

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 1966**

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Answers:—

- (1) "Professor A. L. Reimann."
- (2) "Yes."
- (3) "Before the examination papers were approved in their final form, a thorough check was made to ensure that the questions were in accord with the 1966 syllabus."
- (4) "Examination papers are set to measure the knowledge and understanding of the student in the various subjects."
- (5) "Yes. The assessors checked the papers set by Professor Reimann and accepted them as fulfilling the purposes indicated in (4)."
- (6) "The whole matter will be considered by the Board at its next meeting."

#### TRANSPORT OF WOOL TO INTERSTATE SELLING CENTRES

Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier,—

- (1) Has his attention been drawn to the article in *The Courier-Mail* of November 16 headed "Queensland Wool will by-pass Brisbane Auctions"?
- (2) Will he take steps to see that the orderly flow of wool to Brisbane markets is not disrupted as suggested in the press?
- (3) Will he also take action to protect Queensland industries from the threat to trade direct interstate?

Answers:—

- (1) "Yes."
- (2) "Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution guarantees the freedom of interstate trade, and any steps to compulsorily restrict the movements of wool to intrastate wool-selling centres would be abortive. Such steps would also be undesirable because considerable quantities of wool from northern New South Wales are regularly sold by the Brisbane auctions."
- (3) "This Government has done and will continue to do everything in its power to protect the interests of Queensland industries from any threats to their trade."

#### ROCKHAMPTON RAILWAY WORKSHOPS EMPLOYEES

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

Referring to his Answer to my Question on November 9 concerning the transfer and dismissal of employees from the Rockhampton Railway workshops—

- (1) What was the length of service and what position was occupied by each of the twenty-nine employees transferred and to where and what positions were they offered transfer?

### THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER, 1966

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

#### QUESTIONS

##### PHYSICS PAPER, SENIOR PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

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

In view of the serious controversy over the Senior physics examination papers in 1965 and 1966—

- (1) Who set the paper in 1966?
- (2) Was this the same person as in 1965 who then stated he was not conversant with the Senior syllabus?
- (3) Was any action taken to ensure that the person preparing the paper this year was in fact familiar with the syllabus?

(4) Is the purpose of the Senior examination to ascertain the knowledge and ability of the student or whether the teachers have taught the syllabus?

(5) Was this year's examination paper referred to or checked by any person or body? If so, what were his or their comments?

(6) Will the Board of Senior Studies consider setting another Senior physics examination paper for this year?

(2) From what position, after what length of service and for what reason was the one employee dismissed?

Answers:—

When the dieselisation programme began to affect the Rockhampton district, his Worship the Mayor of Rockhampton, Alderman R. B. J. Pilbeam, made strong representations to me requesting that every effort be made to retain the services of permanent railway staff. In keeping with the Railway Department's policy, action has been taken to provide employment for all permanent employees.

(1) "The number of employees concerned in each grade and the positions which have been offered to them are as follows:—

Number of Employees	Grade	Position offered
1	Fifth Grade Sub-Foreman	Will be retained as a surplus Fifth Grade Sub-Foreman in his present position of Fitter in Charge, Gladstone
1	Leading Hand Turner	Turner
8	Turners .. ..	Porter
4	Blacksmiths ..	One (1) offered position as Blacksmith, Maintenance Branch, Rockhampton One (1) offered position as Blacksmith, Cairns Two (2) offered positions as Porters
3	Coppersmiths ..	Porter
1	Toolmaker .. ..	Toolmaker, Ipswich
5	Blacksmiths' Strikers	Fettler
1	Driller .. ..	Fettler
1	Crane Slingsman	Fettler
1	Tube Turner ..	Fettler
1	Power Hacksaw Operator	Fettler
1	Bosh Hand .. ..	Fettler
1	Boiler Attendant	Fettler

Length of service varies from one year ten months to thirty-one years six months."

(2) "The employee concerned has been offered a position as porter. His length of service is one year ten months."

OVERSEAS ORDERS FOR RAILWAY ROLLING-STOCK

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

(1) How many orders for rolling-stock have been placed with overseas companies by the Railway Department during the last three years, naming separately the companies, types of orders placed, delivery times and accepted prices?

(2) Has there been any discrepancy in prices and extended delivery times? If so, what are the companies involved?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "The only rolling-stock contract let to an overseas company by the Railway Department during the last three years was to Nippon Sharyo Seizo Kaisha Limited, Japan, for the supply of 200 'VO' wagons. The total cost including landing and import charges was \$2,196,611.94. Deliveries were made on schedule and there was no discrepancy in prices and no extended delivery time."

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS, NORTH QUEENSLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION AND PEOPLE THE NORTH COMMITTEE

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

(1) Is the North Queensland Local Government Association composed entirely of certain Local Authorities in North Queensland, each of which functions in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act?

(2) Was the People the North Committee formed by and does it operate under the complete control of the North Queensland Local Government Association?

(3) Are the books, documents and all other matters relating to the operations of (a) the North Queensland Local Government Association and (b) the People the North Committee subject to audit as provided by the Local Government Act? Has the Auditor-General made such an audit? If so, where does the report appear and when was it made available to Parliament?

(4) If the Auditor-General has no statutory authority to make such an audit, will he request the North Queensland Local Government Association to produce a detailed balance sheet of its own and the People the North Committee's financial affairs from the date the People the North Committee was formed to the latest date for which figures are readily available, and will he make such balance sheet available to this Parliament?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) "The North Queensland Local Government Association and the People the North Committee are not constituted under "The Local Government Acts, 1936 to 1965," and accordingly I am not aware of their constitutions."

BOAT-LAUNCHING RAMPS AND NEW PUBLIC JETTY, CAIRNS

Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

(1) Has any consideration or decision been given on site plans and construction detail for additional boat-launching ramps and a new public jetty at Cairns?

(2) If so, what are the locations and estimated costs, when is it anticipated tenders will be called and when will the work commence?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "Site plans for a new public jetty near the Esplanade in Cairns are being prepared and are expected to be available for approval before the end of this month. The estimated cost will not be known until the plans are available. The Department of Harbours and Marine has approved of the engagement by the Mulgrave Shire Council of consultants to make a general review of the need for boat-launching ramps in the Cairns area. Action is proceeding in this direction."

#### ELECTRICITY RETICULATION FOR DANBULLA FORESTRY RESERVE

**Mr. Wallis-Smith**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

In view of the permanent work force engaged at Danbulla Forestry Reserve and the fact that barracks and other accommodation are provided for these men, will he consider the installation of electric light and power for all buildings at this camp?

*Answer:—*

"I will secure a report and give the matter full consideration in the light of the circumstances of the case."

#### HARVESTING OF TOBACCO CROP, MAREEBA-DIMBULAH DISTRICT

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

(1) Is he aware that an acute shortage of labour exists for the harvesting of this year's tobacco crop in the Mareeba-Dimbulah district?

(2) Has he taken any steps to overcome this serious problem? If not, will he take urgent action to provide sufficient labour to harvest the full crop?

*Answers:—*

(1) "I am advised that there is no acute shortage of labour for the harvesting of this year's tobacco crop in the Mareeba-Dimbulah district. I understand there is at present some shortage of skilled labour but otherwise there is adequate labour offering."

(2) "It is not the function of the Government to direct labour. The Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service does assist in the movement of labour to various sources as required and no doubt that Department could assist should growers experience difficulty in obtaining labour. The Honourable Member will naturally be aware that an officer of that Department is located at Atherton."

#### RAILWAY REFRESHMENT ROOM CHARGES

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

(1) What is the reason for increased prices at Railway refreshment rooms in the last two months?

(2) Why are sandwiches of the same type two cents dearer on Saturday than on Monday?

(3) Will he have all prices exhibited in a prominent place in each refreshment room?

*Answers:—*

(1) "The increases in charges for meals and light refreshments at railway refreshment rooms operated from and including November 1, 1966. This is the first increase in such charges since 1960 and has been necessary because of increases in wages and costs of provisions."

(2) "A surcharge of 2c per customer for light refreshments applies on Saturdays, on Sundays and public holidays. A check of all railway refreshment rooms conducted on railway property will be made to ensure that no charge beyond that authorised is being made."

(3) "Yes."

#### MAINTENANCE WORK, MAREEBA STATE SCHOOL

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

Owing to the dilapidated appearance of the Mareeba State primary school and the urgent need for repairs to the buildings, will he have a responsible officer of his Department inspect the school with the view to having it repainted externally and internally and necessary repair work carried out to bring the buildings into line with other schools throughout the State?

*Answer:—*

"No recent correspondence has been received from any local interested party indicating that repairs to and repainting of the Mareeba State School building is necessary. Arrangements will be made, however, for an officer of the Department of Works to inspect the building in question and furnish a report and estimate of cost of any improvements considered necessary."

#### DEATH OF MR. R. J. GARDNER

##### MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

**Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN** (Landsborough—Premier) (11.15 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

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

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

The late Robert James Gardner, who passed away peacefully in his sleep a few days ago at the age of 76, entered the 32nd Parliament as Australian Labour Party member for the electorate of Bulimba following the general election of 29 April, 1950. He did not have an easy entry into this House, because he was one of the few members in the history of Queensland who had to meet a challenge to his election. Following that challenge, on 2 January, 1951, his election was declared void by the Elections Tribunal and a fresh election was ordered. However, as a result of that fresh election Mr. Gardner was re-elected to this House on 14 April, 1951. He held his seat in the House until 2 August, 1957, after he became a member of the Queensland Labour Party in April, 1957. He was defeated in the election on 3 August, 1957.

As one who served in this Parliament during the period that the late Mr. Gardner was a member, I knew him and remember him very well indeed. He was a very conscientious member of this House and a man with the courage of his convictions, as was evidenced by the manner of his election, by his subsequent attitude, and by his many speeches in the debates that took place here. He did not speak very frequently, but his contributions were sincere and to the point. They were notable for their obvious sincerity of utterance.

The late Mr. Gardner graduated to Parliament from the Public Service of this State. He had served in the Crown service for 22 years prior to his election to Parliament. He was employed in the Department of Works from 3 December, 1928, to 28 April, 1950, and was a foreman painter on his resignation from the department.

The late Bob Gardner gave a lifetime of service to the union movement in Queensland. For 25 years he was an executive officer of the Operative Painters and Decorators' Union, and was president of that union for a term. He was also president of the Building Trades Group of Unions when the 40-hour week was pioneered in this State. He gave great service to the union movement of Queensland and to his fellow union members.

He was also very keenly interested in the Australian Natives Association, and was a member of that organisation for very many years.

Summing up, in addition to being a good member of this Parliament, giving fine service to the State during his period in office, he was also a very worthy citizen, and this Parliament and the State are the poorer as the result of his passing.

I join with all hon. members of this House in extending to Mr. Gardner's widow and family our deepest sympathy at the passing of their husband and father.

**Mr. HOUSTON** (Bulimba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.19 a.m.): I, and all other members of the Opposition, join with the Premier in this vote of condolence to the widow and family of the late Bob Gardner. Perhaps it is a rather queer turn of fate that, on behalf of the Opposition, I should have the opportunity today to speak about the passing of Bob Gardner, because in 1957 I helped to bring about his defeat.

I knew Bob Gardner perhaps better than most people. I knew him for the genuine person he really was. As the Premier has said, Bob Gardner was an active member of the trade union movement for many years, and his work associated with union advocacy for a 40-hour week was well known to all Labour people at that time. For his work in the Labour movement he was made a life member of the Australian Labour Party prior to 1957. As the Premier pointed out, his beliefs and convictions subsequently caused him to leave the Australian Labour Party and to throw in his lot with the Queensland Labour Party. As a result of that, there was a change in the representation of the electorate. However, that does not detract in any way from the man as we knew him.

Bob Gardner was, and always will be, respected as a worth-while citizen of our area. Perhaps he is best remembered locally for his work amongst the younger people. For many years prior to entering Parliament, and after his retirement, he was an active member of the Bulimba Hockey Association. It is for his active work for that association that I believe he will be always remembered. Next Saturday the local hockey team will be opening a new club-house, and I know the club members were looking forward to having Bob there for the opening ceremony.

Bob Gardner's widow and family will have the deepest sympathy of all people in the area he represented in Parliament. I am very pleased to be associated with this motion of condolence moved by the Premier.

**Mr. DIPLOCK** (Aubigny) (11.23 a.m.): I wish to associate myself with the motion moved by the Premier and seconded by the Leader of the Opposition. I express my pleasure that both hon. gentlemen saw fit to highlight the late Mr. Gardner's sincerity and decency. I believe that they both spoke sincerely and from the heart.

Unfortunately Mr. Gardner was not a member of the House for very long, but I am sure that during his term of office he earned the respect of every hon. member on both sides because of his decency and sincerity, and the other qualities that went to make him the gentleman he was. Whatever Bob Gardner thought of the matter that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, we know that he acted according to the dictates of his conscience. At the same time he gave

the right to every other hon. member of the House to act according to the dictates of his conscience. There was no bitterness in Bob Gardner. He uttered no words that subsequently he would have liked to retract.

Not only on behalf of myself, but on behalf of all members of the Queensland Labour Party, I join with the Premier in conveying to the widow and family of the late Bob Gardner our very deepest and sincerest sympathy.

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

### SUPPLY

#### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES— THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH ALLOTTED DAYS

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

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1966-67

#### DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

##### PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Hon. J. A ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.26 a.m.): I move—

"That \$5,574,904 be granted for 'Department of Primary Industries—Primary Industries'."

Hon. members might note that the sum of \$674,122 is included in Schedule C as a grant from Consolidated Revenue to meet the Government endowment on stock assessments received for 1965-66 under the Stock Acts, 1915 to 1965, whilst a further \$367,000 has been provided on the Estimates of the Treasurer as a special Drought Relief Grant to the Stock Fund for 1966-67.

Provision has been made under the Trust and Special Funds for an expenditure by the department of \$7,685,335. The significant items are—

State—	\$
Stock Funds	2,190,463
Stock Disease Compensation and Stock Improvement Fund	170,885
Sugar Cane Prices Fund	360,995
Sugar Bulk Handling Facilities Special Fund	977,000
Poultry Industry Fund	142,267
Queensland Meat Industry Authority Special Account	44,740
Other—	
Commonwealth Agricultural Services Extension Fund	374,000
Commonwealth Dairying Industry Fund	197,700
Commonwealth Poultry Industry Assistance Fund	1,078,000
Australian Meat Research Trust Fund	373,287
National Pleuro-pneumonia Fund	112,225
Tobacco Research Fund	251,000

These latter amounts arise from Commonwealth grants for the benefit of primary industry, grants from industry research funds, contributions from other States for disease eradication and, in the case of the Commonwealth Poultry Industry Assistance Fund, this account is a clearing account for the distribution of Commonwealth levies to the State Egg Marketing Boards.

The amount of \$5,574,904 is sought to meet the salaries and contingency expenditure of the department from Consolidated Revenue, the amounts being \$3,478,626 and \$2,096,278 respectively.

The expenditure for the financial year 1965-1966 was \$4,583,980, which consisted of salaries \$3,232,014 and contingency items of \$1,351,966. The increase in salaries, namely, \$246,612, is due partly to the increase in salary payments consequent upon basic wage adjustments granted by the Industrial Court and Commission, partly to automatic promotions, including the new promotional scheme for advisory staff, and partly to the appointment of a limited number of departmental scholarship-holders who graduated this year.

The contingency provision of \$2,096,278 includes a special provision of \$750,000 for the Dairy Pasture Subsidy Scheme, \$40,000 for the expansion of operations of research stations and departmental grants to the various trust funds, totalling \$166,750, including an additional grant to the Poultry Industry Fund this financial year.

In dealing with the departmental Estimates for 1966-67, for the information of the House I propose to run fairly briefly over the various activities of each of the divisions of the department.

The Administration Division co-ordinates departmental activities, and in addition to the various "housekeeping" services—that is to say, accounts, commercial, despatch and so on—covers a number of branches and sections dealing with information, extension staff training, research stations operation, and biometrics.

Considerable Commonwealth finance has become available during the current year to allow expansion of information and training services, and to provide much-needed equipment for research stations. This assistance is provided by way of the Commonwealth Extension Services Grants, and this is an appropriate time to say a few words about the obligations of the various States that use Commonwealth grants to supplement their own spending on extension and regional research.

For a number of years, the Commonwealth has made grants to the States for extension services totalling some \$1,400,000 annually. This total has been doubled for the current financial year and Queensland's share is \$571,000. The Commonwealth has undertaken to increase the Australian total progressively to \$5,500,000 over five years. If Queensland's percentage allocation remains

at about its present level, we may expect to build up to about \$1,000,000 by 1972. This is obviously an extremely useful grant and enables us to plan ahead for expansion of extension and regional research activities. The grant, however, is contingent on each recipient State maintaining its normal rate of expansion of spending on these activities. In other words, the grant cannot be used to relieve State budgets of their normal commitments.

Clearly, if we are to take advantage of the grant in the years ahead, and at the same time honour our obligations, we must provide a reasonable annual increase in State expenditure. This, of course, is wholly desirable of its own worth.

The matter of research stations will no doubt be raised in the debate on my motion, and it might facilitate discussion if I outline briefly the research stations set-up in the department. First of all, we have a number of stations which operate as regional research stations and serve the interests of the various industries in those regions. Among the main regions served by such stations are Darling Downs, Lockyer, Dawson-Callide, Fitzroy, Burdekin, and Atherton Tableland.

Then we have a number of specialised stations operated by particular branches. Thus, the horticulture branch has a number of horticultural research stations, the cattle husbandry branch has its field research stations, and so on. The Brian Pastures Research Station, near Gayndah, is in a special category, the property being owned by the Australian Meat Board and operated by my department.

It is an unfortunate fact that there are never sufficient Government funds to meet the demands upon them, and in this respect we have not been able to develop and equip our research stations as quickly and as adequately as we would like. Finance has also been the main stumbling block to the further establishment of new research stations. It is arguable, of course, whether a research station is really required in every farming or grazing region. The establishment of efficient research centres is costly, and, to obtain full value from skilled technicians and modern facilities, the best equipment must be provided. Every such centre is consequently designed to serve the widest possible area. In some cases, a compromise between a full-scale research station and investigations on commercial properties has been made by providing limited laboratory facilities and field plot facilities at particular centres. This may well be the pattern that we will have to follow in the future.

But the established stations need to become fully developed as quickly as possible. However, much has been achieved. If we look at our Darling Downs regional research station near Warwick, which is our main plant-breeding centre, we can chalk up such achievements as Spica wheat, various hybrid sorghum varieties, and better forage sorghums.

We have achieved good progress in the main Central Queensland centre at Biloela, which has led agricultural development in the the lower-rainfall areas, and a new administration and laboratory block has recently been erected there. With agriculture moving into the 25-inch rainfall zone, plant breeding and soil studies now under way at this station have particular significance.

The Burdekin station at Millaroo is faced with the task of devising land utilisation systems for various soil types commanded by the waters of the Burdekin. It is of interest that in testing uses for the more intractable heavier soils, rice is showing up as a potentially valuable crop.

The Atherton Tableland station at Kairi serves both the dairying and the maize industries. The station's pasture research has laid the foundation for improvement in dairy production. Priority has been given now to maize breeding to overcome a major industry problem, and locally produced hybrids are now being distributed to growers.

The Coolum Research Station, on the wallum country, is one of our more modest research stations, yet the results achieved there with pasture improvement have paved the way for commercial development of the wetter wallum soil.

The results being achieved at other regional research stations are equally important to the regions that they serve.

The Queensland Agricultural Journal is also provided for under the Administration Division. I have seen many complimentary references to this journal, and I know that it is highly regarded by farmers and graziers. This is only one avenue by which the results of research and practical experience are conveyed to farmers. It is planned to develop other avenues in the future to ensure that producers are kept abreast of improved methods of production.

Special provision is made for \$750,000 for the Dairy Pasture Subsidy Scheme. This follows a decision by the Government to implement a recommendation of the Dairy Industry Advisory Committee, which reported to the Premier on ways and means of improving the position of the dairy industry.

Experience gained with new pasture mixtures in recent years has indicated that in many districts the most profitable line to pursue in increasing the efficiency of dairy production is the laying down of fairly substantial areas of the new pastures. The subsidy was designed largely to encourage application of the newer knowledge of pastures.

**Mr. Tucker:** How do they apply—direct to the persons concerned?

**Mr. ROW:** Yes. Application has to be made for the subsidy. There is a district committee in each area to which farmers make application for the establishment of approved pastures. Recommendations go to the central committee for approval, and on satisfactory establishment of the pastures,

the farmer makes his application for subsidy payment. The scheme is, however, not restricted to plantings of newer pasture types. It applies to plantings of any types of pasture which, in the opinion of the special district committees, will prove successful in those districts.

It is too early to estimate the volume of applications that will be received this year, but it is expected that the provision made will cover the requests for subsidy in the current financial year.

The Division of Development Planning and Soil Conservation has been operating as such for only a couple of years, but its worth has been evident right from the start. There is no doubt that as the agricultural development of the State increases in pace, this division will play an increasingly important part in the planning of developmental projects.

The Development Planning Branch provides close liaison between branches of my department and between my department and other departments in the development of approved projects, as well as in the assessment of the agricultural and economic potential of a number of proposed projects.

Branch officers have been closely associated with the Land Administration Commission in the Fitzroy Basin Land Development Scheme, and in Areas I and II have assisted technically in relation to the 335,906 acres of brigalow scrub now cleared on ballot blocks and the 191,304 acres of this area now carrying established pastures. Land capability classifications are being made throughout the greater part of these areas, and settlers are being encouraged to base property development programmes on these inventories. In Area III, resource inventories are being made well in advance of subdivision so that settlers will be in a position to base development decisions on sound physical data.

Joint assessments of the \$26,000,000 Nogoia irrigation project have been made during the year and, as a result, a joint report has been submitted to the Commonwealth. Joint examination of a number of other irrigation projects is currently being made. These include the Kolan-Lower Burnett-Isis project; the Bowen-Broken River project; extension of the St. George project; and the Brisbane River-Lower Lockyer project.

Soil conservation services are now provided from 27 centres, including four new centres which were opened during the year at Ipswich, Clermont, Jakey and Allora. Good progress continues to be made in the application of soil-conservation measures, and last year a total of 6,400 landholders applied these measures to 120,355 acres of erosion-prone cultivation land. Earthworks aggregating 3,160 miles in length were constructed. Some 530,000 acres of the State lands have now been protected by soil-conservation works. Half a million acres is a substantial area. But when it is realised that there are possibly 1,000,000 acres not treated and that the average area

of new cultivation coming in each year is over 250,000 acres, the task of catching up on arrears is a formidable one.

The provisions of the Soil Conservation Act passed last year are being applied progressively. Hon. members will recollect that provision was made for the setting up of project areas, comprising a small number of farms, on the decision of a majority of the farmers concerned. The first such project area has now been gazetted, and further applications are in train. This form of activity under the Act integrates very well with the informal soil-conservation group activity that has been a feature of the Eastern Darling Downs in recent years.

I turn next to the Division of Marketing whose operations cover a wide field. They embrace not only marketing as such, but market research and intelligence, farm management, economic investigations, the formulation and administration of standards, seed testing, and a variety of other measures affecting the whole of rural industry. These various services are grouped under the three branches of the division—the Marketing Services Branch, the Economics Research Branch, and the Standards Branch.

On the marketing services side, existing services to marketing boards, primary producers' co-operative associations, growers' organisations and the farming community generally will be continued. The demand for these services, naturally, is increasing as the rural output of the State expands and marketing becomes more complex. Other regular services, including market price reporting and crop forecasting, will also be maintained.

This year saw the successful establishment of a Tobacco Industry Stabilisation Scheme. The Marketing Division has been very much involved in the development and operation of this scheme. I am happy to report that all Queensland tobacco leaf of acceptable grades from the last crop has been sold at prices equal to or above the minimum grade price levels established. All told, Queensland sales this year totalled 14,375,593 lb. at an average price of 113.1 cents a lb. This was worth \$16,257,834 to the State.

With the development of the State, the necessity is arising for close examination of market outlets and processing opportunities for primary products. This involves market research on a much more sophisticated plane than has been carried out in the past, and the Marketing Services Branch is now carrying out a good deal of this type of study. During the past year, for example, detailed surveys were made of market outlets and prospects for protein meals in Central and Southern Queensland.

**Mr. TUCKER:** Is that done only within Australia, or also outside?

**Mr. ROW:** Markets outside Australia also are examined. With the State's developing oilseeds industries, this study was of particular relevance.

A joint economic study by the Marketing Services and Economics Research Branches

on the practicability of establishing a cannery at Stanthorpe to serve the Granite Belt fruit industry was also completed during the year. This report showed that the time is not yet ripe for the establishment of a cannery at Stanthorpe.

Also in the processing field, studies have been completed into the economics of cotton ginning in Central Queensland and on the Darling Downs, and the economics of vegetable-oil milling in Central Queensland. These studies show that the right place for cotton ginneries is in the centres of production, provided a reasonable production figure can be maintained. They also show that the prospects for establishing an oilseed-crushing plant in Central Queensland are very good if we can get the Nogoa Dam scheme under way.

Market studies are being continued in North Queensland, and assessments on dairy products and potatoes are about to be issued. In addition, necessary basic studies of population distribution and trends in the northern and central regions have been completed.

Other market research projects currently in progress include studies on egg quality, the broiler industry, the pig industry and rice market potential.

On the development front, the Marketing Services and Economic Services Branches have been heavily committed in connection with investigations concerning irrigation projects.

Marketing and economic studies were completed in connection with the proposed Emerald irrigation scheme during the year, and investigations are in progress on the Bundaberg-Childers, Lower Lockyer Valley, Upper Brisbane Valley and St. George irrigation schemes.

Studies projected for the coming year include the Barambah-Barker Creek and Bowen-Broken River areas, while others are under consideration.

In the general field of economic research, a study of dairy farms assisted under the Farm Water Supplies Scheme was recently completed. This revealed that butterfat production had increased by 26 per cent. and net farm incomes by an average of 42 per cent. on these farms after the installation of irrigation systems. This is a very pleasing result.

Other studies completed include a preliminary survey of the economics of egg production in Far North Queensland, and drought-feeding strategies in the wool-growing areas of the State.

Economic studies in progress at present include capital investment on Darling Downs wheat farms, farm management practices on banana farms, and an economic survey of the peanut-growing industry. Also receiving attention are economic aspects of bulk milk handling, and the economics of grain drying and beef-sheep enterprise combinations in the Tara-Goondivindi districts.

During the coming year such studies will be extended to include the economics of fertiliser application in the maize industry on the Atherton Tableland, the economics of fat lamb production on the Darling Downs and the rationalisation of dairy products manufacture in South Queensland.

Farm management advisory services are necessarily of a continuing though expanding nature, and the provision of advice in country centres is proceeding as fast as staff, training and finance permit. During the year an agricultural economist was posted to Gympie. Local farm economic services are also available at Toowoomba and Atherton.

During the coming year it is intended to station agricultural economists at Rockhampton, Townsville, Kingaroy and Roma. This is part of over-all departmental policy aimed at emphasising the whole-farm approach in extension. Assistance through farm management accounting groups will be increased this year to service some 400 farmers in the dairying, grazing, fruit, poultry and peanut industries.

Now that increasing emphasis is being placed on pasture improvement, the provision of reliable seed is of major importance. The Standards Branch is now testing some 15,000 samples of seeds of various types each year in its seed testing laboratory. Tropical legume and pasture species are increasing rapidly in importance. I might add that this service is used very extensively by the trade as well as by individual growers.

Similar development has occurred in the seed certification field. Certified hybrid sorghum seed production now exceeds this State's requirements, and we are supplying other States, particularly New South Wales. Queensland's maize production is now heavily dependent on the supply of certified maize seed.

Registration of agricultural chemicals has long been a function of the Standards Branch. With the introduction of legislation to provide a measure of control over aerial and ground spraying of such chemicals, the present services will be extended to provide greater protection to primary producers.

Dealing now with the Division of Dairying, the importance of dairying in Queensland, despite the reduction in number of dairy farmers to 12,500, is reflected in the provision sought for this division. This, however, is far from being the total amount to be expended on the industry during 1966-67. I have already mentioned the provision to be made for the dairy pasture subsidy. It will be evident later that a good deal of the spending of the Divisions of Animal Industry and Plant Industry will be to the direct benefit of the dairying industry by way of such things as veterinary and cattle husbandry services and pasture research.

The major part of this division's spending on field services will be in providing the routine regulatory and extension services.

These two go hand in hand, and indeed the ultimate aim is regulation by education rather than by the book of rules.

The regulations under the Dairy Produce Acts are designed as much for the benefit of the industry as for the protection of the consumer. The careless or the poorly equipped dairy farmer cannot hope to supply a consistently good product to the factory. Quite apart from his direct lower monetary return from the factory, the industry suffers a major loss, due to the over-all reduction in quality of butter and cheese as a result of the inclusion of his poor raw material. Care must be taken to see that those farmers who are inclined to let things slide to the detriment of quality do not damage the industry.

But important as it is to keep an official eye on regulatory requirements, it is much more important to help towards the education of farmers in approved practices and to assist them in various ways to more efficient production. This is a major function of the Division of Dairying and is performed in every dairying district from the South Coast to the Atherton Tableland. Every district has a series of farm demonstrations of pasture improvement, fodder conservation and other recommended practices to serve as a standing reminder to district dairy farmers of how things can be done, and the results they can expect. Thanks are due to the Commonwealth Government for the provision of finance for materials for most of these demonstrations. Salaries, however, are met by the division.

A new aspect of this work, which the Premier forecast in his policy speech, is the unit farm demonstration. That is to say instead of demonstrating individual practices, a team of specialised departmental officers get together with co-operating farmers and plan a long-term development programme for the whole farm. This is based on an economic analysis of the various practices and enterprises open to the farmer. This type of demonstration has been started in the Ipswich area, and may be expected to be extended to other districts in due course.

Another important activity is providing services to farmers, carriers and factories involved in the bulk handling of milk. This practice is growing rapidly, and obviously requires technical advice if it is to proceed smoothly. Experienced officers are available to advise farmers on equipment and methods of bulk handling on the farm, to ensure that the milk is carried to the factory under hygienic conditions, and to see that grading and other procedures are adequate.

A recent newspaper item referred to the failure of some milk to meet the frothing requirements of milk-shake and espresso-coffee bars. This is only one form of abnormality. There are other forms which are causing concern to the industry. A survey in progress by the Division of Dairying embraces 125,000 tests of milk from

220 herds. The results will indicate just how serious the problem is, and whether corrective measures are needed or practicable.

Provision is made in the Estimates for continuation of herd recording in the dairying districts. Availability of finance is a limiting factor to the expansion of herd recording. Under present arrangements the cost is borne in specified proportions by the dairy farmer, the Commonwealth Government and the State Government. There is little hope of expanding recording unless further money is first forthcoming from the Commonwealth Government. This is a possibility in the 1967-68 financial year, and it may well be that departmental Estimates next year will provide for additional State funds in line with an increased Commonwealth contribution.

What I have said does not mean that there will be no opportunity for farmers to join herd-recording groups this year. The strength of groups and the number of groups vary from time to time, leaving openings for new farmers to come in. The long drought caused many farmers to withdraw from recording groups last year, and for various reasons some of these may not rejoin.

Many examples of striking improvement in production as a result of participation in herd recording come to the notice of my officers. It is evident that recording has potential benefit to most farmers and so will continue to be encouraged. It will be interesting to hon. members to note that the mathematics involved in the analysis of herd recording figures has been transferred to a computer. This will enable monthly results to be returned to farmers at a much earlier date and will also permit a wider range of analysis of the total figures to be undertaken.

The Dairy Research Branch is looking forward to the commencement of operations at its new pilot plant at Hamilton this year. Finding finance for the building of this plant has been a drawn-out process, but I am sure that the work to be undertaken there will prove very rewarding to the industry. The research branch has done a tremendous amount of work over the years and is in the forefront of Australian dairy research establishments. This is a branch which is unlikely ever to run out of problems to solve. For example, the removal of weed taint from butter has been successfully accomplished and is now a commercial process. The removal of weed taint from cream has also been carried out successfully by new techniques, but additional equipment is now required to adapt the process for use on a commercial scale.

Changing market requirements for cheese require that close attention be given to various phases of cheesemaking, such as manufacturing methods, quality and packaging. The chemical and bacteriological laboratories, both in Brisbane and Toowoomba, are actively engaged in numerous projects related to these matters. Of considerable importance also is the matter of producing new varieties of

cheese to meet the demand of a growing population, which is becoming more sophisticated in its cheese-eating and demands greater variety than the local manufacturer has supplied in the past. A number of types equivalent to Edam, Gouda and other continental cheeses are already in commercial production, and new varieties to suit our special production conditions are being developed.

**Mr. Tucker:** It appears that there is a good market for them.

**Mr. ROW:** There is a good market everywhere, particularly in the North.

It is essential that the industry, in co-operation with research workers, should take the initiative in developing outlets for dairy produce, and the cheese market offers one such outlet. Other dairy foods in addition to cheese are being investigated, too.

The department has taken over the full responsibility for investigations into pesticide and antibiotic residues in dairy produce. Previously the Australian Dairy Produce Board had provided financial assistance. Hon. members will be aware that the problem of residues in foodstuffs can be a very real one, especially for an exporting country. Some time ago we had to ban the use of DDT as a tick treatment because certain importing countries objected to DDT residues in our meat. We have to be careful that our dairy produce does not face a ban because of excessive residues. Sampling and analysis is proceeding all the while in the dairy research laboratories in order to keep the matter under constant surveillance.

As an example of how changes in industry practices, valuable as they may be in some respects, can create fresh problems is given by the market milk industry. Milk processors now tend to store milk at low temperatures longer than in the past. This has led to an increase in spoilage due to certain types of bacteria. The research laboratory is pushing ahead with investigations into this particular problem.

I have referred in this Chamber to the enterprise shown by a number of dairy factories in establishing their own production-control laboratories to keep a constant check on chemical and bacteriological quality. This move stemmed from the butter and cheese improvement services provided by my department, but it has by no means eliminated the need for continuance of these services. In fact, the new markets being developed for Australian dairy products are demanding stringent quality standards which the dairy industry must meet. This is particularly so in South-east Asia and Japan. The dairy research laboratories analysed over 50,000 samples last year in providing improvement services to manufacturers.

I shall now deal with the Division of Plant Industry. The range of operations of this division is extremely wide, extending from pasture improvement to food preservation research. The work of the Agriculture Branch on pastures is much more diverse

than that of the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Tropical Pastures and in the eastern region is complementary to that of C.S.I.R.O. The joint work has culminated in the dairying districts in the introduction of the Dairy Pasture Subsidy Scheme which has been referred to under the vote for Administration Division.

The department's pasture research is now having practical application over most of the State and with the prospects of a drought-free period ahead there is certain to be a big upsurge in pasture improvement, particularly in the beef and dairy areas. The sheep industry is by no means being neglected in pasture research; in fact, we have quite a big team working right through the sheep belt from Charleville to Richmond. The chief pasture officer has recently come back from an exploring trip in South America and North Africa, where he located a number of new plants with promise for the semi-arid districts.

Townsville lucerne has come into the picture in a big way in recent years, and much of the research work of C.S.I.R.O. and my department in the beef areas north of Rockhampton is based on this legume. A few months ago an officer of my department was transferred to Townsville to keep in close touch with the work of both bodies with a view to ensuring that the results of research are applied in the paddock as soon as possible.

Very close contact has been maintained between pasture workers at our tropical Agriculture Research Station and the management of Tully River Station, a King Ranch project. Experimentation on the property, in combination with earlier research by the research station, has assisted in the successful establishment to date of over 20,000 acres of well-balanced tropical-grass and legume pastures.

The crop improvement programme of the Agriculture Branch is an extremely varied one. I need only choose a few of the projects to indicate the progress achieved to date and the desirability of continuing research and extension at a high level.

Tropical rust of maize has been the cause of considerable loss to Atherton Tableland growers in recent wet seasons. This season they will have available to them a small quantity of seed of two resistant hybrids bred on the department's research station at Kairi.

Plant-breeding programmes are also in progress with wheat, grain sorghum, and various oilseed and fibre crops. Among the oilseeds, safflower, soybeans, linseed and peanuts are to receive particular attention. Progress on peanut improvement has reached the stage where growers should shortly benefit from higher yielding selections and introductions.

The structure of the cotton industry in Queensland is changing. Only a few years ago any suggestion that the State's main cotton ginnery would be transferred to the Darling Downs would have been scorned. Yet today this transfer is in progress. This

crop illustrates the overriding influence that irrigation development can have on an industry. Queensland, once the main cotton State, now plays third fiddle to New South Wales and Western Australia. Irrigation development on the Darling Downs has attracted the ginnery to that area. I am sure that as we progress with irrigation, other districts will eventually have their own ginneries. The cotton crop has proved a rather frustrating one to plant breeders, as spinners' requirements in fibre character change from time to time.

The Horticulture Branch, which operates five research stations, has been limited, like the general research stations section, in developing its stations. Our budget has not developed in this branch to the extent we would like. However, the financial assistance of the fruit and vegetable industries over the past few years has been heartening and has prevented serious curtailment of research work.

Despite financial limitations, the research stations are turning out useful results from their varied programmes. The Granite Belt station, for instance, has developed an improved apple rootstock that could find a useful place on the Granite Belt. A new tomato variety introduced and tested at the stations is in commercial production at Bowen. A new strawberry variety bred at the Redlands station has earned the praise of growers who planted it on a commercial scale in 1965.

As part of its plant improvement function, the Horticulture Branch services various schemes designed to ensure that growers have access to planting material which is true to type and free from disease. Some of these are the Citrus Budwood and Seed Distribution Scheme, the Strawberry Runner Approval Scheme, and the Bean Seed Approval Scheme. A new venture is the Ginger Seed Approval Scheme, which was inaugurated this year as a safeguard against the spread of diseases.

The structure of the fruit and vegetable industry has been changing over the years. Many of today's growers got their foothold in the industry with very little capital, and were able to build up successful enterprises. This is seldom possible today. Production now involves a heavy investment in land, buildings and machinery. Also, profit margins are frequently so low that only large-scale growers can expect a reasonable farm income. This is particularly true when growers are committed to a single crop such as citrus or pineapples, and cannot vary their production programme with the ups and downs of market demand. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the more highly mechanised industries there is a trend towards larger unit production areas.

There are a few question marks hanging over some segments of the industry. Can the pineapple industry find an outlet for the heavy crops that can be expected from the larger plantings that are being made? How

much further are processed vegetables going to replace fresh vegetables? Can the reduced demand by processors for strawberries and passionfruit be halted?

The work of the Food Preservation Research Laboratory covers the storage, transport and processing of fruits and vegetables. Appropriate storage conditions have now been defined for deciduous fruits grown in Queensland.

Satisfactory transportation of perishable commodities is still a major problem, particularly under non-refrigerated conditions. Investigations are therefore being designed to study air flow in louvered wagons in order to sort out the best stacking conditions for cases and cartons.

In the field of processing, much work is being done on evaluating the canning suitability of lines of pineapple and in determining the best way of concentrating pineapple juice.

New equipment has been installed for experimental work on the production of light-weight but nutritious foods that can be kept for long periods without refrigeration and without loss of quality.

The Agricultural Chemical Laboratory and its sub-laboratories provide a wide variety of services for primary producers and undertake research on many problems associated with soil and plant chemistry.

The free advisory soil-testing service is much availed of by farmers, as indicated by the number of samples tested—between 5,000 and 6,000 each year. The laboratory also advises on the suitability of water for irrigation and stock-watering purposes, and reports were issued last year for over 3,000 samples. The number of samples of grasses and fodders examined for nutritive quality amounted to over 5,000.

Soils surveys are continually being made of areas in which agricultural development is under way or being planned, particularly in respect of irrigation development.

Soil technologists have made intensive studies of the wallum soils at the Coolool Research Station and have determined the fertiliser requirements of these infertile sands for the maintenance of high pasture productivity.

At the Millaroo Research Station, on the Burdekin River, officers are investigating the problem of slow water penetration on the flood-plain soils that cover hundreds of thousands of acres of the Lower Burdekin valley. The solution of this problem would open up the way to the development for irrigated agriculture of a vast area of country in a strategic region of the State. Much detailed laboratory research has been done, and field trials in which the laboratory findings will be applied are now being undertaken and will be watched with much interest.

In the last year a modern research laboratory was opened at the Biloela Research Station, where soil chemists and soil physicists will study matters associated with the development of the important brigalow belt. These brigalow soils are known to have a good level of fertility and a high potential productivity, but they have some unique characteristics which require careful study in order to determine how to maintain their productivity while using them to maximum advantage. The work of the soil scientists at Biloela is being co-ordinated with studies of other research specialists on the new Brigalow Research Station near Theodore.

At the laboratory at Mareeba, soil chemists are co-operating with other specialists in the study of nutritional problems associated with the Atherton Tableland maize crop. There is also the question as to why tropical legume-based pastures thrive on some parts of the Tableland and not on others. This is an intriguing problem and is receiving close attention by soil chemists.

The Botany Section of this division has a number of projects of economic importance under way. Some are basic to the effective utilization of the brigalow country. Over the years, a good deal of information on aerial destruction of brigalow was obtained. The factors that produce suckering of brigalow after initial clearing are now fairly well understood, and advice can be given on how to clear large areas of different kinds of brigalow without causing them to sucker badly. It is not always practicable to follow this advice since effective clearing depends on wet seasonal conditions. So current research is concentrated on development methods for treating suckers, which can be expected in some circumstances. Spraying offers most promise, but three or four years will be required to sort out the best procedures.

The invasion of cleared land by limebush is the subject of another study of high economic importance. A research botanist has also been doing detailed research on the various kinds of lantana that occur in Queensland. This is basic to finding a starting point for biological control of the pest lantanas. He has shown that nine of the 18 kinds of lantana found here may be regarded as pests. This officer is now overseas searching for these particular types so that entomologists may follow up by collecting insect enemies.

The continuous battle that has to be waged against pests and diseases of crops and pastures emphasises the importance of the work of the Entomology and Plant Pathology Sections. Resistance of insect pests of plant crops to insecticides has not reached the same economic importance as the resistance of the cattle tick. Nevertheless, it presents a potential threat, particularly to the export grain industries. Any suggestion of infestation by resistant grain pests could have

serious consequences. Therefore, insecticide resistance studies figure prominently in the research programme.

Non-chemical methods of pest control are assuming greater significance because of pesticide residue problems and the killing off of natural controls by the use of insecticides. It is no longer sufficient to devise chemical treatments by trial and error methods. A deeper understanding of the insects themselves and their reaction to season and chemicals is required. This requires modern equipment and facilities—insectaries, incubators, special microscopes and other expensive equipment.

In the field of plant pathology, also, modernisation is the order of the day. This includes greater specialisation. In this connection it is pleasing to record that the special plant virus laboratory set up in 1964 is now turning out much useful information. The assembly of specialist teams and the provision of adequate facilities take time, but the faster we move in the direction of specialisation, the faster we can expect economic results to flow.

The operations of the Division of Animal Industry are financed mainly from Trust Funds, particularly the Stock Fund, but I propose to outline the project spending of the division at this stage. On the basis of area occupied, as well as value of production measured at the property gate, the industries serviced by this division are the most important in the economy of the State. They also provide the greatest potential for State development.

The Veterinary Services Branch has been in the limelight during the past 12 months, mainly on account of the tick problem in the Brisbane Valley and the slaughtering of cattle in the Mt. Crosby area to remove a possible threat of blue-tongue disease. While these occurrences are indicative of the major function of the branch—control of pests and diseases of animals—they represent only those aspects that hit the headlines.

I might refer here to progress towards the eradication of pleuropneumonia of cattle. Since before the beginning of the century, this disease has been established in the Gulf and Peninsula area and has come and gone in other sections of the State, particularly in the Channel Country. As a result of an extensive campaign conducted over the past few years by the Veterinary Services Branch, it appears that the disease is now on the run. Teams of special officers have gone into the pastoral areas each year, making tests on cattle on properties and following up reports of infected lungs provided by the meatworks. As a result, free and protected areas have been declared and the last stronghold of the disease—the Gulf and Peninsula—is now being tackled. All the States and the Commonwealth are contributing to this National Pleuropneumonia Eradication Scheme. In the past year, no evidence whatever of pleuropneumonia has been observed

either in the field or in meatworks. However, this is by no means a complete assurance that the disease has gone. A sustained effort must be made to clean up any pockets of the disease that may exist.

Tick control work is, of course, a major activity of the Branch and a high proportion of staff time will continue to be devoted to this. The standard of tick control on properties needs to be improved, and extension and regulatory efforts will be directed to this end. Research has shown how various management methods can be moulded into a control programme that is more effective than reliance on dipping alone. Such management methods are being brought to the notice of cattle owners, and their adoption, where practicable, is being advocated. The problem caused by the development of strains of ticks resistant to various tickicides is causing great concern. There is no saying where this could end if the chemists cannot keep just a little ahead of the tick in this regard. The position in the Brisbane Valley is a very worrying one. As I said earlier, containing the resistant ticks within the present infested area is imposing hardship on many cattle owners. But if restrictions on stock movements and treatments are relaxed, the resistant strains could get out of hand and threaten the whole of the industry. A lot more work will have to be put into surveying the actual position to determine the limits of the resistant-tick infestation before a systematic approach to eradication is practicable. In the meantime, some hope is held for a successful outcome of tests of two new tickicides against the resistant strains.

As I said earlier, the insecticide-residues problem in meat could be a rather serious one because of the low, or even nil, amounts that will be tolerated by major importers. With Commonwealth assistance, we have a small team at work in the field and in the laboratory keeping a constant check on residues resulting from the use or misuse of insecticides on cattle or the pasture and fodders they eat. One of the disappointing features of control and treatment of livestock diseases has been the failure of private veterinarians to enter practice in districts such as the Far West. These districts have large stock populations and plenty of disease problems that Government veterinary officers cannot be expected to cope with on an individual animal basis. Following on the department's success in encouraging practitioners to set up in dairying districts with the inducement of tuberculin testing contracts, an attempt was made last year to attract veterinarians into practice in the West. The encouragement given was an undertaking to subsidise mileage charges on calls from stock-owners, and to pay for part-time official duties undertaken in the absence of departmental veterinary officers. The response so far has not been encouraging, but provision is made in the Estimates for payments which it is hoped will fall due in the current year.

The Veterinary Services Branch administers the Brands Acts. Hon. members from the country are well aware of the stock-stealing problem, and it must be admitted that the lack of an up-to-date Brands Directory adds to the difficulties of owners and police in tackling the problem.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** When are we going to get one?

**Mr. ROW:** It is being printed now.

Anyone who has seen a copy of the last printed directory, that issued in 1957, will appreciate the magnitude of the task of compiling and printing a new issue. In the current year, provision is made for \$20,000 as a progress payment to the printer.

The department's Animal Research Institute and its subsidiary stations have earned a particularly good reputation for research over the years. Working on problems that often have no close counterpart elsewhere, the researchers have achieved excellent results. I need only mention poison plant work, drought-feeding investigations and fluorosis in sheep as examples.

Research is only one aspect of the institute's work. The institute and its subsidiary Animal Health Station at Townsville are important diagnostic centres. The diagnosis of Newcastle disease in poultry by the institute this year was an outstanding performance which received many tributes from scientific workers.

It must be comforting to the primary industries to know that a team specialising in the diagnosis of exotic diseases is on hand at the institute to forestall any spread of foot-and-mouth disease and similar devastating diseases in Queensland, should we be ever unfortunate enough to have any of these diseases introduced.

It can be said that drought, ticks and tick fever are among the most serious causes of economic loss to the cattle industry in Queensland. The institute is active in designing ameliorative measures for all three hazards.

The research on drought feeding undertaken at the Rocklea Animal Husbandry Farm during the past few years was invaluable to field officers in advising primary producers on their feeding problems during last year's drought. During the drought, a quick project was put through to ascertain whether sheep being fed on mulga needed a vitamin A supplement. Fortunately, the feeding of costly vitamin supplements was found unnecessary. Some feeding problems came to light during the drought, and attention will be given to these in anticipation of the next drought.

The Animal Research Institute has traditionally been the source of tick fever vaccine used in Queensland to protect cattle against the disease. A good deal of research is going on continuously and a couple of years ago a vaccine with distinctly new features was issued. This has been well accepted by cattle-owners, and a record 300,000 doses were

supplied last year. New facilities provided at the Wacol Tick Fever Research Centre with the assistance of the Australian Meat Research Committee will cater for the expanding research on tick fever.

As I said earlier, a considerable amount of survey work is going on in the Brisbane Valley to determine the extent of occurrence of resistant ticks. The laboratory testing of the ticks collected is being done by the Research Institute.

The institute is also tied up with pesticide residue investigations, doing much of the laboratory work involved in determining residue levels.

Another important function of the institute is running the Artificial Insemination Centre at Wacol. Owing to the drought, last year's semen requirements were down somewhat, but in 1964 about 37,000 head of cattle were artificially inseminated with semen supplied from the Wacol Centre. The work is building up there as more bulls are being proven, and farmers are nominating the sires from which they want semen. Beef-cattle owners are coming into the picture now as well as dairymen. The beef breeds represented at the centre are Poll Hereford, Hereford, Brahman and Angus.

A metabolism building being erected at the institute with the assistance of the Australian Meat Research Committee will permit expansion and improvement of nutrition studies with cattle, pigs and poultry in particular, but increased operating funds will have to be assured as the unit comes into operation.

The Sheep and Wool Branch of the department, on current staff strength and facilities, has to spread its services fairly thinly over the widely flung sheep industry of the State. Yet last year field officers of the branch provided over 4,000 advices and demonstrations to sheep-owners, and took part in 25 field days. Their services were, I know, particularly appreciated by sheepmen concerned with drought feeding, who sought advice on rations and relative costs of keeping sheep alive.

The woolgrower is, of course, the major concern of the branch, but advisers stationed at Dalby and Warwick provide services to lamb-raisers, and it is proposed, with Commonwealth assistance, to appoint a sheep husbandry officer to the Callide Valley.

Since the Wool Biology Laboratory was set up in the department some years ago, steady use has been made of its services by both stud-breeders and commercial flock-breeders. This service enables them to sort out their superior stock on wool yield and wool characters. This service will be continued, and it is expected that the volume of work will build up quickly now that most sheep-owners are not preoccupied with drought problems.

The field research station operated by the branch in the Julia Creek area has had its ups and downs, as must be expected of a

station in such an unfavourable environment as the North-west. The main aim of this station is to study the adaptation of merinos to the northern sheep areas, and to breed better sheep for the area. This is long-term work, rendered even more so by frequent droughts. Yet it is work that we feel has to be conducted on the spot, and it is intended to persevere with it in the expectation of getting results capable of wide application in the dry tropical area.

With the announced intention of C.S.I.R.O. to transfer its sheep-breeding work from its national field station in the Cunnamulla district to New South Wales, the department's Julia Creek work assumes even greater importance for the Queensland sheep industry.

Experience has shown the absolute necessity of offering reasonable working facilities to research and ancillary staff if they are to be attracted and retained in the environment of the tropical North-west. Further, research people working in relative isolation from other researchers must be given ample opportunity for professional improvement. It will cost a lot to give these assurances to potential staff, and this will be an increasing cost as staff builds up and projects expand.

I would like to express my appreciation of the interest shown by regional graziers in the research station at Julia Creek, known as "Toorak". Some of that interest has had its expression in rather critical comment, but I feel, with the advisory committee for the station, that we are on the way to overcoming most of the acknowledged difficulties and deficiencies.

The operations of the Poultry Section are covered largely by finance from the levy on eggs imposed under the Poultry Industry Acts and State grants. Apart from general advisory services to poultry farmers and some field research, the branch is concerned with blood testing for pullorum disease. This is a most essential service and involves testing of the best part of half a million fowls each year. With the big increase in meat-type chickens being introduced from interstate breeding centres, there has been a disturbing increase in the number of fowls reacting to the test. Last year, we had to take the rather drastic step of placing an embargo on the introduction of day-old chickens from certain breeding organisations interstate until a certificate of relative freedom from pullorum was obtained from the authorities. As the eastern Darling Downs is developing as a poultry area, an additional officer is to be stationed at Toowoomba to assist with blood testing. The broiler industry is becoming more specialised all the time and it is necessary to provide specialised training for advisers in this field.

I have already referred to a new item under Trust and Special Funds this year—namely, Commonwealth Poultry Assistance

Fund, \$1,078,000. This represents a proportion of levy under the Commonwealth Egg Marketing Agreement to be paid to egg marketing boards for equalization purposes.

It is not so many years ago that the condition of the pig industry in Queensland was described as chaotic. It is pleasing to note that the changing structure of the industry has been accompanied by improving stability. Pig-raising has graduated from a sideline activity to a major farm enterprise, and there are many farmers who rely entirely on pigs. Throughout the industry there has been a trend towards more intensive systems of pig-raising to reduce unproductive labour to a minimum. This trend has created a bigger demand for the services of officers of the Pig Section, and has involved them in the design of new types of piggery buildings. Providing advice on modern designs and planning and evaluating labour-saving equipment will be major projects of the section in the present year.

Another extensive field of work will be pig nutrition. During last year's drought pig numbers actually increased, due in part to the farmers' ability to use substitute feeds for the standard feeds which were in short supply. The department can take some credit for being in a position to recommend alternative feeding systems based on regional feeding trials. Intensive housing systems for pigs have brought in their wake problems of manure disposal. In conjunction with health and local government officers, methods of disposal that will not constitute a danger to public health are being examined.

The Slaughtering and Meat Inspection Branch is financed largely from slaughtering inspection fees on all classes of livestock. In addition to inspecting stock and carcasses to ensure a supply of wholesome meat, including poultry, to the public, the branch is responsible for the grading and classification of meat where these are undertaken.

Consequent upon the proclamation of the Meat Industry Act on 3 July last year and the establishment of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority from that date, there have been quite substantial changes in the established patterns of the meat trade, the domestic meat trade in particular. As will be recalled, one of the main concepts of that Act was the freeing-up of trade and in this respect much has already been accomplished. I would like to pay tribute to the most constructive manner in which the authority has exercised its functions to date.

The Metropolitan abattoir area is now an open area for those works, a total of 14 approved by the authority as appropriate sources of supply. The authority has also approved one private works to supply into the Toowoomba area and generally has rationalised the supply of sufficient hind-quarter and other popular cuts of meat to meet public demand in all abattoir areas.

Extensions to the Toowoomba and Bundaberg district abattoirs have been recommended for approval and, other than Mackay, the position generally with respect to the district abattoirs is satisfactory. All works except Mackay are operating at a profitable basis.

The Government imposed on the authority the special task of supervising the operations of the Mackay District Abattoir, which had met with financial difficulties almost from the commencement of operation. The authority clearly established that these works could be operated profitably at the designed capacity of 1,075 head of cattle a week for eight months of the year and local kill only for the balance of the year; that is, the works need an average kill of 750 cattle a week to break even. It is most regrettable that the industry has failed to support the establishment of these service facilities. The Government cannot continue to financially support these works for casual use of operators. With a view to confining financial losses to a minimum, the manning at the works has recently been reduced to a minimum, and operations restricted to the local kill plus a small export kill. It is now clear that there is little future prospect of other than casual use of the works by independent operators. It is equally clear that the works in the hands of a single operator with ability to obtain the necessary throughput could be operated on an economic basis. Losses to 30 June last amounted to \$267,000, and for the first quarter of this financial year to a further \$39,185. It is therefore proposed to give consideration in the near future to the sale or lease of these works.

At Cannon Hill, whilst much progress has been made in the design and planning for a replacement works, work to date has not led to a final acceptable design. The estimated capital cost of the design submitted, based on a capacity of 1,000 head of cattle a day capable of expansion to the capacity of the present works, shows the need for an increase of approximately 40 per cent. in killing charges. This is recognised as a quite unrealistic burden to place on the industry and the consumer, and the board is presently engaged on a revision of the design to examine ways and means of reducing the capital requirement of the new works. It is expected that this revision will be completed by the end of the present month.

I have already dealt with most of the activities of the department in discussing the current and projected work of the various divisions. As I have intimated, some of these activities are financed from the various trust funds supplementary to Consolidated Revenue.

I do not intend to go any further at this stage. Hon. members have available to them the annual report of the Director-General. I do feel, however, it would be desirable to make some brief reference to the sugar industry.

As this Committee will know, the sugar industry makes no call on Consolidated Revenue beyond the small annual grant of \$14,000 to the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. With the persistence of world free market prices at an extremely low level, the present picture in the industry is perhaps not as bright as it has been on occasions in the past. There appears, however, to be a general strengthening of the desire in most sugar quarters throughout the world to achieve a satisfactory International Sugar Agreement and it is to be hoped that this can be achieved in the coming year.

In the meantime, the action taken by the Government at the request of the industry to obtain additional liquid funds to the extent of \$19,000,000 to assist the marketing of the current crop will, I feel, carry us through the present difficult situation.

I might make the point at this stage that I am quite confident that the decision to increase our production of sugar from about 1,800,000 tons in 1962 to about 2,100,000 tons expected for this season was, and is, a wise one. Much has been said and written in recent times of world over-production of sugar. This is admittedly temporarily true and undoubtedly has led to the present depressed prices.

But a further integral part of the picture is the rapidly increasing world population. Dr. Sen, the Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations Organisation, makes continual and strong pleas for expanded food production in the world. Present world sugar production is many millions of tons below future consumption projections. I feel that Australia has a responsibility to increase its food production, and I believe that at the appropriate time in the future we must expand our sugar production. I emphasise the words "appropriate time". I feel quite strongly that the industry can accept this responsibility when it comes.

**Mr. DAVIES:** What percentage of the crop do you think will be left in the field this year?

**Mr. ROW:** Very little.

**Mr. DAVIES:** Would it be 25 per cent. in some areas?

**Mr. ROW:** No.

For the present we must weather a fairly difficult situation, and in this respect the Government will continue to stand very solidly behind the industry.

**Mr. HOUSTON** (Bulimba—Leader of the Opposition) (12.36 p.m.): As the Minister has indicated during his speech, the Department of Primary Industries covers a wide variety of activities and a great many items. Over the years we have found it difficult to present arguments on its Estimates, as we are able to do on the Estimates of some other departments. We seem to have, in

control of this department, Ministers who have the ability to make it appear so very simple.

In the first place, I take this opportunity to congratulate departmental officers on the great work they are doing. I have had the opportunity over a long period of getting to know quite a number of them, and I know how dedicated they are to their work of fostering primary industry in this State.

I think it can be said with truth that, if left to its own devices, primary industry in its various forms would be one of the most hazardous of undertakings. In the old days there were some who made profits on the land, but there were many who struggled throughout their lives to make ends meet. Under present conditions, that should not happen. For several reasons, primary production in any form should be a most rewarding activity. As the Minister has pointed out, there are now experimental stations at which investigations are carried out to determine the crops that can best be grown in various areas, and to find methods of dealing with the pests that attack them. Research is also being undertaken on pastures and the most suitable types of live-stock for various climatic conditions. If primary producers take advantage of the services now available to them, their industry should be much more stable than perhaps it has been in the past.

Of course, Governments must play a very great part in this industry. As the Minister indicated, money is being spent on various research stations, and from them great results can be achieved by the loyal and devoted officers staffing them. Closely tied with this research, of course, is the necessity for water for stock and pasture development, so that in general whether the department's efforts are successful depends much on the activities of other departments.

I feel that it is not inappropriate for me to urge the Minister to do all in his power to convince his colleagues, particularly in the Federal sphere, that it is necessary to take action immediately to conserve water. The loss of so much of the natural water in Queensland has always worried me; in fact, some streams have been allowed to become more of a liability to the State than an asset. When successful primary production depends so greatly on water, I believe that the conservation of water should be given No. 1 priority by Governments.

It is true that drought has created a considerable number of problems in the last two or three years; it is true, also, that the cattle numbers have decreased in that period. But it is pleasing to note that experts in various fields, including those associated with banking institutions, which have a secondary interest because they advance money and make loans to primary producers, are confident that in the coming year, and in the years immediately succeeding it, no big problems should arise from drought. In

fact, their reports indicate that in many respects the coming year should be a record one.

It is strange that, while there have been complaints about and discussions on the effects of drought, the number of cattle and sheep slaughtered has increased as a result of the decision of producers to reduce their stock numbers instead of merely allowing them to die from starvation. Although the cattle are not turned off in prime condition and the return to the producer is lower than normally it would be, at least they allow the meatworks to continue operating, keep men in employment, and allow subsidiary industries such as canning to have a longer season. Of course, now that the drought has broken, fewer cattle will be available for killing and, consequently, fewer men will be employed.

In the State's economy, as a problem arises in one industry and Nature assists to overcome it, another problem arises in a different industry. That shows quite conclusively, I think, how dependent primary and secondary industries are on each other. No matter what planning the Government undertakes, I believe that in the immediate future it must use primary industries as the foundation for secondary development. Many hon. members have said in this Chamber over the years, when speaking of development and decentralisation, that it is necessary, particularly in country areas, to ensure that secondary industries are closely associated with primary industries. For example, the Committee knows that an abattoir provides work in the area in which it is established. It opens an avenue of employment to men and women and, as a result, a community is created. That community needs services, and ultimately there is a further increase in the population of the area. The effect snowballs. A depression in any of the primary industries has a similar but converse effect. As hon. members know, when the drought reached a certain stage the number of cattle and sheep available for killing decreased considerably, the meatworks were affected, and eventually the whole area was affected.

It is necessary, therefore, that immediate action be taken to ensure that the effects of drought are reduced to the lowest possible level, and I again urge the Minister to obtain more money from the Federal Government—not next year, not the year afterwards, but this year.

**Mr. W. D. Hewitt:** There are some very good recommendations in the committee's report on drought mitigation.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is true. I think the hon. member will agree that no matter how much we talk about drought, unless something is done to increase water conservation it will all be of no avail.

After production, of course, we have to do something about marketing. The sugar industry is at present a classic example of this. We have an abundance of what I consider to be a well-managed crop but, owing to factors completely beyond the control of

the growers, they find themselves in financial difficulties. Therefore, we must ensure that there is a ready market for our crops and, indeed, for all our primary products.

To establish a market we have to make sure, if it is not local, that the articles produced have ready access to it. For instance, there is no local market for wool grown in western areas; it has to be brought into the main selling centres. I want to mention this because I feel that the growing of primary products and their disposal are tied up in one bundle. Between the point of production and the point of marketing we must have a ready means of transport. I do not want to go deeply into the rights or wrongs of our transport system as it affects wool, but I think the Minister should make strong recommendations to his colleagues in the current problem created by the suggestion of western hauliers to transport wool from Western Queensland to the Sydney market. They are not suggesting this in any sense of spite, nor do I think they are doing it with the idea of trying to force some great issue. I think it is purely a matter of economics to them.

I do not intend to argue today whether or not the increased transport charges are just, but I think this matter should be looked at in an endeavour to discover the cause of the problem and also with a view to taking appropriate action to correct it.

**Mr. Davies:** One would have thought that Country Party members would have forced a discussion on the matter in Caucus yesterday afternoon.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is so. I do not know whether the Minister mentioned it. I am informed that on a normal load of wool from Winton to Brisbane transport fees payable to the Government amount to \$203, which is an increase of 80% on the previous rate. I am also informed that to transport a load of general merchandise on the return journey costs \$405, which makes a total charge of approximately \$608 for the round trip.

I am led to believe that the round trip to Sydney from Winton is not more than 600 miles farther than the round trip from Winton to Brisbane, and the haulier could take a load from Winton to Sydney and back, an extra 600 miles, at a cost much less than the \$608 he pays the Government to bring it to Brisbane. I am not arguing for or against the fees charged, but if the economics of the situation are such that it would pay a haulier to bypass Brisbane, then the matter concerns me very much.

It is not only the primary producer who will be affected. As I said earlier, we must use our primary production as a foundation for secondary industries and employment in various other fields. For instance, associated with the handling and disposal of wool would be quite a number of employees on both the clerical and the handling side, and if this wool bypassed Brisbane and went to Sydney a substantial number of these people could lose their jobs. We have also to bear in mind that once an operator changes his

place of operation, it is very hard to get him to return to his original run, particularly if the change has been a financial success.

Without in any way suggesting whether or not the carriers are justified in their action, the Government must take notice of what they are doing. The Minister should take the matter up with his colleagues, because this is a matter of major importance both to the woolgrowers and to those dependent on the employment created by this industry. It might be said that the haulier could come to Brisbane and pass on the extra charges, but that would mean an additional charge on either the producer or the consumer. Whichever way the additional charge went, I do not think it would be in the best interests of the people of this State.

The Minister mentioned the production of beef in its various forms. Here again costs have to be taken into account. It is disturbing to realise that in this country, which is one of the main beef-producing countries in the world—particularly Queensland, with its great reliance on the cattle industry—we are eating less meat than formerly. It could perhaps be argued that this is a result of the influx of many people from overseas who are not great meat-eaters, although I do not think that would have a great bearing on it. With intensive advertising campaigns, such as are conducted in many other fields the consumption of more meat could be encouraged. Of course, we must ensure that meat is not priced off the Australian table. In this connection, many imported made-up foods are comparatively dear, but they seem to have a ready market.

This is something that the meat industry will have to look at. For the record, the consumption of meat in Australia last year was 185.5 lb. per head compared with 196.7 lb. the year before, a decrease of 5 per cent.

Prior to that there was a drop of 5 per cent., the consumption per head having fallen from 206.1 lb. to 196.7 lb. I believe that the main factor responsible for the drop was the price charged for meat.

A few years ago we debated in this Chamber legislation which took the franchise from the Queensland Meat Industry Board. I remember the Minister saying at the time that what was proposed would result in cheaper meat for Brisbane. Unfortunately, that has not come about. What we suggested has happened; meat prices have increased and employment at the Brisbane abattoir has been affected. I know that this is not the debate to deal with this matter, but I suggest that the Minister ensure that the Metropolitan Public Abattoir Board get under way quickly with the building of the required new section at the Brisbane abattoir. This is required, not only by the industry itself, but by those who work there. We have to realise that costs are continually increasing. If the building was dangerous a few years ago, it must

be even more dangerous now. This should be treated by the Government as a matter of urgency.

The Minister mentioned stock stealing. This is very big problem and is affecting producers and the public as a whole. Financial losses through stock stealing are passed on in the price of the beasts that are sold so that the producer can still operate at a profit. I have no fight with him for doing that, because it is a normal business practice.

The theft of stock affects everybody, whether he is directly or indirectly connected with it. A suggestion came from a producer of some consequence concerning the employment of inspectors at abattoirs, particularly in the country areas, to help prevent the stealing of stock. I understand that the department has inspectors at the saleyards and that they are doing quite a good job, but this man suggested to me that because cattle were being slaughtered so quickly quite a lot of stolen cattle were being slaughtered and the offenders were getting away with it because of lack of inspection.

**Mr. Rae:** One of the sad features is that when cattle thieves are caught it is very difficult to get a conviction.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is so, but the solution lies in the Government's hands. As an Opposition we cannot do very much about it.

**Mr. Rae:** It is pretty grim.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Yes, it is. I am making these comments to let the Government know that we are conscious of it. We do not favour what is happening in any way, nor do we suggest that it should be allowed to continue.

It was suggested by this man that it might be possible to impose a small levy on cattle slaughtered at the abattoir so that a fund could be created for this purpose alone. I do not know whether it would pay off, and I do not profess to be a grazier, but the suggestion was made to me in good faith and I am passing it on to the Minister in good faith, with a request that he investigate it. We must remember that quite often prevention is far better than all the cures. If we can prevent people from stealing cattle for slaughter, or for sale, we will be doing much good for the industry. To my mind the stealing of cattle, sheep, or any other livestock, is the same as stealing a workman's tools. It is engaged in only by the lowest forms of people. I know that the industry contributes in many other ways, but any action taken by it to help eradicate stealing will be for its own good. Whether this is a commendable suggestion is a matter for the industry to decide.

I wish to devote a few moments of my time to the projected sale of the abattoir at Mackay. I did not expect it to take place at this point of time. We certainly know

that the policy of the Government, particularly the Liberal Party section of it, is to dispose of Government enterprises wherever possible. It seems that in this case the opportunity has presented itself and that the Minister's recommendation will be to dispose of the Mackay abattoir. I cannot for the life of me understand the reasoning which suggests that an abattoir, or any other business for that matter, which is unfinancial when run by a Government or semi-government authority becomes financially sound when handed over to private enterprise.

**Mr. Thackeray:** It smells of political corruption.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** There is something about it. I wish I had a little more time to get information on this subject before the Government takes action. I suggest that before the Government decides to sell or lease the abattoir every member in the Chamber be made fully conversant with all the ramifications, including details of the prospective customers. When the Minister mentioned this intention, a couple of Liberal Party members were quite gleeful. There is nothing to be gleeful about when any business is running at a loss. That is not good. Perhaps they were gleeful because the abattoir is to be given to private enterprise.

**Mr. Thackeray:** It was sabotaged right from the word go.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The hon. member for Rockhampton North could be quite right. Any failure of this nature is to be regretted, irrespective of the reason.

**Mr. Row:** You had your troubles, too.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I do not deny that. All I object to is the attitude adopted by some hon. members opposite when this failure was mentioned. The Opposition has been charged with creating unemployment. What a ridiculous statement! Employment in both primary and secondary industries is of the utmost importance.

No doubt there are reasons for this situation, but we would like to know what they are. If a business can be run successfully by private enterprise there is no reason it should not be run more successfully by a Government, which has at its disposal more information and more knowledge.

(Time expired.)

[Sitting suspended from 1.2 to 2.15 p.m.]

**Mr. CORY** (Warwick) (2.15 p.m.): I join in the debate to comment on my observations of the work done by the Department of Primary Industries, to thank and congratulate the department for what it has done, and to offer what I hope are some practical suggestions for improvement.

I congratulate the Minister, who unfortunately is not in the Chamber at the moment, on the presentation of his Estimates, mainly those sections relative to what has been done

in extension and research work, and on what the department has done in getting an increased amount for this work. A considerable part of that money is eaten up by increases in ordinary expenditure as well as increases in services. I express a great deal of pleasure at the increase in services being rendered by the department and at the increased amount being made available by the Commonwealth Government for extension work. The Commonwealth amount will increase gradually over the next five years until it totals \$5,000,000. That is gratifying because extension work is beyond the State's financial resources. We will make good use of the money by being able to evolve a developmental plan for the future in the knowledge that the money will be made available.

There is a great need for more money for extension and research work because of its effect on the economics of the individual engaged in primary industry. Throughout Australia the standard of living of those engaged in primary industry has improved, and an improved and modernised method of operating properties has been effected. Not one of those improvements has not cost money. For this reason the economic structure of those engaged in primary industry is very important, so the Government should assist by keeping abreast of research work and, through extension services, making the results available to the individual. In that way it will play an increasingly important part in improving the economic position of those on the land.

People engaged in primary industry are supposed to operate on the smallest return on capital of any industry. It is important that the results of extension work should be made available as quickly as possible, because in primary industry it is virtually impossible to continue operating economically if we are prone to failure with individual crops or individual enterprises. I say this because of the capital structure under which primary industry is now operating. Much more money is now needed to institute modern methods, and a great deal of it has to be spent on items that have a high rate of depreciation. In addition, the extra capital needed has to be serviced by increased profits.

I extend my thanks to the Minister and his officers for the research work being done and the extension services that are made available to primary producers. I notice with much pleasure the increased sum allocated to expand this field, because our whole economy relies on the success of primary industry.

The loss of revenue because of drought conditions has had an effect on the Stock Fund, and I realise that its receipts will be reduced very markedly for possibly quite a number of years. If the services vital to the economy of primary industry, and its rehabilitation from the effects of drought, are to be maintained, Stock Fund receipts

cannot be allowed to decrease. I therefore note with much pleasure the extra finance that has been made available to it.

I should like to refer to the extent of the Government's contribution compared with the amount that is collected from the industry itself. At present, 80 cents is allocated from Consolidated Revenue to the Stock Fund for each \$1 collected from the industry. I think it will be found that, at this rate of contribution, there will not be sufficient in the fund to finance the research and extension services that the industry now expects. I should therefore like to see in future Estimates an increase in the Government's contribution to \$1 for each \$1 subscribed by the industry. I feel sure that this will be necessary because primary producers now know that they have to be guided by expert advice if they are to conduct profitable enterprises. Because of this awareness, the research and extension services of the department will be required to an increasing degree, and the money allotted to this work must be increased. I suggest that each \$1 obtained from the industry be matched by \$1 from the Government; it does not seem to be unreasonable to ask for this.

I agree that research stations should be established in various parts of the State, although not necessarily in every area. However, every aspect of primary industry followed in all parts of the State should be dealt with by at least one research station. It is important that these stations have staff and facilities capable of doing a complete job.

It is important that the correct decisions should be arrived at. Plants should be bred not only for yield but for their resistance to disease; animals should be bred with an eye not only to increased weight or increased milk production but also resistance to disease. I stress this, because the disease-resistance factor is sometimes lost sight of when attempts are made to breed and select for certain other purposes. For example, wheat bred entirely for grain-production may lose its resistance to rust or its stem strength. In order to achieve satisfactory results, the research must be carried out with all relevant factors in mind. When the breed of animal or type of plant is released, it must be of high quality.

The industries concerned have not the economic strength to enable them to carry out such research themselves, and I compliment the Government on the work it is doing in this field. I suggest that there should be more co-operation between the Department of Primary Industries and the C.S.I.R.O. in research and extension work. A considerable amount of jealousy exists between the two organisations at present; that is regrettable, because it means that much research work is being duplicated. Not only is it costly; the results are not passed on to industries as quickly as they should be. In addition, extension work may be slowed

down, and the passing on to primary producers of the results of research is very important. Extension services and research work are important now; their importance will increase in the future.

Until five or six years ago, the use of fertiliser in primary industries other than the sugar industry was fairly restricted; but in the last five or six years its use has increased phenomenally. Ten years ago it was thought that, because of the fertility of the area, it would not be necessary to use fertiliser on the Darling Downs. It has been shown that that idea is incorrect, and I venture to say that more fertiliser is being used in that area now than most people would care to admit. The results prove conclusively that it is an economic proposition.

I remind the Committee that fertilisers are not increasing the fertility of the land on the Downs; they are merely rebuilding it. The fertility of soil, both in agricultural and grazing areas, declines after it has been in use for a number of years. In the brigalow land that has been used quite extensively for agriculture, fertiliser has not yet been used widely. But between five and 10 years is about the maximum period that people will be able to continue working it without applying fertiliser. Therefore, people engaged in primary industries in Queensland must accept the application of fertiliser as part of the economics of those industries. Fertiliser is not cheap. We get response from its application, but it costs quite a lot of money. However, that must be accepted as part of the economics of our plant-growing and grazing industries.

In this connection, too, I wish to mention soil conservation. There has been a great expansion of the activities of this section, but again this work cannot be completely divorced from the application of fertiliser. It boils down to a combination of retaining the soil and maintaining its fertility. In some cases it is a matter of retaining some soil and, having done that, fertilising must then be undertaken to retain its fertility.

Before going further I feel that in connection with extension work I should mention specifically the mobility of the officers engaged in it. This is a very important point. We have many excellent officers engaged in this work but their activities are curtailed through their inability to obtain transport. The position has improved somewhat compared with some years ago, but the activities of some of these excellent officers are still curtailed because they have used up the whole of their mileage allowance. They are therefore unable to get out on their extension work and impart their knowledge to the producer. The producer either has to come to them or do without their assistance. I think this is a rather short-sighted policy.

I commend the officers doing this work throughout the State. They are accepted by the people and are getting down to the practical application of what is needed; but if they are to be curtailed in their work

because they have not the necessary mileage available, much of the benefit that could be derived from their operations will be lost and we will not be getting full results from the money expended.

I now wish to mention very briefly my attitude to the Brisbane Milk Board as it applies to the collection of milk from country factories and from producers as a whole. This board was set up as a means of ensuring the metropolitan area adequate supplies of milk and cream of prescribed quality. I have no quarrel with that, but, that being so, it is a vendor-consumer board. It is not a producer board in any shape or form, and therefore the needs and thoughts of producers cannot possibly be adequately represented.

I realise that there are producers on the board, but they are in such a minority that regardless of what they may think they have no effective voice in any decision that is made. As a consumer board it probably does a good job, but as a producer board it does not even hit the deck. It does nothing but ride on the back of the producer to ensure that the consumer gets a fair go. I do not blame it for that, but I think a different attitude towards the producer would lead to more co-operation within the industry.

I do not think I need go through the composition of the board—most hon. members are aware of it—but because of its composition I consider that it cannot possibly be a competent body to arbitrate on questions that affect the economics of supplying factories, and hence, the suppliers to those factories. I say that because of the present allocation of quotas to country factories. How can a board judge a matter outside the ambit of the experience of most of its members? I am not saying there is anything wrong in the representatives of the vested interests looking after those interests; it is only natural that if anyone has a vested interest in something he will look after it in the best way possible.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Aren't there some departmental officers on the board?

**Mr. CORY:** Yes. The chairman is a Government appointee.

It is virtually impossible for a producer to get a majority decision from the board. The vested interests send along their prepared, audited statements of facts and figures and the couple of producers' representatives have their work cut out trying to cope with that type of case. Very often the board makes a decision on a matter completely outside the ambit of the experience of its members. I am not criticising individual members; they have every right to stick to what they think is right in the interests of those they represent.

The changes in the quota system were made when there was no factory representative on the board. They were made with complete disregard for, or appreciation of, the factories that came into this scheme in its infancy.

Many of the factories that are trying to get in now would not come in at that time. It is an anomaly in the Act that the factory representative was absent through sickness, and after he died a proxy could not be appointed. While he was away the whole question of quotas was discussed and a new system introduced. For that reason I say that there is something lacking in the constitution of the board. Although the Act does not permit of the appointment of a proxy for the factory representative, provision is made for the appointment of a proxy for the wholesale vendors' representative. In fact, one was appointed when he went overseas, and that proxy has been sitting on the board for many months. There is something wrong with the legislation when it will permit of the appointment of a proxy for one representative on the board but not for another. The reallocation of factory quotas was decided on at a time when the factories themselves did not have a representative on the board to discuss the matter or to report back on the discussion.

In the early days, during the war years, when the factories started to supply raw milk to the Brisbane area—I think they became more organised in about 1946—many of the close-in factories did not come into the scheme. Perhaps that was because of the people who were running them at that time. I know quite a deal about this matter because I was a supplier to the Warwick factory, and we started to send our milk to Brisbane. The whole economy of the scheme has been built up with our quota coming to Brisbane since those days. The present attitude of the board is, "Why should we penalise these close-in factories for something that somebody decided 20 years ago? It is not a decision of those presently running the factories for which we would be penalising them." Perhaps there is merit in that argument. On the other hand, there are factories that have stuck to the scheme ever since its inception. There are those who will come up to scratch now but who, 20 years ago, would not be in it. Perhaps there should be some happy medium in this, but on no account let us penalise the fellow who has been in the scheme from the start. I believe he should be given consideration for all that he has done in the past, and is continuing to do, especially in the light of the capital expenditure he has undertaken to ensure the highest-quality product.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (2.41 p.m.):** I do not think any Estimates are of more interest to hon. members generally than those for the Department of Primary Industries. I believe that all hon. members must extend their congratulations and appreciation to the departmental officers, who are performing such an important task in helping to develop our State on a primary-industry basis.

**Mr. Pilbeam:** And to the Minister.

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** It is as the hon. member for Rockhampton South has interjected. The Minister knows my sentiments so far as he personally is concerned; I have expressed them so often.

For the last two or three years officers of the Department of Primary Industries have suffered severe headaches because of the disastrous drought. It must have been very frustrating to all concerned, from the Minister down, to have projects interrupted or deferred. This terrible act of nature forced people who were eager to forge ahead with good work for the benefit of the State to sit idly by watching disaster affect all sections of our productive community. Because of the drought, 500,000 cattle and 5,600,000 sheep were lost; our plantings were down 17 per cent. last year, and production was down 27 per cent. on the previous year, which itself was not a good year, with consequent disaster to people in the dairying industry, especially those on small properties which can be barely classed as living areas, who could not diversify to help them out of their dilemma. However, it must be conceded that many lessons have been learnt, and no doubt departmental officers will seek to apply them as quickly as possible provided they can get the co-operation not only of this Government but also of the Federal Government in building water conservation projects, which are so urgently needed.

It is indeed a deplorable fact that the Commonwealth Government has never contributed towards major engineering works in this State. The lessons of the last two years are so important that the strongest representations must be made to ensure that a water conservation plan is put under way without delay. As the member for Barcoo, I naturally have a vested interest. I want to see action taken to implement the Nogoa Gap project.

There are other important matters that I must bring to the Committee's attention, such as improved pastures and the use of fertilisers. The Minister's report in introducing his Estimates was very comprehensive, and it was gratifying to note that many of these matters are of concern to the department. Here, again, the drought has been a disturbing feature affecting the extension of improved pastures. Last year the acreage under improved pastures fell to 15,000, as against the average for the previous five years of 27,000. It is important to realise that a drought can be so harmful in this field, in which we need urgent development. Queensland has not made as great an advance in improving pastures as have the other States of Australia, particularly those to the south of us. Perhaps the other States are more climatically suited.

I was interested to hear that Queenslanders do not use fertilisers as much as they should. My research shows that Queensland fertilises only 88,000 acres and that the

Australian total is 38,000,000 acres. That could be detrimental to our welfare. I expect that following further advice from the Department of Primary Industries farmers will use more fertiliser. Our figures are most unimpressive in comparison with the Commonwealth total.

Recently we discussed the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Bill, which aroused considerable interest. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha discussed the danger aspect in the use of agricultural chemicals. We all agree with his remarks. This morning I read in "The Courier-Mail" that a friend of mine had taken into a field two bottles, one filled with water and the other with weedicide, and that he had made the fatal error of drinking the weedicide. From time to time we hear of such cases, so we realise the danger faced by those who use these substances.

Recently I read an article to which I wish to make reference. It may not seem relevant when I first mention it, but its relevance will become apparent. It reads—

"American drug safety standards were getting so high scientists feared that soon no new drugs would be passed for distribution . . .

"Dr. George Savage, research director of the Upjohn Company, added: 'If penicillin were discovered today it would not be accepted by the Federal Drug Administration because of its toxic side effects.'

"He said increasingly stringent F.D.A. standards had combined to reduce the availability of new antibiotics.

"He cited the drug griseofulvin, which he described as the penicillin of anti-fungal diseases.

"This drug has never been marketed,' he said.

"It was developed some years ago, but it showed some side effects in certain animals. Now it has been shelved.'

"Dr. Savage said the F.D.A. no longer sought only to protect the public from a safety point of view.

"Now they are moving on to the question of efficacy as well,' he said.

"We have to show a new drug is more effective than any old drug as well as being completely safe, which is a very tough goal for a research team."

I introduced that article to reiterate the need for what I believe is essential, namely, a national standard. We in Queensland have set very high standards, but we must have a national standard. After all, there is a national standard in America.

**Mr. Lickiss:** That is what I advocated.

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** I am supporting the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha. There is no need for him to interject. National standards are most important. I should like

the Minister to confer with other primary-industry Ministers in Australia with the object of establishing a national standard. It is particularly urgent for us to progress more rapidly in this field.

I can remember a personal experience when, over 26 years ago, I was quite ill. I went to a specialist and was given a course of injections. To my astonishment I picked up a medical journal a few years ago which claimed that the course of injections I had received could be destructive to the kidney system and, in some cases, fatal. I mentioned the other day that this is the age of calculated risk. If we set a high standard in this regard, whether on a State or national level, we will not have an age of miscalculated risk. Perhaps I may have been a loss to the community had I died; I do not know. History will assess that. It is important indeed that national standards be adopted, and that an organisation be set up to determine what is for the benefit of the community, particularly in the field of chemicals.

Research is extremely important, and it has been very interesting to hear it mentioned here. Again I must repeat something that I said the other day. In this vast continent, with only a small population, every endeavour must be made to avoid duplication of research work. We have not so many specialists that we can afford to waste their talents. That is why I said the other day that if the best services were obtained from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, which is financed by the Commonwealth Government, and there were co-ordination and co-operation between the State departments dealing with primary industry, some duplication might be avoided. This would allow specialists in their fields to give greater service to primary industry, not only in this country. It must be remembered that in this matter we also have obligations overseas.

Research is of the utmost importance, but it must be planned research. From the point of view of the State, the most economic system would be to have the Commonwealth Government financing research through the C.S.I.R.O., and State officers providing specialised services to those in need of them.

**Mr. Lickiss:** Research has to be balanced with adequate extension service.

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** That is correct; I shall deal with extension work soon. I feel that standards and research are very important.

I now wish to deal with the extension services. Nobody in this age fails to appreciate the benefits of education, and the Department of Primary Industries is the education department of primary industry. It is important indeed that there be made available throughout the length and breadth of the State extension services to people who are sadly in need of advice on farm and station management. The department deserves credit for its endeavour to do something in this field, but there is, of course, a shortage

of men who are qualified to carry it out. As a consequence, it is not possible to give the best service needed today.

It has to be remembered that people on the land, are, in the main, highly educated. About 50 or 60 years ago, although they may have been highly intelligent, they were not highly educated. Today the position is quite different. I could take hon. members to some rural centres where the standard of education of primary producers is particularly high. Sometimes I pity the young teachers who are sent to teach there in one-teacher schools. On one of the properties will be found a former officer of the C.S.I.R.O. who is a Master of Science. Up the road a little is a Bachelor of Arts, and a little farther along the road is a young lady with a degree in veterinary science. In my day, when a teacher went to a rural community he was superior in knowledge, and probably in intellect, to most of the community, whereas today a young teacher can be at a decided disadvantage.

The services that the Department of Primary Industries has to bring to people in rural centres today have to be of a very high standard indeed. There are, of course, people with varying abilities to absorb the lessons taught, but there are many who welcome this type of education and are able to absorb and apply it.

**Mr. Sullivan:** I think you will find that the people of whom you are speaking are very co-operative with departmental officers and pass some of their knowledge on to them.

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** I agree with the hon. member.

I was interested to read in the report of the Department of Primary Industries that in North Queensland there is the Far North Queensland Extension Committee, composed of officers of various branches. This is a new essay into extension. A somewhat similar approach has been made in the Maranoa. Therefore, the question that I ask now is an obvious one: why is there not a Central Queensland Extension Committee? I think that is important.

I realise, as do many other people, that primary producers in Central Queensland are engaged in a variety of activities. In the Central Highlands, of course, there is a high percentage of new settlers, and they are the people who need extension services. If facilities were not provided in the area, they probably would feel too neglected to try to make the personal contact that is necessary. I remind the Committee of the closer settlement that has taken place in the Peak Downs district. One can go back in the history of Peak Downs to the Queensland-British Food Corporation project, the subdivision of the area by a Labour Government, and the consequent development after it had been proved as a grain sorghum area. Since then, various other experiments have been reasonably successful—it has been proved that wheat can be grown there at times, and

safflower is the boom winter crop—and it is, of course, quite adjacent to the new brigalow area. The officers of the department would have a number of services to co-ordinate, and it is important that this co-ordination should be provided as early as possible. As you know, Mr. Rae, they will be greatly appreciated, and I ask the Minister to consider the suggestion I have made. After all, Central Queensland is a highly productive area.

While I am referring to my own electorate, I should like to thank the Minister for his efforts in the field of soil conservation. A great deal of development has taken place, and agricultural activities are being followed on lands that formerly were used only for grazing. In addition, a section of the Brigalow Lands Development Scheme has been opened in my electorate. It is important to remember that a considerable amount of growth and development has taken place in the area since 1955, and I expect that in the future Emerald will be to Rockhampton what Toowoomba now is to Brisbane, or perhaps what Bathurst is to Sydney. One could say that the area has been pioneered; but the people who have settled there have the advantage of the help and advice of officers of the Department of Primary Industries, and good communications have assisted in reducing the hardships that our forefathers endured. There is no reason why rapid progress should not be made, and the Department of Primary Industries has the important task of assisting to promote rapid growth and development.

I sincerely hope that there is not another drought for 15 years, but I know that droughts have to be taken as they come. What a lesson the last drought taught us! Let us reap the benefit of that lesson and re-form our ideas relative to large projects for water conservation. We will then have our land more closely settled in areas that are going ahead, and at the same time be geared to defend ourselves against the ravages of drought.

I feel also that I must refer once again to the fact that for many people the current drought is not yet over. I am concerned that today I received a telegram from the Jericho Shire Council urging me to make strong representations to the Co-ordinator-General for a drought relief grant. I know this has nothing to do with the Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries, but when the council has to make an urgent appeal like that in order to carry out its work in the shire, it does indicate that the primary producers in that area are far from solvent.

I wonder how many areas in Queensland are stricken in that way. We know the hardships that were endured by people on the land, particularly the new settlers. The sugar industry is a classic example, but there are also new settlers on the brigalow lands. I wonder how they will be affected when they have to pay their local authority rates. I wonder how the problem of rates will affect other western shires. These areas have

been stricken by drought and, even though settlers have good grass at the present time, any money they have available has to be used for stocking purposes. Consequently, it is necessary for the Government to be very sympathetic in this respect. I ask the Minister for Primary Industries to make strong representations to Cabinet that as much money as possible may be given in relief grants to the councils, not only to solve the unemployment problem that is existent but also to take some of the strain from primary producers and help them get back on their feet more quickly. I make that appeal today in all seriousness. It is important, and possibly we shall hear more about it in the next few weeks. I regret that there has not been a much quicker move; it is quite some time since 30 June. However, the Treasurer has assured me that the application forms would be sent out and I have no reason to doubt his word.

In conclusion, let me say that there is not a member of this Committee who does not wish the Department of Primary Industries all that it could wish itself. I sincerely hope that it will go on from strength to strength, giving the service to the man on the land that he so urgently needs. In a climate that varies so much because of the vastness of the State the problems of the department are not easy ones, but our pioneering efforts will be greatly helped by the type of officers who work in the Department of Primary Industries. They are dedicated to their jobs, and while we have dedication in the attitude of the department towards the man on the land we certainly have no need for despair.

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) (3.4 p.m.): I wish to congratulate the Minister on his handling of this department. I say that advisedly, because during the 14 years I have been in this Parliament, representing a very large electorate, I have never met a Minister whom I could so easily approach at any time whatever, either personally or by way of deputation.

The Minister will remember the occasion, just after quotas were introduced for the tobacco industry, when I brought down two carloads of people to see him at Ingham. He met that deputation at half past 7 in the morning while he was still in his pyjamas. He spent about an hour with us. I was very grateful to him on that occasion because those growers were very anxious to see him and discuss matters of major importance to them.

I congratulate the Minister on the stand he took in bringing about the stabilisation of the tobacco industry. As a result, the industry now looks secure in the Mareeba-Dimbulah and other tobacco areas in the North. The growers are still feeling the backwash of the low prices paid in previous years, but I believe this will be caught up with by this year's and next year's crops.

Undoubtedly the growers had a bad time before stabilisation, but they can look forward to a better future.

Unfortunately it appears that the industry will not develop any further. As long as the percentage of Australian leaf contained in cigarettes manufactured in Australia remains as it is we cannot hope to develop this rich tobacco-growing area very much more. Hundreds of acres of the richest tobacco land in Australia are waiting to be cultivated and put into production, but because of the restriction on the content percentage we cannot develop the industry any further. I appeal to the Minister to have the percentage increased so that more tobacco land can be put into production.

Buyers from large tobacco companies have told me on more than one occasion that the tobacco grown in the Mareeba-Dimbulah and Mary River areas is the best they have seen anywhere in the world. I know that that is a wide statement, but that is what I have been told by experienced buyers who have seen tobacco produced in Virginia and other parts of the world. It is a great pity that this industry seems to have reached its peak when so much excellent tobacco country could be put into production. Further production is held back because of the present percentage of Australian leaf in cigarettes manufactured in Australia. I think it is only 50 per cent.

**Mr. Row:** It is 51 per cent.

**Mr. ADAIR:** I have always believed in expanding the tobacco industry. To do this we must insist upon a 60 or 70 per cent. Australian leaf content in cigarettes and tobacco manufactured here. I believe we should go even further, and produce tobacco and cigarettes with a 100 per cent. Australian leaf content.

A tobacco farm of eight or 10 acres will give a farmer a good living. I know of no other industry that can do so well on such a small acreage. Farmers in the sugar industry require at least 50 or 60 acres to cut 1,300 tons of cane, but eight or 10 acres of good land is enough for any tobacco-farmer to handle.

For future development of the Paddy's Green and Mary River areas, which are the two most important areas in Australia for tobacco-growing, we must have more irrigation. More channels must be provided, and a dam will have to be constructed on the Mary River to conserve water for farmers. There are hundreds of acres untouched, and until the percentage of Australian tobacco-leaf in cigarettes and tobacco is increased there is no way that this area can be developed. The existing farms on the Mary River are using every drop of water coming down the river. There is not a ghost of a chance of other farmers getting enough water, even if permits are granted. I urge the Minister to advocate that a higher percentage of Australian leaf be used so that we may expand tobacco-farming in these rich areas.

During the Budget debate I referred to the poultry industry. Since then I have spoken to poultry-farmers in my electorate who are greatly concerned about this industry. The increase in rail freights has made it very difficult for them to carry on and they find it very hard to compete with southern poultry farmers. They tell me that freight costs will make the difference between surviving and perishing, and I believe that to be true. I ask the Minister to do all he can to assist this industry. The only way he can help is by getting a reduction in freight rates on poultry-feed from the South.

I have spoken on many occasions about the sugar industry, which is very important to North Queensland.

**Mr. R. Jones:** Far North Queensland.

**Mr. ADAIR:** Yes, Far North Queensland. The only place we talk about is the Far North; we do not talk about places farther south, but I will include Townsville in the Far North.

This industry is in strife, although the established grower with 3,000 tons or more is all right. He can continue because, if he is near the line, his harvesting costs are much cheaper than those of a new farmer. The established farmer can use the mechanical harvester, which cuts cane at \$1 a ton. Farmers today do not fertilise as much as formerly, and they grow cane that is more suitable for mechanical harvesting; it stands up. Cane that is lying on the ground is difficult to cut.

By comparison, at present a new farmer pays a cane-cutter nothing below \$2 a ton. Cutters will not shoulder-load cane, so the farmer has to get a mechanical loader to load his cane. That costs another 70c or 80c a ton. Then the whole of the cane has to be hauled out. In one area it costs \$2 a truck-load, and, as some trucks carry under 3 tons, it costs the farmer another 70c or 80c a ton to have it hauled out. Therefore the new farmer pays \$3.40, compared with the \$1 that is being paid by an established farmer who is near the line.

The Minister would no doubt agree that a farmer who goes onto forest scrub country and has to clear 60 acres and get it ready for planting, buy machinery, erect a home, barracks and a machinery shed, and buys plants and fertiliser, cannot start off with as little as \$16,000. To clear an acre of rich scrub country and take out the roots and prepare the soil for planting costs nothing under \$220 or \$240. It is impossible for a farmer to grow his peak of 1,200 or 1,300 tons with only the \$16,000 granted by the Agricultural Bank. He must be given at least another \$4,000.

I know many cane-farmers who have had to undertake outside work to tide them over. These men work on their farms from daylight to dark, seven days a week, so they are willing to work. When the wet season comes they go elsewhere to earn a little

money. One man went to Gladstone, and for the entire eight weeks he was there the workers were on strike, so he came back.

These men have to get work elsewhere. I know that some new farmers were out scratching for tin at the mines, and others were working at other jobs. An ordinary job on the basic wage is no good to them, because by the time they pay for their accommodation and meet their other expenses they are unable to save anything to enable them to carry on through the year. I know dozens of them who owe money to grocers for food bills. Even though they have cut up to 1,000 tons of cane this year, they will still be indebted to grocers and other business people.

I believe that the only way in which they can be assisted is for the Agricultural Bank to advance them extra money. It is no use telling me that there is no security for the Agricultural Bank. Anybody who knows anything about the sugar industry knows that there are many people who would buy those properties for much more than the Agricultural Bank's equity in them. The security is there. These farmers have cleared the land and grown a crop, and put in two years of hard work on their farms, so that the Agricultural Bank has nothing to lose. I cannot see why it is holding back and refusing to make further advances to men who have worked hard and are doing everything possible to make a success of their farms. They have put into them up to £4,000 and £5,000 of their own money, so they can be expected to do everything possible to carry on. I believe that the Agricultural Bank should assist them to stay on their properties, as they have every chance of being successful if the bank will come to their assistance. I appeal to the Minister to think this matter over and do what he can to have the Agricultural Bank assist these growers wherever possible.

There has been some talk about a banana industry in the North. I know that some banana-growers have had to leave the Coff's Harbour area because the soil has been worked out and, unlike the soil used for the growing of cane, it cannot be restored by the use of fertiliser. These farmers have been looking round the Innisfail, Silkwood, and Tully areas for land suitable for banana-growing. The area is excellent for this purpose, and farmers there are being offered up to £20 an acre a year for a lease of land for the growing of bananas. That indicates how anxious those banana-growers are to move into this area, which is good country for bananas. In the Daintree and Bailey's Creek areas there are hundreds of acres of the richest soil one could find anywhere in Queensland, and it has proved over the years to be excellent for growing bananas.

A company is now investigating the purchase of large areas of land there for the growing of bananas. I am sure it will find this an excellent area for that purpose. Mason Brothers have grown bananas at Tribulation and at Bailey's Creek, the quality of which

has not been equalled anywhere in Australia. Many years ago they sent bananas from those areas to southern markets and had no trouble in disposing of them. The bananas now being grown are of the Mons Mari and improved Cavendish varieties and are of a very high quality.

It seems that the banana-growing industry has a future in the area, but the officers of the department will have to ensure, as they have in the past, that the correct varieties are grown and that bunched top and other diseases do not spread through the area. As I travel along the roads in my electorate, occasionally I see bananas affected with bunched top and other diseases, but I know that the officers of the Department of Primary Industries take a keen interest in their work and will make sure that such diseases are kept in check.

In conclusion, I ask the Minister to consider matters that I have raised.

**Mr. CAMPBELL** (Aspley) (3.27 p.m.): The ramifications of the Department of Primary Industries are wider than those of any other Government department, and it is to the credit of the Minister that he has been able to make himself familiar with virtually all phases of the department's work. As you know, Mr. Rae, the work of the officers of the Department of Primary Industries is very important to Queensland and those officers are efficient, capable, and conscientious.

One of the services provided by the department is in the field of marketing, and it is to this subject that I shall direct the major portion of my remarks in this debate. For over 40 years many of Queensland's primary products have been disposed of by the system known as orderly marketing, a system based on the pooling of a particular commodity and the equalising of returns from various sources to give a common, payable return to each producer. The system involves varying degrees of control of the product, from outright acquisition, as in the case of sugar, to industry control through a marketing board, as in the case of most other industries.

Although the system is obnoxious to many people because it denies the individual producer the freedom to dispose of his product as he sees fit, nevertheless it is superior to the methods employed overseas—in the United States of America, for example, there is a system of price support, and in Great Britain farm products carry a heavy Government subsidy—and it has served Australia well and provided a degree of stability to primary producers that was lacking hitherto. Its main drawback, if it can be said to have any drawbacks, is the compulsory element in the legislation governing orderly marketing.

**Mr. Davies:** The Labour Party deserves great credit for having introduced it.

**Mr. CAMPBELL:** The Labour Party cannot take any credit for that.

**Mr. Davies:** Who put the legislation on the Statute Book?

**Mr. CAMPBELL:** This was never the policy of the Labour Party because it was introduced at a time when the Labour Party was hell-bent on socialising this State. Orderly marketing was introduced in the era of State stations, State butcher shops—you name it and the Labour Party had it. It was introduced by an element in the community that had great difficulty in gaining legislative approval for the aims which were evolved to meet pressing problems of over-production that occurred in the early 20's, so do not let us run away with the idea that it was a product of Labour Party policy.

I must say that the Labour Party ultimately accepted this principle of orderly marketing but it was not a plank in its platform. At that time the Labour Party was following the Blackburn line of thinking on Socialism but, because of tremendous surpluses that occurred in the post-World War I period, some system of marketing was necessary and this system of equalising returns from various destinations was evolved and it enabled marketing of our surplus commodities. Of course, it also overcame that other great evil of the time, market manipulation arising from the surpluses that occurred.

Therefore, the disposal of surplus products on unremunerative markets earned for Australia precious overseas credits to provide for imports and it has become, during the past 40 years, an integral part of our national economy. Apart from wool and meat all farm products return less from their disposal overseas than from sales on the local market. We cannot overlook the fact that in the past we have been dependent upon returns from export of primary products to meet our import bill. Of course, we all know that fluctuations in overseas returns for our primary products have from time to time caused a great problem in our balance of payments, but during this intervening period great changes have taken place technologically. We have moved from the horse-and-cart era of the 20's to the space age and from the simple type of living to sophistication of the atomic age.

Just as great changes have taken place technologically in the secondary industry field, so also have tremendous changes taken place in almost every aspect of primary industry. In every branch of primary industry former methods have become so outmoded and practices so advanced that they now bear very little resemblance to those of yesteryears, and in many cases the scientist has replaced the husbandman. The application of scientific principles is inseparable from sensible modern-day farming.

Great changes have taken place in every phase of primary production, except, perhaps, marketing. Whilst numerous refinements have taken place in the operations of our commodity boards, and modern methods have been introduced, nevertheless the same principle that applied 40 years ago remains

unchanged to this day, namely, the principle of pooling of products and charging a much higher price to the Australian consumer in order to offset losses incurred in export. Just as sweeping changes have occurred in technology, so also have great changes taken place in economic outlook.

**Mr. Bennett:** Great changes will occur on Saturday week.

**Mr. CAMPBELL:** Yes. I am expecting a landslide towards the Government on Saturday week.

Because of the great upsurge in mineral production throughout Australia, the steady increase in the export of manufactured products, and the gradually increasing demand overseas for some of our basic rural commodities, due to increased world population and higher standards of living—particularly in Asian countries—no longer are we as dependent upon exports of farm products for our overseas currency as we have been in the past. With the rate of development in the mineral field, mineral exports particularly, and, as time goes on, manufactured secondary goods, will almost completely supplant agricultural production as the provider of our very necessary overseas currency.

This changed economic picture removes one of the principal reasons for the compulsory element in our marketing system. This factor alone warrants a fresh appraisal of the system. Of course, there is another urgent reason why we should satisfy ourselves whether it is still necessary to maintain such a rigidly controlled marketing system, and to find out if, in the future, economic conditions will permit the return to a freer marketing system. It cannot be denied that the time-honoured practice of equalising returns from various avenues of disposal imposes a heavy burden upon the consuming public who, in effect, pay extra for farm products to make good the losses incurred in external disposal. This applies to all commodities that are sold under a price-stabilisation scheme. Food prices have a considerable impact on the cost-of-living index, which is eventually reflected in the wage structure of the nation. Any unnecessary burden in this sphere renders it more difficult for secondary industry to compete on foreign markets.

**Mr. Davies:** Do you think the farmer is too prosperous at the present time?

**Mr. CAMPBELL:** That would be one of the most inane things I have heard the hon. member say for many days.

There is a pressing need to study the economics of producing large surpluses of farm products for export to markets that return prices much below production costs.

Knowledge of marketing is one of the skills possessed by modern farmers, amongst whom there is an increasing number who are able to control their own destiny in this matter. This is borne out by the increasing trend towards contracts between individual

growers or groups of growers and processors in other States, and even in this State, for products not covered by marketing legislation. There is an increasingly strong body of opinion which believes that it could be more efficient and advantageous in the future to return to the natural law of supply and demand in the marketing of our primary products, such as occurs with most other products, rather than continue with a system based upon compulsory acquisition of the product. This does not necessarily suggest that our existing marketing boards will be superseded, for any marketing board that is really efficient will still have ample scope to operate, but it does suggest that the removal of the compulsory aspects of our marketing legislation could give greater scope for initiative and enterprise, and thus provide the necessary stimulus and incentive to those progressive farmers who are imbued with the desire to take full advantage of the benefits of modern science and technology.

I repeat that great benefits have flowed to primary industries as a result of the legislation that governs the conduct of our marketing boards but just because this has been a satisfactory system for the past 40 years it does not necessarily mean that we have to continue in this way for the next 20 or 30 years.

**Mr. Mann:** You are advocating the abolition of the boards?

**Mr. CAMPBELL:** I am not advocating the abolition of the marketing boards; I believe that they will have a role to play in the future. Indeed, they will be inseparable from the marketing of our great primary products. But I suggest that primary industry itself should have a look at this system of marketing to see if there is not some way of improving the system for the future.

I have pointed out that one of the reasons for introducing orderly marketing was to ensure that we had sufficient primary industries exports to meet our import bill. I have pointed out that the export returns from primary industries are being surpassed by those from minerals and the increasing volume of secondary industry products and that the trend will continue. This will relieve us of the necessity to depend on the export of primary products for overseas exchange.

I have pointed out also that the application of stabilisation schemes imposes a heavy burden on the consumer. The egg-producer contributes 6c a bird to the Commonwealth Poultry Industry Assistance Fund. Ultimately, that is a direct charge on the consumer. If it were possible to bring production and consumption of eggs into harmony we could do away with the necessity for this levy, which, in turn, would mean that the producer would get 6c a dozen more for his eggs or the consumer would pay 6c a dozen less. That is a simple equation of a very complex system.

I expect that I will be charged with wanting to wreck orderly marketing, but that is the last thing I want to do. However, I do say that primary industry, in its own interests, in the interests of its efficiency, and in the interests of the nation, will have to examine its marketing methods so that they may fit in with today's pattern and not just follow that of the past.

**Mr. Melloy:** The Egg Marketing Board could not have done the right thing by you.

**Mr. CAMPBELL:** The hon. member for Maryborough previously made an inane interjection and the hon. member for Nudgee has done the same.

In "Truth to Tell" in "Sunday Truth" of 28 August, this article appeared—

"Big national controversy raging around important food item had interesting development during week with court sequel being tipped to quick here-and-gone appearance of Sydney factory boss."

As most hon. members will realise, that has some bearing on the margarine controversy. I do not wish to develop that topic at this stage but I wish to draw attention to a rather peculiar happening which is more or less a sideline to this controversy.

On 18 August this year a well-dressed man, with overalls tucked under his arm, presented himself at the Nutta Products (Qld.) Pty. Ltd. factory at Ormiston, seeking a position as a factory hand. After being told there were no vacancies and that he could leave his address he loitered around the premises for half-an-hour, taking careful note of all that was visible. He was reluctant to give his address. Ultimately he gave a fictitious name and address. He was seen by several people in the vicinity of this factory for the next hour and a-half. He engaged in a conversation with a man who has a small work bench on the property next door to the factory. Again later he appeared at another entrance to the factory and was observed to be loitering around until he was asked by the foreman to leave the premises. Half-an-hour later he appeared at another door with a small scoop in his hand. He walked through the factory and scooped out a sample of fat, left the factory, hopped into a waiting car, and was driven away at a fast rate of speed. I shall not weary the Committee with all the details. This person who presented himself at this factory was none other than the works manager of Marrickville Margarine Pty. Ltd., Sydney, and the driver of the car, registered No. NOM-243, which was owned by that company, was the works manager of the Brisbane factory. One wonders what was the purpose of those activities. Rather than asking, "Is Mrs. Jones a good Australian?", one is tempted to ask, "Is 'Mr. Marrickville' an honourable Australian?"

The Estimates provide an amount of \$1,078,000 from the Commonwealth Poultry Industry Assistance Fund. In case it is thought that is a subsidy provided by the

Commonwealth Government to assist the poultry industry I state clearly and emphatically that that fund was established by Commonwealth legislation and is contributed to by every egg producer in Australia at the rate of approximately 6c per hen. It is an integral part of the present stabilisation of the egg market. It is a satisfactory means by which every commercial egg producer in Australia contributes his fair share to the stabilisation of the egg industry. For many years the industry has been seeking the implementation of this scheme, believing in the essential fairness of it. It is heartening to know that a scheme which is considered by many to be a hazardous experiment is operating to the full satisfaction of the industry, although some producers in certain areas consider it is a hardship.

Producers in North Queensland, for instance, think it is a hardship. They should not overlook the fact that it is through the stabilisation scheme that prices are maintained. It also removes the ever-present threat of the import of eggs from Southern Queensland and New South Wales to the fairly lucrative market in the North. If it were not for the stabilisation in the marketing of eggs provided by the Egg Marketing Board, the producers in North Queensland, who believe that they are suffering some hardship, would be obliged to receive much less for their product.

I now wish to deal briefly with the Minister's reference to the outbreak of Newcastle disease. The poultry industry of Australia was indeed fortunate that only a mild type of virus was detected in this country. So mild was it that it had only a depressing effect on the birds and did not cause the grievous losses that have resulted from it in other parts of the world. Newcastle disease has been the scourge of the poultry industry in the United States and England, and the only way of combating it in those countries, and other parts of the world, has been the slaughter of entire flocks.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. COBURN** (Burdekin) (3.52 p.m.): Before proceeding to submit the two cases that I wish to present this afternoon, I offer my congratulations to the Minister on his efficient administration of this department, and for his kind and courteous manner when dealing with me on all occasions on which I have made representations to him. I realise that he is keen to have a good team behind him and to see that it is an efficient one, and he has, in large measure, succeeded.

The district that I represent, with its wonderful soil and water supply, which makes it essentially an agricultural area, has very close contact with the Department of Primary Industries. I think an analysis of what has been done in the Burdekin electorate will lead one to conclude that we have been rather generously treated by the department. We have a well-equipped and well-staffed

experiment station at Millaroo, which has been instrumental in carrying out much work of a very valuable nature. Nearby we have the "Swan's Lagoon" Cattle Field Research Station, from which results have not yet been obtained because it is more or less in its infancy.

Very valuable experimental work in connection with cattle production will be carried out on that station, and in a few years we will be reaping the benefit of the experts' findings. There is also the Ayr Experiment Station at Clare Road, which at present is concerned mainly with experiments in connection with dairy cattle, mainly Sahiwal and Jersey strains. That is another experiment that takes about seven years to complete, and till then the full benefit of the work carried out will not be derived. The results will be known in the future, and I think that they will be very valuable.

In addition, there is the sugar experiment station near the Pioneer Sugar Mill at Brandon, and the interest that the farmers have in that station is displayed when field days are held. Hundreds of them turn up to see the work that is being carried out by members of the staff and to listen to addresses given by members of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations to acquaint them with the work that is being done and a number of matters closely related to the work of the department.

As all hon. members know, the sugar industry is suffering what might be regarded as a minor recession, due entirely to the low price being received for export sugar. Because of that, most farmers are looking for ways of reducing costs. Most of those with whom I have discussed this aspect of the industry are of the opinion that one of the best ways of reducing costs is to introduce mechanical harvesting of cane. The type of machine most favoured is the cutter-harvester type, which cuts the cane into lengths of about 10 or 12 inches.

Before becoming involved in a discussion on mechanical harvesting, I should like to tell hon. members that experiments have been carried out at the Millaroo Experiment Station relative to the production of rice. On 23 August, I asked the Minister a series of questions about those experiments, and he gave me a very long and comprehensive reply, going into detail on the results that have been achieved. Summed up, they are: that the experiments had been carried out on from 5 to 6 acres; that the production of rice approximated 3 tons to the acre.

The experiments have been carried out over a period of 10 years, and some of the farmers in the area who have been in close touch with the Millaroo Experiment Station are now anxious to grow rice on a commercial basis. One man made a proposal to me that I submitted to the Minister for Lands. He said that if he can obtain a lease of 1,000 acres of Crown land that is available in the area, he will grow 100 acres of rice in rotation with cattle pastures, growing the rice one year in six on the same land. He also

requires a licence from the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, of course, to be assured that he will have adequate water for the rice during the growing period. Experts have told me that rice requires 5 feet of water to the acre, so for 100 acres, 500 acre-feet of water would be required. At \$6 an acre-foot, which is the prevailing price in the area, it would cost that man \$3,000 for water to grow his crop of rice, and that is a fairly heavy cost for one item.

I was able to find out that in 1962-63, the value of 55,900 tons of milled rice exported from Australia to other countries was \$6,800,000, and the average price was \$121.50 a ton. It takes 2 tons of paddy rice to make a ton of milled rice, which means that the paddy rice would be worth about \$60.75, or roughly £30, a ton in 1962-63. In 1963-64 a total of 55,200 tons of milled rice was exported. It was worth \$7,200,000, and the average price a ton was \$130.50.

In 1964-65 the total value of export rice was \$8,000,000, the total volume of export was 63,200 tons and the average price per ton for the year was \$126.50. In 1965-66 \$8,800,000 worth of rice was exported, the total volume being 70,000 tons and the average price per ton \$125.70. If this price was maintained any grower could expect round about \$61 to \$62 a ton for rice, and as he would be able to get about 1½ tons of milled rice per acre, judging by experiments that have been already carried out, he would get about \$97 to \$100 for each acre of his rice crop. Reckoning on that basis, the man to whom I have referred would get about \$10,000, and his outlay for water would be about \$3,000. While he was doing that he would also be growing pastures for fattening cattle.

All that is being awaited now are decisions by the Minister for Lands and the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission whether the land will be leased and the water made available. If so, this man, at his own expense and risk, is willing to undertake this experiment to prove whether or not rice-growing on the Burdekin is a commercial proposition.

The question of the harvesting of cane has become a very vexed one. There are two opinions on this matter—the growers' and the millers'. The growers are very strongly in favour of the introduction of mechanical harvesting, and I would say the greater percentage of them favour the chopper-harvester. Some objections have been raised to the introduction of the chopper-harvester because of the operations of leuconostoc bacteria. These bacteria cause a jelly-like substance to form on the plant, and this affects the juices. But they were also in existence—they have been for many years—when cane was harvested manually. It is the dirtiness of the knife that causes the leuconostoc germ to develop, and because there are many more short sticks in the stalk of cane harvested with the chopper-harvester there are more opportunities for this germ to carry out its work of deteriorating the juices in the cane.

However, I understand that that is not the objection that the millers have to cane harvested by this method. Their main objection is that they will have to incur very heavy expenditure to provide the large number of bins that will be necessary for carrying the chopped-up cane. Some farmers have told me that they have very carefully kept the cost of the operation and they can put their chopped-up cane on the truck for as little as 12s. a ton. The hon. member for Cook said this afternoon that in his area farmers were placing cane on the truck for as little as 10s. a ton compared with, in his area, 28s. a ton when it was manually cut and mechanically loaded. It is the saving that is effected that is making the farmers favour this method so much.

On 1 September I asked the Minister a question concerning the powers that the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board has over the ordering of a miller to supply bins to farmers who require them. His reply to me was that questions relating to the transport of cane in the current season are within the powers of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. The Central Board can order the supply of trucks for the current season, but the farmers want the power extended so that the board's powers will enable it to make a determination with respect to future seasons. I understand that the Minister has this matter in hand at the present time, and that we can expect legislation during this session to deal with the supply of bins by millers to cane farmers.

**Mr. Row:** I gave notice of it this morning.

**Mr. COBURN:** I heard that, but I did not know what was in the Bill. I suspected that it would deal with this matter. I might be a jump ahead, but it would be interesting to know the attitude towards this matter of the two bodies closely connected with the industry.

By a majority decision of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board the Mourilyan mill is to supply bins for chopped-up cane, free of charge, to five growers whose original bin-hire agreements had expired. There was an appeal to the board regarding the supply of bins by mill-owners, and the appeal of the Mourilyan growers was upheld. The board decided that the mill must supply the bins to the five growers concerned, and that it must supply them without cost to the cane-grower. Applications were made to the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board by both the Mourilyan and Pleystowe mill suppliers' committees by way of appeal against the decision of the local boards to have inserted in each of the local awards a provision requiring the mill-owner to supply bins free of charge to named growers for mechanically harvested, chopped-up cane.

In allowing the Mourilyan appeal, the chairman of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, the Honourable K. R. Townley, sounded a note of warning to the growers. He said that authority to supply chopped-up cane is not an authority to supply dirty,

trashy or badly topped cane, and that an increase in the quantity of chopped-up cane, which deteriorates rapidly, may mean that the suppliers of whole-stalk cane, whether mechanically or manually harvested, will have to accord priority of delivery to chopped-up cane so that it will not be held in the mill yard over a week-end or for any other considerable period. According to the chairman of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, chopped-up cane deteriorates much more rapidly than whole-stalk cane. He sounded the warning that those who supply chopped-up cane could not expect priority in having their cane treated. He also pointed out that the decision in the case of the named Mourilyan growers was a decision upon the facts in that particular case, and that such a decision would not necessarily apply generally. The decision made in that case was on the facts applying to that particular case, and therefore it could not be taken as an over-all decision that would be given in every application. In other mill areas conditions may be, and probably are, different, particularly where bins are being supplied to and used by a grower for the first time. In such a case payment of rental for a period of three years would seem to be a reasonable condition to impose.

The vexed question is whether the mill should supply the bins and charge a rental, or whether the bins should be supplied free of cost because mills have an obligation under the Act to transport the cane to the mill. The chairman of the Central Board ruled that those who were just starting to use the bins should pay a rental on them for about three years and that that would be a reasonable imposition.

In his decision on the Mourilyan and Pleystowe appeals, with which Mr. G. H. Mocatta, the cane-growers' representative on the board, completely agreed, the chairman said that the questions that arose were—

"1. Has the board power to insert a provision in an award requiring a mill-owner to supply such bins to a grower?

"2. If it has such power, should it exercise it in the particular case?

"3. If it does exercise the power in any particular case, should it also provide that the supply of such bins should be without charge to the grower concerned?"

He said that the answer to the first question depended upon the construction of section 56 (1) of the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act of 1962. That is the Act that the Minister intends to amend. The section reads—

"An award shall determine all matters relating to the harvesting and delivery of sugar-cane by the cane growers and the transport, handling and crushing thereof and the payment therefor by the mill-owner."

The whole crux of the question was whether chopped-up cane was sugar-cane. The chairman had to determine whether, in his

opinion, it was or was not. He decided that unless chopped-up cane ceased to be sugar-cane—and the experience of some years in Mourilyan and other mill areas would seem to indicate that chopped-up cane is still regarded as sugar-cane—there would seem to be no warrant for considering it to be in fact other than sugar-cane. He said that chopped-up cane under the definition given in the Act must be regarded as sugar-cane and, because of that, the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board would have the power to order a mill to supply the necessary means for transporting it to a mill. A stalk of sugar-cane, which grows to 10 ft. or more, did not seem to the chairman to cease to be sugar-cane when it was cut into 10 or more lengths of 1 ft. or so each. If it is not sugar-cane, what is it?

That is the factual side of the question and, as a matter of construction, the chairman of the board could see no warrant for reading the subsection as though it was not intended to apply to chopped-up cane. The chairman said he was therefore of the opinion that mechanically harvested, chopped-up sugar-cane does come within the ambit of the subsection. He said it might be suggested that the Legislature could not have intended to empower the Central Board or a local board to include in an award a provision having the effect of forcing a mill-owner to incur capital expenditure. In the first place, he said that in such an argument he found it somewhat difficult to distinguish between expenditure of a capital nature and any other expenditure that is required to be made either by a millowner or growers to comply with an award. In the second place, he said it seemed to him that, if the plain words of the statute authorised the inclusion in an award of such a provision, it was idle to speculate on the possibilities or probabilities of the Legislature's intention. He had in mind, no doubt, that it was intended that this was to be regarded as coming within the ambit of the Act. He then pointed out that awards have contained such provisions for many years; for example, clause 8 of the current Mourilyan award, and clause 16 of the current Pleystowe award. Both provisions place an obligation upon the mill-owner to supply transport for cane, an obligation which, necessarily, means expenditure on capital cost and maintenance.

I have no time to detail the whole of the proceedings at that hearing, but the final summing up was that the board delivered a majority decision, with the mill-owner's representative dissenting. The decision was that the board had power to order the mill to supply bins for the current season and also to decide whether a charge would be levied. The contention was that a rental for three years might be reasonable to recoup the mill-owner in some measure for his expenditure. It was also decided that as the Mourilyan growers had had an agreement to pay 1s. 3d. a ton for the cane carted to the mill in bins, after they had paid for

three years, and as the bins remained the property of the mill, the mill should be recouped sufficiently for its expenditure.

The Minister assured us that the Bill of which he gave notice this morning would deal with bins and would cover every aspect of the case. We hope that under the Bill the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board will have power to order a mill to supply the required number of bins to farmers who want to have their cane harvested by chopper-harvesters and transported to the mill in bins. I cannot guess just what the Bill will contain. Whether it will provide, as was suggested by the chairman of the Central Board, that it is reasonable and fair that the rental should be charged and that the mill should be forced to supply the bins required, I shall discover when I see the Bill. I can assure the Minister that it is of great importance to the Lower Burdekin district, as no doubt it is in every other sugar district.

**Mr. Houston:** What do the growers want?

**Mr. COBURN:** Most of them want to use the chopper-harvester.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. MELLOY** (Nudgee) (4.17 p.m.): Firstly I shall say a few nice things about the Minister. I suppose it will be claimed that I am out of form, but that does not matter. I congratulate the Minister because he is different from the usual run of ministers. Although he is restricted or hemmed in to a great extent by Government policy, he is a practical man who knows his job. Three or four weeks after he assumed his portfolio I asked him how things were going and he more or less said that he did not know whether he was Arthur or Martha. I think he was referring not to his ability to do the job but to the task of relating his practical knowledge to the job and the problems of administration. He has gone ahead, but it is still quite refreshing to see humility in a minister rather than the brash arrogance evident in some of them.

I was rather surprised at the Premier's reply this morning to the question of the Leader of the Opposition about what steps he could take to overcome the diversion of our wool clip to New South Wales. The Premier said that owing to section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution any steps to restrict compulsorily the movement of wool to interstate wool-selling centres would be abortive. He did not say whether the Government could do anything to bring the wool back to Queensland. He said that the Government has done, and will continue to do, everything in its power to protect the interests of Queensland industry from any such threats.

I do not think the Premier is doing all that he could do in this matter. The president of the Western Queensland Road Hauliers' Association said that hauliers were forced

to divert the wool to Sydney because of the increased road taxes announced by the Treasurer in his Budget.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I remind the hon. member that we are not discussing the Estimates of the Transport Department.

**Mr. MELLOY:** No, we are discussing the Department of Primary Industries, and—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I remind the hon. member that we are not discussing transport.

**Mr. MELLOY:** I am discussing the marketing of wool and whether it is to be sold in New South Wales or Queensland. If it is not going to be sold in Queensland, I want to discuss why that should be so. We want the Premier to do something about bringing this wool back to Queensland. He has said that, because of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, he can do nothing about it. As the Government has done something that has forced the diversion of wool to New South Wales, it can likewise do something that will bring it back to Queensland. This can be achieved by making it more attractive financially to send the wool to Brisbane than to Sydney. Growers who want to send their wool to Brisbane for sale now find that road haulage fees are 30 per cent. more than rail freight, and they can send it to Sydney at the same price that it would cost—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member is completely out of order in discussing transport matters. References to the sale of wool are permissible under these Estimates, but transport matters may not be discussed.

**Mr. MELLOY:** I am speaking on the cost of marketing wool, which I think is pertinent to this debate.

**Mr. Houston:** It is no good growing it if you can't sell it.

**Mr. MELLOY:** Absolutely. In all other matters, the discussion of costs is of paramount importance. In the interests not only of the producers but of Queensland as a whole, facilities have to be provided for the carriage of wool to Brisbane. I understand that this latest development, if allowed to continue, will mean six fewer wool sales in Queensland. The Premier has it within his power to do something about it, and I certainly hope that he will take some action. It is no good saying that he has not the power, and must allow the wool to go to New South Wales to be sold. Brisbane has facilities for its sale, and the Premier has the power to take steps that will facilitate its carriage to Brisbane. That is all I propose to say on the matter, as I think I have made my point. The Premier's reply this morning to the Leader of the Opposition shows that he has failed in his

duty. The answer to the problem lies in his hands, and what he has so far done does not meet the situation.

The only other matter that I want to discuss is the production of safflower oil. Marrickville Holdings Ltd. has stated that, as a result of the maintenance of quota restrictions, it will be forced to cancel \$2,000,000 worth of orders for safflower oil. I should like the Minister in his reply to give some indication of the effect this will have on safflower growing in Queensland. It is quite a big industry. I understand that about 160,000 acres were planted in Queensland last year but that, because of the drought, about 80,000 or 90,000 acres were ploughed in and not harvested. However, between 80,000 acres and 90,000 acres have again been planted this year.

According to Marrickville Holdings Ltd., the growers are going to suffer; on the other hand, Nutta Products says it will take every ton of safflower oil that is produced. Someone is wrong, and I think the Minister might do the Committee a service by explaining just what the real situation is. There is no doubt that many people are buying poly-unsaturated margarine, and this has induced farmers to grow more safflower seed. Marrickville Holdings Ltd. says that it is going to cancel an order worth \$1,500,000. That must mean that some growers will not be able to market their product, and I am sure all hon. members want to know how it will affect Queensland. If Nutta Products buys every ton of safflower seed that is available, the position will be saved.

Those are the only matters that I wish to raise on the Estimates introduced by the Minister. I hope he will give them careful consideration.

**Mr. WHARTON** (Burnett) (4.27 p.m.): In my opinion, the Minister presented his Estimates to the Committee very clearly and very fully. The work of the Department of Primary Industries covers a very wide field, and the Minister touched on many subjects in his speech this morning.

A pleasing feature of the Estimates is the increase in funds provided by the Commonwealth to assist the department's extension work. Having been engaged in primary industry, I believe this is probably the most important part of its work. The C.S.I.R.O. is engaged in research work and is doing a very good job. In saying that, I am not detracting in any way from the research work of the Queensland Department of Primary Industries; but it seems a pity that the department should have to split its funds between research and extension. If the C.S.I.R.O. directed its attention entirely to research and the Department of Primary Industries directed its attention to extension work, much more would be achieved.

The decision by the Government to subsidise pasture establishment on dairy farms is a very good one. It will assist farmers to

increase production and also improve the quality of the product. The hon. member for Nudgee referred to margarine, and the competition from margarine makes the quality of butter a very important consideration. It is particularly important that we achieve a higher-quality product, and that is being done. I pay tribute to Mr. Coombs for his remarks in the Press this morning on the spreadability of butter. If his suggestions were followed I believe the demand for butter would greatly exceed the demand for any substitute product.

The dairy association at Gayndah, of which I am chairman, has a scheme under which it provides farmers with the articles required to install in-tank refrigerators. It also provides the finance if the farmer needs it, and for about \$200 he can build and install an in-tank refrigerator. It costs only about \$20 for the concrete well, and if he sells the farm he has no difficulty in selling the unit. In this way the association has done a great deal towards improving the quality of the cream and, just as important, reducing costs of cartage.

There has been a fairly large reduction in the number of dairymen in this industry, although there has not been such a large decrease in production. However, we have experienced some difficulty in serving a lesser number of suppliers. As hon. members will know, serving a lesser number of suppliers increases cartage costs. We have overcome this difficulty by refrigeration, and at the same time have improved cream quality. I think this is an important step and one that could be emulated by other associations. The department has also helped in this venture in that Mr. Hussey actually goes onto the farms and assists in putting in this type of refrigeration unit. We, as a company, are doing something for the farmer, but the department is providing this assistance with the over-all result that we produce a better quality product at cheaper costs.

I commend the department for its work in research in the elimination of weed taint. This is a very necessary step, because even in the very best of country, particularly in the tropical areas, it is very difficult in a good winter season to eliminate weeds, with the result that the farmer cannot avoid having cream affected by weed taint. It is a very important step forward that the department is now able to eliminate that taint on a commercial basis. It is a simple matter to remedy weed taint on a small scale but to do it on a commercial basis is really a step forward, and I congratulate the department on its efforts in this direction.

I wish now to refer to margarine and its relationship to the Dairy Produce Act. Under the Dairy Produce Act margarine is a dairy product, and I think the Act should be amended in this respect. I do not think margarine could in any way be declared as a dairy product. However, it is under our Act and I think it detracts somewhat from the importance of the dairy industry.

Margarine is manufactured by Marrickville Holdings Ltd. from safflower-seed oil, and I have been very pleased that farmers have been given some opportunity to put their land to profitable use by growing this crop. However, Marrickville Holdings Ltd. has exceeded its production quota and action has been taken to prevent it from continuing to do so. That is as it should be. This company should not be allowed to break the law. Other firms are producing within their quotas and are willing to buy safflower-seed oil. However, we should not be carried away with the importance of safflower-seed oil in the manufacture of margarine. I am informed that the trend overseas is for very little of it to be used in the manufacture of margarine. It was widely used some time ago, but at the present time the trend is towards the use of other oils.

Although Marrickville Holdings Ltd. have said that they must have safflower oil, this is phoney sort of talk because it is not necessary to use safflower oil in the manufacture of margarine. Many years ago America moved away from the use of safflower oil in the manufacture of butter substitutes. We should not be carried away by any suggestions that safflower is the only oil that can be used. There are many other uses for safflower oil apart from the manufacture of margarine. It is not for me to take up time in listing them. I hope that the department, through research, will be able to find many other uses for this product.

I am pleased that co-operatives are being set up so that the growers can get together in an organised way. I want to see all our primary industries prosper; I do not want to speak in a derogatory way about any of our primary industries.

When I was in New Zealand recently I took a close look at the dairy industry. That country is very fortunate in having excellent natural pastures. While there I saw dairying in its best form, with cattle grazing on natural pastures. All that the dairy farmer has to do with his land is fertilise it and build wind-breaks. Most of it will carry one and a-half to two cows to the acre. We have to do a lot more than fertilise our land; we have to grow crops, irrigate pastures and all sorts of things to maintain the dairy industry.

A feature of the dairy industry in New Zealand is the co-operative spirit that exists. The New Zealanders are dedicated to co-operation; they do not pay dividends on their shares; they have amalgamated a great many of their factories; they specialise in cheese and rennet, and the manufacture of butter and milk powder. Previously many of their factories were only two or three miles apart, particularly in the New Plymouth area, but now they are about 10 miles apart. The factories are remarkably efficient, working seven days a week and taking milk in almost round the clock. They are able to retail butter at 2s. sterling a lb. I saw it on sale in the shops at 1s. 6d. a lb.

The industry costs the New Zealand Government about £stg9,000,000. New Zealanders do not like to use the word "subsidy", and, so as not to offend them, I will say that the dairy-farmers are assisted to the extent of £9,000,000 for that part of their production that is sold in New Zealand. They take what they can get on the overseas market, as we do, and they are able to do quite well mainly because of their business-like methods of production in the factories and good seasonal conditions. Their production is so efficient that they can manufacture cheaply.

There was a great song in this Assembly—and to be honest I must say that I joined in it—about the effect of the Commonwealth-New Zealand trade agreement. The New Zealand people do not like us to mention it, for it has worked out in our favour. I was greatly interested in it at the time because I thought it would be detrimental to our dairying and pig industries. On my visit to New Zealand I found that the reverse is the case and that we are on the better side of the ledger as a result of the New Zealand trade agreement.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt interjected.

Mr. WHARTON: He did. Mr. McEwen said we would not be affected, but at times I am a Doubting Thomas. When a man forecasts something and it works out right, that is all very well; but when other people forecast something and it does not occur we become rather disgruntled and think they are bad forecasters. On this occasion the forecast was correct. I joined with many other people in criticising the agreement but it has been to our advantage, particularly in regard to cheese and pig products. I think it is well worth mentioning this matter. I have changed my mind, and I should like that fact recorded.

Mr. Davies: Will any sugar be left over in the Bundaberg district?

Mr. WHARTON: I do not think so, and I do not think any will be left over in the Maryborough district. I think it will all be sold.

Mr. Bennett: At what price?

Mr. WHARTON: I think we can leave that for the moment. I would not even hazard a guess at the price; I do not think even the learned hon. member would know the price. I will not make a forecast, but Mr. McEwen forecast that the New Zealand trade agreement would be beneficial to Australia, and his forecast was correct. I therefore leave the matter of price to the Minister.

I have a few comments to make on improved pastures. Many of our top departmental officers had their early training in the department, and they are doing marvellous work. Brian Pastures is reflecting the result of their work, as is the extension work throughout the State. I agree with the hon. member for Warwick, who said that instead

of having too many small research stations we should ensure that the ones we have are good. The field days at Brian Pastures attract people from all parts of the State, and the work of the department is spreading far afield. We can apply the results to our pasture schemes. The use of lucerne, green panic, buffel, and Rhodes grass is common in my district. Lucerne is a major legume. We have always thought so and the department has proved it at Brian Pastures. The work carried out by the department at Brian Pastures is essential for the dairy industry, the sheep and cattle industries and the pig industry.

Other research stations are playing their part. I was recently at Coolum, in the wallum country, and the improved pastures in use there are altering completely the scene in the wallum lands from Coolum to Bundaberg, which lend themselves to practical application of the research now under way at Coolum. It is a pleasure to go there and see the work that has been done. Timber has been cleared and beautiful pastures have appeared on what we once considered was useless land.

Townsville lucerne is used from Bundaberg to Rodds Bay. It has become the legume of that district and is having a good effect on the beef industry. The C.S.I.R.O. is conducting a good deal of research at Rodds Bay.

I have previously mentioned fine-stemmed stylo. It is a fairly scarce legume which is hard to harvest. It is a winter-growing legume, whereas most legumes grow in the summer. It spreads naturally. At Brian Pastures there is a 6-acre patch of this legume. It has a high fence around it to keep the wallabies out. The wind blows the seed over the fence and it has taken possession in spear-grass country. It is an advantage to have a legume that will spread into natural pastures in spear-grass country. But now we are achieving something because it spread naturally and can be used in the rougher areas of the State that do not lend themselves to agriculture.

I commend the department for assisting in soil and economic surveys for irrigation. That work is important in the Kolan, Lower Burnett, and Isis districts. It is no good providing irrigation if the soil is not right and the crops do not lend themselves to it. It must provide an economic return to farmers. The important work that this department is doing is of great assistance to the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply, and more important, to the farmers. There is no doubt that irrigation plays an important role. It has played its part in establishing a more stable economy in this State. The provision of more irrigation, with assistance from this department, will overcome some of the lag in both primary and secondary production that was mentioned by the Minister for Industrial Development. We must have markets, industrial development,

and employment. If they go hand in hand and do not climb over one another we will have a better balanced economy.

The sugar industry is important. The sugar-cane grower is the most efficient farmer I know.

**Mr. Bennett:** He is not getting a fair go at the moment.

**Mr. WHARTON:** I am speaking of him as a farmer. The hon. member for South Brisbane always gets off the track. Like all legal men, he gets wide of the mark.

The sugar-cane grower is one of the best farmers. He knows how to prepare soil, fallow land, and use fertiliser and irrigation.

**Mr. Bennett:** They over-fertilise at times and ruin the soil.

**Mr. WHARTON:** The hon. member's tongue is over-fertilised at times.

We must look after this farmer. Usually he is a small farmer. There are many of them in my electorate. They are doing a grand job in closely settled areas. Closer settlement is better than sparse settlement, and is good for the economy. It is a shame that at the moment the sugar market is depressed. It is very important that the cane-grower should receive a better return than he is now. I certainly hope that the Minister is correct in saying that world trends have shown that sugar production is not near the tonnage needed for the projected population increase. The price is certainly low at the moment.

**Mr. Davies** interjected.

**Mr. WHARTON:** Let me say to the hon. member for Maryborough that if an industry is to be economic it must have both quantity and quality of production. They are the essential ingredients, whether the commodity be sugar, butter or anything else. Let us accept that the price is now too low. If it is possible to obtain better agreements or stabilisation plans, let it be accepted that sugar will be produced more economically by those who are able to engage in the industry in a bigger way.

**Mr. Davies:** You said that sugar-growers are better than dairy-farmers. How are you going to explain that to the farmers around Biggenden?

**Mr. WHARTON:** I did not say that at all. I was not saying anything derogatory of anybody. What I was saying was that the cane-grower knows how to plough, fallow, plant, irrigate, and fertilise. He has to succeed. Cane-farming lends itself more to closer settlement in the area round Bundaberg, and that is very important I have said nothing derogatory of any other industry.

**Mr. BENNETT** (South Brisbane) (4.52 p.m.): No doubt the observations made by previous speakers that the Minister is of a

pleasant personality, equanimity and disposition are quite correct, and I share those expressions. Of course, it is obvious that he needs to be all of those things when he has to administer a department that has been brought almost to its knees by Government policy that has done very little to encourage adequate development in various avenues.

The outlook of the department is particularly dismal; the lot of the primary producer is not a happy one. In fact, as the State president of the Primary Producers' Union said, "The primary producer's lot is grim." Any Minister under the stress and strain of having to cope with the administration of this department under present conditions would certainly need to be a man of pleasant personality.

There are many reasons why primary industries have not developed as they should have, the main one being the cheese-paring policy applied to them by the Government. It has refused to ensure that rural workers are paid adequate wages to work in country areas, as a result of which many farmers, particularly in the dairy industry, have found it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain labour. The Government will not insist upon fair wages and decent hours and conditions for this type of worker.

The hon. member for Gregory knows only too well the truth of what I am saying. I have had two excursions to his electorate this year to give the electors the benefit of my rural experience, and they have agreed completely with what I have said about the difficulties confronting them. The people of the Gregory electorate are not extremely happy at the moment. I am fortified in the submissions I am making by the report on the activities of the Department of Primary Industries, which has been tabled in this Chamber for the benefit of hon. members. I have listed a series of points to indicate that the Government should galvanise itself into constructive action to alleviate the plight of those engaged in primary industries in Queensland.

According to the report, the efforts made during the past 12 months have been extremely ineffective. On the first page, one sees the embarrassing admission that the Government was responsible for the destruction of 723 bovines and two goats within a 1½-mile radius in the Mt. Crosby area. As a result of the Government's panic, Queensland lost not only valuable stock but also \$76,000 in cold, hard cash. Anyone who understood the situation fully would have known that there was no need for that wholesale slaughter, and subsequent tests proved that there was no evidence of the existence of blue-tongue. Surely the State should have had available suitable laboratory equipment to enable the Government to satisfy itself of the true position. Stock valued at \$76,000 were lost because of the delay that occurred when semen had to be sent to another country for testing.

**Mr. Sullivan:** You are not pleasing your Deputy Leader very much. He appears to be ashamed of what you are saying.

**Mr. BENNETT:** The hon. member might be more interested in the next statement in the report, which is headed "Better Bulls". It says—

"The result of the first 10 years of bull proving is that the Department's artificial insemination centre has on its strength five A.I. proven Jersey and two A.I. proven A.I.S. bulls."

**Mr. Row:** It takes five years to prove a bull.

**Mr. BENNETT:** There are a few hon. members who have proven themselves in less than one year.

I turn now to pasture improvement. Again there is the sorry admission—

**Mr. Sullivan:** Who wrote that for you?

**Mr. BENNETT:** The Director-General of Primary Industries. I am reading from his report, in case the hon. member for Condamine cannot follow what I am saying. Obviously he has not read it. I read all the reports as they are tabled and note the relevant points so that I can refer to them from time to time.

The report says—

"As might be expected, Queensland is far behind the more climatically favoured States in acreage of sown pastures and in quantity of artificial fertilisers used on pastures."

It is admitted there that Queensland is far behind other States in pasture improvement.

The hon. member for Burnett referred at some length to the dairy industry, and I think it must be conceded that dairying is conducted in an inefficient fashion in Queensland. Men with experience on the land and economists have argued that it would be cheaper for the Government to acquire all the dairying lands in Australia and import all the dairy products required; it has been argued in the Commonwealth Parliament that the dairy industry in Australia is conducted very inefficiently.

**Mr. Pizzey:** It is only recently that we discovered suitable tropical legumes, but they have had them in the South for half a century.

**Mr. BENNETT:** It is not only legumes that affect the industry.

**Mr. Pizzey:** And other suitable grasses.

**Mr. BENNETT:** It is only in the last few years that we have had suitable grasses and legumes, but we cannot have grasses and legumes without water, which this Government is doing nothing to provide. That is why the dairy industry is finding it difficult to survive. Government members need not take my experience into consideration; they can face up to the concrete evidence that has been provided in this report.

Incidentally, dealing with water, people in the Gregory electorate are not very satisfied with the efforts made by this Government in the conservation and distribution of water.

At page 10 of the report, under the heading "Dairying" we read—

"In the opening quarter of the year, the industry was in a state of distress."

That is a fair observation and a fair comment.

It goes on—

"Production was little more than 50% of that for the same period of the previous year. . ."

In other words, it had fallen by not less than 50 per cent., which is obviously a serious and alarming deterioration in the industry.

To continue—

". . . and had fallen by a further 25% from the previous quarter."

That is how this industry has been sliding down the ladder, and this Government, in its attitude of complacency and, not wishing to face the truth, will not make an admission that something radical must be done to arrest the landslide in the dairying industry before it automatically extinguishes itself.

**Mr. Chichen:** Are you the shadow minister for drought?

**Mr. BENNETT:** We have heard so much about drought from the Government side that every hon. member opposite would qualify as minister for drought. That is the only thing they do efficiently; they excuse their weaknesses and inefficiency by blaming the drought. There are many in the West who say that this drought explanation is overrated and overdone, and one of the reasons the drought is blamed for the parlous position that the pastoral industry is in at present is the hopeless overstocking of country that has not the necessary water to carry the stock.

To continue with the report, under the heading of "Dairying" it says—

"Butter and cheese production during 1965-66 continued the decline which has been evident since 1962-63."

So there the Government has failed again. After five years of this Government's regime and administration, butter and cheese production commenced to decline and has been declining ever since.

The report continues—

"Compared with 1964-65, butter production declined by 5% and cheese production by 8%."

**Mr. Sullivan:** That is because you eat margarine.

**Mr. BENNETT:** I will deal with the butter and margarine dispute in due course, if time permits me, because that dispute is also rather sickening to anyone with a fair and trained mind.

The next point I wish to make relates to the sugar industry. This industry has been thrown into a state of chaos and confusion and is almost on the brink of bankruptcy because of the inadequate material that was placed before the Gibbs commission on the future of the sugar industry in this State. It was perfectly obvious that the evidence presented to that commission could not be sustained, even in the immediate future, so far as it took into consideration the failure of the beet crop in Europe and decided that the Castro situation was a permanent one. All of that, of course, was putting a blind eye to the truth. Because of decisions made on the inaccurate evidence placed before that commission, the sugar industry is now in a dangerous condition.

Under the heading of "Sugar" we read that—

"Production was affected by unseasonal conditions and was some 200,000 tons below the mill peak aggregate."

In spite of the decisions made by the Gibbs commission about the future of the market for this industry, we read in the 1965-66 report—

"The market outlook is chequered. On the one hand the industry benefits from the protected domestic market to the extent of about 600,000 tons, while the U.K./Commonwealth Sugar Agreement provides an assured market for 335,000 tons at satisfactory prices."

"On the other hand, almost two-thirds of Australian exports are sold on the basis of free market prices. These were severely depressed throughout the year, falling to £16 15s. stg. per ton in early June, the lowest since World War II."

After the expensive hearing of the sugar commission, during which the Commissioner and his assistants travelled overseas to various countries, after extending the assignments in North Queensland, and after committing young farmers to tremendous expenditure by way of mortgages, we find, in sharp contrast to what the Government expected according to the information it either did or did not obtain, that the price per ton is the lowest since World War II. These young farmers, who have committed themselves to hard work and heavy expense, now face possible bankruptcy. As my Deputy Leader points out, since this report was printed the price has further deteriorated to £13 15s. a ton. The report continues—

"The lower price was a direct result of lack of demand and the sale of a large parcel of sugar by Brazil from substantial surplus stocks."

Why was the commission not told about all this? Why could it not have anticipated that there would be this lack of demand? On the other hand, this Government clearly told the farmers of the State—the men on the land—that there would be a tremendous

demand for sugar and that they should pay a lot of money for new assignments in order to make a fortune in a short period.

I proceed now to my next point. This is what the report has to say about the linseed industry—

"Although the present position in the linseed industry is far from good as a direct result of the contracting domestic market, the longer term prospects are better than is generally recognised."

It goes on to say—

"The widening use of safflower seed oil as an edible fat in Australia, together with the wide interest in the crop overseas, augurs well for the development of this industry."

Earlier an interjector queried my attitude towards the margarine-butter dispute. I make the comment that nothing has sickened me more than this cheap and nasty argument and contest that is presently being waged between the margarine interests and the butter interests. I, personally, have always used butter, and I prefer it. These expensive advertisements throughout various Australian newspapers and direct communications on expensive parchment, which must be costing both sides a fortune, should be stopped.

If ever there was a convincing argument for the socialisation of any industry it lies in the battle that is taking place between the margarine and butter interests because most of their profits are being wasted in idle warfare—most of it paper warfare. Profits that should be going to the people of Australia and to the primary producers are being spent in the useless campaign that is being waged in a venomous fashion by these two interests.

Incidentally, I wrote to these people and pointed that out. I also told them that all their expensive material would be relegated to the waste-paper-basket before it was read, and no doubt that is what most hon. members did.

**Mr. Ramsden:** That is the second sensible thing you have said today.

**Mr. Row:** That is the most sensible thing you have said.

**Mr. Ramsden:** Did you get a reply.

**Mr. BENNETT:** No. That was the first time they were not prepared to waste a stamp and claim that what I was saying was not worthy of consideration.

I will pick another industry at random. In relation to bananas, this item appears in the report—

"Banana production in 1965-66 will be slightly below 1964-65 levels but values are expected to be higher."

Production of bananas has fallen also. If we like to go into the lesser fields, we see that onion production in 1965-66 was only 15,500 tons, about 30 per cent. below normal.

**Mr. Smith:** Is this to demonstrate your versatility?

**Mr. BENNETT:** The hon. member for Windsor has just returned from New Guinea. I hope he has not come back in a tropical condition.

In relation to beans—or, for that matter, anything else we like to choose—we see from the report that over more recent years there has been a trend for both value and production to decline. This is supposed to be a man-on-the-land Government, but what has it done for the man on the land? For any commodity we care to take in the report there has been a decline in production and a loss of markets, yet the Government is supposed to represent the interests of primary producers and, fundamentally, judging by what hon. members opposite say, is a primary-producers' Government. It has failed miserably in the field in which it claims to be expert.

It is shocking that the technologists employed on the Snowy River development scheme were not transferred to Queensland when they completed their duties in the southern States. The A.L.P. introduced this scheme to conserve vast quantities of water. When the Curtin and Chifley Governments proposed the scheme, Menzies, Holt and McEwen were so horrified that they boycotted the official opening. However, when they saw how successful it was they preened themselves on its completion and tried to take full credit for its inception and construction. That is history, but this Government is prepared to do a disservice to the State by not making strong representations to the Commonwealth Government and insisting that these skilled technologists—who no doubt will go overseas to develop other countries when their services are no longer required here—should be brought to Queensland. This State's greatest handicap to development and help for primary producers is the lack of suitable and consistent supplies of water.

When we look through the pages of "Hansard" over the past century we see how easy it is to come here and wail and weep because we have been passing through droughts. Instead of wailing and weeping, parliamentarians should be generally castigating themselves for allowing a drought, after a century of Queensland's development, to seriously curtail our prospects. And that is what has happened. We must have droughts from time to time; they will continue to come. We cannot change the weather or the seasons, but we must prepare for drought.

**Mr. Ramsden:** Do you think we should have done it in the past half century?

**Mr. BENNETT:** It should have been done long ago, but because it was not done long ago is no reason for procrastinating further. If there had been a Federal A.L.P. Government since 1949 it would have been done.

Previous Labour Premiers, including the late Mr. Forgan Smith, and particularly the late Mr. E. M. Hanlon, did a great deal for water development but could not persuade the Federal anti-Labour Government to provide them with funds for the Lower Burdekin scheme and other water-conservation works.

**Mr. Ramsden:** That would be your explanation for its not being done by your party in the last 40 or 50 years?

**Mr. BENNETT:** That interjection is as relevant as the observation of the hon. member for Gregory that a bull that jumped a fence and molested a young heifer should have been sent to the abattoirs.

Water distribution could mean new life for a large acreage of what is known as the mulga lands in Queensland. That particular rain-belt receives only 14 inches a year. We who live on the coast are not fully conscious of the paucity of the rainfall in other parts of the State. If we could harness our waters for use in those parts of the State that are lacking rainfall, our development would be much greater.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. SULLIVAN (Condamine) (5.17 p.m.):** It would be easy to devote the full 25 minutes allowed in this debate to criticism of the contribution that has just been made, but I am confident that the Minister will answer all of the charges levelled at his department by the hon. member for South Brisbane. By jumping from one primary industry to another, he indicated that he is possibly one of the most diversified farmers in this Chamber. I was unable to hear him and am not sure whether he claimed to be speaking from experience or inexperience, but, as he displayed complete ignorance of all of the primary industries with which he dealt, I am sure he was speaking from inexperience. I came here at the same time as he did, and I cannot remember, in that six years, seeing a leader or deputy leader of the Opposition so embarrassed. By facial grimaces and in other ways the Deputy Leader showed his disgust for certain statements and accusations made by the hon. member for South Brisbane, and the inexperience of the hon. member.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I rise to a point of order. If in fact I was looking grave, I was pondering the dearth of intellect of the hon. member for Condamine.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I am glad the Deputy Leader agrees with me. I suggest he was pondering the dearth of intellect of the hon. member for South Brisbane.

The hon. member for South Brisbane went out of his way to refer on many occasions to the inefficiency of the dairy industry. In defence of the dairymen of Queensland, and not because I am one of them myself, I must reply to those assertions. It is true that people have left the industry and the number of those engaged in it has decreased. I shall

let members representing other electorates speak for themselves. In my electorate, however, I feel no concern for those who have left the industry, because their going is the result of a shortage of labour brought about by the industrial development of this State, for which I commend the Government. People have left the dairy industry because their land is suitable for agriculture, and markets are available for grain and beef as a result of negotiations by the Federal leader of the Country Party, Mr. McEwen, who will go down in history as one of the greatest trade negotiators of all time. Because of economic stability in other industries, people have left dairying, and that does not concern me a bit.

Strangely enough, figures produced by the Dairy Produce Board show that, despite the decrease in the number of dairy farmers, production figures have remained approximately constant. That is an indication of efficiency, and I am sure that dairymen throughout Queensland will not thank the hon. member for South Brisbane for the criticism levelled at them by one who does not know the first thing about the industry. If he criticises some of the laws of the State, because of his legal knowledge I may respect him, but I would have thought he had sufficient common sense to leave criticism of a branch of primary industry to someone who knows something about it, if there is such a person on the other side of the Chamber.

He also criticised people in primary industry for the conditions under which their employees work. I have lived in a rural area all my life, and have never heard this criticism. I believe that the conditions given by dairy farmers, wheat-growers, and all others engaged in primary industry, to rural workers are, in the main, better than those given to workers in industry in the cities. Having pointed out those few things, I shall leave any further reply to the Minister. I am very confident that he will be quite capable of dealing with such criticism, although he will probably not spend much time on it.

As one representing an agricultural, cattle-fattening, and dairying area, I commend and congratulate the Minister and his departmental officers on what I, and all people engaged in primary industry, consider to be a very fine job being done to assist men on the land. Primary Industries is, I suppose, one of the most extensive departments. It has many branches, each calling for highly qualified personnel, and the advice given to those in various forms of primary industry is indicative of the fine types of officers in the department.

What is probably a record wheat and barley harvest is now in progress. To some extent it is the result of seasonal conditions. My memory extends back almost to the development of the wheat industry in Queensland, and I cannot remember any better seasonal conditions for wheat and barley-growing in my lifetime. However, I do not

believe that is the only reason for it. Twenty years ago, if a farmer was able to get 10 bags of wheat to the acre, he regarded that as a record crop; but today it is fairly common-place for farmers on the Darling Downs to get 20 bags of wheat to the acre—in some instances 25—and up to 35 bags of barley to the acre. Research and the introduction of new varieties have played a very big part in increased yields, and work done at Hermitage Research Station at Warwick in breeding new varieties, together with the work done by the Wheat Research Institute and by private individuals, has contributed greatly to the development of the wheat industry and its present buoyant economy.

In recent years wheat has been grown in some of the marginal areas. As hon. members know, the State has been ravaged by a very severe drought—the worst drought in my memory—and stock losses have made it necessary for graziers to turn to farming activities. Replacement stock are not available to them, and it takes some years to build up cattle numbers. Because of the severe financial loss many graziers have sustained, it is beyond the capacity of many of them to purchase the stock that are available. Whether a man wishes to become a farmer and grow grain or whether he wishes to remain a wool-grower, a beef-producer, or a fat-lamb grower, it is very good for him to have experience as a farmer. If he decides to remain in the grazing industry, he will become much more efficient as his knowledge of farming increases, and if he is on country where the rainfall makes it possible for him to grow wheat or barley, no doubt he will produce better beef, better wool, or better fat lambs.

By holding field days in the marginal areas to which I have referred, officers of the Department of Primary Industries have given much good advice to graziers who are endeavouring to become farmers. When the hon. member for Barcoo was speaking, I think I mentioned by interjection that men holding a degree in agricultural science, or something of that sort, who have chosen to settle on the land—and I have some of them in my electorate—have been very helpful to young departmental officers who have come into the area. I am not being derogatory of the knowledge of departmental officers, but I remind the Committee of the old saying that there is no substitute for experience. It is good to see the co-operation that exists between the officers of the Department and these older men who have qualifications and who have gained practical experience on the land in a particular area. I believe that it is playing a big part in the development of the industry.

It is pleasing to me—and I am sure it is equally pleasing to other members of the Government, and possibly to many members of the Opposition—to see how the advice of extension officers has been accepted by farmers in recent years. I think it is true to say that some years ago farmers were a

little bit loath to accept advice from departmental officers; but realising that farming is becoming much more scientific and that it is essential to take notice of scientific advice if they want to advance, they now accept, I believe, all advice that can be given to them by these departmental officers. After all, they are providing money by way of certain levies and so on to pay for this advice.

Quite a lot has been said about the need for the use of fertilisers and various other methods of retaining and building up our soil. I have said in this Chamber on other occasions that it is responsibility of the farmer, in his lifetime, to ensure that the condition of his land when it is handed to his children is at least as good as when he took it over, if not better. I believe this is possible.

The hon. member for South Brisbane said by way of criticism that we are not efficient and it was interesting to hear the Minister for Education point out by interjection that only in recent years have we developed tropical legumes.

**Mr. Pizzey:** And subtropical legumes.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** That is so, and I believe these legumes will play a very important part in the scheme the Government has introduced to assist the dairy industry. Being one member of the Government who sat in discussions with departmental officers and leaders in the dairying industry, in more or less formulating this scheme, I again commend the departmental officers and the Minister for their assistance. I also commend members of the State council of the dairy industry organisation for their very practical and co-operative approach.

I believe that, with the development and application of fertilisers, the use of legumes, and better water conservation and soil conservation methods, the dairy industry in the localities where seasonal conditions are suitable, the coastal belts, will achieve production per cow equal to Victoria. Country Party members representing electorates situated in those areas will no doubt have something to say about this matter. The area I represent is not blessed with such good rainfall but its soil is possibly richer, and I believe that dairymen in my locality can benefit greatly from this scheme.

Lucerne is one of the legumes that has been proved in my area and farmers are availing themselves of the scheme to establish such pastures. The advice readily available from departmental officers is going to be of great assistance to them.

I am on record in other places, and I go on record here, as saying that I have complete confidence in the dairy industry. I have had a lifetime of experience in it.

**Mr. Bennett:** Can you explain why it has drifted downhill in the last decade?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** The fact that I milk 40 fewer cows now than I used to milk and produce just as much as I produced

previously means that not necessarily I but the people who work for me are becoming more efficient in the industry. Dairymen generally can achieve the same result by taking notice of departmental officers and adopting better farming methods. The manufacturers of various types of farm machines are assisting us in this direction because it is important in an area where rainfall is erratic to be able to make the best use of what rain falls with what are known as dry-farming methods.

**Mr. Bennett:** Your production has improved because you have a share-farmer who knows his job.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I am very pleased to hear the hon. member for South Brisbane pay a compliment to my share-farmer because I am very happy to do that myself. The people who are there now have worked for me for nine years. They have never shown any indication of wanting to leave me, which does not go to prove that the dairy farmer does not treat his employees well. They have played a big part in increasing my production. They are a very young family, and I have trained them to my ways. I think they appreciate that, too.

In recent weeks I have had preliminary discussions with some departmental officers about soil conservation. I think we will see some changes here. I hope to embark on some soil conservation practices on sloping country. I am a believer in strip farming on broad acres. Up until recent years this has been difficult. The farmer likes to plough a paddock and work it with trailing machines, and it is difficult to farm it in strips. With the machinery now available it is possible to farm broad acres in strips and leave strips of grass which I believe will be as effective in preventing soil erosion as levee banks. I believe that this is the thinking of some of the departmental officers.

**Mr. Wallis-Smith:** Did you think of it first?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** No. I do not claim that at all. This was suggested to me by departmental officers, and I am one who is always happy to take notice of them.

Soil erosion prevention is very important. I remember the late Hon. O. O. Madsen stating during a debate on the Estimates of his department that in a major flood on the Darling Downs 5,000 acres of arable soil was lost to agriculture. He said at the time that we must measure up to our responsibilities and not just allow that sort of thing to happen. He measured up to that responsibility. I was able to persuade him at the time to make available the services of the soil conservation officer stationed at Jandowae. The topography of the country on the northern extremity of my electorate, which is on the western slopes of the Bunya Mountains, is in some respects similar to the country on the eastern Downs where these ravages of soil erosion took place.

The subsequent development of agriculture in that area indicates that the Jandowae officer did a magnificent job. I compliment him and the farmers in the area because they took steps to prevent soil erosion right from the beginning of farming new country. It is important that that be done because soil erosion should not be given a chance to start. The development that has taken place on the western slopes of the Bunya Mountains, from Jandowae through to Bell, is such that it is now a pleasure to drive through the area. The work that the farmers are doing by way of soil conservation shows that they are playing their part by ensuring that the condition of the properties they have occupied during their lifetime will when handed over to their sons be at least as good as when they took them over, if not better.

Young farmers today are very keen. I have mentioned field days for plant-breeding, soil conservation and water conservation. It is pleasing to attend these meetings and see the interest displayed by farmers' sons—the farmers of the future. The Rural Youth Organisation is a grand organisation and we must thank it for the part it has played, in conjunction with the departmental officers.

I see a great future for agriculture. We have seen expansion in the grain industry, brought about, no doubt by the graziers' desire to get back into production as quickly as possible and earn money, after the disastrous drought last year. It is indeed pleasing for hon. members representing areas perhaps a little further west than mine—where constituents were harder hit—to see that they have been successful. Weather conditions have been ideal and they are harvesting a record crop. This crop will play a big part in our economy. The country towns that service the developing areas have benefited greatly by the sale of machinery for farming and harvesting. That is excellent because during the drought business people had a rough time.

**Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (5.42 p.m.):** Like many other hon. members in the Chamber, I view with considerable alarm the amount of money usually appropriated to this very important department. Whilst there has been a considerable amount of talk—mainly from the Government benches—about the drought and the considerable disadvantages it has inflicted on the rural sector of our economy, no-one sees more evidence of a drought than in the Estimates usually presented by the Minister for Primary Industries. If there is a drought anywhere, it is certainly evidenced in the funds appropriated for this department. That is somewhat strange and hard to understand when one considers the fact that, after all, this Government has as its senior partner the Country Party—the party that should be interested in matters pertaining to the rural life of our State and the very many fine primary producers in it. I hope that one day this money shortage will be cleaned up once

and for all so that this department can take its proper place in the State and get on with the job it should do. It should be one of the leading ministries rather than one of those that are starved for funds.

Much of the work done by this department is very arduous and seemingly unspectacular when compared with enterprises such as the Gladstone-Moura railway line, which is really visible and to the public eye appears as a colossal undertaking. In this department many arduous hours of painstaking work are performed by many of the entomologists, scientists, agrilogists and other officers in their various fields. They deal with problems that of necessity are very important to this State's future.

I pay a tribute to the many fine and devoted officers in this department. They are extremely courteous, and at all times give of their best in the interests of our primary industries. There is not a department within the framework of the Government in which there are more devoted officers.

Anybody who walks through the various corridors of the department's building in William Street is reminded of a big maze. How a number of the officers do their work is beyond comprehension. Many of the offices are much smaller than those in which we are asked to work in Parliament House, and eight or nine people have to use them. In addition there are shelves, cupboards, books, and all types of equipment in those rooms. The officers are working under difficult conditions. Walking along some corridors I feel that I will need to have a shoe-horn with me to get through the doors so that I can interview an officer. The Minister should use plain, bold words to Cabinet and try to gain some form of relief for these officers so that they will be able to carry out their work in comfort and contentment.

During the debate on these Estimates two years ago I discussed Great Britain's entry into the European Economic Community. She failed in her attempt at that time. Recent Press reports emanating from overseas indicate a renewal of her desire to enter that customs union. The Department of Primary Industries should be alert in this matter and be geared to make an appraisal of the situation if such a state of affairs comes about.

That community became effective on 1 January, 1958, and comprised France, Italy, West Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Its primary objective was the elimination of obstacles to the free circulation of goods within that community by the dismantling of customs and quota barriers and the introduction of a common external tariff. It was something revolutionary in Western European countries, particularly in this day of ruthless, intense trade and competition. The establishment of this customs union progressed. While the gross national

product of the United Kingdom increased by 16 per cent. between 1958 and 1963, of the United States, by 23 per cent., and of Australia by 26 per cent., it rose by 30 per cent in this community. That is something that exercises the minds of right-thinking people.

It will be a time for serious thought if Great Britain takes the final plunge. This is something of which I hope the Government is very cognisant, because there are many within the community today who have suffered adversely as a result of the Government's complete unawareness of the varying trends in primary production.

In all debates we hear from the Government benches many references to the astuteness and remarkable administrative powers of the Government. We are told that the Government is responsible for the great strides that have been made in Queensland. The previous speaker on this side of the Chamber directed attention to the position in the dairy industry. From the other side of the Chamber, the hon. member for Condamine made some observations on the same industry. I quite realise, of course, that he is a practical farmer. He said that, despite the decrease in the number of dairy farmers, production had not been seriously affected. I propose to give some figures showing that in my electorate the reverse is the case.

I represent an area that contains the headquarters of the largest co-operative dairy association in this State. It is very interesting to examine the figures appearing in the annual report and balance sheet of the Port Curtis Co-operative Dairy Association Ltd. I shall quote the figures for 1955, 1956, and 1957, the years often referred to in this Chamber, the latter being the year of the temporary political demise of the Australian Labour Party administration. I shall also quote the figures for 1964 and 1965, as they can be considered quite recent.

The following figures show the number of suppliers to the Port Curtis Co-operative Dairy Association Ltd., the largest in the State, and the production of butter in each of the years mentioned—

	No. of Suppliers	Tons of Butter
1955	2,695	6,707
1956	2,709	7,058
1957	2,603	6,192
1963	1,934	5,622
1964	1,768	4,552
1965	1,549	4,677

They are alarming figures indeed and fully support the argument advanced by the hon. member for South Brisbane.

**Mr. Sullivan:** You show an increase per supplier there.

**Mr. HANSON:** A decrease in number of suppliers and in butter produced.

**Mr. Sullivan:** Not the way I work it out.

**Mr. HANSON:** In 1955, 1956 and 1957, the suppliers numbered respectively 2,695, 2,709, and 2,603. In 1963, 1964, and 1965, the number decreased from 1,934 to 1,768, and then to 1,549. In 1965 there were approximately 1,000 fewer suppliers than when this Government assumed office. If we on this side of the Chamber are responsible for everything except the Gatton murder, surely the Government should be responsible for the decrease in the number of suppliers and the alarming decrease in the quantity of butter manufactured.

A short while ago we heard words to the effect that in spite of the fact that there are fewer suppliers, an equal quantity of dairy produce was being manufactured. That is not so. The figures are in the balance sheet; they are audited. I will allow the hon. member to look at them later if he wishes to do so.

Exports are the very basis of the nation's economy, and the cattle industry is one of the industries in which exports could be increased. In my electorate, experiments have been carried out for many years at Rodds Bay Station, where Townsville lucerne, a tropical legume, has been introduced and planted with the help of superphosphate and molybdenum in typical speargrass country. The carrying capacity of Rodds Bay was very poor in comparison with that of stations in lush areas of the State, and 16 or 17 years ago the C.S.I.R.O. began an experiment that has since proved very heartening. It is a sort of pilot experiment, and when field days are held scientists and hundreds of other people interested in the cattle industry go to the station to see the work that has been carried out.

According to the C.S.I.R.O., there are about 75,000,000 acres of spear-grass country that could be suitable for tropical pastures, and it has now been shown what can be done in the wallum country, which surrounds the area of the electorate of the hon. member for Maryborough and extends up into my electorate and down to the New South Wales border. I thank the officers of the Department of Primary Industries who, on occasions, have invited me to the Coolum Research Station.

**Mr. Row:** I sent you a personal invitation.

**Mr. HANSON:** Yes, and I was very grateful for it.

In the tea-tree country in the Gulf, tropical pastures have been introduced on a small scale and have shown that the carrying capacity of the country can be increased.

Townsville lucerne seems to be the most popular legume at the moment, the one that seems to have the best future. However, in addition to legumes, a certain amount of fertiliser and judicious clearing of the timber are needed. The hon. member for Condamine referred to strip planting. Cutting timber and strip planting are very expensive.

However, the fact that considerable competition from native grasses could destroy the effect of the Townsville lucerne makes strip planting worth considering.

When I speak to primary producers in parts of my electorate and in other parts of the State, I am alarmed by the discrimination against them in rail freight on fertilisers. They badly need fertilisers on their properties, and I believe that there should be some standardisation of charges for getting them to their properties. If a person living in an isolated area wishes to use fertiliser, he should be able to get it to his property at a price comparable with that charged in areas closer to the point of supply and with a greater population.

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

**Mr. HANSON:** Before the dinner recess I was making certain submissions relative to the cattle industry. Following up those submissions, I am somewhat alarmed at the shortage of funds at the disposal of this department to enable it to do something concrete and sound about one of the greatest menaces ravishing this industry, namely, the cattle tick. This scourge is responsible for serious setbacks to growth in cattle, it causes excessive mustering for dipping purposes, market values are affected when cattle become tick-infested, expense could be incurred in taking them to tick-free areas, considerable loss results from tick fever, and there could be damage to hides. In the aggregate, the losses suffered by cattle-owners in this State as a result of the ravishes of cattle tick would be colossal. It has been estimated at perhaps many millions of pounds per annum.

Certain types of tick at the present time have developed an immunity or resistance to standard organic-phosphate mixtures, and it is held by many in the cattle industry that if we do not watch the position closely the cattle industry could become one of relative unimportance. This would be very much to be regretted.

I am sure all hon. members are conscious of the fact that there is in the Brisbane Valley a type of cattle tick that has definitely developed this resistance. The department is maintaining a deep silence on the matter. I know certain things are being done by officers in working out just what type of planning or organisation should be adopted to combat this menace, but, as I said initially in my speech, not enough is being done because this department is suffering from a severe drought in the allocation of funds. If the officers of the department had been given the authority and had been organised and given a flood of funds, I am sure they would have been able to come up with a solution. However, when one looks at these matters it is noticeable that only in exceptional circumstances are stock-owners in this State compelled to dip their cattle, irrespective of how badly tick-infested they may be, and, in addition, it is not compulsory for the owners of dips

to have them regularly tested. I am aware that the testing of dips is done as a free service, but very few dip-owners avail themselves of the service. I was shocked to hear this assertion from various cattle men to whom I was speaking.

I do not pose as an authority on cattle husbandry, but I have lived in an area that was for many years dependent upon the meat industry.

**Mr. Smith:** Your predecessor was a big cattleman.

**Mr. HANSON:** As one who was naturally interested in what occurred in my locality—a trait that possibly the hon. member for Windsor does not possess—I naturally formed many friendships with cattlemen, and in talking to them about their problems I have found that they are very appreciative of the fact that in my present position I am able to see that many of their little worries are aired in this Chamber. I have taken a great interest in their affairs over the years.

Funds will be necessary for this work, but apparently they are not available through the usual channels of Government finance. Levies subsidised by the Commonwealth Government, similar in operation to the voluntary levy to promote wool sales, would be something of a constructive nature to assist with this problem.

The area I represent produces large numbers of cattle, I have spoken to many very intelligent cattlemen who have informed me that unless revolutionary steps are taken, the industry could well be on the brink of disaster. Although hon. members opposite might pooh-pooh my submissions, I make them in all sincerity. There are a considerable number of responsible people in the grazing industry who would share those views. I have seen cattle in my area dipped fortnightly in mixtures 20 per cent. stronger than the recommended mixture, yet after dipping they have still shown considerable tick infestation. It is no use saying that the dip-resistant tick is confined to the area of the Brisbane Valley. I maintain there are dip-resistant ticks far beyond the boundaries of that area.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. MURRAY** (Clayfield) (7.22 p.m.): I wish to refer to those sections of the Estimates dealing with the poultry industry. The Committee will recall that last year Commonwealth legislation was introduced to put into operation the C.E.M.A. plan for the control of production and marketing within the poultry industry. It was a very controversial measure agreed to by our Minister at the Council of Agriculture without any reference to this Parliament or, for that matter, members of the Government. Queensland was committed blindly to this plan, except for those within the industry who desired it. Of course, we must assume that the Minister and his departmental advisers were reasonably happy with it,

because successive Governments in Queensland have worshipped at the altar of producer controls and boards for the marketing of primary products. Queensland has built up considerable status in this regard. Other States have played around with boards—establishing some and abandoning others—in a rather amateurish way. We, on the other hand, are seasoned professionals with all the streamlined techniques, efficient built-in machinery and the know-how—

**Mr. O'Donnell:** Who are "we"?

**Mr. MURRAY:** We, in this State. We have the know-how and the other things I have mentioned for the establishment of "instant" boards. You name it, we've got it; or, once having named it, if we haven't already got it you can be sure we will soon have it.

I am not quite so silly as to suggest that we should not have some controls—that we should abolish very necessary and excellent controls. Nor would I suggest for a moment that we should not have some boards. I firmly believe, as my party believes, in the general principle of orderly marketing. The hon. member for Aspley posed a question on that point this afternoon. I believe in orderly marketing, but I detest monopolies and I will not agree to them unless I can be satisfied that there is no alternative in the public interest. I would even encourage a Government to subsidise an alternative enterprise—a non-Government enterprise—to break up a monopoly in the public interest.

Boards can become a kind of cancer in our primary producers' bodies. There is definite evidence of this. They commence as a healthy, useful and very orderly process, but sometimes they develop all the frightening characteristics of what we may refer to as cancer cells among normal body cells. In some respects boards become quite mad after a while; they grow at a fantastic pace, gobbling up what they are supposed to help, and eventually succeed in destroying the body that houses them. I think it is a great pity that primary producers cannot be inoculated against "board-itis" or whatever we might like to term it.

I refer specifically to the almost inevitable monopolistic growth that takes place in some boards and the controls and restrictions that concern them. I believe they should never be agreed to in the name of primary-producer protection unless they can satisfy a very rigid test for their justification in the interests of the State and the people.

No-one could possibly object—I am sure none of us here would—to groups of primary producers banding together, in the common interest, in co-operative activity. That is healthy and natural and has been accepted throughout the progress of our commercial history. It is healthy, it is accepted, and it is good. But the point and moment that protection is sought by legislative action, or by regulation under existing Acts, for the special needs or desires of any section or group

within the community, the alarm bells should ring. And they should ring loudly. The test should then be applied and we should never agree without the closest scrutiny and discussion of the intended measure.

Hon. members will recall that the C.E.M.A. plan introduced last year to the poultry industry by the Commonwealth Government was not agreed to by this Parliament. It was not brought before Parliament and, indeed, it was never brought before the members of the Government because it is a Commonwealth tax. A practice has developed—and it is too common these days—whereby one of our Ministers, in conference with his fellow-Ministers from other States and the Commonwealth Minister and in this case the Council of Agriculture, commits this State to very far-reaching legislation sponsored by the Commonwealth Government.

I realise that we could argue this matter quite separately. It is really a different matter and I know that you, Mr. Rae, would not want me to pursue it. However, I know you will not mind my saying that this practice needs investigation. I feel that all hon. members may be a little uneasy about the implications in it and I believe we should look at it very closely. I am quite sure we would have agreed to the C.E.M.A. plan. I understand it has worked very much as it was intended to, although some of us may have questioned the intention, if we had had the opportunity, and some may have expressed some doubts about it, but that is quite normal.

The plan itself is not so unusual for Queensland for the reasons I mentioned earlier. We have been very good throughout our history, over many years, at doing this sort of thing, although there was a little fuss about it in North Queensland. In some of the other States, for various reasons the opposition was quite violent. One of the main reasons for the violent opposition was that it prevented people from continuing in their accepted way of life.

Senator Cormack, a Liberal senator from Victoria, who possesses a very profound knowledge of rural affairs and a very high sense of rural principles, addressed himself to this matter recently in the Senate with some philosophical nostalgia. He told a little story relating to it and I will quote him—

"A few years ago, when walking around a picture-selling gallery, I saw a rather pleasing 18th century oil painting, obviously of Central European origin, which I bought. When I took it home, my wife asked: 'Why did you bring that picture here?' I said: 'If you look at the picture, you will see it is a picture of a farm such as we would have known when we were young, showing the farmer's fowls scratching around the garden—fowls which provide eggs and chickens for the farmer and his family. I will attach a piece of paper to the back of this picture so that when our great-grandchildren ask their parents

about it, their parents can take it down, turn it over and say: 'This was a common scene in the days of your grandparents when people could have a few fowls and eggs.' The children will ask: 'In those days were people allowed to own fowls?' Then their parents will be able to tell them the story of the great change that took place. They will be able to explain that, in a primitive society, people could have a few fowls to get a few eggs, but that about 50 years ago the Government of the day took action to see that people could have only 12, 20 or 24 fowls. A few years later, they were allowed to have only six fowls, and now no-one is allowed to have any fowls at all.'

"Perhaps I will live long enough to see the Council of Egg Marketing Authorities get itself statutory powers and then proceed along the path of other statutory authorities. There will be a big quarrel in the Senate about whether a new 20-storey building for the Council is to be located in Hobart or in Perth, in the interests of decentralisation. There will be a quarrel between Melbourne and Sydney about whether the building should be in one of those cities. The Public Accounts Committee will examine whether \$20 million should be spent on a computer. There will be great correspondence with the Research and Development Corporation of California to see whether the computing systems are right, and the Council will be projecting egg production in Australia, both in shell and pulp, for the next 25 years and fixing prices accordingly. The levies imposed on the industry will go up to a marked degree, but there will be so many people involved that it will not be possible to make any changes.

"I have a rather fanciful picture in my mind. Associated with this industry we will have a whole horde of people who will be characteristic, I suggest, of a great deal of our scientific effort today. They will look around to find some sources of revenue to support their scientific endeavour. There is quite a system about this. First of all, they will find out where the money is. Then they will go to the Department of Trade and Industry and suggest that a great deal of money could be saved in packaging if we could get square eggs. Then some files will be opened in the Department of Trade and Industry and the problem will go to the Department of Primary Industry. The system will start to operate. There will be another increase in the levy on the poultry industry and the money will be used to start a scientific inquiry into the capacity of the industry to produce square eggs in order to save 33 per cent. of cargo space."

**Mr. Thackeray:** You are egg-bound.

**Mr. MURRAY:** That is what happens. We will become egg-bound, like the hon. member for Rockhampton North.

Senator Cormack agreed a little later that he had spoken in a somewhat satirical vein. I now come to the occasion and the reason for his remarks. This Committee would perhaps not be aware that during last month the Commonwealth Parliament passed three Bills relating to the poultry industry dealing with assistance, levy, and collection. One of the Bills dealing with collection introduced what I can describe as only a very thoroughly objectionable factor. I asked the Minister a few days ago whether this Commonwealth legislation would be embraced by us and he said it would, which is the normal course. So without reference to Government members, and without reference to this Parliament, by nothing other than his own acquiescence at, I presume, the Council of Agriculture, in the same manner as the C.E.M.A. plan was introduced, the Minister has committed this State to the Commonwealth Minister's having the power to grant inspectors employed by the Egg Board, by assigning an instrument in writing, the extraordinary power to enter premises, not only where poultry are housed—we might accept this—whether the owner is present or not, but also if the inspector so desires, to enter the owner's house and search for records and documents. If the owner's doors are locked or if his desk in his house is locked the inspector can, if he so desires, on his own judgment, whether the owner is present or not, break open the door of the house or the drawer of the desk and in fact search anywhere he likes even if he only suspects the owner of evasion of the poultry levy.

**Mr. Porter:** Doesn't he need a warrant?

**Mr. MURRAY:** No. In fact, the inspector can do this even if no-one is present, and the authority on which he does it is nothing more than the written instrument of the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry. It does not specify Bill Smith's house; it can be any house owned by any person about whom he may receive information from any source and whom he may suspect of evading the tax.

**Mr. Porter:** Isn't that more than a policeman can do?

**Mr. MURRAY:** I shall come to that. I think this is a rather tragic commentary on the role of executive government in the middle twentieth century. I think it is a frightening illustration of corrupting power in the hands of the Minister's servants.

A few hon. members may say, "So what? This sort of power has been given in legislation that has been passed in this Parliament and in other Parliaments." Perhaps a conscience or two will be satisfied with that attitude. Senator Cormack observed that in the last ten years this was the 11th Bill to go before the Senate asking for, and having granted, similar powers. I suppose someone will soon take out the number that have been passed by this Parliament, or accepted without question by the Commonwealth Parliament. I think it will be appreciated that each of those Acts

on its own, for its own special need, and under its own special circumstances, may appear to have some justification. But when we start to aggregate them—to tally up what we have done—I would say that any man who clings to the very fundamental principles of British justice might well be excused for asking, or may well properly ask, what man's home is now his castle.

The alarming situation now arises in which a Commonwealth Minister can delegate his power to an individual inspector. As I understand it, it is purely an instrument in writing for the inspector to use, and it is the State board that then assumes the authority in connection with the direction of the inspector in relation to his duties. The State board now assumes an authority that we would not give a magistrate or a justice of the peace. I say in answer to the earlier interjection of the hon. member for Toowong that we are giving to an inspector power, which could not be secured from a magistrate or a justice of the peace, to use a blank warrant to enter and search any man's home if and when the inspector, in his own judgment of what is reasonable, considers it should be entered and searched. Although the inspector should show his authority to someone, he nevertheless can proceed to enter if he suspects that people are deliberately absenting themselves.

Mr. Pollard, whom hon. members opposite know well as the spokesman for the Labour Party in the Federal Parliament on primary industry, addressed himself to this matter in the House of Representatives.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Is he Deputy Leader now?

**Mr. MURRAY:** I am not sure of that. Mr. Pollard supported the Bill with some reservation. He said—

"This power could well be abused in some circumstances. We must ask ourselves whether it is not a fact that all heads of power granted to all governments can, without the exercise of common sense, be substantially abused. However, I think it can be said in the circumstances we are considering that the Ministers in the respective States will ensure that before this power is exercised the inspector will be warned to be discreet and will be required to report his suspicions to the Minister or his deputy and obtain approval to make an inspection."

I think that is a pretty fair comment by Mr. Pollard.

What I think we should now know is this: does the State Minister intend to do this? Does he intend to insist on a knowledge of the case involving the inspector's suspicions and then decide whether or not to grant approval to enter and search?

The Minister should explain, clearly, if he can, either during the debate on these Estimates or at some later stage, just what the position is, because no amount of persuasion can convince me that a further erosion of individual rights should be tolerated. The Minister should give the

Committee an assurance that the particular power under the Poultry Industry Levy Collection Bill that has been accepted from the Commonwealth, drafted in such loose terms, cannot be used at any time in Queensland unless it is with his knowledge and approval in a specific case.

What the Minister should do, I believe—I think all freedom-loving Queenslanders and all hon. members in this Chamber will agree with me—is urge the Commonwealth to repeal this distasteful clause. Further—I think this point would be acceptable to hon. members on both sides of the Chamber—the Minister, who is a State Minister, should not commit the Government of the State to measures such as this without the knowledge and approval of the Government, or of Government members. More properly, I believe—I think this is the proper course in cases such as this—the House should be afforded an opportunity, on a statement by the Minister of an intended agreement on a measure of this sort, of discussing the statement, if necessary in considerable detail, and demonstrating its approval or otherwise. The Council of Agriculture should be nothing more than a liaison and consultative meeting of State Ministers and their advisers. The Ministers should return from the meeting with proposals for acceptance by their Governments, having come to tentative agreement only on the principle of the matter. I think that is very desirable; but to go any further than that is to seriously usurp the rights and functions of their States.

So much for that particular piece of legislation. As it happened, it related to the poultry industry. It could have related to any other measure under which inspectors are appointed. I am quite sure that inspectors are carefully selected and are men of integrity and ability, and I do not question their need to assist in many ways. But when a Government delegates this form of authority in order to enforce its will on the primary producer, it is time to cry "Stop". If a soundly and expertly based investigation was made of the numerous Acts on the Statute Book, placed there because of strong pressures and sectional interests, no doubt in the very sincere belief that they would result in the particular benefit sought, I am certain—absolutely certain—that it would show that there is an urgent need to decontrol in many fields. It would show, I think, that the lid has been screwed down too tightly and that the primary producers' room to manoeuvre has been restricted.

I should like to quote briefly from an interesting statement in a book written by an Indian judge, M. C. Chalgá. He says—

"Go beyond the reasonable controls of personal liberty, and the reaction of excess, depredation and disrepute of law are truly appalling."

He continues—

"A little too much law, and you turn the moderate drinker into a dipsomaniac, the agnostic into a blasphemer, the enlightened employer into a Gradgrind and a flirt into a prostitute."

I think there is need to decontrol. The primary producer is not only beset with rising costs of production, a net from which there is little escape; he is often caught also in a maze of interlocking controls and restrictions on his freedom to dispose of the product of his enterprise, and sometimes he is frustrated by prices for his product that have been reduced to uneconomic levels by monopolistic monsters created in the name of orderly marketing. But when, on top of all that, the Government is prepared to break the traditional sanctity of the home and single out the primary producer as being an especially evil wrongdoer in order to justify its action, it has gone far beyond the reasonable control of personal liberty.

I think we have started to drive the final nail and I will serve notice here and now that I will not tolerate being put before this Parliament any more legislation that contains this power of entry and search in this manner and for these purposes.

Mr. Porter: You will perhaps agree that we should go further, and when legislation already containing the provision comes before the Chamber those provisions should be deleted.

Mr. MURRAY: Yes. Any amending legislation that comes before us should include provision for the removal of the provision from the principal Act. The primary producer is suffering enough. He knows probably better than any other section of the community, how to suffer, and I suggest that we get off his back.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (7.46 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak on the Estimates for the Department of Primary Industries, mainly because of the wonderful co-operation that country people—and they constitute the majority of those I represent—receive from this department.

Although much time has been spent by other members in criticising the views of previous speakers, I am going to spend a few minutes in expressing my appreciation—and that of the people I represent—of the Minister and many of his officers. I should say that this Minister is ideal for this department. I know the esteem in which he is held by his officers, and this in itself makes for good teamwork. It also means that we will get the maximum results from these people, something we can well do with. We need it more than ever; we need it because there is a growing awareness that for many years we were not completely au fait with what we were doing. We were not aware of the things we were

doing wrong, whether clearing the land, cultivating the soil, or trying to exist on one crop instead of many. Now we have the advantage of expert advice from these officers, and the manner in which they give it leaves little to be desired.

I will deal briefly now with some of the departmental officers who work in the electorate of Tablelands and whose headquarters are at Atherton, and I shall show to what extent these officers have helped our primary industries.

I cite as an example the potato industry which has been introduced in that area recently and which, at present, has a very large output. It is now producing its own bulletin. The one I have here is for the month of October, published this month. Hon. members will get some idea of the size of this industry in this area when I point out that from 1 July to the month of October it distributed 2,771 tons of potatoes. That is some indication of the way in which this industry has expanded.

When I went along to their annual meeting I found that a departmental officer, Mr. Doherty, was there. He was waiting until the meeting finished in order to show slides depicting various diseases in potato culture, but it was so late by the time the meeting finished that Mr. Doherty was not able to show his films. He just packed up his films without complaint. It was arranged that he would show his films at another meeting, and on 11 November the film on the biological control of insects was shown. That is one instance of the wonderful work of these people.

I was pleased to hear the hon. member for Port Curtis mention the conditions under which these departmental officers work. Accommodation suitable for the job they have to do is not provided. For instance, the entomologist needs a room at a certain temperature for his research work and tests, but as it is not provided he has to improvise with glass coverings and that sort of thing. Although a palatial structure is being built in Atherton for the Forestry Department, the veterinary branch is housed in little better than an enlarged doll's house. The entomologist works on a glassed-in veranda, 8 ft. wide. It is wrong that people who render such excellent service should have to work under these conditions. Imagine in the tropics having to go out into the field to search for specimens, and then having to identify them and, where necessary, make cultures under these conditions. I will name some of the officers who are doing such good work, but the list will not be exhaustive. While I know many of them by name, I know others only by their job. I mention at Atherton Mr. Doherty, Mr. Gartner, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Elder, Mr. Veurman, Mr. Darvall, Mr. Edgley, Mr. Grieve, and Mr. Nimmo. Each and every one of those officers takes his job to heart. None of them wants to leave Atherton. They have declared war on Nature. Many people forget the

type of work performed by these officers. That is why the Department of Primary Industries is so different from other departments. These officers accept the challenge. Every Australian accepts a challenge, once thrown out; anyone who does not is not worthy of the name. These officers are constantly accepting challenges, and on overcoming them assist the man on the land.

With marketing, outside interests enter the picture. The hon. member for Clayfield has referred to cases involving this outside element. But the departmental officers I am talking about are waging war against Nature. They have accepted a challenge and are doing a wonderful job.

At Kairi we have Mr. George, who is senior experimentalist, Mr. Tow, agronomist, and Mr. Martin, plant breeder.

By referring to an article in "The Cairns Post" of 5 November this year under the heading, "Maize Liaison Work Extended by Board," let me indicate to the Committee how Mr. Doherty has impressed the Atherton Tableland Maize Marketing Board. This liaison with the Department of Primary Industries has been in operation for only one year, and the board is anxious to continue it. A further article deals with a new rust-resistant hybrid maize bred at the Kairi experimental station, which was produced mainly by Mr. Ian Martin. I heard the Minister say that two types of hybrid rust-resistant maize are to be released to farmers for planting this season. This is a very interesting page in the paper. It contains such articles as "Tobacco Notes", "Agriculture in the Tropics", "Poultry Notes", notes on bananas, dairy cows, and potatoes, and last but not least, "Labour Opinion (By the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. Houston)". It is in the library for those who wish to see it, and I commend it to hon. members.

There is also an experimental station at Parada, where experiments are being undertaken with fodder crops and tobacco. We have found in the irrigation areas that all land is not absolutely suitable for tobacco. The soil survey team deserves credit in this regard. It decides whether soil is suitable for tobacco. Pasture experiments for beef-cattle fattening are also undertaken. At Parada we have Messrs. Ward, McNee, Ferguson, Staples and Evans, and these officers travel great distances around the district; a farmer has only to make a phone call and they come to look at his crops. This has made conditions much easier for the farmers. Previously it was a matter of hit-and-miss. They had to make a long trip to the station to get information but now they have only to make a phone call. When the officer comes to the farm, the farmer discusses the problem, or takes the officer out to the paddock to look at the trouble. I cannot speak too highly of these officers and I am extremely pleased to be able to pay them a tribute for their work.

I want to refer briefly to the peanut industry and cut across a few of the remarks made by the hon. member for Clayfield. Although he specifically mentioned the Federal law concerning the poultry industry, he also said that he was opposed to boards when they become a little like dictatorships. The boards do a marvellous job. They provide organised marketing which is necessary at the end of the story for those producing the goods. What is the purpose of producing goods if there is not organised marketing? I was very pleased to see on the front page of the report the following passage, which many hon. members may have missed—

"Stabilisation Schemes

"In last year's report reference was made to price stabilisation measures proposed for tobacco leaf and wool."

I will not discuss wool as we have men here who are trying to cripple its orderly marketing. I am sure that is very hurtful to the Government.

I remember the start of the peanut industry in Kingaroy. I was working there about 1926 and the only work in Kingaroy at that time was in the railway goods shed. Anyone who can compare Kingaroy now with the Kingaroy of the old days will appreciate the progress that has taken place. The peanut board is continuing to provide stability for the farmers but a certain element is spoiling the functioning of the board; it will really shake the board if it continues. I have previously raised this matter in this chamber, but I think it bears repetition. The Board is taking further steps to benefit growers. It has spent \$300,000 on new machinery and cold storage facilities. This is a new development in the peanut industry, because peanuts are a difficult crop to store. It has discovered by investigation and by contact with departmental officers that in that way it can overcome the problems in storage of peanuts.

The undermining element is the private operators who do not go through the board. Last year they represented about 30 per cent. of the Queensland crop. They will cause the board to fall asunder. I make a public plea to them to go back to the board and supply it. In every instance the board's price is used as a guide by private operators. All they do is to give a larger initial payment to the growers. I know that the Government is trying to increase the amount of initial payment. If all the growers go back to the board, it will be able to continue to safeguard the industry and arrange orderly marketing and, I am certain, advance more to the growers. Growers in my area are not sending their crops to private operators, but they are worried that the board may not be able to cope with the increase in the activities of private operators in the Kingaroy and surrounding districts.

**Mr. Dewar:** An electorate full of peanuts.

**Mr. Tucker:** The biggest peanut is on the Government side.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH:** The Minister who is interjecting is the smallest peanut I have seen.

I am prepared to go around with the Minister for Works and Housing, who has Kingaroy in his electorate, and see all the farmers and try to get them to go back to the board. That is how important it is. The Government should do something to overcome this threat.

The hon. member for Cook said a good deal this afternoon about the northern area, and had a few words to say about the tobacco industry. He said that the State Government should get the Commonwealth Government to increase the percentage of Australian leaf used in manufactured tobacco. I suggest to the Government an annual increase of 2 or 3 per cent. so that there will be stability for years to come. The Minister for Local Government and Conservation told me that no more farms will be opened up in the next three years, a period of marking time while stabilisation finds its feet. If the percentage is not increased, who will take our tobacco? It certainly will not be exported. The former Governor, Sir Henry Abel Smith, kindly sent me two photostat copies of the records of his farms in South Africa. Comparing them with ours it can be seen readily that there is no chance of our tobacco ever being exported. These are important documents which should be studied by the department. As our tobacco cannot be exported, what will happen to this area in which irrigation is provided if the percentage is not increased? Will it lie idle? Will we say, "Here is a lovely irrigation scheme which was meant to supply many more farms, but unfortunately we cannot sell our tobacco." The Minister for Primary Industries suggested that they should grow something else. I told them that, and they said, "Tell us where to sell it".

This is where the matter comes back to what I said recently to the Minister for Industrial Development. (I am pleased to see that he is present.) These people will grow anything they are told to grow if a processing plant is provided. An Australian Labour Party Government provided the water and the channels. This Government has overcome many obstacles in the scientific field. The problem of buying and selling tobacco has been overcome by the stabilisation plan. Is the matter to be left there, or are further advances to be made? This is a very real and important issue. I went through all the crops mentioned on page 11 of the Annual Report of the Department of Primary Industries, and the only one that is not grown on the Atherton Tableland is sugar. Such development would increase the population and provide an assured market.

I now wish to devote a few minutes to dealing with the poultry industry, not from the point of view of the hon. member for Clayfield but from that of the farmer. I am pleased to see the Premier in the

Chamber, because he has received from poultry farmers' organisations many letters asking for assistance by reduced freights. The poultry industry is important in the North because it is one of the main consumers of maize and supplies the local market. This is the type of linking-up that is needed in rural industry. There is no point in sending primary produce to all parts of the country if it can be used locally, and much of the maize crop can be used by the poultry industry.

The important thing, however, is that it can be used only if the poultry industry continues. Whilst the C.E.M.A. plan was quite an obstacle to be overcome, I think poultry farmers in this area have done the right thing. I know that they have abided by the instructions issued to them, and, as far as I know, there have been only isolated cases of resentment at having flocks counted. All that these producers want is some measure of relief from the burden of freight charges that have to be paid on grain obtained from such areas as Dalby and Toowoomba. I ask the Premier to try to come to some arrangement by which they can obtain relief from excessive freight burdens and so reduce the cost of production.

The final matter I wish to deal with concerns the production of seeds. This matter has come to the fore lately. I asked a question last year concerning the establishment of a seed-testing branch in North Queensland. I heard the Minister comment on the way in which seed-testing activities have increased, and the Annual Report of the department has on the front page a photograph of part of the seed-testing station in Brisbane. I feel that one of the most important suppliers of seed is going to be North Queensland. I have been out watching seed being harvested, and people are now making their living from the harvesting and collecting of seed. This indicates the extent to which the industry has grown. I can remember asking the Minister if there was any chance of an export market for seed and being told that in Venezuela, as near as could be ascertained, there was one small testing plot  $3\frac{1}{2}$  yards square. That was in 1964, yet today we cannot get enough seed for our own requirements. The seed is being sown in Cape York Peninsula, and many farmers are using it to improve their pastures. I understand how difficult it is to use it successfully when the nature of the land changes so rapidly. In only 200 or 300 yards in that volcanic country, one finds soil that is very fertile and will grow anything and also soil that is sour and will grow only bracken and rubbish. That makes it very difficult for the farmers, but I am sure our Primary Industries officers will overcome this problem.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. McKECHNIE** (Carnarvon) (8.11 p.m.): I shall take the opportunity afforded by these Estimates to speak on two subjects: firstly, the desirability of having more

Queensland apples exported through the port of Brisbane, instead of through the port of Sydney; secondly, pasture research in the traprock country.

Before dealing with those subjects, however, I express my appreciation to the Minister and the officers of the Department of Primary Industries for the great assistance and consideration I have received from them during the past 12 months. The horticultural station at Applethorpe, on the Granite Belt, has worked very satisfactorily. It has a very good staff and has achieved some notable successes with rootstock of apples. It has had success, too, with tomato-breeding, and tomatoes bred at the station have been used in the Granite Belt and also extensively in the Bowen area.

I express appreciation that the tobacco experiment station at Whetstone, near Inglewood, remains there. At one stage the tobacco authorities intended to shift it to Ashford, in New South Wales, but it is now to remain at Whetstone at least until the waters of Coolmunda Dam enable it to be used for experiments related to tobacco and associated crops.

Similarly, I express my appreciation to the officers of the department for their work in the extension of irrigation on the Granite Belt, and for their investigations into the possibility of establishing a cannery there. The final recommendation was that it was not advisable to establish a cannery on the Granite Belt at this stage; but the ground-work has been done, and it will be the basis for the establishment of a cannery when production has increased sufficiently. It is increasing. In the current year it is likely to be about 1,500,000 bushels; a few years hence it will be 3,000,000 bushels.

The efforts of the Standards Branch, combined with more irrigation and greater cold-storage space, have produced quality apples this season that are the envy of the rest of Australia. Hon. members opposite know of the problems that have arisen in the United Kingdom relative to Australian apples. I am happy to say that Queensland apples have not caused those problems. The high quality of apples from the Granite Belt is well known in the trade throughout the world.

**Mr. Dewar:** Can people afford to buy apples in England now, under a Labour Government?

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** Possibly they could, because the price of apples in England has fallen below the cost of production. In the past few years Stanthorpe apples, through the efforts of the growers, together with more irrigation and cold stores and the work of officers of the department, have established a reputation for quality in Australia, and that is paying off in both the export and the local markets. The best apples that one can buy in Brisbane are not apples from interstate, as they used to be, but those from the Granite Belt. Even in southern New South

Wales Stanthorpe fruit has been recognised as being above average by Australian standards.

I fully appreciate the rather difficult task of the Standards Branch in the guaranteeing of this quality. These people have had to do certain things that naturally are not welcomed by growers who may be breaking some of the standards regulations. But the Standards Branch has informed me that 85 per cent. of growers in that area have an exemplary record.

**Mr. Davies:** 15 per cent. is a high proportion.

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** We have established quality, and that has been done as a result of the work of all concerned.

I should also like to express appreciation of the work the department has done in research into the destruction of lime bush. It has not been outstandingly successful but it has produced some solutions. Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately—the main solution to the lime-bush menace is still to plough it out. Although it is not desirable in all cases, it has had some very interesting side effects.

Twelve years ago in the Goondiwindi district there were only 1,000 acres cultivated under wheat. This current year there are 64,000 acres and it looks as if it will produce at least 1,000,000, or perhaps 1,500,000, bushels of wheat. Next year it looks as if the area under cultivation will extend to 100,000 acres.

For some time we had in the district an agronomist officer who was a combined specialist on grasses and crops. This position is now vacant and I trust that the Minister will be able to find somebody to fill it. I realise it is difficult to get these men, but in this district, which is expanding at such a rapid rate, the need for this man is urgent.

**Mr. Davies:** Victoria seems to be able to get plenty of extension officers. Where does your Government fail?

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** We have more extension officers than the hon. member's Government ever had. We are progressive; we want to do things and to progress. We are not satisfied to remain stationary; consequently, we have a greater need for more officers.

As I say, there is a need for such an officer in this rapidly expanding area. I appreciate the Minister's position; I know it is difficult to get these officers.

I have another problem in respect of which I seek the consideration of the department. It is associated with the local stock inspector, who has gone on holidays. In border areas the position is complicated by the fact that one has to obtain a health certificate to move stock from Queensland to New South Wales and vice versa. There is a girl in the office who can issue stock permits, but it is essential that a stock

inspector be available to issue a health certificate. The officer at Goondiwindi, Mr. Walters, gives very good service. He goes out of his way to give service outside of working hours—we appreciate that—but when he is on holidays a problem does arise.

Here again I understand that there is a shortage of officers and that no relief officer can be provided to take this man's place. The department has gone to considerable trouble in making sure that a part-time officer is there. It is sending relieving officers from St. George, Warwick, Stanthorpe and Toowoomba to fill the gap on certain days of the week and, although it is not 100 per cent. satisfactory, the department is doing its best. It is costing more, I should say, to do this as a stop-gap method than to have a full-time officer there while the local man is on holidays.

Safflower has been mentioned quite recently, and as I have been connected with the matter I should like to give hon. members a little information on it. This year 85 per cent. of Queensland's safflower crop is being grown under contract to Pacific Safflower, so there is an assured market for 85 per cent. at a guaranteed price of \$95 a ton Sydney, plus the certainty of a premium to follow, with a good chance that the premium, which was \$3 a ton last year, will be exceeded.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** We are quite happy.

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** Good. This is quite a good situation, not under a commodity board, but under a marketing system, that this year, at least, has worked well. We are not a bit worried about margarine because, in spite of what has been said, we know there is a market for safflower.

I turn now to stabilisation. The wheat industry stabilisation scheme has worked wonderfully well, and is appreciated throughout the wheat areas. I appreciate the Minister's interest in this matter and the fact that he brought down complementary legislation in this Chamber about two years ago. It was originally Commonwealth legislation but it was re-ratified here about two years ago.

I am pleased that the hon. member for Tablelands is happy with the stabilisation of the tobacco industry as far as prices are concerned. The growers in my area are happy. I think a total of 14,500,000 lb. was sold this year in Queensland above the average price. As the hon. member said, there will be a period of three years during which stabilisation will more or less only maintain the status quo. Do not forget that we had a carryover of approximately 14,000,000 lb. when the scheme commenced. We have to absorb those 14,000,000 excess pounds. That will be taken up in the next couple of years, which will give us a year's breathing space.

I agree that from then on there must be a progressive increase in the percentage. It could be 3 per cent., but I should like

to see a 5 per cent. increase. If that increase were maintained over eight years—three years plus eight years—in 11 years we would have 90 per cent. Australian tobacco content in cigarettes manufactured in Australia. It would be a little hard to go beyond that, because it is possibly desirable to include some imported tobacco for blending purposes. If we can reach a 90 per cent. Australian content in the next 11 years we will be very happy. It certainly would allow the industry to expand.

I am very happy that many growers in my area are in the position where they can expand up to their quota. They did not reach their quota during the current year. With Coolmunda water coming in, and with more likely to be available from other sources, they will be in a position to expand to some extent. I express my appreciation to the Minister, to Mr. McLachlan and Mr. Agostinelli, and to departmental officers for what they have done, and I refer particularly to the Honourable C. F. Adermann, who has had frequent discussions with leaders of the industry and members of the Queensland Parliament on this matter. I appreciate the quota system and look forward to its further implementation in the next 11 years.

I express appreciation for all the matters I have dealt with so far. They are matters that have been resolved very satisfactorily either wholly or partially, and I think the department for its continuing co-operation.

As I said earlier, I should like to see all the apples that are grown in Queensland exported through Brisbane. At the moment 90 per cent. of the apples grown in the Granite Belt are exported through Brisbane. There is no reason why the other 10 per cent. cannot be. Quite a large percentage of our present exports goes to Europe but I expect that with the increasing quantities of fruit available for export we will be exporting more and more fruit to the East and I want it to go through Brisbane rather than Sydney; first, because we want commerce to go through our own port and, secondly, by going through Brisbane it will be a better product when it reaches the markets in the East. At present, fruit is transported to Sydney and is then brought back by ship to Brisbane, where the Queensland consignment is picked up and it all then proceeds north. Consequently a lot of unnecessary distance is covered. For those reasons, I should like to see all Queensland apples exported through Brisbane.

Another problem occurs in the export business in that the trade is conducted under a quota system by people who have held quotas for a long time. It is therefore virtually impossible for a new exporter to break in. There is room for exporters, whether in Brisbane or on the Granite Belt, to engage in the export market so that they may export direct instead of having to bear the added expense of exporting through a man with a quota. That is partly the reason for some apples going to Sydney, as the quotas ex

Brisbane are not as big as those ex Sydney. Consequently, some growers and packing-houses on the Granite Belt find that by sending fruit to Sydney they can export on another exporter's quota. I should like to see opportunities provided for new people to enter the apple-export trade.

The quality of Granite Belt apples has been so high in the past few years that we want to export them as a Queensland product to improve our image on the Eastern markets. Also, our Standards Branch set an acknowledged high standard. In the current year we expect that 1,500,000 bushels will be produced on the Granite Belt. Within the life of the young trees coming on we could reach a target of 3,000,000 bushels within 10 years. We will not be able to eat them all here, and we will certainly have to look for exports on what is a highly competitive world market. To illustrate the point, in the year before last just under 100,000 bushels of Granite Belt apples were exported from a crop of 1,000,000 bushels, whereas in the year just finished we exported approximately 250,000 bushels, or 2½ times as much. We are hoping to export to markets in Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and the Near North.

**Mr. Tucker:** What was the reason for the marked rise in one year?

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** Improved quality. A very high standard is set for export fruit. The previous season was dry, followed by heavy rainfall in the harvest period, which caused a certain amount of break-down. Although the last year was somewhat dry, it was a perfect year for apples. Much of the improvement in quality can be attributed to increases in technology and growers' knowledge; it is due partly to the growers' own efforts and partly to those of the officers of the department. We also have a very good horticultural station which has been established for 18 months. It has helped to improve the quality of the fruit and has increased the growers' knowledge so that they can control their problems. Much of the loss in quality is due to various pests and diseases. I therefore expect to see in the future a greater proportion of fruit of export quality. With a rapidly increasing yield, as young trees come to fruition, there will be a need to export more to maintain a reasonable price.

The department has been doing a certain amount of pasture research on traprock country. Officers from the Warwick branch have been operating on Mr. Ian Murray's property "Kelso", in the Texas district. A considerable number of trials have been carried out, mainly with the co-operation of the landholder. They could not be called full-scale trials, but they are feelers. Some trials have been carried out in the Inglewood district, particularly with grazing legumes. They are what we want.

The traprock country is on the western slopes of the Great Divide in the southern portion of Queensland, west of Stanthorpe and Warwick. It is quite hilly, hard-timbered country with eucalypts, box, gums, apple

trees, stringy bark and so forth, which are hard to kill. It is hard country. It is hard in the winter with heavy frosts and essentially grows grass only, not legumes. We have good summer feed, as long as the grass does not get too big, followed by winter drought. It is not drought through lack of food but through lack of nutrition. Consequently we must find some way in this relatively good winter rainfall area to provide better feed. The average rainfall in June is 2 inches, which is pretty good by Queensland standards. Consequently there is good moisture content that can be used if we can find a way of introducing a suitable legume into the traprock pasture. I acknowledge that the department is looking at it from both directions, namely, from Texas and Inglewood, and also from Warwick.

The department is working on the problem of timber regrowth in conjunction with Mr. W. A. Raff of Karara, because, as most hon. members know, in this hard type of country with eucalypts there is a regrowth problem.

This is essentially grazing country. It is too rocky and steep for agriculture, except in a few pockets, flats, and so forth. Some landholders are doing a good job by growing lucerne on slopes. That presents problems, too, because they are risking erosion. We need a winter legume that can be grown without disturbing the soil too much. We must observe soil conservation principles on the steep slopes, which are only light soil with rocks through it. It is quite a problem.

**Mr. Tucker:** Where would you get a legume to stand up to frost?

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** All the clovers thrive on it. In the Dirranbandi-St. George-Goondivindi area clover grows a foot high in the heaviest winter. It is white with frost in the morning but still retains its lush green appearance. That is the beauty of winter legumes. Lucerne will grow, but it is much more susceptible to frost. Most hon. members would have seen lucerne that has been bitten by frost and is whitened for a considerable distance down from the top. Although we are obtaining some success with lucerne on the slopes, we want something that is a little more tolerant to the frosts that extend for quite a long period of the year in that particular area. I hope the Minister can avail more in that direction. I appreciate the work that has been done. It has been considerable in small, non-continuous efforts.

On 3 November, 1966, the Minister for Primary Industries issued a Press statement on grazing in the Inglewood area, reading as follows:—

“Legume grazing demonstrations in the Inglewood district last season showed that irrigation and fertiliser gave an economic increase in the yield of grazing legumes.”

This was essentially in the Macintyre Brook area, where irrigation has been introduced within the last 12 months. Under irrigation,

it is much easier to establish these legumes. I appreciate that work, but we have to get back to the hard hills and do something there. I realise that ascertaining the correct fertiliser requirements is one of the problems, and trials have to be carried out on the use not only of fertiliser but also of trace elements.

**Mr. Davies:** Do you think the price of fertiliser is unnecessarily high?

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** I think it is as cheap as it can be under a Government that is sympathetic towards primary industry. The subsidy allowed is of great assistance and is much appreciated within the industry.

**Mr. Davies:** I think you are being fleeced right and left.

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** Naturally, we would appreciate it if we could get it cheaper. We are hoping that the discovery of phosphate rock will assist primary producers. A.C.F. & Shirleys Fertilizers Ltd. have a lime kiln in my area, and there would be the cheapest place in Queensland to buy lime. I am not altogether sure that lime is needed; it would be in some spots. However, powdered lime, slaked or unslaked, can be bought there, I think in the vicinity of \$11.40 a ton cheaper than it can be obtained in Brisbane, so that at least we have that fertiliser available.

I look forward to further development in this area, and I appreciate the work being done by the Minister.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. THACKERAY** (Rockhampton North) (8.37 p.m.): I wish to deal briefly with the first annual report of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority, and to refer to the operations of public and private abattoirs in Queensland. I notice in the report that Queensland has one metropolitan abattoir, five district abattoirs and 24 private abattoirs.

**Mr. Sullivan:** Speak up; we can't hear you.

**Mr. THACKERAY:** For the benefit of hon. members who are now taking the cotton-wool out of their ears, I repeat that Queensland has one metropolitan abattoir, five district abattoirs, and 24 private abattoirs operating. If the cow-cookies on the Government side have read this report, they will have noticed that of the five public abattoirs, four, as appears at page 195 of the Annual Report of the Auditor-General, showed profits for the financial year ended 30 June, 1965.

**Mr. Chinchin** interjected.

**Mr. THACKERAY:** I am not going to be interrupted by the “ginger group” on the back-benches of the other side of the Chamber. After all, they are merely the “ockleberries” repeating what comes from the “cackleberries” at Liberal Party headquarters. Those fellows are merely carrying a brief for this New Australian from Western

Australia who is up at Liberal Party headquarters. I am addressing my remarks to you, Mr. Hooper, not the "ginger group".

The fact that four of those district abattoirs have shown profits indicates that public abattoirs can compete with private abattoirs. Rockhampton is the centre of the largest beef-producing area in Queensland. It produces two-fifths of the beef production of the entire State, and it has no public abattoir. I remember the hon. member for Townsville South criticising the hon. member for Townsville North when he spoke of the abattoir at Townsville showing a profit, which it is now doing. The Auditor-General's report shows at page 195 that the Townsville Abattoir showed a profit for the last financial year.

I have been advocating a public abattoir for Central Queensland ever since I entered Parliament in 1957. Only one member on the Government side has agreed with me—the hon. member for Mackenzie, Mr. Hewitt.

**Mr. Davies:** What about the hon. member for Rockhampton South?

**Mr. THACKERAY:** I am coming to him now. He said there is no room for a public abattoir in Rockhampton. He is the gentleman who, with the support of his vested-interest friends in Rockhampton and members of the Liberal Party, has prevented the construction of a public abattoir in Rockhampton. As I have said, proof of the success of public abattoirs is contained in the Auditor-General's report.

**Mr. Chinchin:** Show us the proof.

**Mr. THACKERAY:** It is in the Auditor-General's report.

The hon. member for Rockhampton South rises to his feet in this Chamber time after time, year after year, and says that there is room for another four meatworks in Central Queensland but no room for a district abattoir. He is the political stooge of vested interests.

**Mr. Pilbeam:** Who takes up to 20 per cent. of the local trade?

**Mr. THACKERAY:** Page 3 of the report of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority refers to export consumption, not to local consumption. You may know a lot about wheat; you do not know anything about meat.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member for Rockhampton North will address his remarks to the Chair. He is not compelled to take notice of interjections from the other side of the Chamber.

**Mr. THACKERAY:** I am trying to enlighten hon. members opposite. I crave your indulgence, Mr. Hooper, if they get a bit noisy, do not worry about them; they do not understand.

The hon. member for Rockhampton South has openly opposed the construction of public abattoirs in Central Queensland, and

has done so over a period, because of his connection with vested interests. The proof of the success of public abattoirs is given in the Auditor-General's report and in the report of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority. However, hon. members opposite, who probably have shares in the organisations now controlling the meatworks, do not want to see public abattoirs built in Central Queensland. That area produces two-fifths of the beef in Queensland but is not being given a fair go.

**Mr. Tucker:** They are greedy for profit.

**Mr. THACKERAY:** That is correct. One would only have to look at their taxation returns to see that.

**Mr. Houghton:** Where did you tie up your horse?

**Mr. THACKERAY:** Fancy the old crabderby expert asking me where I tied up my horse! He cannot even tie up a crab.

One hon member opposite referred to the Mackay abattoir. That was a political sop to prevent the erection of a public abattoir in Rockhampton, and it has been sabotaged right from its inception. Figures will prove that. The Mackay abattoir cost about \$1,896,000 and in the last financial year showed a loss of about \$260,000. Only about 20,000 cattle were killed in the whole year. In other words, if they killed at normal capacity, so far as Fields are concerned about 500 head a day would complete their kill for the whole year in 40 days. I should like to know who are the people on the board who have killed the abattoirs at Mackay because, at page 197 of the Auditor-General's report he says—

"The Board's operations have been adversely affected by an inconsistent level of throughput from export operators, shortage of certain skilled labour and suspension of its export licence from 1st January, 1966, to 22nd March, 1966."

In other words, buyers have gone out of their way to bypass this works, knowing full well that they have been given the green light by this Government to sabotage the works, which will be put up for sale or lease.

**Mr. Tucker:** They would not even build a road from Nebo into Mackay.

**Mr. THACKERAY:** As the hon. member for Townsville North says, they would not build a road from Nebo into Mackay. The Minister for Mines and Main Roads refused to put a road into Mackay under the beef roads scheme to assist this abattoir. The hon. member for Rockhampton South has been talking about certain roads, but the former Minister, Ernie Evans—God bless his soul; he was a white man and a true Australian—told the hon. member for Rockhampton South, "You will only get 5 per cent of 5,000 cattle a year from that area; why should we spend all this money?" I wish there were more Ernie Evanses in this

Chamber. If we had Ernie Evans in Rockhampton we would have had this abattoir today, but we have been sold down the drain. Now the abattoir in Mackay, which I have inspected, will be either sold or leased by this Government to Amagraze, the Vestey empire, or William Angliss.

**Mr. Hanson:** At sewing-machine rates.

**Mr. THACKERAY:** That is right. They will be treated like the other Yankee firms, who have been given land for 5s. an acre.

**Mr. Tucker:** They took their bat home when Patterson won Dawson.

**Mr. THACKERAY:** That is so. Fordyce is finished so far as the Mackay people are concerned because he would not help this abattoir in Mackay.

**Mr. Ramsden:** Would you mind saying that again in English?

**Mr. THACKERAY:** May I say through you, Mr. Hooper, to the hon. member for Merthyr, that I don't talk in triangles.

Getting back to the state of the cattle industry in Central Queensland and Mackay, this Government should do something for Rockhampton. For nine or ten years there was no abattoir in Central Queensland till the Government built one at Mackay for \$1,900,000. It will be given away or sold, as my colleague from Port Curtis says, at sewing-machine rates, and again we will not have an abattoir in Central Queensland although we produce in that area two-fifths of the cattle produced in Queensland. The cattle industry in this area is completely tied up between the Vestey empire and the Fitzroy River abattoirs in Rockhampton. Killing facilities are available for export operators. The terms and conditions under which operators may avail themselves of 20 per cent. of the killing facilities are not specifically laid down. Nowhere can anyone show me the terms laid down.

The Minister is reported to have made a very important statement at Surfers Paradise on Monday, 10 October last, concerning dip-resistant ticks. I only hope he is successful in obtaining a dip to which ticks are not resistant, because I realise the devastation the cattle tick is causing in this State.

**Mr. Pizzey:** His was no idle promise.

**Mr. THACKERAY:** Sometimes the idol's face smiles and answers! I leave that one for the Minister to work out.

I think the Minister for Primary Industries is an attentive man. I know he will not be influenced by the "ginger group" of the Liberal Party. I know that in time to come, if he is still the Minister during the next two years, he will do something about implementing abattoirs in Central Queensland. I leave that matter in his capable and good hands.

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT** (Chatsworth) (8.52 p.m.): I suspect that after the last speaker I will provide the same anticlimax I provided the other day when I followed the hon. member for Townsville South. I trust that what I lack in fire I might be able to make up in terms of common sense. I hope that my observations will be of some use to the Committee and to the Minister.

Although the development of industry and the exploitation of mineral resources are having a great impact on the changing pattern of our economy, it is nevertheless an indisputable fact that Queensland is still essentially a primary-production State. The vastness of our geography, the nature of our climate and the dictates of continuing policies over many years, all mould this pattern. Notwithstanding the fact that there has been a greater emphasis in recent years upon industrial development, there is no reason to suggest that in the foreseeable future Queensland will be other than a primary-production State. Tonight we are considering the administration of a department that has very wide ramifications, a department that influences greatly the way of life of many thousands of citizens, and influences the economy in a way disproportionate to the number of people it influences. Although it was said yesterday that the aggregation of population in Queensland is in the south-east corner, it is undoubtedly true that the livelihood of many of those thousands of people is dependent directly or indirectly upon primary production. No one could dispute that because the primary producer suffered badly from the drought we in the city also suffered. When there is talk about the fall in retail trade, when there is talk about some increase in unemployment and when there is talk about loss of spending power, it is not unreasonable to attribute many of these things to the impact of drought upon primary production.

To develop my argument I refer to a document tabled in the Federal Parliament a few years ago, a document which represents the most comprehensive economic survey of the Australian situation ever presented to an Australian Parliament, namely, the Vernon Report. There are those who will say that the Vernon Report was rejected. True, it was rejected in terms of being implemented as a continuing pattern. The grounds upon which the Prime Minister rejected the report are grounds with which I substantially, but not entirely, agree. Among his arguments against the Vernon Report was with respect to the contention that there should be a type of economic advisory council. This, of course, is foreign to our brand of politics for a great number of reasons.

While the Vernon Report was rejected in those terms it was nevertheless laid down as a broad economic survey and, in those terms, it was a document that was then valuable, that remains valuable, and which will be a work that will be referred to for many years

to come. There will be few things referred to in this Parliament that would not have some significance and some relevance in the Vernon Report.

It is to this document that I turn to consider primary production in this country. One should say that the comments dealt with in the Vernon Report related to the over-all Australian scene, and not only to Queensland. But what relates to the Australian scene also has significance and is pertinent to the Queensland situation. The Vernon Report in dealing with the rural economy made some broad observations. It dealt with the historical background and it projected thinking and tried to establish what the future of the rural economy would be. It used the term "Agriculture" in a broad sense; it used it to signify the full range of rural economy. So, when the word "Agriculture" is used in the many passages that I intend to read I hope that hon. members will accept it in its broadest text. In the introductory stages the report spoke about agriculture and said—

"... agriculture's role in the future growth of the economy, of which the most important aspect is to contribute to export earnings, is dependent on two things—capacity to expand the supply of rural produce, and ability to sell it on satisfactory terms in relation to production costs."

If one could permeate one's own thinking into this one would expect, as the first message there, that there must always be a containment of cost in the rural sector, as there must be in other sectors of the economy. The report continues—

"If an unduly cautious view is taken of the marketing outlook, willingness to expand supply may be impaired, private and public investment in rural industry may be restricted and the contribution to growth made by rural industries as export earners could be needlessly checked. Such a pessimistic view could also be taken to imply doubt about the wisdom of continuing research and extension efforts which, by raising productivity standards, almost always lead to increases in total production."

**Mr. O'Donnell:** There has always to be an element of risk in whatever you do. You have to keep the risk to the minimum, though.

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT:** We could well appoint the hon. member as the spokesman for the Liberal Party because we do not believe in eliminating the element of risk. When we do so we eliminate some of the fine things in human character.

Having made those observations in terms of containment of cost and also the ability to take risks, the report dealt with the historical background of the rural industry and eventually came to the period immediately after the second world war. It was significant to read that recovery in the immediate post-war period was slow. In the

1950-51 period production was only 9 per cent. above the pre-war level although population was up by 21 per cent. In all fairness, the report recognised the fact that recovery was slow because of the 1945 drought, because of a shortage of equipment and materials attributable to the war, and because of restrictions on home-consumption prices, but the Government made a reappraisal of the rural sector and a very significant Government pronouncement was made in the early part of 1952. This is interesting to read because it highlights the increased emphasis that the Commonwealth attached to rural production from that point of time. The statement which was made by the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture of the day said—

"The Commonwealth Government has, therefore, decided to adopt as its policy objective a Commonwealth-wide programme of agricultural expansion, not only to meet direct defence requirements, but also to provide food for the growing population, to maintain our capacity to import, and to make our proper contribution to relieving the dollar problem.

"Out of consideration of all these circumstances the Commonwealth Government has decided that activities directly concerned with the production of essential items of food and agricultural products in this country shall be classified in importance with defence and coal production."

That highlights the emphasis that the Commonwealth Government then attached to rural production and in point of time the highlight that has since been attached to rural production. It has associated it in importance with defence and coal production.

Flowing from that major decision we find then that the Commonwealth has—

"... participated increasingly in policy measures designed to meet the special problems of the rural industries. These measures have consisted mostly of price-stabilisation schemes for certain products, the expansion of research programmes, new credit facilities, financial aid for the development of undeveloped areas, special income-tax provisions, including investment allowances for primary producers, different forms of protection for some infant rural industries and, more recently, the renewal of the superphosphate subsidy.

The special agencies that have been created, of course, include the Australian Agricultural Council, the Water Resources Council and the Australian Forestry Council, and, while it is not mentioned here, we all know that the C.S.I.R.O. has also played a significant part.

So the point that the report establishes, and the point I feel that is useful to bring forward is the fact that rural production in this country rates very high in terms of Commonwealth policy and in terms of State Government policy. The report, which is very copious on this particular matter, and

one which all of us could read with great advantage, makes assumptions as to the future of the rural industry. It points out that at recent levels—

“... there would seem to be scope for further agricultural expansion, assuming expanding market opportunities and provided that cost increases in Australia can be kept under restraint, at least compared with movements of prices in Australia's markets or in the costs of competitors.”

They touch upon an optimistic note. Again, in another section, talking about the prospects for crop production the report said—

“The willingness and ability of farmers and graziers to apply the results of research have been vital. So, too, have been the complex of Federal and State policies which, after a rather bad start in the early post-war years, encouraged and facilitated the advances in production in the rural sector. The Committee stresses this inter-relationship between research, extension, positive governmental policies and an able and willing agricultural community. The Committee rests most of its confidence on future expansion of this partnership.”

While this partnership is recognised, and I do not think anyone argues its existence, it does no harm at all to mention and emphasise the desirability of this very happy marriage between research extension, positive Government policy, and an able and willing agricultural community. They are inter-dependent and inter-related, and one ventures to say that primary production these days will not go far without support from those other sectors.

The report in its closing phrases then points out—

“We are satisfied that there are no insuperable limiting factors in the way of steady expansion of agricultural supplies for domestic use and for export, but there is need for continuing policies of encouragement which also recognise the vulnerability of the rural sector to certain types of economic stress originating both externally and within the economy.”

That viewpoint of the Australian economy which is in the Vernon Report, with which I have dealt briefly, deals at great length with the rural industry. While it makes certain recommendations it contains certain tables and drawings relative to the Australian rural economy.

It is useful to note that even in the brief space of time since this report was printed, some of the projections have already been proved quite inaccurate. There is, for example, a table projecting wheat production to the year 1980. A discussion that I had with one of my friends of the Country Party this afternoon suggests that already the figure projected for 1980 is being realised. In another part of the report a projection of population is made, and this projection was out of date as recently as the time when the

Prime Minister, in his introductory comments, tabled the report. Whilst this cannot be considered an infallible document, it is nevertheless valuable, and I commend particularly to the Minister and his officers the section of it dealing with rural industry.

Some reference has been made in the course of this debate to the tick menace. I want to make some further reference to it tonight.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** It costs \$25,000,000 a year.

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT:** I think the hon. member for Barcoo may be rather conservative in his estimate. Even if we once again find ourselves in agreement (this seems to be the pattern tonight), \$25,000,000 per annum is a remarkably high figure and one that demands some attempt to reduce it. Hon. members will be interested in the history of tick infestation. Far from being a recent menace, it was in fact recognised back in 1894. In a document entitled “The Economic Importance of Cattle Tick in Australia”, one reads in the section relating to Queensland—

“The first attempt at control of the cattle tick in Australia was made in Queensland in 1894, when the whole of the Gulf country and part of the Cape York Peninsula west of the 144th meridian and north of the 21st parallel of south latitude were placed in quarantine. This step was taken when the seriousness of red water fever and its association with the cattle tick were recognized. Further quarantine areas were declared as the pest spread; eventually the State was divided into seven zones, and various conditions for the movement of stock into or out of each zone were imposed. At the end of 1917 a tick board was appointed to deal with all matters pertaining to the control of the pest in Queensland.

“Since 1952 the Queensland Government, through the Division of Animal Husbandry of the Department of Agriculture and Stock, has spent more than £750,000 on efforts to control cattle tick infestation and to reduce the incidence of tick fever. Special attention has been paid to immunization against tick fever, making it possible to introduce stud stock from tick-free areas for the improvement of herd standards in tick-infested areas. Continuous research is maintained on dipping problems and to establish the most effective types of acaricides.”

One establishes from that document that we are wrestling with a problem that is nearly as old as the State itself.

The hon. member for Barcoo tried to project a figure for the cost of ticks to the State. A document I have here places the economic toll at at least £10,000,000 per annum, and that is besides such things as dipping costs, loss of beef, loss of milk production, deaths from red water fever, damage to hides, and quarantine restrictions.

No-one would deny that tick eradication is a monumental problem. There are, of course, many city-dwellers who see no problems beyond the periphery of the city. It must be realised that if millions and millions of dollars are spent on this work, at the end of the programme there will be no grandiose highways or wonderful bridges spanning rivers for the great population aggregation in the city to see. To them, there will be little tangible evidence of what has been done. But the evidence of such expenditure will be seen in better herds, increased production, and big savings in costs.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** They will get cheaper meat as a consequence.

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT:** The hon. member for Toowong says he hopes we will also get better meat.

As one who represents a city electorate and does not have the first-hand knowledge of some of these matters that members representing rural electorates have, but who, nevertheless, recognises the problem and wants to make some comments, some observations, and some recommendations that may be useful—might I also add a rider to that and say that in fact it is possible, or probable, that most of these things are being implemented already—I express my thoughts because I want to associate myself with those who recognise the danger of tick infestation. These are the suggestions that I make to the Minister:

(1) That the Government should give proper emphasis to the problem as one of great magnitude;

(2) That it should encourage the building up of herds with strains resistant to tick fever and to the tick itself;

(3) That it should implement an enlarged and continuing educational programme on tick eradication;

(4) That it should thoroughly investigate the feasibility of declaring areas in which cattle movement would be entirely prohibited for a period long enough to eradicate tick from the area; and

(5) That it should invite Commonwealth participation in an enlarged war upon this pestilence.

I point out that a grand programme of tick eradication was in force in New South Wales from 1930, and there was a continual Commonwealth participation in that programme. On that occasion the Commonwealth obviously recognised the ramifications of the programme and, to use the vernacular, "came to the party." The impact of the tick upon Queensland herds is ever so much more real, and it is not unreasonable to invite Commonwealth participation to try to solve, or at least to mitigate, a problem of this consequence.

Finally, again to try to establish the cost of the tick, I refer to another document that I have here. It was presented and prepared by the C.S.I.R.O. and relates to an experiment that was conducted at the Katherine Research Station, Northern

Territory. It shows that a group of undipped, tick-infested cattle gained only 42 lb. a head over a period of six months; by contrast, a group of similar cattle on identical pasture but which were dipped regularly gained 132 lb. a head in the same period. There was a weight difference of 90 lb. a head for a period of six months. So if it is reasonable to suggest that in 12 months there would be a variation of 180 lb. a head, in the carcass weight of the killed beast, there would be a gain of about 100 lb. If one takes a conservative figure of \$20 for such a carcass and assumes that the cattle population of Queensland is about 4,000,000 at the moment, one can assume that there is a beef wastage on the hoof amounting to about \$80,000,000 because of tick. That is a projected figure—I recognise that the herd is not killed in its entirety in one year—but in terms of wastage on the hoof, I put it to you, Mr. Hooper, that that is another method of assessing cost.

Whatever their approach to the problem is, I think hon. members are unanimous in recognising the extent of this menace, and whatever the Minister does in his endeavours to wrestle with and contain the problem will meet with their vigorous support.

I conclude by saying to the Minister that hon. members on this side of the Chamber recognise the widespread ramifications of his administration. He is charged with heavy responsibilities, and he is assured of their good will and continuing support.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON** (Salisbury) (9.15 p.m.): The Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries are well down on the list for debate, but I do not think that is a very true indication of the importance of primary industries to this State. Over the past five years Queensland has consistently been the largest export-revenue-producing State in the Commonwealth and to me it is cause for some speculation why the Government appears to place primary industries well down on the seniority list of portfolios.

For the last six or seven years frequent references have been made in Budget speeches to the severe effects that drought has had on our economy and it would seem that the whole basic effect on our State finances as a result of drought conditions it to be found in our primary industries. Because of this, I was somewhat amazed on reading the report of the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, the summary of which says—

"Total area under irrigation in Queensland as at March 1965, was 281,173 acres (an increase of 29,091 acres for the year), equivalent to 0.06 per cent. of the total State area."

In a State that has been the subject of periodically recurring droughts, it is rather alarming to see that only .06 per cent of our total area is under irrigation. I think that highlights several factors. First of all, I think,

it highlights the need for a rearrangement of portfolios to incorporate water conservation in the primary industries section. The complete success of our primary industries, particularly those in the field for which this Minister is responsible, depends on an adequate water supply. It highlights also the shocking disregard of water conservation shown by the present Federal Government. I think it could fairly be said that all water conservation in this State has been arranged and performed with State finance; not one penny has been spent on a national basis on water conservation in this State.

When one realises that the irrigated production of the State for the year ended 31 March, 1965, was valued at \$69,736,000, equivalent to 11.1 per cent. of the State's total rural production, one must also realise just how important water is and how closely it is linked with primary industry. I can see the Minister nodding in agreement. So, as I said earlier, it is passing strange that water conservation has not been included among the responsibilities of the Department of Primary Industries. Instead, we have two separate Ministers controlling two vitally important features of our economy that are very closely interlinked—water conservation and primary industries. On the matter of water conservation, the report of the Department of Primary Industries shows very clearly the dependence of primary industries on water.

The very first comment under the heading of "Director-General's Views and Comments" is ". . . And still more drought". He went on to point out that the drought experienced in Queensland in 1965 was one of the most severe, widespread and devastating ever recorded. He described how almost the whole of the State—pastoral areas and agricultural areas alike—had suffered because of the drought. His report highlights the need for the spending of money on water conservation to support the State's primary industries.

Over the years we have seen the construction of beef roads, the development of the brigalow scheme and other projects which have attracted Commonwealth assistance. Unfortunately this cannot be said about water conservation schemes to boost primary production within the State. The fact that the .06 per cent. of the total State area under irrigation produced 11.1 per cent. of the State's total rural production proves what a great asset water conservation is.

I wish to deal now with a matter I have raised previously this session, namely, the need to preserve scientific areas, particularly in the brigalow country. The Minister mentioned earlier that although the brigalow area includes some of our most valuable crop-producing land, there is an element of risk about its management. I think that every C.S.I.R.O. scientist who has been interested in the development of pastoral and agricultural land has referred at some time or another to the great need for care in the

management of brigalow land. One departmental scientist described it as a prima donna that was very good but very difficult to handle. I think it is recognised that although this land basically is some of our finest, there is great need to take care with it to ensure that through mismanagement we do not destroy the purpose for which we are trying to develop it. I think that is recognised by all soil authorities.

I have had several discussions on this matter with knowledgeable people in C.S.I.R.O. who point out that one of the inherent dangers in developing brigalow land is the fact that unless sufficient of it is preserved in its virgin state it would be very difficult for any scientist to make an assessment if something went wrong with the soil structure without virgin land on which to experiment. My attention was drawn to the fact that this applies also to other types of land. It was pointed out that there is a great need to preserve various types of land as scientific areas. I was told that in some instances in the development of tropical land scientists had had to obtain permission to enter national parks to carry out certain experiments.

Naturally, nobody wishes to see our national parks disturbed. We all accept the fact that when a national park is created it is inviolable. I was told that that was one of the problems and it will be a problem in the brigalow country unless we set aside areas in their virgin state in which scientific investigations can be carried out into atmosphere, soil structure, the nature of trees, and so on.

At this stage, I should like to sound a note of warning about brigalow development. No-one would seriously oppose developing these lands, nor would anyone wish to preserve them merely for the sake of having brigalow land. Not even the National Parks people would adopt such an attitude, but I think it is important to have sufficient typical brigalow country set aside so that our scientists may continually conduct research into the matters I have referred to.

That brings me to the preservation of wild life. The Minister knows that I have shown more than a passing interest in this matter. In the brigalow land there are indigenous birds, animals and insects. I stress the importance of having a sufficient area of this type of land set aside to preserve wild life. Over the years, in our haste to develop and put our lands into production, we seem to have forgotten the important part that indigenous birds and animals play in pest control. Anyone who saw the recent documentary film on Channel O titled "We, the Destroyers", produced by Alan Morehead, could not but be disturbed by the gradual extinction of much of our valuable and historic animal and bird life. I enjoyed the show so much that I sat through it twice. This subject is very important. One of the greatest tragedies referred to in the film was the fact that the

number of Cape Barron geese has been reduced to about 2,000 pairs, yet the authorities allowed an open season of 48 hours.

We cannot allow such stupid actions in Queensland. I am aware of the valuable work done by Mr. Roff as the Fauna Protection Officer in Queensland, but we are not doing enough to stimulate the interest of young people in the need to preserve wildlife as part of our national heritage.

I know that in many cases comparisons are odious, but the Fauna Protection Panel in New South Wales is setting the lead for the various States in the work it is doing to create an interest on the part of young people in the unique wild life of New South Wales. I correspond regularly with that body, and only recently I received from it a well-illustrated brochure on Australian wild life. This type of publicity is common throughout New South Wales.

Marsupials and protected birds are illustrated in these brochures, which are produced periodically by the New South Wales Fauna Protection Panel. Most of them are made available in New South Wales schools, the very places where they should be put. I make an earnest plea to the Minister tonight—I am not crawling to him—that serious consideration be given, through the Fauna Protection Officer in Queensland, to adopting a similar practice of displaying our wild life in a brochure similar to the one that is produced in New South Wales.

**Mr. Wallis-Smith:** I am sure he will do that.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I hope he does. I shall be disappointed if he does not. I hope he has clear in his mind what I mean by "wild life." A number of young children today in the metropolitan area and in the large provincial cities are forgetting the birds and animals we have in this State. Unfortunately, the need for education on this important matter has been overlooked.

**Mr. Richter:** Have you seen the Queensland publication on wild life?

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I am a regular subscriber to it. But it is not produced by the Government. I was speaking of brochures that are made available in New South Wales.

**Mr. Richter:** This is done by the Government. My department prepares it.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** What I am referring to is a brochure 3 feet by 2 feet. The last one I received illustrated every type of duck indigenous to Australia.

**Mr. Wallis-Smith:** And every school in the Tablelands area has one.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** Because of the good work of the hon. member for Tablelands. But nothing like that is available for use in Queensland schools to arouse in our children an awareness of the need to conserve our fauna. I referred to the film "We, the Destroyers".

**Mr. W. D. Hewitt:** What was the film's attitude to kangaroos?

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** A sensible one, and one that is being overlooked at present when we are permitting the wholesale slaughter of this national animal. The producers' idea was to farm these animals so that they would not be eliminated by reckless shooting, followed by a severe drought which could well wipe out the species. The idea was to farm these animals.

**Mr. W. D. Hewitt:** There would have to be controlled killing.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** That is true. It has been said that if we are not careful the only kangaroos we will see are those on our coins. I should hate to think that future generations would be denied the pleasure of seeing the animals that now dwell in this State. I am serious about this, and I think most thinking people are.

A Bill has been introduced to control the use of pesticides. I shall have a lot more to say about that at a later stage. I take this opportunity to reinforce what the Minister said this morning about the need for research into the effects that pesticides have on many of our birds and animals. Only recently I read a rather good article by Mr. Ian Gall, who is a very keen naturalist, in which he pointed out the effects of D.D.T. on flocks of straw-necked ibises. These birds have been of invaluable service in controlling pests. I think a post-mortem examination at one stage disclosed that in one day a straw-necked ibis is capable of destroying approximately 2,000 grasshoppers. Unfortunately the unrestricted use of chemicals in pest control is having a significant effect on the natural predators of pests.

I think there is a great need for research by officers of the Department of Primary Industries into the effect of pesticides on soil bacteria because at present there does not appear to be any going on in Australia.

**Mr. Nicklin:** There is a tremendous amount of research going on.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** It is being carried out only by chemical companies, not at Government level. If any young scientist was looking for research opportunities, he could well open up wonderful fields by devoting himself to investigation of the influence of pesticides on soil bacteria.

**Mr. Nicklin:** They test them chemically before they put them on the market.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I do not want to go too far into this subject as I propose to deal with it at the second-reading stage of the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Bill. However, almost no research is being carried out on the effect of pesticide residues on the human body. It is recognised that the body is capable of storing the residues in body fats, but that is where the research ends. The same thing happens with soil bacteria.

**Mr. Davies:** Much the same result as with the fluoridation of water.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I am not coming into that! Without any doubt, insufficient research is being done on soil bacteria. This is most important, because if anything is done to upset the balance of soil bacteria, all agricultural land could be affected in years to come. I strongly recommend that this research be not left to chemical companies. Scientists of the Department of Primary Industries should be keeping a constant watch on these things.

I now wish to deal with the question of control of nursery practices. Over the years I have heard complaints from people who have purchased plants and have then been able to propagate only a small percentage of them. I think that this is another field that could be investigated by departmental officers. I know that in the busy commercial world many good practices in nurseries have been forgotten. They have been discontinued for cheaper and quicker methods of marketing plants for sale.

(Time expired.)

Progress reported.

#### PAPER

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Proposal to Revoke the Setting Apart and Declaration as:—

(1) A State Forest of:—

(a) The whole of State Forest 446, parish of Stapylton containing an area of about 1,365 acres—and,

(b) So much of State Forest 451, parishes of Cooloola and Womalah, as is comprised in all that piece or part thereof described as portion 11, parish of Cooloola and a road, as shown on plan FTY 151 deposited in the Survey Office and containing an area of about 5,365 acres—and,

(c) (i) So much of State Forest 135, parishes of Brooloo and Cambroon, as is comprised in all that piece or part thereof described as portion 1638, parish of Brooloo and a road, as shown on plan FTY 149 deposited in the Survey Office and containing an area of about 515 acres.

(ii) So much of State Forest 467, parish of Yabba, as is comprised in all that piece or part thereof described as portion 84, parish of Yabba and a road, as shown on plan FTY 150 deposited in the Survey Office and containing an area of about 1,175 acres—and,

(2) A scenic Area of so much of Scenic Area 781, parishes of Clumber and Fassifern as is comprised in all that piece or part thereof described as portion 224, parish of Clumber, as shown on plan Cc1859 deposited in the Survey Office and containing an area of about 23 acres.

The House adjourned at 9.40 p.m.