

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 1966

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY

PRESENTATION AND ANSWER

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that, accompanied by hon. members, I this day presented to His Excellency the Governor the Address of the Legislative Assembly, adopted by the House on 6 September, in reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech and that His Excellency has been pleased to make the following reply—

“Government House,

“Brisbane, 8th September, 1966.

“Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

“As the Representative of Her Majesty The Queen, I tender to you and the Members of the Parliament of Queensland, my sincere thanks for the Address-in-Reply to the Speech which I had the honour to deliver at the Opening of Parliament on August 3rd last.

“It will be my pleasant duty to convey to Her Majesty The Queen the expression of continued loyalty and affection to The Throne and Person of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II from the members of the Legislature of Queensland in Parliament assembled.

“The Queen is the unifying centre for the peoples of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and a sign to the world of our faith in freedom.

“I trust that your labours to promote the advancement and prosperity of this great State will meet with success in full measure.

“I pray that the blessings of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

“ALAN J. MANSFIELD,

“Governor.”

QUESTIONS

ACCEPTANCE BY BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL
OF WILBUR SMITH REPORT

Mr. Chinchin for Mr. Hughes, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Has Brisbane City Council informed the Government of (a) its agreement and acceptance of the Wilbur Smith plan and (b) its willingness to carry out its obligations pertaining to the plan?

(2) Has the Council officially informed the Government of its intentions regarding the retention or otherwise of its tramway system?

Answers:—

(1) "(a) and (b): No. However, the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor has indicated that the Brisbane City Council would find it difficult to finance its share of the cost of implementing the Wilbur Smith Plan. In an endeavour to find a solution to the Council's problem, discussions are at present taking place between Government and Council officials."

(2) "No."

WIDENING OF FAIRFIELD ROAD; TRAFFIC LIGHTS, ANNERLEY ROAD—GLADSTONE ROAD JUNCTION

Mr. W. D. Hewitt for **Mr. Hughes**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

(1) Has he any information as to whether the Brisbane City Council intends to carry out urgent work to widen and duplicate Fairfield Road, Fairfield and Yeronga?

(2) Has he any information, pursuant to my representations, as to whether Brisbane City Council intends to provide pedestrian-actuated traffic lights at the junction of Annerley and Gladstone Roads?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "These are matters which come entirely within the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council. Consequently I am unable to supply the information requested."

UNIFORM SALE OF GOODS ACT

Mr. Hanlon, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

(1) Concerning undesirable practices of some high-pressure salesmen, particularly those operating on a door-to-door basis, is he yet able to indicate whether the drafting of a uniform Sale of Goods Act, which he has stated over a lengthy period as being before the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, has reached the stage of implementation to tighten the law in this regard?

(2) If not, will the Government take independent action to protect the public in this State by way of interim legislation which can be later amended as required?

Answers:—

(1) "No. The Honourable the Attorney-General for New South Wales has undertaken to refer all aspects of this matter to the Law Revision Commission of New South Wales and pending the receipt of the report from the Commission the matter is in abeyance."

(2) "I have the matter under consideration but I am not in a position to make an announcement on Government policy in this regard."

**PUBLIC RISK INSURANCE COVER,
GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS**

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

(1) To what extent is the risk of employees (including those resident but off duty) and public covered against death, injury or loss of personal possessions in unfortunate occurrences on public property or in public institutions such as the outbreak of fire at the Dalby General Hospital or other misadventure?

(2) Will he request the relevant Departments to examine the ramifications of this Question by way of general survey of the situation with respect to all public buildings with a view to recommendations that will ensure adequate cover for both employees (to extent not covered by Workers' Compensation) and the public risk in such circumstances?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "As a matter of general policy successive Governments have not taken out underwriting covers for any of the risks mentioned."

**PATIENTS' FEES AND COMMONWEALTH
SUBSIDY, PUBLIC HOSPITALS**

Mr. Lloyd, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) What patients' fees were received by the State for services at State hospitals during the financial year 1965-66?

(2) What was the amount of Commonwealth subsidy received by the State on behalf of patients at State hospitals during the same year?

(3) What are the numbers of patients treated at State hospitals together with the amounts of Commonwealth subsidy received for various groups, i.e., free hospital treatment and treatment for which a charge was levied?

Answers:—

(1) "\$3,112,652."

(2) "\$4,516,769."

(3) "The numbers of patients for 1965-66 are not available as all returns from the Country Hospitals Boards have not yet been received. For 1964-65 the total number of inpatients was 226,215 of which 176,590 were classified as public patients and 49,625 as private patients. During 1965-66 the amount received from the Commonwealth for inpatients who received free hospital treatment was \$3,823,865 and for inpatients for whom a charge was levied \$692,904. The figures quoted in (1, 2, and 3) do not include tuberculosis patients for whom the Commonwealth meets the full cost of treatment nor Pharmaceutical Benefits."

POLICE PROTECTION, BRISBANE CENTRAL
TRAFFIC AREA

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

(1) How many uniformed police officers are rostered for beat duty in (a) the main streets of the city from Roma Street to the Gardens area and (b) the Fortitude Valley area, from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. daily?

(2) What police protection is provided for the public within the Brisbane Central Traffic Area during those hours?

Answers:—

(1) "(a) eleven; (b) fifteen, four of whom perform some traffic duty."

(2) "An average of 184 members of the Police Force."

SALE OF RAILWAY LAND IN SCARBOROUGH
STREET, SOUTHPORT

Mr. Carey, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

(1) What is the reason for the delay in the sale by public auction of vacant land on the eastern side of Scarborough Street, Southport, once occupied by the Railway Department?

(2) If no specific reason exists, will he expedite sale proceedings in order to enable the area concerned to be developed?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "The area is at present zoned 'For public purposes' and requires to be re-zoned 'Business and shopping'. This involves an amendment to the City of Gold Coast Town Planning Scheme and approval of the amendment is awaited. When the amendment to the Town Plan is made, the Railway Department will proceed with the disposal of the land."

DEMOLITION OF RAILWAY BUILDINGS
FLINDERS STREET, TOWNSVILLE

Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

Has any decision yet been reached concerning the demolition or reconstruction of the obsolete and dilapidated railway buildings in Flinders Street, Townsville, that are commonly known as the ironworking section of the railway workshops and, if so, will he inform the House as fully as possible on the matter?

Answer:—

"No decision has yet been made as to the future of the ironworking section of the Townsville Workshops. The structures are in a safe condition. When this district is completely serviced by diesel locomotives, the future of these buildings will be reviewed."

UNOCCUPIED AND TEMPORARY SCHOOL
CLASSROOMS, BRISBANE

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

(1) At what primary schools in the metropolitan area are there unoccupied classrooms and how many such rooms are there at the schools?

(2) In the same area at what primary schools are there currently in use temporary classrooms and what is their number?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "To answer this Question accurately it will be necessary to make a special review of accommodation in all metropolitan schools. This is not possible within the time available. However, if the Honourable Member has any specific problem relating to accommodation, I would be pleased to discuss it with him."

DAILY PATIENT COSTS, PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

What was the average cost per patient per day at (a) Royal Brisbane Hospital, (b) Princess Alexandra Hospital and (c) all hospitals as at June 30, 1964, 1965, 1966, and the latest date for which information is available?

Answer:—

"The average costs per patient per day were as follows:—(a) Royal Brisbane Hospital, 1963-64, \$10.68; 1964-65, \$11.14; 1965-66, \$12.18. (b) Princess Alexandra Hospital, 1963-64, \$8.17; 1964-65, \$9.02; 1965-66, \$10.13. (c) All State Hospitals, 1963-64, \$8.25; 1964-65, \$8.79; 1965-66, this is not available as all returns from the Country Hospitals Boards have not yet been received. The difference in costs between the Royal Brisbane and Princess Alexandra Hospitals is due principally to the greater number of chronic sick aged patients at Princess Alexandra Hospital."

LABELLING OF MEDICINES

Mr. Hanson, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) What are the requirements of the regulations under the appropriate Acts governing prescription labels issued by chemists?

(2) In view of the many drugs now available to the public, will he consider the necessity for more details to be placed on prescription labels so that in an emergency quick identification would be possible and the necessary antidote or remedial treatment could be administered?

Answers:—

(1) "Labelling of medicines is provided for under the Poisons Regulations. Those for internal use must have the name and address of the chemist and the words 'Keep out of the reach of children'. It is customary to include on the label the directions for use as indicated by the doctor in the prescription. If the medicine is for external use the label must also bear the number of the schedule in which the drug is listed and the words 'Poison' or in lieu thereof 'Caution' followed by the words 'To be used strictly as directed'."

(2) "The greater proportion of drugs prescribed for human use are in the form of tablets or capsules. The question of labelling of medicines was discussed at the Health Ministers' Conference this year and it was agreed that medicines of this type shall be labelled with the name of the drug or drugs contained in the capsules or tablets unless otherwise directed by the doctor. Discussions are taking place with the representatives of the pharmaceutical chemists and the Australian Medical Association in regard to details involved in this decision."

BEEF LOADING PORTS

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the practice of rationalisation at present being inflicted on Queensland ports by shipping interests and with the full connivance of the Australian Meat Board, The Australian Meat Exporters Development Council and the Commonwealth Government?

(2) In view of the financial interest of the Treasury by way of Government Loan and loans guaranteed by Government sources to harbour boards, has he made necessary overtures to the Commonwealth Government requesting a cessation of the practice of rationalisation?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "I refer the Honourable Member to the Answer given by my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries to a Question on this subject by the Honourable Member for Cairns on 11th ultimo."

SCIENCE SYLLABUS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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

(1) Since the transfer of eighth grade pupils to high schools, how many primary school teachers have been transferred to secondary schools in the northern district?

(2) Has the new science syllabus been fully implemented in primary schools and, if not, when is this to take place?

(3) Is there a certain amount of experimentation required under the new syllabus and, if so, is the necessary equipment to be made available to schools?

Answers:—

(1) "Ninety-four. Of this number 75 transferred to secondary teaching at the beginning of 1964, the remainder since that time."

(2) "No. The new science syllabus for primary schools will become obligatory in 1967."

(3) "Yes. The equipment required will be made available to all State primary schools on application. The new scale of issue is set out in the *Education Office Gazette* for August, 1966."

APPLICATION FORMS FOR HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES, THURSDAY ISLAND

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

Is it possible for prospective tenants or purchasers of Housing Commission homes to obtain application forms at Thursday Island? If not, will he remedy the situation?

Answer:—

"Leaflets of information and application and other forms in relation to the Workers' Dwelling scheme for applicants who own their land and desire loans from the Commission for erection of houses have previously been forwarded to the Clerk of the Court, Thursday Island. The Commission has not received evidence of a demand on a continuing basis to warrant the construction of houses for purchase or rental and consequently does not own houses or land at Thursday Island. However, prospective applicants may submit their names to the Clerk of the Court."

SUBDIVISION OF HOUSING COMMISSION LAND, ROCKHAMPTON

Mr. Thackeray, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

When will the Housing Commission land at Rockhampton purchased from Cass Brothers be subdivided for residential allotments?

Answer:—

"The Rockhampton City Council has approved the design for the subdivision of the land acquired from Cass Brothers into 182 housing allotments and five shopping sites. Action is now being taken to survey the allotments fronting Thozet Road and Horton Street and such allotments will be available for selection by applicants desiring to have houses erected for purchase to designs chosen by them."

DISPOSAL OF RAILWAY HOUSES, KAIRI-MILLAA MILLAA BRANCH LINE

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

(1) How many departmental houses remain unsold on the Kairi-Millaa Millaa section and what is their location?

(2) Of these, how many are rented and what is their location?

(3) Are any available for rental and, if so, what is their location?

(4) Has the land previously needed for this section been disposed of?

Answers:—

“Following strong representations by the Honourable Member for Mulgrave, these matters were examined as most of the area referred to in this Question is in the Honourable Member’s electorate.”

(1) “Nine houses.”

(2) “None.”

(3) “No. The areas occupied by the fettler’s cottage, Malanda, fettler’s cottage, Kureen, fettler’s cottage, Minbun, ganger’s cottage, Minbun, fettler’s cottage, Moregatta are to be offered for sale by the Lands Department as Special Leases, together with the improvements thereon. Public tenders are being invited through the Press on Saturday, September 10, for the purchase *in situ* of the station-master’s house at Malanda. The assistant station-master’s house at Malanda is being offered to another Government Department for purchase *in situ*. The two houses at Millaa Millaa are again being offered for purchase for removal, there being no road access to these two buildings and an advertisement will appear in the Press on Saturday, September 10 inviting public tenders.”

(4) “No.”

UNSOLD NON-QUOTA TOBACCO LEAF

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

(1) What is the total quantity of non-quota leaf remaining unsold in Queensland at the conclusion of the last tobacco sale?

(2) What is the quantity in each district?

(3) How many farmers hold non-quota leaf in each tobacco area?

Answers:—

(1) “The description non-quota tobacco leaf includes over-quota leaf which is leaf of a quality which falls within the accepted grade schedule but is not covered by the Australian quota and out-of-quota leaf which is low grade leaf of a quality which does not meet the required minimum standard. No over-quota leaf from the 1965-66 crop which has been delivered for sale is left unsold in Queensland. There is

some low grade out-of-quota leaf which does not meet the agreed minimum grade standard unsold but the quantity is unknown since such leaf is returned to the growers and destroyed and only a proportion of it remains on the selling floors.”

(2) “The position as stated in Answer to (1) applies in all districts in Queensland.”

(3) “The position as stated in Answer to (1) applies to all tobacco areas in Queensland.”

CHEAPER PRODUCTION OF GAS FROM COAL

Mr. Murray, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

Are there any significant prospects for a wider use of Queensland coal resulting from the new techniques discovered by C.S.I.R.O. and other research workers whereby gas can now be produced much more cheaply from coal?

Answer:—

“This State is a contributor to the funds made available to the National Coal Research Advisory Committee which in the current financial year will expend over half a million dollars on coal utilisation research. Part of this will be expended in Queensland. However, there are no immediate prospects for a wider use of Queensland coal, but the long range prospects, probably at least five years hence, could be promising due to Queensland’s coal resources being spread over a wide area of the State. The question of economics will determine the extent to which this process can be applied. The Government will keep in close touch with developments with the relevant Research Authority.”

IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR TEACHERS IN OPPORTUNITY SCHOOLS

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

What in-service training is provided for teachers in State opportunity schools?

Answer:—

“In-service training for teachers in opportunity schools takes many forms. Head teachers and senior staff provide on-the-job training for newly appointed staff through staff talks, lesson demonstrations and guidance in remedial principles and techniques. Vacation in-service courses have been held in recent years for opportunity school teachers and indeed for all teachers in special schools. The next such course will be held in December, 1966. Senior staff of the Guidance and Special Education Branch make regular visits to opportunity schools in an advisory capacity and discuss specific problems relating to the education of slow-learning children.

From time to time arrangements have been made to enable teachers from country opportunity schools to observe methods and procedures in large metropolitan opportunity schools. Teachers from opportunity schools together with teachers from other schools in their district have attended seminars arranged by District Inspectors during 1965 and 1966 in connexion with the introduction of new syllabuses in mathematics and science. The Special Schools Bulletin which is published each term by the Guidance and Special Education Branch is another medium of in-service training. It contains articles which have a direct relevance to the work of teachers in special schools. Another form of in-service training in opportunity schools involves attendance of three teachers each year at the diagnostic testing and remedial teaching course at the University of Queensland. The Special Schools Association which comprises teachers in both State and non-State schools also provides in-service training for its members in the form of Saturday workshops. This activity is indeed a reflection of the enlightened professional outlook which exists among such teachers and the Department of Education has encouraged the Association in its efforts. Officers of both the Guidance and Special Education Branch and the University of Queensland have participated in workshops."

COMMONWEALTH AID TO SUGAR INDUSTRY

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

Has he yet received advice from the Prime Minister regarding the amount of financial assistance the Commonwealth Government is prepared to make available to Queensland sugar interests? If so, will he give details of the assistance that will be available and the terms relating to it?

Answer:—

"No official advice has yet been received but active negotiations are in progress."

RESERVATION OF LAND FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Mr. Tucker for **Mr. Sherrington**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Lands,—

(1) Has any survey of the State been carried out to ascertain what areas are available for setting aside as reserves for scientific research as distinct from National Parks?

(2) Before the development of large areas of land such as the Brigalow Scheme, is any ecological survey carried out?

Answers:—

(1) "The Question is widely framed giving rise to a degree of uncertainty in my mind as to how my reply might best assist the Honourable Member. I am not aware

of any general survey to determine what areas are available for setting aside as reserves for scientific research purposes as distinct from National Parks but from time to time particular localities have been examined in order that land might be set aside with scientific research in mind. I mention brigalow, wallum, mulga, and gidyea type lands as examples of my point. It also is worth mentioning that the authorities associated with this type of research have a policy in certain circumstances in terms of which the research programme is carried out on privately held lands as distinct from a reservation under the control of the particular authority. If the Honourable Member has in mind a survey with a view to furthering scientific knowledge in respect of fauna as distinct from flora, I am inclined to agree that his interest is well founded and it could be to our advantage to encourage this type of project. The State Department of Primary Industries is doing much work in this field and I mention the Deer Reserve in the Esk Valley, reservations in the Gulf area for Broilga life, the recently reserved area of 64,000 acres in the Brigalow Developmental area, to mention but a few. Certain naturalists, notably David Fleay have made worthwhile contributions. As I have pointed out, I am uncertain of the Honourable Member's particular interest in this wide field but let me assure him of my own great interest and my ready willingness to lend a hand to any branch of scientific research associated with our flora and fauna. I would be willing at any time to discuss his point with the Honourable Member."

(2) "The Honourable Member has particularly mentioned brigalow development and perhaps that is the area in which he is mainly interested. I think it can be said with reasonable certainty that as a preliminary to the large-scale development of the Fitzroy River Basin lands there was available a considerable amount of information on the soils, vegetation, climate, economics and topography of that area. In fact, whilst the development of this region might conceivably have taken place many years before it did, it is to our advantage that earlier development did not occur in so far as ecological aspects are concerned. At the time of planning, there was available the results of work sponsored by the Bureau of Investigation constituted by "The Land and Water Resources Development Act of 1943". Dr. Skerman correlated a considerable body of valuable information during his association with that Bureau. Dr. Isabel, who is presently with C.S.I.R.O., also published a valuable report on Brigalow lands. The Division of Land Research of C.S.I.R.O. carried out a land use survey of the northern part of the Fitzroy Basin particularly the Isaacs-Comet region. The State Department of Primary Industries has also made

available a considerable volume of documentary material perhaps the most valuable of which is the report by Mr. Johnson on his Ecological Survey of the Brigalow lands as well as Dr. Blake's vegetation map of the brigalow areas. In relation to large-scale land developmental projects carried out in Australia, I think it can safely be said that in this field more information was available in respect of brigalow areas than most if not all other land developmental projects."

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING, ALBION RAILWAY STATION

Mr. Murray, without notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

(1) Is the Minister aware that a certain Mr. Hunter of Albion, who unsuccessfully sought aldermanic honours in Clayfield, claims that he has forwarded a petition to the Minister from certain citizens in Albion seeking a more suitable pedestrian crossing to the station?

(2) Has the Minister received this petition and is his department doing anything about it?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "I have seen Press reports that there is such a petition in existence. I know, too, that the petition exists because I have photo copies of some of the pages of that petition. So far the petition has not been presented to me. I understand from inquiries made that it has not been presented to the hon. member for Clayfield. I understand that the normal procedure in presenting petitions to Ministers is for them to come through the member for the district. Neither the member for the district, the hon. member for Clayfield, nor myself, as the responsible Minister, has received the petition. I do not know who has the original petition. When the petition is received I will have the subject of it examined."

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Operations provided for by Part III—Aid to Development of The Financial Arrangements and Development Aid Acts, 1942 to 1947, for the year 1965-66.

Golden Casket Art Union for the year 1965-66.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

The Harbours Acts, 1955 to 1964.

The Racing and Betting Acts, 1954 to 1965.

The Forestry Acts, 1959 to 1964.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (11.31 a.m.), by leave: During the Address-in-Reply debate the hon. member for Townsville South, Mr. Aikens, made the untruthful accusation that I had given my parliamentary salary increase to the Cairns Aerial Ambulance but that I had post-dated the cheque to 2 June so that I could cancel it if I was unsuccessful at the election on 28 May. On a point of order, I asked the hon. member to withdraw the remark, which appears on page 280 of "Hansard" of 25 August, 1966. The hon. member then said—

"I will withdraw it, but I wonder what the hon. member will say one of these days when I produce a photostat copy of the cheque."

Mr. Melloy: That is the sort of thing that is said by those who smear the A.L.P.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: Quite so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The House having granted leave to the hon. member for Tablelands to make a personal explanation, I should be pleased if hon. members on both sides of the Chamber paid him the courtesy of allowing him to make it without interruption.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: It may be of interest to hon. members to know that the hon. member's assertion that he could produce a photostat copy of the cheque was also untruthful as no person would have access to any paid cheques but his own, except with the consent of the drawer of the cheque, or by court order. This rule is inflexible. The manager of my bank was quite willing to co-operate with me, and has provided me with a photostat copy of the cheque, which hon. members are invited to examine.

I will read out what is written on the cheque. It was drawn on 29 March, 1966, in favour of the Q.A.T.B. Cairns Centre for the sum of \$300.80, and is signed "E. Wallis-Smith." It was cashed at the National Bank, Lake Street, Cairns, on 30 March, 1966, by No. 2 teller. This is photostat evidence of the cheque that the hon. member referred to.

I bring this matter to the notice of the House. It was an untruthful statement about me by the hon. member for Townsville South, and it has incriminated me in the eyes of people in the North. It is just another example of the type of statement that this hon. member makes in the House.

Mr. AIKENS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member is attempting to debate the matter, I inform him that such a practice is not allowed.

Mr. AIKENS: I think you should protect hon. members. There is no evidence of any endorsement of the cheque; there is no evidence that it is a valid cheque.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is attempting to debate a personal explanation.

Mr. Graham: Liar!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Mackay to withdraw his unparliamentary remark.

Mr. Graham: What remark did I make?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member knows full well what remark he made and I ask him to withdraw it. I do not intend to repeat it.

Mr. Graham: Against whom did I make it?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member knows full well what he said.

Mr. Graham: I said "Liar." That is all I said. I said nothing else. In deference to you, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw it.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

SENATOR RAUL MANGLAPUS (PHILIPPINES)

Mr. SPEAKER: It is my very great pleasure at this stage to extend a warm welcome to Senator Raul Manglapus of the Philippines.

Honourable Members: Hear, Hear!

COMMONWEALTH AID, FITZROY RIVER BASIN BRIGALOW DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Mr. V. E. JONES (Callide) (11.36 a.m.):
I move—

"(a) That this House commends the Commonwealth Government for its continued support of the Queensland Government's policy of decentralised development in many ways, and particularly for the financial support this State has received for the implementation of its major projects in the State's regional areas. On this occasion it is fitting to acknowledge the Commonwealth's ready assent to the Queensland Government's request for special loan funds to finance the extension of the Fitzroy River Basin Brigalow Development Scheme into Area III defined in the original plan submitted by the Queensland Government. This is desirable for the following reasons:—

(1) The suitability of brigalow land for intensive land usage as classified in this area by State authorities has been unequivocally endorsed by the Commonwealth Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

(2) The inclusion of Area III in the scheme will raise the total area to be converted from scrub waste to production to 12,000,000 acres.

(3) The lands so cleared and improved will provide adequate living areas for 600 families.

(4) The intensive cultivation of this land for pasture and crop production in association with beef and lamb fattening will distinguish the entire Fitzroy scheme as the most imaginative attempt at closer settlement in Australia.

(b) That a resolution to this effect be forwarded to the Prime Minister."

As a member representing Central Queensland I submit this motion with pride, not only because of its importance to that part of our great State but also because of its importance to the State generally and to the whole of the Commonwealth. This scheme, which was implemented by this Government and has been in operation since the latter part of 1962, covered an area of approximately 5,000,000 acres in the Fitzroy River Basin in Central Queensland. The aim of the scheme is the development of that area to gain increased production of beef cattle with the object of having beef available for export, and the production of other primary products.

By an agreement made on 1 December, 1962, between the Commonwealth and the State, financial assistance was made available by the Commonwealth for the purpose of implementing this programme of development. The brigalow belt extends as far north as Collinsville, over a distance of some 700 miles, and up to 450 miles inland from the coast. In some parts the brigalow belt has been developed extensively for grain-growing, dairying, wool-growing, and beef-cattle fattening. These parts will be the more favourably situated areas close to rail and the more heavily populated districts. This applies particularly to areas west of Monto, Biloela, Theodore, and Moura. It has long been recognised, therefore, as being of high fertility and possessing great potentialities for development.

However, it has also been recognised from past experience that such development would entail, for grazing purposes, comparatively high expenditure and also a good deal of care in treatment. In the greater part of the Fitzroy Basin area, these factors, together with the fact that a major part of the land was held in large areas under terminating leases, resulted in a very slow development of the area. However, the pulling of scrub by heavy tractors under the scheme in that area has advanced tremendously. This pulling is followed by burning-off operations and, where the land is to be used for grazing purposes, aerial sowing of grass seed is carried out at the first opportune time. Investigations by technical officers have demonstrated the most advantageous times for these operations.

However, the development of the scrub is not the only requirement for development of scrub areas. Water facilities have to be provided, considerable fencing effected, and, for cattle-grazing in the Fitzroy Basin area, tick-control facilities have to be provided. Again, a major necessity—and development of land today requires it—is the provision of

an adequate road network. At the commencement of the scheme, the Fitzroy Basin area was badly served in this respect. For instance, the development of Area III, which has now commenced, will necessitate the provision of about 450 miles of access roads leading to the main highways, and also about 180 miles of main roads.

In April last the Commonwealth Government announced that financial assistance would be made available to develop Area III, which consists of some 6,000,000 acres. This area extends north from the Central Railway between Gogango and Comet, and its inclusion in the Brigalow Land Settlement Scheme will make 130 new blocks available for public competition. The existing leaseholders will be granted about 225 new leases over retention areas.

The suitability of this area for development was the subject of a detailed economic investigation undertaken by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. The bureau's findings supported and reinforced the opinions of State officers, and of producers experienced in brigalow country, that development of the area was a sound economic proposition. A considerable amount of preliminary work has already been done in Area III by field officers of the Department of Lands in the investigation and classification of land, and also some designing. A depot has been established at Emerald, and this is serving as a headquarters for the field staff.

We can thank the Commonwealth Government for the financial help in this scheme which has enabled the State Government to develop the area as rapidly as it has. For the development of Areas I and II the Commonwealth Government has agreed to advance the total sum of \$14,500,000 over a period of eight years, to expire on 30 June, 1970.

It is pleasing to read in a resumé of the Fitzroy River Basin Brigalow Land Development Scheme, dated 30 June, what has gone on in Areas I and II. It says—

"To date 2,494,329 acres have been acquired. Forty-nine retention areas have been granted to existing leaseholders with a total area of 1,051,693 acres. The net area made available for new settlement is 1,442,636 acres. To date 100 blocks have been made available, 75 for selection and 25 for sale at public auction.

Works completed on the 75 blocks selected comprise:—

(a) 335,906 acres of scrub pulled, of which about 191,304 acres have been burnt and grassed.

(b) 24,588 acres sprayed to control suckers and also 4,161 acres stickraked for the same purpose."

In its announcement in April last, the Commonwealth Government said that \$11,500,000 would be made available for the development of Area III. It is possible that this amount could include any surplus that

may accrue in financing the development of Areas I and II. The position will be made clear when legislation is passed by the Commonwealth Government to enable Area III to be brought within the scheme.

Hon. members should remember that this State has borne a substantial part of the costs of administration connected with the brigalow land settlement scheme. The Government of Queensland has appreciated the enthusiasm shown and the inquiries made by people from all parts of Australia, and from overseas countries, particularly America. Applicants for blocks opened for selection numbered 625, of whom 459 have been admitted to the ballots. The demand for blocks sold at auction has been well maintained, and \$1,270,043 has been realised for the 25 blocks sold to date. It is interesting to note that the upset price placed on these blocks was only \$621,435.

Public opinion is that this Government has a good grasp of the developmental problems that have to be solved. We have informed potential selectors that great physical and economic difficulties would have to be surmounted before the area could come into proper production. The Minister for Lands has warned against the temptation to overgraze, remarking that this was a dangerous short-term policy often followed by men whose capital was so limited that they had to get the greatest immediate return.

In the earliest years there can hardly be any great return to the operator from a new brigalow block. Money goes into it faster than it comes out, and there is no doubt that the droughts which have prevailed since the beginning of the scheme have retarded the efforts of many selectors in fulfilling their development programmes.

The completion of the brigalow scheme was strongly urged at a symposium on northern development held in Sydney early this year, and it can now be said that virtually the whole country is behind this scheme to bring Central Queensland into full pastoral production.

Even the economist, Dr. J. B. Davidson, who was opposed to any northern development, has given a cautious blessing to the extension of the brigalow scheme, although only last year he maintained that the development of Stage III would be risky because the area was north of the Tropic of Capricorn. He averred that brigalow farming could bring in an 8 per cent. return.

The view of other economists is that, given reasonable seasons, an average return of 15 per cent. could be expected, for the new area will lend itself particularly to irrigation farming, and, in time, could see agricultural activity outstripping purely pastoral farming.

This Government's forecast of the soundness of the beef industry and the bright demand prospects for the products have now been confirmed, and experienced men associated with marketing, such as those on the

Rockhampton Saleyards Board, have kept abreast with the requirements of the area. They have progressively expanded the yards to handle the number of cattle that are coming forward. During the year additional motor transport loading and unloading ramps were provided, together with a number of large yards, and a further 22 paved and well-lit selling pens have just been completed. The yards are now capable of handling in excess of 5,000 head of cattle on any one day.

A new bore has been installed with the necessary reticulation, and this is a decided relief to what could have been a definite problem to the board in maintaining sufficient water for all purposes. The quantity of water now available permits up to 30,000 gallons being used at week-ends for the laying of dust to provide comfort for employees and all persons attending the sale.

Central Queensland has entered the great-est phase in beef production in its history, and the two large meatworks at Rockhampton have recently expended approximately \$5,000,000 on buildings and improvements to plant in preparation for the large number of cattle that will be offered in the near future.

Not only are big things happening in the brigalow settlement project, but established graziers everywhere are forging ahead due to the introduction of improved pastures and better crop-fattening practices.

Two cold stores capable of holding 2,000 tons of meat have just been established at Port Alma by the Central Queensland Meat Export Company and T. A. Field (Bne) Pty. Ltd.

We give Mr. Morris full marks for building a mutton abattoir at Gavial Creek. These works are now completed and the killing of sheep will commence any day.

It is stressed that the brigalow lands offer tremendous opportunities for development. This is the largest area of undeveloped fertile land in the Commonwealth. Its full development will be of great and lasting benefit to both the State and the Commonwealth.

The scheme offers outstanding opportunity for land-conscious men to establish themselves in a fast developing area, on very generously-sized blocks under a freeholding tenure, and with capital readily available from the department up to the figure of \$60,000 for carrying out developmental work. The advantages of capital for development which is being made available by the department will be readily obvious to all, and the developmental work being carried out by the department in association with the settlers will ensure that the blocks are income-producing at the earliest possible stage.

Therefore, the Queensland Government gratefully acknowledges the interest, practical help and ready co-operation of the Federal Government, and of the members of those Commonwealth departments that have made such a contribution to the evaluation and assessment of the area in the first place, and

the appropriate practical financial arrangements which resulted in the Commonwealth Government making available to the Queensland Government a loan of \$14,500,000 to enable the scheme to be put into effect. The Commonwealth authorities will be kept up to date with progress in this effective co-operative effort, which will result in a rapid development of an important part of the State of Queensland and at the same time produce an effective increase in our beef-export earnings.

I say in conclusion that this scheme, in its over-all aspect, is a splendid example of what may be expected from a combination of vision and practical help by the Commonwealth Government from a national point of view, and energy and courage on the part of the State authorities who are carrying the responsibility for the time being for the administration of the scheme and the development of the State of Queensland.

Mr. SULLIVAN (Condamine) (11.56 a.m.): It pleases me very much to join with my colleague the hon. member for Callide in seconding this motion. I congratulate him for the excellent manner in which he outlined what is happening under the Brigalow Land Development Scheme. To do that, of course, it is necessary to quote many figures, and this the hon. member has done.

I believe that the time is fitting for us to commend and thank the Federal Government for what it has done to assist Queensland in the development of this vast tract of country which, in its natural state, was virtually useless.

I join with Mr. Speaker in welcoming the honourable Senator from the Philippines, who I understand is very interested in agriculture. He should be keenly interested in this debate, because this is the first time in the history of Queensland that the development of such a vast tract of undeveloped country has been undertaken. Although this development is in its very early stages we are mindful of the problems that we face, particularly those posed by climatic conditions, and we believe that we know what is the right thing to do. This country cannot be allowed to remain unproductive when so many land-loving people are wanting land of their own on which to play their part in the development of the State and, at the same time, create their own little dominion for their families.

When we have visitors from other countries it is pleasing that they can listen to a debate on a subject in which they are interested, even though conditions here may be different from those in their own countries.

It could be appropriate that I am seconding the motion moved by the hon. member for Callide because I am one of those in the Chamber who has lived and worked in this class of country, although the area of land that I, and people in my locality, make

our living from is much smaller and it does enjoy, perhaps through its geographical position, better weather conditions. We also enjoy various amenities provided by the local authorities and electric authorities which people in this newly developed area do not enjoy today but which, through their own hard work and the assistance given to them by the Government, will be available to them in 20 or 30 years' time.

I have a map before me which covers the whole of the Fitzroy Basin. It is significant that the area of the map extends to within 20 miles of my home. I will not be parochial in this matter as the scheme is much too vast for that; it has Queensland-wide effects. However, it is significant to me that an area not far from where I live has been developing in recent years because of this project. In the early thirties—about 30 years ago—the same type of development took place in the area between Jandowae and Chinchilla, which is very well known to the Minister for Lands.

I have always considered this area to be the best brigalow land in the State. I see the hon. member for Barcoo looking at me. I agree with him that there is very good brigalow scrub in the Arcadia area, and nearby areas, but the belt between Jandowae and Chinchilla has been developing for 30 years. In the 1940's, after the war, there was soldier settlement in the areas around Wandoan and Taroom. We have seen the development taking place there and now, 20 years later, we see it extending into these vast areas. This is wonderful development, which every Queenslanders should support. There has been a gradual development of this vast tract of land which, as the hon. member for Callide explained, contains about 12,000,000 acres.

The area that I said started to develop 30 years ago was devoted mainly to dairying, and the settlers played a great part in developing that country. However, because of the economic position of the dairying industry, and perhaps more because of its labour difficulties, there has been a change from dairying to grain-growing. Today, those people are playing a great part in producing what we hope will be a record wheat crop. Wheat is now growing where once stood dense brigalow scrub and pricklypear. I visualise the same pattern in Areas I, II and III of the Fitzroy Basin.

From time to time I have yarned with a Lands Department officer named Neville Cooke, to whom I pay a great tribute. He is virtually in charge of this development as the field officer and has kept me acquainted with what is taking place there. I was there a couple of years ago and found that quite a number of the settlers who were successful in ballots or had purchased blocks came from my locality; they were people I knew. I sincerely commend the Minister for describing these settlers as "owner-drivers". Developing their blocks has

been a challenge to these young people—most of them are young people—who have settled in this area. They are working their own properties; and they are not absentee landlords. They are there as "owner-drivers" with their young wives and children, and what they achieve will benefit them as well as their children. I have seen how keen they are in the face of many difficulties. We will all agree that in recent years the greatest hazard has been the weather, but their spirits have been high. The department has been kind—not unduly so—but I think this would be expected irrespective of what Government was in office.

When these people were starting out and were in the development stages and had little or no income, it could be expected that they would run into drought conditions and that the department would have to be lenient with them in the repayment of their commitments. I commend the Minister for Lands and the department for doing this in the first three years to assist them with their financial commitments. It is not something that is being given to them. It will be caught up with in the later years of their purchasing term.

I know the president of the Brigalow Settlers' Association, Mr. Doug Staines. He came from Jandowae. I meet him now and again because his family lives in my locality. He has expressed the appreciation of members of this association for the assistance given by the department, and so has the secretary of the association, who is the wife of one of the settlers.

The system of developing country today is different from what it was when my area was developed. They now have big machines pulling scrub in vast areas. A problem has been created because of inclement or unfavourable weather conditions. When I was in this area about two years ago I saw country that had been pulled, burnt, and grassed. The rains did not come and there was not a cover of grass. This led to sucker regrowth. However, these people were not deterred. They said, "We will probably get rain next year." It is pleasing to know that in recent months there were good rains in those areas. But there was not sufficient rain to provide surface water, and this is a problem. I have not time in 15 minutes to say all I want to say, so I shall probably deal further with this matter during the Budget debate.

These people have turned to agriculture. Everybody knows that with insufficient water, grass, and country, it is impossible to run cattle. I believe that in the brigalow country the plough is the answer. Many of the farmers in the area today are growing 600 or 700 acres of wheat. They are the sons of pioneering families—many of them came from the Dirranbandi area—and have taken their know-how with them. They must not be tied down to doing anything specific, because weather conditions will dictate what

they must do. I do not claim that this will be the grain bowl of Central Queensland; it may well be because patterns change.

This money was made available for beef fattening. I would say that two or three years out of every four, with good seasonal conditions, these settlers will be able to cash in on a grain crop. With the type of beef that the consuming public on the home market, and on the export market, are demanding, the right type of beef must be produced, and the way to do it is to combine grazing with crop fattening. I believe these men who have taken this know-how with them have played a most important part in the scheme because some people who drew blocks knew nothing about farming matters, but when people like that see the fellow next door with a nice crop of wheat, they will try it the following year.

That is how development snowballs, and it is a wonderful thing. I know that even today, when weather conditions are right, crop fattening is a pretty good and rewarding life. Of course, if the time comes, as it has now since the drought has broken, when store cattle are very expensive, farmers can go in for cash crops. I understand from Neville Cooke, the officer of the Department of Lands to whom I referred previously, that conditions look right at the moment. Please God that there will be an inch of rain by the end of September so that a crop is obtained, because that is how this country will be developed.

No doubt when the Estimates of the Main Roads Department are being debated we will have a chance to deal, perhaps at some length, with road construction in the areas that are being opened up. Roads are essential for development. It is pleasing to note that the road from Moura to Bauhinia Downs, through Area I, is now bitumen-sealed. This is the area that I was in when I got to know a few of these people. Mr. Doug Staines was one who went there, and I was able to go to his house and throw my swag on a bed because I used to nurse his wife many years ago when she was a little girl. She left Jandowae, where they had everything, and is now a good little pioneer, with three or four children growing up. It is good to know that she is within 7 or 8 miles of a bitumen road, and I understand that it is the intention of the Department of Education to build a school at Bauhinia Downs. With the number of young people in that area, I am sure there will be sufficient children to retain the school in the years to come.

(Time expired.)

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (12.12 p.m.): I feel that somebody in either Federal or State politics has been reading Tennyson at one time or another, for that famous poet wrote, "Sue me, woo me, and flatter me." I do not know whether the Prime Minister sends telegrams in this vein to various State

Governments of his political colour throughout Australia, or whether the Premier of this State seizes the opportunity to reverse the theme, namely, "Sue him, woo him, and flatter him." That is all that the motion before the House represents. No doubt inspired in the Cabinet room, it has been handed to a lesser member of the coalition for the sole purpose of indulging in soft-soaping the Federal Government.

Mr. Sullivan: Have you ever heard of Dr. Patterson?

Mr. O'DONNELL: I shall deal with him later.

If the motion had been presented in the form of a compliment to the pioneering families in the brigalow area and the excellent work done there by departmental officers, or even as a compliment to the Minister for Lands, the Opposition would have gone along with it. However, I say quite emphatically that this type of motion has no propaganda value at all. We can see through it, and it is nothing but a waste of time.

I should like to refer at this stage to the policy of the Australian Labour Party on development. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to read some extracts from an article that I wrote. This is what I said—

"It is important to realise that the Australian Labour Party approves of what The Fitzroy Basin Brigalow Land Development Scheme aims to achieve. As a progressive political body we are in favour of any scheme which will foster closer settlement, development and increased production that will advance the internal economy of the State of Queensland and expand our overseas trade. Therefore, we support any aspect of the Brigalow Scheme which will achieve these aims providing it comes within the ambit of A.L.P. land policy.

"Our criticism is directed at the land policy of the Coalition which aims at extension of freehold tenure over rural lands—a policy diametrically opposed to Labor policy of the preservation of leasehold tenure.

"The Anti-Labour Coalition policy operating in the Scheme is in itself highly controversial within the Country Party-Liberal Party Government for as two political parties share the partnership each has its own land policy."

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Hooper): Order! I hope the hon. member will tie this in with the motion.

Mr. O'DONNELL: I will.

I then said—

"Briefly the policies are as follows:—

(a) The Country Party is advocating restricted freehold tenure, generally on an 'owner-driver' or individual basis—an approach they claim is slow but sure.

(b) The Liberal Party contends that the C.P. process is too slow and too restrictive and is advocating unrestricted freehold tenure for individuals and companies."

That states very briefly the policies of the coalition parties.

Mr. McKechnie: What was the A.L.P. policy?

Mr. O'DONNELL: The hon. member can read it later.

A moment ago the hon. member for Condamine was somewhat amused because he thought I had embarrassed myself by putting words round the wrong way, and he introduced into this debate the name of Dr. Patterson. Let me revert to the statement made by the hon. member for Callide—"following the generosity of the Federal Government." I do not have to remind any hon. member about the 1961 Federal election and the reverse that the Liberal-Country Party Government suffered in Queensland due to its neglecting this State, so I can turn to what happened this year.

On 12 February 1966, these headlines appeared in the "Telegraph"—

"The Federal Government next week is expected to announce an \$11,000,000 extension of the brigalow land development scheme in Central Queensland."

They are very good headlines; but, coming to the small print, we see this—

"The announcement is expected to be made in Sarina on Thursday night by the Minister for National Development, Mr. Fairbairn.

"It will be the first positive vote-catching plan by the Federal Government in its attempt to see the Country Party retain the Dawson division in the by-election on Saturday, February 26.

"Mr. Fairbairn will fly to Mackay with the Prime Minister, Mr. Holt, on Wednesday.

"On Thursday he will go separately to Sarina to campaign for the Country Party candidate, Mr. John Fordyce."

Further down, the article says—

"The announcement will be the Government's first direct move to counter the development crusade campaign being conducted by the A.L.P. candidate, Dr. Rex Patterson.

"This week Dr. Patterson claimed the Government in 16 years of office had virtually spent nothing on development in the Dawson electorate."

As hon. members know Area III is well and truly in the Dawson electorate.

The result of that approach to the electors is well known. They just did not accept it. They preferred Dr. Patterson's approach to the Government's attempts to obtain a political advantage at the time of a by-election.

I follow those remarks up by saying that on 24 February, 12 days later, the Premier, Mr. Nicklin, said that he would fly to Canberra on 4 March to discuss with the Commonwealth Government extension of the brigalow scheme in Central Queensland. This deputation was three weeks after that statement was made. How can anyone say we should commend the Commonwealth Government when it adopted those tactics because it was afraid it would lose a Queensland representative in the Federal Parliament? That is the part that hurts.

Let us deal with the position where the Commonwealth Government could have given practical help to the brigalow settlers in the Arcadia Valley by the provision of telephonic services at a reasonable cost. There are 23 settlers there. They have to provide virtually everything, including a guarantee from these 23 settlers for an amount of \$2,000 a year as well.

If the Federal Government was really interested it could have done something of a practical nature to help these settlers. I have here a newspaper article, dated 20 October, 1965 relating to the profits of the Post Office. It is not losing money; on the contrary, it is making money. I am referring to this period of time because it is the specific time of the application. Another statement by John Eddy headed, "Economics for the Layman", which was published in the "Telegraph" on 6 November of last year, says—

"Why Not Cheaper Telephones?"

But for a 'conjuring trick' by the Federal Treasury, your telephone bills could be cut by almost one-quarter."

I have not the time to deal fully with this because of the restricted time allowed in this debate, so I shall now leave that subject and refer to the drought.

The drought was a calamity, but lessons were learned from it. I am pleased to say that the Minister was very understanding and from him came a revision of the conditions from time to time. I feel that Area III is going to develop in a much better way than Areas I and II, because, throughout this experimentation which has been going hand in hand with the drought disaster, there has been a broader realisation of the difficulties these settlers will face, and as a consequence a revised approach is being made so that their situation will be eased.

A Government Member: Due to a sympathetic Government.

Mr. O'DONNELL: In reply to that interjection, I said it was due to a sympathetic Minister. I am not saying it is due to a sympathetic Commonwealth Government, because it laid down the conditions in the first place. These people have had to put up with hardship and further representations have had to be made on their behalf. Approaches have had to be made on a firmer basis. As a result, I think we should have a

far better result in Area III than we have had in Areas I and II because of a better understanding of all the problems involved.

Mr. Lickiss: This was an agreement between the States when the conditions were laid down by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. O'DONNELL: The hon. member might like to say it was an agreement, but we know very well from the people who have had to put this agreement into practical operation that there were conditions.

Mr. Lickiss: State conditions.

Mr. O'DONNELL: They are not State conditions altogether. I do not think the Minister would have agreed to some of the conditions that were involved.

Mr. Lickiss: Then ask the Minister to make that statement.

Mr. O'DONNELL: I am not going to ask the Minister to make any statement. I believe he would have been in a position where he would be accepting that the Commonwealth Government was lending money to the State in the hope that from this loan much good would accrue to the State. I have a personal belief in the Minister; it is not a political one at all. I would not have him "rubbed" personally by anyone in this House.

For the information of the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha, I should like to make this point: I have 58 of these blocks in my electorate and their old valuation was \$400,162. Their new valuation is \$1,217,350, an increase of approximately 300 per cent. In the Bauhinia Shire the average revaluation is up 102 per cent. As a consequence, these people will be paying double the rates they previously paid.

Mr. Lickiss: Not necessarily.

Mr. O'DONNELL: Their valuation has gone up 300 per cent. In the Bauhinia Shire it has gone up 102 per cent. It is a flat rate, therefore their rate must be increased.

Mr. Richter: That does not mean three times as much.

Mr. O'DONNELL: I said twice as much. (Time expired.)

Mr. PILBEAM (Rockhampton South) (12.27 p.m.): Naturally, it is with extreme gratification that I rise to support this motion thanking the Commonwealth Government for the financial support it has given my part of the State. The motion specifically deals with the Brigalow Land Development Scheme, and in particular Area III, which, of course, is the area that will more directly benefit the city of Rockhampton, the central railway line and the areas behind Rockhampton.

The previous speaker referred to the fact that there is a great deal of pioneering under this scheme. That is undoubtedly true. It calls for a great deal of faith in the future

of this country and much hard work. No doubt it is an expensive undertaking, and in order to supplement the personal qualities of these settlers it is necessary that money be provided. Most of the money has been provided by the Commonwealth Government, and the purpose of this motion is to thank that Government for what it has done.

Probably it would be hard to find a similar situation anywhere else in the world, where so much fertile land has been left undeveloped for so long. The challenge to make this land productive is there. The Commonwealth Government, the State Government and individuals are co-operating to do just that. It has brought many rewards, some of which have not yet been touched on. One reward it has brought, of course, is an increased grain yield from the area. Although the production has been prejudiced by drought it still has been instrumental in the setting up of a flour mill in the city of Rockhampton, which has been a great boon to employment in that city. Already we have one of the most modern flour mills in Australia operating in Rockhampton, and a site has been obtained for a second. No doubt a second mill will be established in that city when possible, in addition to supplying the area with the whole of its flour needs, we will be able to export flour. This will provide further employment for people in the area.

Certain ancillary works are necessary to develop the brigalow belt. For example, money must be provided to establish an efficient system of bitumen roads throughout the area. I commend the Commonwealth Government and the State Government for the work that is being done in that region. I commend them also for the money that has been provided by the Commonwealth Government by way of grant and loan to construct the beef roads throughout Queensland. However, I do not entirely agree with the programme of beef roads that has been drawn up, in that they will benefit either South Queensland or North Queensland. All the beef roads provided by the Commonwealth Government in North Queensland benefit meatworks in North Queensland. There is only one exception, namely, the Dingo-Mt. Flora Road, the southern part of which will benefit the central area.

Mr. Aikens: Don't you think the brigalow farms are bound to fail because they can't control the regrowth?

Mr. PILBEAM: That is one of the problems, but it will be controlled.

I recognise what the Commonwealth Government has done in providing the money to let us proceed with the construction of meatworks in Rockhampton. As the mover of the motion pointed out, two very modern meatworks have been established in that city. The old C.Q.M.E. meatworks have been modernised at a cost of over \$2,000,000, and very modern meatworks have been

constructed at Nerimbera by T. A. Field Pty. Ltd. This development is due in part to the money the Commonwealth Government has provided to develop lands that will increase the cattle-carrying capacity in the area.

I join with the mover of the motion in commending Harold Morris for the work he has done, under great difficulties, in building his mutton abattoir. Many people did not have much faith in him, but he struggled along until his mutton abattoir was completed. I think he had a trial run this week and I certainly hope it was successful. We must remember, too, that cold stores have been constructed at Port Alma as a result of the new beef roads, and Mr. Morris has an area set aside for establishing a cold store.

Mr. Aikens: Isn't Gladstone trying to take away all this from Port Alma?

Mr. PILBEAM: I will not comment upon that remark. It is bad enough for it to come from one side of the House, but I would be just as bad if I were to answer it.

I commend the Commonwealth Government for the money it has provided for the brigalow land roads and the beef roads. I ask hon. members to consider the possibility of the Commonwealth Government's developing a scheme to build a system of main highways in the State. When I refer to "main highways", I have in mind roads that are built parallel to railway lines. When new road systems are built we are apt to forget the old system, which is most important. If the State highways are not serving their purpose the Main Roads Department is not doing its job properly, for it determines the position of highways throughout the State. Although I know that the policy of the former Minister for Main Roads, and of the present Minister, did not favour a system of national roads, we may have to consider, in view of the shortage of money, a national system of highways, positioned and financed directly by the Commonwealth Government. Over the years we have advanced a long way with the help of the railways—they provided satisfactory, decentralised development in this country—but we must, without very much further delay, get continuous bitumen highways throughout the length and breadth of the country.

When we thank the Commonwealth Government for the help it has provided, we should not neglect the possibility of asking for further assistance for the main highway systems in this State. And when we are talking about roads serving meatworks, we must not be carried away with the idea that roads ensure the success of meatworks such as the one at Mackay. On many occasions I have spoken in this House against district abattoirs, and I am human enough to consider that my views have been well and truly borne out by the example of the meatworks at Mackay. That

works has certain disabilities because of bad design. Bottlenecks have been built into it by people without the experience to undertake that type of work. The number of cattle being sold away from Mackay would be sufficient to keep that works going all the time, yet it is hardly being used. That must destroy forever the fallacious argument that the building of a district abattoir stops cattle going past its door. This is an example of a district abattoir where there are enough cattle going past the door every week to keep it employed, yet the Government is being asked to subsidise that works to the extent of almost \$4,000 a week.

The same situation exists in Rockhampton. It is claimed it would have been different if a district abattoir had been built in Rockhampton. But we have the example of 20 per cent. of two private works being made available to other operators. We offered a quota of 10 operators, yet we had the utmost difficulty getting five of them to use the works. If it is not used until a more favourable time of the year, who will carry the overhead until the more favourable time comes along? All district abattoirs have to carry the overheads whereas, with the benefit of this 20 per cent. scheme, the overhead must be carried by the two private meatworks. No-one can tell me that district abattoirs are a success after the examples at Mackay and Rockhampton. The building of more beef roads into Mackay, where there are enough cattle already going past the door each day, will not be the answer to the Baker's Creek works.

Mr. Hanson: You have cattle going south despite the two private works in Rockhampton.

Mr. PILBEAM: That is right. I agree entirely. The only way to stop cattle going away from a meatworks is to induce the graziers to enter into an agreement to sell their cattle inside the area and not to sell to the highest bidder. That is the only way it can be stopped. That proposition was put up to a representative of the graziers by the Meat Industry Committee of Inquiry, but he would not agree. Personally I think graziers should be allowed to sell to the highest bidder, but if they do that, and sell their cattle away from the area, it should not be argued that the building of an abattoir will stop the cattle going past its door, because that argument is fallacious.

There are many other things for which we should thank the Commonwealth Government. I consider that one of the most important is the construction of the Capricornia Institute of Technology at Rockhampton. For many years we sought the setting up of a university in Central Queensland. We admired the work going on in this field in Townsville and sought a similar institution in Rockhampton. After about 10 years of endeavour, during which we met,

at various times, the Senate of the Queensland University, and went south and discussed the matter with Professor Martin, we finally achieved a breakthrough and, as a result of the Martin Report, now look forward to establishing an institute of technology in Rockhampton.

Mr. Aikens: Our big problem is to get the northern students to attend the northern university.

Mr. PILBEAM: Many people were rather disappointed. They wanted a conventional university in Rockhampton, but many people—I am one of them—do not share that opinion. We are on side with the institute in Rockhampton and are most grateful to the Commonwealth Government for providing a substantial subsidy of \$1 for \$1 on the buildings being erected there at present. I understand that \$1,500,000 will be spent in the first triennium period. At present a general studies block costing \$300,000 is rapidly approaching completion, and a hall of residence is planned. Accommodation will be provided for 120 students.

Mr. Thackeray: Does this deal with beef roads, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. PILBEAM: I suggest that the hon. member for Rockhampton North read the motion. If he does he will find that I am quite in order. A little education would not do him any harm.

In the first year the enrolment is expected to be over 100, increasing in three years to more than 300. That is a very wonderful breakthrough in the field of tertiary education and, in accordance with the text of the motion, I thank the Commonwealth Government for financing this major work in Central Queensland.

There are many other things for which the Commonwealth Government should be thanked. Increased housing grants have been provided to enable the construction of houses necessary in the cities of Central Queensland.

We are most grateful to the Commonwealth Government for its assistance in these worthwhile major projects. If we advance other projects and seek financial assistance for them, I am quite sure we will receive the co-operation of this House and the full consideration and sympathetic support of the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (12.41 p.m.): I enter the debate not to speak along the lines followed by previous speakers but to sound a warning. According to the mover of the motion, this 12,000,000 acres is the largest area of undeveloped fertile land in the Commonwealth. I am pleased to see the Ministers for Lands, Primary Industries, and Conservation in the Chamber, because they are responsible for the matters that I intend to speak about.

Whilst the rate at which this land is being cleared is phenomenal, I am wondering if the land cleared can be maintained, and this is where I sound my note of warning against not only regrowth and erosion but a multiplicity of other things. If the land cannot be maintained, we will be told that weather conditions have been the cause of it.

The hon. member for Condamine went so far as to say, "Please God we get a good season." Surely development should be based on something more sound than that. Surely it should be based on the recommendations of those who are surveying this type of soil with a degree of tolerance because they hope that it will not be cleared so rapidly that it cannot be maintained, and therefore cannot produce the crops and pastures envisaged.

I know that there are at least four or five types of soil in the brigalow land. Although I am not an authority on any of them, I am, to a point, an authority on the over-clearing, for cultivation purposes, of land that cannot be maintained; the loss of topsoil that cannot be regained; and the desolate look of the land after farmers have walked off it. The hon. member for Condamine said that in good seasons it was quite a good life. The land will provide a good life for 600 families, according to the motion, and this large area of 12,000,000 acres, and the decentralisation of population that settlement on it will bring, are far too important to be subjected to the risk of bad seasons.

Mr. Aikens: In good seasons the Channel Country is the best country in Queensland, but it does not get good seasons.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: It is all good country for some use in good seasons. That is one of the reasons why I asked the Minister for Primary Industries this morning to have experimental plots established in certain areas. We have to get the know-how through our advisers, and only when this has been obtained should consideration be given to how much families can cope with. If it costs £500 to "pull", as it is called in the brigalow area, and clear a certain area, is it thought that that is the end of clearing or does the settler suddenly remember that two years hence he may have to spend a similar amount?

Where will the money come from? Does the settler realise that if there is not a good growth of grass, wind erosion may lay the foundation for serious water erosion? I have seen many areas of bare ground on which, under the influence of the hot sun—the sun is hot in the brigalow areas—the top soil has powdered and blown away, and then the rain has come and washed more soil away. It can be the beginning of a vicious circle if the land is not maintained correctly, and money is needed to maintain it.

I do not intend to say any more at this stage. I do not think the issue should be clouded or cluttered up, and I am not bringing politics into this debate. We want the

soil of Queensland to remain here, not be blown away or washed into the Pacific Ocean, and this can happen in any river basin in which large areas of land that are cleared indiscriminately cannot be brought into production and maintained as was envisaged when the scheme was implemented. I hope that the appropriate Ministers will watch the position closely and avoid mistakes that may have been made already in the Fitzroy River Basin Brigalow Land Development Scheme.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (12.47 p.m.): From the political as well as the economic point of view this is one of the most inappropriate and inopportune motions that has ever been moved for consideration by this Assembly. History shows the shabby financial treatment that the Commonwealth Government has given not only to the Country-Liberal Government of Queensland but to many former Labour Governments. In spite of this, we are asked on this occasion to support a motion that thanks and commends the Commonwealth Government for its assistance to the Queensland Government in the development of decentralised industries. In addition, the motion suggests that a copy of the resolution agreed to by this Parliament should be sent to the Prime Minister of Australia at a time when the Treasurer of Queensland, Mr. Chalk, has indicated to the people of this State that the Government's attitude to the Commonwealth Government is going to stiffen because of the shabby treatment that the State has received at the hands of the Commonwealth Government.

Let me now compare the treatment received by Queensland with that received by some of the other Australian States. The motion moved by the hon. member for Callide refers particularly to the Brigalow Land Development Scheme, but the financial assistance given by the Commonwealth Government for that scheme compares very unfavourably with the assistance it has given to Western Australia for a similar scheme. For the Brigalow Land Development Scheme in Queensland, the Commonwealth Government is to make available, on the projects up to Stage III (the original scheme), interest-bearing advances to a limit of \$14,500,000 over a period of five years, interest to be capitalised as at 15 July, 1967, and repayment to be made by equal half-yearly instalments over 20 years, commencing in 1968.

Up to 30 June, 1966, a loan of \$6,200,000 has been made available to the Queensland Government. For northern development in Western Australia—I ask hon. members to bear this clearly in mind when considering the motion—non-repayable grants amounting to \$15,524,000 and loans to an amount of only \$1,476,000 have been made available to the Western Australian Government. These moneys were made available by way of a direct grant for the Ord River Scheme, the replacement of the Derby jetty, the

Exmouth township—an amount of \$1,030,000, which represents 50 per cent. of the total cost of the construction—and the Broome jetty to the extent of \$3,000,000, 50 per cent. only to be repayable. For the Ord River irrigation project and the Wyndham jetty there have been grants of \$10,000,000 and \$7,000,000. That is only for the development of the northern portion of Western Australia.

Compare that treatment by the Commonwealth Government with that of Queensland. All the money that has been made available to Queensland is repayable by the Queensland Government in half-yearly instalments over a period of 20 years.

Even with the beef roads we find that a similar position exists in the whole of the administration and the treatment by the Commonwealth Government of Western Australia as compared with Queensland. In Western Australia the grant for beef roads is a direct, non-repayable grant.

I have the figures for the beef-cattle roads as at 30 June, 1966. The grant to Queensland was \$9,696,000, and there were loans to the extent of \$6,298,000. To Western Australia, which was a direct, non-repayable grant, it amounted to \$6,900,000. I believe also that a smaller loan has since been made available to the extent of some \$18,000 escalating forward from here on. The impact on Consolidated Revenue in Queensland of this assistance, which, as the hon. member for Callide has said, was so generously made available to the Queensland Government, will have its effect on the financing and the budgeting of the State of Queensland.

The Treasurer of Queensland knows that within a few years we will be saddled not with the ordinary interest payments to the Commonwealth Government but with amortisation payments on the reconstruction of the Mt. Isa railway line over 20 years, as well as the Brigalow Land Development Scheme amortisation. That is money which is made available by way of loan, not by way of direct grant as in the case of schemes which are assisted by the Commonwealth Government in other States.

Even in New South Wales—a State which, I would say, would be much more financially capable of looking after its own affairs than Queensland—we find that in respect of the Northern Rivers area—the Clarence River, the Macleay River, the Richmond River, the Tweed River and the Shoalhaven River—an amount of \$5,500,000 has been made available as a direct grant, a matching grant, to ease the burden of the local authorities in flood mitigation work. This is being made available by the Commonwealth Government to New South Wales, but similar money is not being made available to Queensland. The reason for that is that this Government is incapable of putting forward a sufficiently adequate case to the Commonwealth Government, as has happened in other States of the Commonwealth.

We are asked here by the hon. member for Callide to agree to a motion commending the Commonwealth Government for its treatment of Queensland. The forwarding of such a resolution as this would place this Parliament in the position of being a stray, starving dog, and of giving thanks for a stray morsel of meat, or a bone that has no meat on it. That is the position in which this Parliament is being placed by a motion to this effect. If there is to be a stiffening of the attitude of this Government towards the Commonwealth Government, do not let us have this type of motion coming before Parliament.

Mr. Aikens: It is like kissing the boot that kicked you.

Mr. LLOYD: We have been kicked for so long that apparently the Government is prepared to keep on being kicked. It is ridiculous that hon. members opposite should be trying to convince this Parliament that such a resolution should be sent to the Prime Minister. If it ever reached the Prime Minister what chance would the State Treasurer, with his so-called stiff attitude towards the Commonwealth Government, have of getting additional assistance? Look what happened at Weipa and the decentralised development, as hon. members on the Government benches call it. A sum of \$11,000,000 has to be spent by this Government for the construction of a township and harbour facilities to enable the bauxite production to proceed.

That is decentralised development, but what is the attitude of the Commonwealth Government towards this project? What money has it made available to the Queensland Government towards the cost of the township and the cost of the harbour? Is it the 50 per cent. it provided for the Exmouth township, the Derby jetty or the Broome jetty? Fifty per cent. of the total cost of those projects was made available to the Western Australian Government, but for the Weipa project, out of a total cost of \$11,000,000, the Commonwealth Government has provided only a measly \$3,200,000. It will cost the taxpayers of Queensland \$11,000,000 for the construction of the township and harbour at Weipa, but the Commonwealth Government will make available to the Queensland Government only the paltry sum of \$3,200,000. In Western Australia a full 50 per cent. of the cost of its projects was made available to the Government of that State as a non-repayable grant.

For a long time the Government has been talking about northern development and how it intends to assist it, but we have heard very little lately about approaches to the Commonwealth Government on Queensland's northern development. At one time nothing that was going on in Northern Queensland was being assisted by the Commonwealth Government, yet day after day schemes in Western Australia were going ahead towards which the Commonwealth Government was

making a generous contribution. In some instances, when schemes were very costly the full amount was made available to the Western Australian Government as a non-repayable grant for northern development.

An amount of \$6,000,000 is being made available by the Commonwealth Government to reimburse the Tasmanian Government for the construction of the Gordon River Road to enable the full potential of hydro-electric power in Tasmania to be realised. This money is being made available to Tasmania for development in the southern part of Australia, not for northern development. There is no responsibility on the Tasmanian Government to repay one penny of the cost of constructing the Gordon River Road.

It is all so farcical; it is an indication of the complete disunity within the Government parties at the present time, that, on the one hand, the State Treasurer tells the Press that he is going to stiffen his attitude towards the Commonwealth Government and that it is necessary that the Commonwealth Government make more assistance available to the Queensland Government, while, on the other, the hon. member for Callide asks us to agree to a resolution going forward from the Queensland Parliament thanking Mr. Holt and his Government in Canberra for the assistance given to Queensland.

What a ridiculous state of affairs it is when we have the State Treasurer saying these things, on the one hand, while, on the other, the Government is asking that a resolution go forward to the Commonwealth Government thanking it for something that we have never received! Whatever we get we have to pay for dearly. Like Shylock, the Commonwealth Government wants its pound of flesh. At all times the Commonwealth Government is taking everything it possibly can from this State by way of export earnings, but it is returning nothing to us.

Let us forward a resolution insisting that the Commonwealth Government accept its full responsibility, from a national point of view, to the people who are living in this State and for the necessary development of our industries to enable the State to give better service to its people.

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

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

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING AGREEMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Minister for Works and Housing) (2.16 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to authorise the execution for and on behalf of the

State of Queensland of a further agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the several States of the Commonwealth in relation to housing, and for other purposes."

In brief, the Bill provides for the extension with a few modifications, for five years, of the 1961 Agreement, the period covered by that agreement having expired on 30 June, 1966.

Since the Second World War agreements have been made between the Commonwealth and the States in respect of housing, and these are commonly described as follows:—

From 1945 to 1956—The 1945 (or "Old") Agreement

From 1956 to 1961—The 1956 (or "New") Agreement

From 1961 to 1966—The 1961 (or "New") Agreement

The 1956 Agreement departed in certain major principles from the 1945 Agreement, while the 1961 Agreement was substantially an extension of the 1956 Agreement with minor adjustments. The 1966 Agreement, as I have said, will virtually be an extension of the 1961 Agreement with minor modifications.

The main differences between the 1945 and subsequent agreements are—

(i) The 1945 Agreement provides for rebates of rent on the basis of income and for the Commonwealth to meet 60 per cent. of excess disbursements over receipts in a year;

(ii) The subsequent agreements do not provide for rental rebates or for the Commonwealth to share any losses, and include the provisions for housing for the Armed Services—we must be prepared to pay for Army housing up to 5 per cent. of our allocation of funds under the Housing Agreement and the Commonwealth pays what is required over and above that amount—and for diversion of 30 per cent. of the agreement moneys to building societies which were not in the 1945 Agreement.

I am sure that there is no need for me to take up the time of the Committee in making out a case for more houses. All hon. members agree on this, and while hon. members opposite may differ from the Government in regard to some details of how and where the houses should be built I know that we share common ground in striving to secure more homes for both ownership and rental.

At this stage, might I commend certain hon. members on both sides of the Chamber for their very keen participation in co-operative housing societies. I thank hon. members for their enthusiasm, the goodwill they have engendered, and the work they have done in this particular activity in our State.

It is the practice for Housing Ministers of the various States to meet annually. These conferences are helpful and informative, and

here again party politics play no part. While the need for more houses is Australia-wide, the particular problems vary from State to State. They are entirely different in many respects. As an example, we have found that New South Wales and Victoria do not only share our common problem of a housing shortage but they are also having to face up to the considerable expense of slum clearance and rehousing of the present residents of the condemned premises, as well as providing homes for an ever-increasing number of newly married people, migrants, etc. While Queensland does not have slum clearance as a major problem we do have a problem which, for example, hardly occurs in Victoria, namely, vast distances. In Queensland we are called on to provide houses in centres remote from the capital city, and during the past financial year we had houses under construction in no fewer than 109 localities other than the City of Brisbane. We have built in Birdsville, Burketown, Boulia, and many other inland towns.

There has been very considerable discussion with the Commonwealth in regard to an extension of the Housing Agreement. At the suggestion of the Commonwealth a meeting took place in Canberra in July, 1965. Preliminary discussions took place to discover the thoughts and views of each State. Queensland was represented by the Housing Commissioner, Mr. Campbell, and the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Redwood, both of whom have had considerable experience for many years in the Queensland Housing Commission.

In March of this year the State Housing Ministers met in Conference in Adelaide and we were pleased that the Commonwealth Minister for Housing—Senator the hon. Dame Annabelle Rankin, D.B.E.—could join with us as most of our discussion related to the Agreement which I am now submitting to Parliament.

May I digress for a moment to express my pleasure that we have, in the person of Dame Annabelle Rankin, a very competent and understanding Queenslander in the important office of Commonwealth Minister for Housing.

As hon. members are well aware, our State housing authority is the Queensland Housing Commission. The Commission operates under the State Housing Acts, 1945 to 1965, and also under the various Housing Agreement Acts which Parliament passes from time to time. I might explain that I propose to introduce a further Bill very shortly to amend the State Housing Acts to increase the eligibility for free life insurance and to make some procedural adjustments to facilitate the work of the Commission. The activities of the Commission dovetail the Housing Agreements into the Commission's functions and responsibilities under the State Housing Acts, and

it is very difficult to discuss the Housing Agreement Acts and avoid references to the State Housing Acts.

Since the revival of housing in 1944-45 to 30 June, 1966, the following are the annual completions of dwellings by or through the Housing Commission or co-operative societies financed with Housing Agreement moneys from the Home Builders' Account, and for the disbursement of which the Commission is responsible:—

Year	Housing Commission	Home Builders' Account	Total
1944-45	131	..	131
1945-46	417	..	417
1946-47	751	..	751
1947-48	840	..	840
1948-49	1,047	..	1,047
1949-50	1,013	..	1,013
1950-51	1,230	..	1,230
1951-52	2,076	..	2,076
1952-53	2,314	..	2,314
1953-54	2,105	..	2,105
1954-55	2,047	..	2,047
1955-56	1,754	..	1,754
1956-57	1,912	41	1,953
1957-58	1,504	185	1,689
1958-59	1,781	378	2,159
1959-60	1,452	462	1,914
1960-61	1,746	387	2,133
1961-62	2,006	469	2,475
1962-63	1,798	458	2,256
1963-64	1,876	497	2,373
1964-65	1,744	428	2,172
1965-66	1,702	485	2,187
	33,246 dwellings	3,790 dwellings	37,036 dwellings

The Housing Agreement is primarily one of finance. In effect, however, the position is that each State must determine, in the light of its own over-all permissible loan raisings within the framework of the Loan Council, what proportion of its total Loan funds it can afford to allocate for housing.

Mr. Lloyd: It depends to a great extent on how much you have.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes. In deciding this, a State has to weigh the relative urgencies of all its responsibilities, such as schools, hospitals, roads, primary industries, water supply and irrigation, and so on. When the State has determined the amount of its loan raisings that it can allocate to housing, subject to Commonwealth concurrence with such amount, the Housing Agreement then operates so that the interest payable to the Commonwealth on that amount is 1 per cent. less than the long-term bond rate. The agreement also provides that the Commonwealth may advance additional money for housing for the armed forces. The machinery of the Housing Agreement operated last financial year so as to enable the Commonwealth to provide a special additional allocation to stimulate the housing industry. Queensland received \$1,897,000 of this special loan allocation. Hon. members will recall that we in Queensland received that special allocation, and about three-quarters of it was spent in the Belmont electorate, on the Wecker Road Estate.

In regard to housing for serving members of the armed forces, the view is sometimes expressed that this should be provided by the Commonwealth. However, I think many hon. members will agree with me when I say that it is a compliment to the States and the administration of State housing authorities that the Commonwealth prefers to use the State facilities and organisation, and this attitude, I feel, is one to be encouraged.

Mr. Walsh: That would be all right if they gave you more money.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: There could be quite a few arguments on that, too. No-one would ever refuse additional money.

Mr. Sherrington: I think there is a tendency on the part of the Federal Government to lessen its obligation to build houses for serving members of the armed forces.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No, I would not say that. The Commonwealth has shown no reluctance to provide additional loan funds to the State for this purpose. In the 10 years in which this part of the agreement has been in force, the State has allocated \$3,078,600 of Housing Agreement money for this purpose, and the Commonwealth has provided \$6,606,068 by way of supplementary loans.

Mr. Lloyd: You have had several special grants from the Commonwealth for homes for members of the defence forces in that \$6,606,068.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That could be so.

Mr. Lloyd: There was one in particular, for homes at Gaythorne, which was not the subject of any subsidy; it was a direct grant.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That could be so.

The Commonwealth has thus found \$2.15 for every dollar provided by the State. The arrangements for the current year provide for the State to allocate \$317,100 and the Commonwealth to find \$1,182,900, which is three and a-half times the amount allocated by the State. The houses are rented to the Commonwealth, which receives no concession in the calculation of rent.

Mr. Lloyd: Would that allocation from the State include the vacated homes?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No. I think we have to make the full 5 per cent. available in this allocation.

Another question arising out of the 1956 Agreement is whether this State really gains—this question has been raised by hon. members from time to time—from the diversion of Housing Agreement funds to co-operative societies. Hon. members will be well aware that, because of the efficiency and generous terms of the Workers' Dwelling scheme, which the State had operated from 1909, and the encouragement given by the

State—I commend former Labour Governments for that—to the sale of houses erected under the 1945 Agreement, the building society movement played a very small part in housing in Queensland prior to 1956. In that year, the Labour Government that was in office agreed to the Commonwealth's proposal to divert a percentage of agreement moneys to co-operative building and housing societies. There is no doubt in my mind that such moneys could have been utilised in the State-wide operations of the Housing Commission at least as effectively and efficiently as through the societies.

Mr. Walsh: Did you say the State Governments agreed?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, the Labour Government agreed to this money being diverted.

Mr. Walsh: I think you ought to qualify that a bit. They agreed under duress.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I thought I was kind to the former Government by saying that it agreed to it. What the hon. member has said detracts a little from my statement.

Mr. Lloyd: If they had not agreed to it, they would not have been a party to the agreement and they would have had to pay the long-term bond rate for the same money.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: However, it must be realised that, in diverting this money to societies, the purpose has been not only to spend the particular allocation but also to encourage and foster the society movement so that it will actively seek and attract additional funds to housing from private sources.

I am sure that the hon. member for Kedron will appreciate that it has had that effect. It is an important aspect of housing, and the societies have attracted \$32,163,000 from private money, which the Government has guaranteed. From the 30 per cent. and the 40 per cent. that has been allocated from the home-builders' account has come \$22,657,341.

Mr. Lloyd: You know as well as I do that you have cheated on the building societies by subsidising from your loan funds.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No.

I am sure hon. members will agree that we have done a very wise and good thing, because a total of \$54,820,341 has been channelled through the societies from this fund, together with the amount that they have been able to get from private sources and that has been guaranteed by the Government. That has helped very considerably in the provision of housing in this State. As a result, we now have in Queensland a very healthy society movement. I am pleased to lend my assistance to the movement, particularly on the lines of encouraging the formation of societies in towns such

as Mt. Isa, outside the capital city, which play a very important part in the State's economy. The Housing Commission has very loyally carried out Government policy in respect of co-operative societies, particularly in establishing, from the outset, acceptable standards of construction. I am sure the hon. member for Belmont will agree with that, because he takes a very keen and active interest in this subject.

The Bill that I am now introducing follows the pattern of the 1961 legislation. Clauses 2 to 7 set out definitions, authorise the execution of the agreement, give the agreement the force of law, authorise the Treasurer to make loans to approved institutions from the home-builders' account, authorise approved institutions to receive loans from the Treasurer, and establish the security of loans made by the Treasurer.

Clause 8 of the Bill deals with deposit on sale and is the exercise by the State of its rights under the agreement to fix the terms and conditions of sales of houses erected with agreement money. This clause establishes a minimum deposit of \$500 for sales under the new agreement (unless otherwise determined by Order in Council) and is substantially in accordance with section 6 of the Commonwealth and States Housing Agreement Act of 1956.

The 1966 Agreement is set out in the schedule to the Bill as an extension of the 1956 and 1961 Agreements, with certain amendments. This procedure follows the administrative pattern adopted in 1961, when that agreement was enacted as an extension of the 1956 Agreement.

The proposed amendments do not disturb the basic principles of the 1956 Agreement, and, for the most part, are machinery provisions necessary to extend the application of the agreement to 1970-71.

Clause 2 provides for the extension of the definition in the existing agreement of "Member of the Forces". The effect will be to include persons who, whilst members of the defence forces, served in South Vietnam or Malaysia or any other area which may be declared for the purposes of repatriation benefits. It will cover everyone in the forces.

Clauses 3 to 6 amend the time periods in the agreement to include the further five years, 1966-71.

Clause 7 deletes subclause (2) of clause 11 of the existing agreement which provided that, unless the Commonwealth and the appropriate State Minister agree, advances may not be used by a State to erect outside the inner metropolitan area a block of flats exceeding three storeys in height above the main entrance level. Some States considered this provision to be unduly restrictive and the Commonwealth agreed to delete it.

Mr. Houston: If you had to build a three-storey block, would you see that a lift went into the building?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It would depend on how the building was constructed, and whether a lift was necessary.

Clause 8 proposes a further amendment to the existing agreement in regard to the standard of dwellings provided for serving members of the armed forces. The existing agreement provides that dwellings erected by the States for serving members of the forces shall be of a size and standard normally erected by the State in pursuance of the provisions of the agreement. The Commonwealth seeks to permit a size and standard of dwelling which accords with the services, scales and standards of accommodation as issued under the authority of the Defence Department.

Mr. Lloyd: That means that because of this, dwellings for the Defence Forces will be so much more expensive. Lots of homes will have to be built.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I can assure the hon. member that there will be very little difference.

Mr. Lloyd: That was not the case in Townsville when the dispute was on.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: This is something new which the Commonwealth wanted to include in the agreement, and it wanted the various States to do something in this regard. We are quite happy with it. There is not a great deal of difference. As the agreement stands, there is doubt whether some States may use advances to erect Service dwellings in accordance with these approved scales and standards. The proposed amendment removes any such doubt. However, there is no compulsion on the State, and the appropriate State Minister may agree, at the request of the Commonwealth, to adopt the Defence Services Scale. On the other hand, we could object. Queensland sees no objection to the amendment as there is no substantial variation between the scale and our general practices.

Clause 9 proposes the insertion of a new subclause (3AA) and a new subparagraph, and consequential changes in clause 16 of the existing agreement. The amendment is designed to assist people in rural areas who are often deprived of the benefits of the Home Builders' Account provisions because there are no building or housing societies operating in their areas. This was not raised by Queensland, as the Workers' Dwelling scheme is State-wide. However, the amendment was not opposed and Queensland, if it so desires, may take advantage of it.

The proposed amendment permits a State to allocate during each of the five years a portion of the moneys available in the Home Builders' Account for lending to persons seeking to buy or build homes in rural areas, and to use the facilities of a Government instrumentality for such purpose. For this purpose a rural area would be

regarded as an area in which there is no building society and in which it would be difficult to form one and administer it efficiently.

The amendment will do away with annual Commonwealth approvals for allocations to Government lending institutions for loans to rural areas, and provides for approval by the Commonwealth to an arrangement that would apply to advances over the 5-year period. The use of this provision would be at the discretion of the State.

Clause 10 provides for any interim advances which may be made after 1 July, 1966, and prior to the coming into force of the new agreement.

Clause 11 provides that the 1956-61 Agreement, as amended by this agreement, shall be known as the 1956-66 Housing Agreement.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) (2.43 p.m.): Let me preface my remarks with an expression of appreciation to the Minister for the courtesy extended to me, as a member of the Opposition, in inviting me to accompany him, the Commonwealth Minister for Housing—Dame Annabelle Rankin—and the Commissioner of Housing on an inspection of the latest flats and other housing projects in my electorate since Parliament resumed. On behalf of the Opposition I appreciate the courtesy that was extended to us, and particularly to me as chairman of the Opposition's Housing Committee.

It was very interesting to listen to what the Minister said about the new agreement. In introducing the Bill he traced the history of the various agreements drawn up between the Commonwealth and the States. This is the fourth agreement, and it will be known as the 1956-66 Housing Agreement. From time to time there has been much criticism in this Chamber about the way the Australian Labour Party operated under the first agreement, known as the 1945-56 Agreement. I am pleased that the Minister touched on the history of these agreements because, whatever may be said about them, the States are only the agents, as was pointed out by some Opposition members who interjected when the Minister was introducing this measure.

It has been said that no alternative is open after the Housing Ministers have met and the case has been placed before the Federal Housing Minister. It is then taken to the Federal Cabinet and put before the Federal Parliament. Having passed that stage we have either to accept the agreement "as is," or suffer what we suffered in 1956. Those are the facts.

If any reflection should be cast on the way in which the agreement may have operated during our time as the Government, there must also be a reflection cast on the Federal Government. Even though the 1945-56 Agreement—known as the Chifley

Agreement—was drawn up when the A.L.P. was in power in the Federal sphere, that Government left the Federal Treasury benches in 1949 and the present Federal Government controlled and operated the agreement for 6½ years before the new agreement was reached in 1956. Despite all the assertions made in this Chamber since I have been here about what we should have done or did not do, the responsibility rests with the person whose duty it was to see that these agreements were carried out by the States.

The Minister pointed out quite clearly that when the agreement was renewed in 1956 the rental rebate clauses were withdrawn. That is true. I do not want to go into this very deeply because other hon. members on this side of the Chamber will refer to various points. However, during the second-reading debate in the Federal House, Senator Dame Annabelle Rankin said—

“The 1956 Agreement provided that the Commonwealth would make advances to the States at a concessional rate of interest, in practice 1 per cent. below the long-term Commonwealth bond rate. It is left to the States themselves to decide how the interest concessions may best be used to meet the cost of rental rebates to needy families, and assist the financing of home sales.”

I have believed for some time that under the new agreement rental rebates were not available but, in the Commonwealth Minister's words, as printed in “Hansard”, it is left to the Government of the day. It is left open to the Government as to how the 1 per cent. interest is used, whether it is used to assist families in distress who cannot meet their rent commitments, or commitments in purchasing a home. I wonder if this is how the situation was arrived at when we hear so much about the £25 deposit for homes in this State under the 1945-56 Agreement.

Mr. Bromley: It is a farce.

Mr. NEWTON: It is a farce to a certain extent. It means that if a person puts down a £25 deposit he must pay an extra £1 a week in his rental until he has paid the required deposit of £250 before he actually becomes the purchaser of the home.

I was very interested to hear the opening remarks in this debate. There is no doubt that finance plays a very important part in the building of homes in Queensland, and, while we play only a small part as a Government, there should be no relaxation in any way in this matter.

Prior to the last State election certain organisations, as reported in the Press, were supposed to be meeting the State and Commonwealth Ministers for Housing, pointing out the serious situation in this State. Yet we find that in the agreement now being presented to us there is no extension, as we hoped there would be, in the

funds being made available by the Commonwealth to the States to overcome this problem.

Mention has been made of the amount allocated to co-operative building societies. We all appreciate the role that has been played by that movement. Many hon. members, both Government and Opposition, are directors of those societies. It is time that the Commonwealth Government appreciated what is being done by these societies to meet the 30 per cent. allocation that is to be given to them over and above the ordinary allocation that would be granted for housing purposes in this State.

The co-operative building societies today have the same difficulty as other building organisations, namely, difficulty in obtaining the necessary finance to carry on their work. Unfortunately, some societies got money from the Home Builders' Account and then endeavoured to raise loans by other means, and were successful. There are quite a number of co-operative building societies that have done nothing but use the moneys they received from the Home Builders' Account. But immediately there is any curtailment of finance the amounts given to those societies which have been doing the job, and still need the same amount as in other years, are cut in order to assist the new co-operative societies and those which have not played the game.

On the eve of a Federal election one would think that the Federal Government would do more in this direction, particularly as the Minister for Housing is a Queenslander. My experience of Dame Annabelle is that she is a woman who should understand our housing problems and requirements. But again there has been no reduction in the rate of interest and no extension in the provision of homes for aged and disabled persons or rental rebates for them. It could be claimed that under the Commonwealth scheme there is an Aged Persons' Home Agreement which is subsidised \$2 for \$1. But that does not stop this or any other State Government from endeavouring to do more to house our senior citizens and disabled persons.

The current Housing Agreement expressly provides for the erection of dwellings by the State primarily for families of low or moderate means. The State may therefore devote Housing Agreement advances to the housing of pensioners. Whether a State does so is a matter solely for decision by the State Government.

That is what I am getting at. In this State at present—I do not know the position in other States, but I imagine it is no different—if ever any section of the community is suffering a grave injustice it is those pensioners who are occupying homes under the 1956 and 1961 Agreements, and will under the 1966 Agreement.

That applies particularly to flats. When one goes to see these people one finds that a large percentage of their pension goes in the payment of rent, which costs from £4 to £6 a week in various blocks of flats built in recent years. In addition to rent, the cost of gas and electricity is a very large item for pensioners, and on it they receive no subsidy whatever. The Commonwealth Government is aware of this situation, but it does nothing to subsidise these people and help them meet this problem.

The Queensland Housing Commission has endeavoured in a very quiet sort of way to do something about it. Officers of the Commission know as well as I do that quite a number of pensioners moved into homes under terms of earlier agreements, and raised families there. They are occupying houses containing two, three, and, in some cases, four, bedrooms. The Commission is endeavouring, in its own way, to obtain those premises for the housing of families. Occasionally a feeler is put out. Of course, immediately it is brought to the attention of the member in whose electorate the house concerned is situated, no further action is taken. It is pointed out that there was no intention to endeavour to force any person from a house into a flat.

The fact is, of course, that this situation exists, and these are the things that should be made quite clear to the Federal Government at conferences of Ministers for Housing. I think the problem would be largely overcome if there was a return to the basis of the 1945-56 agreement, under which pensioners and disabled persons in receipt of pensions were charged for flats or houses rent equal to one-fifth of their income.

Mr. Aikens: Not only pensioners, but anyone in indigent circumstances.

Mr. NEWTON: I agree. That has always been the policy of hon. members on this side of the Chamber. Although I do not wish to deal at any length with rebates of rent, as there are others on this side of the Chamber who do, I believe that this is a type of concession that should apply.

At present I am greatly concerned about what is going on in the purchasing of land by the Government. When the Australian Labour Party was in office the Government bought land and subdivided it for building purposes. The point I am trying to make is that many things are involved in carrying out this agreement. It concerns not only land but the provision of sewerage, on which the Government at one time had a plan. It now says that it will accept no responsibility in this matter with the exception of direct household connections.

The Minister referred to flats. I agree entirely with the hon. member for Bulimba, who said by interjection that if blocks of flats are to be built higher than the present blocks, lifts will have to be provided in them. After all, there is a lift in this building to

take members up one floor. Of course, the staff use it to go to the second floor, and we agree that it is needed. Things such as that are very important.

Getting back to the new agreement, I indicate that the provisions mentioned by the Minister will be examined closely when the Bill is printed. It is interesting to note that one hon. member seemed to be concerned about the extras that are to be supplied in houses for service personnel. The Defence Act lays down what must be provided for houses built for service personnel, and fly-screens, blinds and linoleums were mentioned in the Federal House as being some of the things required.

The provision of homes in rural areas is also dealt with in the new agreement, and the Opposition agrees with the Minister's statement that not much trouble has been encountered in providing houses in outlying areas in Queensland. The main problem years ago lay not in approving the building of houses but in the successful tenderers getting labour to build them. In some instances, of course, it was necessary to use day labour to complete them. There would not be any trouble in providing houses with the present day-labour force. The men in it have always been willing to work for the Queensland Housing Commission and for the other department within the Minister's portfolio, the Department of Works, on the construction of schools and other buildings required by the Department of Education.

Mr. Lee: You realise of course, that it costs more.

Mr. NEWTON: I would expect that interjection from the hon. member for Yeronga after listening to the line of argument that he adopted in an earlier debate. It is in line with the attack that he made on the day-labour force of the Main Roads Department. I have worked for the Queensland Housing Commission as a day-labour employee on two occasions, and I say that the use of day labour kept the cost per square of houses down in Queensland. At that time, so many hours were allowed for this job or that job in a house, no matter what was being done, and, whether it could or could not be done, prices were still lower than contract prices. In addition, it was a very good guide to the Housing Commission, when it called tenders for groups of houses, as to whether or not contractors' prices were reasonable. I think the same could be said of the Main Roads Department and other departments.

Day labour was introduced in 1915 or 1916. Because it was introduced by an Australian Labour Party Government, hon. members opposite refer to it as a socialistic enterprise. It is not. It ensures that the people of Queensland get the best value for the finance that is available.

While I am dealing with the question of providing houses in rural areas, I point out that the agreement says that, if ever we have

to retire from it, 10 per cent. of the allocation made to the State shall be put into Government lending institutions. It could be either the Agricultural Bank or the State Government Insurance Office. So if we cannot get proper housing, or a co-operative housing society or building society interested in forming organisations in these areas and doing the job, it should be done by the Housing Commission itself by using some other Government institution in those places.

We have to look at this matter because 30 per cent. is going to co-operative building societies. Is this 10 per cent. coming off that or off the 60 per cent. that is left? I am pleased to see the Minister shaking his head, because that is something about which we want information. This point has been raised in the debates in the Federal House, so therefore, it must be in the agreement.

Finance is very important, and when we consider what this Government is doing to provide homes for persons in industries which are being developed in this State, we find we are getting less and less money for housing. We, the Opposition, must play a part in this debate, and we do so to the extent that the people about whom we are concerned are those on low or moderate incomes, and it is our responsibility to assist them to purchase homes, or where they cannot get homes for purchase, to assist them in some way or other to get homes for rental.

Another thing which causes me great concern is that it is quite evident from the Orders in Council that have been issued recently that so far as co-operative building societies are concerned the maximum amount has been increased from \$7,000 to \$8,000. Again I say to this House: how can any Government or anybody who chooses a particular home pay £500, or \$1,000, without having some case put forward to show that the house is worth it? If these loans are increased by that amount, from my experience, and from your experience, Mr. Hooper, as a builder, we would expect an extra square to be put on the house, or perhaps some extra cupboards.

We know that hot water is now installed throughout most houses. Copper plays a very important part there. It is an important commodity in installing septic and bathroom facilities. Because of the increased cost of copper, this extra amount that is being made available by the Government is being eaten into. These are the things we should look at very seriously. Let me say quite clearly that it has been the policy of the Opposition that whatever money we receive, we want to see it go as far as possible in the provision of housing for the people of this State.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (3.9 p.m.): Firstly, I should like to express appreciation to the Minister for Works and Housing, the Housing Commission and the officers of that Commission generally for the assistance they have given for many years in Queensland.

The Minister has mentioned the 109 centres outside the metropolitan area. Some of these are in very remote country areas which previously were not served by the Housing Commission, and it is good to see houses being erected in those areas.

Being a little parochial, I would particularly like to thank the Minister and the Commission for the job they have done in the town of Goondiwindi. They have recently bought 52 acres of land, and in addition to that they have built approximately 30 houses, all of which have been sold.

Mr. Bromley: That is in your electorate?

Mr. McKECHNIE: That is in my electorate. They have either been sold or are available for rental. Some of those houses were sold when only the blocks were showing. I am very happy with that approach to the problem.

In the introduction of this Bill to authorise the execution for and on behalf of the State of Queensland of a further agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the several States of the Commonwealth in relation to housing, and for other purposes, I take the opportunity to bring up another matter which, to some extent, is contrary to my earlier statement.

With the dieselisation of the railways a need has arisen in a more urgent form. We should make greater provision for railwaymen who are being shifted to small towns where accommodation is not available for them. I am dealing with this subject on a State-wide basis, but to illustrate my point I will again be parochial and mention the town of Inglewood, in my electorate. Inglewood is only a comparatively small town, but it is going ahead rapidly. Some years ago it was in the doldrums but owing to development, particularly the construction of the Coolmunda Dam, this town is growing rapidly. In its wisdom the Railway Department has decided that early in the New Year it will send 10 railwaymen west from Warwick to Inglewood. From Inglewood's point of view this is a good thing, but my concern is for the railwaymen who will be looking for accommodation. Railwaymen in this position should be looked after to some extent at least by either the Railway Department or the Queensland Housing Commission, or, better still, by the two departments working in unison for their good.

Mr. Houston: Is there any guarantee that their employment in that centre will be of a permanent nature?

Mr. McKECHNIE: It depends upon how the hon. member defines "permanent". For the foreseeable future, yes, they are to be stationed in Inglewood on a permanent basis. However, with the further development of dieselisation—I hope for the good of the State and the railways it will develop further—it could happen that after a number of years it may be necessary to rearrange the various depots to fit in with faster services

and better time-tables and the general upgrading of the railway system. To that extent I think we can look upon these men as going there permanently, although I do not think we can genuinely expect them to buy their homes there in the hope that they will be there for the rest of their working lives. Of course, some of them will buy homes, and I think we should encourage them to do so. Inglewood is a growing town, and in any event some people prefer to own their own homes.

Mr. Houston: It is all right if they hold their capital value, but if they lose value

Mr. McKECHNIE: They should hold their value in the town of Inglewood. It has water, which is so essential to these centres. It will be an expanding town in an expanding district. I think we should encourage these people to buy their own homes but I can see their point in not doing so, and also the hon. member's point that we must look after them in this changeover. Ten men will be going there and I think it is a good thing for all concerned.

Mr. Aikens: Are you sure it is 10 men, not 10 sets?

Mr. McKECHNIE: No, 10 men—three sets and a spare. There will be three drivers, three guards, three firemen, and one extra. I do not know what the extra man is. Similarly, from Warwick another 10 men, in the same categories, will be transferred to Wallangarra. However, the situation is a little more difficult in Wallangarra.

An Opposition Member: Where are you getting this information from?

Mr. McKECHNIE: From discussions with the railway employees themselves in my electorate.

It is a little more awkward to encourage men to buy homes in Wallangarra because their capital appreciation is very small. Wallangarra depends mainly on the meatworks, which provide a lot of work, but most of the employees come and go, as is more or less customary with abattoirs. Many of them come from Stanthorpe, and others from Tenterfield, over the border, and they travel back and forth. Although there is very little appreciation in house values, it is impossible to rent a house in Wallangarra. I am concerned about what will happen to these railwaymen. Probably some of them are not married, but I think we can assume that quite a few of them are. The Railway Department and the Housing Commission, in co-operation, could find ways to house these men at Wallangarra.

There is a genuine need at Wallangarra for rental homes. Officials of the Railway Department, together with the meatworks management and the local R.S.L. branch, have all approached me pressing for more homes, and are co-operating with me to

achieve more housing. At Wallangarra there are 15 Housing Commission homes, two of which have been bought and the other 13 rented.

As far as possible it is desirable to sell houses to the people who need them. It is very desirable that a man should own his home. A wonderful example is set at Goondiwindi, where 30 houses have been sold.

Mr. Bromley: Of course, there are exceptions.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Yes, there are, and Wallangarra is an exception. I think that, with co-operation between the Railway Department and the Housing Commission, some way could be found to assist these men.

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (3.18 p.m.): When listening to the Minister introduce this measure I gained the impression that he was somewhat like the landlord who hands his tenant a chocolate and then, the next moment, gives him a notice to quit. I was sure that what he had to tell the Chamber this afternoon would not be in the nicest of terms. I felt sure that the spate of compliments he was "dishing out" to Opposition members portended things to come. It can be fairly said that this Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement will be notable not for what it provides but for what it fails to provide in housing in this State.

There is no doubt that in the last few years there has been an ever-increasing demand on State funds for housing. This has been brought about because there has been a drying up of finance for housing from the private banks resulting from the more lucrative fields of hire-purchase in which these institutions are engaged. Many of the housing industry's spokesmen and the various societies that interest themselves in the housing needs of the State have continually criticised the lack of finance for home building.

There is no doubt that the ever-increasing demand for assistance from the State Government to provide homes on a reasonable deposit and at a reasonable cost is due to the ever-increasing number of young people seeking to marry. This was reported in the "Telegraph" of 18 March, 1966—

"The average young man earning about \$45 a week with no long-established savings bank record had little hope of obtaining finance for a decent house, housing society officials said in Brisbane today."

At that time there was the problem of the huge gap between the advance made by the society and the actual cost of building the home. Since that article appeared, the Housing Commission has increased its maximum advance from \$7,000 to \$8,000. In some measure that has bridged the gap. But with the ever-increasing cost of materials, unless

this matter is reviewed periodically, within 12 or 18 months the deposit gap could again be too great for the average person.

In that article it was also pointed out that in normal circumstances the buyer of an average new house would need at least \$4,000 in cash. Even though the gap has been bridged to some extent by the Housing Commission, there is little or no finance available from private sources to meet the housing needs of the State. This is due largely to companies choosing the more lucrative fields of investment, such as hire-purchase.

The large number of young people who are getting married and are unable to obtain private finance must create a heavy demand on the finances of the Queensland Housing Commission because it is generally accepted that herein lies the solution of the lower deposit more in keeping with the means of the average wage-earner. This measure does not deal with one of the causes of the higher costs of home building, namely, the interest rate, because the Commonwealth Government has failed to recognise this problem.

The Bill is notable for what it does not provide. As the hon. member for Belmont said, possibly one of the most notable features of the 1945-56 Housing Agreement was the provision for the extension of a rental rebate system to tenants of rental homes. It cannot be denied that in our society there will always be a demand for the rented home. There are many reasons people do not choose to purchase a home. I admit that in the last few years the number of persons in that category has declined; nevertheless there is a constant demand for rented homes.

I feel—and I am sure that this would be the view of the Minister and the officers of the Commission—that there seems to be in the community today an ever-increasing number of people who are unable to meet the rents determined under the 1956-61 Agreement. On several occasions I have been advised that whilst the Commission was quite satisfied to allot a home to an applicant, it was necessary to seek what is known as an "old agreement" home to provide accommodation in keeping with the earnings of the tenant.

This seems to be happening in an increasing number of cases. Possibly it is because in many instances families with four or five children have to live on the basic wage or little more than that, and many of those living in homes built under the 1956-61 Agreement, and the agreement that was in force before the introduction of this measure, find that as their families grow they have also to meet a rental that has in many cases soared well beyond what was laid down in the terms of the original Commonwealth legislation. That legislation prescribes that at no time shall the rent of a home exceed one-fifth of the income of the tenant.

Because of the high rates of interest charged on the loan money used for the construction of homes under the new agreement, rentals have risen much higher than those that were previously in force. As a family increases, so does the burden of meeting an economic rent. Now that the Minister has had a few years' experience in this portfolio, I am quite sure he is well aware of this problem, and I also feel sure that he would have brought it forcibly to the notice of the Prime Minister at the conference. I am sure that the Minister must be concerned at the number of people who are unable to meet these increased rentals.

It is very refreshing to note that when Mr. Dedman was Minister for Post-War Reconstruction he said in the Federal Parliament in 1945, when submitting the Bill that became effective legislation in 1946—

"The bill which I have the honour to submit for the consideration of the House today is an important piece of social legislation. It will provide means whereby a full-scale attack can be made on one of the worst of our social evils, namely, the bad housing of the Australian people."

That was, I believe, a true summary of what was intended under the original legislation introduced in the Federal Parliament. An attack was to be made on the bad housing which was then part of our general standards. In Australia, as in other countries, this was contributed to by the lack of housing activity in various parts of the Commonwealth during the Second World War, when the building of homes was at a minimum. In introducing that Bill, Mr. Dedman was well aware of what he was doing, and what he hoped to do was not only to provide housing as such for the people but, possibly more importantly, to keep in mind the elimination of substandard houses and the provision of houses that would be available to every person in the community, particularly those on low incomes.

I think that the rental rebate provision of the 1946 Commonwealth Act, under which the economic rental of a home was based on the income of the tenant, was one of the most humane provisions that have ever come before any Parliament in Australia. That rental rebate has meant that people have been able to raise their children in decency and comfort, and—this is even more important—people in the lower-income group were never called upon under that agreement to pay more than one-fifth of their income in rent. On that occasion, in replying to Mr. Menzies, Mr. Dedman said in his speech that, after considerable research, it had been found that the average Australian could not afford to pay more than one-fifth of his income in rent if he was to provide a decent standard of living for his family.

I think the Minister for Works and Housing should indicate to hon. members what the reaction of the Commonwealth Government

was if an attempt was made by him or by the Government to point out that it is becoming more and more necessary that rental-rebate provisions should apply to people in the lower-income group because of the shrinking purchasing power of the dollar.

The Minister said in his introductory speech that an agreement will be made between the States and the Commonwealth relative to the provision of homes for serving members of the Armed Forces. In my opinion, the Commonwealth Government should accept its responsibility and provide the number of homes required by serving personnel. At one time any serving member of the forces was eligible for a home from the number allocated to his service; now there is an ever-increasing demand on the Housing Commission by service personnel. The policy of the Housing Commission used to be not to entertain applications from servicemen—that was only about three years ago—because at that time a certain number of homes were being allocated to the Department of the Army to be apportioned out among serving personnel. If a serviceman found that he was unable to get a home from this source, in most instances the Queensland Housing Commission rejected his application on the grounds that he was a serviceman.

It would appear, as I interjected earlier, that the Commonwealth seems to be adopting this diminishing responsibility in the housing of service personnel. The Minister is shaking his head. He is gaining more money for the construction of the homes, but let it not be forgotten that it is also draining off the available money.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I possibly misunderstood what was said in that regard. Nevertheless, I do feel that because of the demand for housing by the civilian population, and particularly the demand in the northern part of this State—I am not going to encroach on any other member's area—the Commission could not keep pace with it. The use of the personnel of the Housing Commission for the construction of homes for Army personnel must of itself mean a slowing down in the rate of progress in meeting the needs of the civilian population.

Mr. Smith: Can't they put on more staff?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I will answer that question if the hon. member tells me why he shaved his moustache off.

As the hon. member for Belmont said, in the agreement for Army accommodation provision has been made for such things as fly-screens, linoleum, and so on, and possibly there could be no room for quarrel with that. If a serviceman moves on, the incoming tenant will enjoy the benefit of the linoleum and fly-screens.

I do not know whether it is common today, but it was a Housing Commission practice some time ago that where a member of the defence forces who was an occupant of a Housing Commission home, reached the retiring age and left the services he was asked to quit the house he was occupying because it had been allocated to the Army. That seemed ludicrous to me, because the Housing Commission would then re-allot him a home in another suburb.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: A number of servicemen remain in our houses as ordinary citizens.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I am saying the practice was that instead of letting him stay there and allotting another house to the Army—this was up to 18 months ago; I do not know if it has since been changed—he was required to move from one home into another.

Mr. Smith: That is all right.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: The hon. member might know a little bit about the law, but he is ignorant on the matter of housing.

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Campbell): Order!

Mr. SHERRINGTON: As I was saying, we have no quarrel with it, but this would simplify the problem of the serviceman who is residing in one of these homes and then moves on to an active theatre of war. It might also highlight the policy of the Australian Labour Party in regard to P.C. items.

I feel quite sure that if that is the agreement that the Government is prepared to enter into with the Department of the Army, then perhaps some day we might get the refrigerators and washing machines that we were promised in the 1963 election policy speeches. We all know that that was a confidence trick, anyway, because it was stipulated that they had to be manufactured in Queensland although the Government knew full well that those things were not made here.

Mr. Dewar: We kept that promise. There is a refrigerator in every home.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: That is what Government members promised in their 1963 policy speeches.

Mr. Dewar: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I will slip down to the Library if the hon. gentleman likes, and get it for him.

I have devoted a little more time to this matter than I intended. I specifically wanted to raise a matter I have raised in this Chamber before, that is, the provision of housing for pensioners. We know that when the wife of a Housing Commission tenant dies the Commission usually requests—I admit that it does not demand—that the

widower find alternative accommodation so that the house can be made available for a family. I suppose there is a legitimate reason for doing that. I think it was two years ago that I spoke in this Chamber of the need for small homes designed for pensioners to be built as part of a Housing Commission estate. Many pensioners have no desire to enter an institutional home; they want to remain part of community life. If widowed pensioners are to be asked to vacate Housing Commission homes, surely we should provide them with Housing Commission accommodation designed to suit their purpose and so that they can remain part of the community, rather than force them into institutional homes that they have no desire to enter.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (3.42 p.m.): At the risk of being accused of indulging in parochialism I am going to make a special plea today for the erection of more Housing Commission homes in Townsville, particularly for rental purposes. It is true that for some time—I suppose up to 12 or 18 months ago—we did not have the same call for Housing Commission homes for rental as we had years ago, but today the position is becoming very serious indeed. It is rather pathetic, in fact distressing, to have people with quite large families—people in good circumstances with good jobs—tramping from estate agent to estate agent trying to rent the few private houses or flats that are available and being unable to get them. It is almost impossible to get a rental Housing Commission house in Townsville, except under the most extraordinary circumstances. One woman I know, who has several children, has almost worn her shoes off going from estate agent to estate agent. When the family can get a flat or a private home for rental, they find that the rental is so exorbitant that they cannot possibly pay it. I know, of course, of the parable of Christ feeding the multitude on five loaves and two fishes. I am not trying to be blasphemous, but it would appear that the Government expects the officers in charge of Housing Commission departments in various parts of the State to perform much the same miracle by supplying the multitude when there are only one or two houses, or no houses at all, for rental.

Townsville is a rapidly growing city. We have a big R.A.A.F. group of personnel there, and we are going to get a lot of Army personnel there. I want to be completely fair on this; I do not want to be misunderstood, nor do I want to be misquoted, on this. I have no objection whatever to R.A.A.F. personnel or Army personnel being supplied with Housing Commission rental accommodation. However, I believe that there should be some equitable balance between the accommodation supplied for R.A.A.F. and Army personnel and the accommodation made available for civilian personnel.

Mr. Smith: You cannot quarrel with their being accommodated when they are posted there.

Mr. AIKENS: Quite true; I cannot quarrel with their being accommodated, because they are posted there. But is there any difference between an R.A.A.F. man or an Army man being posted there and an employee who is transferred to or goes to Townsville in the ordinary course of his work and needs accommodation?

Mr. Hanson: What about railwaymen?

Mr. AIKENS: Yes; they need accommodation. I am merely asking for an equitable balance to be maintained.

I think it was early this year that I received notification from the Minister that 40 houses were to be built at Aitkenvale by the Housing Commission. I was quite happy, but there was a sting in the tail of the letter from the Minister telling me that 40 houses were to be erected. He told me that all of the 40 were to be made available for R.A.A.F. personnel. That is agitating our minds. I have no objection to R.A.A.F. men getting a house, but I believe that a similar number should be made available for civilian personnel to meet their housing needs.

I come now to another remarkable aspect of housing in Townsville. I should like the Minister to listen carefully to this, although I have no doubt that it is Government policy. When a civilian moves out of a Housing Commission rental home, even though the R.A.A.F. in Townsville has not a member to put into it, it is frozen for future R.A.A.F. personnel needs. I should like the Minister to answer this in his reply. If he does not I will direct a question to him in the House asking how many vacant houses in Townsville are held, frozen for R.A.A.F. personnel who are not yet there.

Mr. Hanlon: There is nothing more frustrating than that to someone who is wanting a house.

Mr. AIKENS: That is true. I inquired into this matter and found that the R.A.A.F. pays the rent from the moment the house is frozen. As the hon. member for Baroona said, it is quite frustrating for the ordinary citizen with a big family in urgent need of a roof over their heads, to apply for a Housing Commission house that is vacant and to find that it is frozen for R.A.A.F. personnel who are not yet in Townsville and may not arrive there for some considerable time. The Housing Commission's attitude is that as long as the R.A.A.F. pays the rent on the vacant house it can be kept vacant for as long as it likes on the offchance that an R.A.A.F. man may arrive and occupy it.

I repeat that I do not wish to be misreported on this. I have no objection to R.A.A.F. or Army personnel being supplied with Housing Commission accommodation, provided some equitable balance is maintained between R.A.A.F. and Army personnel

and the ordinary citizen. As I said, there is an urgent need for the construction of more Housing Commission homes in Townsville for rental purposes. Townsville is in the throes of a building boom. The Army is building a large establishment, and other people are doing quite a lot of building there. Consequently, much of the work being done in Townsville today cannot be described as permanent work as it applies to the people who are doing the work. As a result, many people are not prepared to build or buy a home in Townsville. They need rental accommodation.

The hon. members for Belmont and Salisbury referred to the 1945-56 Agreement, which provided for rental rebates—and of course this was wonderful. I point out to them, if they do not know it, that there was a very big fly in that ointment. I remember it very clearly, as I was in Parliament when the first Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement was passed. With the then hon. member for Bowen, and the then hon. members for Bundaberg and Bulimba, I fought very hard against some provisions relative to the rental rebate. Hon. members may not know that this provision still applies, but it does not mean that a worker pays no more than 20 per cent. of his salary or his income.

There is a big catch in it, because if the tenant has pensioner parents, for instance, or a pensioner friend or pensioner relative living with him, the whole of the pension—not the amount of rental the pensioner pays to the tenant—is added to the income of that house, and one-fifth of the total is taken. Every bit of income that comes into the house is included. It is so paltry that if a child of the worker wins a scholarship, the amount of the scholarship must be added to the income of the tenant so that one-fifth of it can be taken as rent for the house. While it is true that the rebate is very valuable, it is not as valuable, nor is it as sea-green and incorruptible, as the hon. members for Belmont and Salisbury would have us believe.

Mr. Walsh: Some rents were as low as 8s. a week.

Mr. AIKENS: That may be so. I know that some pensioners today are living in Housing Commission flats in and around Townsville, particularly in the Garbutt area, at a particularly reasonable rental because only one person lives in the flat.

Mr. Walsh: I am talking about rebates.

Mr. AIKENS: They are getting these valuable rebates because their flats come under that particular part of the Housing Agreement. I know other people who have a daughter and a son working and are not getting any rebate at all. Although they are living in a house covered by a rebate, the whole of their daughter's and son's earnings, and the pension of the mother, is added to the wages of the tenant and one-fifth of it is taken. As the hon. member for Bundaberg

knows, it does not mean that they must pay one-fifth of all income that comes into the home; they pay no more than the rental determined as the economic rental. For instance, if the 20 per cent. is more than the economic rental, they pay only the economic rental just as anyone else would pay.

I make another appeal to the Minister for Housing to brush aside the snobbish opposition of the Townsville City Council and to build flats on that very fine five or six acres of land he has between Mitchell Street and The Strand. I have recounted previously the history of that land. It was vested in the Townsville City Council after the Government cleaned all the sand off it, filled in the lagoon, and sold all the allotments in Mitchell Street and on the filled lagoon. The area on the beach where the Government took the sand away was left vacant, and that land was vested in the Townsville City Council, of which I was a member, as a recreation reserve. But it was considered that there were enough recreation reserves in North Ward. As a matter of fact, there were more recreation reserves in North Ward than in any other part of the city. So the land was handed back to the Government. It was vested in the Department of Education, which handed it over to the Housing Commission. The Department of Education did a Levantine deal with the Housing Commission to get the money to fill in the site for the Townsville High School at Monkey Island.

For some years that valuable land on The Strand has been the property of the Housing Commission, and every time a suggestion is made that flats similar to those in Warburton Street be erected on it we run up against the snobbish opposition of some of the Townsville City Council aldermen who do not want any more working-class people in North Ward. They want it retained as the snob suburb of Townsville.

I do not think the Minister for Works and Housing, either personally or politically, is a social snob; I have never known him to be one, anyway. I suggest he brush aside the opposition of Roberts & Co. We know that, as far as buildings are concerned, Roberts is the real mayor of Townsville. Angus Smith is a personable, affable, likable chap, but he is purely and simply, shall I say, the pleasant front for Alderman Roberts, who, as I say, is the real mayor of Townsville. It is the objection of Alderman Roberts and one or two other social snobs on the Townsville City Council that is preventing the Housing Commission from building flats on The Strand.

When people, particularly young people, try to borrow money from the Queensland Housing Commission or co-operative building societies to buy an allotment and have a home erected (perhaps having gas and electricity connected), as they once did, they now have to pay the council for the construction of a bitumen road in front of their allotment, pay for concrete channelling

in front of it, and pay for not only the installation of water from the water-main to their property but, with the owners of adjoining allotments, for the installation of the main down the road. In Townsville they have to pay all, or nearly all, the cost of installing sewerage. I believe that these demands are also being made by other local authorities throughout the State.

I understand that before anyone can build a home in Townsville today it costs anything from \$800 to \$1,000 for work that previously was done by the council.

Mr. Lee: That happens in Brisbane, too.

Mr. AIKENS: I said that it happens in other places, too, and I think it is about time the Government had a look at it.

I now come to the rotten and unjust part of it. The moment these young home-owners in suburbs such as Aitkenvale or the tail end of Currajong, in the electorate of the hon. member for Townsville North, move into their homes, having paid \$800 to \$1,000 an allotment for work that originally was done by the Townsville City Council, along comes an officer of the Valuer-General's Department who says, "You have a nice allotment here. You have a bitumen road and concrete channelling. Of course, you have water, sewerage, and electricity. Consequently, I am going to increase the valuation on this allotment."

Mr. Lee: For which they have paid.

Mr. AIKENS: Yes. Having paid for all of those things, they pay extra rates to the Townsville City Council because of the increased valuation, due to the large amount of money they have been compelled to pay in the first place to the Townsville City Council.

Mr. Lee: I couldn't agree more.

Mr. AIKENS: I am happy to have the agreement of the hon. member for Yeronga, because he at least is a very knowledgeable man in these matters. He knows what is going on, and he joins me in voicing a protest on behalf of young people who today are being compelled to start off building their homes and rearing their families with such millstones round their necks.

I digress for a moment and hazard a guess as to where the money collected by the councils goes. I use the plural because I do not want to be accused of conducting a vendetta against the Townsville City Council. Only the other day the people on the Gold Coast wanted to know where the money paid to their council goes. I think it was said that 36 per cent. of that council's revenue is spent on administration costs. I would hazard a guess that 46 per cent. or 56 per cent. of the money received by the Townsville City Council goes not only in administration costs but on the expense of civic receptions and trips by the mayor, aldermen, and officers of the council to

various parts of the Commonwealth. I really believe that this is something that the Government should face up to.

If young people endeavouring to establish homes are to be told, "First of all, you have to be quite subservient; you cannot grumble about this. You must allow the local authority of the area in which you live to saddle you with a debt that should be carried by the local authority. Then, because you are compulsorily saddled with that debt for roads, concrete channelling, water, sewerage, and so on, the valuation of your allotment is going to be increased to make you pay extra rates on the allotment because of the money you have been compelled to spend." I think that that is iniquitous and unjust. Any Government that is honest would not allow that state of affairs to continue for very long. If the hon. member for Yeronga and other hon. members on the Government side of the House who appear to be completely in accord with the remarks I am making really feel as deeply as I do about it, I hope that next Wednesday, when they have their Caucus meeting, they will evolve some means of lifting this burden from the shoulders of young people.

I make this final appeal to the Minister for Works and Housing: he should consider seriously the invidious position in which the people of Townsville find themselves today, with a rapidly expanding city, a rapidly expanding population, not nearly enough Housing Commission homes being built, either for purchase or for rental, and not nearly enough money being channelled into co-operative housing societies. In places such as Gladstone and Mt. Isa it would appear that the Government has said, "This is an expanding economy. We will have to make a special effort to provide these places with Housing Commission homes for rental and for purchase." I think the Minister should give at least the same consideration to the expanding economy of Townsville as he is giving, and proposes to give, to the expanding economies of other places in the State.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (4.1 p.m.): If one is really to understand this legislation, I think it is necessary to have a complete understanding of all the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreements that have been implemented since 1945.

A great deal has been said about the provision of houses for the Army, the provision of finance to building societies from the State's housing allocation, and what has been done—according to the Government, a great deal of work has been done—in providing homes in this State; but very little has been said about the preamble to the 1945 Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement, which was drawn up in 1945 and began to operate in 1946. The preamble to that agreement postulated that money made available for the housing of people in Australia immediately after they were discharged from the Armed Forces would

carry the lowest possible interest rate and that it would be used also to provide homes for people in the community who could not afford to buy them. In other words, the intention of the original agreement—not only of that agreement but of succeeding agreements also—was to provide homes for people who could not afford to pay high rentals, who could not afford to build their own homes, or who did not have the necessary finance to enable them to pay a deposit on a home.

At that time, when the Commonwealth long-term bond rate was $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. (it was limited to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. by the Chifley Government) money for housing was made available to State Governments at an interest rate of 3 per cent., and rental rebates were allowed under the agreement that were of benefit to pensioners and working people in the community. For example, if a woman's husband died and she had to raise her children on the widow's pension, she was able to stay in the home and pay a rental of one-fifth of her pension. As I said, that was the original intention of the agreement; but somewhere between 1956 and 1966 the whole intention of making cheap money available for this purpose has been lost. Rental rebates are no longer in operation.

Mr. Walsh: Only for the original homes.

Mr. LLOYD: Only for the homes built under the 1945 Agreement. For those built subsequent to the 1956 Agreement a rental rebate is no longer available. If the original intention of the agreement is to be given effect to and perpetuated, some form of rental rebate should be made available in authenticated cases. I have had brought to my attention many cases in which families have been in occupation of a State rental home for five or six years; the husband dies and the widow is left to look after her family, and in many cases there are young children going to school. She immediately supplements the widow's pension with children's allowances, and, perhaps, with assistance from the State Children Department. In all, she may receive a gross income of £12 a week. To keep that family in existence, the Housing Commission gives them an agreement home built subsequent to 1956 but says it is unable to provide a rental rebate.

There is the disturbance of the family to be considered. Certainly they receive sympathetic consideration, but in these cases immediate action is taken to transfer the widow and her family from the 1956 Agreement home to a 1945 Agreement home, where the rental rebate is available to her. I cannot see why this action is necessary.

The State Government should have the power to say to a widow, "Stay in this home and we will allow you the rental rebate". Why is there this disturbance of a family where there are possibly young children going to high school? We now have children of 12 years of age leaving the primary school and graduating to high school.

Why disturb the family and transfer it from, say, Stafford to Inala, thereby disturbing the education of the children. It does not mean any extra revenue to the Housing Commission. The family leave one home and get a rental rebate on another home. The whole thing is absolutely crazy. There is the very upsetting influence on the family to be considered. Quite often the family have had the occupancy of a home for a number of years. They have established friendships. They have their own furniture. Why disturb the family unit? Why not let it stay there?

I agree that the Housing Commission does its best, but it is only its best in accordance with Government policy. I think Government policy should be altered.

It is not only in relation to this matter that the agreement should be altered. Take, for instance, the allocation of houses as they are built in Brisbane in particular at the present time, and also in places such as Townsville and Ipswich. In those latter towns, every new home that is built is allocated to a member of the armed forces, and workers in those rapidly developing industrial towns are unable to find accommodation. This is an injustice. In my own electorate there is a housing project at Stafford, which is in close proximity to Army camps at Enoggera and Gaythorne. These houses at one time or another have been set aside and allocated to members of the armed forces. If the agreement provides that, say, 5 per cent. of the homes must be allocated to members of the armed forces, I admit that we must abide by all the terms of the agreement. However, I do not agree that members of the defence forces should have their houses in one area only. Why should anyone be able to say that because the R.A.A.F. is at Amberley it can take all the houses at One Mile in Ipswich and the working community at Ipswich can go to blazes? Why should the Army, in the industrial area at Grovely and Stafford where there are numerous factories, be allocated all the homes in that area but not at Zillmere? This is wrong. We will have people who work in industry at Grovely and Stafford resident at Inala, and they will have to travel approximately 10 miles to work.

The members of the defence forces should not determine where they are going to have their homes located. Certainly they should have them as close as possible to their establishments, but other people who are working for their living, permanent residents of Brisbane, should not have to travel 10 miles because members of the armed forces want to travel only a mile or half a mile to their camps.

On the other hand, we know what is occurring in the allocation of most of the houses that are available, particularly vacated homes in Brisbane. People who do not have 100 points priority, or who have not been evicted from their homes, are told they cannot get a house. Why? Because the Queensland Government in its policy has laid down

that a certain number of houses will be allocated to the employees of private companies. These employees may come from another State; they may be migrants or people already resident in Queensland. According to an answer given to me by the Minister the other day, 760 houses have been allocated to the employees of private companies in Queensland. Those prospective tenants do not have to justify being allocated a home under the priority system laid down by the Housing Commission.

Mr. Walsh: A lot of them would not even be on the electoral roll.

Mr. LLOYD: Possibly not. If they come from other States they have to be in Queensland for six months before they can be enrolled.

Mr. Hanson: There are a lot of aliens, too.

Mr. LLOYD: Yes; many of them come from overseas.

Apart from those at Inala, where possibly the Government has some trouble in selling houses, all the houses that are being erected, unless allocated to members of the defence forces, migrants or companies, are being reserved for sale. Although we want an increase in home-ownership, this practice of selling most of the houses that are built completely prostitutes the original intention of the agreement, which was to provide homes for members of the working community who could not afford to buy them. That is why this cheap money was made available by the Chifley Labour Government in 1945. It was not for people who could afford to pay \$2,000 deposit on a home, but for the people who could not afford to buy a home and were being asked by private landlords to pay high rentals

I have received sympathetic consideration in respect of most of the cases I have put before the Housing Commission, but the officers are tied down by the priority system. When we place a deserving case before the Housing Commission, unless the applicant has 100 points priority, even though he may be paying \$16 a week rental for a private home, we are told that the Commission cannot provide him with a house. We are told, "If he can get an eviction order tell him to come along and we will provide him with a house. If he can't get an eviction order he has no hope of ever getting a house from the Housing Commission." These are matters that have been lost sight of in the ratification of this agreement every time it comes before this Parliament.

A great deal was said by the Minister when introducing the Bill about the encouragement given to building societies in Queensland. In our 1957 policy speech we put forward a platform which indicated that we would agree completely with the creation of building societies in this State. We indicated that we would assist them with bank guarantees. We realised that while Government

guarantees were not available we were losing a great deal to the other States, and that an essential step in encouraging home-building in Queensland was to give as much encouragement as possible to the formation of building societies.

In 1956 we agreed, under duress, that we would accept the Commonwealth Government's direction that 30 per cent. of the loan allocation for housing should be diverted to building societies. Duress was applied to all State Governments. The Commonwealth Government said, "Unless you agree to this principle we will not make finance available for housing at an interest charge of 1 per cent. lower than the Commonwealth bond rate. If you refuse to become parties to the agreement, you can have only your allocation and you can utilise your own loan resources for your housing programme." That was accepted and 30 per cent. of the cheaper-interest finance became available for housing in this State. Since then, building societies in Queensland have contributed greatly to the home-building programme. They have been able to do this because they have received finance from the Home Builders' Account at a rate of interest much lower than they would have paid had they got the money from private trading banks or other financial sources. In fact, they received the money at a rate of interest only three-quarters per cent. higher than the State Government pays the Commonwealth. If the rate of interest payable by the State Government to the Commonwealth Government on housing allocations is 4½ per cent., the building societies pay 5 per cent. to the State and can lend it to prospective home-purchasers at 5½ per cent. which is much lower than the rate charged by permanent building societies or any other societies in this State; they are charging 6 per cent. or 6½ per cent. These building societies have therefore been contributing quite a deal towards the purchase of new homes.

When the Minister said that the Government had been doing all it could to encourage building societies he was not telling the complete truth. Because of the Government's own loan commitments outside its normal activities, year after year it has reduced the percentage of allocation for housing from the cheap money available from the Commonwealth Government—from the Australian Loan Council—until it is now at a minimum. Each year it has paid subsidies with expensive money from debenture loan raisings which come from the State's allocation for semi-government and local authority allocations. This is very expensive money. In some cases it costs 5¾ per cent., perhaps repayable over 20 years, whereas money available from the Australian Loan Council is repayable over a period of 53 years at the Commonwealth long-term bond rate of 5 per cent. to 5½ per cent.

From our own Loan Account an amount of \$2,000,000 a year—in 1965-66 it was \$2,600,000—has been allocated for transfer to the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement. In all, since 1957 this Government has manipulated the finances of the Queensland Housing Commission—whether through the Queensland Housing Commission Fund or the Commonwealth-States Housing Fund—to the extent of \$12,800,000. When the Labour Government was defeated in 1957 there was a loan indebtedness to the State Treasury, in both funds, of £100,000. Today, the loan indebtedness, as near as I can establish it, is \$12,800,000.

This money emanates from the Australian Loan Council either by way of an allocation for works and housing from the Loan Council to the Government, or in debenture loan raisings for the ordinary activities of semi-governmental and local authorities. Our recent debenture loan raisings have been 100 per cent. filled. So that the money is there. But what has occurred is that housing has become the spare-parts department of the Government in its loan allocation.

The Minister has said that out of the total allocation for works and housing each year, the State itself decides how much will go to housing. Why not take this money, which is available? Why take the minimum and place the rest into the State Loan Account, and then take \$2,600,000 out of the State Loan Account and transfer it to the Commonwealth-State Housing Fund? Why take it away from debenture loan raisings or semi-governmental or local authorities, and use some of it for Commonwealth-State Housing Fund purposes, unless the Government is giving only lip service to the building societies in the State? If the Government used the low-interest money coming from the Commonwealth or the Australian Loan Council, 30 per cent. of it would go to the building societies, and that would enable young people in the community to obtain low-interest loans from building societies at a rate of 5½ per cent., which is no more than the Queensland Housing Commission is charging on workers' dwellings at present.

If this money had come from the Australian Loan Council, let us see how much more would have been diverted into the Home Builders' Account in the last few years and would have been available to building societies. Of \$12,800,000—most of this was taken in the last three or four years—an extra \$3,800,000, that is, 30 per cent. of \$12,800,000, would have been placed in the Home Builders' Account and would have been available to building societies in this State. If that is not cheating on building societies, I should like to know what is.

Because the Government wishes to divert money, at higher interest charges, into its own housing accounts and take it away from somewhere else by a manipulation of the financial organisation of housing, it is

making housing the spare-parts department, the repository for high-interest money, when cheap money is available. If the money were to come from the Commonwealth Government and the Australian Loan Council at, say, 4½ per cent., that is 1 per cent. less than the Commonwealth long-term bond rate, it does not mean that less would be spent on housing in this State. No matter whether the Housing Commission spent it or the building societies spent it, the money would be spent at an interest rate far below that which is presently being charged on the money they are using. The Government should not take money at 5½ per cent. from the State Loan Account, or at 5¾ per cent. from the Public Curator, or from debenture loans, a trust account, or some superannuation fund, and transfer it to the Commonwealth-State Housing Fund, because that is expensive money. People, particularly young people, are crying not against the cost of constructing a house, but against the crippling interest charges on the loan they must obtain in order to finance a home to live in.

Why is it that in 1945 the Commonwealth Government, through the War Service Homes Division, charged an interest rate of 3½ per cent., and still does, even though the Commonwealth long-term bond rate has increased from 4 or 4½ per cent. to 5 per cent.? The interest on housing loans through the Queensland Housing Commission was reduced in 1946 to 3¾ per cent., which was lower than the interest charged by the War Service Homes Division. It increased under the 1956 Agreement to 4½ per cent. and, later, to 5½ per cent. Now it is 5½ per cent. The Commonwealth Government can still, through the War Service Homes Division, make finance available at a profit at an interest rate of 3¾ per cent.

(Time expired).

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (4.26 p.m.): In supporting the introduction of this measure, I look forward, as I am sure all hon. members on this side of the Chamber do, to seeing the Government advance in its policy of progressively building more homes for easy sale instead of becoming a landlord. I was very interested to hear the hon. member for Kedron refer to the importance of the family unit and the consideration that must be given to the matter of home building. I do not think there is any doubt that owning a home is perhaps the best means of making the family unit secure and cohesive, and that, in its turn, is the best way of getting a good community. That essential security is obtained only when people own their own homes.

Elizabethan playwright Ben Johnson once said that it is the ultimate aim of all men to be happy at home. He said that about 400 years ago, and there is still a great deal of truth in it. I think that owning one's own home provides the best prospect of obtaining this happiness, and certainly

secure families provide the best prospect of political maturity. In this regard, it was a pleasure to hear the hon. member for Kedron say that he firmly believes in the principle of home-ownership. It would seem that over the years the parties on each side of the Chamber are getting closer on at least this subject, because I can recall a Federal Labour Minister of years ago saying that he would resist anything that tended to turn Australians, through home-ownership, into little capitalists. I, for one, would like to see as many young Queenslanders as possible become "little capitalists" by becoming home-owners.

Because in the immediate future the Government must be a large-scale builder of homes, I make a brief plea to the Government to try to place a little more emphasis on aesthetics and perhaps a little less on economics. I think most would agree that many of the Housing Commission projects inherited by this Government are all too painfully obvious. Anyone driving through Brisbane cannot miss them. One can tell where they start and where they finish. Such projects stand out but, in my view, not for their excellence. They have a sort of bareness about them—a stiffness, newness, almost a regimentation—which I do not think makes for a good community.

To the extent that the Housing Commission is improving its techniques in this regard it is to be commended, as there has been a great improvement. I wonder, however, if that improvement is yet up to the standard that a modern community might expect, especially in the light of examples from the Scandinavian countries, England, and America, from which we can learn.

We Australians are often criticised for appearing to have an unreasonable hatred of trees, and a dislike, say our critics, for all the soft variations of shape and shades of green that make up a landscape. I do not think that the activities of the Commission to date would completely disarm that criticism. To me, there appears no valid reason why a Government, which I should hope would give a lead in cultural as well as other fields, should lend itself to extending a planned ugliness.

I recognise—it is common sense to recognise it—that when one does any large-scale development it is easier to move in with big equipment—and if it is easier, it must be cheaper—and level everything. So, away with the trees; root out all the various surface materials, all the natural growth; smooth out all the variations in terrain that make for contrast and interest; and put in their place a great expanse of gashed earth on which one starts from scratch to build in bare but orderly array! All this contributes, I think, to a planned ugliness.

Of course, this is done, not only by the Housing Commission but also by many private subdividers, in the name of economy; but I doubt whether, in the long run, a

planned ugliness is really economical. Too much of it generates a very depressing atmosphere, and I think it is a prime ingredient in creating an environment that does not help people to become the best of citizens. Some of the problems that have long been associated with certain types of long-standing housing projects, particularly those related to the behaviour patterns of young people, would have been lessened, perhaps almost to vanishing point, if in the creation of these projects much more attention had been given to retaining natural beauty, and to adding a little more beauty, instead of creating a sort of harsh rawness that is almost brutal in its impact when one sees it. So I commend to the Government's house-building agency this consideration of beauty as well as of cost.

Perhaps some consideration might be given to the trend that has now become more evident in overseas countries where, instead of going in for huge building projects in one place, the authorities are content to build half a dozen houses, a dozen houses, or two dozen houses, in different communities, the idea being that smaller projects will become absorbed and become part of the community in which they are placed instead of becoming a community of their own. I hope that what I regard as a very important aspect of house-building by this Government will commend itself to the Minister and his officers, and that they will make future housing projects part of communities instead of constructing them in such a way that they are likely to become alien islands inside communities.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (4.34 p.m.): I am sure that those of us who have listened to the hon. member for Kedron participating in debates in this Chamber from the time when he was a member of a former Labour Government have always regarded him as something of an authority on housing. It may be said, I think, that his contribution to this debate shows that he is still taking a very active interest in housing generally and the problems associated with it. How far he will get with the figures that he presented to the Minister, which showed a debit of about \$12,800,000 in the Housing Funds to which he referred, I do not know. I have a recollection that when the former Treasurer, now Sir Thomas Hiley, was referring to the fact that the Government was in some difficulties in relation to cash in the Treasury, he said that there were several accounts that could be used to offset the deficiencies, and he mentioned specifically that the Home Builders' Account had a certain sum of money in it.

Whether the Treasurer has, for the purpose of the Government's financial policy, in some way adjusted these funds to show this picture, I do not know. I would be interested to hear the Minister's explanation. I know full well that it would not be an adjustment made by the Queensland Housing Commission

itself. So if the Minister will tell us the whole story and the true story, I am sure it will be an interesting one.

Looking back over the original agreement of 1945, as mentioned by the hon. member for Kedron, I have a recollection that that agreement was arrived at because of the difficulties confronting the community arising from the fact that there were thousands of personnel who were to be discharged from the various branches of the armed services at the conclusion of the war. In addition, other activities associated with the war effort had ceased, and people had to be put back into normal industries.

With due respect to what might be said on the other side of the Chamber about the efficiency of free enterprise, I would hate to think that any intelligent member on that side would get up and say that private enterprise could have coped with the situation at the time. It was only because of this that the Government of the day had to come to the rescue and get what was in fact co-ordinated organisation to put into effect the policy of the Government, and so use that organisation to meet the problems that arose in the way that I have outlined.

When I look back on the 1945 Agreement I realise that it contained many of the provisions already outlined by the hon. member for Kedron. I emphasise that a number of these provisions were eliminated from the 1956 Agreement but were continued in so far as they related to the original contracts, and there are still many people in this State who are enjoying rentals in the vicinity of approximately £2 a week, and, in some cases, less.

I know of cases where, after the adjustment on an income basis in accordance with the provisions of this agreement, a rental figure as low as 8s. a week was charged. If the capital value was taken into consideration, it related to the rent to be charged and it was known as an economic rental. However, in 1956 the then Minister for Housing in the Menzies-Fadden Government decided to throw overboard all this beneficial legislation that was enacted by the Chifley Labour Government, and that was one of the things that had to go. Likewise, the Commonwealth insisted that the States must agree to the provision whereby one-fifth of the total allocation for housing as determined by the Loan Council would go to co-operative societies.

For the first three years I think they were to get 20 per cent. of the total allocation for housing, and in subsequent years, after the first three, I think it went up to 30 per cent. That has continued and it has been written into the agreement, and it has been accepted by this Government on subsequent occasions. I do not suppose there is much that we can do about it.

This is, if I might say so, another example of where the Commonwealth is setting out to strangle the State's

finances. They set down these terms and, in effect, said "Take it or leave it." I have said in this Chamber before, and I could quote from the debates of this Parliament where I made my own attitude on these matters perfectly clear, that I would far sooner have seen the Commonwealth take its proportion of the total loan allocations in accordance with the financial agreement, that is, one-fifth of the total loans to be raised. I would prefer that it take its proportion of the total loan allocations and then put up its own housing scheme for its own purposes.

What has happened to this Government happened also to the previous Government. As I said by interjection, the 1956 Agreement was accepted under duress. As I recall, there was not one State in Australia that did not protest against the manner in which it was presented by the then Minister for National Development, the late Senator Sir William Spooner. What has happened, of course, is that, because the Commonwealth Government handed over to the States the obligation of housing certain personnel who should be housed by the Commonwealth, this Government, as with the Governments of other States, is obliged to find from a loan allocation that should be made available for its own civilian requirements, this proportion for service personnel which was already provided for in the 1956 Agreement.

I have no objection whatever to service personnel at Townsville, Ipswich or any other place where there is a base, being accommodated, but is it good enough that the States should be asked to accept this increased financial responsibility without any increase in their loan allocation? If the Commonwealth wants the State to undertake these things on its behalf there should be some adjustment in the amount made available and, if necessary, a fund should be established specifically for that purpose. As a matter of fact, if we get down to the logic of it—as I said the other day, not too many people ever listen to that—the Commonwealth should be undertaking this type of expenditure without relation to any housing allocation at all. It is related to defence and should come under that heading, particularly in places like Ipswich, with an R.A.A.F. base at Amberley, and Townsville, where there is another R.A.A.F. base, and where now an Army base is being built. I suppose similar situations will arise in the other States.

I have drawn attention previously to the point that this State is not going forward in housing allocations. In the discussions that take place between the Premier and the Treasurer and their officials they determine finally what proportion of the total allocation is to be set aside for housing, so there is some responsibility on this Government either to press the Commonwealth for an increased allocation of funds for this purpose

or to make a larger sum available from its own sources. I know how difficult that would be; the Government has not got the money, and that is all there is to it. Back in 1953-54 the allocation to this State under the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement was \$9,000,000; 13 years later, in 1966, it is now \$9,060,000. I do not want to deceive the Committee with these figures. I am pointing out that as far back as 1953-54 that was the actual allocation.

Today there is a difference of only \$60,000. When we consider the increase in the basic wage—taking a stab at it in round figures it has increased from £12 a week to £16 a week—over that period and consider the large increases in margins that have been granted to the various tradesmen involved in the building industry, we can appreciate that it is impossible for the Housing Commission to provide more homes from this source of finance. It is true that there are repayments which go to different funds, but that comes under another heading.

In 1953-54 the allocation for Queensland was \$9,000,000 and it was then \$9,000,000 for South Australia. For 1966 Queensland's loan allocation is \$9,060,000, whereas South Australia's is \$20,750,000; it has more than doubled. In between, there have been various reductions and increases—it was as low as \$3,600,000 in 1954-55—but that was common to every State. When these matters were determined the Government had reports from its advisers—the Co-ordinator-General, the Housing Commission and the other organisations involved—and to a large extent they influenced the outlook of the Government in determining what amount was wanted.

I want to say a few words about co-operative housing societies. I agree that they are doing a very good job in this State, as they did in New South Wales, particularly prior to the insertion in the agreement of the condition by which the Commonwealth insisted that one-fifth of the allocation should go to them. But let us understand that, in this case, the finance normally came from banks or other investing institutions such as insurance companies, and the investors had to take a risk on whether the co-operative societies would succeed or go to the wall. Today, every dollar invested in a co-operative housing society by the investing authorities carries with it a Government guarantee. The banks do not stand to lose anything—if any of them could lose, which I do not think is possible. This is the position: like more and more private enterprises, they will do nothing unless they get the backing of a Government guarantee. On the one hand, the hon. member for Chatsworth could be backing free enterprise against the socialistic undertakings and he would not be hesitant in asking that a Government guarantee should back the finance of the particular interest he represents. This is where it is so stupid.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: It is a fact that there has been no default in any of these guarantees.

Mr. WALSH: I know there has not, and that is fortunate; let us hope that there never will be. The only defaulter that I can see in the future is the Government itself. That stage is coming, as the hon. member must well know, because of the paltry manner in which the Government is pruning to save funds. As a matter of fact, it came to my notice that in one part of the State employees engaged in a public office are now allowed only one towel a week.

The Minister knows that co-operative building societies have been knocking on his door consistently for allocations to enable them to get on with the job of making advances available to the many applicants who are desirous of buying their own homes through those societies. The few building societies operating in Bundaberg have been held back in their activities because they cannot get finance.

I know the Government has not got the money. Why, then, all this propaganda about a building boom? The February brochure of the Queensland Federation of Housing Societies contains a bitter complaint that in the first six months of the last financial year the funds available were millions of dollars less than previously. Of course there is a building boom, but not in homes. The building boom is in Queen Street and Adelaide Street, where palatial insurance buildings are being erected.

The Minister has heard me complain consistently—the hon. member for Kedron spoke about it today—about the number of homes being built for private companies. The Treasurer said here that in future the Government would be tougher on the private sector. The Government should direct the Housing Commission to implement that Government policy and should also consider the necessity for these big overseas combines, with all their capital, to find their own homes for their employees. They have the money in millions.

I recently drew attention to what Mount Isa Mines Ltd. has done over the years for its employees, some of it in a period when the Labour Government was being condemned because it entered into an agreement with that company to encourage it in developing the mineral resources in that part of the State. Recently, after the Government's decision that the Housing Commission could build homes at Weipa for Comalco, and at Tin Can Bay, Mount Isa Mines Ltd. decided that it would have a "plug" at this, too. The result was that the company will share the provision of homes with the Government on a 50-50 basis. At least that is something. But that company is not altogether deserving, even though it has done much to develop the mineral resources in the north-western part of the State.

I am afraid that a critical examination does not support the view expressed by the Government on what it is doing to house its own people. The hon. member for Carnarvon suggested that the Housing Commission should build homes for railway employees at Inglewood. I do not know that I am altogether in agreement with that suggestion. The Railway Department, like private companies, should undertake to house its own employees. I pointed out previously that when a railway employee with a wife and eight children, occupying the position of assistant station master, was transferred from Gin Gin to Gladstone, although he was a very important link in the organisation of the railway system he could not get a home. This happened while the Housing Commission was building homes for Comalco. I was speaking recently with another member who had a similar story from his area in the North.

These people who cannot get homes have been associated with the development of local industry and have contributed more to the State than Comalco ever will. In spite of that, they are not considered. The Government does not want to give them homes.

Hon. members opposite will have to face up to the fact that charity begins at home. Let us look after our own people in the sugar industry, engineering projects, and any other form of industry, as a means of assisting decentralisation throughout the State. Let them be given a little more consideration than they are given now.

Those who have homes are paying through the nose for them. Some are paying rents of from \$16 to \$20 a week simply because they must have homes. We hear much talk about an economic rental being one-fifth of total weekly earnings. In many cases that does not apply, and to pay the rents charged many must be denying themselves necessities to enable their families to have a roof over their head.

Apparently the Bill contains no new amendments and is, from what I have been able to gather, merely a re-enactment of the 1956, 1961, and 1965 agreements. I shall be interested to see the Bill when it is printed because, as the Minister for Lands, who is sitting beside the Minister for Works and Housing, knows, I do not always accept what is said from the other side of the Chamber. I like to see Bills for myself.

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Minister for Works and Housing) (4.58 p.m.), in reply: I thank all hon. members for their contributions. I am quite sure that they have expressed opinions in which they sincerely believe, and that they are interested in increasing the opportunities for people to obtain homes. Various subjects were dealt with, and I propose to refer briefly to some of them. Many of the things mentioned any Minister or Government would

naturally like to do, and I am quite sure that all hon. members appreciate that, regardless of the political colour of the Government, there will always be problems that cannot readily be overcome.

The hon. member for Belmont referred to homes for old people. What he said is quite true, and this matter has been raised from time to time at conferences on housing matters. They are problems that have not yet been overcome. The main approach to them has been through charitable and church bodies, to whom the Commonwealth Governments pays a subsidy on a 2-for-1 basis. The State contributes to the furnishing of these premises. Some small assistance of \$2 a week is given to certain age and invalid pensioners, other than couples, who have to pay rent. That is apparently as much assistance as it is possible to give at the moment in housing.

The hon. member also spoke about the building of homes throughout the State, and he seemed to think that difficulty is being experienced in letting contracts. I assure him that that is not so. There have been only one or two cases during the years that I have been Minister for Housing in which there have been delays in the calling of tenders. Usually there is no difficulty in obtaining contractors. As the hon. member knows, it is the policy of the Government to call tenders wherever that is possible.

The hon. member also wondered whether some of the 30 per cent. at present being allocated to co-operative building societies could be used by the Housing Commission. One cannot be definite on this, but I think I can assure the hon. member that at the moment the Government has no thoughts in that direction. Because we have the Workers' Dwelling scheme, which a former Government introduced and which has worked very effectively throughout the State, we did not press this matter. Of course, some of the other States have not the over-all scheme that Queensland has.

The hon. member for Carnarvon, Mr. McKechnie, mentioned some problems at Wallangarra. That matter is being investigated. I believe there is a need there, and I think the Commission will be called upon to build some new houses.

Mr. Newton: It will be serious if those 10 railwaymen are transferred.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes. That is one of the problems that is being considered.

The hon. member for Salisbury spoke at great length about the rebates that will not be available under the proposed Act and are not available under the present Act. As the hon. member for Bundaberg said, we would like to have rebates because it is an advantage to be able in certain instances to assist people who, through unfortunate circumstances, do not have the same earning capacity as most people in the community.

There are homes built under the 1945 Agreement or early in 1956 that become available, and the Commission continues to use them to assist people who are in difficulties. As I see it, in these days there are so many things that people think they must have—for example, to own a motor-car has become almost a necessity—and it is very nice indeed to have them; but this does make it difficult for many people to pay what the Commission believes to be an economic rent.

The hon. member for Salisbury spoke also of the difficulties of a man with a large and growing family. What he said is quite true. On the other hand, when these children go out to work, I have seen the advantage it is to people at that period of their life to have someone bringing an income into the home.

Servicemen, as I said earlier, are eligible for a house from the Housing Commission. They are citizens of this State, and we treat them as such. We do not say to them at any time, "You must go into an Army house." The incident to which the hon. member referred may have occurred when the Army said to a serviceman, "Your house is available. You can shift into it."; otherwise we continue to treat them as ordinary citizens.

Mr. Newton: There is a difference between ex-servicemen and servicemen, is there not?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No. They are all treated alike, as citizens of this State. If they come to the Commission for a house they receive the same treatment as everybody else receives.

Mr. Newton: The priority rating applies?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes. It would have to apply if they came to the Commission on that basis.

The hon. member for Townsville South and the hon. member for Townsville North will appreciate that a great deal has been done in that city. Leaving out Canberra, Townsville is growing more rapidly than any other city in the Commonwealth, and the Queensland Housing Commission has done a considerable amount of work there. It agrees that much more should be done. I remind the hon. member for Townsville South that Gladstone has a great need because of the big influx of population into that area.

The hon. member for Townsville South spoke of people who are unable to obtain houses in Townsville. I am sure he will agree that it is neither possible nor practicable for any Government or Housing Commission to have houses waiting for people. If people are in need of houses, the Commission is always willing to build houses for them on their own land. I point out, too, that an advance of up to \$8,000 is now available. Recently a contract for 40

homes was let in Townsville; the Commission will be calling tenders for a further 10 in the near future. There are only three applications for rental houses that come within the Commission's 100, 80 or 60-point categories. In the 40-point group we have 33 applications in Townsville. The hon. member must admit that on those figures Townsville's need is not so very tremendous.

Mr. Walsh: It should be considered, just the same.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, it should be, and it certainly will be. There could be some Army homes, which stand empty from time to time. That is no business of the Commonwealth and I am sure the Army treats this matter with a great deal of responsibility. The Army has personnel coming and going all the time. It could be waiting for some servicemen to return from overseas.

Mr. Walsh: I think that should be stated.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes.

In fairness to the Townsville City Council, I want to say that it has not tried to prevent us from building flats on the land to which reference was made. At the moment we are not contemplating building any blocks of flats there because it is our practice to concentrate on houses for families. It is our belief that flats do not really cater for families. Therefore, we are more anxious to build homes in Townsville.

The hon. member for Kedron spoke at considerable length on problems he has met from time to time. No doubt there is some truth in some of the points he raised. They were also touched upon by the hon. member for Bundaberg. I would say that in many respects the whole problem relates to finance.

The hon. member for Bundaberg made a lot out of the fact that we should allow a widow to remain in her house instead of transferring her to a rebate house in another suburb. We have to do this from time to time. If we do not, then we, as a State, are called upon to bear the full amount of the loss in rent as a result of the rebate. We can only do it with the homes actually erected and identified with the 1945 Agreement. They are the only homes on which we can help people with rebates. That is why these transfers may take place from time to time.

I can reassure the hon. member for Kedron, and the hon. member for Bundaberg in some respects, on what we are doing for new industries and what we have done in the past. I am quite sure they would not like to see any of these industries establish themselves in other States rather than here. Every effort in this direction had to be made when we became the Government. This is one of the things which we pursued relentlessly. I remember that with regard to Weipa the late Mr. Evans had months

and months of negotiations. These are some of the things that led to the position where we now have these industries.

It is easy to say that there was no need to provide houses for some of these industries. However, I do not think we would have had them if we had not "come to the party" by providing homes for their employees.

Mr. Walsh: Apparently the Government recognised it, because the Treasurer said he would have to get tough with them.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: We have played our part and have gone as far as we can financially. The State has gone so far and, as I said, from time to time we have taken stock of how far and how fast we are going. No doubt that is one of the reasons why, after the burst of industrial progress that has taken place in this State, this is probably the time to take stock of some of these things and to have a breathing space for a period.

The hon. member for Kedron tried to indicate tremendous advantages in fractional percentages in interest rates, and spoke of all the poor people we had. I know we have some people in unfortunate circumstances who face a difficult position, but I think we must agree, as I said earlier, that today we generally have a very affluent society. The position is difficult because there are so many things that I and all other hon. members feel we are entitled to—television sets, motor-cars and all the rest of it. Therefore we have to take stock of our general living standards and not merely say that rental rebates are the solution to the problem.

I appreciate the remarks of the hon. member for Toowoong about our homes. He said that our estates are becoming more attractive and interesting. That is true. However, it does take time to establish an area. Some of the estates have been built in a short space of time but it takes a long while to make them attractive with trees, shrubs and flowers. He mentioned the desirability of sparing the trees as we clear areas. I assure him that I have a great love for trees. There is no place I like better than a small area of 12 acres that we have in the Bunya Mountains. I love to take my family into the scrub. We have lovely scrub surrounding our home outside Kingaroy. This area of virgin scrub is a delightful spot. I love trees very much, but on going into this question I find that their preservation is not as easy as might be thought. Many of the trees growing on the land to be cleared are not particularly attractive. We have only fairly small areas for housing estates, and by the time a house and a garage are erected on an allotment, together with sewerage lines, clothes-drying areas and the like, there is not much room left for trees.

Mr. Newton: It has been done at St. Lucia.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: In some of the larger estates around Indooroopilly, where the

allotments are relatively large, it is possible to leave the trees, with very attractive results. When clearing estates, constructing roads, and so on, it is difficult to leave the trees there.

The hon. member for Bundaberg gave some interesting and solid advice on various aspects of the Housing Commission. He is a man who has had considerable experience in these matters over a long period. As he said, very low rentals were available in that period, but, as I said earlier, we do use those houses.

I could supply certain figures in reply to the hon. members for Kedron and Bundaberg, but some of them are tied up with the coming Budget debate and I think it would be more appropriate if they were produced at that time.

I was a little surprised at the suggestion of the hon. member for Bundaberg that the Commonwealth Government should accept responsibility for building homes for service personnel in this State. As Queensland is a State with sovereign rights I should not like to say to the Commonwealth Government, "You can come in here and take over that activity."

Mr. Walsh: What I said was that service personnel are part of defence and their housing should be a charge against the Defence Vote, not against this State's housing allocation.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The hon. member felt that the 5 per cent. to which he referred should be paid entirely by the Commonwealth. I think we have to look at this matter quite fairly. The State does receive considerable benefit from service personnel. We will benefit considerably from the hundreds and hundreds of service personnel coming to Amberley and Townsville.

Mr. Walsh: Every other State benefited from that during the war.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That may be so, but we will benefit now from the plans and preparations being made by the Commonwealth, and from what it contributes.

The hon. member referred to the amount allocated to South Australia for home building and compared it with Queensland's allocation. I am sure he knows, as we all do, the basis on which Queensland's allocation was arrived at compared with the other States. Because money was available to the previous State Government it did not have to take advantage of certain loan raisings and we are now at a disadvantage because of that.

Reference was made to Mt. Isa and other places. As was indicated, Mount Isa Mines Ltd. builds two houses for every one that we build. At Moura we build one for one. Now that we have established such places as Moura, that is virtually the basis on which industries will have to assist when homes are required in future. We feel that, as the Government, we have a responsibility to build homes, and we do so.

The hon. member said also that co-operative housing societies in Bundaberg did not have sufficient money to finance homes. I remind him that people can always come to us if they want to build on their own land, and we will advance up to \$8,000. There is no need to depend entirely on co-operative housing societies if they have not the money. That is one of the things that I said previous Governments had introduced which works effectively and well.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, read a first time.

The House adjourned at 5.19 p.m.