home units or flats in Mackay and on each occasion I have received the same answer. Money is available to build as many homes as are required in Brisbane, Gladstone and Rockhampton, but it cannot be found to build them in Mackay. Whilst I remain the member for Mackay I will continue to voice my protest, because I believe that the Government is neglecting the requirements of Mackay and consequently retarding its development.

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) (5.19 p.m.): I want to add my very sincere and hearty congratulations to the Minister on his elevation to the Ministry and on the splendid job he is doing.

I cannot understand why members of the Opposition are complaining about not receiving a fair deal. Both the Minister and I are members of the old team. We were brought up the hard way. We sat on the benches opposite and, when the hon. member for Mackay resumed his seat a moment ago, I could not help thinking to myself that if he threw his mind back to the time when we were on that side, he would realise just what a cruel Government the Labour Party was. Nothing was too tough for the Opposition. I do not think we were welcome even at Parliament House, let alone in this Chamber.

The Country-Liberal Government has been very generous to the Opposition. There has been no discrimination in the expenditure of public funds. I am not talking with my tongue in my cheek. Hon. members opposite should remember what they did to us when we were in Opposition. The Minister and I came in at the same time. We know the way they treated us. Compare that with the fair go and the sympathetic treatment we have given them throughout the State.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: They don't know they are alive.

Mr. LOW: That is quite true.

Mr. Aikens: What do you think of the Done report?

Mr. LOW: We will discuss that later. As long as we are not "done"; that is the main thing.

I have already congratulated the Minister on his elevation to office. He is doing a very fine job. I extend thanks and appreciation to Mr. Longland, the Under Secretary of the Department of Works, for his wonderful organising and administrative ability. I thank Mr. Campbell, the Commissioner of Housing, for the outstanding job he is doing towards housing the people of the State. The Government Printing Office also comes under the Minister's control. I have always found Mr. Reid, the Government Printer, to be a very obliging and efficient officer.

The Under Secretary's report is certainly a very informative document. I was pleased to read in it details of a number of new features associated with public buildings throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. A great deal of thought and imagination has gone into their architectural design and construction.

Mr. Houston: Do you prefer the modern style of building to the old style?

Mr. LOW: Quite candidly and sincerely, I cannot understand what Labour did with its money when it was in office. The public buildings in Queensland were a disgrace to that Government. During my travels throughout Queensland—in the South, the South-east, the West and the North-West, and on a recent trip from Brisbane to Cooktown, including a visit to Bloomfield—I have seen how our public buildings have been given a complete new look. It was very pleasing and satisfying to me to see the standard of public building that has been erected throughout the length and breadth of the State, irrespective of the political representation.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. LOW: I have to have some opponent, and hon. members opposite know that. I believe him to be an honourable gentleman. I would not mind if we had an election next Saturday. I keep in close touch with my people. I attend many functions each week-end. Elections do not worry me at all. As a matter of fact, I appreciate them because I like to know how the people are thinking and what they think of my representation from time to time.

Mr. Walsh: Do you think they are building too many places down on the Gold Coast?

Mr. LOW: The Gold Coast is a wonderful tourist area. At the same time the North Coast is a very strong competitor. The Gold Coast will have to be on the mark all the time if it does not want to be overtaken.

Mr. Murray: The Sun Coast is coming up.

Mr. LOW: Yes, our star is rising.

Recently, the hon. member for Callide, Mr. V. E. Jones, and I, together with our wives, toured the whole of the coastline

right through to Cooktown. We were very pleasantly surprised to see the wonderful job the Department of Works has done in every important centre on the coastline and in the hinterland areas, including the Tableland. Hon. members can bleat away and say, "We want this; we want that . . .".

Mr. Sherrington: And they don't get it.

Mr. LOW: Yes, they do.

Mr. Sherrington: Not if they're in a Labour electorate.

Mr. LOW: When I went north, I found that Labour electorates received the same generous treatment as Country Party or Liberal Party electorates. The people of each area receive their fair share irrespective of the politics of the representation. I cannot say the same for when Labour was in office in this State.

Mr. Murray: Spoils to the victor, wasn't it?

Mr. LOW: The Minister and I, representing the constituencies of Barambah and Cooroora saw the rotten, raw deal—

Mr. Aikens: Strong words.

Mr. LOW: As strong as I can make them. We received a rotten, raw deal.

Mr. Aikens: Do you think you will get the same rotten, raw deal if Labour gets back again?

Mr. LOW: They will never get back in again. I am sure the people of Queensland have now seen the light.

Mr. Houston: What light?

Mr. LOW: They have seen the light; Labour will never get back in again. We now know exactly what we can expect from a Government constituted of Country Party and Liberal Party members.

Mr. Houston: The Liberal Party don't want you.

Mr. LOW: Of course they do.

Mr. Aikens: Why do you keep working the Country Party into it? What part do they play?

Mr. LOW: We are a combined party. We are a happy party. We have our differences, of course. Every family has its differences. If we did not have differences in our homes now and again, life would not be worth living. A progressive Government moving forward must have differences.

Mr. Houston: Why?

Mr. LOW: Because, though we do not all think alike, we have the same destination, namely, success—and we will get there. It is only by combined effort and co-operation that we will eventually bring about that wonderful achievement.

Mr. Houston: Whose side are you going to be on in Murrumba—the Country Party or the Liberal Party?

Mr. LOW: I am not going to come into that; all I will say is that we will win for certain.

When I travelled through the electorates of Queensland—and we travelled at our own expense—looking at all the Government projects and meeting the rank-and-file people, I was assured that they appreciate what has been done for them and what will be done for them in the future; there is no doubt about it.

The hon. member for Mackay complained about houses. Mackay is a lovely centre, with all the signs of great prosperity.

Everywhere we went we found public buildings—primary and secondary schools, maternity hospitals, general hospitals, and child welfare centres—a credit to the Government.

One reason I wanted to be here this afternoon was to say to the Government, the Minister, the Under Secretary of the Department of Works, and his officers, a special "Thank you" for looking after not only South Queensland but also the great North, right up as far as Cooktown and Bloomfield, and taking in Atherton and the Tableland, and west to Mt. Isa—in fact, the length and breadth of the State.

Townsville has received a better deal under the Country-Liberal Government than it did under Labour. I do not know where these people got the money, but it is a great credit to them.

Mr. Aikens: Is the A.L.P. candidate standing against you an Egerton man or a Williams man?

Mr. LOW: I do not know. All I know is that he is a decent person.

Mr. Sherrington: Why is he under transfer?

Mr. LOW: There is no vindictiveness in it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order! I am trying to assist the hon. member for Cooroora; I ask him to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. LOW: When the Borumba Dam was under construction, a good deal of rail traffic was going to Imbil. Now that that project has been completed, it is possible that the railway station will be downgraded.

Mr. Sherrington: Will you do your best to keep him there until after the election?

Mr. LOW: I have to have someone there, and it might as well be a decent bloke like him.

When the Government decided on a drive to expand the secondary education system, it was necessary to organise a building programme in Queensland such as had never been experienced before. The result was an outstanding and very gratifying achievement by all concerned. Accommodation needs were met and the requirements of the plan were truly fulfilled. I thank the Minister,

his officers and staff, who did this wonderful job. There is absolutely no doubt about it; young people today can obtain secondary education right at their own doorstep at any centre in Queensland.

I compliment the Minister and the department on the improved lighting, ventilation, etc., in new school buildings, and on the provision of health, dental and rest-room facilities. It has been a wonderful improvement on the dark and dingy old-type structures, which were bad for the health and which ruined the eyesight of many children.

The new maternity wards at general hospitals are a credit to the Department of Works and the Department of Health. They show clearly what good government means to the people of this great State of Queensland.

I am pleased to see that the Minister has had a few jobs carried out in his own electorate. I can remember the time when he took up a subscription to build a house for a local school teacher.

I appeal to the Minister for a few additional improvements in my electorate. I have been treated very well and I appreciate it. If one shows appreciation, one is likely to get a little more in the future.

Mr. Walsh: Why don't you ask the Treasurer to give the Minister more money?

Mr. LOW: I should like to do that, and I am sure that, if it were available, the Treasurer would give the Minister more money; but I do not think it is.

I ask the Minister to give favourable consideration to the construction at Tewantin of a court house and police station building similar to those recently erected at Maroochydore and Caloundra, both of which centres have similar populations. The present school building, which faces the main street, is nearly 100 years old; it is badly eaten out by white ants and it needs replacing, too. Recently approval was given for the provision of temporary classroom accommodation at Cooroy. I do not think that is in the best interests of education. I should like to see permanent accommodation provided. The enrolment is sufficient to warrant it, and I am sure that it will increase in the future.

At Pomona, I am happy to say, the Minister for Education has decided to provide new school buildings on the Ellis Estate site; that is a progressive move listed for consideration in 1966-67.

A new school residence is required at Eumundi. I want to thank the Minister for all the residences that have been provided at the country centres in my district during his administration and that of previous Ministers.

I am happy to say that a new science building has been approved for Nambour;

it will be provided as soon as plans are completed, and it will be financed by the Commonwealth Government.

Some 12 months ago the Minister had the pleasure of opening the secondary department of the Imbil school; it has proved a great success. I attended its speech night the other night, and the hall was crowded with over 1,000 people who really appreciate what the Government is doing in the Mary Valley. The secondary department at Imbil is certainly proving its worth.

Mr. Aikens: Were you there?

Mr. LOW: Yes, I was there. As a matter of fact, I chaired the meeting. It was very pleasing to see all the happy families present. Most of the men in that area are forestry and mill workers, and they all attend with their wives, sons, and daughters.

Mr. Davies: You didn't make political capital out of it, did you?

Mr. LOW: They are very grateful to the Government.

Mr. Aikens: Did you distribute the prizes?

Mr. LOW: Yes. I assisted in giving out the prizes. I know I was "on side", anyway.

In September, I had the pleasure of opening the new wing at the Yandina school. That was the school I attended in my early days, and it was a great pleasure to me to open the addition to it. All agreed that, in general design and ventilation, school buildings are vastly different from what they were in the old days.

Mr. Duggan interjected.

Mr. LOW: I appreciate the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition because he was a decent Minister when in office—probably the most decent of all.

Mr. Aikens: This is not a speech; this is a conversation.

Mr. LOW: I also attended the official opening of new extensions to the schools at Kin Kin and Federal. It is really very gratifying to attend school functions and see the modern facilities now being made available for country children. This shows the forward thinking of the Minister, the Government, the Department of Works, and all of those associated with them.

Recently the Treasurer had the privilege of opening the Noosa towns water supply scheme at Tewantin, and I mentioned there that septic conveniences would be needed at Tewantin, Cooroy, Pomona, and Cooran. Again, this water scheme will assist in improving the health of the children. The Government is making available a 50 per cent. subsidy towards the water supply project, and the Department of Works is making arrangements for the installation of septic systems in due course.

My experience of the day-labour gangs employed by the Department of Works in my electorate is that they are a jolly fine band of fellows. I have met quite a few of them, because I represent two districts—the Maryborough district and the Brisbane district—and I know that they do a very good job. Whenever I have checked on the cost of the work, I have found that it is exactly what it ought to be. I have no complaint about the way they apply themselves to their work, either, and whenever a request is made that a job be done by day labour I have no hesitation in saying, "Give it to the local men." They are interested in the district and many of them are associated with school committees and other public bodies.

As to the paint colour of schools, I have noticed that both dark-green and light-green fade very quickly in the hot sun. The paint peels and, 12 months or so after a building has been painted, it looks very shabby.

Mr. Ewan: It might be the metal underneath.

Mr. LOW: Yes, the metal might have something to do with it, but both light-green and dark-green fade and peel very quickly. Perhaps there is an acid underneath the paint that causes it to deteriorate. However, I think an investigation could well be made into this problem. Apart from this, I believe that the use of lighter colours and new paints is certainly a step in the right direction.

Mr. Davies: The paints may be of cheaper quality today.

Mr. LOW: That may be so.

On some occasions new sheets of roofing iron are provided and not painted. One sees that quite frequently in country areas. It may happen in the city, too; I do not know. The appearance of the building is spoilt and the roof remains patchy until the whole of it is repainted.

Mr. Davies: You can't paint new iron.

Mr. LOW: There might be a difficulty there, but I wondered whether it would be possible to paint some sheets of iron beforehand so that the roof would not be left in a patchy condition, in some instances for as long as 12 or 18 months.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (5.44 p.m.): First, I thank the Minister for the courtesies that he has extended to me in replying to correspondence that I have sent to him and representations that I have made to him during the last 12 months. I extend thanks, too, to Mr. Campbell, Mr. Redwood, Mr. Longland, and many other officers associated with the departments under the Minister's control. These departments play a very important part in the development of the State and, although their responsibilities are very onerous and hon. members on this side of the Chamber are very critical from time to time of the

actions of the Minister and of the administration, I have always found that the Minister and his officers are very approachable.

There has been considerable mention in this Chamber, both today and on Thursday last, of the spending of money on housing in Gladstone. I am sure that many hon. members realise that Gladstone's problem is a special one and requires special attention because overnight there began to grow an industry of very grandiose proportions, which necessitated very quick Government action in the provision of certain services and on a scale larger than that handed out to other areas.

Unfortunately, there is a tremendous amount of criticism in Gladstone relative to the houses erected on behalf of the alumina company. I have mentioned this criticism in previous debates in this Chamber. Whilst I adopt a realistic attitude, as I think most people do, and accept that the employees of the alumina company must be adequately housed, at the same time I, and other members on this side, maintain that people who have been living and working in the area for many years deserve similar treatment from the Government.

Many houses have already been erected—I suppose they will total a couple of hundred eventually—for the employees of this company, and the rental will be guaranteed by the company. From the point of view of the Housing Commission that is a very sound, business-like move, but, as the member for the district, I have an obligation to people who have resided in the district for years. The names of a considerable number of them appear on the files of the clerk of the court as applicants for houses, and over many years, they have been trying to obtain justice in the matter of housing. The position in Gladstone might well be likened to that of the Ancient Mariner, who had "Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink". Houses are springing up all over Gladstone, but many people with high priority ratings, with large families or eviction orders, are unable to obtain satisfaction from the Housing Commission.

Only recently, six homes were released to the public. We were particularly pleased to obtain them but they were given to people on a home-ownership basis. It is not that I have any quarrel with home ownership. We believe, and have believed for many years, in home ownership.

Mr. Murray: You would prefer that, would you not?

Mr. HANSON: I have only a limited time. Although I should like to listen to the interjection of the hon. member for Clayfield, I will let his remarks pass till another day. He is probably more interested in other fields and other political activities.

It is a grave problem to be surrounded, as it were, by a land of plenty and, at the same time, to find that ordinary necessities

are denied us. It is a terrifying thing, particularly so for the person who represents the electorate.

I agree with my illustrious brother-in-law sitting on the front bench, the hon. member for Baroona, who recently suggested that this Government, while closing the housing camps, by its action in imposing limitations on rent control allowed the building of luxurious flats and apartments which are included in, and boost, the figures relating to the number of housing units constructed.

This Government has not changed the state of affairs that existed when people lived in the housing camp in Victoria Park. There is still a great unsatisfied demand for housing, a demand which some months ago caused the Treasurer to remark, "I do not know where these people come from." Every clerk of the court has a similar problem. As I said in my Budget speech, exorbitant prices of up to £10 a week, plus £2 a week extra for electricity, are being charged for caravans in the area that I represent. The other day I came across a man who was sleeping in a wheelbarrow at the back of licensed premises. I might mention, that I am not connected with the premises in question. I took pity on this poor fellow and did something which probably the hon. member for Merthyr would not do in similar circumstances. I arranged accommodation for him until he could get work and was able to afford better accommodation.

This morning I heard the hon. member for Merthyr eulogising the Government for allowing the private sector to participate more in the field of housing, and suggesting that the private sector was rendering a great public service by investing its money in houses, apartments and so on for which it could charge high rentals. I know that the hon. member is a highly responsible member of the Government. As a matter of fact, he is being referred to in political circles as the "pea" for the next Cabinet vacancy. Only recently the hon. member said that the intelligentsia of the Government was in the Cabinet. Even though he is such a highly responsible member of the Government, I suggest that he go to any trading bank that is supposed to finance housing and try to get money for a house. He will find that he is up against a brick wall.

Only recently in Gladstone I was dealing with the case of a young man who was trying to obtain a house. Even though he had £600 or £700 in the bank, and an insurance policy for £1,500, his land and furniture being completely unencumbered, he was not able to borrow from any bank sufficient money to erect a house at a contract price of £3,450. After making various representations over many months I was able to have his requirements met. What utter rot it is for a man who is desirous of becoming a Cabinet Minister to talk about the wonderful job the private sector is doing! I agree with the hon. member for Baroona that these people are doing a wonderful job for themselves by charging

exorbitant rents to those who are able to afford them rather than catering for the wants of the ordinary working man.

A great deal of argument has been advanced during the debate about members of the armed forces obtaining houses through the Queensland Housing Commission. The Minister mentioned that the Commonwealth Government and the State Government had participated in the ratio of 68 to 32. I realise that the housing of defence personnel poses a great problem, and I agree with what has been said about the needs of members of the armed forces. When they come to Queensland they become Queensland citizens. They have to eat and they have to be accommodated. They spend their money here. The armed services are virtually employers giving employment to their various service personnel.

I want to emphasise one point particularly to the Minister and other Cabinet members. Since the present Federal administration took office, many hundreds of millions of pounds have been spent on defence each year. Last year the expenditure exceeded £300,000,000. While the Commonwealth desires the State to participate in meeting the housing requirements of members of the armed services, I maintain it should be on the basis of a greater defence allocation for Queensland than at present. On many occasions I have asked in this Chamber if anyone had particulars concerning defence expenditure in Queensland. I was told privately by a member of my own party—a high-ranking member of the party—that only 3 per cent. of the total defence allocation was spent in Queensland, which is the most vulnerable State in the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth desires a 32 per cent. participation by the State in housing yet, in the next breath it is prepared to spend only 3 per cent. of the total allocation for defence requirements in Queensland. Surely in ordinary moral social justice it should be asked—and should participate—to the extent of 97 per cent. of the housing requirements of members of the armed services.

That argument is quite fair and the scheme is highly desirable. I do not think the State should be asked to contribute as much as it does to meet the housing requirements of the armed services. If the State did not have to provide this amount, much more money would be available to the Minister to give the ordinary working people justice in their housing requirements.

I have one suggestion to make to the Minister concerning the Department of Works. Only recently a delegation went overseas seeking experienced tradesmen to play their part in the expansion that is taking place in various centres of this State.

Mr. Aikens: Is that the group that went to Malaya?

Mr. HANSON: In reply to the hon. member for Townsville South, it was not. The group comprised a number of businessmen and a man from the Department of Justice who is now attached to the Agent-General's office in London. I do not know what success the delegation achieved. I know that the man from the Department of Justice whizzed around the State in a lightning 10-day tour, and in those 10 days he was supposed to absorb the industrial requirements of certain industries in this State. I do not know to what extent the Department of Works participated in the delegation. However, I believe that with the shortage of tradesmen throughout Queensland it is highly desirable in the future for the Department of Works to look further afield, and, if possible, nominate tradesmen from overseas so that they can work in the department. I know that several private industries are willing to participate and I should not like to see the department miss out. Frequently we hear criticism about the long delay by the department in completing Government buildings. Obviously it is due to the shortage of tradesmen, which exists throughout the building industry. I suggest to the Minister, if he has not already participated in the scheme to get tradesmen for the department, that he should investigate it and see if it is at all possible to bring some of them into his organisation so that they may be able to assist the department in carrying out its programme.

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

Mr. PILBEAM (Rockhampton South) (7.15 p.m.): I congratulate the officers of this department, with which I was associated for so many years, on their successful year's work. In those congratulations I include an old workmate of mine in the person of Mr. G. Campbell, who controls this very important department. I congratulate the Minister also on a very good year.

It is very gratifying to see a different outlook being adopted towards the employees of the department. In the old days when I worked there, it was regarded as a sort of "Cinderella" department with a poor system of classified positions. The position under this Government is entirely different. There is a very good system of classifications and quite a good future is assured those who work in the department.

I am gratified to see the housing construction that is being undertaken in various parts of the State, and the way this very important department is being administered so as to help the industrial development of this State.

My electorate is no exception. I thank the Minister for giving favourable consideration to my representations for housing for industries such as the salt works at Bajool and the steel fabrication works and new flour mill at Parkhurst. The provision of housing for the employees in those industries is a

very important adjunct to industrial development. I do not say that all new houses should be provided for every new industry, particularly in areas where there is quite a strong housing set-up in existence. If the department gives new industries approximately half the houses they require, in the form of new dwellings, the department is doing all that can be expected of it.

It is only fair that industry should provide some housing for its employees. In many of the areas around Rockhampton good existing houses can be purchased, and it is only fair that industry should supply some of its own housing. This has been done in Rockhampton. Usually we ask new industries to buy half the houses they require for the job, in the form of existing dwellings, and not to load the department with unreasonable requests for new houses.

There has been a big improvement in house designs. There is now a reasonable variation in the designs of workers' dwellings. In the old days, one could pick workers' dwellings because they were all of the same design. Probably it is to the credit of the architects today that there is some variation from the rigid adherence to type in workers' dwellings.

Mr. Aikens: Some of the old bungalow dwellings were good and sound.

Mr. PILBEAM: That is so. I appreciate the Minister's encouragement of home ownership. In the development of housing estates nothing is as good as home ownership. It is easy to pick letting houses in a city from those privately owned, and the worst parts of provincial cities at present are those composed of rented houses. It is only human nature for a tenant not to take anything like the interest in his dwelling that an owner does. The tenant does not tend the footpath, the garden, or generally touch up the house in a way that demonstrates to outsiders that he is proud of it.

I do not like to see workers' dwellings provided for rental in a group, because invariably there is deterioration in them. The worst parts of my city are those in which houses are let. I know that some houses must be provided for letting purposes, but I do not like to see groups of houses let to tenants in one locality. I much prefer the policy that Mr. Campbell appears to be adopting of building a number of houses in an area and selling some and renting the others. In that way the houses are treated reasonably and there is not a general deterioration in one area.

It is very gratifying to me to see the treatment meted out to the employees of my council; they have a generally happier outlook; and my main theme this evening is the recognition of the work done by the Housing Commission in the very sound housing projects being undertaken throughout the State.

Another thing that I find pleasing is the way the Commission is co-operating with local authorities. Too often in the past, the Commission purchased estates without any regard to drainage problems in the area. All local authorities have full records of flood and drainage problems in their localities, and I think they all make this information available to the public. They ask people to use the information to check whether the land has any disability before development on it is undertaken.

Mr. Aikens: Have you a town plan at Rockhampton?

Mr. PILBEAM: Yes. We are putting one in now.

Let me say that this Commission is co-operating with my council to the benefit of all. No longer does it buy land and erect houses and then find that they have serious drainage problems. That is irritating to members of the public who have put all their savings into houses.

I know that representations are made throughout the years to encourage home ownership by the provision of houses on low deposits. It is ironical to say that this is not necessary, because when I was working in this department there were two schemes in operation. There was the workers' dwelling scheme, in which 20 per cent. of the house and land was provided by the applicant. That meant that he had a 20 per cent. stake in the property. On the other hand, there was a workers' homes scheme, in which applicants did not even own the land. It was leasehold land, and each applicant had to provide 5 per cent. of the value of the house.

It is fair enough to say that there was no comparison at all between the two schemes. Under the workers' dwelling scheme, the people had a 20 per cent. investment in their homes and they looked after them. It was always possible to tell workers' dwellings from workers' homes. Under the workers' homes scheme, there was a very high percentage of unpaid dues. People got the idea that, as they had only a 5 per cent. investment in the house, all that they had to do was get in arrears to an amount equivalent to the 5 per cent. and they could leave the house without losing anything.

I thoroughly applaud the present system and would not like to see it break down. I also recognise the desirability of getting rid of some of the old houses, if possible. As I say, I thoroughly applaud the present system to extend the deposit and the other elements that go with it.

I thank the Department of Works for the very fine buildings it has erected in Rockhampton. I do not think any hon. member has referred to the care of Government buildings or, in particular, to the provision of gardens round Government

buildings in provincial cities. In Rockhampton there is one of the finest examples of Government gardens that one could see anywhere, and it reflects great credit on the head gardener.

The only fly in the ointment in Rockhampton is the site of the old police station. The building has been razed to the ground and I understand that the area is to be landscaped and placed under the care of the head gardener. I ask the Minister to proceed with the work as quickly as possible because, while the rest of the gardens are a credit to the city, this corner is a little eyesore.

I have no reflections to cast on the work of the department and I do not intend to take up the time of the Committee by referring at length to the work it has done over the years. I again thank the Minister and the officers of the departments under his control for the courteous way in which they have accepted and replied to the various requests that I have made to them.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (7.27 p.m.): I think housing is the most important part of the Minister's portfolio. Much could be said about public buildings and improvements in the design of public buildings throughout the State; but, in spite of what might be said about the clamour for improved office accommodation in Brisbane and other cities and towns, the most important problem confronting the Minister and his officers is the housing of families in Queensland.

So much has been said about the success of the Government in the field of housing that I think it might be a good idea to see whether there is any means by which its efforts to meet the situation can be improved still further. It is idle for any member on the Government benches to say that the housing of the people of Queensland is satisfactory when, in various parts of the State, married couples are living in caravans and paying up to £8 and £10 a week for the use of part of an allotment and the facilities in an adjoining house. The Government and its supporters cannot say with truth that everything in the garden is lovely in the field of family housing.

I know that there are some limitations, and I am not unmindful of them in discussing this subject. One is finance, another is the availability of tradesmen in the various callings in the building industry. From time to time statements are made by the Federal Minister for Housing, and even on behalf of the State Government, that the building industry is booming. The amount of finance being made available to the building industry as a whole may give some weight to this claim; but whether or not it is being directed into the proper channels and being used to overcome the shortage of houses for families is another question. Despite the complaints that have come not only from this State but from all over Australia, the Federal Minister in charge of housing, Mr. Bury, recently made a statement. He said that,

despite all the problems confronting families who are in need of homes, the Federal Government has no intention at this stage of making further finance available. This means that if the Government is in a position to make finance available it will probably make it available towards the end of the financial year when it cannot be reflected in the finances for this year. Unless this Government—and the Federal Government in particular—through banking institutions or other lending authorities, take some action to channel the finance available for building purposes towards home building, the position of the home dweller will become more and more difficult.

Of what satisfaction is it to a mother with five or seven children, looking around for cheap rental accommodation, to see going up large structures such as are being erected in this City? Even in the Civic Square, buildings that are already accommodating business offices are being pulled down and the available finance, building materials and tradesmen are being used in erecting new buildings in their stead. Surely some approach could be made to the financial institutions, by either this Government or the Federal Government, to see that that state of affairs does not continue. As long as it does, the cruel position of a young couple raising a large family, living in a tent, a marquee or a caravan, will continue. What credit does it do this Government and its supporters that that state of affairs should exist in this State?

I know the Government takes the view that it should encourage industry. We all take that view, but we do not all agree that the Government should supersede its obligations to the local community by giving assistance to foreign companies that have large amounts of capital and are in a good enough financial position to finance the construction of homes required for their employees. Should the Government assume responsibility for that work to the detriment of other families who for years have assisted to build industry in this State?

I suppose, that if one looks down the list, Bundaberg, with 15 houses, got its fair share of the houses built in the State last year. It is probably a fair share if one disregards particular areas where the pressure is really on, such as Gladstone and Townsville in particular. But, in spite of that 15 is not enough. I have brought several cases to the Minister's notice. One was that of a young mother with seven children occupying a two-bedroom house. That is only one of many cases brought to the notice of the department, as the Minister knows. Surely some more serious effort could be made to meet the requirements of that type of family. If we allow this sort of thing to continue without any attempt to withhold finance from major building undertakings, such as multiple-storey offices, in this State and elsewhere, what hope is there for the family unit?

Some time ago the Treasurer circulated a memo setting out the various sources of finance. I should like the Liberal Party section of the Government to take particular note of what I am about to say. The memorandum is headed "Finance For Co-operative Housing Societies and Co-operative Terminating Societies carrying Government Guarantee." The first of these societies, according to the circular, was launched in 1958. The circular goes on to record the number of registered societies from 1959 to 30 June, 1965.

The names of the lenders of moneys for housing purposes are very interesting. I noticed that what could be regarded as socialistic institutions—the Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia and the Commonwealth Trading Bank of Australia—up to 30 June, 1963, had advanced £4,060,000. The A.N.Z. Savings Bank, up to the same date, had advanced £1,000,000, the A.N.Z. Trading Bank £50,000, the Bank of New South Wales Savings Bank £260,000, the C.B.C. Savings Bank £528,000, the E.S. & A. Savings Bank £100,000, the Commercial Savings Bank £130,000, the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland)—another socialistic enterprise, according to the Liberals—£1,300,000, the New Zealand Insurance Co. Ltd., £105,000, the Royal Insurance Co. Ltd. £50,000, the North British & Mercantile Insurance Co. Ltd. £50,000, the Yorkshire Insurance Co. Ltd. £50,000, the Netherlands Immigration Board £100,000, and Police Superannuation, which, of course, is Government-supervised, £200,000, making a total of £7,983,000.

In his circular the Treasurer comments—

"From this it will be seen that Insurance Companies generally were not good supporters of the movement. Being anxious to expand the volume of support, I discussed with State Insurance the question of their rendering support, pointing out that there was a prospect of reciprocal insurance business to make the investment more attractive."

I want to impress this fact on members of the Liberal Party. For the year ended 30 June, 1964, the Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia provided £650,000, the Commonwealth Trading Bank of Australia £50,000, and the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) £350,000. I will not go through the rest of the lenders but the total for that year was £1,655,000. For the year ended 30 June, 1965, the Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia provided £1,100,000 and the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) £1,367,000, between them a total of £2,467,000 out of the total for that financial year of £3,342,000.

Despite all the talk about money being available from this source to assist in housing, it is well to note that it is just not coming forward from the banks through the co-operative societies. I should like to impress upon those who may think otherwise

that the main supporters of the co-operative society scheme are the Commonwealth Trading Bank and the State Government Insurance Office.

Mr. Smith: The Commonwealth Savings Bank.

Mr. WALSH: The Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia.

Mr. Smith: You said the Commonwealth Trading Bank.

Mr. WALSH: And the Commonwealth Trading Bank. If the hon. member had been here he would have heard me mention the figures.

Mr. Aikens: What about the capitalistic trading banks?

Mr. Smith: I have got quite a bit of money from the A.N.Z. Bank.

Mr. WALSH: Apart from other banks, the A.N.Z. Bank has made a reasonably substantial contribution. Other banks, not named, that have been circulated are probably directing their finances into channels where buildings are being pulled down and new buildings erected in their place.

I do not think that any real effort is being made by this Government or the Commonwealth Government to ensure that that state of affairs does not continue. As I said earlier, unless action is taken to direct what is to be done we will continue to be faced with the same problem. The Minister, and the Government generally, know that the direction of material and finance should not be difficult because it was practised here until the early 1950's when even material supplies were controlled by a Government authority. That was to ensure that during the shortages of the immediate post-war period the available material would be directed to the erection of homes. There were big industries in this city which were refused building permits by the Government of the day. If permits had been granted they would simply have been competing for tradesmen, material, and so on. I should like the Minister to bring to the notice of the Government the necessity to do something about this matter.

The Government may be able to justify what it is doing in centres such as Biloela, where quite a substantial number of houses are being constructed by the Housing Commission because the coal resources at Moura are being exploited by the Thiess-Peabody-Mitsui interests and, likewise, at Gladstone. However, I want the Minister and the department to remember that in other parts of the State we have industries that have been established for many years. They are looking for tradesmen to meet the housing problem, but they cannot get them. I know that the Minister will say, "We offered to build so many homes if the companies concerned would guarantee the rental for 10 years." Why should we have to follow

that plan? Why not build the homes and offer them to those who are prepared to take them? That would satisfy many of the families who are literally coming cap in hand begging for a roof to be put over their children's heads. I have seen too much of that.

When I look at the return submitted by the Minister in the Housing Commission report I ask myself what necessity there is for building so many homes in remote parts of the State when we know that there are people who cannot take up their positions in industry in the State for lack of proper accommodation.

The Minister has been good enough to consider requests I have made to him to see tomorrow a certain person who is waiting for a home to be built in Bundaberg. I have previously mentioned some details of this case. It is pathetic to think that the contract for the house was accepted on 2 March of this year, yet not one post or one piece of timber has been put in place. The loan has been approved by the Housing Commission. All this humbug has gone on with the contractor over that period because he is engaged in several other building activities; he has taken his building organisation, carpenters, tradesmen, and so on. with him, and left this man in the lurch, still begging for his home. The department should do something about this type of contractor. If he tenders again for another home, irrespective of how low his price may be the department should consider his unsatisfactory record in the completion of homes.

In contrast, I have another case of a working contractor—a very hard working and honourable type of contractor, too—who is in partnership with his wife as a building contractor. He works as a carpenter. He put in a claim for £77 11s. under the rise-and-fall clause in the contract. The Housing Commission challenged his right to this claim for his labour. I could understand that action if this man was supervising a number of contracts. If this practice belongs to the dim past it should be corrected. Why humbug a man about for £30? He has given honourable service in the building of homes for the Commission. Why humbug him about and argue over a miserable £30 difference between what the Commission is prepared to settle for and the amount claimed?

Apart from that, I do not know why the Commission should be particularly perturbed about it. I have here a document signed by the two purchasers of the home. They are quite happy to pay the extra amount, which I understand is £77 11s. 9d., although it is shown in this document as £77 4s. 10d. The purchasers are happy because, although under the contract the house was to be completed some time in October, it was actually completed in August and they were able to get into their home and use it two months before it was due for completion. Although the Commission might have been following a precedent laid down many years

ago, in these days when it is difficult to get tradesmen and reasonably priced tenders, surely a miserable little amount like £30 could be adjusted.

Why does a man have to go to all this trouble when he is working as a carpenter, not as a supervising contractor, and has put hours of labour into the job, and then, simply because he is registered in partnership with his wife, he cannot get the benefit of a rise-and-fall clause? I hope the Minister will look into this practice. That type of action will not help the Commission to get people to tender for jobs if they can get work elsewhere. Why would they tender for a Housing Commission job if they are to be humbugged about like this?

Reverting to the first case to which I referred, the contractor got the job in March. It was supposed to be completed in August, and he got an extension of time. It is now due to be completed by 27 December, and there is not a post in or a board nailed on anywhere. In the second instance the contractor completed his job two months ahead of time and the Commission argues over £30. If the Minister wants to create a new precedent, let him get onto this case for a start and encourage this man who has given honourable service not only to the home purchaser, but also to the department. I have all the correspondence that was submitted to the arbitrators. The Commission put a quantity officer onto it. He made calculations which deny this man not only his 316 hours, but set out to reduce the number of hours claimed for the employment of an apprentice carpenter. Owing to the size of the amount involved it seems to be one of those irritating Public Service red-tape tactics.

The Commission can argue the principle of a contractor being a contractor as distinct from a man who is earning wages. I draw that distinction between the supervisor of several contracts and the man who actually puts in his full time on building a house. I hope that the Minister will give this matter some attention and, in conclusion, I thank him for his courtesy and the way in which he has handled all approaches and representations that I have made to him.

Mr. HOOPER (Greenslopes) (7.51 p.m.): I join my colleagues on this side of the Chamber in congratulating the Minister and thanking him for his courtesy and assistance at all times. Although the contribution of the hon. member for Albert was treated rather facetiously this afternoon by hon. members opposite, I felt that his comments were well deserved. He congratulated the Minister and thanked him for his courtesy and assistance. I sincerely endorse those remarks, and also pay tribute to the senior officers of both the Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission, the supervisors, and all employees right down to the tradesmen who do the actual work. One has only to look at some of the work

produced by them to realise their capabilities. Indeed, they have left lasting monuments in many of the works on which they have been employed throughout the State.

I rose tonight to speak on several very small matters. In his annual report the Under Secretary of the Department of Works said—

“At the South Brisbane School for the Blind a new classroom block has been constructed and a new dormitory block is in the course of erection.”

No doubt the Under Secretary is aware that that is a typographical error, and I should like to correct it by referring to what the Minister said when presenting his Estimates. He said—

“At the South Brisbane School for the Deaf a new classroom block was completed and a new dormitory block is under construction.”

He went on to say—

“When I saw what was left to us by the Labour Government I was very anxious to do something for this school. In many respects it could have been described as a dangerous building, so this work is in progress.”

How very true that is! Small children have to receive their education there, and many have to live there for the greater part of their school lives. The building was a fire hazard and was dangerous in many other respects, and I am sure those who have had the honour to serve on the committee of the school thank the Minister and the department for a job well done. As the present president of the school committee, I give the Minister my thanks, and I know that my colleague the hon. member for Yeronga would endorse my remarks.

I welcome the addition of the classroom block, which has been completed and has now been in use for many months. Those who have had the privilege, as I know the Minister has, of seeing this building since its completion realise that this special school for deaf children required more than an ordinary effort from the officers and workmen of the Department of Works. Experts in this field inform me that this classroom block at Dutton Park, if not the best in Australia, is so very close to it that the difference does not matter. I thank not only the officers of the Department of Works but those of the Department of Education, including the staff of the school, for their wonderful work in various aspects of designing and equipping this building. As I said earlier, the building is now being used for the very desirable purpose of training deaf children by oral methods.

The Minister went on to say that a dormitory block for these children is under construction. In fact, it is now well under way, and I pay a very high tribute to the men who have worked on it. From the time the foundations were poured, the work has

proceeded fairly quickly and the men have done a very good job. Both the form-work and the brickwork are of a very high standard, and when the building has been completed I am sure it will be the equal of the classrooms that the children occupy during the day.

I was very impressed, too, to hear the Minister say that the construction of a further dormitory block will be undertaken to complete the rebuilding of the South Brisbane School for the Deaf. This is very good news for the parents of the many deaf children who attend the school and for the staff and the committee on whose behalf I am speaking. The school buildings cannot be replaced too soon.

For the benefit of hon. members generally, I might mention that this school is not in my electorate, so I am not being parochial.

Mr. Bennett: I thought it was about time you gave me some credit for the development of South Brisbane since I have been its representative.

Mr. HOOPER: I should like to answer that interjection. When the Minister for Education opened the beautiful new classroom block, I insisted that my colleague the hon. member for South Brisbane be invited. He accepted the invitation, but we have not seen him yet.

Mr. Bennett: I rang up and explained. Tell the truth.

Mr. HOOPER: I say that the hon. member accepted the invitation but did not arrive at the function. I am the chairman of the committee, and that is all I know of the matter. It does not do him any good to interject when he does not know anything about it. Let him stick to the law; I will stick to the building industry, which I know something about.

Mr. Bennett: You are using the blind people for political purposes; that is why I didn't go along—because of the way you act.

Mr. HOOPER: Mr. Hodges, I resent the remark that I am using the blind people for political purposes. It is offensive to me and I ask that the hon. member for South Brisbane withdraw it and apologise.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): The hon. member for Greenslopes says that the remark is offensive to him. I ask the hon. member for South Brisbane to withdraw it.

Mr. Bennett: I thought the hon. member would have invited me to be a member of the committee because the school is in my electorate, but he has never done so.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will withdraw the remark.

Mr. Bennett: Very well, I will withdraw it. Why don't you fight—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HOOPER: I am sorry that the hon. member saw fit to interject on the subject of under-privileged children.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Bennett: You asked me to withdraw. Why won't you have me on the committee? It is my electorate. You are playing politics with it all the time.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HOOPER: Mr. Hodges, I am elected to the committee by the parents; I am not a Government representative. That is all I wish to say on that subject. We should be very happy if the hon. member for South Brisbane, or any other hon. member for that matter, took an interest in the work of the committee. It is a parents and citizens' association committee, and I am sure that the Minister for Works and members of the committee would be pleased to have the ideas of any hon. member on anything that might assist the children in the community who are not as fortunate as we are.

I believe that the flats built by the Housing Commission have been a useful addition to the houses it has built throughout the State. I should like to make one comment in this regard. Referring to the flats at Dutton Park, when one drives to Parliament House each day one would not have to be highly imaginative to think one was back in Singapore or Hong Kong. The first sight that greets one is clothing on clothes-lines at the front of the building. I know that architects have a difficult job to design buildings with facilities for the drying of clothes, but I suggest that nothing could be more unsightly than clothes hoists in front of a magnificent building. They could possibly incorporate drying rooms, not on a flat by flat basis but on a community basis.

This matter concerns not only me but many other people as well. I do not like referring specifically to this matter, but this building is adjacent to the Oral Deaf School on Gladstone Road. It is a beautiful school in a setting second to none, but the picture is certainly spoilt by the clothes-lines on the front and side elevations of these Housing Commission flats right at the entrance to the school. I know the tenants cannot avoid this, but I ask the architects who design these flats in the future to look closely at some other method of clothes-drying, particularly on the front elevation of the buildings.

This morning my colleague the hon. member for Merthyr made a very worth-while contribution to the debate. He spoke of rising costs in the building industry, and particularly the effect on the Housing Commission, and indeed, the Department of Works generally. He pointed out that whereas a tradesman's wage in 1951 was just over £10 a week, today it is well over £20—I think, £24-odd. That is only one aspect of the rise in building costs. Although hon. members opposite find it convenient to charge the Housing Commission with not building

enough houses and the Department of Works with not doing sufficient work, they do not know they are alive; costs are simply fantastic. One has only to compare the cost of materials and labour when I entered Parliament in 1957 with present-day costs to realise how staggering the increases have been.

I believe that both departments under the Minister's control are doing a magnificent job and are continually improving.

I am sure the hon. member for Belmont would agree with what the hon. member for Merthyr said about home construction by private enterprise. He mentioned the relative costs per square over the years, of brick, timber and fibro-cement houses. To me, the use of the term "square" in connection with the costing of houses is a complete misnomer from the builder's point of view. It might be all right from the viewpoint of the Housing Commission in multiple projects, but there is no way in the world that a house can be properly priced on the so-much-per-square method. As the hon. member for Belmont would know, it is not the size of a house or the material that its exterior walls are built of that counts, it is what goes into the house. The sooner many hon. members realise that the better. A small builder employing the method he uses for individual homes might find it very difficult to compete with the bigger man who, with group projects, can use the per-square method.

Mr. R. Jones: Your own members used that in their arguments.

Mr. HOOPER: Yes, but I do not agree with it. I was referring to my colleagues when I said that. It is completely wrong. The sooner we realise that the small builder must, and does, base his price on the cost of the material and the labour content, the sooner we will arrive at the right method of pricing houses and projects.

Although lifts would undoubtedly add considerably to the cost of building flats or home units of more than two or three storeys, they should be provided. Such buildings are constructed with the idea of assisting aged and infirm people—pensioners and the like—who, for many reasons, cannot look after yards or gardens. And they should not be required to climb flights of steps.

Mr. Newton: At Holland Park pensioners on the third floor get heart attacks from climbing steps.

Mr. HOOPER: I agree. Even if it meant a slight increase in rentals it would be worth while to the occupants of these buildings to have a lift.

I turn now to what the Department of Works is doing in my electorate at the present time. This is the first occasion I have referred to my own electorate. The department is rebuilding or completely renovating the old Queen Alexandra Home at Coorparoo, which has been used as a handicraft school. At the present time the department

is completely renovating the handicraft section and building a school for the preparation of food adjacent to the old Queen Alexandra Home. This form of technical training is to be further extended. Only yesterday I had a look at the building, the work done and the type of problems the tradesmen are running into. There are many problems associated with the job, including the underpinning of old concrete piers. I thought the hon. member for Belmont would smile at this. I did not think an older builder would put his concrete piers down only a foot in the ground. The Department of Works has had a very difficult job. It had to tom up the building and the work involved a great deal of skill and attention to safety. While the work was going on, handicraft classes were continued in the adjacent building. I am sure that at the moment work on the school for food is proceeding at top speed. A problem is how to get the kilns for the pottery room into the building. It is old construction which has been renovated and the only way to overcome the problem is by the erection of a small annex to house the kilns for the pottery section. I wish to thank the Minister particularly, and the officers of the Housing Commission and the Department of Works, for a job well done.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (8.10 p.m.): For various reasons I did not intend to participate in this debate, and many of the important subjects that had attracted my attention have been canvassed very extensively by those who have spoken. Obviously the emphasis today, by everybody with a sense of responsibility, is on the supplying of houses. This matter has been dealt with adequately by all who have contributed to the debate. I may have one or two comments to make about it in a moment.

However, I do not wish the debate on these Estimates to be closed without my expressing, on my own behalf and on behalf of Opposition members generally, our appreciation to the Minister for his courtesy. I take this opportunity of complimenting him on the presentation of his Estimates. I think all of us appreciate the fact that he dealt with them in a very calm, logical and dispassionate way and did not try to score politically as is sometimes done. He indicated problems that confronted the previous administration, and I think hon. members on this side of the Chamber appreciated the way he dealt with their contributions. The pattern he set is commendable, and I am grateful for it.

I want to express my thanks to the Under Secretary for Works, Mr. Longland, and to express appreciation on my own behalf, and on behalf of members of the Opposition, to Mr. Campbell, Mr. Redwood and Messrs. Simpson and Barlow, because they are the four officers with whom we deal. Housing is a matter that engages our attention more than anything else, and everyone knows the

frustration, the difficulties and the problems confronting people looking for accommodation. While there are infinite variations of the stories presented to us for consideration, they must become rather boring for the officers concerned. If they had not a proper disposition for dealing with these cases, there would be a natural tendency for them to become somewhat impatient and blase and perhaps become, for the want of a better term, bureaucratic in their outlook. But these officers display unflinching courtesy; nothing is too much trouble for them.

Ordinarily in a debate I do not go into so much detail in my thanks to officers, not that they are not deserving of them in many cases, but I sometimes think that we can use our time to better advantage canvassing other matters. I do not deny hon. members the right to deal with local problems, because, after all, the electorate expects members to deal with them. But I should like my particular thanks to these officers to go on record. In my position as Leader of the Opposition, many of the detailed representations are left to my secretary. I have found exactly the same courtesy and attention given to the matters raised by them as if they were raised by a senior member of the Government or by any member of Parliament. For those reasons I want these facts to go on record.

In general, in their desire to promote the picture outside of intense activity by the Government, Government members have kept referring with monotonous regularity to the tremendous sums of money spent by the Government. We had exaggerations by hon. members when contrasting conditions allegedly existing prior to 1957 with those of today. We even heard the hon. member for Albert talk about the dismal colours possibly being responsible for his defective vision. That is arrant nonsense. If people look at the records they would find the pastel shades were introduced in about 1950. I do not say that they were not ahead of their time in 1950. These matters should be put into their correct perspective.

In the debate last year, the hon. member for Mulgrave said that, in 1957, once people left the precincts of Brisbane on the Bruce Highway for Cairns, they got onto bush tracks and gravel roads through undulating country. I took the trouble of going to the Parliamentary Library and taking out the mileages of bitumen roads completed each year. They totalled hundreds of miles, although not very many. This Government eventually completed the road programme to Cairns. But these things are progressive in character.

Then we come to the great emphasis that is laid today on education. I wish I had more time to go into it. It is true that the sum being spent on our works programme today is progressively greater than it was in 1957 and the years prior to that. We expect that with an expanding State, a growing population, and an increase in building costs.

We have evidence of the tremendous rise in the cost of homes. As recently as 23 October, 1965, the Press claimed that there was a rise in home costs of £259 in 12 months. When I came to Parliament 30 years ago, quite a reasonable home, including land, could be purchased for £600. I have a well-constructed home, which was valued at something like £650 when I married 30 years ago. What concerns everybody is the tremendous increase in costs today. Therefore in measuring these claims, we have to bear in mind the increased cost of providing similar facilities today compared with the costs of 5, 10, 15, or 20 years ago and the fact that we are living in a State with an expanding population, and in an expanding world.

The annual report from the Under Secretary mentions that 119 primary-school classrooms and 323 secondary-school classrooms, a total of 442 classrooms, were built last year. I am glad that the Government is discharging its obligation in providing for the population explosion that has occurred. It has been mentioned by members on both sides of the Committee, but particularly by the Opposition. The pattern reflects itself.

Go back 1,000 years and you will find that, following any cessation of hostilities, with men returning from the war, resuming their civil occupations, and getting married, there has always been a tremendous impetus in the birthrate. We have felt the effects of that impetus over the last 10 years. The result has been a great demand for additional classroom accommodation everywhere in the world, not only in Queensland. I am not criticising the Minister for Works and Housing. I do not care what Government members claim to be their performance in education. However it is gilded, the performance of this Government falls behind that of every other State in the last eight years on a per-capita basis. Whatever the disparity with the other States was in 1957, it is greater today.

The records show that, in the last year Labour was in office, 318 primary-school classrooms were constructed, as against 119 last year. Labour built 76 high-school classrooms, or a total of 389 classrooms that year. The total of school enrolments was much lower than today. Therefore Labour's performance was not bad. We constructed 389 classrooms in 1957, compared with 442 built by this Government last year. It is true that the amount spent was greater. That is represented largely by increased building costs.

Going back further, in 1956 Labour built 298 primary-school classrooms and 71 high-school classrooms, a total of 369. In 1955 we built 260 primary-school classrooms and 104 secondary-school classrooms, a total of 364. During the five-year period up to and including 1955, we built 1,000 primary-school classrooms for 40,000 pupils, and 218 secondary-classrooms for 5,470 pupils. Today, secondary-school demands have grown

to four times what they were then. Consequently one would expect to see reflected in the figures a better result than 323 secondary-school classrooms and 119 primary-school classrooms last year, a ratio of roughly 3 to 1. Trends everywhere are changing.

I could speak for 25 minutes on this matter in greater detail, as I think it appropriate to put on record that, although the amount of money spent by the Government is certainly greater than that spent by Labour Governments, hon. members opposite have no more discharged their obligation to the pupils and teachers at schools in 1965 than we had when we went out of office in 1957.

Mr. Murray: The primary schools will ease off considerably.

Mr. DUGGAN: I have emphasised that.

Mr. Murray: Exactly, and it will not be long before secondary-school enrolments will, too.

Mr. DUGGAN: That is true. By about 1970 they will start to decrease. We now have problems with the university, too. My main concern is to place on record refutation of the statement that we neglected our obligations in the field of education. I like to listen to a reasoned argument and I do not mind having to face up to any situations in which the Government may be able to show a better record. After all, if one is honest one cannot run away from facts. I think it is equally honest, however, to point out that the Labour Party has nothing to be ashamed of in what it did up to 1957 compared with what the Government has done to 1965.

Although I do not like to engage in parochial matters, I wish to take the opportunity to say a word or two about a speech made in this Chamber by the hon. member for Aubigny. Some of us accept the responsibility in Opposition of looking after the interests of neighbouring electorates. One of the obligations that I accept is that of occasionally assisting the Dalby branch of the Australian Labour Party. The hon. member for Aubigny probably owes his election to Parliament as much to three or four members on this side of the Chamber—principally the hon. member for Warrego and me—as to anyone else. I wish to place on record that, prior to the break in the Australian Labour Party, few people better defended the hon. member from attacks by his colleagues than did the hon. member for Warrego and I.

I mention these things because, in the Supply debate, the hon. member for Aubigny said, amongst other things—

“Functioning in the town of Dalby is an organisation that is endeavouring to discredit the Housing Commission administration, the Minister and myself by spreading malicious and untrue rumours to the effect that the labourer requiring

a rental home had not much chance of obtaining one because of my influence in the interests of employees of Napier Bros. These rumours are not only untrue but most unfair to the officer in the C.P.S. Office at Dalby who allots Housing Commission homes. If you were to search Queensland you could not find a more conscientious officer.”

He then went on to say—

“Personally, the rumours do not worry me at all, for I know, the officer concerned knows, the Commission knows, and the Minister knows, that at no time have I made representations for favouritism for any Napier Bros. employees . . . The organisation concerned reminds me of a reptile which, after endeavouring to strike or vomit its venom on an innocent party, starts biting itself.”

The organisation referred to is, I take it, the Dalby branch of the Australian Labour Party. That branch wrote to me and I placed the case before the Minister. There was a courteous letter in which they took umbrage at the remarks of the hon. member for Aubigny and asked me to defend their attitude. I want it to be understood that, in their letter of 4 November, at no time did they attack the Minister on this matter, nor did they launch any attack on officers of the Housing Commission here or on the clerk of the court at Dalby, for whom they have a high regard. What they wanted to know was whether the allocation of homes in Dalby to employees of Napier Bros. was disproportionate to those allotted to others. The branch stated that, out of 26 houses built in Dalby since 30 June, 1963, 13 were allotted to employees of Napier Bros. They pointed out that, valuable as Napier Bros. was to Dalby, there were at least five other smaller firms engaged in the manufacture of farming equipment.

I want to point out that, when I was Minister for Transport, I had the privilege of giving Napier Bros. orders for the repair of railway wagons—an undertaking that this Government subsequently revoked when it took these contracts from Napier Bros.

The Dalby branch also pointed out to me that there are five other firms in Dalby engaged in the construction of agricultural implements and work allied to it. Those firms have an aggregate employment not less than that of Napier Bros., and the Dalby branch is concerned about the opportunities that these people have for getting Housing Commission accommodation. They are not concerned, as the hon. member for Aubigny is, primarily with watching the interests of Napier Bros.; they are concerned with safeguarding the interests of all the workers in Dalby.

If they want to make representations to the Minister and ask for information about the basis of allocation of Housing Commission houses so that they can then examine the question, I think it is very proper and appropriate that they should be given the opportunity to do so. I say on their behalf

that I resent the nature of the attack made by the hon. member for Aubigny on the Dalby branch of the A.L.P., and I want it recorded in "Hansard" that not at any time did that organisation reflect on the Minister or his officers, either in Brisbane or in Dalby. I should like to spend a little more time on that matter; unfortunately, it is not available at this stage.

I should like to say just a word or two about housing before I conclude my remarks. This subject has been canvassed very thoroughly indeed by all hon. members; but the Opposition believes that, in spite of the assistance that has been made available either through Commonwealth funds supplemented by State funds, or through co-operative building societies and other bodies, the best investment that the Australian nation can make of public funds is in the provision of easy ownership of houses for its people.

The Australian Labour Party is "rubbished" at election time with talk about the growth of Communism. The most effective way to deal with Communism is to provide every worker in this country with an equity in his own home. If provision is made for that, there will not be any need to worry about the Australian people following foreign ideologies. Because of the high cost of land, it is quite impossible to make this provision. Whatever the reason is for these high prices, I do not think there is any justification for them.

Economically, of course, if a person is willing to pay £700 or £800 for a block of land, that is proof of its value. The hon. member for Bulimba and I were in Sydney at a trade fair recently and we saw land at Surfers Paradise advertised for sale at £7,000 an allotment. I am not very much concerned about people who can pay £7,000 for an allotment or £30,000 or £40,000 for a penthouse; I am not concerned about the tremendous amount of finance that is available for home units selling at from £8,500 up to £10,000; but I am concerned about the ordinary, reasonable type of home costing £3,000 to £4,000 in which a person can, in suitable surroundings, provide for the upbringing of his family and know that, if he applies himself to his work and has an opportunity of getting money at low rates of interest, it will be paid for.

Incidentally, I believe that rates of interest for housing projects in Australia are higher than they are in most industrialised countries in the Western World. In some countries loans are available at 3 or 4 per cent. interest; but Mr. Bury stated recently that, even for assisted homes, the rate of interest is 7 or 8 per cent. How in the name of goodness can one expect a person to commit himself to pay off £4,000 with interest at 7 or 8 per cent.? The interest alone would cost him £4 or £5 a week. People cannot acquire homes under those conditions.

In my opinion, all Australian Governments should make a concerted effort in the field of housing. Mr. Cahill, who was then

Premier of New South Wales, made a statement to the Premiers' Conference that an authority should be set up to co-ordinate the work of all public housing authorities in Australia and that it should have access to funds that would enable it to make money available to people at low rates of interest so that they might own their own homes. I cannot point the finger at any individual or any Government in this respect; but, if there is a real desire for the Australian people generally to be decent, democratic members of the community, an effort must be made to make cheap housing available so that they will be able to own their own homes. I think that is the greatest contribution we could make to the prosperity and future of this country.

Mr. Murray: That is a great change from the Dedman philosophy.

Mr. DUGGAN: Mr. Dedman was a Minister quite some years ago. I am expressing what I think in 1965-66.

Before I conclude, I should like to express my appreciation of the policy of illuminating State buildings during the Christmas period or during any important events when country people are in the city. But, with that illumination, I could not help but be struck by that architectural monstrosity, the new adjunct to the Public Library. It was not so noticeable before, but, now that Queen's Park has been renovated, it is extremely unfortunate that we have this monstrosity dominating it. I have here a newspaper cutting of an article by Clem Lack with a picture of the old Public Library building. It reads—

"The present Public Library in William Street, Brisbane. In the remodelling, the graceful architectural character of the old building, erected in 1897, will be retained."

And then it goes on to explain that a lecture hall and auditorium to hold 200 people is to be a feature of the extension, as well as storage space for books. Now we have this thing as an extension. It is not that I am against the particular type of building. If it were at another place altogether, isolated, or in appropriate surroundings, it would probably be all right; but in this section we have some of the most beautiful buildings in the Commonwealth—the Executive Building, the Treasury and the old Library. They make a magnificent triangle, almost a square, and this extension is very much out of character and unfortunate. It is no good crying over spilt milk but the addition cost over £200,000.

Now that there is a £16,000,000 Government building project for George Street, we should do all that we can to provide for architectural harmony.

A purely private organisation made every effort, when erecting a new building, to see that it was not an eyesore because it was being constructed opposite the Treasury Building.

Mr. Murray interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: I am drawing attention to this. I may be wrong and one cannot undo what happened years ago.

Mr. Murray: You are quite right.

Mr. DUGGAN: The Minister has a good Under Secretary and good officers who do much of this detailed work and I express the hope that, with the responsibility for new building on him in the future, he will bear my comments in mind. He should take note of representations that I feel I am voicing not only on my own behalf but on behalf of many citizens in Queensland.

I appreciate the opportunity given for a very full debate on this matter and I shall conclude my remarks by once again expressing my appreciation of the Minister's attention to the speeches of various members on this occasion.

Mr. SMITH (Windsor) (8.34 p.m.): I join with other hon. members in congratulating the Minister and in applauding the way in which he has discharged his duties. There seldom would be a Minister more approachable and more courteous than the Minister in charge of the Committee at the present time. I am very happy that we have such a person to handle the matter of housing, which is very important, and also the matter of public buildings.

I rise primarily on this occasion to remind the Committee that five years ago I advocated this very development that is now being outlined by the Minister.

Mr. Bennett: It takes a long time to get your ideas over to the Minister.

Mr. SMITH: If the hon. member wants his colleague to get into this debate, he should be quiet. If there is much interjection I shall take my full time.

On 20 October, 1960—in "Hansard" Vol. 227, at page 841—I outlined a scheme for demolishing all the old buildings in George Street from Queen Street to Parliament House and building in their stead sizeable blocks with spaces between them. What I said was—

"We should do it as they have done in America with the United Nations Building. We should build narrow, long and tall buildings, leaving spaces between them for light, air and beautification. Then anybody who wishes to conduct Government business may be able to do it all in George Street."

At that time, five years ago, the Government was remodelling the District Courts. I felt constrained to say then that it was a waste of money. I say now, and more forcibly, that it was a waste of money, seeing that we are going to build a new court block. That will sound the death knell of the remodelled District Courts which at best were a hotch-potch, and an expensive one at that.

Mr. Bennett: It cost about £130,000, didn't it?

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Mr. SMITH: Whatever it was, it was a waste of money, particularly in view of the fact that the scheme I envisaged five years ago is apparently coming to fruition now.

A little later in the same year, as reported in "Hansard", volume 228, at page 1395, I developed this theme a little further. I said—

"The sooner we get one of those sections the less waste there will be in the Government's expenditure on buildings, such as the money spent on the District Court building and on Harris Court, and judging from the signs of activity one sees behind the Bellevue Hotel, I take it that Government money will be spent on some land there which the Government own. Unless they use ground to advantage—unless they build multi-storey buildings thereon—I submit they are wasting the land and wasting the money being put into buildings on it."

Further on I spoke about selling land in the city that we did not need and using that money to build in the section between Parliament House and Queen Street. I pointed out that the money we could have obtained from this source could have gone into the building of the modern and useful buildings I was advocating, which I considered then, and still consider, to be a necessity. As reported at page 1782, I urged for the provision of car parks between and underneath the buildings. Commencing at page 1781, I made the following point—

"My suggestion is that we raise on those sites new buildings that are much taller and of a more useful nature.

"If my suggestions were to be given consideration, and if we were to utilise the block between Alice Street and Queen Street for Government buildings, we could well incorporate in the lower part of the proposed buildings, and underneath the garden plots around them, such a scheme as is envisaged for Hyde Park in Sydney."

I went on to talk about a car park that was being planned for Hyde Park.

It is a shame to have spent money on Harris Court, which will go, and it is also a shame to have spent money on the District Court. But now that we are going to build the new courts I hope that the architects who design them will make sure that the equipment inside the courts is suitable for court proceedings. We have had the spectacle of courtrooms that cannot house juries; we have had the spectacle of courtrooms in which the witness box is entirely unsatisfactory for the purpose—witness boxes where a witness cannot write or cannot be seen by the jury. In many cases in lengthy trials the accused wants to sit down, and is allowed to do so by the court, but if he is housed in a dock when he sits down he is completely concealed.

Mr. Bennett interjected.

Mr. SMITH: Whenever someone advances a matter of importance—

Mr. Wallis-Smith: Only in your view.

Mr. SMITH: Not only in my view. It is not only my view, but it is the correct view for anyone to want to see that justice is properly carried out. A witness in a court needs to be where he can be seen and where he can write, if necessary.

Mr. Bennett: It would make no difference to your cross-examination.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SMITH: I do not know. So far as I am concerned, I would not mind. I am thinking of the person in the witness box. I would not be there; the hon. member would not go there.

Witnesses have to be in a situation where the jury, the judge and counsel can see them. In some of the new courts built around Queensland, counsel would need to be cross-eyed to observe the jury, the judge, and the witness at the one time, because they are widespread. There is a very satisfactory set-up in the old Criminal Court in Brisbane. We have the jury, and, between the judge and the jury, the witness box; they are in a very convenient situation. I submit that a similar set-up should be followed as much as practicable, but we do not see it any more.

Mr. Bennett: We have a dock in which one cannot see the accused.

Mr. SMITH: I have already mentioned that point, but your fellows over there, who apparently know a lot more than I do about these matters, drowned my remarks.

An Opposition Member: What do you mean by "fellows"—hon. members?

Mr. SMITH: I wish I could say that.

I have one other matter to refer to in connection with housing, namely, the matter of channelling Government money into the building of homes through co-operative housing societies. The tendency is developing of investing Government moneys when much more could be diverted to housing societies. The State Government Insurance Office is one such instrumentality. It is doing a little more investing in the private sector than is necessary. It gets much of its money from compulsory insurance such as workers' compensation and various motor vehicle insurances, not that the latter is a profitable avenue, but workers' compensation certainly is. That money could well provide greater assistance for housing societies rather than being used for the benefit of the private sector of the community.

There is an important matter which should be investigated now that we have strata titles. It seems to me that co-operative housing societies should be entitled to advance money for the purchase of one of these units. When we had home-unit blocks

it was understandable that co-operative housing societies could not advance money for them, but now, with strata titles, a perfectly good title is given for the unit area of a building. This block, or unit, or dwelling—

Mr. Tucker: Can you suggest what they would cost?

Mr. SMITH: It does not matter what they cost.

Mr. Tucker: If they cost £10,000, that would buy two houses.

Mr. SMITH: I am talking about the advance by the housing society to purchase them. It does not matter what they cost, as the maximum advance is £3,500.

The Co-operative Housing Societies Act contains a peculiar definition which refers to a dwelling house on its own piece of land. Surely that should not be a deterrent to advancing money for a home unit, which is also standing on its own ground but is not on a single block.

Mr. Bennett: Don't you think the Housing Commission should handle all this money so that there would be no racketeering?

Mr. SMITH: There is no racketeering at all. Much of the money for co-operative societies comes from banks; that has been mentioned already.

I submit that, if necessary we should amend the definition of "dwelling house" in the Co-operative Housing Societies Act to finance, through co-operative housing societies, people desirous of purchasing a unit which has a strata title. I emphasise the strata title for the unit because, with a unit which is part of a corporate body, a person does not get a title.

The main theme I advocate at this juncture—and I am mindful of my arrangement with the hon. member for Bulimba, which I am prepared to honour so I will be brief—is that as much Government money as possible should be channelled to Government-guaranteed societies. There has been a falling off—and a decided falling off this year—in the construction of houses, yet the demand for housing is just as great this year as it was last year. Without the necessary money it is very difficult to satisfy the need. I am quite in accord with many of the earlier speakers that it is desirable to provide a worker with his own home; indeed, it is desirable to provide everyone with his own home and the best way to do it at present is through societies. The Government should ensure that money coming into its hands finds its way into the hands of housing societies.

Mr. Tucker: Like H. G. Palmers?

Mr. SMITH: I say that there is far too much speculation in the private sector. H. G. Palmers is a good example, because a lot of that money will not be recouped. If it had gone into housing societies, every single

penny would have been recouped and the houses would be there providing much needed assistance to the people.

Mr. Lloyd: It was a very poor investment by the S.G.I.O.?

Mr. SMITH: It was a poor investment. I do not think the S.G.I.O. should go in for that type of investment. I am glad there is such an accord of thinking in the Chamber.

I come back finally to the proposed buildings in George Street. I made a statement five years ago which has not been taken notice of, namely, that eight storeys are not enough for a modern building. We have seen in Queen Street the erection of a couple of taller buildings. Yet they are not tall even by Australian standards now. If we are to build eight-storey buildings in George Street we are wasting the land on which they are built. Almost five years later to the day I repeat the plea that we use this land and use it well. If we intend to use it for an eight-storey building, we should double it and go up 16 storeys and have all Government departments in this area. I repeat the plea I made five years ago. I hope I do not have to wait five years to see it given effect to.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (8.47 p.m.): First, I thank the hon. member for Windsor for allowing me a few minutes to speak during this debate. If I had the full 25 minutes I would devote some time to answering some of the charges levelled by the hon. member for Cooroora. Every time he speaks in the Chamber he claims that while Labour was in office his electorate and the electorates of other Country Party members received no consideration at all. That is completely untrue and was said for propaganda purposes only. That can be proved by looking at the annual reports of the Department of Works and the Housing Commission for the years prior to 1957. Those reports contain evidence that in all electorates work was carried out in proportion to the money available to the Government. In every report there were the words, "Owing to lack of available finance in the loan field or from Commonwealth sources." The 1957 report of the Department of Public Works shows that 20 new primary schools were erected, that there were additions to 153 others, and that 318 classrooms were erected. The programme was continuing. Secondary schools were being built and planned. High school work was carried out in electorates held by the Country Party. At Biloela in the Callide electorate work was carried out on a high school top. At Gayndah and Gin Gin in the Burnett electorate and at Kingaroy and Murgon in the Minister's electorate, further work was undertaken. The hon. member for Cooroora complained that no work was carried out in his electorate. In that year work proceeded on a high school in Nambour. In Warwick in the Warwick

electorate, and in Gatton in the Lockyer electorate, work was also carried out. They are some I saw when reading quickly through the report. Work was carried out as demand required and as money became available.

I do not think anyone should lose sight of the fact that, irrespective of the Government in office, the Minister if sensible will take notice of his departmental heads. I do not think that there has been any great change in the personnel of the Department of Works since the Government changed in 1957. Criticism of the work carried out by the Department of Works is tantamount to criticism of departmental heads who advise the Minister. I do not think in fairness it can be levelled; hon. members opposite agree that those gentlemen have done a wonderful job, and I join them in thanking the Under Secretary and other officers for the courtesy and assistance that they have given to members in the discharge of their duties.

Some of the buildings that were completed are worth mentioning. According to the reports, new maternity blocks were provided at Gordonvale and Ayr; extensive alterations were carried out to the Teacher's Training College at Kelvin Grove; and the Teachers' Training College at Kedron was past the planning stage and the design was well under way before the present Government came to power.

The hon. member for Cooroora condemned public buildings erected in Queensland prior to 1957. The State Government Insurance Office building was built by a Labour Government, and the extensions of the block to Ann Street begun under a Labour Government were continued by this Government. Many high schools were constructed by Labour Governments. If there are any issues on which I am ready to fight with the Government—and there are plenty—one of the most important is the fact that parents and citizens' associations have to provide in schools many things that should be made available from funds of either the Department of Works or the Department of Education. As the Minister knows, the parents and citizens' committee of the Balmoral High School asked for a cover over the area where the children stand when waiting to be served at the canteen. Each time it rains, the children get wet, yet the department refused to assist in the construction of any kind of shelter. Without being asked to do so, it provided a shelter on the other side of the canteen—for what purpose, I do not know. Admittedly it is handy in that there is now an area under cover where the children can have their lunch. While it was being built, the parents and citizens' committee was paying half the cost of placing an awning on the other side of the wing for the protection of the children when waiting to be served at the canteen.

The attitude of the Department of Works and the Department of Education seems to be to leave everything to the parents and citizens' committee. I do not think that

that is good enough, and I believe it is one aspect of departmental policy that should be changed. After all, the provision of capital assets of schools should not be the responsibility of parents and citizens. They also have to provide many other things considered necessary as teaching aids and extra amenities. Keeping students dry should be the responsibility of the department. If it had not been for a desire not to see students suffer, I know that the parents and citizens' committee would not have had that work carried out.

It is also worth recording that there has been in recent times a sacking of many of the day-labour force of the Department of Works. I know that the Minister says that this is caused by a falling-off of work in some areas. My information is that much work is now being let out on contract. It is easy to see how from a purely financial point of view this could be justified.

The Minister could say that the department took out estimates on a particular job and then found, when tenders were called, that a certain contractor had submitted a price lower than the estimate. One of two things must have happened: either the estimate was wrong (I doubt this very much because I have great faith in the engineers), or the price tendered by the contractors was a cut price. The only way in which they can cut their price is by working, particularly on smaller jobs such as painting and repairs, to standards below those to which the people concerned are entitled. In my opinion, it is not right, in the interests of this country and its standards of living, to allow work to be done by people who are prepared, merely because they are doing the work themselves, to live and work under conditions that are not acceptable to workers generally.

Mr. Duggan: If I may interrupt, I should like to make the point that allegations were made that men were working from daylight till dark at the Freestone State school and the Allora Police Station, which meant that employees of the Department of Works were displaced. I mention that apropos what the hon. member for Bulimba is saying.

Mr. HOUSTON: I endorse what the Leader of the Opposition has said. We should not allow the Government to save a few pounds on a job by using labour in that way because cutting of prices leads eventually to shoddy work, and none of us wishes to be associated with that. In the long run, shoddy work has to be replaced and extra money has to be spent.

The hon. member for Cooroora and other Government members complained loudly about the fact that no work had been done in their electorates when Labour Governments were in office. I have shown conclusively that in one year their claims were incorrect, and I am sure that reports for other years will show a similar position. I say without fear of contradiction that not one Housing Commission house has been

built in my electorate since the Country-Liberal Government came to office. The Housing Commission has been told of land that is available, and I know that people who own land in the area have offered it to the Commission for housing purposes but have had their offers rejected for various reasons.

In my opinion, houses should be built close to industry. I say that not because there is a good deal of industry in my electorate but because I believe that houses should be built to enable people to live close to their place of employment. After all—I have said this before; I will say it again because it is worth repeating—every penny that people have to spend on transport to and from their place of employment reduces their income. Where housing can be provided for them without cluttering up the roads, and so on, this should be done. If employees have to pay £1 or 30s. a week in fares, this is a fixed charge that they have to meet.

I am not very happy about allowing companies—Amagraz and others—to have houses at their disposal for rental purposes when prospective tenants are not required to comply with any of the usual principles of priorities. A tenant who has a house made available to him under these circumstances is completely at the mercy of the employer as to whether or not he is entitled to remain in it. I should like the Minister to assure the Committee, through you, Mr. Hooper, that, if an employee ceases to be employed by Amagraz, for example, or any other company in a similar category, he will not be put out of the house while he pays the rent usually charged by the Housing Commission; in other words, that once he becomes a rental tenant, he is to be regarded simply as a rental tenant of the Housing Commission. I suggest that, even if he leaves the firm the day after he has become the tenant of the house, his tenancy should not be interfered with as long as he pays the required rental.

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Minister for Works and Housing) (8.59 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity, in closing the debate on these Estimates, to thank hon. members for their criticism and to thank the Leader of the Opposition and other Government and Opposition members for their kind remarks about myself and the officers of the departments under my control. I appreciate the fact that recognition has been given to endeavours by officers of the department and myself from time to time to see where it is possible to meet the needs and requirements of various members of this Assembly.

I should like to reply briefly to the various members who have spoken today. I shall begin with the hon. member for Norman, who mentioned that much more could be spent on housing in his electorate. Again I can only say to him, as I have done on various occasions on which I have heard his criticism, that we have to take into account the overall position in the State.

That, of course, is one reason why we cannot do what all hon. members would like in one particular sphere of governmental activity.

He also spoke about the conditions under which many employees of the Government in this State are working. In many respects, we have done quite a deal in this regard by providing additional accommodation. As hon. members know, we have made a statement relative to the commencement of new blocks of Government offices, and, in the Health and Welfare Building that is to be opened shortly, we have shown that efforts are being made to do just what the hon. member was criticising us for not doing.

I was somewhat surprised at the hon. member's criticism of me relative to my visit to the high school in his electorate. He is a bit impatient in expecting results. He must remember that his is only one of hundreds of problems throughout the State. A State-wide plan takes a deal of time to prepare, as I am sure he will appreciate. As a matter of fact, this morning, I signed a letter for the hon. member setting out some of the things that are to be done at this school. A contract has been let to provide an access road and other things for which he was asking, and we included in the contract the levelling off of the school grounds, and so on. I remind him also that the soil from the excavations for the proposed new building in George Street would be dumped on the grounds to bring the levels up to what is required. That was recommended to me by my officers as a practical way of overcoming the problem.

As I say, the hon. member is just a little bit impatient relative to the things that he is anxious to get for his school.

Mr. Sherrington: You are not going to tear the letter up now, are you?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No, I am simply giving the hon. member the information a little in advance. He will receive the letter tomorrow, or in good time.

The hon. member was a little rash also in his statement that no money had been spent at the Buranda Boys' School and the Buranda Girls' School. In fact, this year £2,009 was spent on the boys' school and £528 on the girls' school. He must have been absent for a period.

The hon. member also spoke at some length about apprentices in the department at present. I must remind him that in his criticism he overlooked the fact that in this department in 1955 there were 294 apprentices, in 1956 there were 348, and, in 1957, 291 apprentices in the various trades. In the last three years of our activity there were 419, 435 and 396 respectively. Admittedly there has been a reduction in the number of apprentices employed at the moment, but in the last year Labour was in office there was a reduction of 57 apprentices, a far greater number than the present reduction.

I feel that, for the record, I must give some facts and figures so that the whole

picture may be clearly represented and recorded. In the hon. member's day the day-labour force, in respect of which the hon. member levelled criticism at this Government, numbered 1,742. At the moment it numbers approximately 2,500.

The hon. member spoke of a number of things relative to the cost of houses, but he failed to recognise the reasons for these increases. He spoke of the need for old people's homes. The hon. member for Roma told us what can be done locally. Hon. members opposite have spoken over and over again about the tremendous need for homes. The other day the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made some rather outrageous statements which hit headlines in the Press, although they did not really tally up. In spite of what he said, I feel that I must reiterate the figures that I gave on Thursday last. For the eight years from 1 July, 1949 to 30 June, 1957, 14,451 houses were built by the previous Government as against 13,907 during the years we have been in office. Hon. members opposite refuse to recognise that what really counts is the number of houses provided.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition forgot to mention the percentage provision of Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement moneys available in the last eight years to building societies. It represents 3,264 houses. This percentage deduction did not apply before June, 1956. The hon. gentleman cannot have it every way. To make a true comparison the figures are 14,492 under Labour's last eight years and 17,171 in the eight years of this Government.

It has been suggested that building societies in Queensland have been cheated by this Government because they have not received a larger share of the housing allocation. That is rather a strange suggestion to come from members of a party which, when in Government, refused to foster the building-society movement in Queensland. Since the introduction in 1958 of the legislation guaranteeing loans to building societies, funds have been provided by lending institutions under guarantee to enable the purchase or erection of 4,489 dwellings up to 30 June, 1965. No-one can deny that we have achieved results by guaranteeing advances to co-operative societies. The total is now 21,660 in our eight years as compared with 14,500-odd in the previous eight years.

Mr. Newton: It would be more if they were not so lazy.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That might be so, too, but it is not always easy to raise the finance.

As to the amount of expenditure, although, as the Leader of the Opposition says, there are increased costs today and many other things which have to be taken into account, the figures are very illuminating. In the eight years to 1956-57 new loans advanced for houses provided by the Government totalled £31,691,000, whereas in the eight

years to 1964-65 new loans advanced, provided or guaranteed by this Government amounted to £66,689,000. As I said to the Leader of the Opposition a moment ago, we realise that in connection with this sum we must take into account that the cost of constructing a dwelling has risen considerably over the years.

Hon. members must admit that the provision of such a large sum of money for housing is something of which the Government can be proud. A substantial proportion of those funds, in both cases, has been expended in providing home ownership for people on their own land, including the workers' dwelling scheme. I agree with the hon. member that it is an excellent scheme. Indeed, it has the full support of the Government.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that, in providing £1,200,000 for the Commonwealth-State Housing Fund from Treasury loans and debenture sources, in effect the Government had cheated the co-operative housing societies of £360,000 in 1964-65. If all of this money had been allocated for housing in terms of the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement, 30 per cent. of it would have gone to housing societies. If we look at the overall picture on the priorities that apply, the Commonwealth-State Housing Fund obtained £1,200,000 instead of £840,000. I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition whether he would prefer the £360,000—which he says should go to building societies—in preference to the money spent on hospitals, schools, irrigation works or any other pressing developmental work, or does he mean that the £360,000 should have gone to the building societies and that the allocation to the Housing Commission should have been correspondingly reduced? We just cannot wave a magic wand and find £360,000 for building societies within our overall loan framework and not reduce the State's work activities generally. In raising this question the hon. member should give serious consideration to these works.

The hon. member for Merthyr outlined clearly and factually the housing shortage right back to the early days of the commencement of the Housing Commission's operations. He spoke of high rents and he gave us some very interesting figures. I think we should place them on record to show that labour costs have risen by 200 per cent. and material costs by 100 per cent. The cost of everything has increased—rates, and so on—and all the costs tally up. The scheme which the hon. member suggested, under which the rent should be no more than one-fifth of the salary, sounds very well in theory. However, we must face up to the fact that we have 101 different workers in different industries, under different awards, under different conditions, each with changing awards and wages, and then there are those who are unemployed. Goodness me, we could never cope with it; we would

need another army of men to keep track of what was what. We would have to depend largely on people giving a factual account of their position. It is entirely impracticable to suggest that we should operate such a scheme. I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition will agree with that statement.

Mr. Newton: You are already increasing rents whenever any small thing is done to a house.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No, we are not.

Mr. Sherrington: Even when there is a change in tenancy.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Hon. members know very well that there have been several rises over a long period; the overall adjustment has been made right through.

Mr. Newton: There have been rises when tenants move out and when sumps are connected to stormwater drains. And, when a new stove is put in, there is a two-bob increase.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It appears that that is something we could argue for a long time. The formula under which we work today is partly the formula introduced when Labour was in power in both spheres. The hon. member showed a true appreciation of the reason for housing societies and their problems.

The hon. member for Burdekin spoke of his problems. I appreciate them. We are always prepared to accept and assist people who come under a contract of sale for homes. The hon. member spoke of the deposit paid on homes. That is all tied up with the cost of the land, and so on. As much as we would like to, we cannot get away from those factors. The re-tendering in his area has been caused by the busy industries in the busy North. We have had to do that in order to get reasonable prices for our homes. The hon. member stated his case clearly and distinctly. He recognised that there may be another side to the picture. I appreciate the fairness he displayed.

The hon. member's general criticism related to the Press statement about the £16,000,000, which is the estimate of the cost of the buildings to be erected in Brisbane. They will not be built overnight. It is not as if the £16,000,00 is sitting there to pay for this work immediately. As hon. members know, £50,000 has been allocated to those buildings in the next financial year. That is the provision that has been made. As hon. members will agree, if something is to be done, the first step is to get started. In this important issue we have faced up to that responsibility.

We completed the Health and Welfare Building, which has been under construction for a number of years absorbing a considerable amount of money.

Mr. Duggan: Would you be equally grateful if £16,000,000 was to be spent in the Burdekin electorate?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I suggest the hon. member for Burdekin is quite fair; I know he would have been very happy, but I feel he did not quite appreciate the over-all problem.

As to school requirements, the total loan funds of this department are allocated to each and every department that comes within the scope and activity of schools and new schools, and priorities are allocated in that regard. The Government is fully aware of the need for works throughout the State to meet the school requirements mentioned by the hon. member for Burdekin.

The hon. member for Carnarvon spoke next. It was pleasing to hear a member acknowledge what has been done in his electorate. I am not saying that other members did not—to some extent, other hon. members acknowledged what was done—but the hon. member for Carnarvon did this freely. Every hon. member, if he wished, could have got up and said that quite a good deal had been done in his electorate. I acknowledge that in one way or another certain members did that.

I appreciate the remarks of the hon. member for Carnarvon about the sum of £16,000,000. It is true that at the moment this sum seems excessive compared with what is spent in the country, but it will be spent over a long period. I do not think anybody in the Chamber or in any department knows when that project will be completed. It has been started. In addition, large Commonwealth grants of something like £3,000,000 will be spent in the metropolitan area this year and £4,000,000 will be spent in country areas. Therefore it is not as the hon. member thought it was. Large amounts will also be spent in country areas. The Housing Commission has 90 houses at Goondiwindi and has seven under construction there.

The hon. member for Townsville North spoke at considerable length on a number of important matters. I mentioned to him the other day that 84 houses were to be built for the Air Force.

He spoke of the need for flats. We tend to think in terms of homes rather than flats.

He also spoke of Queensland being a fair way behind other States. I do not know whether he is correct in that assertion. It is necessary to look at this matter from the angle of the over-all needs of the State. It is also necessary to concentrate from time to time on places such as Biloela and Gladstone. There might be development in a particular town or district for a period of time, but that is merely a passing phase. For those reasons, it is not possible to make comparisons between one town or electorate and another; it is necessary to deal at a

specific time with specific circumstances. I say that, in the end, this is not detrimental to the State as a whole, nor is it a matter of procrastination. Many towns demand what the hon. member demands for his.

I have the impression that some hon. members seem to think that building homes is entirely the responsibility of the Housing Commission. Whilst it certainly has a large responsibility in this matter, there are other methods of financing the construction of houses.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke of the need to make loans available at lower rates of interest. In the 1965-66 programme, 121 houses are to be built in Townsville. From their criticism, I feel that many hon. members do not appreciate what is happening. Commission sites also are available for home ownership. I hope hon. members emphasise that in their areas. There is no restriction on finance in this regard, nor is there any restriction under the Workers' Dwelling scheme.

Mr. Tucker: You realise that the 84 for the Air Force will not solve any housing problems?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I appreciate that. Homes in addition to those will be built. Following a visit recently by one of my officers, 44 acres are to be purchased for the construction of a group of houses. This year expenditure from the Home Builders Account has been increased from £67,000 to £100,000. Those are some of the things taking place in the area of the hon. member for Townsville North.

Mr. Tucker: Have you announced previously that these 121 houses are to be built?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Not actually.

Mr. Tucker: Then how was I to know?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I emphasise that at times hon. members are perhaps a little premature in their criticism because they are not familiar with what is happening. They should know that Housing Commission officers are in the continual process of examining the position with respect to additional houses in all areas.

Mr. Tucker: That's a Dorothy Dixier, if you like!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The hon. member for Balonne acknowledged what was done in his electorate and expressed appreciation. Much has been done there. In spite of his age, the hon. member is very active and works hard in his area, and much has been brought to attention and attended to through his efforts. At Tara 46 homes have been provided, whereas previously there were virtually none. I admire the people who have made this possible, and compliment them on their efforts.

Mr. Newton: What were they built for—an industry?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Just general expansion.

Mr. Newton: It's not bad when a place with the population of Tara can get 46.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: There was the prospect of the discovery of oil.

Mr. Newton: That demand was not there in 1957.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The discovery of oil had some bearing on it, and probably the business that followed helped, too.

Mr. Newton: At least you are being fair, which the hon. member for Balonne was not.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: As the hon. member for Balonne said, much the same has been done at St. George. I express my appreciation of his interest and his hard work.

The hon. member for Nudgee said that this Government could not equal Labour's record in housing and he went to considerable lengths to develop that theme. I have given hon. members the overall picture, and what the Government has achieved is shown by the number of houses it has provided. I have given the Committee the relevant figures; I shall not repeat them. The hon. member implied that the Government had virtually the sole responsibility for building houses. As I indicated earlier, there is a great deal of activity in many other spheres.

The hon. member for Roma said that the majority of Housing Commission houses in the West have been built by this Government, and that is true. As I mentioned when I replied at an earlier stage of the debate, under Labour Governments the majority of houses were built in the metropolitan area, and the hon. member emphasised that point. He reminded the Committee of the position when rent control was in force. Many more houses have come onto the market for rental since the control was lifted.

Mr. Newton: But they will not accept families with children.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: They meet a need and provide a good deal of accommodation.

I was very interested to hear of the housing activity in the Roma electorate and to know that, whereas 15 houses were provided in the 12 years before the hon. member was elected, 144 houses have been built since. He gave a very spirited address on what has been done in his electorate, which is a big one. The hon. member has applied himself with the same spirit to working for his constituents—there are no two ways about that—and I again express my appreciation to him.

He spoke also of how he had pleaded with Mr. Gair and others in the past. He is not the only one who has pleaded with Mr. Gair and got nothing. I often pleaded with him and did not get anything. This Government has provided many houses for public servants, and I do not think any hon. member will deny that the whole situation has changed in this regard.

I compliment the people of Roma who have contributed to the erection of five units for aged people. With Commonwealth assistance, they were erected for £2,000 each. It is an interesting illustration of what can be done by self-help, and I agree with the hon. member for Roma that it would be good if we could do something for more aged people.

The hon. member for Cairns spoke without a great deal of heat about the difference between the work done in Country Party and Liberal Party electorates and the work done in his electorate. He probably believes that he has some justification for saying that, but he knows very well that that principle does not apply.

I checked on the 37 houses that he mentioned. Actually, 32 applications are being dealt with at Cairns at present and the Commission hopes to purchase more land in the Cairns area very soon.

I agree with what the hon. member for Cairns said about the work force in the area. I have been up there and met Mr. Tolcher and Mr. Norman, both of whom have done very good work. We have built five homes for public servants and called tenders for another four in Cairns. Those are some of the things we are seeking to do in that electorate.

I was interested to be reminded by the hon. member for Albert that 39 men are stationed in his area and that of the hon. member for South Coast, which is indicative of the activity going on in those areas by the Department of Works. At the moment we are negotiating with the Department of Lands on the purchase of some of the land about which the hon. member spoke for the very purpose he mentioned, namely, to enable homes to be built there in the near future.

Mr. Houston: Didn't he know about it?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No, he did not.

So far as the pest exterminator suggestion is concerned, we consider that our works supervisors are aware of this danger and are constantly on the alert for it. We also consider that they are capable of dealing with anything that is drawn to their attention in this regard. Although we appreciate the suggestion, we think it is well covered at the moment in the way we operate.

The hon. member for Mackay did not seem to like me very much, but I suppose that cannot be helped. He was not prepared to express any appreciation of any other member of the department either; he was

rather critical of them also. I feel that that is unfair to them because they are quite impartial and are anxious to do the right thing in every way. We are State-wide in our outlook and we do not consider any area in particular. What we have done in the North we have done in the North-west. We have built houses at Birdsville, Boulia and Bedourie.

The hon. member always tries to split Mackay into two cities. I can never work him out. We have had land in Mackay for some years and it is natural and practicable that we should use it. At the moment, we are looking for additional land in the hon. member's area.

The hon. member spoke also about increased rents. Has not everything else increased in price? One has to take those things into account and operate efficiently. At the moment, eight houses are being built in Mackay, and four are under contract. That is 12 this year. I remind him, and other hon. members, that for the first time the Home Builders' Account Fund is making money available to a co-operative building society at Mackay, and the Workers' Dwelling Scheme is available to people who want to build their own homes.

The officers of my department and I are very meticulous in seeing that approval given by the Executive Council for certain work is immediately made known to the hon. member concerned. I sign such letters of advice every Thursday morning and they go to members later in the day. I checked his statement relative to the contract granted to Woolam and Sons Pty. Ltd., and I have found that on 28 October the Executive Council accepted the tender for the erection of an electrical trades block at Mackay and that a letter advising the hon. member for Mackay of the acceptance of this tender was forwarded to him on the very same day. I fail to understand his criticism on that score.

The hon. member for Cooroora brought back many vivid memories of my days on the opposite side of the Chamber, dating back to 1947. In spite of what the hon. member for Bulimba said, they were tough days. We have a drought in the State today, but we went through a drought when we sat over there. On one occasion I asked the then Minister for Public Works and Local Government the Hon. J. A. Heading, now Sir James Heading, what was spent by the Department of Public Works in my electorate for a few years before we were the Government. At the time it was something of the order of £13,000 a year. That gives hon. members opposite an indication of some of the problems we were up against in trying to get something done for our electorates.

The hon. member for Cooroora reminded me how we could not get anything done. On one occasion when a public appeal was made for a residence for a school teacher

I gave £20 to the committee. Everybody in the district gave £5, £10, £15 or £20. That is the sort of thing we had to do to get things done in those days. We built a number of residences throughout the district in that way.

Mr. Newton: What year was that?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That was in the years before we became the Government. That is the sort of thing we were up against in those days.

Mr. Houston: You must admit that you still have not built all the homes you would like to build for public servants and teachers.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have mentioned 153, which is a pretty good effort. The hon. member for Cooroora spoke of the new look throughout the State generally. Anyone who goes to Nambour will agree that that is fair comment about the new roads, buildings and so on.

The hon. member for Port Curtis made a very good speech. He recognises the huge development that has taken place in his electorate. In reply to his criticism about housing for members of the armed services, I point out that we have agreed to make available 5 per cent. of our Commonwealth loan funds for housing for Army personnel. Up to 5 per cent. the Commonwealth Government matches £1 for £1, but if the expenditure exceeds 5 per cent. the Commonwealth pays all that we agree to spend to build houses for them. I think that is a pretty fair gesture, taking everything into account.

In reply to his suggestion about recruiting good migrant labour into the department, I point out that we are in very close liaison with the Immigration Department, and as the need arises we work that way through the department.

Mr. Newton: That would apply only to the Department of Works; you do not do that for the Housing Commission.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It applies mainly to the Department of Works.

The hon. member for Rockhampton South put the suggestion that in future we should provide half the houses for industry. This is a matter we are thinking about at the present time. It is possible that such a suggestion could be implemented in the future. We are doing just what he said about selling some houses in group areas and keeping some for rental.

Mr. Houston: People working for a certain firm would have top priority, and they would get the houses.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That has occurred, of course, in a particular industry. Naturally, if we are to provide houses for these industries we have to take men who are suitable and willing to work in the industries.

Mr. Houston: What about those who have been here for years?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: If they are prepared to work for the companies at Gladstone, and are able to fit in with the general scheme of things, they will be employed. I am sure that many of them have been engaged. I do not doubt that many of them are at Gladstone today in the houses we have built.

We co-operate with local authorities. The hon. member recognises that. My officers will appreciate it if local authorities generally will do the same. I am glad that the hon. member appreciates and approves of the policy and methods we adopt. I assure the hon. member for Rockhampton South that it is intended to proceed with the gardens at the Rockhampton police station. The drawings have almost been completed for the garden beds, pathways, and landscaping generally.

The hon. member for Bundaberg said that we were building for foreign companies which have much money to invest. As I said a number of years ago, that is only part of the deal in the business of assisting industries. Comalco is now at Gladstone; it is a settled and assured industry. The hon. member said why not make them build the houses at this stage. The hon. member will recall that there was a long period of uncertainty and doubt as to whether it would go there, and whether it would start at Weipa. As one company after another came in to form the group, each contributed to the present financial standing of the firm. However, this agreement was entered into in the days when it was part of the deal. At that time the responsible Minister and Cabinet discussed all these matters with the representatives of the firms and sought to make the position attractive so as to encourage them in every way, just as we did with Amoco and Ampol.

Mr. Houston: You are not making homes available for their workers to live in.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No, but we induced the companies to come here, and we offered a different sort of inducement, namely, a Government contract to use their petroleum products when they commenced production. That inducement was part of the over-all deal. We have done what we accused former Governments of not doing, namely, what Sir Thomas Playford did so often in South Australia. We suggested at the time that the same procedure should be adopted in Queensland.

The hon. member also suggested that we should divert material to houses. In effect, we would be diverting labour. He pointed out how it was done in the years after the war. It is true that that was done, but I do not think anyone would like to return to those days by following such a suggestion.

The hon. member referred to the 10-year guarantee by employers, and he also asked if we should be making the homes available.

I believe that a full explanation has been given of the matter and I am sure that hon. members appreciate it.

The hon. member also referred to a contractor who had fallen down on the job. That is a long story. I could give our side of it, but I assure hon. members that the position is being examined.

The hon. member mentioned a contractor who was working on the job and demanded the rise which had been granted in wages. The rise-and-fall clause is designed only to recoup employers for extra expenditure. This man did not have to recoup any expenses; he was working on the job alone, so we could not grant him an increase asked for on the score of extra expense. It would have meant that the purchaser would have to pay the increase.

The hon. member for Greenslopes is chairman of the committee at the Deaf School. I appreciate the interest he takes in this organisation. One of the very first inspections I made as a Minister was at this school. I outlined the other day our reasons for doing something at this school.

The hon. member suggested that we put lifts in flats. Unless we build a tall, multi-storey block of flats, a lift is not practicable or economical. The cost of a lift is too high for a small block of flats.

Mr. Newton: What is the difference between a block of flats and Parliament House; we have a lift here and there are only two floors.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That may be so, but as members of Parliament we enjoy many other amenities that the community does not enjoy.

I appreciated the generally fair comments of the Leader of the Opposition. He spoke about the amount per capita that we are spending on education. There are many angles to this subject. I think he will agree that tremendous financial strides must be taken relative to the development of other industries as well as other aspects of our State development. It is statistically true that Queensland gets more accommodation per £1 than any other State. The Commonwealth Statistician sets out clearly how much cheaper are our erection costs in Queensland. Hon. members know that that is true. We get more per £1 than any other State for housing and Government buildings. Buildings in the colder climates in other States have tremendous heating costs.

Mr. Harrison: That would add a couple of thousand pounds to a building in Canberra.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Probably more than that.

The Leader of the Opposition compared the 1957 classroom constructions with those in 1965. He said that that does not reflect a tremendous increase in construction. A comparison between 1957 and 1965 does not include all factors. Recent trends in

school populations have reached a stage where pupils are now passing from secondary schools into technical colleges and universities. In other words, a true comparison shows that primary and secondary-school accommodation is now revealed as a construction problem not a great deal higher than it was in 1957. But tremendous increases in construction are being carried out in institutes of technology, universities, and technical colleges, and this tremendous volume of building represents approximately 40 per cent. of the education building quota. That is an answer to the statement of the Leader of the Opposition relative to costs.

I agree with the hon. gentleman that high costs of construction are a matter of concern. I can appreciate his concern for the average working man and his family who are buying their own home. That is something over which it is hard to exercise any control.

I assure the hon. gentleman, and I am sure that he will agree, that the new Government buildings will be very pleasant, attractive, and practical, and will be something of which we or any other Government can be justly proud. I have seen the models illustrated in the Press; no doubt other hon. members also have seen them.

I pay a compliment to Mr. Dave Mercer and the members of his staff for the design work and planning and preparation not only of the court buildings but of work throughout the State generally.

The hon. member for Windsor is doing a worth-while job for co-operative building societies. I give all due recognition to him and to the members of his society, who I know are doing good work. The Government believes that through co-operative societies very much more can be achieved in this State. That is one of the reasons they were set up, and I think that they have proved conclusively to be of great value since they were set up by the Treasurer in 1958-59. They have played an important part in housing, and as time goes by they will have an ever-increasing value to the State.

In relation to the comments of the hon. member for Windsor concerning the Supreme Court, I repeat that the new building will incorporate all the requirements as advised by the expert committee set up to look into this matter. The committee investigated similar court buildings and requirements in other States and obtained information from overseas, and was also advised by the Commonwealth. I am sure that the building will delight the hon. member when it is finally completed.

The hon. member spoke of the need to construct buildings of many storeys. The proposed new Government office building in George Street will not be of eight or nine storeys, it will be of at least 15 above ground, with three levels below the ground.

The hon. member for Bulimba spoke at some length about the work carried out in various electorates. There are many things that we would like to do for parents and citizens' associations. The hon. member was critical of the things that the Department of Works does not do. I am sure he will agree that many great advances are being made in the provision of such things as the tuckshops that are now being built. The department is improving the amenities gradually, but I point out to the hon. member that there is a limit to how far it can go. It can be done only step by step, not all at once.

The hon. member mentioned shoddy work by contractors. I assure him that very competent officers of the Department of Works and of the Housing Commission supervise very carefully any work that is done for those departments. My discussions with contractors have convinced me that they have been called upon to comply with the plans and specifications to the last detail and that there is no such thing as shoddy work.

Mr. Houston: I did not say that there was shoddy work. I said it could develop if contracts were let at prices much below the department's estimate.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Apart from that, the contractors have to take the consequences if their prices are too low.

In conclusion, I again thank hon. members for their contributions to the debate and repeat that, where practicable, what they have said will be considered as opportunity offers, and no doubt something will be done about their requests in time. I again thank my officers in the Department of Works and the Housing Commission for their wonderful spirit of co-operation and the very good work they are doing.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! By agreement, under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 20 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for the Department of Works and Housing.

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

Department of Works and Housing—	
	£
Chief Office	346,354
Balance of Department, Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account	28,031,893

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.