

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 1967**

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**WEDNESDAY, 11 OCTOBER, 1967**

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

**QUESTIONS**

**MINING LEASES ON NORTH COAST BEACHES**

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

(1) Are there beach dredging leases in Laguna Bay between Teewah Township and Double Island Point?

(2) If so, who are the lessees, what is the period of each lease and when were they granted?

(3) Was an attempt made to work D/L 101 in June, 1966, and was it stopped at the Commonwealth Government's request following evidence of erosion damage to the lighthouse reserve by mining machinery?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2)—

(4) Were applications lodged to mine 10,000 acres of the high dunes in the area in 1963 and were they withdrawn following widespread public objection?

(5) Is prospecting continuing in the high dunes and in the Noosa Plain?

(6) What are the terms of the agreement in respect of SML84 Maryborough?

(7) Has there been any contact between his Department and the Department of the Interior concerning applications to mine the Double Island lighthouse reserve?

(8) In view of the importance of the areas referred to as scientific, forestry and tourist areas and as no developmental work has been undertaken on leases in the area, will he investigate the possibility of revoking existing leases until a complete investigation of the area is undertaken to determine its possible future?

"Dredging Lease No.	Titleholder	Term	Approved by Minister
7 (Appln.) ..	Queensland Titanium Mines Pty. Ltd.	21 years from 1- 4-1949 ..	26- 7-1949
8 (Appln.) ..	Queensland Titanium Mines Pty. Ltd.	11 years from 1- 4-1959* ..	16- 9-1957
9 .. ..	Queensland Titanium Mines Pty. Ltd.	11 years from 1- 6-1959* ..	16- 9-1957
11 .. ..	Titanium Corporation of Australia Pty. Limited	21 years from 1- 9-1951 ..	28- 2-1958
12 .. ..	Uranium Corporation of Australia Pty. Limited	15 years from 1- 3-1965* ..	23- 8-1955
13 .. ..	Uranium Corporation of Australia Pty. Limited	15 years from 1- 3-1965* ..	23- 8-1955
17 .. ..	Uranium Corporation of Australia Pty. Limited	15 years from 1- 9-1965* ..	3-10-1955
24 .. ..	Titanium Corporation of Australia Pty. Limited	21 years from 1-12-1955 ..	10- 1-1956
25 .. ..	Titanium Corporation of Australia Pty. Limited	21 years from 1-12-1955 ..	10- 1-1956
26 .. ..	Titanium Corporation of Australia Pty. Limited	21 years from 1-12-1955 ..	10- 1-1956
84 .. ..	Titanium Corporation of Australia Pty. Limited	15 years from 1-12-1966* ..	23-10-1957
101 .. ..	Uranium Corporation of Australia Pty. Limited	21 years from 1-10-1964 ..	20-11-1964
104 (Appln.) ..	Andrew Bruce Small ..	5 years from 1-10-1965 ..	8-12-1965
105 (Appln.) ..	Andrew Bruce Small ..	5 years from 1-10-1965 ..	8-12-1965

\* Renewal

**APPLICATIONS NOT YET APPROVED**

Dredging Lease Application No.	Applicant	Term Applied For
117 .. ..	Coastal Mining Development Pty. Ltd.	21 years from 1-7-1967
118 .. ..	Coastal Mining Development Pty. Ltd.	21 years from 1-7-1967
119 .. ..	Coastal Mining Development Pty. Ltd.	21 years from 1-7-1967
120 .. ..	Coastal Mining Development Pty. Ltd.	21 years from 1-9-1967 "

(3) "Mining on Dredging Lease No. 101, Gympie, commenced on May 23, 1966, and ceased following the mining of approximately 8,000 cubic yards of concentrates. The Department of Mines has no knowledge of any request by the Commonwealth Government in regard to the cessation of mining on this lease."

(4) "Applications for special leases were lodged but withdrawn in favour of an authority to prospect, which authority permits the holder thereof to carry out a prospecting campaign in order to locate and evaluate possible ore bodies."

(5) "Prospecting is presently in progress on areas held under authority to prospect located northerly of Noosa."

(6) "The conditions applicable to Special Mineral Lease No. 84, Maryborough, cover 1½ pages of close typing. It is suggested the Honourable Member peruse same at my Department."

(7) "Officers of the Department of the Interior have consulted officers of the Department of Mines in regard to possible methods of exploitation of mineral deposits on the Commonwealth Lighthouse Reserve at Double Island Point. This area is Commonwealth land and not under the jurisdiction of the State."

(8) "In the course of the proving of ore reserves of a magnitude to warrant expenditure on roads, mining plant and treatment facilities, it is essential and customary procedure for leases to be taken over areas with an economic mineral content so as to provide long-term reserves, thus ensuring continued operation and employment. The revocation of existing leases would be a retrograde step in the orderly development of the area and could result in a loss of both valuable mineral wealth and future avenues of employment for several hundred persons. Further, the revocation of the existing leases would be tantamount to repudiation."

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL PARK, LAKE COOLOOLA AREA

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

Regarding the Cooloola Sand Dunes,—

(1) Was an application lodged three years ago with the Forestry Department for the setting aside of a portion of the area as a National Park?

(2) Was it investigated by departmental officers with that purpose in mind?

(3) Have any plans for a suitable area been prepared by his Department and, if so, will he table them?

(4) Has any submission been made to Cabinet regarding the matter?

(5) Have there been any discussions between his Department and the Departments of Lands and Mines and Main Roads regarding it? If so, have these Departments expressed opposition to the proposal and, if so, why?

(6) Has finality been reached concerning the future of the area and particularly with regard to its status as a National Park? If not, what is the reason for the inordinate delay in reaching a decision?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Yes."

(3) "Yes—vide map tabled herewith."

(4) "No."

(5) "The proposal has been referred to the Land Administration Commission and the Department of Mines. The Land Administration Commission has concurred in the proposal. The Department of Mines has advised that the area is at present being prospected, and its conversion to a national park is objected to at this stage, but that further consideration will be given to the proposal when the value of the minerals in the ground has been assessed."

(6) "See Answer to (5)."

*Paper.*—Whereupon Mr. Richter laid upon the table the map referred to.

#### UNIFORM PACKAGING OF GOODS

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

What action does he propose to take and when does he propose to take it regarding the uniform packaging of goods, a matter referred to by him when the Weights and Measures Acts were before the House for amendment?

*Answer:—*

"Draft legislation is presently being finalised which, it is anticipated, will be introduced during the current Session."

#### POLICE RAIDS ON PREMISES AT GLADSTONE ROAD, HIGHGATE HILL

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

(1) How many times and on what dates in the past twelve months have the police raided premises at 188 Gladstone Road, Highgate Hill?

(2) Under what authority did the police enter the house and what is the relevant legislation?

(3) Who was in occupation of the house on each occasion and what was found?

(4) What were the names of the police concerned in each raid and what are their usual postings in the force?

(5) Did any prosecutions occur as a result of the raids? If so, will he give particulars?

*Answers:—*

(1) "The premises in question which are known as the headquarters of the Society for Democratic Action, an organisation having amongst its adherents members of the Communist Party, of the Eureka Youth League, and of the Pacifists Youth, and as a rendezvous for young males and females who apparently adhere to the aims of the Society and who sleep at the premises on mattresses on the floor in anything but clean and hygienic conditions, have never been 'raided' by police."

(2 to 5) "See Answer to (1)."

#### HANDLING OF DANGEROUS DRUGS

**Mr. Davies** for **Mr. Tucker**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) Regarding the last amendments to the legislation dealing with the handling of dangerous drugs, is he aware that in the field of barbiturates alone there are over 900 common varieties of medicine which contain the element?

(2) Have doctors handling these and other drugs been able to comply with the law as regards names and addresses, amounts given, new consignments and other required book-keeping? If not, what is the present position?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Yes."

(2) "It is usual procedure to give a period of grace to allow for reorganisation of procedures before implementing the requirements of the Poisons Regulations. Doctors, in common with all others who handle these drugs, will be required to observe the regulations but most of the drugs they order for patients are by prescription. They sometimes give patients small quantities of drugs to take until prescriptions are dispensed."

#### ORDER IN COUNCIL, ILLEGAL DEMONSTRATIONS

**Mr. Davies** for **Mr. Tucker**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in *The Australian* of October 4, headed "The Right to Protest", which read, "It has been learned that an Order in Council has been obtained making demonstration without a permit a criminal offence. At present taking part in an illegal demonstration is merely a minor traffic breach"?

(2) Has an Order in Council been made and will it be proclaimed?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Yes."

(2) "No."

#### SECOND-HAND DEALERS' LICENCES

**Mr. Donald** for **Mr. Bennett**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

(1) How many persons in Queensland have been issued with a second-hand dealer's licence?

(2) How many of the licensees have convictions?

(3) How many of them had convictions before receiving their licence?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 3) "I am sorry that the Honourable Member is not present this morning, but even allowing for his spasmodic attendance at this time of the day, one would have thought that the learned Honourable Member, so well versed in law, would know that the Second Hand Wares Act is administered by the Honourable the Minister for Education, to whom this Question should be addressed."

#### NEGLECT AND ILL-TREATMENT OF CHILDREN

**Mr. Donald** for **Mr. Bennett**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Tourism,—

(1) Pursuant to his Answer to a Question by the Honourable Member for Sandgate on September 6, 1967, that cases of cruelty to children had been reported to his Department from time to time, will he state whether or not, following the proof of such cruelty by foster parents, the Department still allows the children to remain with them?

(2) Has this happened in some cases and, if so, how many?

*Answers:—*

(1) "The child would be removed by the Department."

(2) "Yes, but cases involving foster parents are very infrequent, and in fact officers long associated with the Department can recall only one case. In this instance, original placement of the child was not made by the Department, but subsequently a fostering allowance was paid."

## CLOSURE OF CLONMEL STATE SCHOOL

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

(1) How many one-teacher schools have been closed in the two-year period ended September 30, 1967?

(2) Was Clonmel State School, near Monto, closed in August?

(3) As its closure at this stage of the school year is seriously embarrassing the students, will he consider the request of the parents and citizens' committee to have it re-opened?

(4) Was it closed because of staff shortage?

(5) Does he consider that the many hours of bus travel to further-removed schools justifies the closing of one-teacher schools?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Sixty-nine one-teacher schools have been closed in the two-year period ended September 30, 1967."

(2) "Yes—Clonmel State School was closed on August 11, 1967."

(3) "Careful investigation of the possible closure of the Clonmel State School revealed that the transport arrangements subsequently approved were convenient and acceptable to parents. No circumstances that would lead to the embarrassment of the students were reported. It is not proposed to re-open the school."

(4) "Closure was in accordance with the Cabinet decision concerning consolidation of schools."

(5) "The educational advantages that result from the closure of one-teacher schools justify the reasonable periods of time spent in travelling."

## INCLUSION OF QUEENSLAND IN ITINERARY OF PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

**Mr. W. D. Hewitt**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

Will he request the Prime Minister to include Queensland in the itinerary of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, when she visits Australia?

*Answer:—*

"The Honourable Member may be assured that when we know that the Prime Minister of India will visit Australia suitable representations will be made to the Right Honourable the Prime Minister to have Queensland included in her itinerary."

## APPEALS AGAINST TOBACCO QUOTAS, MAREEBA-DIMBULAH AREA

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

Further to his Answer to my Question on August 30 relative to increases in tobacco quotas in the Mareeba-Dimbulah area,—

(1) What were the grounds of appeal by J. F. Nelson and F. and M. Piagno and on what grounds did the Appeal Tribunal grant the increase of 4,000 lb. to each?

(2) Were there any other farmers who appealed on similar grounds and who did not receive such an increase? If so, what were the reasons given by the tribunal?

(3) If a farmer disagrees with its decision, has he any further right of appeal and, if so, to whom?

*Answers:—*

(1) "The Tobacco Quota Appeals Tribunal is an appellants tribunal constituted with the powers of a commission of inquiry to hear appeals in relation to tobacco quotas. The grounds upon which such appeals may be made were stated in my Answer of August 30, 1967, to a previous Question by the Honourable Member. I am not aware of the specific grounds upon which any of the 345 appellants to the Tribunal relied nor of the detailed factors upon which the Appeals Tribunal based its decisions. All hearings conducted by the Tribunal were open to the public and I have no doubt that the Tribunal reached its decisions in all cases upon the evidence before it."

(2) "See Answer to Question 1."

(3) "There is no provision for further appeal against any decision given by the Appeals Tribunal."

## TREATMENT CHARGES, IRVINEBANK STATE TREATMENT WORKS

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

(1) In view of the increased crushing charges now operating at the Irvinebank State Treatment Works and as they are alleged to impose no additional burden on the ore supplier because of the increased throughput and recovery rate, is he aware that there had been no corresponding increase in the hourly rate and that the rate varies considerably between hard and soft ores?

(2) Will he investigate the charges with a view to having a sliding scale rate instead of the present one of \$15 per hour for all grades of ore?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Ore treatment returns to date indicate an increase in the hourly treatment rate and a further increase is anticipated. It is agreed that the hourly throughput rate of hard ore is in some instances less than that of soft ores."

(2) "It is considered the re-introduction of a sliding scale of treatment charges is not warranted."

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATION, ATHERTON HIGH SCHOOL

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

(1) Did a mistake occur in the Works Department records as to the actual number of classrooms at the Atherton High School?

(2) If so, how many classrooms short is the school for (a) its present needs and (b) 1968 requirements?

(3) What enrolment is expected for 1968?

(4) What action does he propose to rectify the poor conditions, where children are taught in sections under the buildings, on concrete floors with a blackboard fixed to the brick wall?

*Answers:—*

(1) "No."

(2) "(a) Three permanent classrooms, but the District Supervisor of Works has been requested to furnish an urgent report on improving the areas underneath the school building being used temporarily for classroom purposes. (b) Four permanent classrooms."

(3) "460."

(4) "The Department of Works has been requested to prepare a plan and an estimate of cost for the provision of four permanent G.P. classrooms, an art room, and a staff room at this school. If the proposed additional permanent accommodation is not available for occupation at the commencement of the 1968 school year, sufficient temporary accommodation will be provided to cater for the anticipated enrolment pending completion of these permanent additions."

CONSTRUCTION OF ZILLMERE OVERPASS

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

(1) Have all resumptions involved in the construction of the proposed overpass bridge and its approaches at Zillmere been effected? If so, what was the amount paid?

(2) Are any resumption payments outstanding? If so, what amount?

(3) Will construction of the overpass commence at an early date? If not, what is the reason for the continued delay?

*Answer:—*

"I suggest that the Honourable Member address his Question to the appropriate Minister."

MEANS TEST FOR PATIENTS AT DENTAL HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

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

What is the eligibility for dental treatment of a tradesman receiving \$48 per week who, because of expenses totalling \$46 per week for rent, hire-purchase payments, education expenses for three children and food and clothing, is unable to meet the cost of private dental treatment?

*Answer:—*

"I would direct the Honourable Member's attention to my reply of September 27, 1967, in answer to his earlier Question concerning this matter. I would emphasise that the means test is designed to permit flexibility in its application and each individual case is determined on its merits by the interviewing officer at the dental hospital or clinic concerned."

UNAUTHORISED REMOVAL OF VEHICLES FROM SCENES OF ACCIDENTS

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

What authority have towing-truck operators to remove vehicles from the scene of any accident before seeking permission or after refusal of permission by a person other than the police?

*Answer:—*

"I refer the Honourable Member to section 60 of *The Traffic Acts, 1949 to 1969*," section 29 of *The Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Acts, 1931 to 1967*," and section 408A of the *Criminal Code*."

WAITING LIST, IPSWICH OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL

**Mrs. Jordan**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

How many approved students from schools in the Ipswich area are on the waiting list to attend the Ipswich Opportunity School?

*Answer:—*

"Thirty-six."

ESTABLISHMENT OF INSTITUTE OF  
TECHNOLOGY, IPSWICH

**Mrs. Jordan**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

Has consideration been given to the establishment of an Institute of Technology at Ipswich in the foreseeable future or is Ipswich to continue to miss out because of its proximity to Brisbane, despite its population of approximately 54,000 and its ranking as Queensland's second provincial city?

*Answer:—*

"No. In its report on tertiary education in Australia, the Martin Committee recommended the establishment of tertiary colleges in Brisbane, Toowoomba and Rockhampton. The Government, with Commonwealth assistance, proceeded to establish institutes of technology in these centres. The needs of Ipswich will be met for many years by the Queensland Institute of Technology, Brisbane."

COST OF ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING  
IN RAILWAY DEPARTMENT

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

(1) What are the total amounts of expenditure for the purchase, installation and operating costs of the Railway Department's Electronic Data Processing Bureau in respect of (a) computers and/or similar equipment, (b) stationery, (c) wages, and (d) other expenses?

(2) What are the names of the manufacturing firms and suppliers of (a) E.D.P. computer equipment and (b) E.D.P. stationery?

*Answers:—*

(1) "(a to d) The machines are hired from the supplier at a yearly rental of \$145,465. The cost of providing accommodation and installing the machines was \$74,674. The cost for the financial year ended June 30, 1967, was: Stationery, \$18,071; wages, \$99,492; other expenses, \$13,717."

(2) "(a) I.B.M. (Aust.) Ltd; (b) Data Cards Australia Pty Ltd., Lamson Paragon Limited, H. Pole & Co. Pty. Ltd., and the Government Printer."

DISMISSAL OF STAFF, MAREEBA—  
DIMBULAH IRRIGATION SCHEME

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

As the Irrigation Department's permanent staff and labourers employed at Mareeba are concerned at the Government's decision to dismiss and transfer a number now employed,—

(1) How many workers have received dismissal notices and how many staff members have been transferred?

(2) Will a permanent staff be retained at Mareeba and, if so, how many will be employed?

*Answers:—*

"It must be appreciated that the construction of the Mareeba-Dimbulah project, like any other construction job, even though prolonged, must eventually end. This scheme has now virtually reached the stage of full development with the water presently available for irrigation, while supply has still to be maintained for full power generation at Barron Falls. The requirements for Barron Falls may be varied when Collinsville Power Station is commissioned but this has not yet been determined. Meanwhile it must be expected that construction work on the Mareeba project will taper off to a small amount at the end of the current financial year. Funds required for this financial year for construction are \$200,000 as compared with \$550,000 for 1966-67 and some further minor works can be expected in 1967-68. However, reduction in the Irrigation Commission's work-force at Mareeba will be more than offset by commencement of three new projects in other parts of Queensland in the present financial year. Answers to the specific Questions asked are:—

(1) "Since June 30, 1967—(a) Twelve wages employees have been dismissed due to diminished work requirements; (b) Twenty-five wages employees have been advised that their services will be terminated between now and December, 1967; (c) Nil."

(2) "A permanent operation and maintenance force will be required in the area, and is largely already established. Final requirements have not been firmly established but could involve a total of between forty and sixty personnel."

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Public Service Commissioner, for the year 1966-67.

Land Administration Commission, including Reports of the Acting Surveyor-General, Superintendent of Stock Routes and Rural Fires Board.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

The Rural Training Schools Act of 1965.

The Police Acts, 1937 to 1964.

Audit Inspector's Report on the Books and Accounts of the Queensland Coal Board for the period from 26 August, 1966, to 8 August, 1967.

## OVERTIME PAID IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

### RETURN TO ORDER

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an Order made by the House on 10 August last, on the motion of Mr. Ramsden, showing the amount of overtime paid in each Government department (all funds) in 1966-67.

### FORM OF QUESTION

**Mr. MURRAY** (Clayfield) having given notice of questions—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I am a little concerned about the hon. member's first question. It appears to be a Commonwealth matter. I will have a look at it.

## CITY OF BRISBANE MARKET ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

(Mr. Hodges, Gympie, in the chair)

Debate resumed from 27 September (see p. 699) on Mr. Row's motion—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the City of Brisbane Market Acts, 1960 to 1962, in certain particulars."

**Mr. O'DONNELL** (Barcoo) (11.32 a.m.): When this debate was adjourned almost a fortnight ago I had only just begun my speech and, as a consequence, I had to do some revision before I entered the Chamber today. I gave particular attention to going through what the Minister said in his introductory speech, and I feel that the two amendments of extreme importance are those designed, in the Minister's words—

"To relieve the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works of the responsibility to act as constructing authority for the Brisbane Market Trust; and

"To empower the Brisbane Market Trust, with the prior approval of the Governor in Council, to sell or otherwise dispose of any part of its land which is surplus to the requirements of the Trust for the purposes of the Act."

I pointed out previously that the activities at the Brisbane Market had to a certain extent decreased as a result of direct dealings between certain producers and purchasers.

In general, I also accepted the proposal concerning the disposal of land, to which the Leader of the Opposition also referred. I do not know whether the Minister's introductory remarks made it quite clear that the maximum area permitted to be disposed of is 25 acres. I am very pleased about that limitation.

In searching through the report of the Brisbane Market Trust, I found this statement relative to land—

"It continues to exercise the attention of the Trust how the cost of land acquired for the new Market site, and which is a charge against Market operation, might be offset by the use which may be made of land surplus to the requirements of the ultimate development of the Market."

The Committee knows that the 125 acres was originally partly Crown land and partly land that was resumed in order to provide a site for the marketing of fruit, vegetables, etc. What surprises me is that, as the Market Trust finds the cost onerous and an embarrassment to a certain extent, some foresight was not shown at the time by allowing the Trust to hold the land on a leasehold basis.

I referred in another debate to the fact that leasehold land had been given to Austral-Pacific Fertilizers Ltd. at a rental that was encouraging when compared with the normal rental. The situation in this instance is that the Brisbane Market Trust is seeking to dispose of land to assist it financially and, to a certain extent, to allow it to undertake desirable projects. If it was good enough for the Government to give Austral-Pacific Fertilizers Ltd. land on a leasehold basis—admittedly, that company had the option of freeholding—I think it would have been much more desirable to give land to the Brisbane Market Trust on a leasehold basis, perhaps also at a favourable rental to encourage its activities. If that had been done, the Crown would have had control over the land at all times. If any future development or re-organisation was required, the land would still be in the hands of the Crown.

**Mr. Dewar:** Do you know that the Trust was not offered leasehold?

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** I do not know that. I am seeking information on this point; perhaps the Minister will give me an answer, because I think the question is important. Irrespective of whether or not the Brisbane Market Trust was offered land on that basis, I do not think that trusts generally should have any alternative to holding land under leasehold tenure. The Government, in its aim to assist, could suggest that that would be the most readily available avenue at the appropriate time.

In this instance, an area of freehold land is to be disposed of and the money resulting from the sale used because the Trust is embarrassed. If the report is correct, it suggests that the purchase of the freehold title to the land, being a cost against the operations of the market, has been something of an embarrassment to the Trust's activities. That is the way I am putting it.

This is an important matter, because after all—and I mentioned this the other day—perhaps some day in the future we will be



considering a market area on the north side of the city, or somewhere else in the city, and this area of land that is in excess of immediate requirements would be available for disposal to some other organisation. The Crown, even if it was disposed eventually to release it on a freehold basis, would have the money realised from it returned to the Treasury, and at the same time would have given encouragement to the Market Trust.

If I heard the hon. member for Wavell correctly, there is a shortage of this type of land on the north side of the city, in which case the Crown would have been able to dispose of this area on a businesslike basis and use the proceeds to acquire another area.

I have not had a great deal of experience of this, but I cannot visualise that the market will be confined solely to the Rocklea area for the rest of time. I cannot see anything else but growth. We are witnessing today a great centralisation of population and growth of cities, so in my heart I feel that some day there will be a decentralisation of market sites in the city to meet the people's requirements and to avoid congestion of traffic.

A point relevant to this Bill that has raised a great deal of discussion is the future of the market—not "markets". That is the heading in the report, and the relevant portion reads—

"The Trust desires to draw attention to the fact that it has provided facilities for the wholesale marketing of fruit and vegetables unequalled anywhere else in Australia.

"However, with the economic squeeze being experienced by growers, there has been an increasing trend to by-pass the Market. This has a weakening effect on the central Market with a consequent undermining of wholesale prices, thus increasing the economic problems of growers and agents alike.

"The Trust urges all producers to evaluate carefully the advantages to be derived from the maximum use of the Brisbane Market."

A person who reads the reports of the Brisbane Market Trust for the last two or three years will appreciate the value of the services provided and the development of services that is going on at the new location, but this section of the report stresses the weakening effect of a central market. Anyone who has been reading the newspapers over the last five or six weeks could not help but notice that friction has developed between the C.O.D. and the fruit and vegetable section over a proposal made by certain agents to increase commission fees from 10 per cent. to 12½ per cent. I know that such a move would hit the grower. We raised this question previously, and I again urge the Minister to make a very sound study of the position in order to make certain that the growers' interests are protected.

The variation in the activities of the market—the direct transactions between grower and purchaser—no doubt has had some effect on the agents. But agents at the market, as are other agents, are out to attract business, and to do so they have to canvass growers. It appears that some of them at least are failing and consequently are seeking increased commission, which can only act to the detriment of the primary producer. If the burden could be shared by all sections of the business community there may be justification for an increase, but it is again striking back at the primary producer.

I refer to an article in "Queensland Fruit and Vegetable News" of 28 September, 1967, which says—

"If prices for fruit and vegetables have remained static for the past ten years, the responsibility for this must be placed squarely on the shoulders of those whose job it is, and are paid, to sell and promote."

That is an astounding statement. It indicates that there has been no increase in the price of fruit and vegetables in the last ten years. Through you, Mr. Hodges, I ask the Minister whether this indicates that there is prosperity in the fruit and vegetable industry when we take into account the spiralling cost of inflation in the community over the last 10 years.

Do not forget that the agents' commission has always been substantial. It has never been less than 10 per cent., which is a considerable amount. If fruit and vegetable prices are to remain static the extra 2½ per cent. will be coming from the grower, no-one else. The grower's static price will be reduced.

What the Minister has said really comes down to two important points. I do not know whether the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works should be relieved of the responsibility of acting as constructing authority for the Brisbane Market Trust. This is one point we will have to consider very carefully. I am pleased to see that a maximum has been set to the area of land that can be excised and sold. I do feel that a mistake was made in the tenure. The granting of leasehold tenure to the Trust may have been of some assistance in that it would not have been paying off land on a freehold basis, which, as is suggested in the report, has become something of an embarrassment.

We will examine the Bill carefully. If we feel its provisions are good we will commend them, but if we do not we will criticise the Bill and give our reasons for that criticism at the second-reading stage.

**Mr. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha) (11.50 a.m.):** I do not think we really have a clear-cut picture before us today. There are a number of imponderables and a number of matters that should receive a great deal more consideration. We all realise that satisfactory marketing arrangements are vital to the primary producers of the State. We also

realise that, in the merchandising of the end product, the commission deducted from the sale of such produce can be taken in as an item of cost of production. It is an amount that must be deducted from the primary producer's gross return to obtain his net return.

Over a great number of months there have been rumblings in relation to the matter raised by the hon. member for Barcoo, namely, the commission chargeable. We know that at the moment it is 10 per cent. on the sale price of the produce and there has been a rather concerted move, particularly by the private agents at the market, to increase the commission rate to 12½ per cent.

We now know that a provision in the Bill enables the Brisbane Market Trust to sell up to a maximum of 25 acres of the land presently contained in the market area. There are a number of matters that should be investigated. The first one is the way this land was conveyed to the Market Trust. Obviously, as has been mentioned by other hon. members, this area was part freehold land and part Crown land which, I would suggest without making a title search, was conveyed to the Market Trust by what might be described as a restricted grant in trust—in fee simple, possibly, but restricted because we have already found that legislation is necessary to enable the sale of this land to be effected. Had it been unencumbered fee-simple tenure, possibly the Market Trust could have disposed of it without any reference to Parliament. When considering the disposal of the land to the Market Trust in the first instance, we must look at the title or the restricted tenure we gave to the Trust. I suggest this has quite some bearing on the price charged by the Crown for the land. By virtue of this Bill we shall waive any restrictions in relation to at least 25 acres of the land to enable the Trust to sell it in fee simple, presumably to the highest bidder. I do not know—and we will not know until we see the Bill—the purpose for which the land is being sold. I should say that the purpose for which the land can be used would be dictated by an overriding authority above the Market Trust; it would depend on the zoning under the town plan for Brisbane. The move to sell the land stems primarily, I suggest, from a desire to obtain additional revenue, and obviously the Market Trust envisages a large capital appreciation on the sale of the 25 acres. I believe that this capital, in the hands of the Market Trust, will relieve it of some indebtedness and will be directed towards reducing some of its commitments. One might readily ask whether this is a gift of money to the Trust in an effort to hold the commission rate at 10 per cent. rather than have it raised as has been mooted.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** How can you associate that with the commission?

**Mr. LICKISS:** I do not want to go into the economic theories behind this, but if the Brisbane Market Trust is committed to a certain repayment over a number of years and we infuse something like \$250,000 by way of immediate repayment we cut down the indebtedness and therefore can balance one against the other. I suggest it is a very short-term view.

I believe that the nigger in the woodpile in terms of primary-producer marketing at the market site is the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing. It is an agent that is granted both Federal and State Government concessions. It competes unfairly with private agents. There are certain levies to which the C.O.D. has access that enable it to boast openly that it advertises more than private agents. But it is given the incentive and the right to do so. It is not subject to the impact of taxation as the private agent is. The growth of the C.O.D. has been considerable.

**Mr. Lee:** It has trebled itself.

**Mr. LICKISS:** That is correct. It acts in an octopus-like way. We see private agents going out of business and the C.O.D. becoming stronger every day.

The Government has to ask itself whether this accelerated growth of the C.O.D. is in the interests of the free-enterprise system under which we live, of the producer bodies, and of the community generally. It is on these points that we should critically examine the Bill. If the accelerated growth of the C.O.D. continues there will be no private agents at the market. There will be monopolistic control of primary-producer marketing. I suggest that no-one would want to see that situation eventuate.

I do not want to speak at any great length on this matter. I shall be interested to see the text of the Bill. I suggest that the sale of this land is a means by which additional capital will be infused into the Market Trust and by which it is hoped that the commission rate will be retained at 10 per cent. and not increased to 12½ per cent. I suggest that the move for this increase has been caused by the unfair competition, with the advantages granted to it, of the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing in its marketing operations at Rocklea. A free-enterprise Government must protect private industries against monopolies, of whatever form they may be. This applies equally to Government-sponsored monopolistic systems which are not in the interests of the common good.

**Mr. NEWTON** (Belmont) (11.59 a.m.): I have an interest in this Bill because there are a number of small-crop farmers in my electorate. The present market is quite handy to them. If they transport their own fruit and vegetables to the market, they pass the railway junction where they can off-load any commodities that they wish to send interstate.

The situation of the market is of great assistance to producers of small crops in the Redlands district and the Capalaba and Upper Mt. Gravatt areas in my electorate. There is, of course, some merit in what was said by the hon. member for Barcoo concerning decentralisation and the establishing of a market on the north side of Brisbane.

One thing that gives me some concern is the proposal to allow the Trust to dispose of land surplus to its requirements. In addition to the facilities provided by the Trust for agents to display and handle fruit, vegetables and produce, there are on the site shops of many other types that are now quite important to those who have business with the market.

**Mr. Lee:** The market is the best in the Southern Hemisphere.

**Mr. NEWTON:** As the hon. member for Yeronga suggests, a very good job has been done there. The Trust, however, will have to give some consideration to the way in which land disposed of will be used. After all, almost all vegetables taken to the market by farmers could be damaged by the discharges of some industries if they were allowed to operate in close proximity. Vegetables such as lettuce, cabbages and cauliflower are transported in open cases, and it will be noted that they are always packed with the leaves down so that they cannot be spoiled by outside influences. Heavy industry, including the plant of A. Sargeant & Co. Pty. Ltd., is already established along Sherwood Road, and an experimental farm of the Department of Primary Industries is just across the road. I hope that the Trust will take into consideration the possibility of contamination by industrial discharges, as this is a matter of considerable importance to farmers.

**Mr. Dewar:** The town plan would not permit noxious industries there.

**Mr. NEWTON:** If that is so, that problem is overcome. Small-crop farmers do endeavour to present to the public fruit and vegetables in fresh condition.

I am also concerned about the possible effect of the Bill on produce agents. There are in my electorate quite a number who handle chaff and other stock feeds. It is true that they also handle heavier lines, such as potatoes and pumpkins. Onions also are handled in very large quantities. Beans, peas and cucumbers, for example, are usually sent to the market in cases or in sugar-bags, but heavier vegetables are transported to the market in what are known as sacks and are handled in large quantities.

I have been concerned for some time about the condition of the heavier vegetables when they arrive at the market and about their condition when they are sold in shops in various suburbs in the metropolitan area of Brisbane. If a market were established on the south side of the river and another market on the north side of the river,

as envisaged in the original Act, inspections of produce of the type to which I am referring could be carried out more easily than if sub-agencies were allowed to be established in a number of places. I refer mainly to produce agents, because they carry the lines with which I am dealing.

It is well known, as the Minister said, that one can buy vegetables of the heavier type by the sack, or in whatever quantity one wants, in any suburb in which a produce agent is operating. Farmers do a particularly good job in packing fruit and vegetables, and any person who goes to the market to purchase those items can see them laid out and examine what he is purchasing. However, the same is not always true of onions and potatoes. Having worked on the land and been connected with the growing of potatoes and onions, I know that the methods used to grow them today are very different from those used before World War II. In many instances they are grown under irrigation. Of course, the demand for fruit and vegetables in Queensland during World War II, to feed not only our own forces but also the forces of our Allies, made it imperative to use methods that would produce them much more quickly than the methods used when I worked on the land.

There is a tendency today, with crops being grown under irrigation—pushed along, one might say—perhaps to harvest them before they are ready to be harvested, and this is done quite often with onions and potatoes. In my opinion, it is not right to do that. When I worked on the land I was amazed by what was done with potatoes. Small potatoes were never sent to the market to be sold. The growers tried to use them themselves or fed them to the pigs on the farms, and some types of pumpkin were treated similarly. In those days the policy was to give the community vegetables of the best possible quality.

It is now proposed to remove some items from the provisions of the Act, and sweet potatoes and swede turnips are included. One wonders where it will all end. If turnips are excluded, one might then find that parsnips are excluded, and then carrots. There is not much difference between these vegetables but they are not all sold in bulk quantities as are potatoes, onions and pumpkins.

I think this aspect of the matter should be watched very carefully. Whatever may be contained in the Bill will be closely looked at by us because we feel that what has been done to assist the small-crop farmers in near-country and outer-metropolitan electorates has been of great value to them. Of course, much better facilities are provided than existed at the former Brisbane market.

All these matters should be given careful consideration, but I think the most important is inspection. I do not think farmers deliberately harvest crops early but the question of

getting a crop out quickly often arises in the event of rain, which affects some crops if they are left in the ground. If they are not harvested quickly the farmer suffers severe loss. Nevertheless, I think far too much soil is leaving farms in bags. Whatever decentralisation may occur, I hope the inspectors continue to do a good job in the interests not only of the farmer but also of the consumer who purchases the goods.

**Mr. McKECHNIE** (Carnarvon) (12.12 p.m.): The vesting of the market site in the Brisbane Market Trust on freehold tenure was an excellent idea to help the whole community. Being vested in it on freehold tenure the sale of portion of it will now be used to assist various sections of the community. It will be used to help primary producers and it will also help consumers, whether they be in Brisbane or in the wider sphere, in many parts of Queensland. These markets do not service Brisbane only but a large area of the south-eastern corner of the State, and in some cases a much wider area still. The sale of this 25 acres will provide immediately an area for industry and, as the hon. member for Wavell has pointed out, industry needs it. It will be of great assistance in that particular area.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** The report says that the Trust will be embarrassed if it does not sell it.

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** That does not apply to industry.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** It applies to the Market Trust.

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** I shall come to that angle directly. The important point is that it provides finance that may be used to reclaim and improve another section of the market site area that at present is not being used. This land may be of use for expansion of the market if needed in the years ahead. Consequently, portion of the proceeds of this sale can be used to build up land and have a site ready for expansion if and when such necessity arises.

It has been suggested that this 25 acres could sell at \$250,000. Portion of this amount could be used to reduce the amount of debt to be serviced by the Market Trust, thus allowing the Trust to provide cheaper facilities for agents and so assist them in their over-all costs. It is particularly important that commission rates be held at 10 per cent. It is not only important, it is a "must". Held they must be because, as other speakers, and reports, have pointed out, the price of fruit and vegetables has not improved over the past 10 years.

Consequently costs must be held as far as possible. Most other costs have increased. These costs we must hold. A reduction in the over-all indebtedness of the Brisbane Market Trust could indirectly give some assistance in this direction.

**Mr. Newton:** Do you mean a stabilised price?

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** By stabilising the commission component of the cost of production of the various fruits and vegetables. By so doing we would assist the growers because we would be holding their cost structure. As I said earlier, it must be held.

Of course, it is the duty and purpose of an agent to seek new and better markets and to provide a service to growers. The agents should seek better markets and better prices. That is why there are agents in any type of business. I do not wish to see this responsibility of the agent taken away from him. Agents should justify the 10 per cent. commission paid by the growers in seeking better outlets for the growers' product.

I return now to the point about the land. As I said, I think it was a very good idea that it should be held under freehold tenure. It provides an opportunity to sell 25 acres and so assist the fluid finances of the Trust. What are the needs of the future in that particular area? At the moment an area of 36 acres is being used at the market site. This land can be improved out of the money obtained for the land that is sold. The land will then be ready for expansion should it be required.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** There will be 64 acres remaining.

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** Yes. There is ample room.

I am of the opinion that in the future fresh fruit and vegetable markets will not be needed to the extent they are today because the tendency throughout the world is to process fruit and vegetables at their source of production. Whether it is better for the community or not I do not know, but we are turning more and more to bottled, canned and snap-frozen fruit and vegetables in a form that is readily prepared by the working housewife. Consequently the trend is away from big fruit and vegetable markets and towards processing.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** You can visualise a market on the north side?

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** Yes, and I can foresee some expansion at the present market site at Rocklea as the city grows. We must keep in mind the fact that the market was built in its present form for a city of 1,000,000 people. The growth of the city will assist the agents, particularly the small ones who are struggling for existence, in that they will have a greater turnover in the same premises, for which they will be paying relatively the same rental.

At the moment, with 36 built-up acres, there is ample land to cater for the needs of 1,000,000 people. If Brisbane grows a little more there will be plenty of ground that can be prepared from part of the proceeds of this sale. If the city grows to an exceptional size in the years ahead, naturally there will be a decentralised market

system with a return to a market on the north side of the city. Consequently, I am doubtful if more than 50 acres would ever be required for the present market.

There is a possibility that some processing may be done adjacent to the market site, although I do not think this will happen. I believe the trend will be towards processing in the area of production, but it may be necessary to do some pre-packing and re-grading elsewhere, and some processing of fruit and vegetables that are not quite up to standard may also be done there. That will improve the standard of our fresh-fruit market. Throughout the fruit industry we are aiming at higher standards and, as processing develops, we will find that an article of a much better quality will appear on the fresh-fruit market.

I cannot visualise any trouble in selling the 25 acres. I believe it is also necessary and desirable to lease the remaining 60-odd acres, possibly in two sections, one for a long term and the other for a medium term, so that they may be called in and used when necessary.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (12.21 p.m.): I have a few observations to make about the Bill. I use the word "observations" because I do not wish to appear critical of the intents and purposes of the Bill. After examining the proposal I find myself very much in line with the thoughts expressed by the hon. member for Wavell a couple of weeks ago. I have formed my opinion very largely as the result of my experience as Minister for Lands, when it became my responsibility from time to time to resume land for Crown purposes. I agree entirely with the hon. member for Wavell that the area of land available to the Crown, or held by the Crown, in and around Brisbane is very limited. When one is entrusted with the responsible duty of resuming land for Crown purposes one wakes up to the stark truth of what it actually costs. Very often the inconvenience caused to people as a result of resumption means, if the case goes to court, that the Crown has to pay a terrific price for the land.

Whilst this area of land may not be required by the Market Trust at present, in a short space of time it will be required by the Crown for some other purpose. If it has to be held for a few years I am sure that the appreciation in value of the land will more than compensate for what may be obtained by selling it at the moment. The earnings of the land, or the interest on the value of the land, means something, but, on the other hand, we must take into account its future appreciated value.

I am not in a position to say what the land will be required for, but I am sure it will be required for some Crown purpose within the next few years. If we look around the city we see that it is very difficult to place industries adjacent to that land. It may be required for something complementary to the

fruit and vegetable industry. The hon. member for Carnarvon said that the trend in fruit and vegetables will be to canning and chilling. I agree with him. However, when we consider that fruit and vegetables must be sent to a central place we should remember that most of our districts are too small for the establishment of canning works. If canning works are established they require considerable supplies, without which they are uneconomic. What is better than bringing them to a place such as that where the present market is situated? Within easy reach of that point is my electorate, the Lockyer electorate and the Stanthorpe district.

We must also bear in mind the question of an over-supply at the market, which happens quite frequently. If it is not possible to place fruit and vegetables on the market within a week they should go through the cannery rather than be given away at any price. I am considering this from the aspect of both the producer and the consumer. The producer of fruit and vegetables, which are perishable products, must keep in mind the interest of the consumer at all times; if he does not, his prospects fall to the ground. There must be a backstop, and, if there has to be one, where should it be?

I realise that there is still more land available. Nevertheless if we are in a bad way it is not advisable to sell this land just for the sake of raising money.

Many side issues have been introduced. I am not offering any severe criticism, but I feel so strongly on this point that I want to record my views. The time will come when this land will be required for Crown purposes, so we should not take the risk of passing it on to private enterprise as either fee simple or a lease. Brisbane is rapidly developing both residentially and industrially, and there is not a great deal of land left, particularly on this side of the city. There has been a real explosion in the growth of secondary industry, population, and the needs of the people, so that we must be very careful what we do with perishable products like fruit and vegetables.

Criticism has been levelled at the C.O.D. As a primary producer I have watched the trend over the years and must defend the C.O.D. It was created not at the hands of this Government or any other Country Party Government; it was created at the express wish of the primary producers themselves. Legislation was prepared by a Labour Government just before I entered Parliament. But we must cast our minds back years before that. The marketing of fruit and vegetables has always been a contentious matter. There is really no competition at the markets, but it is difficult to suggest something that is better than the present system. Goods are consigned to the agent, who sells them to best advantage. On some days there is no advantage and he sells them at give-away prices or actually gives them away.

For years we tried to devise a better system. As a result of our consideration over the years, and an appeal to the Government of the day for some machinery of our own, the C.O.D. was created. It represents all of the people who care to send to it. It is not a monopoly as has been suggested. A producer can send his fruit and vegetables to the C.O.D. or to a private agent, or he can take his own produce to Brisbane and sell it there. The C.O.D. represents producers at the markets.

Of course, there has to be a market of some type in which to sell, and the C.O.D., acting for all the producers, was the farmers' only real defence. It is very easy now to say that the C.O.D. is an octopus and a monopolist. It is, of course, neither. No producer is denied the right to sell where and when he likes. The farmer is the one who makes the choice, and in doing so he has to consider whether a private agent will do everything possible in his favour. Some agents, of course, do a very good job, and I give them credit for it. It could be said that in some cases a private agent would perhaps get a better price than the C.O.D. would. In the interests of the producer and the consumer, efforts were made to set up depots in various parts of the State. In some cases that move has not been entirely successful. The fact remains, however, that it was a genuine effort to do something for those who produce the goods.

I ask hon. members to be realistic in the view they take of fruit and vegetable growers. Generally speaking, they operate in a small way. They do not make a lot of money, and they have to get the best possible prices for their products. Another peculiarity about fruit and vegetable marketing is the multitude of variations in quality. There is good, bad, indifferent, and even worse than that, if I may so describe it; in some cases the product is not even edible. Nevertheless, a market has to be found for it, which makes this a rather contentious matter.

I do not know whether the Bill deals with commission rates; I do not think it does. It has been mentioned that the commission rate is 10 per cent., which in my opinion is quite considerable. I know there is a move afoot to increase it to 12½ per cent. Again let us be realists. At a commission rate of 10 per cent., one agent gets the return of 10 growers, and it is safe to say that many agents handle the crops of 50, 60, or even 100 growers. If the agent is getting a raw deal, what kind of a deal must the grower be getting?

Obviously the Minister has, on the advice of his advisers and a number of members on this side of the Chamber, introduced the Bill with the best of intentions. However, my experience, together with the shortage of land in and around Brisbane, makes me very concerned about it. It is not known when a market subsidiary will have to be established, and it will have to be set up close to the market. I have made scores of mistakes throughout my life, and my experience has

shown me that we always aim too low. We do not realise the expansion and progress now proceeding. This State is jumping and flying along. Go to the bush and see what is happening; look at what is being done in the city. Let us plan for the future. I cannot help but feel that this proposal is not doing that, at least to the extent that I think it should.

**Mr. MURRAY** (Clayfield) (12.34 p.m.): Many hon. members appear to be concerned about the disposal of the Trust's land. I would prefer to see it held, under the trusteeship of the Department of Industrial Development, for future use, as the State is constantly running out of land. However, I shall not make an issue of that matter today. The Brisbane Market Trust has considered the position; the Government has considered the position. All I can say on this occasion is that if ever an issue of this sort comes before hon. members again, there will be room for very grave concern.

I think that the Trust has settled down. Let us give it credit and say that it can dispose of the land in question, which is said to be an inferior section that the Trust does not require. It may be fair enough to do that; but I should prefer the land to be held because, as I said earlier, we do run out of land. Who is to say what land will be required in that area 20, 30, 50 years hence? And that is the equivalent of only five minutes in the span of time over which Governments will be concerned about the matter.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** The Trust claims that paying for the land is embarrassing it financially.

**Mr. MURRAY:** The fact is that, although the Committee is agreeing to the proposal, it is, I think, expressing concern about the way in which it is being done. It is obvious that the price obtained by the Trust when it disposes of the land will be injected into the operations of the Trust with a view to giving them greater stability.

How long will all this continue? The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha has touched upon matters of concern; other hon. members have done so by inference. Is this to be the end of it? Does this finalise and stabilise the problem that the Trust has? I suggest that possibly the Committee is dealing with the question from the wrong end. Without wishing to cover again the ground that the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha covered very competently, I suggest that the Committee surely should look at the problem out at the market.

The C.O.D. has performed, and is performing, a very useful function. I have great arguments, as have many other hon. members, in a philosophical sense against bodies of this type growing up and extending their activities in private enterprise with statutory protection and concessions.

**Mr. Porter:** In fact, they are not in competition. They have an undue advantage that reduces it.

**Mr. MURRAY:** That is true. They cannot really be in competition if they have statutory concessions of which they can take advantage. The ability to take advantage of concessions in trade operations outside this particular operation at the market varies considerably. Nevertheless, the great danger lies in that direction.

If we leave the C.O.D. as it is statutorily organised and established, we want from it the greatest possible efficiency. Let us assume that we have efficiency right through its operations and through the operations of the Market Trust. How in the name of heaven can the private operator compete? He cannot. He pays taxation; he is out in the marketplace of free enterprise. In the long run, he cannot compete if the C.O.D. has the sort of efficiency that one would expect it to have as a statutory body. Herein lies its advantage.

We must go back to the problem again. I think the Committee should be asking the Minister and the Government to look at the problem from the other end, to see whether or not they should be beginning to look at the regulation of this form of activity to give it some balance and encourage more healthy competition than is evident today.

Of course, we all have the greatest sympathy with growers of fruit and vegetables because, without a doubt, they are engaged in a very hazardous occupation. We must inject as much stability as we can—certainly as much as our philosophy will allow us to inject—into the organised marketing of their products. But I cannot see any merit whatever in allowing a statutory organisation to gradually grow and put its competitors out of business. The majority of the growers, as the hon. member for Fassifern said, originally wanted stability.

**Mr. E. G. W. Wood:** They still do.

**Mr. MURRAY:** A great many of them, I say to the hon. member for Logan, do not support the C.O.D. For one reason or another they want the competition that other agents can supply, and that is healthy. The hon. member for Logan wants this, too, because if we had only the C.O.D. operating at the market, what form of operation would we finally get? Surely it is obvious to hon. members that we do not want that, for the very reason that T.A.A. is a better airline because of Ansett-A.N.A. The same principles apply.

**Mr. Newton:** There are certain commodities that some agents will not handle.

**Mr. MURRAY:** That may be so; nevertheless, we should be looking at the manner in which we can assist healthy competition, which surely could be the easiest way of serving the producer best.

**Mr. Sherrington:** Surely you are not serious in saying that you believe there is competition where monopolies exist.

**Mr. MURRAY:** That is precisely what I am saying but I cannot get it across to the hon. member for Salisbury. That is the great danger. It is for that very reason that we do not want the C.O.D. to blanket the whole thing.

**Mr. Sherrington:** Yet you go along with private monopoly.

**Mr. MURRAY:** I do not go along with any form of monopoly at any time. I would go along with this argument with the hon. member for Salisbury, who knows perfectly well that the people who go to the market and those who send their produce to the market are better served by a choice of agents, whether it be the C.O.D. or any private agent of their choice. Hon. members who represent electorates that send produce to these markets also know perfectly well that they are better served. I make my suggestion for the very reason that the hon. member for Salisbury raises; we do not want to see this swamping out. This would be very bad indeed. It is there, I think, that the role of the Government comes in.

**Mr. Sherrington:** You ought to look at the bread-baking industry.

**Mr. MURRAY:** There are all sorts of things we might look at, but when we statutorily establish such an organisation as the C.O.D. we have the obligation as a Government to watch its activities closely. That is a field that is wide open to us at the moment.

I conclude by saying to the Minister, "Please make sure that this type of proposition is not going to occur again." I do not think this Assembly would be happy to go along with it. The farmer cannot keep on selling his back paddock and remain in farming. He cannot lop it off piece by piece. The need for land in this city, which the Government can control by one means or another, is so urgent for the foreseeable future that we should think twice about ever doing this sort of thing again.

**Mr. CHINCHEN** (Mt. Gravatt) (12.44 p.m.): My main concern in this matter is not great, but what worries me a little is what prompted, if not the whole of this Bill, then the major portion of it. The commission agents are the big consideration. We know that some little time ago they endeavoured to introduce some form of credit control, which would have been very unfortunate. The next move was to endeavour to increase commission rates. I feel that we must all thank the C.O.D. for holding the line on that one. It played a very important part in holding the situation.

Here again I feel that the whole move is an endeavour to assist the agents, and one asks why. What have these people done to justify this? We wonder why fruit and vegetable prices in general have not increased in the last 10 years. We know how costs have gone up. We know how wages have gone up over this period. The return to the people

who supply our food has not gone up proportionately during this affluent period. In a powerful editorial in "Queensland Fruit and Vegetable News", the C.O.D. indicate that perhaps some of this is due to the commission agents themselves. That editorial suggests that perhaps the closest parallel to the agents at the market are those in the motor industry. They both endeavour to clear all their wares at any price but the motor-car agents bear the loss, if any. The manufacturer is paid the full price for his car, and if there is any loss the agent accepts it. If the agent at the market decides to clear his floor—this probably starts shortly after lunch—he can sell the product at any price. If the agent gives the fruit away it does not cost him anything—the grower is the one who suffers. This is one of the problems.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** Wouldn't the volume of supply be the crux of the whole matter?

**Mr. CHINCHEN:** Not altogether. One agent may have too much of one particular product left, and he knows that tomorrow morning he has another 5,000 cases of it coming in. Therefore he clears his floor. If he starts getting rid of his product at half past 12 or 1 o'clock the other agents soon know that his price has dropped to \$1.50 so they all drop the price to \$1.50. That is the sort of thing that happens.

The editorial in "Queensland Fruit and Vegetable News" asks what the agents have done by way of promotion. Any promotion that has been done has been by the growers themselves through their levy to the C.O.D. The agents do nothing. The product is put on their floor and taken away by somebody else. I cannot fathom why they are not doing well enough. Apparently the thought is, "Let us give the agents some relief by selling part of the Trust's land. Get rid of the burden of the debt on the Brisbane Market Trust and this will help the agents."

The report of the Brisbane Market Trust says—

"It continues to exercise the attention of the Trust how the cost of land acquired for the new Market site, and which is a charge against Market operation, might be offset by the use which may be made of land surplus to the requirement of the ultimate development of the Market."

The report gives the figure of \$123,000 for 125 acres, so that 25 acres would be about \$3,000 a year at 6 per cent. Is this an embarrassment, particularly when the report indicates that the cash operating account for the year discloses a surplus of revenue over expenditure of \$26,253? It shows also that all Trust contractual obligations falling due were met.

This is an important item in the report—

"It is a relevant matter to the Report on these 1966/67 Accounts that on the basis thereof, the Trust has determined a

reduction in the rental as from 1st July, 1967, of wholesalers occupying selling floors within the Market."

That proves that the market is doing quite well. It is taking care of its obligations. As to the land, which is as valuable as we know it to be in an ever-developing city, I am a little concerned, not because the Trust wishes to sell it but because of the purposes for which it is being sold. I am a little apprehensive that, after a period—any money that is available can be easily disposed of; that presents no problem at all—this land having been disposed of, another request may be forthcoming for the sale of another 25 acres, or some other area.

My main concern, however, is the relationship between the agents and the growers. We are told that the growers are not getting a proper deal, and I do not know why they are not. There is a problem here because the growers' union, the people who speak for the growers, is the C.O.D. That is as it should be. It should be the growers' union, acting in the interests of the growers, battling and striving to fight the Market Trust, the agents and the people who handle the produce. How can the C.O.D. do that when it is the biggest stall-holder in the market? It is a major problem. I believe that the commercial activities of the C.O.D. should be divorced from its other operations. It is ridiculous to have on the Market Trust as a growers' representative—I am speaking of Mr. Flewell-Smith, whom I greatly admire—one who is not a grower, but who in fact is the biggest stall-holder representative.

**An Opposition Member:** He used to be a grower.

**Mr. CHINCHEN:** That is not the point. A grower may have a fight with the C.O.D. If he goes to the Market Trust it says, "See the growers' representative", and he meets the man he is having a fight with. There is no point in that. The growers should be just as organised as the commission agents, but they are not. The agents are few in number, but they know what they want and they know how to try to get it. They are looking after their own interests—a pressure group, I might say—while the growers' organisation has developed into a big commercial empire. That is what it is today and, to a great extent, the grower is forgotten. That is a great shame. The growers should have their own voice, not one that is directly connected with a commercial enterprise, because their interests are being lost sight of. That is a major point, and one that should be stressed.

My main concern in this matter is to ensure that by some means the growers—the most important people in the community—are looked after. I believe that honest competition among the agents, with nobody having an advantage over anybody else, is in the best interests of the growers. It is obvious that the C.O.D. can afford to pay a great deal of money for sites vacated by agents because



of its statutory advantages. That is not true, honest competition. I should like to see straight-out competition, with the C.O.D. divorced from its commercial empire, so that the growers may have a direct voice in all these affairs.

This is important legislation, but I should like to think that never again will there be before us a measure to alienate land from the Market Trust.

**Hon. J. A. ROW** (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.49 p.m.), in reply: In closing the debate on the introductory stage of the City of Brisbane Market Act Amendment Bill I propose to make brief reference to some of the points that have been raised by hon. members. However, I should much prefer to develop them at the second-reading stage.

When referring to the proposed amendment dealing with the definition of "vegetables", the Leader of the Opposition suggested that perhaps the new definition did not go far enough. He expressed the view that potatoes, pumpkins and onions should be officially classified as vegetables and that I, or the Trust, should allow the fruit and vegetable supplier to supply these commodities as well. Let me say that the purpose of the amendment is to extend the definition of "vegetables" to include swede turnips and sweet potatoes so that they can be sold by fruit and vegetable agents.

In addition the amendment will allow potatoes, pumpkins and onions to be classified as vegetables at the appropriate time. It could be some years ahead, just as the time is now opportune to classify swede turnips and sweet potatoes as vegetables. Now is not an appropriate time to classify potatoes, pumpkins and onions as vegetables. If this were done, the traditional handlers of these commodities would not be able to trade in them anywhere in the City of Brisbane until 31 August, 1974. I would add that although potatoes, pumpkins, and onions may not be classed as vegetables, there will be no barrier to these items being supplied by small-crop growers or to their being sold by fruit and vegetable agents who were trading in them at the old market. Marketing is in the process of change. The Bill provides machinery to enable the market set-up to keep in step with the times.

The Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Barcoo suggested that Parliament is being asked to accept blindly the Co-ordinator-General's request that he no longer be the constructing authority for the Trust. I can assure hon. members that such is not the case. The Co-ordinator-General was made constructing authority for a particular purpose, namely, to construct a new public market for the wholesaling of fruit and vegetables in the City of Brisbane. This he has done in a most capable manner. Surely the Co-ordinator-General's resources can be more gainfully employed in developing other major projects than in calling

tenders and supervising the odd extension or new building for the Trust. The Trust is quite capable of doing that.

In fact, the Co-ordinator-General was prompted to make this request when it was found that the provisions of the Act made it incumbent upon him to act as constructing authority in respect of an extension to the picking-over shed, which merely involved the addition of three modules identical to those already in use. He was wasting the good services of his men in doing something that the Trust is quite able to do.

It was no surprise to me when the difference between the wholesale and retail prices of fruit and vegetables was raised by the Leader of the Opposition. This was the subject of a survey by officers of the department two years ago and quite an extensive report was produced. The matter is of general concern, but it is of particular concern to the two groups at the extremities of the distribution chain, that is, the growers and the consumers. I do not think we can blame the producer or the consumer, or any intermediary, for the size of the price gap. Nevertheless it is certain that a strong wholesale market is necessary for efficient distribution.

In this regard I point out that the effectiveness of a market can be reduced by lack of grower support and by weak and inefficient sellers. Maximum through-put at the market not only promotes greater market efficiency but also minimises the unit cost of selling and tends to keep prices more stable. The important point is that we do not go along with the pessimists who claim that the cost of distribution cannot be contained.

The question of authorising the Trust to sell a small part of the land that was acquired as the site for the new market is a very important one. It was not introduced without mature consideration of the city's future market needs.

I propose to deal with this question in some detail at the second-reading stage. At this stage, I feel it is sufficient to say firstly that any land alienated from the market would certainly be developed as an industrial site, and secondly, that the Bill contains adequate safeguards against indiscriminate sale by the Trust.

I shall, in my second-reading speech, deal with other matters raised by hon. members.

Motion (Mr. Row) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Row, read a first time.

The House adjourned at 1.1 p.m.