

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 1968

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr. Speaker:—

Water Act Amendment Bill.

River Improvement Trust Act Amendment Bill.

Government Loan Bill.

Land Tax Act Amendment Bill.

Succession and Probate Duties Act Amendment Bill.

QUESTIONS

PRIVATE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

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

(1) How many expert or other advisory committees composed of one or more private citizens, as distinct from public servants or Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, are at present inquiring into matters referred to them by the Government?

(2) What is the purpose of each committee?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "It would appear that the types of Committees to which the Honourable Member refers would normally be constituted for the purpose of advising the Government on internal domestic or policy matters; in other words, subjects which, at that time, are the Government's own business. However, should this not be so and if he would care to be more explicit, I will endeavour to provide the information the Honourable Member seeks."

ANTI-EROSION WORK ON GOLD COAST BEACHES

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

(1) Since July 1, 1967, what action has been taken by (a) the Government and (b) the Gold Coast City Council to overcome the erosion problem on the Gold Coast and to safeguard it from future erosion?

(2) What contracts have been let or are planned for Gold Coast anti-erosion work and at what cost?

(3) Was any money spent by (a) the Government and (b) the Gold Coast City Council on restorative and preventive work prior to the letting of any contracts? If so, how much?

(4) How are any of these works, which were arranged by either (a) the Government or (b) the Gold Coast City Council, being financed?

Answers:—

(1) "(a) The investigation work commenced in 1966 has been continued. The Government has also assisted the Gold Coast City Council in the planning, design, and supervision of construction of boulder walls, and the Department of Main Roads has constructed a boulder wall from Narrow Neck to Higman Street. (b) The Gold Coast City Council has taken immediate action, during and following cyclone periods, to restore damage to public areas. The Council has also proceeded with boulder-wall construction, and dozing of beach sand to reform dunes."

(2) "A major contract for boulder-wall construction has been let for \$789,160, and a minor one for supply of sand to Main Beach for \$9,600. A further contract is planned for the supply of sand, estimated to cost \$10,000."

(3) "(a) Yes—\$101,402 by Department of Main Roads on boulder wall, also \$80,000 towards restoration of damage. (b) Yes—\$300,068 towards restoration of damage and \$25,000 (approximately) on dozing of beach sand."

(4) "(a and b) Restoration of damage—Original emergent expenditure—Debenture loan, \$120,000; State grant, \$80,000; Council revenue, \$11,416; further emergent expenditure—Debenture loan, \$240,000; State grant, \$80,000; Commonwealth grant, \$80,000. Boulder wall, original allocation—Debenture loan,

\$600,000; State subsidy, \$150,000. Further allocation, 1968-69—Debenture loan, \$436,000; State subsidy, \$109,000. Dozing of beach sand—Council revenue, \$25,000 (approximately)."

EXPENDITURE BY RAILWAY DEPARTMENT ON ADVERTISING

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

(1) During each of the calendar years 1956, 1957, 1962, 1965 and to date in 1968, how much has the Railway Department spent on advertising through Press, radio, television and theatre films and slides, (a) in Queensland and (b) interstate for the purposes of (i) seeking staff, (ii) other administrative purposes and (iii) seeking passengers and freight?

(2) How much of the money was specifically spent on television advertising in each year?

(3) In addition to this advertising, does the Railway Department spend any money on public relations? If so, to what extent and in what manner?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "The advertising payments made by the Railway Department for the financial years ended June, 1956, 1957, 1962, 1965 and 1968 were as set out in the following tabulation:—

For Year Ended June			Press	Radio	TV	Theatre	Total
			\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
1956—Queensland	..	..	16,437.27	58.99	..	77.75	16,574.01
Interstate	..	..	1,329.67	..	..	..	1,329.67
Total	..	..	17,766.94	58.99	..	77.75	17,903.68
1957—Queensland	..	..	9,175.84	26.21	..	36.50	9,238.55
Interstate	..	..	1,449.80	..	..	..	1,449.80
Total	..	..	10,625.64	26.21	..	36.50	10,688.35
1962—Queensland	..	..	11,315.74	14.00	..	47.30	11,377.04
Interstate	..	..	881.86	..	..	..	881.86
Total	..	..	12,197.60	14.00	..	47.30	12,258.90
1965—Queensland	..	..	18,414.25	57.00	..	..	18,471.25
Interstate	..	..	687.45	..	..	..	687.45
Total	..	..	19,101.70	57.00	..	..	19,158.70
1968—Queensland	..	..	30,307.58	30.00	430.00	312.00	31,079.58
Interstate	..	..	488.99	..	..	..	488.99
Total	..	..	30,796.57	30.00	430.00	312.00	31,568.57

The information sought as to expense in respect of seeking staff, other administrative purposes and seeking passengers and freight are not separately recorded, and the extraction of this information for all of the years would involve considerable clerical time, the expenditure of which is not considered justified. However, the information was extracted for the year ended June 30, 1968, under the heading sought and is as follows:—

For the year ended June, 1968

	Queens-land	Inter-state	
	\$	\$	
1. Seeking staff ..	2,147.52	488.99	
2. Other Administrative purposes ..	2,847.89	..	
3. Seeking passengers and freight ..	26,084.17	..	
	31,079.58	488.99	\$31,568.57

Advertising payments made by the Railway Department for the three months ended September 30, 1968, were:—

Press	Radio	TV	Theatre	Total
\$ 9,820.47	\$ 87	\$ Nil	\$ 66	\$ 9,973.47

All of which was spent in Queensland."

ISSUE OF PROVISIONAL DRIVERS' LICENCES

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

Has his attention been drawn to the leading article in *The Courier-Mail* of September 25, headed "How do we beat inexperience"? If so, has consideration been given for provisional driving licences to be issued to junior car drivers and, if not, why not?

Answer:—

"Yes, the issue of provisional drivers' licences to all applicants seeking to be licensed for the first time and irrespective of age, has been the subject of careful consideration by members of the Standing Committee for Road Death and Accident Prevention established by Cabinet to advise on Road Safety matters, including this one. One of the reasons for the point system which came into operation on December 1, 1967, was that 17-20-year-olds in this State were under as much control and supervision as those holding provisional licences of all ages in some other States. The question of provisional licences as operating in New South Wales is being kept under review by S.C.R.D.A.P. At this stage it is difficult to assess whether or not provisional licences in those States has reduced deaths on the road. Again I bring it to public attention that Queensland is the only State to reduce the number killed on the road this year as compared with last year."

DE-REGISTRATION OF TAXI-CABS

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

Is there an inflexible arbitrary rule compelling the removal from registration of taxi-cabs that are more than six years old? If so, as the useful and efficient life of a motor vehicle depends not on a rigid age basis but on the care and attention given to it, why is consideration not given to the deregistration of dilapidated taxi-cabs of a lesser age than six years and the re-registration of well-kept taxi-cabs of a greater age than six years?

Answer:—

"There are 2,212 licensed cabs in Queensland. In the public interest it is advisable to specify a limit to the age of a vehicle which may be authorised under license, particularly in Brisbane and provincial cities. This is achieved by stipulating a year of manufacture which varies between medium and heavy 'prestige' type cars. In the former case the requirement is that replacement is required after the model is more than six years old and in the case of the heavy cars eight years. The condition of taxis generally is kept under constant supervision and orders for repairs, reconditioning and if necessary replacement are issued for any unsatisfactory vehicle. This policy is aimed at providing the travelling public with safe as well as comfortable travel in a roadworthy modern vehicle. If the Honourable Member has doubts as to the condition of a particular vehicle and he advises me I shall have appropriate enquiries made."

INSTALLATION OF TRAFFIC LIGHTS, ANNERLEY ROAD—GLADSTONE ROAD JUNCTION, DUTTON PARK

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

(1) Further to my requests for pedestrian-actuated traffic lights to be installed at the junction of Annerley and Gladstone Roads, Dutton Park, will he use his influence with Brisbane City Council to have this necessary safety device installed as soon as possible?

(2) In the meanwhile, will he have the pedestrian crossing at this location adequately controlled by police during the periods when the crossing is used by children who attend the local schools and college?

Answers:—

(1) "The question of whether traffic control light signals should be installed at the intersection of Annerley and Gladstone Roads, Dutton Park, is one for decision by the Brisbane City Council, which has been vested with the full authority for such a determination."

(2) "Other demands on manpower do not make it possible at present for police officers to control these crossings. However, I might point out that, in so far as schools which are situated in the vicinity of this intersection are concerned, at present the pedestrian crossing in Gladstone Road in the vicinity of St. Ita's Convent is manned by a member of the Police Force during morning and afternoon periods. In addition, pedestrian-controlled traffic lights are installed in Annerley Road in the vicinity of the Dutton Park State School."

BASIS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO
NON-STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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

(1) With respect to the proposal in the 1968-69 Budget to initiate, for the first time in Queensland, a scheme of special financial assistance to approved non-State primary schools, will he define an "approved" non-State school?

(2) Will the payment of \$25.00 per student per annum be made on the basis of each child enrolled at the commencement of and during the year?

(3) Will there be any conditions or restrictions attached to this new worthwhile and desirable form of financial assistance?

Answers:—

(1) "An approved non-State primary school is one which in the opinion of the Minister for Education provides satisfactory facilities and efficient and regular instruction in primary-school subjects."

(2) "Three payments will be made each year based on enrolments of eligible pupils at each mid-term date, i.e., March 15, June 15 and September 15."

(3) "No."

POLICE RADAR TRAPS IN KELVIN GROVE
HILL AREA

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

(1) Further to his Answer to my Question on November 7 about the radar trap at the bottom of Kelvin Grove Hill, will he check with the source of his information the matter contained in his Answer, as I possess a ticket which apparently contradicts the information he supplied?

(2) In the light of his further inquiry, will he supply any further information in the matter?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "In response to my direction, a further search was made of the records of the Analytical Section of the Police Traffic Branch and this disclosed that radar speed detection units were operated by police personnel in the vicinity of the bottom

of Kelvin Grove Hill between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. during the period August 1 to October 31, 1968, on seventeen occasions. During those hours in the period May 1 to July 31, 1968, radar units operated in that locality on eight occasions. I regret that the information furnished to me by the Police Department on which my reply to the Honourable Member's Question on November 7 was based was incorrect and I wish to apologise to the Honourable Member and the House. Appropriate instructions have been issued to ensure that accurate information is furnished in future."

PROVISION OF SUBSIDY TO "MEALS-ON-
WHEELS" ORGANISATIONS

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

(1) Will he favourably consider making subsidy available to "Meals-on-Wheels" organisations in this State which are making a most valuable contribution to our society?

(2) If no subsidy is available, will he take the matter up with the Commonwealth Government with a view to providing assistance along the lines mentioned?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "As announced in the Federal Budget, the Commonwealth and the States are giving consideration to the adoption of a comprehensive home-care programme for the aged. In considering such a programme, the need and the role of meals-on-wheels organisations within the community have not been overlooked."

PROCESSING OF TENDERS BY LOCAL
AUTHORITIES

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

Will he give the same consideration and latitude to all Local Authorities in the State regarding the calling of tenders and formalities as he has done to Brisbane City Council?

Answer:—

"The Question is based on an incorrect assumption that some latitude has been extended to the Brisbane City Council."

COMPENSATION FOR FIRE LOSS AND
DAMAGE, MITCHELTON STATE
HIGH SCHOOL

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

With regard to the recent fire at the Mitchelton State High School, will the Government consider (a) the payment of compensation for personal losses sustained by students and teachers and (b) the

making good, at its expense, of all school equipment destroyed or damaged as a result of the fire?

Answer:—

(a) "Consideration will be given to claims for compensation for personal losses by students and teachers and (b) "In accordance with established policy all school property lost or damaged in the fire will be replaced."

REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS AT PREMIERS' CONFERENCE

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

(1) Following a conference of State Premiers held recently in Sydney, whereat he represented the Premier, is there a likelihood of any report coming from the conference?

(2) Has he noted recent remarks of the Federal Treasurer, The Right Honourable W. McMahon, that if States' demands were met it could cause inflation in the economy?

(3) Did he make a comprehensive submission to the conference and, if so, has the Prime Minister signified his desire to accede to any of his demands?

Answers:—

(1) "The discussions were in camera and no minutes were taken."

(2) "Yes."

(3) "The views of the Queensland Government on certain aspects of Commonwealth-State financial relationships were put forward by me. Perhaps I should state for the Honourable Member's information that the conference discussed two broad issues. The first was the immediate issue of the effect on current State budgets of the \$1.35 increase in the total wage announced by the Commonwealth Industrial Commission on the day of the conference and certain other recent cost increases. The second issue was the broader matter of Commonwealth-State financial relationships generally and measures which might be taken to remedy shortcomings in the present relationships. As to the immediate issue of the effect of the total wage and other cost increases on the current State budgets, the States requested an early conference with the Prime Minister. My latest advice is that the Prime Minister has stated that he feels that it would be premature to hold a special Premier's Conference on this matter. He has suggested that a meeting of Commonwealth and State Treasury officers should be held. The Queensland Government has no objection to such a meeting so that the full facts can be ascertained on a national basis, but it is firmly of the opinion that the matter

requires discussion at a Prime Minister-Premier level once the facts are ascertained. This view has been conveyed to the Prime Minister. As to the broader issues of Commonwealth-State financial relationships generally, a number of matters were discussed and are now being examined in some detail prior to a further meeting of Premiers. This meeting is likely to be held in Adelaide early in December. No submissions have yet been made to the Commonwealth on these broader issues for the reason that they are still under examination and consideration."

INCIDENCE OF DYSLEXIA IN CHILDREN

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

(1) Has he any evidence of children classified as backward but having an I.Q. above normal who after medical examination have been found to be suffering from *dyslexia* which means difficulty with reading? If so, how many in Queensland are known to his Department?

(2) What action is taken by his Department to detect the condition in children and what remedial measures are offered?

Answers:—

(1) "*Dyslexia* is a term which means difficulty with reading. Many children with this condition are of normal intelligence and I am advised that children with mild grades of *dyslexia* attend normal schools. The number of children with *dyslexia* is not known. The condition is not notifiable."

(2) "Children with severe *dyslexia* can receive treatment at welfare and guidance clinics if the problem involves a psychological disorder. If regarded mainly as an education problem, children with *dyslexia* are frequently interviewed at the Guidance and Special Education Branch of the Department of Education which I understand arranges for assistance to be given to them."

IMPROVED ACCOMMODATION FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS, ATHERTON

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

In view of the present poor accommodation for departmental officers and staff at Atherton, has any action been taken to have better accommodation provided? If so, when is it intended to commence work on the new buildings?

Answer:—

"The large area in the Court House vacated by Forestry Department has been renovated and most of the Department of

Primary Industries officers at Atherton have occupied their new quarters. The Entomological staff and the Veterinary Officer are the only staff remaining to be accommodated and it is anticipated renovated office and laboratory space and a new storeroom will be ready for occupancy before the new year."

EXPERIMENTAL AND RESEARCH STATIONS,
NORTH QUEENSLAND

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

(1) Has an experimental area been developed at Gilbert River? If so, what work is at present being carried out?

(2) If not, what plans are in hand for the area and when is it intended to commence operations?

Answers:—

(1) "The position has not changed since November, 1966. No experimental work has been performed other than that mentioned in my reply of November, 1966. Irrigated pastures, lucerne and cotton were grown successfully in co-operation with the neighbouring property owner."

(2) "At the present time, the position in the Peninsula and Gulf areas is being investigated by the Land Research Division of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Organisation. Pending the results of this investigation, implementation of any plans for experimental work on the Gilbert River has been withheld. The area is serviced by officers of my Department from Atherton and Mareeba as required."

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

(1) When will the new research station be completed in Paddy's Green area?

(2) What will be the chief role of this station?

(3) How many are employed at the experimental and research stations at (a) Parada, (b) Walkamin and (c) Kairi and what are the qualifications of the various departmental officers?

(4) What are the staff numbers and details at (a) Atherton, (b) Mareeba and (c) Cairns?

Answers:—

(1) "The selection of the site for the new tobacco station is expected to be finalised before the end of November. Development of the new station will probably be phased over a 2-3 year period, depending on the availability of funds."

(2) "The proposed station will be developed specifically for research into problems of tobacco production on major soil types in this area."

(3)—

" —	Parada	Walkamin	Kairi
Graduates ..	5	1	2
Diplomates ..	3	2	8
Assistants, Cadets, etc.	12	4	14
Totals ..	20	7	24 "

(4)—

" —	Atherton	Mareeba	Cairns
Graduates ..	3	11	2
Diplomates ..	6	9	2
Inspectors ..	1	2	5
Assistants and Cadets	1	4	..
Clerical	2	3	2
Totals ..	13	29	11 "

CONTRACT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF OLD
TOWN HALL SITE, BRISBANE

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

In view of the statement in *The Courier-Mail* of November 8 by Alderman Crawford, will he place the full facts of the Capital City Motels Pty. Ltd. contract and negotiations and other relevant material before the Crown Solicitor in order to allay the fears of a large number of people in Brisbane that something undesirable has taken place?

Answer:—

"The statement in *The Courier-Mail* of November 8 by Alderman Crawford is inaccurate. I did not discuss the matter over the telephone with the Council's Executive Adviser, Mr. J. C. Slaughter. Mr. Crawford is no doubt aware that a *prima facie* case must be supported by evidence, not merely by allegations."

UNCLAIMED T.A.B. DIVIDENDS

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

(1) What is the total amount of unclaimed T.A.B. dividends since the establishment of these betting shops to the latest date available?

(2) Does the unclaimed money go into consolidated revenue and, if so, in what table is it shown?

(3) Is it used for any specific purpose and, if so, for what?

(4) If it is not used for any specific purpose, for what general purpose is it used?

Answers:—

(1) "From August 11, 1962, up to June 30, 1968, \$706,969."

(2) "Yes, under Taxation—Totalisator, Betting and Turnover Tax—Table 10."

(3) "No."

(4) "It forms part of Consolidated Revenue for expenditure on services from that Fund."

WAGE RATES AND CONDITIONS, BLIND INSTITUTION EMPLOYEES

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

(1) Further to his Answer to my Question on November 6 concerning blind workers comprising 64 males and 9 females employed at the Blind Institute, what are the various rates of pay per week of (a) males and (b) females employed in each of the categories outlined?

(2) Will he detail general conditions of employment of these blind workers, including working hours per day?

(3) When will the report of the steering committee be completed and will a copy be available to all interested persons?

Answers:—

(1) "Weekly rates payable to full-time blind employees engaged on brush making, recaning chairs, millet broom making, basket making, cane furniture, and mats and matting are \$33.65 for males and \$24.65 for females. Other rates payable are:—Mattress and pillow workshop, male foreman, \$43.15 per week; recaning chairs, female in charge \$29.39 per week; cleaning, male in charge \$37.45 per week, male, \$33.95 per week; storekeeper, male, \$35.35 per week. Rates applicable to apprentices employed are:—Juniors (under 21 years, 4-year apprenticeship)—Males, \$15.96 to \$17.20 per week; females, \$12.48 to \$13.43 per week. Seniors (3-year apprenticeship)—Males, \$25.16 to \$26.86 per week, females, \$19.92 to \$20.72 per week. Above rates include a bonus of 60 cents for adult males, 40 cents for females, 30 cents for senior apprentices and 20 cents for junior apprentices. Piece workers employed on brush, basket, mattress and pillow making are paid piece rates which vary in accordance with the article manufactured. The weekly wages of piece workers in the preceding six months varied from a minimum of \$35.58 to a maximum of \$50.61. It must be remembered that blind workers are also eligible for a blind pension of \$14 per week without the application of a means test. This is reduced to \$12.50 per week in the case of a married person where the spouse is in receipt of a pension. Payment of supplementary assistance, wife's allowance or additional pension payable for children under 16 other than the first child of a blind pensioner is, however, subject to a means test."

(2) "Applications from blind pensioners between the ages of 16 and 45 years, who have resided in Queensland for a period of twelve months, will be considered subject to a medical examination by the Government Medical Officer. Applicants over 45 years and up to 55 years may receive special consideration. Appointment in the first instance is for a probationary period of six months. Public Service conditions in relation to sick leave, recreation leave and long service leave apply. Retiring age of 65 years obtains but workers may be retained until three months after attaining 66 years provided health, ability and volume of work warrant it. Employees work eight hours per day, Monday to Friday, between 8 a.m. and 4.45 p.m. Blind workers are also provided with free travel to and from work and free rail travel for themselves and families for vacation purposes."

(3) "It is understood that the steering committee has completed its investigations and a report is anticipated in the near future. The report will not be available to the public."

IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

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

What extension and types of in-service training for teachers are envisaged for the next twelve months?

Answer:—

Comprehensive courses of in-service training of teachers are planned for the next twelve months as follows:—

(1) "Organised by Head Office: (a) Vacation schools embracing a variety of courses of current interest to teachers, viz., mathematics, English, art, evaluation, social studies, etc. (b) Seminars for secondary teachers arranged by the Department in large cities on audio-visual aids, modern languages, mathematics, science. (c) Residential seminars for head teachers and principals concerning innovation in school administration. (d) Courses conducted by the university with departmental co-operation, e.g., French, language laboratories, Senior science. (e) Secondary courses organised jointly by subject associations and the Department, e.g., geography, history, English, modern languages. (f) Production of professional journal, namely, "Quest" and Special Schools Bulletin. (g) Evening courses during 1969 in new mathematics for teachers wishing to attend. To be held in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Townsville, Rockhampton."

(2) "Organised by Regional Directors. Seminars in school management and regional administration."

(3) "Organised by Inspectors of Schools. Concerning innovation in methods and curriculum development. These are arranged one per term by each inspector."

In secondary schools particular attention will be given to new mathematics, BSCS biology, PSSC physics, and modern languages."

(4) "Organised by Teachers' Colleges. Evening courses in special subject fields."

(5) "Organised by Principals of Secondary Schools. Group seminars for secondary teachers."

(6) "Organised within Schools. Workshops arranged by head teachers and principals."

ALLEGED UNFITNESS OF DRIVING SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS

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

(1) Was his attention drawn to the report in *The Sunday Mail* of May 5, headed "Driving Schools' review to Government", and the statement that instructors were unfit to teach learners how to handle a motor vehicle?

(2) If so, has he considered the submissions in the report? If not, why not?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Yes."

ALLEGED DELAY IN INQUEST INTO FATAL ROAD ACCIDENT, KENMORE

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

(1) Is he aware of the editorial in *The Courier-Mail* of October 9 headed "That 'urgent' inquest lags", and its comments?

(2) Has an inquest been held into the car smash at Kenmore, involving ten teenagers? If so, what were the coroner's findings as to the cause of the accident?

(3) If no inquest has been held, when will one be conducted?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Inquests in relation to the deaths of Madonna Ann Garton and Phillip Harold Hutchinson were opened on September 23, 1968, and an inquest in relation to the death of Brian Stanley Foley was opened on October 7, 1968. These inquests were all adjourned for the completion of police inquiries. On October 22, 1968, the Coroner, being informed that Barry Anthony Martin, the alleged driver of the motor vehicle in which the three deceased persons were passengers, had been summoned to appear before a magistrate to answer three charges of unlawfully killing the deceased persons, then, by reason of section 42 of *"The Coroners Acts, 1958 to 1967,"* adjourned the inquests until after the conclusion of those proceedings."

(3) See Answer to (2).

STATEMENT ON PROPOSED SUNDAY TRADING BY HOTELS

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a report in *The Courier-Mail* of August 2, headed "Drink the big Killer", stating that intoxication was the most frequent cause of traffic accident deaths in the March quarter and the statement by Rev. George Nash, Albert Street Methodist Church, in *The Courier-Mail* of November 4 that there was no more public demand for hotel-opening on Sundays than there had been for Sunday pictures and that politicians should realize that the sale of liquor would only be increased thereby?

(2) Has he considered the statements, what are his findings, and, if he has not given them consideration, why has he not done so?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Yes."

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, for the year 1967-68.

Commissioner of Police, for the year 1967-68.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

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

The State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1965.

The Milk Supply Acts, 1952 to 1961.

The Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1966.

The Wheat Pool Acts, 1920 to 1957.

Regulations under—

The City of Brisbane Market Acts, 1960 to 1967.

The Meat Industry Act of 1965.

FORM OF QUESTIONS

Mr. HINZE (South Coast) having given notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The question is not in order in its present form.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee): Mr. Speaker, before I give notice of my question, could you inform me why my question asked of the Premier this morning was completely rephrased by the Clerk-Assistant, without consultation with me, so that its contents were completely transformed?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Any rephrasing of the question was done at my instigation; the Clerk-Assistant would not take it upon himself to do that. In its original form, the question would not have been allowed at all. It was completely out of order because it contained inferences and innuendoes. The hon. member is very fortunate indeed that we went to some trouble to allow it to appear on the Business Paper. If it were not for the fact that it dealt with a matter of particular public importance, I would have sent it back to the hon. member for him to alter it.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should be well satisfied that he received the answer that he did receive this morning.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the House is well satisfied with the answer given by the Premier this morning.

Mr. MELLOY: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should know full well by now how to frame questions; he has been in Parliament long enough to know that. I advise him also that the disallowance of a question cannot be made the subject of a debate in this House. The matter is closed.

Mr. MELLOY: Mr. Speaker, you have made the statement that my question contained inferences—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member persists in arguing with the Chair, I shall have to deal with him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr. MELLOY: Before I proceed with my question, in any case—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MELLOY: —I am going to thank the Premier—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is still debating the question.

Mr. MELLOY: I am thanking the Premier for the courtesy of his acknowledgement of the inaccuracies in his previous answer.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member please pose the notice of question that he intends giving this morning or resume his seat?

Mr. HARRIS (Wynnum) proceeding to give notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member's question would be better put in the form of a letter to the Minister.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

FORESTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—
SEVENTH AND EIGHTH ALLOTTED DAYS
(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper,
Greenslopes, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1968-69

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.51 a.m.): I move—

“That \$5,892,284 be granted for ‘Department of Primary Industries—Primary Industries’.”

CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND

The amount of \$5,892,284 is sought to meet the salaries and contingency expenditure of the department, the amounts being \$4,103,773 and \$1,788,511 respectively. The expenditure for the financial year 1967-68 was \$5,854,037, which consisted of salaries \$3,806,149, and contingency items of \$2,047,888.

The increase in salaries, namely \$297,624, is due to the expansion of activities of the department which necessitates the appointment of some additional staff and to increases in salary payments consequent upon the Public Service Award being varied by the State Industrial Commission.

The contingency allocation in 1967-68, \$2,047,888, included a special allocation of \$350,000 to the Dairy Pasture Subsidy Fund. Exclusive of this amount, the contingency allocation for 1968-69 provides for \$90,623 more than last year's expenditure.

TRUST AND SPECIAL FUNDS

Expenditures under this heading are of a special-purpose nature where particular primary industries, other States, our own Treasury or the Commonwealth have contributed the funds necessary to carry out such specific aims, as follows:—

	SALARIES AND CONTINGENCIES		
	Appropriation for 1967-68	Expended 1967-68	Required for 1968-69
	\$	\$	\$
Primary Industries Department Special Standing Fund	702,476	572,565	830,191
Banana Industry Fund	50,540	48,057	54,890
Buffalo Fly Control Fund	177,810	151,858	181,960
Commonwealth Agricultural Services Extension Fund	754,624	666,028	835,170
Commonwealth Dairying Industry Fund	18,611	18,610	
Commonwealth Poultry Industry Assistance Fund	2,000,000	2,105,248	2,250,000
Dairy Pasture Subsidy Scheme	750,060	491,074	750,000
Meat Inspection Account	372,337	375,072	426,785
Meat Research Trust Fund	359,780	322,537	349,377
National Pleuro-Pneumonia Fund	111,010	93,415	152,175
Poultry Industry Fund	148,484	149,455	152,480
Queensland Meat Industry Authority Special Account	47,947	39,457	50,328
Stock Diseases Compensation and Stock Improvement Fund	192,190	162,647	172,235
Stock Fund	2,368,195	2,745,047	3,017,495
Sugar Cane Prices Fund	383,003	354,472	433,363
Swine Compensation Fund	2,620	846	2,620
Tobacco Research Fund	283,700	237,765	293,880
	\$8,723,327	\$8,544,153	\$9,952,949

The increase above last year's total expenditure from these funds relates in the main to the provision for increased expenditure from the Stock Fund. This fund includes an amount of \$500,000 for the supervision of the treatment of cattle for the multi-resistant (Biarra strain) cattle tick. It might be noted that the Treasurer has made available a special grant of \$460,469 to the Stock Fund as the sources of revenue of this fund have been greatly depleted during the recent drought. This is in addition to an amount of \$710,888 which is provided under payments authorised by special Acts as normal endowment on stock assessments received for 1967-68 under the Stock Acts, 1915 to 1965.

I must express appreciation of the contributions that are being made by the Commonwealth Government, both directly and indirectly, by primary producers through levies of various kinds, some self-imposed, and by various organisations.

The Commonwealth Government last year made \$754,624 available to my department for regional research and extension under its extension services grants to the States. I am happy to say that the projects put forward for consideration by the Commonwealth have been so well received that the proportion of the total funds that comes to Queensland is relatively high. The Right Honourable Charles Adermann, when Federal Minister for Primary Industry, started the Commonwealth extension services grant scheme.

The Commonwealth also contributes to agricultural research within my department through various joint Commonwealth-industry funds. These are financed through collection of levies agreed to by the tobacco, wheat, livestock and dairying industries, plus a subsidy from the Commonwealth. The fruit and vegetable

growers of Queensland also continue to assist the department materially by way of financial and equipment grants.

In the operation of my department the expenditures from Consolidated Revenue and Trust and Special Funds are very closely interrelated. In dealing with departmental activities generally, I do not propose to differentiate in relation to the source of funds.

I now propose to comment briefly on major developments in our rural industries. I shall then deal with the activities of my department in terms of the individual branches in the six departmental divisions, namely, Administration, Development Planning and Soil Conservation, Marketing, Dairying, Plant Industry and Animal Industry.

PRIMARY INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS

An additional 300,000 acres of land is being put under the plough in Queensland each year. Much of this new cropping is in areas marginal to the established production areas and much is undertaken by graziers who have had little or no farming experience. In these circumstances my department is faced with a big task. The suitability of the new areas for cropping must be determined. Landholders need advice on suitable crops and cropping methods. Field investigations are necessary to adapt research results to the new conditions in the area. The economics of production must be studied and marketing problems overcome. Livestock production is not standing still either and changes in the pattern of beef, dairy, pig and poultry production demand corresponding modifications and advances in research, extension and other services.

A brief review of the standing of some of our main primary industries is in order as a prelude to an explanation of the directions in which it is proposed to expend funds in the financial year.

The beef industry, which has been riding on a wave of relative prosperity for some years past, has come face to face with a situation which threatens its buoyancy temporarily. I refer to the decision to voluntarily restrict exports to the United States for a time in order to avoid restrictive action by the United States Government on imports of Australian meat. The outcome of this temporary halt, and of any independent action on meat quotas that may be taken by the United States, is not clear.

But I feel I can say with some confidence that the industry has done so much to increase its efficiency over the past 20 years that it can never relapse into the depressed conditions which were its general lot up to the 1940's. Today the industry has much to sustain its strength during temporary setbacks. Pasture improvement, forage cropping, improved watering facilities, herd improvement, improved disease control, better facilities for stock movement, increased saleyard capacity and slaughtering facilities all add up to more efficient production to cushion economic blows.

The wool industry, which was plunged into gloom when the high returns of the early 1950's faded away, and suffered further alarm at prices trended downwards from 1963 to 1967, now seems fairly confident that a period of price stability lies ahead. A succession of good seasons should keep this industry on an even keel and allow growers to effect property improvements or introduce suitable supplementary enterprises.

The dairy industry continues to lose farm operators, but is maintaining stock numbers and production. Many of the farms that have gone out of dairying have been turned over to vealer production and other farming activities. Others have been amalgamated with adjacent dairy farms and continue in dairy production. The Commonwealth Government's broad proposals for improving the over-all efficiency of the industry by encouraging and assisting operators of the less viable farms to leave the industry is in process of being moulded into a workable scheme by the Governments concerned. Progress has been fairly slow, as the scheme decided upon must have Australia-wide application. In effect, there has to be agreement among all the States.

The pig industry continues to expand, and now returns some \$25,000,000 a year to farmers. Pig-meats now rank second to beef in value of meat products. The structure of the industry has changed considerably, with large units coming to the fore.

The egg market became increasingly difficult early in 1968 because of low prices received for the sale of surplus stocks overseas, and it is difficult to see an early substantial improvement in this position.

The sugar industry, although it achieved record production of 2,213,000 tons of raw sugar in 1967, remains in a difficult position economically. Although world production is some 67,000,000 tons, the economy of the Australian industry rests on the prices paid for the 9,000,000 tons which are traded on the free market, since Australia is the second-largest seller on that market. I sincerely hope that the recent International Sugar Agreement will have the effect of stabilising the industry, and most of us are confident that it will.

The elation that followed the devoting of an increasing acreage to wheat in Queensland is now tempered with concern at the prospect of a substantial carry-over of Australian wheat from this season's crop. If anything like the estimated 500,000,000 bushels is produced, both storage capacity and market outlets may present difficulties.

One point of local concern is that wheat is moving back into marginal country from which it was withdrawn many years ago. While new production techniques have improved the reliability of cropping in marginal areas, a grave danger still exists and disaster could overtake those who commit themselves heavily to cash crops in such areas. The tremendous expansion has forced the Commonwealth Government to examine very closely its commitment under a renewed wheat industry stabilisation plan. As a result, a two-price structure, in which the link between the guaranteed price and the home-consumption price has been broken, is being introduced by the Commonwealth. I expect to be bringing down complementary legislation as soon as possible during this session of Parliament.

An interesting development in grain production has been the expansion of the selling of grain sorghum to Japanese buyers. As with other export commodities, however, price is a major consideration in planning expansion of cropping.

Tobacco-growers, particularly those who have suffered financial hardship, have been given increased quotas for 1969 following the lifting of the Australian quota from 26,000,000 lb. to 28,500,000 lb. The tobacco industry stabilisation scheme, which has worked well since its inception in 1964-65, has been extended to 1973-74.

In a few short years the Australian cotton industry has caught up with, and overtaken, the Australian demand, which formerly seemed quite out of its reach. This situation has prompted the Commonwealth Government to re-examine the bounty incentive which it has offered in the past. As a result, the bounty of \$4,000,000 is to be phased out by 1972. The effect of this will be that the efficiency of production

will have to be high if the crop is to be grown profitably. The trend from rain-grown to irrigated production will almost certainly be accelerated in the light of the planned withdrawal of the bounty.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

Turning to specific aspects of the Estimates, I shall deal first with the Administration Division. This division covers a variety of services that are auxiliary to the research, extension and regulatory functions of the department. They comprise accounting, supplies, transportation, correspondence and other housekeeping services, as well as management of certain research stations, the centralised service for the design and analysis of experiments, and the information service.

All of these internal services are strained to the utmost to meet the demands made upon them. So far as the central information services are concerned, the Commonwealth Government makes a substantial contribution through its extension services grant, but maintenance and expansion in other areas are entirely a State responsibility.

Since the last Budget was presented, the accountant of the department since 1947, Mr. Cec. Sadler, has retired. I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of his valuable advice in framing departmental Estimates over the years and in keeping a strong and fair controlling hand on expenditure. His successor, Mr. H. J. Evans, is in the lobby this morning.

Expenditure on research projects on research stations is covered in other sections of the Estimates. The Vote for Administration Division includes provision for station management expenses only and covers those stations that come within the ambit of the Research Stations Board. In the main, these are general purpose stations that serve a variety of regional research needs and exclude those restricted to horticulture, sheep, beef, or some other specialty, whose expenditure is provided under the branch Votes concerned.

With the current trend towards diversification of production in most parts of the State—even the most tradition-bound wool-growing areas, for instance, are now diversifying into beef and crops—the need for more multi-purpose research stations is pressed upon me from time to time by primary producers and their organisations. Most of the cases presented have a great deal of merit, but the advantages to be gained must be measured against the funds and staff available.

As an indication of what is involved in setting up and operating a research station, I might cite the Hermitage Research Station, near Warwick, the multi-purpose station serving the Darling Downs. This comprises some 432 acres of land, much of it valuable agricultural land. Facilities such as buildings and machinery are provided for crop research, pasture research, pig research, sheep research,

and fauna research. There are 14 research and technical officers working on that station alone. Thus, any multi-purpose research station must involve a great deal of capital, maintenance and staffing. These are basic considerations in determining whether new research stations should be established.

Another consideration is the fact that regional adaptation of research results is what most areas need, rather than basic research, and this adaptation work can be done fairly satisfactorily and economically on private properties, with co-operation between the owners and members of the staff of the department. Of course, we have not put a stopper on research stations entirely. For example, with the assistance of the fruit and vegetable industries, the department recently opened a small horticultural research station at Bowen. But generally we are faced with a need to provide and consolidate facilities and staff for existing stations, and we would be unwise to spread our resources too thinly by attempting to set up more large stations at this juncture.

The question that springs to the mind quite often is whether a research station is fully geared to the needs of the region it serves. The primary industries change direction quite frequently in response to economic, technical and social forces, and it is not unlikely that research effort could continue along a line from which an industry was diverging. To make sure that this sort of thing does not happen, steps are being taken to progressively mould research workers into regional teams with field workers, and to seek the advice and guidance of industry representatives. Thus, a couple of years ago, I invited a representative of each of the district's primary industries to join the advisory committee of the Biloela Research Station. That was a committee of practical men set up to join departmental officers at the research station and advise on the change in industries. At the invitation of the Hermitage Research Station committee, a diverse group of farmers came together recently with research staff at the station to exchange ideas on the work in progress and discuss what is needed for the future.

Biometry is virtually the keystone of scientific research. It determines the design of experiments and it provides the mathematical basis which is necessary for correct interpretation of results. The strain on the biometricians of expanding research within my department is being eased to some extent by the use of computers in analysing the results of experiments. The computer bought by the Government for general use by departments is being used to an increasing extent by my staff.

The estimated expenditure for the Queensland Agricultural Journal covers a monthly issue of some 13,000 copies. This journal is maintaining a high standard, presenting useful information to farmers and graziers in a readily understandable form. A large amount

of supplementary printed information is available for more specialised purposes, but the *Agricultural Journal* continues to be a major link between the department and primary producers.

Mr. Duggan: Don't you think it is a rather shocking indictment of the Government that there is not one Country Party member in the Chamber listening to your departmental Estimates?

Mr. ROW: They are busy on other matters.

Extra provision is requested for publishing the *Queensland Journal of Agricultural and Animal Sciences*. Many scientific papers emanating from departmental research staff are published in specialised scientific journals, both Australian and overseas, but the volume of material coming forward is increasing to such an extent that a substantial proportion must now be published by the department itself.

DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND SOIL CONSERVATION

When the Division of Development Planning and Soil Conservation was established early in 1965, the principal aim was to assist in co-ordinating the development of State primary industries on bases which will provide for orderly economic establishment and which will obviate the risk of deterioration due to erosion or to decline in the physical or chemical status of the soils. The division now comprises 86 officers, including 65 attached to the Soil Conservation Branch, 7 in Development Planning Branch, and 14 providing administrative and mapping services.

It is the role of the Development Planning Branch to act conjointly with other units of the Department of Primary Industries and with other departments in undertaking agricultural and economic assessments of the various opportunities for State primary industry development.

As one facet of the work, I might mention that the Development Planning Branch has co-ordinated the soils, land classification and economic investigations associated with irrigation developments approved for the Emerald, St. George and Lower Lockyer project areas. At full development of these works, from 54,000 to 75,000 acres of additional irrigated land will come into production, the actual area depending on the type of cropping or animal enterprise undertaken. The branch is also closely concerned in the major development activity in the beef industry, namely the Fitzroy Basin land development scheme. The Department of Lands is, of course, charged with the over-all administration and financial control of the scheme, but my department carries the direct responsibility for providing technical and extension services.

Supporting activities undertaken by the division in Area III include the completion of "land unit" mapping activities over an

area of 536,700 acres. These activities, which require the recording of vegetation, soils and land-form patterns, are a fundamental requirement which precedes the preparation of base property plans and individual development programmes for 130 new settlers.

During the year, as a prerequisite to the launching of the reorientated extension structure for assisting settlers in the Fitzroy Basin, an in-service school for 40 participating officers was held at Biloela. It proved most effective in the formulation of general principles of brigalow development in the light of current circumstances and recent research findings from the Brigalow Research Station and other relevant sources. Collated papers from the school have since been published in a bulletin titled "Brigalow Development", and this publication updates recommendations and advice to all persons with an interest in the subject.

Officers of Development Planning Branch and other departmental officers are actively associating with officers of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and C.S.I.R.O. Rangelands Research in extensive soils, vegetation and economic surveys of the western arid zone of Queensland. This project has been endorsed by the Land Development Committee, with the survey area, generally below the 15-inch isohyet, embracing the shires of Barcoo, Diamantina, Boulia, Quilpie, Bulloo, Winton and Paroo. The implications of pastoral-utilisation practices in this dry environment are of great economic importance to the State.

A specialist soil-conservation service was established in Queensland in 1947 with the appointment of one officer. In subsequent years the organisation was progressively expanded, and, in 1957, 17 officers were employed on soil-conservation work. Thirteen were field officers, and they assisted farmers technically in establishing erosion-control measures on some 13,000 acres during that year, or about 1,000 acres per officer. At the present time there are 65 soil-conservation officers, including a field staff of 40 officers who contoured 118,441 acres during the year 1967-68.

It will be noted that, although the extension staff has been trebled since 1957 in order to meet landholders' pressing needs for soil-conservation technical services, the area protected annually has increased to nine times the area treated in 1957. The interest of farmers has surged upward during this period, and 6,020 farmers are now applying soil-conservation measures compared with about 1,300 farmers in 1957.

While the increased level of activity on the part of departmental officers and farmers is most gratifying, a sober note is introduced when we relate performance to State needs. Despite the good progress made, there are now 1,500,000 more acres of land requiring treatment than there were in the early 1950's. This is due to the large areas that have been brought under the plough for

the production of grain and forage crops over that period. This expansion in cultivation undoubtedly has increased productivity, but an increased soil-erosion hazard goes with it.

The main erosion problem in Queensland is erosion of cultivated land caused by run-off water from rainfall. It is estimated that there are now 5,675,000 acres of cultivated land in the State, of which 3,690,000 acres are subject to water erosion. Some 761,500 acres have been treated by contour-cultivation methods, leaving a net area of 2,928,000 acres requiring treatment. In addition to this 2,900,000 acres, a substantial area of new-cultivation land is being brought under the plough each year. This is occurring at the rate of about 300,000 acres per annum, and, as two-thirds of this new land is prone to erosion, some 200,000 acres requiring contour treatment are added each year.

If we are to provide stability on the 2,900,000 acres by the turn of the century, about 90,000 acres will need to be treated each year in addition to the 200,000 acres annual increment of erosion-prone new-cultivation land. Hence a minimum annual control rate of 290,000 acres must be the basic aim. When we reflect that the total area treated in the year 1967-68 was 118,441 acres, it can be seen that we have much more to do.

The Department of Primary Industries is continuing to play its part in meeting the erosion risk by providing an advisory and technical service to the landholder in soil-conservation techniques. Most sloping cultivated land in Queensland should be farmed on the contour, and the provision of a service in planning and marking out contour guidelines is a major task.

Detailed land-use investigations and the testing of practices such as stubble mulching and minimum tillage under local conditions are required, and a research programme to carry out this work is being developed. The research team will produce technical guides to conservation land use, which will be of use to farmers and field officers alike in developing soil-conservation programmes suited to the needs of each individual farmer.

DIVISION OF MARKETING

The Division of Marketing embraces branches dealing with marketing and economic services and control of agricultural standards.

The Marketing Services Branch is concerned with all aspects of market research and development marketing finance, and marketing advisory services to primary producers and others. The service includes representation on the various marketing boards set up under the State's marketing legislation.

The branch functions range from the study of particular commodity markets to over-all assessment of market possibilities and transport and handling problems associated with major rural development projects. In the field of finance, assistance is given to marketing boards and co-operative associations in negotiating crop advances and development capital. In this connection mention might be made of the current establishment of new ginnery facilities for cotton at Cecil Plains and the arrangement of crop finance for the Peanut and Navy Bean Marketing Boards. Other services include the collection and dissemination of market intelligence and the compilation of progressive forecasts for various crop and livestock products. The branch is also very much involved in the administration of the tobacco industry stabilisation scheme and in the examination of stabilisation proposals for other industries.

With the development of new areas of primary production has come a demand for factual information on market prospects for new crops. Surveys are currently proceeding into rice and tea cultivation in North Queensland and the marketing and canning of culinary beans. In conjunction with the Food Preservation Branch at Hamilton and the Department of Industrial Development, a survey is proceeding to ascertain the feasibility of establishing a fruit cannery at Rockhampton.

During the past year the branch completed surveys of the egg industry and the milk industry in South-eastern Queensland, a study of protein meal requirements, a preliminary survey of current and potential fertiliser usage in Queensland, and a review of the world oil-seeds and vegetable oil situation.

The Economic Services Branch is about to commence investigations into a number of aspects of the dairying industry requiring closer attention. An assessment is to be made of trends in the whole-milk supply and of factors likely to influence supply in different dairying districts. The relationship between plant capacity, economies of scale and the effect of seasonality of supply is to be examined in relation to the cost of manufacturing dairy products.

Other aspects relating to the transport and handling of dairy products are also under study. In the present situation, where increases in returns from sales of primary products tend to be severely limited, it is essential that every effort be made to minimise producers' costs. This applies not only to farm costs but also to costs such as transport and handling, etc., over which the farmer has no control. The implications of changing from a cream/pig economy to whole milk supply on dairy farms is being investigated.

The third edition of the Farm Management Handbook is expected to become available towards the end of the present financial year. Demand for previous editions has been so

heavy that a nominal charge of \$1 per copy has been imposed for this third edition to help defray the cost of publication. Advance orders for between 600 and 700 copies have already been received.

Expansion of farm-management services in country areas has continued and regional economists have now been stationed at eight country centres. Unfortunately, owing to resignations a vacancy exists in the Toowoomba office, but it will be filled by the end of the year. Arrangements are already in hand to station agricultural economists at two further centres, namely, Warwick and Bundaberg, and it is hoped that a third posting may be possible.

The Economic Services Branch is also planning for the continued growth and improvement of the farm-management accounting groups scheme and is hoping to increase interest in this computer-oriented farm-recording scheme by adding a new budgeting service. Farmers will be able to compare their current year's progress with a prepaid budget, thus providing a better means of assessing their farming techniques.

The branch is currently engaged in carrying out a benefit-cost study of the lands on the Queensland side of the proposed Pike Creek Dam, near Texas. The economics of growing irrigated grain and fodder crops in the area are being investigated. The aspects of integrating irrigated cropping with live-stock enterprises on a dry-land property are also receiving careful consideration.

In this, as in other branch projects, computer usage generally is steadily increasing, and at all times consideration is being given to ways in which it can assist the primary producer, both on an industry and on an individual basis.

The wide range of inspectional, regulatory and extension services within the scope of the legislation administered by the Standards Branch will continue to be provided.

There is still much ground work to be done relative to the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act. Attention is presently being given to developing draft regulations and a manual of instructions for ground operators. Meetings of the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Board have been held and a comprehensive survey of potential hazardous areas has been undertaken. A small area is being established for growing and testing plants which will be used to observe and assess the effects of agricultural chemicals, at varying concentrations, on such plants. The necessary equipment for this purpose has been purchased.

It is expected that routine and experimental tests of samples of seed, which totalled 12,087 in the year 1967-68, will be exceeded in future years. The new seed-testing laboratory to be constructed at Indooroopilly is in an advanced stage of planning. It is hoped to have it open towards the end

of next year. In addition, a limited seed-testing service has been instituted in Toowoomba. This service will be augmented with the establishment of a seed-testing sub-station in the proposed building to accommodate the Department of Primary Industries in that city. We hope to have a new building there shortly.

Certification of hybrid maize seed has been extended to North Queensland with the development of a hybrid (QK 37) suitable for that area. A number of growers in the Atherton district were granted registration of areas to grow the hybrid as commercial certified seed. Seed in the seed-certification scheme include hybrid maize, grain sorghum, sweet sorghum, hybrid forage sorghum, sudan grass, French beans, cowpea and oats. It is expected that adequate supplies of seed produced under the scheme will again be provided.

An active and thorough inspection service will be maintained with respect to fruit, vegetables, seeds, pest destroyers, veterinary medicines, fertilisers, lime and stock foods. Similar services will be provided in Toowoomba and Rockhampton, with an extension during the coming year to the far-northern area of the State.

By undertaking regular inspections of agents' books, adequate protection will continue to be afforded to growers who consign their produce to licensed farm produce agents. Control over the quality of agricultural requirements will be maintained by the need for dealers to apply for registration and approval of claims of efficacy of their preparations before sale. They must be approved by the Agricultural Requirements Board.

DIVISION OF DAIRYING

Funds provided to the Division of Dairying for activities of the Dairy Field Services Branch are directed towards assisting and supervising the 11,000 dairy-farmers supplying milk and cream.

The main duties of officers are directed to maintaining high-quality production at both the farm and the factory level. This is of considerable importance to the industry in the light of competition on the home market and the surplus of dairy products now available on many export markets. In the face of reducing net returns for produce, officers are endeavouring to encourage greater efficiency in milking operations both through design of equipment and layout of buildings. In August, Queensland acted as host for an interstate conference of 100 delegates on these specific subjects.

Increases in production of 10 to 20 per cent. are claimed when improved techniques have been introduced. Coupled with these regulatory activities, officers are extensively participating in the departmental dairy pasture subsidy scheme. As they are suitably located in all dairying districts, a considerable amount of local direction and recommendation is undertaken.

The department is continuing to provide a valuable industry service through the herd production recording scheme. This activity is supported by Commonwealth, State and individual member contributions. Annually 170 pure-bred and 1,000 grade herds are production-recorded at monthly intervals. This provides basic information on which to relate feeding and breeding programmes. With the advent of artificial breeding, the scheme provides the data for evaluating sires and to allow bull-proving schemes, thus obtaining maximum genetic benefit.

A special allocation of \$1,000 has been provided to permit the reprinting and consolidation of the Dairy Produce Acts, which were last printed in 1944.

To replace staff resignations and maintain staff and technical knowledge commensurate with industry demands, provision has been made for two tertiary scholarships in the 1969 academic year, one at the Queensland Institute of Technology and the other at the Queensland Agricultural College.

During the year two new laboratories were completed for the Dairy Research Branch by the Department of Works. The larger of these, the Otto Madsen Dairy Research Laboratory at Hamilton, now houses the headquarters of the branch and has a floor area of approximately 18,000 square feet on two floors. This building, which is now staffed by approximately 45 officers, is designed to provide completely new laboratories with ancillary pilot plant to carry out the main functions of the branch. The other laboratory is situated at Malanda, on the Atherton Tableland, and not only serves as an important regional laboratory of the Dairy Research Branch but also houses other departmental officers. These new premises in the North will provide an increased and worth-while service to the dairy industry in that part of the State.

The past year has seen an expansion in the testing programmes of dairy products for export. The volume of cheese for export to Japan has increased greatly, as has the export of butter fat in the form of Junex to America. In addition, there have been some movements of butter for the East. The work of analysis and issue of certificates as to quality has been considerably expanded.

The Dairy Research Branch has continued to give extensive service to the dairy industry throughout the State through its various laboratories situated at Toowoomba, Murgon, Malanda and Hamilton. In addition, the branch has staffed the laboratory of the Egg Marketing Board and has rendered valuable service to the poultry industry of the State by examination of egg products, particularly egg pulp. Over 50,000 samples have been analysed in various quality determinations in the many laboratories during the year. These investigations have involved approximately 500,000 tests.

In the metropolitan area the branch has continued to carry out quality-testing work on behalf of the Brisbane Milk Board, and a quality service for pasteurised milk produced in all factories throughout the State. From memory, I think 440,000 tests were carried out on Brisbane milk last year. The butter improvement service and the cheese service operated by the branch give considerable technological guidance and help to these sections of the industry, and have been responsible for improved quality.

The many research projects conducted by the Dairy Research Branch are too numerous to deal with in detail, but some are of sufficient importance to warrant specific mention. The branch has developed a completely new system of cream pasteurisation. This work had its origin in the removal of weed taint from butter and cream and has now yielded a cream pasteuriser which represents a complete breakthrough in cream processing. The new machine permits great savings in capital outlay, floor space and economy in operation, in addition to extreme ease in operation and adjustment. It is noteworthy that the steam consumption with the new apparatus is only one-eighth to one-sixth of that required for conventional machines.

Work has been carried out on butter to achieve a more spreadable product, and also on the use of continuous butter-making techniques in butter manufacture. This work is being continued and will be hastened when the installation of the new continuous butter-maker is completed at the new Otto Madsen Laboratory. New dairy products formed by caramelisation have been developed, as well as new varieties of cheese and beverages from whey and skim milk. The various factors which determine the maturation of cheese and the degree of flavour of cheese have also come under examination.

New tests are needed for the bacteriological grading of raw milk, and an intensive programme of research is under way to find these tests. This work is made urgent because of the widespread adoption of farm refrigeration of milk, coupled with the installation of bulk farm tanks which have seriously undermined the efficacy of existing methods of raw-milk testing. This work is being aided by a grant from the Australian Dairy Produce Board.

DIVISION OF PLANT INDUSTRY

Except for sugar-cane, which is served by the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, the Division of Plant Industry is concerned with every crop grown in Queensland. In addition, it covers fruit and vegetable storage and preservation, native and introduced pastures, weeds and poisonous plants and their control, bee-keeping, classification of the native flora, and fauna conservation.

Executive control of the dairy pasture subsidy scheme is centred in this division. The acceptance of this scheme by dairy farmers has been very satisfactory, and there

is every indication that many farmers will be repeating their applications from year to year to establish additional areas.

Up till the end of June, 4,193 dairy farmers had received approval to plant pastures eligible for subsidy. Of these, 1,831 had applied for and received approval for subsidised plantings in each of the two years of operation. All claims for the second year had not been completed, but it is estimated that about 70,000 acres of pasture were planted in the two years of the scheme, a total subsidy payment approaching \$700,000 being involved.

AGRICULTURE

In the Agriculture Branch, the Government is sponsoring major plant-breeding programmes in several crops important to Queensland's economy—wheat, barley, linseed, maize, grain and fodder sorghum, tobacco, cotton, and navy beans. Major characteristics being sought are increased yield, disease resistance, and quality at least equal to that of the best types available at present. Suitable grain-crop varieties for the ever-increasing cropping areas of Queensland are being determined continually. Apart from departmental and other governmental material, commercial seed firms are providing new varieties for assessment.

Two new varieties of tobacco show early promise of replacing the current commercial variety, Hicks. Chemical control of tobacco suckers and of weed is helping farmers reduce costs of production.

Fertiliser prediction programmes have made considerable progress. Interpretation of research data for particular areas is being undertaken to attempt to rationalise fertiliser usage. There is increasing commercial interest in fertiliser production and in efficient fertiliser use.

Irrigation research programmes are actively studying crop production and performance in the newer irrigation areas—for example, MacIntyre Brook and Nogoia schemes—as well as examining problems in the older areas of Mareeba, Dimbulah, Callide-Dawson, Darling Downs, and Lockyer.

Weeds cost Queensland farmers millions of dollars each year. Major weeds of arable land, such as wild oats, climbing buckwheat, and European bindweed, are being studied and control methods devised.

An increased service in agricultural engineering is being provided to primary industries, with the appointment at Toowoomba of a second agricultural engineer. This is important when it is realised that mechanisation costs amount to 30 per cent. to 40 per cent. of production costs of the usual crops.

Continuing pasture research, particularly applied research projects, is an essential feature of this State's agricultural research programmes. My department has not restricted its activities to the areas of better rainfall. A vigorous programme is operating in the arid and semi-arid areas of the State.

Quite recently a pasture research laboratory was opened at Charleville. Research projects are also in operation at Blackall, Richmond, Cloncurry, Julia Creek, and in the Gulf. They are concerned not only with the introduction of new pasture plants but to a large extent with the better utilisation of the available vegetation and moisture.

Water spreading and shallow water storage techniques have been tested. Quite recently, a most interesting field day was held on this particular subject at Richmond, where it has been demonstrated that grain and forage crops can be grown in the Far North-west of the State under supplementary irrigation.

In the better rainfall country the response of pastures to fertiliser has been studied. With these trials there have been associated experiments to measure the productivity of sown pastures, both with and without irrigation. On the far north tropical coast, sown pastures have supported two beasts to the acre during the summer months, and one to the acre during winter.

All over the State, from the dairying areas of the South-east to the sheep-lands of the West and the cattle country of the Peninsula, stockmen are reaping the benefits of a vigorous State research programme. Stock numbers and animal products are increasing. The State is reaping the cumulative benefits of agricultural research as new and previously unused land comes into production. 80,000 acres of wallum, over 1,000,000 acres of gidgee scrub and millions of acres of brigalow have been developed, and today useless timber on the wet tropical coast is coming down to be replaced with productive pasture plants.

It is vital to the State's economy that this research continue at a high level and that every effort be made to predict future needs so that the pastoral industries progress in strength with other sectors of the economy. The Agriculture Branch has 50 extension officers located at 31 centres throughout the State.

The demands on these and other units of the department's extension service continue to increase as farming methods and management become more sophisticated. It is only through an efficient extension service that we can ensure dividends from money spent on research. In addition, agricultural extension is important to this State to ensure that the finance available for development is wisely spent, as well as ensuring the economic welfare of existing primary industries. Every effort should be, and is being, made to improve our agricultural extension services. It is no good having the research officers if we have not the men to put the story over.

Provision has been made for the training of officers and for their proper equipment and support. It is to the credit of the State's extension services and the close and co-operative association that exists between the farming community and the department's officers that farmers in this State can

market their products, particularly beef and the grains, at prices that are competitive on the world markets. That this is possible in spite of our deficiencies in climate, particularly rainfall, and the inherent low fertility of many of our soils, points to a high degree of farm technical efficiency.

In the wallum, on the poor coastal lowlands, in the spear-grass country, and in the brigalow areas, officers of the Department of Primary Industries are guiding economic development. A mass of technical information is being used to meet individual situations.

The success of the dairy pasture subsidy scheme was dependent on the efficiency of the agricultural extension service, whose officers provided the pasture and fertiliser recommendations and the technical guidance to farmers who have participated in the scheme. It is the Government's intention to further strengthen the extension service as suitable trained staff become available.

HORTICULTURE

The main function of the Horticulture Branch is to reduce the cost of production of fruit and vegetables, either by getting better varieties or by finding better ways to grow them. It is concerned, too, that the consumer should receive a commodity of high quality. Further, it helps horticultural industries to adapt to constantly changing factors of production and marketing.

To meet the need for better varieties, the Horticulture Branch has four full-time specialist plant-breeders as well as a number of other research and extension personnel working part-time in plant-breeding.

The bean industry is largely dependent on Queensland-bred varieties, and most of the tomato varieties grown in the State are introduced varieties tested by horticultural officers.

The passion-fruit industry grows almost exclusively hybrid varieties bred at the Redlands Horticultural Research Station, and a new strawberry variety, Redlands Crimson, bred at the same station, is rapidly displacing other varieties.

Amongst citrus fruits, Queensland already has an advantage in mandarin production, but it has a need for better early varieties. To meet this need, a breeding project has been initiated. Similar long-term breeding work has been undertaken in apples, pears and plums. Queensland has a special need for plant-breeding work to adapt its horticultural crops to Queensland conditions, as most of them were initially developed in temperate climates very different from our own.

With tree crops the need is even greater as, unlike annuals, they cannot be fitted into a suitable niche in the season. Apart from the introduction or breeding of better kinds, there is also a need to keep our best varieties true to type and free from disease. Towards this end, in co-operation with representatives of the several industries, the branch maintains servicing schemes ensuring sound stocks

in citrus, beans, strawberries, bananas and ginger. The bean-seed approval scheme serves a sizeable seed industry, which meets a large part of the Commonwealth's bean-seed requirements.

In the search for better methods of production, the Horticulture Branch maintains three major research stations and two smaller stations, one having been opened recently at Bowen to serve the special needs of the dry tropics. Our three main stations are established at Redlands, Nambour and Stanthorpe, and our two smaller ones at Kamerunga, in Cairns, and Bowen. The branch also has research and advisory officers in all important horticultural districts in the State to ensure that problems can be investigated promptly and that useful information reaches the grower.

In the research field, recent work on weedicides has led to cheaper and more effective weed control in a number of fruit and vegetable crops and the work is continuing. In fertiliser trials, pineapples have been shown to benefit considerably from magnesium. Early work with mandarins promises cheap chemical methods of thinning the crop to obtain better size.

It is likely that yields of deciduous fruit will be considerably increased with wider use of irrigation, and current studies at Applethorpe should make for more efficient use of the rather limited water supplies. Recent work also suggests that the very considerable costs of marketing some fruits can be greatly reduced by pouring the fruit into the case rather than packing it precisely. The use of larger so-called "bulk" containers also promises further economies. Work in this field is in the early stages.

For various reasons many changes are occurring in production and marketing, and research is needed to accommodate them. To mention a few—newer, concentrated fertilisers produced by the fertiliser firms have reduced freight, packing and handling, but their constitution is different from that of the older mixtures, and their effective use in our crops requires study.

Throughout the world there is a move to reduce costs of fruit production by growing smaller, more precocious fruit-trees, planted much closer together.

In the Granite Belt there is an appreciable area of land suitable for this intensive culture, but such a change will bring its cultural problems and work is under way at the Granite Belt station to investigate this new development.

Considerable industries are developing in Queensland in beetroot, beans and peas for processing, and such production depends on mechanisation with a minimum of costly hand-work. Mechanisation of harvesting demands uniformity in the crop, and work is in progress in beetroot and peas to obtain this uniform development of the crop as well as to investigate the other major problems that face these new industries.

FOOD PRESERVATION RESEARCH

Before proceeding to the Estimates for the Food Preservation Research Branch, on behalf of all hon. members I express regret at the death early in October of Dr. Stanley Trout, who had been Director of the Food Preservation Research Laboratory since its opening in 1960.

He was a personal friend of mine, and I had known him since 1922. It was "Sandy" Trout, who, as Director of Horticulture, developed to such good purpose the Food Preservation Research Laboratory at Hamilton to one of the most active and diversified in Australia. He was an extremely active and able food technologist, and his death removed an outstanding figure.

Over the past year, advances in fruit storage research have been made with apples, avocados, bananas, grapes, muskmelon, pears, pineapples, plums and strawberries. Important vegetable storage factors have also been studied for tomatoes, beans and beetroot. Following earlier research, the use of controlled atmosphere storage for fruit is becoming of greater importance in the commercial sphere.

At the laboratory, the importance of controlled-atmosphere storage principles has also been demonstrated in a trial using pineapples. The greater use of this method of storage in apples has emphasised the need for further work on scald control, using D.P.A. (Diphenylamine), a chemical recently cleared by the Queensland health authorities. Laboratory trials have also shown that D.P.A. used in a dip gives almost complete control of bitter pit, another apple-storage disorder. Important studies are being undertaken on the use of ethylene for ripening fruit, and on naturally occurring ethylene in confined spaces causing premature ripening in tomatoes, avocados and bananas.

Work continues in conjunction with the Banana Sectional Group of the C.O.D. on an important survey to determine the incidence of "rubberiness" in commercial consignments to the market.

An investigation has been completed into the conditions of post-harvest handling of fresh market beans as requested by the Vegetable Sectional Group of the C.O.D. Laboratory and field experiments showed that the normal field and transport temperature variations observed had a negligible effect on quality, and that the harvesting of pods at the correct stage of maturity is of greater importance.

In recent years the ginger industry has shown a steady, rapid growth which has been due in part to the extensive research conducted by the Food Preservation Research Branch. Investigations have resulted in improved techniques for the brining, syruling, drying and extraction of ginger-flavouring components which are widely used in the food industry. A new research programme to investigate

crystallising techniques and optimum-storage conditions for the packed products is being commenced this year.

Great Britain imports large quantities of brined mangoes from India and the West Indies for use in chutney manufacture. Extensive plantings have been made by industry in North Queensland, particularly in Bowen, to supply this demand, and investigations are being undertaken by the laboratory to determine the best brining conditions and to study dehydration techniques with a view to exporting dried compressed mango slices.

The installation of a commercial-size citrus-juice extractor has permitted the extension of citrus-juice processing trials. As extensive plantings of Ellendale mandarins are being made in the Gayndah district, investigations have been undertaken to study processing suitability of this fruit for juice-canning.

Over recent years major corrosion problems have occurred in the fruit-canning industry, particularly the fruit-salad canning industry, owing to the presence of excess nitrate in papaws. A thorough study has been made of the chemistry of the corrosion mechanism, but unfortunately no technological solution to the problem has been found in this direction.

It has become very apparent in recent years that in evaluating new passion-fruit selections the processing suitability must be taken into consideration. To this end, investigations are in progress to study the composition (particularly flavouring compounds) of four varieties and 40 hybrids of passion-fruit. Only by these methods can the most suitable varieties be selected for processing.

Investigations into the processing suitability of various pineapple clones have now reached a stage where the six most desirable clones have been selected for regional trials.

The utilisation of potatoes for processing is rapidly increasing and, to gain information on the effects of varietal suitability, fertiliser application, storage temperatures and processing conditions on product quality, a series of trials spread over several years has been undertaken. So far sebago and kennebec appear to be most suitable varieties.

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICAL LABORATORIES

The Agricultural Chemical Laboratory Branch is a valuable unit of my department. Its soil-survey work is indispensable in the assessment of potential irrigation areas in particular, since the structure of a soil is a critical factor in its usefulness for irrigation. Reconnaissance soil surveys are proceeding in the Emerald, Collinsville, Bundaberg and Lower Pioneer River areas. Yearly targets have been set up to 1975 for detailed soil surveys of the area to be served by the Fairbairn Dam. Sections of the brigalow scheme will also be studied in detail.

The chemical laboratory has an important part to play under the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act, as it will be responsible for detecting pesticide residues on crops.

The cereal chemistry laboratory, located at the Queensland Wheat Research Institute, conducts quality analyses of wheat and barley for various purposes. The plant breeders, for instance, have to know the grain quality of the lines they have in their breeding programmes. The effects of fertilisers and irrigation on grain quality must also be measured. Micro-baking and micro-malting tests, which can be conducted on very small samples of grain, are now possible on apparatus in the laboratory.

The branch is also concerned with leaf analysis of tobacco and measuring the effects of fertilisers and irrigation on leaf quality. The branch takes a very lively interest in plant nutrition, and conducts glasshouse and field trials aimed at establishing nutrient deficiencies so that appropriate corrective measures can be recommended to farmers and graziers.

ENTOMOLOGY

More than ever before, there is a need to investigate farming problems caused by insects. It has become apparent that the increasing range of farm chemicals has introduced some problems while helping to solve others. A detailed technical background knowledge of the crops and the pests is essential to develop sound control methods, minimise health hazards, and avoid chemical residue problems and problems of insects becoming resistant to chemicals.

Well-trained officers and adequate facilities are needed, and their cost to the State can be repaid many times by the saving in pest damage which would occur without the guidance that they enable the farmer to obtain. No matter how well trained the officer, we cannot expect him to produce results without laboratories equipped to make use of improved techniques in biological studies. Pasture pests are occupying more attention of the department because of problems of residues in meat, milk and other commodities.

On the Atherton Tableland, the two large funnel-ant demonstration trials established earlier are being continued to show how controlled grazing and fertiliser usage developed in trial work has improved pastures in the presence of funnel ants. In the northern region, large numbers of termite mounds are present in vast areas of beef pastures. Work is planned to find out what influence these insects have on the pastures, and, if they are detrimental, the best methods of permanent removal. An investigation of the destruction of pastures by a soil-inhabiting white grub is under way in the brigalow soils of the Chinchilla-Jandowae district.

Lucerne is a valuable adjunct to our dairy pastures but it has insect pests which limit its growth and require insecticidal control.

This has led to residue problems, and technical studies on the biology and control of its main pest, the jassid, have been started to find an acceptable solution to these problems.

Cotton has always had its quota of pests and a great deal of data have been gathered on the well-known pests to help in offering growers effective control methods. With the greater emphasis now placed on irrigation and the expansion of areas of irrigated cotton in recent years, spider mites have risen to the status of major pests of the crop. Detailed studies of the problem are planned to reduce this new drain on cotton yields.

The legume-seed producers of North Queensland have difficulty in supplying the demand for seed throughout the State, and insect pests, in particular a number of plant-destroying weevils, are contributing to their difficulties. Again, there is here a need for a thorough investigation of the pests concerned and the development of sound control recommendations based on a knowledge of the biology of these pests.

The margin of profit in grain production being what it is, Queensland producers cannot afford to allow losses of grain in storage to get out of hand.

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

Mr. ROW: Before the luncheon recess I was dealing with the entomology section and stressing the importance of investigation of insects and their effects on grain. At our Indooroopilly centre, much work is going on with grain protectants and with inheritance of insecticide resistance in stored-product pests.

The entomology section is responsible for fauna research, and for control of the Fauna Conservation Act. It is not fully appreciated how much investigation is being made into fauna matters. The department operates two main fauna investigation centres, one primarily for kangaroo studies, at Warwick, and one primarily for wild-fowl studies, at Townsville. Information being collected by scientists at these centres is being used to assess the degree to which the various commercial and game animals and birds need protection. The need for continuous well-based surveys of wild-life numbers is becoming increasingly evident. Without sound information, it is difficult to come up with sound decisions concerning conservation.

PLANT PATHOLOGY

Plant-pathology activities are concerned with research and extension into plant-disease problems in Queensland. In addition to the main unit in Brisbane, regional laboratories are situated at Mareeba, Cairns, Nambour, Kingaroy, Toowoomba and Applethorpe. Plans are being prepared for a new building, to be erected at Indooroopilly, to serve as a new headquarters for the section.

Among the disease problems on which research is being conducted are blue mould, stem rot and wilt of tobacco; leaf spot and

root rot of bananas in North Queensland; stalk and cob rot of maize; diseases of peanuts; top rot of pineapples; bacterial wilt of ginger; diseases of beans; market diseases of tropical fruits; tomato diseases; root rot of lucerne; rust and root rots of cereals; diseases affecting quality in potatoes; sorghum rots; cotton seedling problems; mildew of cucurbits; virus diseases of all crops.

Mr. Houston: Can you explain one of those?

Mr. ROW: I shall give the hon. member a long dissertation on them later.

Facilities are steadily improving, with glasshouses now provided at most centres. Research is of necessity becoming more sophisticated, and this means the use of expensive equipment. Every effort is being made to meet this need, and considerable assistance has been forthcoming from both joint industry/Commonwealth funds and direct industry assistance. Research into wheat, vegetable, fruit, tobacco and peanut diseases have been assisted in this way. An ultra-centrifuge for virus-disease work was provided from the Rural Credits Development Fund of the Reserve Bank of Australia. I think that was quite a breakthrough. Not very much money was involved, but it is an advantage to have that equipment.

Much of the research is long term in nature, with results becoming steadily available to primary producers in unspectacular fashion. The adoption of fungicide schedules, evolved over many years, for the control of leaf spot of bananas is one such case. Without these schedules it is certain that the banana industry could not have become firmly established in North Queensland. As a matter of fact, North Queensland bananas are now being exported as far as Perth, in Western Australia.

Recently, on the Atherton Tableland, the control of leaf spot of peanuts by fungicides has been clearly demonstrated. The widespread adoption of this control measure will have a very significant effect on the peanut industry. In South Queensland, fungicide control of top rot of pineapples has been spectacular in departmental experiments. The strawberry-runner approval scheme is based on the provision of virus-free material produced by heat therapy of strawberry plants at the plant virus laboratory at Indooroopilly. This application of research has lifted the productivity of strawberry plantings very significantly.

These few examples illustrate the very considerable impact that plant disease research by this department is having on primary production in Queensland.

BOTANY

I recently had the pleasure of seeing the Premier open my department's new botany building at Indooroopilly. The large and

representative gathering on that occasion—quite a number of politicians were present—was proof of the value of the services that the Botany Section of the department is providing. It previously was in the Botanic Gardens, where an old building housed a wonderful collection of books and plant specimens that were in constant danger of fire. That collection is now housed at Indooroopilly, in very suitable premises.

Research on methods of controlling brigalow suckers is being continued at the Brigalow Research Station, Theodore, and in the southern brigalow belt, near Bungunya. This research includes studies of the effects of burning, ploughing and spraying under different conditions and using different techniques.

Studies of the particular problems associated with brigalow control in Area III of the Fitzroy Basin development scheme are to be undertaken in co-operation with the Department of Lands.

Studies on limebush are being intensified, and a survey is to be made to evaluate the effects of cultivation on regrowth of this plant.

Poisonous-plant problems are being studied in association with the Division of Animal Industry and the university veterinary school.

A study of plants collected in Cape York Peninsula is being continued and, in association with C.S.I.R.O. Regional Laboratory, Townsville, the distribution of vegetation types is being plotted in relationship to soil types.

With the improved facilities now available in the new building, the mammoth task of preparing a new handbook on the flora of Queensland is gaining some momentum. This involves considerable research into the taxonomy and nomenclature of many groups of Queensland plants.

DIVISION OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY

The activities of the Division of Animal Industry are financed largely from the Trust and Special Funds, but many of the activities receive substantial endowment or outright grants from Consolidated Revenue Fund. The division is concerned with research and extension work in livestock, including pigs and poultry, with the regulatory aspects of pest and disease control, and with slaughtering, meat inspection, and meat grading.

VETERINARY SERVICES

On the disease front, the cattle tick has remained the principal cause for concern. However, even though resistant ticks have been detected on an increasing number of properties, the control programme has proved highly effective in controlling, and even eradicating, the pest on those properties on which programmes have been implemented fully in terms of clean musters. To alleviate the burden on stock-owners, the Government has supplied medicaments

to owners of resistant and adjoining properties. Supervision of the control programmes has necessitated additional staff and equipment. These costs have been met from additional special grants made to Stock Fund from Consolidated Revenue.

Resistance of ticks to chemicals is not new, but there is an increasing realisation that we must resort to other methods of control and, further, that it is not always easy to discover new chemicals to replace the old ones. The policy of prolonging the useful life of those that we have is becoming increasingly important.

At the request of the industry, draft legislation has been prepared to provide for registration of all treatment facilities and the sampling of dips. To accommodate the projected work in regard to the tick problem, an expenditure of some \$448,000 is envisaged for the year.

It is encouraging to report the increasing interest by stock-owners generally in the tick-control problem, and this has necessitated the protection of cattle against the tick fevers. My department's Tick Fever Research Station at Wacol has made a timely contribution to this aspect of the tick and tick-fever problem. The techniques of vaccine production have been recast and a highly effective vaccine is now being produced. More than 1,000,000 doses were distributed last year. Such is the success attendant upon the use of this vaccine that inquiries for supplies have been received from interstate and from certain South-east Asian countries.

Attention has also been given to the methods used for applying chemicals to ticks, and a highly effective mobile spray plant has been developed in collaboration with a manufacturer of commercial spray plants.

The unit that has been constructed has proved valuable in the tick quarantine area (a photograph of it appears in the annual report), but it is considered that its most effective use might well be in the eradication of isolated outbreaks of ticks in clean country where the provision of fixed treatment facilities would be uneconomic.

Further satisfactory progress has been made in the eradication of pleuropneumonia, once one of our most important diseases.

In spite of a continuing intensive search for the disease, no evidence at all of it has been found this year, and in fact since 1965, which was the first year during which pleuropneumonia was not found in the State since its first entry during the last century. Its final eradication, to which we believe we can look forward over the next few years, should be a tremendous boon to the cattle industries. Arrangements have already been made for the freer flow of cattle from Queensland to other States and to overseas countries as a result of the success of the eradication campaign. Funds are provided from the States for this campaign and are administered by Queensland.

Plans have been laid to commence with the eradication of two other important diseases, tuberculosis and brucellosis, and Commonwealth agreement on financial aspects of these programmes is being awaited.

Recognising the need to establish private veterinarians in the more remote areas of the State, provision has been made in each of the past few years for this purpose. It is pleasing to report that one contract has been accepted by a practitioner at Cloncurry—a private veterinarian. This may well set the pattern for an expansion of the scheme to other areas. It is regarded as essential, if this State is to effectively participate in major disease-eradication programmes, for veterinarians to be settled in remote areas.

CATTLE HUSBANDRY

Arising from an upward trend in productivity of beef land, there is a safe opportunity to increase cattle numbers. As the reproductive performance of the breeding herds in many areas is relatively low, studies of ways of improving performance are being made. Modifications in herd management methods and variations in nutrition are among the main techniques under examination.

The Cattle Husbandry Branch conducts field research stations at Millaroo and Ayr and carries out other research on other departmental stations and private properties. The branch has an important project in hand, developing techniques for using artificial insemination in large beef herds. This is quite a different proposition from artificial insemination in dairy herds or on small fattening properties.

Other aspects of the research work on beef-cattle management are concerned with paddock rotation and strategic dipping for tick control, supplementary feeding, and grazing management of Townsville-lucerne pastures.

At the Ayr Cattle Field Research Station, a cross-breeding programme aimed at developing a breed of dairy cattle most suitable for tropical conditions is in progress. Indian blood is being introduced into crosses by using the Sahiwal as one parent, crossed with the British breeds of dairy cattle. One obstacle has been the inheritance of difficult temperament from the Sahiwal parent, upsetting dairy-shed routines. Fortunately this problem is being overcome, and good yields are being obtained from some of the crosses, such as the Friesian-Sahiwal cross, the Jersey-Sahiwal cross, and the A.I.S.-Sahiwal cross. The Friesian-Sahiwal cross is showing the best results.

SHEEP AND WOOL

The Sheep and Wool Branch carries out husbandry observations, conducts a wool biology laboratory, supplies advisory services to sheep-owners, and carries out sheep research at Toorak Sheep Field Research

Station, in the North-west. Broadly speaking, there is one departmental field officer to every 400 sheep properties.

The isolated nature of Queensland sheep runs makes considerable travel necessary to contact sheep-owners individually, and is costly in vehicles, fuel and maintenance. In some of the more isolated districts, officers travel by motor vehicle up to 2,000 miles a month during busy periods.

The wool biology laboratory provides fleece-measurement facilities aimed at assisting stud and flock breeders to increase the genetic improvement of sheep more rapidly by helping to define superior sheep. As any genetic improvement achieved is permanent, this type of progress could have a long-term and spreading influence on the State's sheep. Wool-fault and fleece-abnormality investigations are also carried out by this laboratory.

The Toorak Sheep Field Research Station carries approximately 7,000 sheep on 35,000 acres of open Flinders and Mitchell grass plain country, 30 miles south-west of Julia Creek. Investigations are aimed at exploring how to improve production in an environment which, for sheep, is at best marginal, but in which many sheep are grazed. Field trials investigate problems of defining local types of sheep of superior production, fertility, nutrition, and wool growth.

PIGS

The higher level of technical knowledge now required to raise the larger numbers of pigs being run on properties has created an increased demand on pig-section staff for information. The movement of pig-raising westward into new grain-producing areas has also increased the areas to be serviced.

Replacement of staff lost through retirement and resignation is being undertaken. Recruitment and training of junior officers is also in progress so that adequate staff will be available.

Testing of progeny of pure-bred boars at the Rocklea Pig Testing Station, which is the only section of the department that is air-conditioned, is being continued as one means of determining blood lines likely to effect improvements in productivity and carcass quality. Litter-recording will also be maintained as a means of demonstrating the value of well-kept production records. Officers of the Pig Branch will continue the practice of evaluating new methods in management, housing and nutrition. Those of practical value are passed on to producers through various extension channels. Problems associated with nutrition, building design and materials, new management practices to meet the requirements of intensive housing of breeding stock, and disposal of piggery wastes, will be under observation during the year ahead. Some attention will be given to the problems associated with satisfactory carcass-grading also.

POULTRY

The Poultry Industry Acts provide for the financing of the Poultry Industry Fund. The amount paid by the Government as endowment to this fund is governed by contributions from the egg and poultry-meat industries. The Government has in past years made an additional grant to the fund of \$20,000. Industry contributions are by way of precepts imposed on egg boards and licensed poultry abattoirs. Other finance is derived from registration of poultry stock suppliers and the blood-testing of their flocks. The sale of eggs and poultry, the residue of the poultry experiments conducted at the Rocklea Experiment Station, also makes some contribution.

Owing to the difficulties experienced in the egg market in the early part of this year because of the low prices received from the sale of surpluses overseas, it has not been possible to increase the precepts issued on the boards to attract higher Government endowment. The Government has, however, increased its separate grant from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

The broiler industry is still in a stage of development, and it is considered that an increase in the precept on this section at this stage might well retard this development. Staff adjustments are planned to provide for the more efficient utilisation of their services. No new appointments will be made.

A small increase in expenditure is planned for the further development of research work associated with the Rocklea poultry section. Provision has been made for the purchase of suitable equipment to enable the determination of metabolisable energy values for locally produced feed-stuff commonly used in poultry rations in this State. The purchase is envisaged also of two feed silos to achieve economy by the use of bulk grain.

ANIMAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The core of the department's animal research is the Animal Research Institute at Yeerongpilly, which has associated facilities at Rocklea, Wacol, and various country research stations.

An artificial-insemination centre is conducted at Wacol. In 1967, over 60,000 cows were inseminated with semen supplied from the Wacol centre. This represents an increase of 16 per cent. on the previous year's figure. In addition, 7,484 ampoules of semen were sold interstate, compared with 123 ampoules in 1966-67. This expansion in interstate sales is expected to continue and has been augmented in recent months by some overseas sales. In fact, people in the Near East are becoming interested in our artificial-insemination services. A custom-freezing service was commenced in 1967-68 to freeze and store semen from privately owned bulls. This service is proving very popular, over 12,000 ampoules being processed in the first year.

In relation to multi-resistant ticks, production of a more reliable vaccine and other developments in tick control have resulted in

increased laboratory work. Testing of ticks for resistance has increased markedly since the initial diagnosis of Biarra resistance. Over 500 batches of ticks were tested for resistance in the first six months of this year. Over 1,000,000 doses of tick-fever vaccine were produced and supplied to Queensland cattlemen in 1967-68, and the demand is still increasing. This contrasts with 171,000 doses supplied in 1965 and is a practical demonstration of the confidence being placed by producers in the modified vaccine, which was produced after some years of basic and applied research by departmental officers. As I indicated earlier, requests for supplies of vaccine have been received from South-East Asian countries.

Testing of samples of dipping vats, development of methods to test new insecticides, and studies of pesticide residues in animal products, have been expanded to meet the demands of the primary producer and satisfy the requirements of prospective importers of our products.

The increase in veterinarians in the field and the coverage being provided by field officers of the Department are resulting in increased numbers of specimens being submitted for laboratory examination. This trend is such that serious thought will have to be given to the establishment of regional laboratories to adequately service this departmental function. The many experiments on survival requirements of cattle, on utilisation of low-quality roughage, and on simple high-grain rations for intensive production of beef have provided basic information which is assisting extension staff to give sound advice to cattle-producers. This work has led to fundamental studies now in progress on the mechanism of urea toxicity and on the sodium requirements of cattle for production.

Utilisation of protein has been the major part of investigations of pig nutrition.

Research in poultry nutrition has included an evaluation of the calcium, manganese and choline requirements of broiler chickens and on the choline effects of protein restriction during the growing period on subsequent laying-house performance.

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (2.38 p.m.): The Minister spent almost 1½ hours in introducing his departmental Estimates. I have no argument with that—I know that he has a very valuable story to tell—but it is certain that in the 25 minutes allotted to me I will not be able to speak on every matter that he introduced.

It could be truthfully said that the officers of the Department of Primary Industries have made a significant contribution to the development and welfare of Queensland. They are all practical men, and wherever they are throughout the State—particularly in North Queensland—they are very easy people to know; they are always willing to meet people outside their ordinary hours to give them the benefit of their technical knowledge. They are prepared to help all in the community

who seek their assistance. It is excellent that we have been able to make use of the research stations throughout Queensland and the work undertaken by them. On many occasions they have assisted primary producers to overcome what might appear, in the first instance, as insurmountable difficulties.

As I am speaking, I am thinking of the area around Townsville, particularly the Thuringowa Shire Council area, where years ago botulism was evident. Today, with the use of vaccines and the efforts of these officers, in co-operation with the primary producers, it has been overcome. Public servants generally should try to gain the confidence of the people around them, and through their easy approach the officers of this department have certainly gained the confidence of the people of this State. As a result, everyone benefits.

As I said, I could range over a wide field in this debate on the Estimates of what, to me, is a most interesting department. However, it is obvious that I must confine my remarks to two or three facets of its activities. Primary industry plays a vital role in, and will continue to be the backbone of, the economy of this State. Surely no-one will argue against that. In recent years there has been a mineral boom in this State which I suppose will continue while there is a world demand for particular minerals at prices that give an attractive return to the investors in the mining industry. It is also possible, of course, that there will be a decline. But there will always be markets for primary products in this hungry world, in which there has been a population explosion. In the next 20 years there will be a population increase of millions, and many of those people will never know what it is like to have three full meals a day. So there will always be a market for our primary products.

In 1966-67, the latest year for which figures are available, the value of our agricultural, dairying and pastoral pursuits in round figures was \$600,000,000, five times greater than the \$120,000,000 received from the exploitation of our minerals. That shows just how valuable our primary production and our primary producers are.

There is a continually widening demand for our primary products and this Government should be ever on the alert to obtain new markets, especially in South-east Asia. There has been a lack of any really solid movement on the part of this Government and the Federal Government to assist primary producers by obtaining new markets. It is patently clear that most of our primary producers use all their available time in following their pursuits, and it behoves the Government to obtain markets, and obtain them speedily, if primary producers are to continue to prosper and primary products are to be sold on ever-widening world markets. Some markets are becoming very competitive, and

returns to producers from them are much lower than they used to be. I shall instance some of them shortly.

To meet this situation we must look for more lucrative markets, and also more economic means of production. If markets are to be found in South-east Asia, primary producers must get the utmost from the land, and material assistance is provided by the Department of Primary Industries in obtaining the most economic means of production. If this is done, some of the difficulties posed by lower returns and highly competitive markets will be overcome.

I notice that there has been an increase in the use of fertiliser and machinery in primary industry, which has resulted in greater productivity. This must have the effect of keeping prices down and allowing this country to compete on world markets, which is very important. The greater use of fertiliser has led to the development of allied industries. A fertiliser works has been established in this State to make fertiliser available to primary producers. That is a good thing, because it also provides employment for many people.

There has also been an increase in the use of farm machinery. This has happened on a large scale in the sugar industry and, although it has meant the laying-off of cane-cutters, other jobs have become available through the use of mechanical harvesters.

I obtained some interesting figures which show the increase in the use of fertiliser in this State. In 1966-67, 1,209,746 acres were fertilised and 4,852,305 cwt. of fertiliser was used. That was a fairly good effort. As I looked back through the statistics available to me, I found that the 1966-67 figures that I have just quoted were double those for the 1961-62 year. The doubling of the amount used in five to six years shows how conscious primary producers are becoming of the use of fertiliser. It can thus easily be seen that the fertiliser industry will find lucrative markets in primary production in this State.

I might also mention in passing that the increasing use of fertiliser means that the phosphate deposits that have been discovered in Queensland will probably make a very significant contribution to primary production if they are developed in the way in which we hope to see them exploited. It may then be possible to produce fertiliser at a lower price than primary producers have to pay for it at present.

In Bulletin No. 64 of 1968, which recently came into my hands, I notice, under the heading "Agricultural Production, Q'ld, 1967-68," a paragraph relating to the use of artificial fertilisers. It says—

"The area fertilised during 1967-68,"—that is the year after the one to which I referred earlier—

"1,242,294 acres of crops and 259,760 acres of pasture, the quantity of fertiliser applied, 5,269,213 cwt., and the number of

holdings on which fertiliser was used, 20,360, were all above corresponding figures of any previous year. Sugar cane was the most fertilised crop, with 86 per cent. of the total area treated."

As I mentioned a moment ago, the cost to the primary producer or the pastoralist is fairly high. I believe that in some areas round Townsville it has cost about \$10 an acre to buy the fertiliser and have it spread on pastures. From that, one can see that it costs a pastoralist a fairly large sum to fertilise a relatively few acres of pasture. In my opinion, the Government should always keep that in view, because there is constant reference to improved pastures and it is often said that those who hold large aggregations of land should do something to improve them. It is obvious that to make such improvements may cost a great deal, and I believe that money should be made available through the Commonwealth Development Bank, and perhaps through other channels, to those who wish to borrow money to improve pastures.

Irrigation is also playing a much more important part in primary production, and again I refer the Committee to Bulletin No. 64 of 1968, which says—

"During 1967-68, 22 per cent. of the total holdings in the State practised irrigation on 311,305 acres of crops and 41,154 acres of pastures. Tobacco, with 97 per cent., had the greatest proportion of its total area irrigated, while sugar-cane, with 141,087 acres, had by far the largest area irrigated."

There is no doubt that irrigation plays a very important part in primary production. Cursed, as we are, with drought, sometimes for a number of years, sometimes for part of a year, irrigation ensures that primary producers are not dependent upon the seasons. In a very dry continent such as Australia, that is an important factor. I am very conscious of the need for irrigation in North Queensland, because in the area around Townsville the weather has been dry for many months. It has again shown the need for construction of the Burdekin dam to be undertaken as soon as possible. If that were done, 250,000 acres of irrigable land would become productive.

I do not intend to spend a great deal of time in dealing with the Burdekin dam, but I do wish to mention the production of rice on the heavy Barratta soils in the Burdekin area. The Minister referred to the research that has been carried out. It was at the department's research station at Millaroo that rice was grown, and it was the first time that I had seen rice grown in any quantity. It was claimed previously that that land was impervious to irrigation, but it has now been shown to be adequate for rice-growing. This industry is beginning to flourish in the Burdekin Valley. It is in its infancy but it is at a very exciting

stage, and I believe the time will come when the Burdekin Valley will be the rice bowl of the North.

Those who have started in this industry now face the problem of finding markets. As I said earlier, I believe that the Government should be busy finding markets so that this industry in the Burdekin Valley can continue to flourish and expand. Of course, like every other primary industry it requires an abundance of water, and, if it expands, it will require more than is at present available.

That is why I say that one of the main requisites of the rice-growing industry in the Burdekin Valley is the building of the Burdekin dam. Since the suggestion was first mooted, one of the main objections to the construction of this dam has been the belief that the land below it would not be productive, but, as the result of research that has now been undertaken, we know that it is productive and well able to carry a great stand of rice. All it needs is ample water, and so I repeat that we should be advocating to the Commonwealth Government that more big irrigation projects should be started in this State. It is from such works that our real wealth will ultimately flow.

Let me dwell for a moment on the sugar industry. There is no doubt that over the last four years or so the low world market price for sugar has caused intense worry to this industry. The burden has been particularly heavy on new growers who came in when the industry was expanded a few years ago. To get into the industry, many of them mortgaged to the hilt. They bought land at the highest prices—sometimes inflated prices—they over-capitalised in some instances, and many of them have found that, because of the poor world price, the redemption payments on their huge debts have become very crushing. During last week-end I had an instance of one grower stating that \$2.50 a ton repayment to the Agricultural Bank was not leaving him anything to live on. Many of these people are in the same boat.

All who have the good of this industry at heart have hoped that a new International Sugar Agreement would be arrived at. I think every responsible and right-thinking person hoped for that, because sugar has made a great contribution to northern development. Consequently, when the Deputy Prime Minister and the Premier of Queensland left here as delegates to the Geneva conference, we wished them well, and I hope that the latest International Sugar Agreement, the text of which was approved by delegates from more than 70 countries at the Geneva conference, will be accepted. I understand that the agreement will be open for signature until 24 December, 1968, and that the instrument of ratification, acceptance and approval must be deposited by 31 December, 1968.

Apparently, as I read it, the agreement will come into force on 1 January, 1969. Perhaps I should say that it is hoped the

agreement will come into force on 1 January, 1969, because it will come into force only if 60 per cent. of the votes of the exporting countries and 50 per cent. of the votes of the importing countries are cast in favour of it.

As I see it, this could be the first snag, although many of the delegates to the Geneva conference were in agreement and the consensus of opinion among them was that the agreement would be ratified. The agreement will remain in force for five years, but it will be reviewed before the end of the third year. I notice that the International Sugar Council will have the power to vary some of the provisions of the agreement. I am not quite certain why that is so—perhaps the Minister might touch on that matter—but it may be to keep the agreement flexible.

We know also that the quantity of sugar available to the free market will be reduced, by approximately 10 per cent., to 7,600,000 tons per annum. What effect will that reduction have on our sugar industry? The Minister should tell us whether it will have any effect on some of the State's cane-growers.

Another point I wish to make is that the countries that are members of the European Common Market are not presently parties to the International Sugar Agreement. It appears to me that that fact does not assure the long-term effectiveness of the agreement. The fact that the members of the European Economic Community are not parties to the agreement could quite easily lead to a breakdown of the agreement itself. The policy of the E.E.C. is to export sugar that is surplus to domestic requirements at subsidised prices, and this policy must always constitute a threat to any agreement that may be ratified in the course of the next month. It is a great pity that the countries constituting the European Common Market were not brought into the agreement. I hope they will be, because they must always be a threat while they are outside the agreement.

The new agreement applies only to approximately 13 per cent. of the world sugar output; the remainder usually goes onto home markets. I do not know what quantity of Australia's output goes on the world market, but from statistics that are available I find that this represents 13 per cent. of the total world output of sugar.

The severely depressed prices of the last four years have caused real hardship in the sugar industry. I know that the Minister is aware of that fact. Sugar that has been produced in excess of the needs of our home market has gone onto the world free market, and during the last few years it was sold at a price that was well below cost of production. If the International Sugar Agreement is to be ratified, our growers should be given the chance of selling the amount of their sugar that has to go onto the world free market at a price that

will at least cover cost of production. It has not done so for many years. The price has been so ludicrously low that it has not been profitable to sell the sugar.

I notice that there is an intention to put a floor price of £Stg.33 a ton on free-market sugar.

(Time expired.)

Mr. CORY (Warwick) (3.4 p.m.): First of all, let me thank the Minister for the introduction of his Estimates this year. In his remarks he spelt out the multitude of facets that are included in his portfolio. It is particularly important to mention them, because all the industries under the Minister's control are faced with problems that have been created by changing methods, standards and marketing demands in our present set-up. As a result, there is a quickly changing economic need in each of the primary industries and, associated with the economic needs, there are problems. Much more capital is required to produce the same quantity of goods as was produced years ago, and, at the same time, we are using less manpower. Pressures are created by the need to use increased capital content to become operative in any primary industry.

During my speech I will refer to two industries. The first is the meat industry, and, while dealing with it, I will mention the Queensland Meat Industry Authority's report. This year's report is the best that has been produced by the authority, which is now firmly established and has much more to report on. However, I ask the Authority not to be carried away by some aspects of the meat industry, but to look at the needs of situations, and the effect of any decision on all sections of the industry, before making any final recommendation. Hygiene is but one aspect—it is one of the most important aspects—of the many major aspects of the meat industry.

Let us be fair and recognise that not all the regulations that supposedly affect hygiene accomplish anything of a practical nature to help the meat industry. We know that certain standards and restrictions have been imposed by the countries that import our meat, but everyone realises that many of these technical regulations do not improve hygiene in any practical way. I therefore believe that these technical facets should not be enforced in the processing of meat for home consumption. We should be fair and realise that the economics of the processing industry present problems that should be left to the individual in this field. I admit that they must be taken into consideration, but I do not think we should direct processors on what is economic and what is not. All processors, large and small, are subject to D.P.I. inspection, and export works are subject to strict Commonwealth inspection as well. That is as it should be, and the industry accepts it. But let us not criticise the operators who have been in the industry for many

years and who, till now, have done everything asked of them. If and when the need arises for a change within the structure of the slaughtering industry, it should be implemented by guidance and advice rather than by the issuing of a list of instructions.

I note with interest from the report that the Meat Industry Authority believes that the aggregate of killing facilities in Queensland is adequate for the present time. I agree wholeheartedly with that finding, but I believe it has more significance than the inference that could be drawn from it. I certainly trust that it will mean no suggestion of the future extension of the service-works principle. If a need does arise for increased slaughtering facilities, it should be coped with by encouraging and helping the expansion of private operations. Let us cut out the direct financial burden that service works have placed on the taxpayer in the past and will continue to place on them in the foreseeable future.

To show the extent of the burden placed by service works on the community as a whole, I shall quote some figures. The Metropolitan Public Abattoir Board sustained losses in 1963-64, 1966-67 and 1967-68, and made a profit in 1964-65 and 1965-66. Its loss over those five years amounted to over \$250,000, and, over 10 years, to nearly \$500,000. The smallest loss represented 5½ per cent. The way the industry, both wholesalers and retailers, has been built up, it is essential that a service works be provided in the Brisbane area. But do not let us extend the system.

A progressive falling-off in cattle-slaughtering at the Metropolitan Public Abattoir and the sale of cattle at Cannon Hill is a natural and very good process, because it indicates greatly improved selling and killing facilities in other parts of the State. The industry need for the Brisbane abattoir-Cannon Hill set-up has fallen off considerably in recent years. That does not mean that it is not important or that it will not always have a share of the market. But it should have only a share and not be the be-all and end-all of the beef-cattle marketing system and, as it was some years ago, by far the major market and the market upon which were registered rises and falls. Now, each of up to half a dozen markets in Queensland can give an equally accurate estimate of industry trends, and this is good. Cannon Hill will always be important, but it will not be as important to the whole industry as it was years ago.

The Mackay District Abattoir has special problems, the biggest of which is to overcome its being started years before it should have been, with the result that it lost \$630,000 in four years, and \$276,000 or 13½ per cent. in one year. How can the public be expected to pay for the losses suffered by such an enterprise?

The Toowoomba Public Abattoir lost \$40,000, or 5 per cent. Admittedly it has

made a small profit in recent years, but it is still not a successful enterprise considering the capital involved.

The Ipswich District Abattoir made a profit of .9 per cent., and the Townsville District Abattoir and the Bundaberg District Abattoir sustained losses of 2 per cent. and 9 per cent. respectively. They have, in some years, made small profits. The whole principle of these service works is not financially sound. I cannot see the need for, or justice in, extending such a doubtful system.

Mr. Harris: Tell us about——

Mr. CORY: If hon. members opposite knew anything about primary production they would get up and tell the Committee about it.

Mr. Newton: I will be saying something about it.

Mr. CORY: I hope the hon. member knows more about it than his colleague does.

Why are these service works such a financial embarrassment? This comes about because neither the operators nor those concerned with their administration are responsible for the capital spent on them, and the system does not make for stability in the cattle market. When people have their own capital involved they see that the through-put is stable, and, if it is stable, the market is also reasonably stable. When a service works is being operated by people who have no responsibility for its capital content, it is easy for "stop-and-go" methods to be adopted according to the trend of the day within the industry. I am not saying that small operators should not be given an opportunity to kill, but this should be done in conjunction with privately owned works without the creation of a public white elephant. Something similar to the system at Rockhampton, where a percentage of the kill is made available to other operators, is what we should strive for, rather than the creation of large public works.

Mr. Harris: Are you advocating the operation of small operators to kill cracker cattle for dairy-farmers?

Mr. CORY: It does not matter what the small operator works on as long as he is given a fair go. If the hon. member really considered this position, I think he would give him a fair go, too.

I should like to refer also to the comments concerning the extension of the Metropolitan Public Abattoir area. I ask why this should be necessary if inspectors do the job that they are asked to do—and I have no doubt that they are doing it. Why should this be necessary, unless it is a scheme to bolster up the weakening finances of the Metropolitan Public Abattoir? If wrongly handled, a move such as this could become a very ruthless approach to something that should come about over the years by a gradual process. It is very easy to make decisions when they

affect somebody else, and I feel that a decision such as this should be made in that light. It is impossible to change overnight a system which has served the people so very well, and I say, "Don't try to do it". I shall always resist having a man put out of business if he complies with reasonable regulations. As I said before, hygiene is the most important consideration and there must be regulations controlling it, but, if a man complies with reasonable regulations, let us not be the ones to put him out of business. He must be given time, encouragement and financial backing when these changes are necessary. There is mention that compensation will be paid to those whose works lose some value because of these changes.

The plan for small acceptable facilities to treat 40 cattle and 150 small stock a day is an interesting one, and I suggest that we examine it before going any further. This is the type of works that I think could play a very important role in Queensland. The required standard could be met by existing small works, with perhaps some small improvement of facilities, and I believe that it is in this field that advice, not direction, should be given to owners, together with financial assistance, possibly through the Department of Industrial Development. I have in mind a couple of works which time does not permit me to mention but which have many thousands of dollars invested in them and must now be fairly close to the required standard. If they are not, I think that a little bit of encouragement, both moral and financial, through the Department of Industrial Development would do a great service to both the beef-cattle industry and the slaughtering industry.

I turn now to another facet of the activities of the Department of Primary Industries and refer hon. members to the report on the investigation of market milk supplies in South-east Queensland. It has a fine theoretical approach, with no regard for costs of production and delivery, quality, or the efficiency of individual factories. It has no regard for factories that agreed to support the Brisbane market when things were difficult back in 1941. Producers in other areas might say, "Why should we be punished for something that our fathers did?"; but I believe—I always will believe—that we should stick by the people who stuck by us when things were tough. In 1941, of course, there was little difference in price, and that is why so many of the other factories did not find attractive the proposal that they should come into the market. Now that there is a price difference everyone wants to get in for his cut, and many people are arguing that no recognition should be given to those who made it possible for the system now operating to be brought into existence.

To be parochial, I ask hon. members this question: how could the Warwick Co-operative Dairy Association agree to a system that recommends amalgamation with

two other factories and would give an equalised payment to producers of 19.478c a gallon when it is now paying its own suppliers 20.893c a gallon? If one confines it to milk producers, those who are now getting 25.018c a gallon would receive only 19.478c a gallon—a reduction of 5.5c a gallon. How could any board recommend an amalgamation in circumstances such as these?

I cannot understand a report that is designed to break up a successful undertaking and happy relationship between a factory and its producers by bringing a scheme such as that into being. The factory at Warwick is a co-operative factory, and it has already tackled its internal supply, delivery and production problems and streamlined its operations. By the suggested amalgamation, it is being called upon to pay for the streamlining of factories that have not done anything up till now. The Warwick factory has a 40 per cent. intake of bulk milk from tankers. How would suppliers react to an amalgamation that would mean that two directors from that area would be on a board of 16 and that the whole of their tanker-delivery system was taken from them?

What seems to have been forgotten is the cost of the milk to Brisbane and the costs of production of that milk. The consumers at one end, and the producers at the other, are the most important people in the industry, and the cost of milk to the consumer must be kept clearly in mind.

The report of the Brisbane Milk Board shows that the cost of production in coastal areas last year was 30.697c a gallon and that on the Darling Downs it was 27.238c a gallon—a difference of 3.95c a gallon.

The boggy of the cost of transport has been raised. Even my good friend the hon. member for Fassifern hawked it about, and it is one of the few matters on which I do not agree with him. The cost of transporting Warwick milk to Brisbane is 2.660c a gallon—that is after rebate is paid by the co-operative association that does the transporting—which gives an advantage for Downs milk, including cost of production and transport to Brisbane, of .799c, or nearly .8c a gallon and this does not include the cost of transport of coastal milk, which would make it a larger amount. It can be seen, therefore, that the Downs has proved that it is the most economic area for the production of milk. Why, then, should we do anything to try to kill it? If the consumer is ever going to get an advantage, let us encourage production where it can be most economically carried out.

Mr. Newton: We will pay for it.

Mr. CORY: Pay a fair thing and we will be happy. Downs milk can be produced and delivered cheapest. As I say, I do not want anyone to bring up the cartage boggy, because the difference in the cost of production far outweighs the transport cost.

Let amalgamation take place normally. It is happening in many cases now. Individual factories and co-operatives have done it within their own factory systems. Let it take place normally, on straightforward economic grounds. Do not force the amalgamation of financial and unfinancial factories, because the financial factory is obviously the one that will have to pay in the amalgamated set-up. Let individual factories come up to scratch, if they have not already done so, and, when they have, I think we will find that much of this supposed need within the dairy industry at the present time will have disappeared.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (3.27 p.m.): Without a doubt, each and every member of this Assembly will agree that this department is most important. This is amply borne out from the introduction of his Estimates by the Minister, because they received the most detailed attention of any of the Estimates so far introduced. I pay tribute to each and every one who had anything to do with the compiling of these Estimates and the Minister's introductory remarks, because they correctly detailed so many of the various factors under his control.

I do not propose to reiterate what was said by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about the wonderful work done by the departmental officers. One has only to pick up a copy of the Queensland Agricultural Journal to see just how dedicated these people are. Every factor is taken care of in language that any farmer or layman can understand, which is most important. I agree wholeheartedly with the remarks made concerning the wonderful job they are doing.

On the other hand, it was appalling to me to see the Minister addressing the Committee for a full hour before lunch with only one Country Party member sitting on the Government benches and, at times, none at all.

Mr. Bennett: They are just not interested.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: As the hon. member for South Brisbane says, they are just not interested. Had I been the Minister and seen only four or five members on the Government side listening to Estimates as valuable as these, which had taken such a long time to prepare, I would have been not only disappointed but very annoyed as well. I think, deep down, the Minister was just that. Some Country Party members came into the Chamber at one or two minutes before 1 p.m., and I was interested enough to count 10 Country Party back-benchers at the lunch tables at 1 o'clock, but between 12 noon and 1 p.m. there was only one, and sometimes none at all, in the Chamber. Admittedly that has nothing to do with these Estimates, but it has a bearing on their importance, particularly to

Country Party members and I think the position I mentioned was a shocking state of affairs.

Having registered that protest, I now move on to the actual Estimates. I intend to mention something that was only partly dealt with by the Minister but is a very important factor in his Estimates. I refer to the upsurge in the growing of potatoes in North Queensland and the reception that they are receiving in southern States. Many hon. members will find it difficult to believe that potatoes that are grown on the Atherton Tableland are receiving top prices on the Melbourne market. For a long time it was thought that Tasmanian and Victorian potatoes had the market to themselves, but owing to the drive of a co-operative, which was formed only five years ago, under the able chairmanship of Mr. Allan Beattie, who is the only remaining member of the original board of directors, that situation has been altered. Only a month ago the Minister had the duty of opening the co-operative's new administrative building, which was constructed, free of debt, at a cost of \$16,000.

From a very small beginning the industry has grown to one in which there are 123 growers who produce 10,333 tons of potatoes annually. The profit by the co-operative from that quantity was \$19,290, but it is well aware of what the future might hold so it was content to provide \$1,000 to the research section of the Department of Primary Industries for research into diseases that are prevalent both on the Tableland and in the potato-growing industry generally. This fact should give the Minister a great deal of satisfaction, for he will know that the co-operative is looking after its own interests.

Briefly, I shall compare the year 1966 with 1968. In 1966, 100 growers produced 8,159 tons of potatoes for a profit of \$5,591; in 1968, 123 growers produced 10,333 tons for a profit of \$19,290. That increase shows how the industry has grown each year.

Not only are the farmers finding the industry a profitable one but they are also providing employment for a large number of people. Just think of the many services that are called into operation for 123 growers who specialise in one particular crop. Merchants who handle hardware and repair outfits suddenly realise that they can hold a sufficient quantity of equipment in stock to supply the potato farmers. This fact reduces the waiting time for repairs and does away with the added cost of air freight that would be paid on equipment obtained from southern centres. An ever-increasing amount of employment is being provided by the industry. The amount of week-end employment that it provides is simply fantastic. It has been a great boon to people who like to go out onto farms in the country and earn a large amount of pocket-money to supplement their incomes.

The Railway Department in the country areas, which previously was the poor relation, suddenly finds that for four months of the year its income from freight charges is \$89,000. This was brought about by the co-operative seeking assistance from the Railway Department through its superintendent at Cairns, Mr. Walton. As a result of the assistance provided by the department the following freight rates are charged on potatoes from Atherton:—

Destination	Freight Rate	
	Per Ton	
	\$	
Cairns	..	6
Innisfail	..	6
Townsville	..	12
Mackay	..	14
Rockhampton	..	22
Brisbane	..	26
Sydney	..	34
Melbourne	..	43

The fantastic reduction in freight rates for the long distances was brought about by the ability of the co-operative to send almost the whole of its product by rail. Only a very small tonnage is going to Townsville by road at the present time. I think it amounts to 680 tons out of a total of 10,000 tons.

To give hon. members an idea of the various prices paid in October, I cite the following:—

Centre	Price	
	per ton	Tonnage
	\$	
Cairns—Innisfail	.. 110—130	133
Townsville	.. 110—130	397
Mackay	.. 110—130	96
Rockhampton	.. 120	32
Sydney	.. 130—150	635
Brisbane	.. 130—140	22
Local	.. 110—130	10
Melbourne	.. 160	80

It will be seen that there must be constant liaison between the co-operative and the Railway Department to find ways to extend the market. It is most encouraging to know that this industry, which is five years of age, is now established on such a sound basis.

A new approach has been considered to some of the diseases that affect this industry. The biological approach, which is vastly different from what the Minister outlined in his speech, is being considered. The Minister dealt mainly with the chemical control of diseases, but there is a South American wasp which one day may be the answer to the problem created by the tuber moth, which is the greatest killer of all in the potato industry. Recently about half a million of these wasps were released in Rhodesia. The wasp has a very rapid multiplication rate, and hopes are high that its introduction will have some effect on tuber moth numbers. This is an angle which the industry is examining to safeguard its future.

This morning I asked the Minister a question, to which he gave a very good answer, about the number of officers in the Department of Primary Industries in and around the Atherton Tableland area. He proudly told me that there are 104 officers. I accept that figure, and I am very pleased with it.

Mr. Row: There are a couple more at Malanda. You did not ask about them.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: That is quite so. I did not ask about Malanda. I will refer to Malanda in a minute.

The interests of these officers are so diversified that they could cover any problem that might be put to them by farmers or others engaged in rural pursuits. The point I make is that in the Treasurer's Financial Statement I noticed a special provision of \$30,000 for the initial cost of establishing a rural training school at Emerald, similar to the one at Longreach. I should like the Minister to use his influence—I know he has plenty of it—to get such a school for us in the Far North. It is not such a great distance from Emerald to Longreach, but in the Far North we get all types of climatic conditions. We have the coastal humidity, the range of temperatures in the Tableland area and the dry country in the western area and the Gulf country. Although the Minister's officers would not play a direct part in the rural training school, they would provide wonderful practical assistance to it in many ways. We have experimental plots at the various places that I asked the Minister about, such as Parada, Walkamin, Kairi and on the Gilbert River. All those places could actively support a rural training school if one was established in the Far North.

I ask the Minister, in all sincerity, to give close consideration to the establishment of the next rural training school in the far-northern part of Queensland. Just think of the cattle problems that exist there. The other day I said that we could have 4,000,000 cattle north of the 16th parallel. That figure came from a C.S.I.R.O. survey of the beef industry in the area. The Minister spent a good deal of time this morning on the beef industry, which is a very large employer of labour. The more we have continuity of killing, and the more meat exports we can get to feed the hungry world mentioned by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the greater will be the need to provide schools and knowledge in the areas in which the cattle are bred and reared.

The Minister mentioned the wool industry in Longreach. I agree with him, in a sense. Emerald will be the centre of a big coarse-grain bowl for the growing of sorghum, barley, and other grains. But everything can be grown in North Queensland. Fruit can be grown quickly on the coastal tropical areas; grain crops, potatoes and other commodities can be grown on the Atherton Tableland all the year round; and cattle can be reared in the vast areas

of the North, including the Cape York Peninsula. The Minister should favourably consider what I have said about establishing a rural training school in that area.

An important matter close to my heart is the case that the Minister made out for soil conservation. I have read many times of topsoil being disturbed every year. To grow crops or pastures it is necessary that the topsoil be disturbed. Flying in the Outback over cattle stations such as Lyndhurst, I have seen cleared areas of from 30 to 200 acres being used to grow improved pastures. The Minister is rightly proud of the dairy pasture improvement scheme. It is being continually expanded, and the best results under the scheme have been obtained in the Atherton Tableland area.

Mr. Row: I think it runs about second to Wide Bay.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: There is soil disturbance in many different areas. The Minister said that water run-off after rain creates one of our greatest erosion problems. I do not know how our dedicated conservation officers—at one stage the Minister said there were 80, and, at another stage, 65—will be able to cope with soil-conservation requirements in all of these areas. In certain parts of the State rains provide such a large volume of water at certain times of the year that the ground cannot absorb it, and if the ground has no grass and trees—trees along watercourses have been uprooted by flood water—erosion will be hastened and it will be more difficult for these officers to cope with the problem. Before any improvement in pastures is allowed there should be a quick check by somebody who knows the contour of the land and soil structure and can give a definite answer on how far we can go in disturbing the topsoil.

I have seen the dairy pasture improvement scheme carried out successfully on the hill-sides, but I have also seen large areas with shallow gutters down to the subsoil. This topsoil cannot be replaced.

In my early days in Parliament I mentioned the tobacco industry, which is carried out on soils that are light and contain a lot of sand and in which erosion is very severe. I wonder if the Minister has ever considered formulating some type of control over areas lying fallow or even under cultivation for the improvement of other crops or pastures. I noticed in the figures of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics released on 4 November that there are 5,619,958 acres under the plough in Queensland, and the area of land under grain crops has continued to increase to the present extent of 2,435,485 acres. They are fantastically large areas and, when it is considered that an inch of rain on an acre of land weighs 101½ tons, nothing short of a miracle could prevent erosion occurring with such an amount of water rushing over all of those acres.

The Minister mentioned cattle ticks. This month's issue of the Queensland Agricultural Journal contains a very good article dealing with the research carried out by the Department of Primary Industries into the cattle-tick problem. The article states that it has been estimated that cattle ticks cause a loss of \$20,000,000 a year to the cattle industry. That is an immense amount and a sum that one might think of in an annual State budget rather than the amount lost in one industry. I do not think the officers of the department would exaggerate to such an extent.

In this industry many of the smaller men who have capital to improve pastures in coastal areas, which are tick-infested, obtain cattle from clean areas. It has been proved beyond doubt that these cattle are very susceptible to the ravages of ticks and the resultant diseases. The attitude, "We will get a lot of losses but we will also get a lot of profit" is not good enough, and much valuable export income is being lost by the introduction of clean cattle to tick-infested areas.

I now want to refer to the sea transport of cattle. This worries me a little. Cattle are taken by sea to the Philippines and other Asian ports, and I am wondering if there is any expert supervision of the fumigating and cleaning of ships before they dock in this country on their return. They may not be in any part of Australia other than the Gulf of Carpentaria for three, four or five months, but then they will go to Cairns or Townsville and deliver stock to the abattoirs there.

I am wondering whether the Minister has sufficient power to see that adequate fumigation of the ships is carried out, and whether an officer of his department travels on the ships to see what is being done. I referred in a question the other day to the possible introduction of diseases to the coastline by ships in our waters. This is aggravated by ships returning from overseas for more cattle. Although the ships do not bring cattle back, it cannot be said that there is therefore no risk of introduction of disease; there are many other ways in which it can be transferred.

I am wondering if it is possible to have our own men on these ships to police severely their unloading and fumigation and take all the steps necessary to prevent the introduction of diseases to Queensland. When we see the difficulties that ticks have caused, it is easy to imagine how much greater the damage and loss could be if a number of other diseases—they are too many and to well known for me to mention—were introduced.

In conclusion, I wish to refer briefly to the dairy industry. The Minister mentioned the factory at Malanda, and I am somewhat perturbed because farmers are being told, "We cannot use all your milk or cream. Send the excess milk to the factory, but you will

receive only the rate for manufactured milk." Yet a statement appeared recently in the Press that Queensland is importing butter from other States. There must be something wrong in the industry if that is so, because I should say that ample milk and cream is produced in Queensland to supply the State's needs and allow some to be exported.

Mr. Hinze: It has not rained for about six months.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: It may not have rained for six months in the hon. member's electorate, but I come from a place where it rains every week. I am talking about the Queensland dairying industry and the production of butter in the State.

(Time expired.)

Mr. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha) (3.52 p.m.): On 18 October last, when supporting the Budget presented by the Treasurer, I submitted to hon. members some preliminary views that I had prepared as a result of a study of the milk report prepared by the Marketing Division of the Department of Primary Industries. At that time I directed my main attention to what I considered to be the most important aspect of the report, namely, the proposals submitted by the Director of Marketing for revolutionary changes in Brisbane's milk marketing system, which I failed to see could benefit the public in any way, or, for that matter, any section of the industry, from producer to consumer levels.

I do not propose to repeat the statements I made on that occasion, but I did indicate to hon. members that my comments should be regarded as of only a preliminary nature and that I proposed to go more deeply into the particular subject.

In recent weeks I have had contact with various interests within the industry, as well as with the public, and I have not found that any section of the industry or the public is prepared to support the report. I have read certain public statements originating from certain of the co-operative factories that would have benefited by the adoption of the report, namely, the factories at Caboolture, the Darling Downs, and Booval, but support for the report from these quarters is only to be expected. However, in the intervening weeks no-one has challenged in any way the statements that have been made as to Brisbane's current milk system being the best in Australia from every point of view, and I repeat that the Government must be convinced that the general public is going to benefit by any change to which it lends support. Sectional interests have no place in these considerations; public benefit, and thus the interests of the common good, can be the only final determining factor.

No serious case has been advanced for any major change—in fact, the report upholds the current operation as being completely efficient—but the Director of Marketing has

put forth the suggestion that we should scrap our efficient milk operation of today, for some unknown and untried system, on the grounds that such a scheme would serve "farmer equity". Any argument as between the various producer groups of dairy farmers hardly seems to me to be a matter for this Assembly, but rather a question for the Brisbane Milk Board to determine on which it should advise the Minister for Primary Industries of any adjustment that may be necessary if the current system lacks anything relative to "farmer equity".

The struggle on the part of direct suppliers to retain their hard-won right to supply Brisbane with 46 per cent. of its milk, and the country factories' bid to increase their share beyond 54 per cent., is the simple crux of the problem and is the only aspect of the milk situation which I consider warrants any special attention. But let the Minister be impartially advised by this expert board and then be prepared to follow its advice. Is this not the main purpose for the Brisbane Milk Board's existence?

I do not propose concentrating any more of my energy on this report—or, should I say, Mr. Lapidge's report (because we have never really got to the bottom of that situation)—for I am now sure that the whole industry thinks it is a most impractical and unacceptable statement of advice; but I do intend to turn to some far more important factors which are developing within this industry in Queensland and which are likely to seriously affect the stability of the dairying industry of this State in the very near future if we, as a Government, do not act to take the situation in hand. I seriously say to the Minister that his officers might well use their energies and attention in this particular direction. Whether it be the Brisbane Milk Board or the Department of Primary Industries, someone must come up with rather urgent answers to these problems if we are to preserve the market-milk operations of South-east Queensland for the benefit of the dairy farmers of this State. I think that it is a matter for the Brisbane Milk Board, which is under the Minister's direction, rather than for the Department of Primary Industries, because the Milk Board is made up of experts from within the industry and should be more competent to advise the Government impartially on market-milk matters within this area.

My immediate concern in respect to the dairying industry of Queensland is the threat caused by the large volume of milk which lies across the border in New South Wales, and the unsuccessful efforts that have been made for many years by the Norco Co-operative Society to gain entry into the Sydney market. In an effort to escape their unattractive butter economy, I can foresee nothing other than Queensland becoming a dumping ground for this Northern Rivers surplus. Under present legislation, the Brisbane Milk Board controls only the supply

of whole milk which has been pasteurised as such, and in no other way dealt with from the dairy to the consumer.

Any dairy product outside the definition of "whole milk" is not at the moment under the control of the board but is subject to the Dairy Products Act, which is administered under Health Department jurisdiction. A similar situation exists in the New South Wales milk zone, and this part of Australia is also seriously concerned with some of the problems that I propose to outline.

The introduction of "low fat" milk is consistent with the developments of overseas trends to meet the consumer's demand for this type of product. In many countries there is a strong tendency towards increasing sales of these "low fat" milk products, based upon the belief that, as such, they have some advantage for people who are suffering from fat intolerance or who believe that they should limit their intake of fat.

The looseness of the existing milk legislation gives an almost open go to certain organisations in Australia to make capital gain from this situation. As I previously stated, already the New South Wales Milk Board is facing a very serious problem in this regard, but I should imagine that it is planning to deal with the situation by legislation at the earliest possible moment.

In recent months there has been a decided pattern of events in Queensland of which I think this Parliament should take very special notice. It is very obvious that there are certain companies who are test-marketing in this area of Queensland to ascertain just how far they can go without any intervention under the legislation of this State, and, the longer they go without intervention, the greater the problem to this Government is likely to become.

The first indication in this regard took place some months ago when the British Tobacco Company, through one of its subsidiaries, brought to Queensland "Devondale" thickened cream, packaged in New South Wales, although the cream itself had originated in Victoria. This cream is brought over the Queensland border under the protection of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution and has found its way into supermarkets and other stores, where it is selling at prices many cents below the price of cream produced from Queensland-produced milk.

This action was very quickly followed by another company's introduction of another brand of cream known as "Bulla", which is also produced in Sydney. I should point out that the quality of both these creams is much below that of the Queensland cream, as it contains not more than 35 per cent. fat compared with Brisbane's standard of 42 per cent. I understand that some Brisbane cream with a fat content of 35 per cent. is now made available by the producers in an

endeavour to compete with the southern cream, but the southern cream is still selling in Brisbane for lower prices.

After the way had been paved by these two southern organisations, only a very short time elapsed before the Norco company decided that it was obvious that there existed a clear path to Queensland, and thickened cream, which was packaged by Norco at its Lismore factory, started to arrive in Queensland to compete with other cream on the Brisbane market. I understand that these foreign creams are now finding their way into northern areas of Queensland, as far north as Innisfail.

At present we have these three southern suppliers of cream competing with the produce of the Queensland dairy farmers, who, up to 12 months ago, had the benefit of the total Brisbane market. It might be said that the cream market does not, in itself, represent a major affair, but I assure the Committee that the marketing of cream of interstate origin has been only the testing ground for bigger and better things that are likely to follow.

It is very significant that within the last week, as the next move in the chain of events, two new milk products arrived in Brisbane for sale. They are packaged in cartons by the Norco company in Lismore and carry the trade names of "Vigour" and "Refresha".

The first product is really standardised milk with added solids, but not fat, with the fat content reduced to approximately 2 per cent. Brisbane's legal fat standard for milk is not less than 3.3 per cent. If this product was produced by a Brisbane factory it would be classified by the Brisbane Milk Board as "standardised milk", and the board would exercise control over this product. The price paid to the producers of the milk used in the manufacture of this product would have been approximately 43c a gallon, which is the normal price paid for milk for the pasteurised trade. However, the product that is manufactured by Norco and comes into Queensland under the protection of section 92 of the Commonwealth constitution is produced from milk that would have been bought from the producer for not more than 22c a gallon. There is little need for me to point out just what sort of problem is looming in this respect.

The second product, which is really a fortified skim milk, has been brought over the border under the same protection and has been distributed by chain stores and group stores. I suggest that both of these products will compete strenuously with the whole-milk market in Brisbane.

If this current situation is allowed to continue unchallenged, then obviously the final move will be for whole milk that is packaged in New South Wales and produced from milk bought for 22c a gallon to make its way over the border into the supermarkets and stores in Brisbane to compete with the regular milk

supply of this city. When this happens we will be faced with a major crisis in the dairying industry of this State. If this situation comes about it will not be limited to Brisbane but will involve many other parts of Queensland, perhaps even the far-northern areas as well. The question will be asked, and rightly so: what has this Government done to anticipate such a situation and what does it propose to do to protect the dairying interests of this State from the dumping of surplus dairy production from the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales onto the Queensland market at uneconomic prices?

I suggest in all seriousness that we, as a Government, have a very urgent responsibility to carefully examine the implications of exactly what is taking place at the present time and what is likely to follow in the very near future. If we ignore the facts, the Minister for Primary Industries will have much to answer for in the near future.

We are all well aware of the implications of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution and the difficulties which arise when attempting to interfere with interstate trade. But I do suggest that the problem that I have outlined—and it will be one of major consequence and embarrassment to this Government—now calls for the closest possible examination of the facts to see that such a disaster does not eventuate. Hon. members must be asking themselves what action can be taken to safeguard this situation. Whilst I have been critical of the milk report generally, I want it understood that I have attacked this problem on the basis of not being destructive, but of simply drawing the attention of the Department of Primary Industries to the fact that it has bigger and more urgent problems on its hands to solve, and that its efforts should be directed to this major interstate problem rather than concerning itself with the fights and bickerings between our own producer interests and concentrating on sectional interests as it has in its report.

I should like to be constructive in my criticism today and have the Committee understand that the job ahead will be to retain the current satisfactory system. For this reason I suggest seriously to the Committee that we may well have to treat the threat which I have outlined as one demanding very special consideration.

The situation in which this Government is placed in respect to this matter is by no means unique. I refer to other parts of the world where problems of a similar nature have had to be faced up to and overcome. In the United States of America as far back as the 1930's, the instability of the market-milk business became an issue of such national importance that it became necessary for the Government to step in and legislate to bring some sanity back into the industry.

I have been particularly interested in the contents of a book entitled "The Public Regulation of Milk Marketing in California",

by J. M. Tinley, Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics, University of California. In this publication there is a complete history and background to the problems which confronted that State and which had to be overcome by legislation.

I also have in my possession a publication by the Dairy Institute of California entitled "Extracts from the Agricultural Code of California of 1967", pertaining to the production and processing of milk and dairy products in that State.

The Agricultural Code of California is a very interesting piece of reading and should make us realise how far the legislative body of this part of America had to be prepared to go to protect its State dairying industry. That section of the code pertaining to the marketing of milk and dairy products is a very tidy piece of legislation. I am sure it could not do other than impress those who have a sincere interest in the maintenance of the orderly marketing of milk and dairy products in this State, but on the basis that public interest is always fully maintained.

A careful study of the publications that I have mentioned will clearly convince hon. members that, contrary as it may sound to the Government's view in respect to price fixation, the circumstances which face the dairying industry in this State, and particularly in South-east Queensland, are such that only by legislating for absolute prices for the sale of milk and such other declared products which are regarded as competitive with milk, at both wholesale and retail levels, is there any possibility of containing this problem so that public interest, in respect to both price and quality, is properly safeguarded, a fair operating margin to processors based upon the services rendered is maintained, and, above all, a fair price to the producer, which is reasonable having due regard to the cost of production of market milk produced under efficient conditions.

I believe that our current legislation should be thoroughly and properly examined, and, if any amendments are necessary to give effect to the suggestions which I have outlined, they should be submitted to this Parliament, certainly during the current session.

I do not believe that by any State legislation it is possible to stop these products from flowing over the border from New South Wales into Queensland. The main task of this Government is to see that, when they are sold in this State, they are not sold at "dumping" prices which will undercut and undermine the dairying industry of this State, which needs the support of proper price levels if it is to survive. Under section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, the movement of goods over the border is undoubtedly protected, but once the sale is made by New South Wales to the Queensland retailer I believe that the interstate sale has been completed. When the sale takes place by the Queensland retailer to the consuming public in Brisbane, I believe that it takes on the

character of an intrastate sale, and, as such, can be regulated under State price-fixing regulations. It is at this particular aspect of the law that critical examination should be directed, without any delay.

Mr. Murray: Are you actually advocating price control?

Mr. LICKISS: I am advocating the protection of an industry against the dumping of uneconomic milk which cannot be consumed or marketed in the State in which it is produced. I believe that as a State Government we have an obligation to our Queensland industries.

By careful handling of this side of the problem there is little doubt that the amount of milk likely to flow from New South Wales to Queensland would be curbed to a great degree because there would be no incentive to buy, for it would be illegal to break the milk-price structure as regulated just as it is in other parts of the world.

At the forthcoming meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council, which meets on a Federal basis in February, 1969, I believe that it is the intention of the various milk boards of Australia to draw to the council's notice the threat which faces the dairying industry in Australia by the possible manufacture of "filled" milk or "imitation" milk. I am under the impression that the milk boards will be pressing very solidly for legislation to make it illegal for such a product to be manufactured in Australia.

This, at least, shows that there are certain people within the industry who are awake to what faces the industry in the near future and are doing at least some forward thinking on the manner in which to deal with these problems should they arise.

However, the two types of milk products which I have described earlier, samples of which I have here and which have already arrived in Brisbane from across the border, must be viewed as an immediate threat, and every possible effort within our power must be made to see that these products are contained in such a way as to prevent their having any marked effect on the sale of full-cream market milk in South-east Queensland.

I earnestly suggest to the Minister for Primary Industries that he arrange for the Brisbane Milk Board to furnish him with a report at the earliest possible date vouching for the facts that I have outlined in respect to these new milk products, which I have purchased in our city chain stores and which I believe constitute a threat to the whole-milk trade and milk producers generally in South-east Queensland.

I am sure that the Brisbane Milk Board, whose responsibility it is to regulate Brisbane's milk supply for the benefit of every interest involved, and to cover the producers, the consumers, the processors, and the retail milk vendors, must be a very apprehensive

body at this date with the current position that faces it and the limited legislation under the Milk Supply Act to combat the problem that I have outlined today.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (4.15 p.m.): It is a pleasure to participate in the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries, which plays a very significant part in the economy of the State and is of importance in many ways to the man on the land.

Of all the departments under the Government's administration, I do not think any is more starved for funds than the Department of Primary Industries. When one considers its contribution to the State's economy and export earnings, one wonders why so much money is directed to other facets of Government administration and why the Department of Primary Industries is relegated more or less to a dark corner while the Government says, "Well, we know this department is nice and buoyant and we have no great need to worry, so we will continue, year after year, giving it the 'big starve'."

According to the latest figures made available by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, the value of Queensland's agricultural production is in the vicinity of \$676,000,000. Factory production, so much of which depends upon primary production and is very heavily glamourised by the Government, particularly when some foreign concern is around the corner and it might possibly consider manufacturing tractors or setting up an assembly plant here, is valued only in the region of \$592,000,000. Although the trumpet is sounded and "The Courier-Mail" has photographs of Ministers cutting ribbons and unveiling plaques whenever there is some development in secondary industry, the value of agricultural production far exceeds that of the much-glamourised industrial production.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: And all agricultural production is Queensland-owned.

Mr. HANSON: That is so.

The activities that come within the ambit of the Department of Primary Industries have opened more country, settled more people, and given more job opportunities than have many of the glamour industries. I know that the opening of areas of land, such as those opened by Labour administrations years ago in the Callide Valley and the Monto area, is quite unspectacular, but over the years those who went there have progressively become men of substance, some of them very wealthy. When a project such as the construction of the Moura railway line, which is a very good thing for the State, is completed, again a great trumpet call is sounded and all sorts of concessions are given to the company concerned whilst the man on the land tries to obtain some miserable assistance from a Country Party Government. In the election that is due in a few months' time, I hope those in primary industry will take

cognisance of the way in which they have been roughly treated by their so-called friends.

Once again I want to place on record my admiration for many of the men who serve in the Department of Primary Industries, particularly those who have spent years in its service, and the fine way in which they carry out their duties. Many of them are very highly qualified. They are excellent public servants who carry out their duties assiduously, and hon. members should be proud of the contribution that the Department of Primary Industries makes to the economy of this State. I have never made a request to the department that has not been dealt with expeditiously, and I accord my grateful thanks to all the officers concerned.

I point out to hon. members that that is in spite of the fact that the Department of Primary Industries has its headquarters in one of the dreariest dungeons that one could find. One needs a shoehorn to get into the departmental offices, and there are more people in them than one finds in a cowbail at milking time. If a fire occurred in those offices similar to the recent tragic fire in the Supreme Court building, there could be a considerable number of fatalities.

I can well understand the Minister's frustration and why so frequently he wears the worries of office on his face when he enters this Chamber. The dark, dingy surroundings in his department change his delightful, buoyant, effervescent personality and cause him considerable worry in the administration of his high office and the execution of his duties. I have visited the Department of Primary Industries and seen files, desks, papers and people spread everywhere. It is the most shocking and disgraceful example of overcrowding that one could see. It might have been all right 20 years ago, when agriculture was not so diversified; but, with the diversification that has occurred in the past few years, some cognisance should be taken of the inadequacy of the accommodation provided in the departmental headquarters.

As I said earlier, rural production plays a very significant part in the economy of Queensland, and I point out to hon. members that recent southern reports show that there was a decline of \$450,000,000 in the value of Australia's rural production last year. That should cause us all considerable concern, because it is essential for the economic well-being of this country that the value of primary products should continue to increase year by year. Although great emphasis has been placed on secondary production, primary production still accounts for two-thirds of the value of Australia's exports, and the decline to which I referred earlier is significant and alarming.

I believe that the farmers of the future must be given, at a very early age, an insight into modern farming methods. The Australian farmer has proved that, given

the opportunity, the correct chemical aids and modern machinery, he can match his counterparts in other countries. Educators now have in mind teaching students at a very young age, so that they can become well versed in farm management and run farms on a sound, businesslike basis. They could learn, too, about the use of fertilisers and machinery, farm cropping, and many other matters associated with agricultural production.

Whilst we have seen in this State in recent years the creation of the pastoral college at Longreach and a proposal to establish an agricultural college at Emerald, I believe that there would be great possibilities of profit for the State if such subjects as animal husbandry, farm management, the use of farm machinery and allied subjects were initiated by the Department of Primary Industries and included within the syllabuses of our secondary schools. They should go hand in hand with the academic courses provided by the Department of Education. The study of such subjects would allow many country children who come to the cities to attend various high schools and become tutorially adept in their application. I am sure that such a step would serve a very important purpose. It is far beyond the ability of the Government to erect specialised colleges, such as the two I have mentioned, throughout the pastoral and agricultural areas of the State, but the system I have outlined would prove to be a valuable adjunct to these colleges.

I attended the recent Nudgee College Speech Night at the City Hall and I was very interested in the remarks of the Rev. Brother Bolton, principal of that institution, advancing these ideas. He has a considerable number of country boys in his school, and when I was speaking to him privately he said that it would be a wonderful aid if the department would interest itself in getting together with the Department of Education to see if a system could be worked out whereby a child doing an academic course could also study the subjects I have mentioned, initiated by the Department of Primary Industries. That department could supply such courses to the Department of Education, to be studied in conjunction with the academic course. It would be of great assistance to these lads, many of whom will be going back into rural production, either on their own behalf or onto properties owned by their parents. In addition, some lads might be desirous of leaving city life and acquiring properties of their own. I think it is a very fine idea and worthy of some consideration by the Minister and his department.

It is a wonderful thing indeed to see educational institutions started in rural areas, but once children are trained in the academic field the area in which they live, and in which they desire to continue to live in the years to come, cannot, beyond a certain point, offer

opportunities of employment other than on land that is probably owned by their parents. In a country such as ours it is very necessary to provide every opportunity for lads to go onto the land if we are to continue to increase, percentage-wise, our rural production and rural exports, because Australia as a country is very dependent on primary production.

I now want to mention a matter pertaining to a certain industry in my electorate. It concerns the Yarwun district, which grows the best-quality papaws in Australia. Some time ago I directed some questions to the Minister relative to certain advantages that were given to pineapple-growers during the period of glut during 1967. The Minister quite rightly mentioned that certain fruit sent in by pineapple-growers was dumped during the early months of 1967. It ranked for payment with the C.O.D., and the final payment to the growers was determined after dumping. Nevertheless, they did not suffer any harsh financial loss. Further, in regard to the profits of the ripe banana section on the floor of the C.O.D., certain rebates were made to growers, to a total amount in the vicinity of, I think, \$104,000.

I turn now to papaws. During 1966-67 papaw growers suffered from over-production in their industry and also from the nitrate content of their product. The Minister was rather evasive in his answer to my question and mentioned that certain allegations were made to the Committee of Direction but many of them arose from misunderstandings and the problem was purely a technical one. That is fair enough. Nevertheless, the papaw-growers did not obtain the same remuneration for their product as pineapple-growers and banana-growers received for theirs. I believe that some form of assistance should have been provided to the papaw-growers, because their product, particularly that which is grown in the Yarwun area, constitutes a large proportion of a very fine canned fruit-salad that is produced at the Northgate cannery.

Not only were the papaw-growers denied their rightful remuneration, but in addition approximately \$20 to \$32 a ton was deducted from the price of papaws that showed a nitrate content. Whilst I believe that the nitrate content of papaws could have been a cause of upset to that industry and of many rumours that circulated in other parts of the world, particularly in the Philippines, where an American concern engages in the production of papaws, I think that the matter was a little over-emphasised because of the heavy production in the period that I have mentioned. In this year's Annual Report of the Department of Primary Industries mention is made of certain modifications of fertilising schedules that will minimise the nitrate content of papaws. However, I believe that the problem was over-emphasised by the cannery in an endeavour to serve its own ends.

On some occasions growers in the Yarwun area packed fruit from one tree into two separate cases, and the cannery claimed that the contents of one case were nitrate-free and that those of the other were full of nitrate. This sort of situation has arisen, and the Yarwun growers know that it has. It calls for some investigation. I was not in the Chamber for the whole of the Minister's speech because I had certain interviews to attend to, but I heard him mention the matter of nitrates relative to passion-fruit. Perhaps the Minister could inform me about the nitrate problem that faces the papaw industry.

I want to draw the Minister's attention to certain matters relative to the election of the committees that are set up, particularly in the other-fruits section of the industry. The Minister should take a good look at some of the members who occupy positions on those committees. It has been brought to my notice that on the committee that represents one section there is a gentleman who, although he represents the electorate surrounding Sunnybank, lives near Beerwah. He is supposed to reside in the electorate that he represents and to have at least one acre of fruit under production. A few of these matters need investigation, as some growers in a number of areas are not very happy with the present situation. Perhaps the Minister knows of it, and I will await his statement on the matter.

Much has been said in recent months about the meat industry. This matter was adequately covered by other members of the Opposition, particularly the hon. member for Townsville North. It is very alarming and disturbing to people who have a "stake" in the meat industry—and that isn't a bad pun—and whose livelihood depends upon the successful operation of our meatworks, to find that the present situation has arisen.

Mr. Hughes: We are all concerned with this situation as responsible members of Parliament, not merely members of the Opposition.

Mr. HANSON: As the hon. member has never exhibited his concern, I can only classify him as irresponsible.

In a recent statement the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, Mr. Anthony, said that meat exporters will have to earn the right to sell on the lucrative United States market. This principle was introduced in the last few weeks to avoid defeating the quota system, as happened a couple of months ago. Those who are supplying the United States at the present time will have to accept the responsibility to supply other markets gained by the Australian Meat Board. This idea has the endorsement of many bodies, including the meat exporters and many of the abattoir boards. Mr. Anthony said that the details of the scheme would be announced within a few days. I think he made that announcement about three weeks ago, but so far no reference has been made to it in the Federal

Parliament, nor has any statement been released by the Minister on the scheme. I should be very pleased if the Minister could give the Committee any information that would be of assistance to the meat industry and hon. members generally. The scheme has been implemented to diversify our meat exports, which previously lacked protection under the recent quota legislation that the Australian Meat Board instituted because of the American legislation.

I said in my Budget speech that in negotiations which this Government has with American interests it is well worth remembering the basis of legislation enacted in the American Congress, wherein rigid hygiene standards are applied, some of them being very harsh indeed. I do not oppose highly efficient hygiene methods, but when I feel that the ultimate end of the devious methods surrounding the hygiene regulations is the exclusion of our Australian beef, I become very concerned. Governments that are quite willing to allow the free and open intrusion of foreign investment into our resources, and that give wonderful concessions to people anxious to start industries here, could well remember, when negotiating a deal for our primary products, that the door against them is kept very tightly closed, or is opened only very slightly. There is little or no intrusion by our primary products, thus protecting the interests of those other countries and keeping their prices high so that their producers are not unduly inconvenienced.

The export of meat forms a very significant part of the basis of our economy. The Department of Primary Industries should therefore be ever willing to promote and stimulate production. I have seen the Department of Primary Industries, in conjunction with the C.S.I.R.O., at work in my electorate, carrying out wonderful experiments at Rodd's Bay and other places. The results have been very encouraging. They have shown a wonderful increase in production from the land, mainly because of the introduction of Townsville lucerne in the spear-grass country, with the use of superphosphate and molybdenum. The departmental report indicates that about 75,000,000 acres of spear-grass country can be put to good use with improved pastures.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HINZE (South Coast) (4.40 p.m.): I make a contribution to the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries because of my great respect for the magnitude of the job done by the department in the development of our State.

Mr. Houston: Are you going to answer the grazier from Mt. Coot-tha?

Mr. HINZE: In due course.

I commend the Minister on the way he attends to this very comprehensive portfolio. He administers and controls a number of activities covering the major primary industries of the State, such as the beef industry,

which is worth \$105,000,000 a year, the sugar industry, which is worth \$98,000,000 a year, the wool industry, which is worth \$93,000,000 a year, and the wheat industry, which is worth \$29,000,000 a year. In addition, he administers Acts controlling weedicides and tickicides and a multitude of other Acts which must cause him great concern. I commend him. It is a difficult portfolio and he handles it well, to the benefit of the Government and of the State.

I should like to refer briefly to the Biarra tick problem, which has come to our notice lately. Recently another 50 farms in the Lockyer Valley were quarantined. The Biarra tick has spread at an alarming rate throughout the State. Up till six months ago or so I was one of those sceptical people who believed that the department was probably being too cautious. But I am now in a quarantine area myself and have had practical experience of what happens. I indicate quite clearly that it is impossible to kill the Biarra tick unless the recommendations of the department are followed and the cattle are dipped with double-strength dursban or Nexagan. They are the only two tickicides with which it is possible to kill the Biarra tick.

While the department has done a wonderful job in this regard, we are reaching the stage where the staff is not sufficient in number to cope with the problem. Quite frankly, I have no recommendation to make to the Minister. I do not know what we will do if the tick continues to spread as it has over the past 12 months. It has appeared on a number of farms in the Coomera Valley area.

To give an indication of how easy it is to introduce this tick, I point out that I brought three cattle down from Toogoolawah three years ago and it was only in the past six months or so that the tick was found on my property. This indicates the seriousness of this problem.

We found throughout the years that ticks which previously could be killed with arsenic, toxaphene, DDT and bercotox became immune to those tickicides. I am pleased to see the various companies devoting so much time, interest and capital to assisting the landholder, the grazier and the cattleman to combat this real problem.

As I said, we have reached the stage where this problem is getting out of hand because of shortage of staff. I know what has to be done to keep strict control over this tick, the time that departmental officers spend on the job and the mileage they travel to various farms. I can see that this is going to be the real problem for the department, the Government and the State. I know what the people of New South Wales are saying and thinking and, if we are not careful, we will not be able to send Queensland meat to New South Wales. I also give the department top marks for the way in which it dealt with the other problem that arose this week.

We have also learnt this week that of 400 university graduates in the Department of Primary Industries, 40, or 10 per cent., have been lost to its service. It will be recalled that the Treasurer said in his Budget speech that this State was suffering a brain drain. I have said before, and I say again today, that this is no way to develop the State. It is no use talking about Queensland being the State with the greatest potential unless we are prepared to pay the salaries necessary to keep trained staff here. It is galling to me to think that we train young people in schools and universities, and they then leave Queensland and go to other States, the Commonwealth Government or overseas. Although I am not saying that there is anything wrong in that, the drain from this State is too heavy and it is about time that, if Queensland is to be the State that we boast about, the present trend was reversed. Instead of people leaving, they have to be attracted here, and the only way to do that is to pay salaries that will attract and hold them.

I now want to refer to a person at the department who has been going quietly along in his work for many years and for whom I have the greatest respect. I refer to Mr. Sam Pegg, who is the officer in charge of the Herd Recording Section of the Division of Dairying. Mr. Pegg has a greater knowledge of this section of the department than has anybody else in this State. The department's herd-testing records show an increase to 221 lb. of butter fat per cow, or an average of 5,150 lb. of milk, from nearly 50,000 cows recorded. Twenty years ago the average butter fat was 144 lb., and the average milk was 3,289 lb., which indicates that it has taken 20 years to virtually double productive capacity.

I suggest that if Queensland is going to compete with overseas countries and other States our production will have to be doubled again, to a figure of about 500 lb. butter fat, because that is a common figure in the United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark, Holland, and some of the other States of Australia. Although it may be said that such a production is impossible, I say that, if this industry is to survive, the target to be aimed at is a production of 10,000 lb. of milk and about 500 lb. butter fat per cow.

To those who say that that is impossible, I mention that the same herd records show that there are 392 cows in Queensland which are already producing over 500 lb. of butter fat. There are 752 cows producing over 450 lb., and 2,028 producing over 400 lb., which means that 3,172 cows in the State, or 6.4 per cent. of all cows recorded, are producing over 400 lb. of butter fat a year. That shows that it can be done. In the East Moreton district, the area in which I am directly interested, 63 cows produce over 500 lb. of butter fat a year. Obviously the reason for that is the feeding programme that is followed. Because of the greater return for milk, it is possible for farmers in the area

to feed their cattle to capacity and allow them to produce the quantity of butter fat that I suggest must be the target for the future in Queensland.

I refer the Committee to a statement made this week by the President of the Australian Dairy Farmers' Federation, Mr. E. G. Roberts. He said that in 1980, only 11 years from now, the population of Australia should be 15,500,000 and that, with the present productivity throughout Australia, there will be enough for only the home market. That would be ideal, of course, for the producers, because the home market always is the best market. But you know as well as I do, Mr. Carey, that an endeavour has to be made to produce sufficient for export in order to maintain the balance of payments. If the dairying industry is to continue to be a major industry, it must be given the incentives and assistance that Commonwealth and State Governments have given it in the past.

A very good feature of Mr. Roberts's address was his reference to the sales promotion that the industry is undertaking. I do not know of any primary industry other than the dairying industry that tries so hard to sell its products throughout Australia and, indeed, throughout the world. Some time ago one used to hear the expression, "the inefficiency of the dairying industry". I am quite sure that no-one can justly level that charge at the industry now. In fact, it must be regarded as one of the most efficient industries in Australia, and it goes to no end of trouble to promote and sell its products.

Mr. Roberts went on to say that new packs coming onto the market shortly will include parsley butter, bacon butter, garlic butter, and lemon butter. Perhaps butter could be used as an ingredient with cheese or prawns in glass-jar lines. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha dwelt at length on attempts to sell milk products. He outlined to the Committee the terrifically keen competition that is developing in that field. As he said, Norco has put out two new lines, "Vigour" and "Refresha". I know that a Brisbane company will be making new lines available, and the company of which I am a member has already put a new line on the market. There will soon be quite a variety of milk products available to the housewife. The same is true of cheese. Queensland has proved to Australia that it can produce the fancy cheeses that are required by housewives nowadays. In fact, the industry is using every endeavour to sell all its products on the home market.

I believe that we should endeavour to bring about an international dairy agreement. All hon. members were very pleased when, the week before last, the Premier returned from the Geneva conference and told the House that a new International Sugar Agreement had been successfully negotiated, and

everyone involved in the sugar industry welcomed that statement. It would be a major achievement if an international dairy agreement could be negotiated along similar lines. As Queensland is a major producer of dairy products, I think that the Government of this State should do everything possible to bring such an agreement into being. It may be said that the task is impossible. I do not think that anything is impossible, and I believe that the Government should begin thinking seriously about an international dairy agreement.

The position today is that virtually every country producing dairy products is paying most uneconomic prices to its dairy farmers by way of a price-support programme, and they are producing a surplus. That surplus is then dumped onto the world's markets at the expense of other exporting countries, of which Australia is one. Surely it is possible for representatives of all the exporting countries to come to some sort of agreement to prevent the payment of such high prices, with subsequent dumping onto world markets.

Mr. Low: What do you think about "Softa" butter?

Mr. HINZE: "Softa" butter is a new line, and here again I think we should give top marks to the Queensland Butter Board for developing it. It contains no additives and does not resemble any substitute. It is nothing but butter—softer butter—and is a spread that I am quite sure will add to the sales of another of our dairy products. I thank the hon. member for Cooroora for reminding me about this product, because I want to congratulate the Queensland Butter Board for the work and effort it put into the production of this new line.

Mr. Hughes: I wonder why it was launched in the summer-time.

Mr. HINZE: It does not matter when it was launched. It has the capacity to stand up to heat. A temperature of 90 degrees has no effect on it. Some lines, such as the substitutes, melt in temperatures of 90 degrees. Margarine would run all over the floor, but this new line will stand up under a temperature of 90 degrees.

I now want to refer to what I believe is the great paradox of the world today. We all talk about the starvation of the masses throughout the world. John Douglas, who recently retired from the A.B.C. and has been to 100 different countries, has written in the current issue of "Country Journal" of the problem as he sees it. We know that we have hundreds of tons of milk powder which is surplus. The South Coast Co-operative Dairy Association has 150 tons that it cannot sell. The price has dropped \$100 a ton in the last 12 months. We have drought conditions in Queensland and Victoria, yet there are great surpluses of dried skim-milk powder while we continue to hear this story about the starving millions.

This is what I call the great paradox. This is 1968; we know of the wonderful work the United Nations are trying to do through Unesco and food and agricultural organisations, but we still cannot find an answer to this great problem. Although we talk a lot about it, that is as far as we get, and all that will happen when the world's population increases is that more people will die of starvation unless we get around to finding some way of distributing our food surpluses.

This is a fantastic State. We hear a lot about its mineral wealth and as the previous speaker said, its secondary industry development. Because of its history of productivity in primary industries, this State can produce virtually anything it is asked to. It would only be necessary to tell the dairying industry, or the wheat industry, or the sugar industry, or the cattle industry, or the wool industry, that a certain production was required, and we would be in a position, because of our productive capacity, to meet it. Therefore, I hope it is possible to get near to some satisfactory manner of distributing the world's surpluses so that we can cut down this terrific toll of world starvation that we hear so much about, particularly in countries such as India, the South-east Asian countries, and South America.

I want to refer now to the dairy pasture subsidy scheme, which was introduced in Sir Francis Nicklin's time. In his last election campaign he indicated that the Government would provide \$1,500,000 for the development of the dairy pasture subsidy scheme in this State. How successful this has been! Through the efforts of officers of the department, various dairy factories, and the farmers themselves, many thousands of acres are now under tropical pastures.

We know that when the tropical areas of this State receive reasonable rainfalls their pastures are improved to a great extent. The carrying capacity of some areas has been increased from one beast to 10 acres to one beast to 2 acres. I saw many instances of this vast improvement in the Cape York Peninsula when the parliamentary delegation visited that area recently. In fact, the hon. member for Belmont was a member of that delegation, and he took a photograph to show the improvements that are possible. We were able to see many of the new tropical grasses and legumes that are grown on the peninsula. The State is lucky that it is able to develop these legumes. In this regard, I pay a tribute to Dr. Mark Hutton, of the C.S.I.R.O., for developing sirato, which has proved a wonderful legume for this State.

I turn now to my own electorate, where the company of which I am a member decided to support the Government's plan to provide \$14 for every \$14 provided by a farmer who has up to 100 acres for pasture seeds and pasture development. Our company subsidised this amount to the extent of \$6, which means that the farmers who

supply the South Coast area receive a subsidy of \$20 for every acre that they plant. The result is that on a percentage basis we have the greatest pasture-improvement development in the south-eastern corner of the State. Last year a smaller number of producers was able to produce up to 5,000,000 gallons of milk, and this was brought about only by the great assistance provided by the Dairy Extension Advisory Committee to farmers in encouraging producers to plant new varieties of grasses and legumes and to embark upon a programme of the correct application of fertiliser.

It is necessary to refer briefly to the artificial-insemination centre at Wacol. Hon. members will recall that this centre was established in the late Otto Madsen's time, and that he was worried that farmers would not support it. We know now that the situation is quite the reverse, and that artificial insemination is accepted throughout the State. We know that the department introduced top-line bulls to the centre, and its policy is having a beneficial effect on the productivity of the dairying industry in this State.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Minister for the way in which he presented his Estimates and for the comprehensive report that he presented on the activities of a very complex department and its officers.

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) (5.4 p.m.): The Minister dealt with many aspects of the Department of Primary Industries and endeavoured to cover the many functions that it controls. The annual report of the department is very interesting, and the officers who helped compile it should be complimented for their efforts.

However, I enter the debate on a controversial note, because I intend to deal with two matters that members of the Opposition feel should be drawn to the attention of the Minister to give him an opportunity of commenting on them in his reply.

The first matter that I refer to is the loss by the Brisbane abattoir of its export licence. Unfortunately we are faced with a very serious situation, very close to Christmas, when all major industries close down for three or four weeks. There could be serious repercussions in the metropolitan area because of what has happened at the Metropolitan Public Abattoir. We are most concerned about what the Minister can do to overcome the problem in the time available to him.

Mr. Hughes: Don't you think this might be more concerned with the election in America, and is another way of imposing an import control?

Mr. NEWTON: No, not at all. As a person who worked in this industry after World War II—I spent some time working in one of these places—and from what I saw of

American requirements, I am not surprised that the position has become tighter and tighter each year.

We are concerned about what will happen if the problem cannot be overcome. It will create redundancy, which has been referred to on many occasions in this Chamber. The people who work in this industry are not easy to train for other types of work. It has been the means of livelihood of quite a number of families for many years. When Dad retires his son takes over, and that has happened for generations. It seems to us that, in a short time, 100 men or more could become redundant if the present problem cannot be overcome.

We are also concerned about the employment of the youth of the metropolitan area, whether it be in the public abattoir or the private abattoirs. The abattoirs play a very big role in the employment and training of our youth. The youths who work in these establishments in large numbers are given an opportunity to learn how to use a knife. If they are sufficiently interested they can become apprenticed in butchery and can eventually become some of the best butchers in the State.

We are greatly concerned when redundancy occurs in this industry because we lose tradesmen as apprentices are not taken on. Over the years it has been proved that there is room in the metropolitan area for private abattoirs as well as the public abattoir. Anyone visiting the various works who would like to make a day of it has an opportunity to look at Thomas Borthwick's Moreton works, the Doboy bacon factory, the Dandy bacon factory and Provincial Traders, which in some way are all involved in handling some of our primary products. There is ample opportunity for both types to operate, as they have for many years.

We are concerned at Press reports that have appeared from time to time. One such report reads—

“Brisbane abattoir has hopeful note on livestock

“The Metropolitan Public Abattoir Board is hopeful that stock will come forward in increasing numbers over the next year or two as the effects of the drought recede.”

That was revealed in the report tabled in Parliament pointing out the position of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority.

The report continues—

“The key factor in the board's future economy . . . is that the volume of throughput should be adequate to absorb fixed overhead charges on a competitive basis, and thus preserve the financial security of the existing public abattoir facilities during the extended period of operations.”

That assessment was probably made before the export licences were taken from the Metropolitan Public Abattoir Board.

The report further says, as indicated by the hon. member for Warwick, that the board showed a deficit for the year of \$160,046, as against a deficit for the previous year of \$231,641. At least that is a decrease and not an increase in the size of the deficit.

The Minister and other hon. members who have been to these abattoirs on a number of occasions, particularly Opposition members, realise that they are operating under severe handicaps because of the condition of the buildings.

As at 30 June, 1968, there were 146 registered operators at the Metropolitan Public Abattoir Board, of whom 36 were licensed to sell carcasses for meat at the abattoir. For the previous year the numbers were 150 and 37 respectively, so there has not been a great decrease or increase in the number of operators. It is interesting to go to the abattoir and see how these people operate, how they get their meat out and the number of people they employ.

In tracing this matter back to see where we are going and why something was not done to overcome the problem confronting the board, it is interesting to note that the same problem existed at the Mackay District Abattoir 12 months after it commenced operations. Therefore, there has been a warning all the way through that American hygiene requirements must be watched in our abattoirs.

On 10 September, 1963, this statement was made—

“Hygiene standard could cost \$50,000,000.

“A Queensland meat authority said yesterday it would cost up to £50,000,000 to bring Australian export meatworks up to the hygiene standards required by America.

“He said the Federal Government would be asked to finance the work because of the importance of the Australian meat trade with America.

“Many existing plants, especially large works, would have to be rebuilt.

“Another authority said this estimate had been ‘pulled out of the air,’ but admitted that ‘a fantastic sum’ would have to be spent on works.”

This is true, because wherever we have gone in the State and seen new abattoirs—recently we went through Central Queensland and had the opportunity of comparing existing abattoirs with newer abattoirs—we have seen a complete change in the whole system. New abattoirs are laid out to fulfil the export trade requirements in their entirety. This was drawn to our attention at that time.

In July, 1964, matters concerning the Metropolitan Public Abattoir Board and its

future appeared quite frequently in the Press. On 9 July, 1964, "The Courier-Mail" reported—

"Plant to last for five years, probe told.

"The life of the existing Brisbane Abattoir plant is limited officially to another five years, according to evidence submitted to the Meat Industry Committee of Inquiry at Brisbane yesterday.

"This big metropolitan public abattoir at Cannon Hill was first constructed in 1914, and was for a long time owned by Swift Aust. Co. (Pty.) Ltd.

"It was sold by Swifts to the State Government as a public abattoir in 1930, and has since operated under the control of the Queensland Meat Industry Board."

The report mentions a period of five years, and 1969 is now approaching.

The Minister, his departmental heads, and the Metropolitan Public Abattoir Board, with the assistance of the Co-ordinator-General's department, endeavoured to move in this direction, but when they started to investigate the foundations of the buildings and the concrete columns that support the floors and beams, they found a very big job ahead of them in doing what was necessary to carry on for a number of years without replacing the plant.

Later in the same year, another article in the Press, under the heading "Report seeks Abattoir rebuilding," read—

"Building of new meatworks at or near the present site of the Cannon Hill Abattoir, with a reduced cattle killing capacity, is one of the major recommendations of the Livestock and Meat Industry Inquiry Committee.

"The committee, in its report tabled in Parliament yesterday by the Premier (Mr. Nicklin), advocated that the new works be operated as a domestic and export service works without a franchise."

Here again the position is placed fully before us. The report of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority for the year 1967-68 shows that the same situation applies as applied a couple of years ago when the Estimates of the Minister for Primary Industries were before Parliament. On that occasion the Opposition appealed strongly to the Minister to endeavour to do something to ensure that the Metropolitan Public Abattoir took its place alongside other works in Brisbane. It was stated in the Press—

"Rebuilding of the Brisbane Abattoir with a reduced cattle killing capacity has been decided by the State Government.

"This follows a major recommendation to the Government by the Livestock and Meat Industry Inquiry Committee."

Again that was carried out by the Government.

The killings at the Metropolitan Public Abattoir have decreased to approximately 1,000 a day, which was indicated in the

report, and the plant has been operating at that rate for some time. When the killings for the 1967-68 year are compared with those for 1966-67, it will be found that there are decreases in the number of killings of cattle, calves, sheep and lambs, and pigs. There was a decrease of 6,755 in the killings of cattle for domestic use, and a decrease of 12,768 in cattle killed for export and interstate, making a total decrease of 19,523. In the case of calves, there was a decrease of 4,851 in killings for domestic consumption and an increase of 492 in the number killed for export and interstate, making a total decrease of 4,359. Sheep and lamb killings held their own, which was to be expected because of the drought conditions that have been experienced in this State. In the case of pigs, there was a decrease of 4,518 in the number killed for export and interstate.

What this means is that whilst a norm has been reached in killings at the Metropolitan Public Abattoir, there has already been a large reduction in the labour force because of what has taken place and what the Government has done as a result of the committee's report.

On behalf of the Opposition, I appeal to the Minister to take some action because the livelihood of quite a number of people living in the Wynnum, Bulimba and Belmont electorates and working at the Brisbane abattoir is affected.

In the short time left to me, I wish to refer to the situation that has arisen in the egg-producing industry in South-east Queensland. Because of the many contradictory statements that have been made, it is obvious that a committee should be set up immediately to investigate this industry. In saying that, I am supporting an appeal made by my leader in June of this year, when a glut of eggs occurred.

Gluts are occurring in far too many industries, and the position is rather frightening. Not very long ago the Opposition was forced to draw the Government's attention to the fact that pineapples were being dumped on rubbish tips and ask it to take corrective action. Later, a glut of eggs occurred. In spite of that, it was not possible for the 2,000,000 poor in this country to enjoy an additional pineapple or egg.

The crisis in the egg-producing industry occurred in May, and within a couple of weeks the price of eggs rose by about five or six cents.

Mr. Bromley: It is no joke for the housewife.

Mr. NEWTON: Of course it is not, and it is very important to the poultry farmers who are battling to prevent themselves from becoming bankrupt. It has been proved over the last three years that quite a number of poultry farmers are leaving the industry. There was a time when poultry farmers in the outer suburbs of the metropolitan area

of Brisbane, particularly in the Belmont electorate, were producing poultry for the abattoir or eggs for the Egg Board. Many of them approached me and told me that, because of the cost of feed, the taxes they had to pay, and the running costs of the Egg Board, they could no longer keep a family in the poultry industry. They made it clear to me that a husband and wife would be doing well to make a living out of it now, whereas some years ago it was possible to support a family in the poultry industry.

I appeal to the Minister to look very closely at this question, because the Opposition believes that an inquiry into the egg-producing industry in South Queensland is warranted. When there is a glut of eggs, housewives are only too happy to buy more. Eggs have a very high protein content—it is every bit as good as the protein content of meat—and doctors usually recommend that people on a diet should have so many eggs in the morning and so many more during the day. In fact, that is one of the best ways of taking off weight. I have been put on a diet by my own doctor, and I know that one of the most important foods on the diet chart is eggs. The only meat mentioned on the chart is T-bone steak, so eggs must be fairly good if they have the same food value as a T-bone steak. Sausages and other forms of meat are not recommended.

In May of this year quite an amount of discussion was taking place about a glut of eggs, yet within a fortnight the price of eggs was increased and we read in the Press that eggs might be sold to feed pigs. The farmer might have thought it was better to use them for some purpose than to have them dumped. However, I have here a cutting from "The Sunday Mail" of 12 May, 1968, which reads—

"Eggs may be sold to feed pigs

"Eggs may be sold cheaply as pig food to help ease the Australia-wide over-production crisis.

"Egg producers and marketing authorities are studying the 'pig food' plan because of a nation-wide glut of eggs."

The article then goes on to condemn such a suggestion, stating that it would not be in the best interests of the industry in any case, and that it would be far better if prices were stabilised or something else was done to overcome the problem.

While Opposition members were receiving deputations on this question we looked at the Poultry Industry Act, which gives some idea of what poultry farmers, are, or are not, allowed to do. It refers particularly to the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act, which has been out of print for some time. It was not available to us. The Clerk-Assistant of Parliament has been endeavouring to obtain a copy for some time, but so far without success.

Poultry farmers hold meetings regularly throughout the metropolitan area, and my leader and I attended some of these meetings to ascertain what their problems are. When we came to study the Poultry Industry Act it was evident that, so far as these people are concerned, we had to refer to the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act which, as I say, is out of print. It is to be hoped that it will be made available again as soon as possible because it obviously has considerable bearing on this matter.

I raise those two matters on behalf of the Opposition. I feel they are both of a controversial nature, and I should like to hear from the Minister particularly what can be done about the metropolitan abattoir. I hope he can give an assurance similar to the one he gave us on a previous occasion, that is, that he will do everything possible to see that this abattoir is maintained. Irrespective of what might be said from the Government side, whilst public and private facilities are competing in the same field it tends to give consumers a commodity at a more reasonable price.

(Time expired.)

Mr. CHINCHEN (Mt. Gravatt) (5.29 p.m.): I join this debate purely to endeavour to obtain clarification on some of the matters raised in the report of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority. In the initial stages I should like to say that I thoroughly agree with the approach made to this whole question by the hon. member for Warwick. I think his contribution was an extremely sensible one, and I support everything he said.

On page 2 of the report that I mentioned we find that research indicates that in the future slaughter-houses will be disappearing in the interests of hygiene. The word "slaughter-house" is a rather nasty word. It conjures up all sorts of unfortunate things in one's mind, but slaughter-houses have been with us for many years.

To me it seems rather remarkable that the question of hygiene should be raised at this moment, because these places have been quite satisfactory over a great period of time. Does it mean that our inspection methods have not been adequate? I do not think so for a moment. Furthermore, I would say that most of the people who conduct slaughter-houses are doing so on an extremely hygienic basis. Recently I was talking to a man who told me that he had never had a requisition or a demand placed upon him to improve his hygienic standards, and yet he had been caught up in this net that has been cast in an effort to remove all the small slaughter-houses. This free-enterprise Government, which believes in decentralisation, puts forward a proposal, it is called, to change the situation and get rid of all these small businesses so that the entire meat production must come from one central source. One wonders why that is so.

The Annual Report of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority goes on to say that the operators of small abattoirs can be compensated. If you, Mr. Smith, had put your life's work into a particular business, how could you be compensated for its loss? For the bricks and mortar, yes, but they do not matter to you; it is your life's work that matters. What if you had two sons who worked in the industry and were looking forward to the day when they could carry on the business? Is there any reason why one of the small industries could not in time become a major abattoir? I do not know if any hon. member has seen the Conkey abattoir at Cootamundra. It was started off as a slaughter-house, and today it is one of the best abattoirs in Australia and exports large quantities of meat.

Mr. Hughes: And it keeps hygiene standards.

Mr. CHINCHEN: Of course it does. There is no reason for saying that, on the basis of hygiene, there is something wrong with all these small businesses. I cannot see that this is the point. If something is wrong, it is our system.

The report says—

"It is not practicable to provide a full inspection service at these establishments, which are subject only to periodical visits by inspectors."

Whose fault is that? I know that some of those people would be happy to pay for inspections. Has any thought been given to encouraging people in a particular area to kill on consecutive days so that inspectors can be present when they kill and process their meat? I think that there is something else present here.

It is rather significant that where this matter of doing away with all of the smaller abattoirs is mentioned, if we care to call them that, the heading of the section states, "Proposal for Extension of the Boundaries of the Metropolitan Public Abattoir Area". That section of the report concludes with the remark, "The Authority concludes that there is a clear need for the extension of the Metropolitan Public Abattoir Area". Of course, that will be at the expense of the small industries. Why is it required to extend the area of the metropolitan public abattoir?

I think that the answer lies within the report, for it states—

"The loss on export and interstate operations again in 1967-68 emphasises the substantial cost of idle capacity particularly in facilities such as freezer storage. The successful financial operation of service export abattoirs is largely dependent on an adequate and regular supply of stock by operators using the service facilities provided."

Chopping the small people out of the industry and putting them in the net will not overcome this problem. The solution, as

I see it, is that there needs to be continuity of work hour by hour and day by day, and there is nothing that will show that the implementation of a bigger area will allow this to happen in these service works.

Mr. E. G. W. Wood: All the local shires are strongly opposed to this.

Mr. CHINCHEN: I do not know who may be opposed to it. The hon. member will be able to speak in a moment, and will be able to expand this matter.

This report seems to be prepared purely for the purpose of looking at the metropolitan abattoir and is not looking at those in outlying districts. It is looking at a particular function, and I think the reason for that can be found in the report, where it says that one of the purposes of the Authority is to "take such action as it deems necessary to co-ordinate the provision, operation, maintenance and development of public abattoirs".

In my opinion, this authority is taking the easy way out. It says, "Look, we are losing money". It is losing a lot of money, and more than is shown in this document unless it is read very carefully. Under the heading, "Metropolitan Public Abattoir Board" this statement is made—

"... the Board revised its accounting procedures, during the year under review, by determining the annual non-expendable charges on a realistic and equitable basis related to the term of the life of the present useful assets."

That is understandable and correct, but without the revised procedure another \$68,000 would have been shown as a loss, based on the published loss as I view it. That means that unfortunately the abattoir is losing a lot of money. To substantiate my theory in this matter I point out that the report shows the annual profit or loss over a period of four years. It is strange that these four years have been selected, because they show two surpluses and two deficits with a final deficit of \$17,813 over the four years. The two years prior to that showed a further loss of \$432,068, and by going back another three years the picture would not have been altered. In effect, a deficit of nearly \$500,000, not \$17,000, should be shown. The four years referred to do not tell the true story.

I am very worried that we should be sacrificing the small people who are starting their own industries. Nobody knows what for. We know the public abattoir has a life of 10 years. But what then? Nobody knows! I should like to ask the Minister whether he has approved of the proposal on page 2. If he has not, I think it is wrong to include it in this public document. A confidential report should have been made to the Minister, who could then have made up his mind about it.

This is saying to all the people—and it covers a very large number—"You are finished". That is shocking. This proposal may not be accepted by the Minister, or by

whoever it is that decides these matters. The necks of these people are on the chopping block. It is frightful that a public document should tell people in industry, people who have run their undertakings according to the requirements of the industry—otherwise they would not be in it—"You fellows are finished".

I cannot imagine how suitable arrangements can be made for people who have grown up in the industry and whose sons are involved in it. If hygiene is the problem, let us tidy it up. I think that can be done; I think there are ways of doing it. I should not like to think that, in the interest of overcoming the losses in Brisbane, the country people have to be sacrificed. That is not the answer. There is a 10-year breathing space, and there are 146 people using the Metropolitan Public Abattoir at present. But people can go into the meat business with a pocket-book and a pencil. They have no responsibility; they have not one cent invested in the enormous plant at the abattoir. Why should they worry if they give the abattoir something today and nothing for a week, something for five days, something else for one day, and then nothing?

That is what is happening. The report states that there is no continuity of operation with 146 independent people without any responsibility to this enormous undertaking. There is no hope in the world that it can ever be run efficiently and satisfactorily. If there are 146 people who want to use the works, why should they not do what anybody else in industry has to do, namely, find some money themselves for capital expenditure?

I heard someone interject that the graziers want it. Well, good enough! If the graziers want it, let them put their money in, too. Queensland has heavy obligations. We have to provide schools, roads, police, and harbours. I see no reason why State money should go into this establishment merely to allow 146 people to use the service works.

Mr. Hughes: Do you think that we should be like Victoria, where the private people lease the works and carry out their own killing and servicing?

Mr. CHINCHEN: I thank the interjector. I know that the present method will not work because of the inability to have stock going through every minute of every day and being killed without breakdown after breakdown because of peaks and hollows in supply.

This is a fundamental problem, and nothing will be done about it with 146 people using the works at their whim. It has another 10 years to go, so why not say to these people, "This is your industry; you are involved in it, and it is about time you had a stake in your own industry. Form a co-operative, form a company, do what you will, but design, plan and finance what is required to provide an excellent works, put in good management, and you will do well."

There is no doubt that if these people had a stake in this industry they would be obliged to plan their programming of stock through the abattoir. It will not happen otherwise. It is wrong to adopt the attitude that the small people will be sacrificed, so give these people a bigger area and this will overcome the problem. I am surprised and disappointed at the present approach. It appears to me that insufficient thought has been given to other methods of overcoming the problem.

The whole story of public abattoirs is not a happy one. I have mentioned the situation at the Metropolitan Public Abattoir Board. The Toowoomba Public Abattoir has been going reasonably well, but this year it lost over \$40,000. The Ipswich District Abattoir has had quite a bad time, with losses of \$50,000, \$46,000 and \$16,000, a surplus of \$772, and now a loss of \$3,000.

Mackay District Abattoir's story is disastrous. I should like the Minister to tell us how these losses are financed. The question was raised with me some time ago and I did not have the answer. It is staggering to think that its losses have been \$261,500, \$270,800 and \$276,000 in each of three annual periods. That is catastrophic. If those losses are being carried by the public at large, it is a disgrace. I know full well that this abattoir was offered for tender in 1967. What has happened since then? Have there been any other approaches in this matter? Are endeavours being made to do something about this? I can well imagine that the State is carrying these losses and I should like to learn that it is otherwise, but the State cannot afford to allow over \$250,000 to be lost in Mackay annually in this way.

The Townsville District Abattoir sustained a loss of \$6,000 this year. It has had quite a reasonable performance.

The Bundaberg District Abattoir sustained a loss of \$21,000. It has gone from a surplus to a loss.

An answer must be found to the problem in Brisbane. Please do not plug up all the holes to allow this large abattoir in Brisbane to have the lot. I can see no point in this. I cannot see that the thinking is right or that this will overcome the fundamental problem. All we are doing, on the basis of hygiene, is reducing these decentralised industries, over a period, to nothing. We are telling them, "Your necks are now on the chopping block," in the hope that something will happen in the metropolitan area. I cannot see that it will happen, because the system has not been changed. There will be peaks and valleys in supply, and therefore there will be continued inefficiency.

It is interesting to read in the functions, powers, etc. of the authority that the authority shall take and do all sorts of things with a view to ensuring an adequate level of competition in the slaughtering and dressing of stock. What are we doing? This enormous area will come back into the hands of one organisation. It is neat and it is easy. We

are saying, "We have finished with you fellows now. You have served your purpose." I do not subscribe to that thinking at all.

Furthermore, I mentioned to the Minister about 18 months ago the possibility of something happening in the case of slaughter-houses. There was a whisper to that effect, and the Minister said that he did not know but he did not think it would happen. Probably six or eight months ago I raised the same question. One of my constituents was told, "Do not increase your business in any way at all. It would not be wise to do so." Again I made a check and was told that there did not seem any possibility that anything like that would happen. Here is now spelt out the proposal for an extension of the boundaries of the area of the Metropolitan Public Abattoir.

What really matters is that the small people who have served so well are to be sacrificed. I am sure that all who look at the story will agree that what is proposed will not overcome the fundamental problem. I hope it is still a proposal and has not been accepted, but I feel uncomfortable for the people who know that they are involved in it. I think it is most unfortunate that it should have been made public. If it is Government policy, let us say so; if it is not, let us also say so. Let us clear the air on the matter.

I hope that further thought will be given to this very important problem. I agree with the hon. member for Belmont that the employment of people is very important, but people have better and more satisfactory employment when working in an organisation that is doing well rather than poorly. The success of the organisation secures their employment. For that reason, I feel that some thought has to be given to the problem of the city area, and perpetuating the present situation is not the answer to it.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (5.47 p.m.): I think it only right and proper that one should take the opportunity of making a contribution to the debate on these very important Estimates. Without doubt, the Department of Primary Industries is one of the most important departments in the State, and I feel that one would be lacking a sense of responsibility and duty to the State and, in particular, the Parliament, if he sat here and took no part in this debate.

As one who represents a metropolitan electorate, I have not a great knowledge of some of the industries referred to in the department's annual report, but I do have very high respect for officers of the department, who are, in the strictest sense, dedicated to their jobs. Some I have met personally at various functions, including the Director-General and Under Secretary (Dr. Harvey), the Deputy Director-General (Mr. Ross), the Chief Advisory Officer (Mr. Harris), and other staff members. It has been my pleasure to make their

acquaintance from time to time, and they impressed me as not only fine officers but gentlemen of the highest order.

Like my colleague from Port Curtis, I hope that in the not-too-distant future this department will be housed in a building more suitable for its purposes. I support the hon. member in the expressions that he used concerning the building in which the department is now housed. I feel sure that the Government must realise the necessity for satisfactory surroundings to allow the officers of this important department to work in the greatest degree of comfort and with the greatest degree of efficiency.

Of course, there are many aspects of the report on which I could speak if I had sufficient time. It is a very comprehensive report, and I compliment the officers of the department on making such a thorough survey of the work of the various sections. In the time available in this debate, it is possible for hon. members to deal only with sections of the report that are of importance to them, and I intend to refer now to certain sections that are of interest to me and have impressed themselves on my mind.

The Minister referred specifically—and rightly so—to the removal of the Queensland Herbarium from the Botanic Gardens to Indooroopilly. Many hon. members had the opportunity of going out and seeing the officers in the new building. I think we should extend our gratitude to the officers who worked at the old herbarium in the Botanic Gardens over a period of 56 years. There should be, too, a great feeling of relief that the specimens held there over that period were not destroyed, desecrated or stolen. When the herbarium was established I suppose the Botanic Gardens were the only convenient place for it. Now that it has been removed, I hope that the Botanic Gardens will receive the respect that they deserve.

Only a few days ago I attempted to draw the attention of hon. members to that 50-odd acres of land, which is the only area set apart in the capital city of this State for botanical research and the preservation of flora that we prize dearly. I do not think that many of us realise the value and importance of that area, and that is why I made the comment about vehicles being allowed to pass through it. Places such as New Farm Park are suited to use by sightseers in motor-cars, but I do not think that the Botanic Gardens lend themselves to that activity. In my opinion, an appeal should be made to the Brisbane City Council to reconsider its decision to allow motor vehicles to use the Gardens. I know that the council's motive was good. It desired to allow as many people as possible—I think that was the expression used at one of the Council meetings—to view the Gardens, and specific reference was made to invalids and aged people who might have difficulty in walking over the whole 50 acres. When I was an alderman of the Brisbane City Council,

I had a very close association with the Botanic Gardens as a member of the Parks Committee. To my knowledge, no person was ever refused permission to take an aged person through the Gardens in a motor-car, under the supervision of the foreman or an employee who ensured that the car did not leave the main driveway.

I spend many hours in the Botanic Gardens at the week-end in conjunction with the metropolitan bands in this city, and I have noticed that the roadways are so narrow that if one vehicle stops, the other cars are not able to move freely. In view of that, the Brisbane City Council is not achieving its purpose of enabling people to view any particular aspect of the Gardens in a limited time. There are some parking bays, but cars parking there during the week would have to pay meter fees. In addition, the people in them would be able to look only over the river frontage or some other specific portion of the Gardens. I think the practice achieves very little purpose. It certainly does not achieve the purpose that the council intended, that is, of giving a wider view to people with horticultural or botanical interests.

I feel that the Government should show a little more active interest in the Gardens. The day will come in the not-far-distant future when, with all the planning going on at the moment and the redesigning and improving of the city, that area will become part of the surroundings of the parliamentary grounds. I feel that the day will come when the Gardens will be added to this area and will make a fitting addition to the present layout of the parliamentary gardens.

I thought I should make that reference. I think I am in order, in discussing these Estimates, in making this passing reference to the Botanic Gardens, and I sincerely hope that an improvement will come about in the not-far-distant future.

Another part of the report that interests me greatly deals with a subject on which one could spend many hours. It is the cultivation of rice. We hear much about sugar, of course, and people shudder these days if one says anything in a way that will give the impression of "knocking" the great sugar industry. I think that the sugar industry has had one of the greatest knocks in its history and it could be many years before it recovers. With other people, I hope that it will recover, but I feel that the Government would be wise to look in another direction and interest itself in another crop to take its place in the future.

In this respect, I think rice would be a very good product. It has been proved that we can grow it. I can remember people saying some years ago that we would never grow rice in Australia, just as it used to be said that we could not grow tobacco or tea, but all these products are being grown at the present time.

To return specifically to rice, it is interesting to note that the Under Secretary of the Department of Agriculture reported in 1899 as follows:—

"Queensland at present produces 14 per cent. of its annual consumption, the statistics being production 1,318,176 lb of clean rice and the imports 8,235,564 lb. The principal district for rice is that of Cairns, which produced 82 per cent. of the total yield, 708 acres being cropped."

Of course, that is only a small amount compared with world figures but it proves that we can grow this product very well indeed. I think it would be one of the products that would help us to rehabilitate ourselves in the eyes of other countries in the world, particularly those whose people are undernourished at the moment, if we had a surplus of rice that we could supply to them. Of course, at the moment any idea of a surplus seems impossible, but we should remember that, in many of the countries in the East, rice is the staple diet.

Tea is another item in respect of which I have been told by people with more knowledge of its production than I have that it is somewhat different in its production from other commodities because it takes much longer to mature. The bushes have to mature to a certain age before they produce the type or quality of leaf that is required to make tea.

Reverting to rice, I think we should put all we can at the moment into encouragement and help for the man on the land who feels disposed to develop this important crop and is ambitious enough to try. As I said before, we are certainly bound to sugar at the moment, but the time may come when we must look elsewhere. We are all hoping against hope, of course, that the sugar position will balance itself out and bring back to us the prosperity we enjoyed in the past. But I think we should look now in other directions and try to find an alternative source of production to help us overcome the great difficulty we are experiencing with sugar.

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

Mr. DEAN: Another matter that should be considered is the use of pesticides. It is gratifying to see that departmental officials, experts and specialists in their use fully realise the dangers involved and have taken some action to mitigate the great damage that is done by the indiscriminate use of a number of the very powerful pesticides. We hear so much today about conservation and the preservation of our native wild life, yet we also hear a lot about many of our streams becoming polluted from the continued use of pesticides with the result that a great deal of our wild life is being destroyed. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has just interjected, the indiscriminate use of pesticides is placing our wild life in serious jeopardy.

Another matter relative to the preservation of our wildlife is the indiscriminate use of firearms. On many occasions hon. members, including myself, have asked the Government to take appropriate action to register all firearms of whatever calibre they may be. All firearms should be registered so that proper control and supervision can be exercised over their use. Daily accidents occur, both in the home and outside, particularly where young boys are using .22 calibre rifles. In many cases great damage is done not only to wildlife but also to human life. The time is long overdue when the Government should register all firearms and restrict their sale to the general community. Exceptions could be made in the case of people whose job it is to eliminate wild-stock or to engage in other activities that call for the use of firearms. However, within city limits there is very little need to use them.

Mr. Abern: Do you think that their use should be controlled by the Department of Primary Industries?

Mr. DEAN: I do not know what department should control it; I have not considered that aspect of the matter. Some attention will have to be paid to the matter in the future, but I would not be prepared to say that a particular department should have the responsibility of doing it. I sincerely hope that the indiscriminate use of firearms will not bring about such a state of emergency that the Government will have to give consideration to it.

I will conclude my remarks with the observation that meat distribution could be policed more satisfactorily. Although this may not come under the Minister's control, I believe that the distribution of meat should be more adequately policed. Nearly every morning of the week, I see in Edward Street open meat wagons standing outside butcher shops while the meat is being delivered. One needs very little imagination to realise the extent of contamination that can occur in carrying meat into butcher shops. When a member of the Opposition referred to the distribution of uncovered meat, controls were tightened up, but they have again become lax. The time is overdue when the responsible authorities should strictly enforce hygiene practices in the distribution of meat.

I hope that I have made a worth-while contribution to the debate, and I sincerely hope that some of my remarks concerning this very important department are earnestly considered. I refer particularly to the suggestion that the Department of Primary Industries be accommodated in suitable and adequate premises.

Mr. E. G. W. WOOD (Logan) (7.22 p.m.): I rise to speak on these Estimates, fully realising that this department is the most complex of all Government instrumentalities. I congratulate the Minister and all his officers on the work they have done for Queensland.

I realise, too, that the major part of the work is of a scientific nature, and, as Australia and Queensland still depend to a large extent on primary industries, the efforts of this department, together with those of the C.S.I.R.O., in developing the natural rural resources of this State are to be complimented. They should be given due credit for the wide ramifications of their work.

I will now deal very briefly with what has been done for coastal Queensland by the C.S.I.R.O. and the Minister's department. Other hon. members have dealt with this matter. They have referred to the various types of legumes and the development of our wallum country, which is but one of the small facets of the work that these two great scientific bodies have carried out to aid the development of Queensland.

In the short time at my disposal I propose to deal to some extent with the fruit and vegetable industry, which, like all other primary industries, faces the difficulties of rising production costs and more highly specialised markets. The fruit and vegetable industry attempts to overcome these difficulties by the increased use of mechanisation. This becomes expensive and the land becomes over-capitalised, and larger aggregations come into being to support this over-capitalisation.

Without doubt we are heading towards the American way of life, where huge companies and absentee owners control the fruit and vegetable industry at a low cost of production. A traveller who returned from America the other day referred to one company that had 250,000 orange trees in one section. The trees were sprayed mechanically and the fruit was picked with grab equipment or shaking equipment, taken straight onto trucks and transported to the other side of America. It is obvious that the industry is heading towards mass production in an effort to beat rising costs of production. There will be those highly specialised scientific farmers who will survive in ideal conditions in areas such as the Redlands area. They will be small frost-free areas that cannot be replaced. But the major trend will be towards mass production.

There are other factors such as better transport, and I give full credit to interstate transport and the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing in its efforts in this regard. For many years the complete responsibility for rail transport has been accepted by the C.O.D., and it has done a splendid job.

Wooden containers are fast giving way to cardboard containers. The Standards Branch has done good work in this regard and I give it full credit. The other day I saw a carton-testing machine in operation at the Redlands Horticultural Research Station. It is fascinating to see the effort put into testing these cartons. All the stresses and strains that the cartons will take are discovered, and cheap containers for bulk packing are fast being developed to assist the farmer to achieve cheaper production. The standard cartons have gone overboard.

I give full credit to the farming industry and the research station for discovering that, for a number of years, farmers were using twice as much fertiliser as was necessary. This has made a tremendous difference. One of the main functions of this research station is to reduce costs.

I shall now deal with the Redlands Horticultural Research Station and its extension service. This station is the finest of its type on the Australian continent and one of the finest in the Southern Hemisphere. It has done a tremendous job for those in the fruit and vegetable growing areas in the whole of Queensland in general and in the Redlands area in particular. It has developed a number of bean varieties. It is interesting to note that a stringless bean has now been evolved at this station. This was difficult to achieve because once the reinforcement is taken out of the bean it starts to curl. The problem lay in replacing the reinforcement with sufficient fibres to counterbalance the curling action. Eventually a bean was discovered which permitted the manufacturer to operate in bulk and allowed the ordinary household grower to take full advantage of it.

Strawberry types have been improved tenfold since the establishment of this station. Another interesting thing is that the station has passion-fruit types from all over the world, many of them being obtained merely for their virus-resistant qualities. They are there for cross-breeding and do not bear fruit, and they have beautiful floral blooms that rival even orchids in beauty. They would be suitable as specimens in a flower garden in their own right. They are kept at the station for breeding purposes only.

Another function of the department is testing to ensure good quality in seeds, which is the very foundation of good farming. Very much is owed to the efforts of the Standards Branch.

Ever since I have been a member of this Assembly I have sought more and more assistance for this experimental farm and the extension services on which our industry depends so much. I did have the pleasure of giving my thanks to the Minister for making funds available for building the administration and scientific blocks at the experimental farm, and when they are completed it will be a wonderful place. Thanks to the efforts of the industry itself, which contributed some \$80,000, the farm has all types of equipment. The atmosphere can be controlled and plants can be reared under all conditions, and there are, of course, many dedicated scientists working there.

There is, however, one matter to which I would like to draw the Minister's attention. I have noticed that the ordinary working equipment is not up to the desired standard. I have seen a lot of obsolete sprays, for example, on the station, and I think that the standard of the farming equipment on a

station of this type should be improved. That is a minor matter to which I should like the Minister to give some attention.

We of the Redlands area are fortunate in that ours is a premier farming district. There are two university farms in the area, one at Redland Bay and the other at Mount Cotton, which are operating on a world-wide basis. They, too, have aided the fruit and vegetable industry in this area.

I also wish to refer briefly to the sugar industry, and I do so only to congratulate the Premier on the very excellent results achieved at the recent overseas conference. The Premier and his officers did a marvellous job for the State in helping to bring about the agreement that was reached. Let us also pay due regard to the efforts of that great Australian negotiator, Honourable John McEwen. I do not know whether this is generally known, but I was told by the Honourable C. E. Barnes at a meeting recently that when the sugar agreement was reached the representatives of all exporting nations rose and cheered John McEwen as if reaching the agreement was his particular effort. I think the whole nation should pay due respect to this man for his efforts, in conjunction with those of our Premier, on behalf of the sugar industry.

Mr. Hinze: He is the greatest statesman in Australia today.

Mr. E. G. W. WOOD: I would say that he is the greatest statesman in Australia today.

In the uncertain markets of supply and demand, many industries—particularly the fruit and vegetable industry—that have export and import quotas are very susceptible to certain imports. The controlling body is the Department of Trade. The machinery of that department is such that certain manufacturers might apply for permission to import goods that are in short supply, pointing out that they cannot get them from their usual sources, and the rural industries are not sufficiently highly organised to be able to say, "If you cannot get it in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, you will get it at Redlands in Queensland". Therefore, the Department of Trade is apt to meet the requests of manufacturers and allow certain quotas to be imported when, in fact, stocks are available within Australia. That is one of the difficulties under which these industries operate.

As hon. members know, New Zealand faces economic difficulties and is seeking to enter the lucrative Australian market with many of its goods. I am afraid that imported frozen vegetables, for example, will have a serious effect on Australian production. In May of this year 1,111,352 lb. of frozen peas, to the value of \$108,000, were imported from New Zealand, and that is also the flush season for peas in Australia. Frozen beans are probably the biggest problem, and 1,200,000 lb. of beans, to the value of \$194,000 were imported.

Mr. Miller: Imported from where?

Mr. E. G. W. WOOD: From New Zealand. Further quantities were imported from the U.S.A., the Netherlands, and other places. Beans can be grown for 2.8c a lb. in New Zealand—I do not know how it is done—but in Queensland—I am speaking now only of manufacturing beans—the cost is 4c a lb. in Victoria 3.3c a lb., and in Tasmania 6c a lb. Hon. members can see how exposed the rural industries of this country are unless applications to the Department of Trade are watched very closely. As I said earlier, it is very difficult to keep a close watch, because the farmers are not sufficiently organised over the length and breadth of the Australian continent to be able to say, "If you can't get it in one place, you can get it in another." On the other hand, manufacturers can produce figures at an hour's notice. I remember that when an attempt was made years ago to control the import of strawberries from Mexico, growers were always labouring under the difficulty of being weeks behind with their information and the season would be over before the position could be brought under control.

I turn now to another matter that I have raised very frequently in this Chamber. When the Brisbane Markets were moved from Roma Street to Rocklea, farmers were given an undertaking that commissions would be pegged at 10 per cent.; at the same time, as a quid pro quo, the owners of the various stalls at Roma Street were given an undertaking that there would not be any more new stalls for 10 years. The second part of the undertaking was honoured, but the undertaking relative to the 10 per cent. commission was never honoured. The stage has now been reached, after various discussions have taken place, at which one finds that 1½ per cent. is being added to the 10 per cent. under various headings, such as handling charges.

It is true that the Minister has been very helpful. I can say that, having taken many deputations to meet him. He has had meeting after meeting on this matter but I should say that it would now be under control to the extent that the commission rates are not rising—as I pointed out before, it is very important that they do not because the basic expenses in this industry are rising too much—but the 1½ per cent. handling charge is mostly going on. That is the issue I am raising at this stage. I do not propose to leave the matter there, as I have been fighting it over a long time. I merely draw it to the Minister's attention, as I have asked him from time to time to review it. I know he has the matter under review. I realise that it is full of complexities and that it is a difficult situation, but I propose to plug away at it until ultimately I get some satisfaction.

The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt raised the issue of the boundaries of the Metropolitan Public Abattoir's area, and I am

in full agreement with him. As far as I am aware, the proposed extension is a dead issue. Some 18 months ago, it will be recalled, this review was made through the various local authorities, and I notice it was reported in last year's Annual Report of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority. The contiguous shires, with the exception of Redland, which was prepared to accept it because there were no abattoirs there and because it is part of the Brisbane market, vigorously opposed it. The Albert and Beaudesert Shires were vehemently against it, and very rightly so.

I agree with the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt on this matter. There are big industries involved. There are Teys Bros., of Beenleigh, and Tancred at Beaudesert, and there are other quite big abattoirs in the Logan electorate. If we want to decentralise we must realise that we cannot allow the Brisbane Meat Industry Authority to phase these people out. I will not stand idly by and see those two shires phased out.

The Minister will recall that there was deputation after deputation on this matter some 18 months ago. These shires were greatly concerned about their local labour pools and their local labour conditions. They wanted to ensure that they retained their work-forces. If any attempt is made to phase these abattoirs out, I am afraid I could not possibly stand idly by and see it done. I must admit that, as Chairman of Redland Shire, I readily agreed to the Redlands being absorbed into the area, but let us go back a little further. It was agreed that the Beenleigh abattoirs should sell on the Brisbane market provided there were local inspections at Beenleigh, which is fair enough.

Small country towns are so dependent upon local industries that to my mind it would be a shame to see any attempt made to phase them into the central metropolitan area. I hope the Minister is taking particular note of this, because I know that once any attempt is made to do this the shires will rise in arms. They will not accept it, and I must give them my support. I cannot stand anybody who sits on the fence. So far as I am concerned, one goes either one way or the other and at this stage I am in support of the shires.

That is the position that I want to make very clear. I hope that when this matter raises its ugly head again the position will be allowed to remain as it is. I do not know the extent of the autonomy of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority, but I hope that the Minister retains sufficient control to see that we are not presented with an accomplished fact in this matter and that the wishes of the shire and myself receive full consideration.

I compliment the hon. member for Sandgate on his remarks, though not so much on his plea to do away with firearms. I do not

think that will solve the problem of destruction of our fauna. It is true that our native wild life is disappearing from the south-eastern portion of the State, but in the protected area south of the Redland Shire we do not see a great deal of destruction. However, any effort that can be made to protect our native plants and creatures in the southern area of the State has my complete support. In my own electorate there is evidence of an increase in the number of native bears, and they are being closely watched by everybody. It is to be hoped that they are not put in any danger. The hon. member has my full support, and I hope that the people of Queensland will take due notice of his remarks.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West) (7.47 p.m.): I do not know that I have anything to put forward in the way of original contributions because all of what I have to say has been covered by the Annual Report of the department, by Press reports, or by the hon. members who have already participated in the debate.

I should like to offer my congratulations to Dr. Harvey and his officers on their compilation of a very interesting report, which sets out concisely—perhaps, in some instances, a little too briefly—the ramifications of the department and the various experiments, tests and phases of developmental work that have been carried out in this very important section of Government activity.

I am also appreciative of the many courtesies that the Minister has shown to me from time to time. I think that his introduction of these Estimates in his usual friendly and informal manner showed that he is able to win our confidence and command our respect. However, I was surprised to see what I felt was rather a slight on him, occupying, as he does, this very important portfolio, when only one of his fellow Ministers was the only other member of his political party present for the greater part of his speech.

When one considers that last year the value of primary production in Queensland amounted to \$861,000,000 one has some appreciation of the impact that the activities of this department must have on the economy of the State.

I do not want to be regarded as a "knocker"; nor do I want to assume an unduly pessimistic role. However, the report, whilst presenting, as one would expect from officers with scientific training, their examination coldly and dispassionately and free from any political bias of the particular responsibilities entrusted to them, generally has a rather pessimistic note. It is necessary to examine to some extent the course that we are following in the field of primary industry.

Hon. members will find if they go through the report section by section that mention is made of the problems that face the primary industries of this State, such as those that face

the sugar industry and the pineapple industry, and the effects of competition, low prices for various commodities, and the ravages of disease. The primary job of the department is to apply its technological and scientific knowledge to measures that will mitigate the effects of natural disasters and enemies of our primary products. It is necessary that we should increase their resistance to attacks from nature and the vagaries of a variable climate in order to increase quality and productivity of the commodities that are mentioned in the report.

I am concerned about what correlation exists between all these investigations and the final purpose in having all these facilities provided. I have spoken about that previously and I will speak about it again this evening. Certain officers may be entrusted with a task, perhaps that of examining the effect of the lantana problem, the cattle-tick problem or some disease in our tropical fruits, and they may apply themselves with great diligence to finding a solution to the problem. I think the purpose of all this is to increase the production or profitability of the crop to enable more and more people to remain on the land and to increase our ability to export primary products in sufficient volume to maintain a healthy economy, but unfortunately we are not doing that. Taking Australia as a whole, last year we were in deficit by more than \$1,000,000,000 in our overseas trading. We have had an adverse trade balance for some considerable time. It was with considerable disquiet that we learnt that, for the last four months, we have been building up a very high adverse trade balance because of our inability to export sufficient quantities of primary products at remunerative prices.

I will now refer to several of these matters. Previous speakers have dealt with some of them, and I do not wish to engage in repetition, but I should like to spend a few minutes on the meat industry. The policies of this nation are in the hands of men who have been commended by Government speakers this afternoon. I refer particularly to the Leader of the Country Party in the Federal House. I am not ashamed to admit that I have publicly, and in this Chamber, drawn attention to what I consider to be the very constructive efforts made over a number of years by Mr. McEwen to protect Australian industry and to do the best he can as a negotiator. It is pleasing to note that there has been a gradual conversion to this line of thinking of members of the Liberal Party. We find that Mr. McMahon is now talking much more toughly about the need to prosecute policies that will enable us to get better terms from our so-called friendly Allies, referring specifically to the United States of America.

I do not want to go into the beef position in any great detail because I believe that the hon. members for Townsville North and Port Curtis, and members on the Government side, have dealt with it quite adequately. It seems to me rather unfortunate that, when United States imports looked like reaching a

total of something like 1,045,000,000 lb., we were restricted to a base quota of 950,000,000 lb. of beef, goat meat and veal, and, as exports to the United States of America represent about four-fifths of our total beef exports, worth about \$157,000,000 out of a total of \$198,000,000, we realise the almost calamitous effect this will have on our economy. When we read in the Auditor-General's report of the millions and millions of dollars that have been poured into the construction of beef roads and the provision of water facilities, and of the various scientific agencies that have been used, such as the C.S.I.R.O., as well as our own department, to enable the cattle industry to compete more effectively, and then find that this pressure is being applied to exclude our meat from overseas markets, particularly the United States of America—

Mr. Hughes: Do you think this may be only temporary due to the politics over there, and the election?

Mr. DUGGAN: No. I do not want to depart from the Estimates, but I feel there has been an increasing tendency for us to integrate our defence programme with that of the United States. We are standardising on equipment, armaments and materials, ammunition and all sorts of things. I think there should be some sort of long-term agreement about just what is likely to happen with the resultant production following the injection of capital for development in our primary industries. We would know then that we have the right to share in this growing market in the United States of America, and elsewhere, just as overseas investors have the right, in that we open the door to them, as the hon. member for Port Curtis pointed out earlier, to share in the growth of our own economy. We put no restrictions on them whatsoever. We encourage and facilitate the injection of capital to an increasing extent and we are buying from them. But we are in a position different from theirs at the present time. Because of currency problems and deficits in their own international trading accounts, they have restricted the free use of the dollar in various parts of the world. If it is good enough for them to do it, it ought to be good enough for us to do precisely the same thing.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: Mr. McMahon said that the other day.

Mr. DUGGAN: Yes, and I am glad to see this intensification of objection by the Leaders of the Liberal Party. Previously this was confined, to a great extent, to members of the Country Party. I am glad to see this extension of interest to the Liberal Party because after all it is the predominant party in the Federal sphere and we would expect it to do something about this.

We are told to prosecute all possible alternatives. We have trade missions going to Asian countries and so on. We know that Japan is pegged in its ability. It is

certainly a viable market to some extent, but, although our beef is going to Japan in small but increasing quantities, there is not much prospect of alternative markets being found.

Because of the effect of the American decision on the New Zealand economy, New Zealand is negotiating a reciprocal trade treaty with Japan, which means the entry into Japan of lamb and mutton, which will retard our ability to gain access to that growing market. In any case, Japan's capacity to absorb increasing quantities of Australian primary products is dependent, to a large degree, upon its ability to sell secondary-industry products in this country, and there is an aversion on the part of a large proportion of our population, and indeed on the part of some of our primary industries, to goods coming from Japan.

If we are dependent, as we are, on Red China, which takes 40 per cent. of our exportable wheat, Red China is in a very strong bargaining position. I feel that there ought to be some greater correlation and co-ordination in our marketing schemes.

I feel that much of the beef-cattle roads scheme originated more specifically or strongly as a political preferment of benefit in those areas for political purposes than as a cold evaluation of the economics of the scheme.

I am certain that the same can be said of the Ord River scheme. It arose largely from a desire of the Federal Government to retain Senate control in Western Australia and the Federal Government poured millions of dollars into the scheme, with the result that unless our experiments are favourable that scheme will not be an economic proposition for the growing of cotton.

Mr. Row: There is a surplus of cotton in Australia this year.

Mr. DUGGAN: Yes, and action has already been taken by the Federal authorities to phase out the \$4,000,000 bounty given to the cotton industry at the present time. What has the effect been? Ord River figures disclose that non-payment of the bounty would have reduced the income of Ord River farms to the extent of \$6,300 per farm. Taking cost of depreciation, family labour and the gross income less cash cost into consideration, it averaged \$19,800 per farm or a return of 18 per cent. on capital. That is the effect of this bounty. Farmers are already going out and accepting alternative work such as they can obtain in the area, and they are talking now of growing sorghum. We in this State are trying to turn from wheat to sorghum in some areas in the hope that we can export it to Japan. We are talking about growing it in the Northern Territory and North Queensland, for export to Japan. That seems to me to be foolish when the Namoi Valley production averaged 978 lb. of lint per

acre, the highest in Australia, compared with 762 lb. at Ord with all its irrigation facilities. The economic result is that a farmer in the Naomi Valley area receives \$69,800 per farm. The farmer in the Ord River area receives \$19,400, and the one in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area receives \$9,000. In Queensland, where farms are in most cases dependent upon natural rainfall, the figure was \$6,500 for the growing of cotton. It seems to me that far too much emphasis is placed on the political rather than the economic factor in these cases.

These problems will only be confounded if, as the Federal Government now proposes, the irrigable area in the Ord River scheme is increased from 20,000 acres to approximately 175,000 acres, when the only prospects at the moment are the growing of sorghum or increasing facilities for the fattening of cattle. I think scientific evidence suggests that Townsville lucerne and other legumes that grow in Queensland and other places are more suitable for the economic fattening of cattle than is fodder that would be grown by irrigation in the Ord River area, because the number of cattle that could be reared in the growing areas of the Kimberleys and in Western Australia is not sufficient to sustain the volume of production necessary to make the scheme economic.

It has been suggested that cotton-growing could probably be developed profitably in the Ord River area if Japan purchased 500,000 lb. of a certain type of cotton a year. But Japan is bound by its imbalances of trade, and I suppose that, of all the nations that I can think of, none is a better or keener trader than is Japan. I want to say in the favour of the Japanese that there is an integration between their foreign office and their trading departments by means of which they know precisely in which direction they are moving. There does not seem to be anything like that co-ordination in this country.

I therefore feel that in whatever way we look at the problems of primary industry, there is cause for disquiet. In the wheat industry, payments will be considerably reduced this year. Although the initial payment is being pegged at the figure given last year of, I think, \$1.10, the guaranteed price is to be reduced from \$1.65 to \$1.40, or thereabouts, a bushel. This year the expected crop is approximately 475,000,000 bushels. The U.S.S.R. has almost a record harvest, and France is selling soft wheat to Japan and other places. The European bloc countries, the Eastern bloc particularly, are not bound by agreement. France is underselling on the agreement reached at international level. All of this tends to undermine the stability of the recently negotiated wheat price, although strong efforts are being made to sustain it. There are therefore problems to be met in our wheat industry.

I am not quite as optimistic as the hon. member for South Coast, who had a fair bit to say about the efficiency of the dairying industry. I do not know where he obtained his information. I do not think that this industry is particularly efficient in Queensland, not because of want of effort on the part of many people but because the income is not there. "The Australian Financial Review" of 7 November discloses in a speech made by Mr. Anthony that of the 62,000 dairy farmers in Australia more than 50 per cent. had an income of less than \$2,000 a year. As I pointed out in a previous speech, the inability of people on the land to make sufficient capital savings to reinvest in processes, equipment, and so on, on their farms makes it more difficult for them to be efficient. The very fact that the Commonwealth Government is making millions of dollars available for the aggregation of farms and the liquidation of uneconomic holdings is proof positive that the dairying industry is not efficient in its ability to market its product profitably and sell it in a volume matching its production.

In the case of the meat industry, there is the problem caused by the almost catastrophic decrease in price. Perhaps I should not have said "catastrophic", because that is an exaggeration. The Meat Board has decided to provide incentive payments, and if exporters wish to gain access to the American market the proposal is that they have to obtain markets elsewhere that will qualify them for access to the American market. How can these people do that? What do they do? Where do they go? They are locked out of the European Economic Community. The type of meat that Australia makes available is not suitable for the needs of most European countries. Only two seemed to be interested in Australian meat—Sweden took 440 tons and Italy about 147 tons—and the total exports to Europe were only about 1,000 tons. Other countries were not prepared to pay the prices that Australia demands for its meat. So what do the producers do in order to qualify for the continued entry to the American market? Where do they go if they are obliged to find alternative markets elsewhere in order to qualify for the right to sell to the United States of America?

I do not know that there is cause for great optimism, despite the eulogies that are heaped on the Premier's head, in the success that attended Australia's efforts at the Geneva sugar conference. I am glad that the Premier went, but I have not been glad to see in recent years the subjugation of the Premier of this State as Australia's chief spokesman at a sugar conference. In the days of Forgan-Smith and Hanlon, they were the chief spokesmen for the sugar industry in Australia; but in recent years the Premier of Queensland, whoever he has been, has played only a very secondary role. The Premier himself—whether it was modesty

or frankness on his part, I do not know—virtually said in his statement to the House that all the credit was due to Mr. McEwen and the Commonwealth officers.

The fact is that last year Australia had a crop of about 2,100,000 tons. Under the proposed agreement, even assuming that the price of 3.5c a lb. is reached—it is far from being reached at present—there will be an excess over mill peaks of about 400,000 tons. From the beginning of the 1969 year, it is estimated that about 180,000 tons of sugar will have to be stored in this country, and the Federal Minister has said that it is no good the industry's coming along and asking for an increase in the domestic price. In addition, the agreement has not yet been ratified.

Again I come back to the point made by the hon. members for Townsville North and Port Curtis, and perhaps by other hon. members, that the Americans, although they are supposed to be our friends, refused to even attend the international sugar conference; the European Economic Community has not been helpful; the Eastern Bloc—Russia and the other countries—was not helpful. I think that the American attitude was that if there was an increase in the world free market price it would boost the Cuban economy to such an extent that the Castro regime would be bolstered, and that is contrary to American policy, Democratic or Republican. Apart from the assistance that the United States of America is giving Australia by increasing its intake of sugar, I do not think it is interested in having any long-term stabilised sugar agreement that will be of benefit to this country.

All in all, the picture of our primary industries is a somewhat depressing one. Few, if any, of them are profitable, and many problems face them, particularly the cost factor. I should like the Minister to convey to his friends in the Federal sphere that rising costs are compounding the problems of primary industries. Nobody seems to care very much about it. Increases in the salaries of the professional classes and in the wages of the wage-earning classes do not concern the Federal authorities very much, because the tax structure enables the Federal Government to reap additional revenue, and they share to a greater degree all the increases.

A meeting of lamb producers at Orange this week pointed out that they were getting only 14c a lb. for their lamb, which was being sold at 20c and 22c, as it is in shops in Brisbane. They demanded at least a 60 per cent. margin of profit to enable them to cope with their costs. The man on the land has no opportunity of seeing that a correct assessment of his costs is made. He has to get market value, and market value depends on whether a product is in short supply or in surplus. Provided that the seasons are good, most primary products are in surplus, and producers depend for their stability upon

a subsidy structure that is costing Australian taxpayers many millions of dollars—about \$179,000,000 in the current financial year. That is a fairly large sum of money to donate, and I ask that more weight be given to the cost factor, particularly insofar as it relates to the cost of land.

I have heard Americans who have come here say that even residential land in Australia is becoming more expensive than it is in some of the densely-populated areas of Detroit and other large cities in the United States. The answer, of course, is if there is a willing buyer and a willing seller, who are we to interfere with this price arrangement? Far be it from me to go back to land sales control because I realise there are problems in that. But all of these cost increases, as I mentioned before, are making it tremendously difficult for us to take an optimistic long-term view about the future prospects of our primary industries, despite the excellent services given to them by the scientifically trained men who are trying to improve the quality and conditions under which various products are grown, and to help people engaged in our primary industries.

I hope that the Minister, perhaps in his reply, will indicate that the Government is conscious of its obligation not only to investigate efficiency in the industry in quality control and the use of insecticides, pesticides, and all those other agencies that are used to improve the growth of crops, but also to see that greater stress is placed firstly on the cost factor and secondly and more importantly on the question of co-ordinating all the capital expenditure to see that this injection of capital into our primary industries will result in a reasonable prospect of access to profitable markets overseas. If we are going to follow this mad system of heavily subsidising everything, it can only lead to ultimate disaster.

Mr. TOMKINS (Roma) (8.12 p.m.): First of all, I should like to comment on some of the remarks made by the hon. member for Toowoomba West. I know that he has had vast experience in this field. He has covered a wide area tonight in the various commodities associated with the Department of Primary Industries, and I should like to say that what he said about some primary industries is quite true. However, what he said about others would not necessarily be true. I propose to deal tonight with the beef-cattle industry and other industries with which I claim to have some association, and therefore some knowledge of them.

I agree with the hon. member that some industries face problems. This is not unusual. I should like to take the opportunity of congratulating the Minister and his top officers on the job they are doing for Queensland. I do not know of any department that covers such a wide field of industries as the Department of Primary Industries. How one Minister can possibly

handle such a diversity of matters, I do not know. All I can say is that I think he has done a very good job. For the industries I claim to know a little about, he has done a first-class job.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: He was pretty lonely before lunch.

Mr. TOMKINS: I was not here because of a family bereavement. Had I been here, I would have been very interested.

I am going to speak tonight of the set-up in the Department of Primary Industries as I know it in country areas. The rural discussion groups that have been sponsored by the department in recent times have met the landholders at meetings for discussions on all types of problems of the land. The discussion that impresses me greatly is the one on economics, which is handled by many top economic experts in the department. This is intended to teach one the principles of farm management, which I think is very important in this age when we have to be very cost conscious. The hon. member for Toowoomba West referred to cost consciousness. I believe that this has to be gone into thoroughly, because we can be priced out of the field in various industries with which we are associated.

Mr. Bromley: Do you think they are giving the Government a fair go?

Mr. TOMKINS: I am quite sure they are. I think the economic surveys that go on and the information they farm out are very good.

One matter that I want to deal with tonight is the cattle industry, and I want to wind up by dealing with the meat side of it. I should like to say that the Department of Primary Industries and also the Department of Lands have been very co-operative in the field of development of brigalow and belah country. I believe this is the big break-through we have had in Queensland in recent years. Ten or 12 years ago nobody would have dreamt that today there would be vast areas of brigalow and belah scrub that have been pulled and the country sown with green panic, Rhodes grass and buffel grass. This looks good in retrospect and today we all say that we knew this would happen. However, as one involved in this sort of thing I know that when one experiments one does not know what will happen. When this type of work is done, one takes the risk involved in the seasons. As much as \$5 or \$10 an acre can be spent on a large area of scrub country without any return, but if the country gets rain there is a very good return.

I should like to pay a tribute to the Department of Primary Industries, the C.S.I.R.O. and the landholders who have been associated with the development of many grasses suitable for planting in dry areas and also for the development of Townsville lucerne, siratro and other legumes in the spear-grass areas to increase their carrying capacities. All this

type of work has led to one thing, that is, increased production on the lands that we own. As well, it has led to remarkable development of the cattle industry because of the price factor. Today a lot of wool-growers have diversified to some extent into cattle-breeding, and some into wheat-growing and cattle-breeding. Whilst that is very gratifying, it means that in the long term we are putting a very substantial burden on the cattle industry and the killing facilities of this State.

The interest that the Government has shown in the development of the brigalow lands speaks for itself. A sum of \$14,500,000 has been provided by the Commonwealth for the development of Areas I and II, and a sum of \$10,000,000 has been advanced for the development of Area III. The allocation of such sums will lead to increased production in those highly productive areas. In addition to the Commonwealth's expenditure, many private interests have ploughed back vast sums of money in the development of their properties, and a great many investors from America, New South Wales and Victoria have come to this State because they realise that it is a good place to live in and has a good and sensible Government in power. As I have said, this points to one thing only: increased production in our primary industries, particularly in the beef industry.

I was interested to read in the Queensland Pocket Year Book for 1968, under the heading of "Overseas Exports for 1966-67", that the top income-earning export industry in Queensland at present is the beef and veal industry. For that year its value was \$105,475,000, to which can be added the value of \$13,057,000 for other meat and meat preparations, which include canned meat. Next comes the sugar industry with \$98,113,000, followed by the wool industry with \$93,206,000, and the wheat industry with \$29,058,000. Those figures tell their own story.

There is no doubt that 30 years ago the beef-cattle industry was the Cinderella industry in this State. Nobody worried about it and it had no worthwhile export markets. It was not looked upon as being an industry of any consequence. However, over the years, owing to many contributing factors, the industry has developed to a tremendous extent.

The figures of livestock numbers do not tell quite the same story, because in 1948 there were just under 6,000,000 cattle in Queensland and in 1967 there were just under 7,000,000, an increase of only 1,000,000. That includes dairy cattle. The hon. member for South Coast will be interested in the fact that we have about 1,000,000 dairy cattle. That shows that there has been an increase. I suggest that the increase is better than might be apparent because today, with better methods, people are getting a better yield from their stock. In fact, the yield is reflected in the figures that I gave.

In other words, production has increased remarkably. The figures also disclose that the top of the tree was reached in 1965, when we had 7,392,504 cattle. We dropped back in the next two years, entirely because of the drought.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: No, it was not.

Mr. TOMKINS: If that is not right, what was the cause?

Mr. Wallis-Smith: They sold their breeding cattle to America, and you know it.

Mr. TOMKINS: That is not true. The hon. member knows full well that the numbers are increasing. Production figures today are slowly gaining ground, and they will continue to do so. In the next two or three years we will face a problem not on the land but in other fields in the cattle industry, to which I will refer in a moment. With the improved pastures and the better cattle husbandry (thanks to the Minister's department), in no time we will have a problem of great magnitude stemming from killing facilities.

Mr. McKechnie: Record numbers of cattle are available.

Mr. TOMKINS: As the hon. member for Carnarvon has said, record numbers of cattle are available and that will continue to an even greater extent, because I am sure that we will not have the same seasons as we have in the past two or three years. This will pose a problem for the Minister in providing killing facilities. Of course, we cannot increase production on the land without creating a little trouble elsewhere.

I refer now to the Metropolitan Public Abattoir, which has been in the news in the last week or two because it lost its export licence. Nobody regrets that more than I, because I suppose that it has never had a better supporter than I. I have always felt that, as a service works, it has done a fine job over the years for the cattle industry. Although the Moore Government was criticised for many things, it did Queensland a lot of good when it purchased the Brisbane abattoir from Swifts years ago and hygienic killing of meat was introduced to the metropolitan area. When the abattoir was bought, a number of small slaughterhouses in the Brisbane area were closed and centralised killing commenced. When that happened, Brisbane received the benefit of stock being killed under proper supervision. I think everybody here will agree that that was an excellent step.

As I understand the finances of the Metropolitan Public Abattoir—I know that Mr. Harris is sitting in the lobby, so that if I say the wrong thing I will hear about it—it has not cost the taxpayers anything. From the day it was bought by the Moore Government from Swifts it has financed its own development and has been carried on profitably. I know that it could be said that the last two or three years have been difficult, but they have been difficult for the private

abattoirs, too. That was purely because of the shortage of cattle in this period, which I do not think will be the case in the years ahead. We will be faced with an entirely different situation, in that more cattle will be available than there are facilities to handle them.

Mr. Murray: In this period ahead that you speak of, do you envisage the closing down of other abattoirs by the extension of the Cannon Hill area?

Mr. TOMKINS: The extension of the Cannon Hill area is a domestic market problem. I have no knowledge of any abattoirs that are likely to be closed down. I want to make the point that owing to increased production on the land, somewhere along the line there must be more killing facilities.

It seems to me that at the moment the Metropolitan Public Abattoir is in a state of flux. It is an old abattoir. I personally believe—I have said this in this Chamber before—that it ought to be shifted out of that area to somewhere west of here to a place like Wacol or Ipswich, because the need to have it on the waterfront is not as great as it used to be. In fact, it is not necessary at all. I believe that the abattoir could be operated in a place such as Wacol or Ipswich in a most efficient manner, without any disadvantage. When the abattoir was built, we had to ship quarter beef to England and other export markets, and the abattoir had to be on the waterfront. But, because of changing methods and the introduction of carton-meat shipments, this necessity does not exist now.

I say to the Minister and his top advisers—and he has plenty of good advisers; I know many of them—that they should have a good look at this matter. Approximately \$100,000 will have to be spent to bring the abattoir up to the hygiene standard to suit the American market. It could be unfortunate that this amount has to be spent, because I believe that in the long term the abattoir must be shifted. I find it difficult to believe that a better abattoir could not be built inland—not too far inland—to serve the—

Mr. Wallis-Smith: What about in Roma?

Mr. TOMKINS: No. There is already one there. It could serve the needs of Brisbane and its community, and also cater for the export market. We must have a service abattoir in Queensland. I lived through the 1950 to 1955 period, when the position was entirely reversed. At that stage too many stock were available for our killing facilities. It is not very good, as a producer, to have to book up stock weeks ahead, particularly in a drought period, to ensure that they are killed. That happened in the 1950-55 period. It was rectified by the Metropolitan Public Abattoir increasing its killing capacity to a 33-butcher gang in 1956. This will happen again because of the development to which I referred earlier. The position facing the Minister relative to the beef industry, and

I refer also to the lamb and mutton industry, which is developing—they are all tied together—is that this abattoir must be able to cater for all the available stock that are to be killed.

Then there is the question of operators who have quotas at the Metropolitan Public Abattoir and develop an export market. I have heard the claim that they should not be allowed to kill there. I just cannot agree with that. A man who develops a business to supply the domestic market should have the right to diversify into the export market if it is profitable and he can diversify under his quota—and there is plenty of quota available at the moment. He should be allowed to develop his business there. This is a factor that we must live with. This is good marketing. I do not think there is any alternative. In recent years the meat industry has had probably one of the best marketing systems we have had for years. One of the reasons it has been so good is that we have always had the Metropolitan Public Abattoir to fill the gap between supply and demand. I hope it always stays that way.

The report of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority, which was published recently—I think it is an extremely good report—dealt with hygiene standards for the domestic market. It has always seemed extraordinary to me that we claim that the Americans set too high a standard for export meat, which could mean that we are prepared to accept a lesser standard. I could never follow this. We should accept no less than America's standard. Going further, people living in smaller areas away from Brisbane—for instance, in the North—should accept nothing less. I know that in the smaller areas there is the same type of slaughterhouse that has been there for years. There is no alternative to that.

As one who has travelled and seen quite a number of slaughter-houses in country areas, I should like to suggest that the department first of all prepare plans for small service abattoirs capable of serving from 5,000 to 10,000 people and upwards. Such plants could serve quite a number of towns. Offhand I could suggest as examples Gympie, the Gold Coast and Southport. I shall not include Maryborough, because there is a different set-up there. The meat authority could, by negotiation with butchers in these areas, encourage them to come in on a co-operative, or some type of company, basis on which one of these service works could be built. I believe that they could be assisted, possibly through the Department of Industrial Development, to get such a system going. This would be good for the maintenance of hygiene. I see that the hon. member for South Coast has left the Chamber. I was going to tell him that he would be surprised if he knew where some of the meat sold in the Gold Coast area comes from.

I believe that this situation could be corrected by a sensible approach, to butchers individually perhaps, to see if they would take part in such a scheme on a voluntary basis. If an abattoir qualifies to supply a high-class area such as the Gold Coast, I see no reason why it should not obtain permission to send the same meat to Brisbane.

This suggestion also applies to North Queensland. I was one of the members of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority who visited the North two years ago, and it was fairly obvious then that a lot could be done there by co-operation. I suggest that such a plan be placed before some of these butchers.

I believe that remarks made to the authority such as, "This would raise the price of meat by 6c a lb.," are plain silly. I believe that the price of obtaining hygiene would be no more than 1c a lb., and I suggest to hon. members that if an extra 1c a lb. had to be paid for hygienically killed meat, it would surely be a good investment.

The problem of the extension of abattoir areas is one that has to be faced in the future. I should like to suggest to the Minister and the Queensland Meat Industry Authority that they see how far they can go on the basis of co-operation. I should also like to suggest that in some areas in which there are fairly good abattoir establishments the Queensland Meat Industry Authority or the Department of Primary Industries will confer with butchers and tell them just what is required to bring their slaughtering establishment up to the required standard. I know a man who has a first-class establishment in the area of the hon. member for Warwick. All that he needs is a lead on what he will be required to do to attain the necessary standard. These things have to be done in the interest of hygiene, because I believe that when these things can be done economically in an area such as Warwick the people should not have to settle for anything less than the Americans settle for when they buy meat here.

In conclusion, I should like to congratulate the Minister once again on the job that he is doing. The ramifications of his department are tremendous. Thanks to the work that the Minister's officers have done in the wheat industry, their persevering with different types of grain has made it possible for good wheat to be grown in western areas. It appears to me that a fairly good, solid type of industry is developing and is here to stay. Although I am not a wheat expert, I am told that the hard wheat grown in the western areas is in short supply on the markets of the world, and I think the Minister should continue to encourage this type of development.

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (8.34 p.m.): I regret very much that so many Country Party representatives are constantly

advocating the removal of the Metropolitan Public Abattoir to some other district. It will be a sad and scandalous day for the capital city of Queensland if their exhortations are every heeded. Mind you, Mr. Carey, one cannot treat their representations lightly, because already one sees the dominant Country Party in the Government prepared to silence its confreres in the Liberal Party on such an important matter as the liquor issue, even though there is sectional legislation that operates against the capital city. I am hoping that that inordinate domination of the Country Party over the Liberal Party will not continue.

Fortunately, in earlier times, before the "ginger group" in the Liberal Party was silenced, the Liberal Party did have some say in the Government; but since the last Liberal Party convention it, too, seems to have given up the ghost.

Mr. Murray: You would agree that the hon. member for Port Curtis is an authority on hotels. Ask him whether he would like to open on Sunday.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Carey): Order!

Mr. BENNETT: I am prepared to answer any question in this Chamber, unlike many Cabinet Ministers, who dodge and evade them and get insulting. In reply to the hon. member's question, I should say that my colleague the hon. member for Port Curtis is not only an authority on hotels; he is an authority—and an outstanding authority—on most issues that come up in Parliament. He could teach the hon. member for Clayfield many things if the hon. member would only spend some time with him in order to improve his parliamentary education.

The advocacy that we are hearing for the abolition of the Brisbane abattoir is regrettable, but I do not propose to speak at length on that subject. However, the hon. member for Roma, who has just resumed his seat, spoke about the abolition of the Brisbane abattoir, and I point out to the Committee that he sat idly by at Roma when the abattoir there was eliminated and abandoned. As chairman of the council for that district, he was not prepared to raise his voice—

Mr. TOMKINS: I rise to a point of order. At no time did I say that I wanted the Cannon Hill abattoir shifted anywhere to the West. I do not want it abolished. I like it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Carey): Order! The hon. member for South Brisbane has heard what the hon. member for Roma has said, and I know that he will want to withdraw the remark.

Mr. BENNETT: Yes, Mr. Carey, I will withdraw it. I thought that he mentioned Wacol at one stage. The Government is putting everything at Wacol these days; it

is becoming rather a cosmopolitan area. I think that some members of the Government need treatment at Wacol.

In my opinion, the Government should spend at least \$100,000 on modernising the Brisbane abattoir, bringing it up to date and ensuring that the hygiene is raised to the required standard.

There are two things that I very much regret about the Department of Primary Industries. The first is that the Government will not shoulder its responsibilities relative to the dangers that have beset the department; the second is that the Government refuses to accept the wise recommendations and advice of its experts in the department. No less than six years ago Mr. O. H. Brooks, who is a Bachelor of Veterinary Science and who was at that time Assistant to the Director of Animal Industry, and Mr. S. G. Knott, who is also a Bachelor of Veterinary Science and who was at that time Divisional Veterinary Officer, strongly warned the Government about the ravages of the cattle tick. In the intervening six years the Government has not done anything to implement their suggestions or to safeguard the industry against the hazards of the situation.

As were so many other pests, the cattle tick was imported into Australia—no doubt by somebody with Tory thinking similar to that of the present Government who brought them in and pretended that they were assets to the country and did not see the danger. Someone wants to import lions now. The Government has not made any provision to safeguard primary industries against such importations, and it has not received advice as to what dangers may attend the importation of lions. Certainly, the man who had the same type of Tory thinking as the present Government brought a Brahman bull and a few other cattle from Java in 1872, and that is when the tick, which has caused the cattle industry in this State so much trouble, was imported.

Mr. Campbell: Do you remember it?

Mr. BENNETT: I don't know whether I remember it from 1872, but I know a lot of present-day warts around the Government parties.

The tick entered Queensland from the Northern Territory, at about Camooweal, in 1895 and spread rapidly to the coast with the movement of cattle for slaughter, and by 1896 it had spread southward to Rockhampton and continued until it reached New South Wales and ravaged that area. In the meantime, although Governments have been warned about the dangers and the cost to the country of the cattle tick, they have done nothing. Mr. Brooks and Mr. Knott mentioned six years ago that the cost to Queensland alone of the damage caused by the cattle tick was no less than \$20,000,000 a year. We have been told in recent times that the damage presently costs Queensland something

in the vicinity of \$25,000,000 a year, yet this Government hides its head where this problem is involved.

Mr. Muller: What do you suggest should be done?

Mr. BENNETT: I will let the hon. member for Fassifern know what the suggestion is. I am fortified in my submissions and recommendations, because I am really only quoting what has been said by top departmental officers when the hon. member was a Minister.

Mr. Muller: You are critical of what has been done. Tell us what ought to be done.

Mr. BENNETT: I know the hon. member for Fassifern has made some harsh remarks relative to my interjections in the past. I will deal with him by merely saying that I will not repeat what Sir Thomas Hiley and some of his colleagues said of him some years ago.

Mr. Muller: That is beside the question. Tell us what ought to be done.

Mr. BENNETT: If the hon. gentleman will listen, perhaps I can convince him by my eloquence in oratory to a much greater extent than his departmental officers did when he was in the Cabinet. If the hon. member wants to get technical, his departmental officers referred to the cattle tick as *Boophilus microplus*. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman has ever heard of the technical name, or whether he simply refers to the tick by its ordinary, colloquial name as we do.

It has been claimed that the annual loss to the industry caused by the cattle tick is far in excess of that caused by all other diseases in beef and dairy cattle in tick-affected areas in Australia. The loss comes initially from serious setbacks to growth, which are often due to tick worry, and the premature death of breeders caused by ticks during dry seasons. Of course, that is obvious to any man who travels through the West, even though he is not a cattle-owner or does not even work in or have any connection with the cattle industry. Many men will say that their cattle are dying not simply, or per se, because of lack of fodder but because of the ravages that are being caused by cattle ticks on mothers carrying calves.

The other cost is in relation to extra mustering that is occasioned because cattle have to be dipped, and thirdly there is the financial burden to the industry because market values are affected when cattle cannot be moved freely from infected to clean areas for fattening or for slaughter. Finally under the heading of losses there is the damage caused to cattle hides by tick infestation.

There is, of course, the possibility of elimination, and this has been recommended from time to time. Graziers have been urged to pay more attention to tick-control measures. There are always a number—and I hope that it is a small number—of men on the land who are prepared

to greedily take all that they can get from the land without safeguarding the future and preserving the rights of posterity and their own children in what can be won from the land. They are prepared to take their profits without, as it were, taking precautionary measures to ensure that those profits will continue to be won by not only their own generation but also future generations.

It has been said that the loss of production owing to ticks has cost Australia many thousands of dollars, and if graziers were prepared to follow the recommendations of departmental officers a lot of that cost, if not all of it, could be saved. It is said that the continued sporadic use of chemicals is unsatisfactory and in fact has led to the development of the dip-resistant ticks, whereas a constant and consistent use of chemicals or dips would be much more satisfactory. When there is a strong plague of ticks graziers will dip their cattle, and when they think that they can get away without dipping them they will not dip. In that fashion they are breeding a strain of dip-resistant ticks.

It has been recommended that graziers should place a far greater emphasis on pasture spelling and paddock rotation than on chemical dipping for tick control. That is not my recommendation, but I want it included in "Hansard" because many experts are ignored by men who are satisfied provided they are making big profits.

A Government Member: Do you know what you are talking about?

Mr. BENNETT: I may not know what I am talking about, but I am prepared to listen to an expert who does.

A Government Member: You are a Queen Street jackaroo.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Carey): Order! Do hon. gentlemen realise that they are not allowed to interject unless they are sitting in their usual places in the Chamber?

Mr. BENNETT: An hon. member said that I am a Queen Street jackaroo. In answer to him, I tell him that I am not a Cunnamulla milk-bar cowboy.

The man on whose opinion I am relying is none other than Mr. K. M. Grant, the Director of Veterinary Services in the Department of Primary Industries. I am advocating that his opinion should be respected and that his recommendations at least be given a trial. I do not see why I should be belittled for endeavouring to advocate recommendations made by such a distinguished gentleman in this field, who would know more than all the Country Party members put together. It is little wonder that the Government refuses to spend an adequate amount in this particular field. Its members are making cheap profits and

think they know more than the experts. I say this, and I say it with some degree of confidence and consideration—

Mr. Ramsden: And humility.

Mr. BENNETT: And humility, in my typical fashion. I refer to the fact that other Governments are prepared to spend money on tick control. The New South Wales Government is prepared to do something about it as well as about research into cattle ticks. Since the 1920's the Commonwealth Government has been contributing towards the cost of cattle-tick control and research in New South Wales. The Minister can tell us what he has done to receive some assistance for Queensland from the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth payments to and for the States, as shown in the 1968-69 official publication, show that from 1 July, 1951, to 30 June, 1968, an amount of \$10,553,000 has been made available for this purpose. That is a large sum of money. The payment to New South Wales for this purpose in 1967-68 was \$288,000, and the estimated payment in 1968-69 is \$310,000. The Commonwealth contribution to New South Wales towards the cost of cattle-tick measures in 1955-56 is shown in Table 58. Skipping over various years, for the year 1968-69 New South Wales received from that fund \$310,000, after receiving increased payments year after year from 1956-57.

What has this State achieved by Cabinet sending down to Canberra from time to time representatives who claim to represent the man on the land, or country interests? According to Table 62 of this same publication, Queensland has received a paltry sum for recharging cattle dips. That is the best they could do; they could not get any allocation under the item that I have referred to. Queensland received \$1,250 for recharging cattle dips. That is the result of their efforts in Canberra.

Mr. Ramsden: Are you still quoting?

Mr. BENNETT: I will continue to quote if the hon. member wants me to.

Mr. Grant is reported as follows:—

"Of all these methods, that of pasture management—rotation or spelling—was least expensive in the long run and also the most convenient.

"It was aimed at killing the tick larvae through their not being able to find a host."

The hon. member for Merthyr should watch out. If we do embark on any such programme in Queensland, he might end up as a host.

The report continues—

"With pasture management as a control measure, it was most important to remember, however, that paddocks should be spelled for at least 5½ months in winter and for 3½ months in summer."

Therein lies his difficulty. No doubt his recommendation is sound, but there will be so many men on the land who will not be prepared to spell their land for nine months in the year, when the occasion demands, to eradicate tick infestation. They claim that the Government and other people in the industry should be saddled with the extra cost to safeguard them.

Mr. Muller: Would you be available for the position of director of tick control?

Mr. BENNETT: I cannot be available for all these positions. I have been reliably informed that I am being considered as the next Commissioner of Police, so I cannot be Director of Primary Industries at the same time. Will the Government please make up its mind where it really wants me?

I think that the Department of Primary Industries in Queensland has been starved of funds. Fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately, we are not lacking in brains or know-how. No doubt departmental officers are not in a position to say so, but they are being considerably frustrated because, firstly, the necessary funds are not made available, and secondly, there are so many alleged know-alls in the Country Party who believe that the departmental officers' expert advice should not be accepted.

Over the years dipping has been carried out either in actual dips as we know them or by spraying the cattle, which is also called dipping. I have already referred to that. However, dip mixtures are not consistent. Although dip tests are free and inspectors are made available by the department to test dip mixtures to see that they are effective, surprisingly enough only 10 per cent. of dips are regularly tested and there is no provision in our law to enforce the owners of dips and of stock to have their dips tested regularly. After all, there is now some provision for motor-cars to be compulsorily tested, and even the individual, mainly in Brisbane, of course, is compulsorily tested. But there is no provision for the compulsory testing of dips which are used by this very important and lucrative industry and which mean so much to its welfare and financial success.

Mr. Newbery: What is your opinion of DDT as a cattle dip?

Mr. BENNETT: DDT has been used as a cattle dip by me in the area around Childers, and used with success as a spray on my father-in-law's stud-cattle farm.

Mr. Row: Is he still using it?

Mr. BENNETT: Unfortunately, my father-in-law is dead, so he does not use it any more. And I do not farm, because in my walk of life I have only two interests, my parliamentary job and the people who like to see me safeguard their personal welfare and liberty in courts. I do not have any other interests in life. I used to go up there and help my father-in-law at times.

I assure those who ask these questions in a derisive way that I spent more time in the cane-growing industry than the majority of Government members, and that is no idle bragging. My father was secretary of the Kalamia Mill Suppliers' Committee. He would now be most disturbed at what has happened to the sugar industry, the spurious lies that cane-farmers have been told from time to time and the ill-gotten comfort they were given following the Gibbs Commission, which plunged them into a state of great emergency. It is to be hoped that this latest agreement does relieve them of some of their anxiety. Over the past few years many cane-farmers have wanted to walk off their farms. If time permitted I would read the A.L.P. policy on the sugar industry. It is clear cut and properly determined, and under it people would know where they are going. This Government changes its policy and attitude to the cane-farmer from time to time. The Government, having lured and encouraged young, small cane-farmers into the industry, left them to their own resources and failed to help them, and they will be saddled with debt for the rest of their lives even if they do survive bankruptcy.

Government members like to side-track me because I underline the weaknesses in this administration. For instance the Minister and the Government should be doing something about the disposal of garbage from overseas ships. They are doing nothing. Other Governments will. If we are not careful we will have a big plague like the one in England, or a big national calamity such as an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, because more shipping is using the river and there is less flow in this river than in many other rivers in the world. The flow is restricted and impeded by the dam towards the source of the river. In the main, shipping operates in that part of the river where there is not an easy getaway for effluent and other matter discharged from the ships. Surely this Government should be making immediate preparation for the disposal of garbage from ships.

In 1965-66 the Commonwealth Government offered financial assistance to each State except Western Australia for the provision of facilities for disposal of overseas ships' garbage with a view to improving existing measures against the entry of exotic diseases into Australia. We have already had this happen. When it happened, the Minister panicked and he killed all the cattle around the place.

Mr. Row: Don't you think that I did the right thing?

Mr. BENNETT: The Minister might have eventually done the right thing, but if he had safeguarded the industry as he should have it would not have happened in the first place.

Mr. Row: It came in from New South Wales.

Mr. BENNETT: That is typical of this Government. It always wants to shoulder the blame onto somebody else. It passes the buck. If it introduces new legislation which contains some weaknesses it says that the New South Wales Government passed it, and that is a good State. If some evil comes into Queensland, the Government blames New South Wales or some other State, just as it did with the Brahman bull in 1872.

(Time expired.)

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (9 p.m.): I am most hesitant to speak after so eminent an authority on ticks and other rural matters as the speaker who has preceded me. As a matter of fact, he has convinced me that he would be just as eminently suitable as "Controller of Ticks" as Commissioner of Police.

In acknowledging the complexity of the Department of Primary Industries, I wish to compliment the Minister and his officers on the part that they have played in obtaining the prosperity enjoyed in certain rural industries. Particularly do I refer to the beef and wheat industries. I shall not speak at any length on the beef industry because the hon. member for Roma has covered it well and drawn to the attention of the Committee that it is now the top export primary industry of Queensland. The efforts of the Department of Primary Industries have contributed to this happy state of affairs, and today there is a record number of cattle in Queensland.

In the case of the wheat industry, there have been record crops in the last two years and it looks as though there could be a still better crop in this current year. Whilst a lot of this is due to changing land policies and the endeavours of private individuals in the development of so-called marginal land, to which I shall return later, it is in no small measure due to the help and assistance that has been rendered by the Department of Primary Industries in the development of rust-resistant wheat and the advice that has been given to primary producers who, in turn, have played their part to obtain good returns from wheat.

The wheat industry in the outer developing areas will be helped in no small measure by the new freight schedules, which will assist areas beyond 176 miles of a sea port. There is no doubt that there will be increased production in those areas in which the best wheat is produced.

In his remarks this morning the Minister mentioned that he has some apprehensions about the way in which the wheat industry is expanding in these marginal areas. I do not share his doubts to the same extent, because, through the work of the department in giving advice, in producing improved types, in the use of fertiliser, plus the know-how of growers in these areas, the so-called marginal areas of today will be the main wheat-growing areas of the State for many years to come. The marginal areas will

then lie still further west than they do now. Consequently, whilst I appreciate the Minister's warning that marginal areas must be watched, my idea of a "marginal area" lies further west than the present areas.

I have had the opportunity of first-hand discussion on this matter with Mr. Norman Fox, the Assistant Director of Agriculture in the extension field, and it is necessary to heed the Minister's warning on the inner marginal areas. The brigalow lands must not be over-flogged in the farming of wheat. There must be balanced agriculture in such areas, and it is only right and proper that the Minister should draw attention to the fact that if the brigalow areas were put under wheat year after year they would very definitely be destroyed. From my experience, I would say that about 20 per cent. of any holding in the brigalow area should be the maximum amount put under wheat at any time. Eventually the whole area would go progressively under wheat, but with a scheme of rotation that would make the fullest use of legumes and improved pastures, thus returning the land to grazing pursuits.

Of course, to this day I suppose lucerne would be the best improved pasture not only as a feed but because it returns nitrogen to the soil which so readily gives up its protein content to produce the wheats that are in such demand throughout the world today. That places Queensland in a strong position, because the good type of hard wheat of high-protein content that is being produced here will be in demand even if there is an over-supply of ordinary wheat on the world market. Consequently, I look forward not only to the growing of more wheat in marginal areas but also to the marginal areas becoming the stabilised and recognised wheat areas of the State.

Diverging for a moment, I should like to refer to a statement in today's "Telegraph" that the Minister was supported by only one Country Party member when he introduced his Estimates. That is incorrect. I do not know how many Country Party members were in the Chamber at that stage—

Mr. Bennett: One.

Mr. McKECHNIE: The newspaper said there was one, and I was here at that stage.

Mr. Bennett: No, you were not.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Yes, I was. The "Telegraph" said that only one Country Party member was in the Chamber when the Minister for Primary Industries opened the debate on his department's Estimates. I categorically assure the Committee that I was here at the time, in addition to the Minister for Works and Housing. Admittedly I left the House long before the Minister concluded his remarks, as did many other hon. members. But what the "Telegraph" is not aware of, or possibly does not wish to

be aware of, is that three Government committees were meeting this morning. While it might infer that members were not doing their jobs, they were in fact engaged on the work of various committees. As far as I am concerned, I spent from about midday till about 4 o'clock this afternoon working on two Bills to be introduced by the Minister for Lands.

Mr. Bennett: What did you do with them?

Mr. McKECHNIE: The hon. member will know in due course what we did with them. They will be introduced later in the session. One will be a Bill to amend the Land Acts, the other a Bill to amend the Rabbit Act.

The point I wish to make is that members of this Assembly on the Government side of the Chamber—I give Opposition members credit for possibly being similarly engaged—were doing their jobs and not just frittering their time away. They were working to present Bills.

Mr. Bennett: Do you want a verdict based on reasonable doubt, or on the balance of probabilities?

Mr. Sullivan: He always speaks the truth.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I wish to make the point that most hon. members were effectively doing their jobs.

Mr. Tucker: You have not made it very effectively, I am afraid.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Speaking of the horticultural research station, the tobacco experimental station, and so on, in my electorate, I have reason to appreciate the work that the officers of the department are doing. I know that similar stations in other parts of the State are doing an equally good job for various industries.

I express my appreciation to the Minister for an answer that he gave to a question of mine in the House recently relative to tobacco quotas. The Minister has protected the quotas of growers in my area pending the construction of the Coolmunda Dam. It has now been completed and will be opened next Saturday by the Honourable Harold Richter, Minister for Local Government and Conservation. It is already one-third full and is holding 20,000 acre-feet of water. Whether or not tobacco is grown to a greater extent in southern inland areas of Queensland, the fact is that the Minister has held the quotas and given men in the industry an opportunity to pick up from where they left off some years ago. Many of them will make good use of that opportunity and of the water that will be available to them.

Similarly, I appreciate the Minister's good work in connection with the survey carried out by the Department of Primary Industries in the Dumaresq Valley relative to the forthcoming construction of the dam on Pike Creek. Much work has been done here

on the suitability of soils, and experiments have been done with the response to irrigation, as they have also been done on the MacIntyre Brook.

Another matter that I should like to mention is the marketing of fruit and vegetables, and particularly market charges. As most hon. members would know, the normal commission at Rocklea markets is 10 per cent., but there has been a trend towards the creeping in of other charges. On Wednesday, 31 July last, the last job done for the Queensland Government by the late Honourable J. C. A. Pizzey, in conjunction with the Honourable J. A. Row, was to meet Mr. Flewell-Smith, representatives of the market wholesalers, and several others, including myself, to discuss market charges.

Owing to the circumstances that existed following that day not much publicity was given to that deputation, but I should like to assure the Committee, and the growers outside, that assurances were given on that occasion that the commission would not rise above 10 per cent. and that no undue extra charges would creep in. One exception was possibly the handling of loose produce such as melons. There could be room there for extra charges, but generally speaking it was understood from the round-table conference on that fateful day that the commission would stay at 10 per cent. and that there would be no cribbing as regards other charges. Looking at markets generally for our primary industries—I am thinking specifically of fruits, vegetables and so on, although this applies to other products—before too many years are past I believe that we must institute or help to establish, a refrigerated-ship service to the North. I am thinking, first of all, of the apples from my own area, but also of Queensland generally, and I know that hon. members from North Queensland would be particularly interested in the shipment of meat and vegetables, such as potatoes and so forth, through the northern ports of Townsville and Cairns, to Thursday Island and New Guinea ports. Combining these refrigerated ships with some passenger accommodation, there will be opportunities for tourism, particularly to Indonesia and Taiwan, and I have in mind Bali and Taipei. They would be quite good tourist runs and they could combine with trade and goodwill in those areas.

I think if we could find somebody with the enterprise and drive to institute a small shipping line such as this it would be a worthwhile assistance not only to our primary industries, although basically to our primary industries, particularly fruit and vegetables.

Recently in Childers the Premier was giving a report on his visit to Geneva and, as the hon. member for Toowoomba West said, he is a modest man and he possibly gave more than a fair share of credit to John McEwen. Again in his modest way, when winding up his address he said that while he made no claims to be a cane-grower, he

was proud to be associated with the discussions in Geneva. I felt it was a nice touch and rather a compliment to our Premier when one cane-farmer got up and said that although they fully realised that he was not a cane man and did not grow sugar, so far as they were concerned, for his work in Geneva and his success there on behalf of the industry they regarded him as every bit a sugar man. I think he qualified well and truly as a sugar man in the discussions at Geneva.

The hon. member for Toowoomba West drew attention also to the problem of costs within our primary industries, and I largely concur in what he said. Costs are the biggest problem that faces the primary industries today. As opposed to that, the hon. member for South Brisbane said that men in primary industry were satisfied as long as they got their cheap profits. I do not know what he meant by that, and what he said intrigued me a little. Like the hon. member for Toowoomba West, I am concerned about costs and their continual rise. Whilst prosperity exists in the meat and wheat industries—and I am confident it will return soon to the sugar industry—many problems have to be faced in the growing of small crops. I was thinking only the other day that in bounties or subsidies, whichever one may like to call them, the Australian primary industries receive \$179,000,000 per annum; yet secondary industries received protection or indirect assistance of \$800,000,000. There is no need for the primary industries to feel that they are mendicants in this field. It is obvious that secondary industries are protected to a greater extent, and in this lies one of our problems.

Hon. members will have noticed recently in the Press that the cotton industry has developed from a Cinderella industry to one that is supplying Australia's home needs. It has done so under the protection of a bounty, and has become so efficient that the Commonwealth authorities believe that it is no longer in need of such protection and have decided that the bounty will be phased out by 1972. That is a compliment to cotton-growers. If a similar principle was applied to many of our secondary industries that receive a portion of the \$800,000,000—if they were given protection for a certain period with, say, a 40 per cent. protection phasing out over 20 years—we would not see the continually rising spiral of costs that face our primary industries today.

I turn now to the sheep industry and its problem of cost in fighting external parasites. While the cattle tick has received a lot of publicity relative to its resistance, it is a mere amateur compared with the sheep blowfly. The blowfly does not simply develop a partial resistance that can be overcome by other specialised insecticides; it has completely defeated the insecticides so that today they have no effect whatever on sheep blowflies. I should like to thank the Minister's

department for the experimental work that it performed in proving this conclusively. Naturally many of the insecticide firms with considerable quantities of insecticide on hand were endeavouring to sell it, and insisted that their product was still capable of doing the job. In certain circumstances it is, but in very many instances not only was it a waste of time and money to apply it but it did more harm than if it was not put on at all. The water that was used to carry the insecticide to the wool attracted the blowflies, so the situation was worse with the use of these insecticides than with their non-use.

I thank the Minister's department for the work that it carried out in my electorate to establish that fact. Today in most of the State's sheep lands insecticides are of no use whatever in controlling blowflies, so we are looking for some other method of destroying them. I believe—and I am not speaking authoritatively—that blowfly infestation could be causing us as much work, trouble and loss as cattle-tick infestation, because flocks that were previously jetted every six weeks and were reasonably safe now have to be yarded at least once a week, and we are back to the old method whereby the pests have to be controlled by manual means. That involves much more work and much extra expense to the wool industry, with a loss of wool and a downgrading because of dust and handling generally.

In the brief time at my disposal I should like to refer to the opportunities for trade with areas to our north in some of our perishable products such as meat and fruit. When I was in Indonesia last May it was obvious that we could not buy many of our primary products such as apples and potatoes. Apples were unprocurable. I understood that when they were available they cost about 40c Australian each. We were looked after very well by the Australian Embassy staff in Jakarta. I promised to get them two cases of apples at the first opportunity. With the assistance of the C.O.D. and the D.S.G.C. I was given two very nice cases of apples, one of Delicious and one of Grannies. A few weeks ago I sent those two cases to the Embassy staff by air, with two thoughts in mind. The first was to fulfil my promise and to repay the courtesies extended to our parliamentary mission, and the second was to get the Ambassador and his staff to report on the quality of the apples under Indonesian conditions. Naturally, it is too dear to do that except for experimental purposes, because the two cases cost me \$26.60 in air freight. Nevertheless, they were sent for a special purpose. I received the Ambassador's letter in reply. He said they arrived in excellent condition and were just as good as they would have been in Brisbane. They were specially selected from controlled-atmosphere storage. We got a most favourable report. That proves that if we had refrigerated ships running beyond

the Cape and trading with those places we could build up a reasonably limited market. Nevertheless, we are looking for every possible export avenue for our fresh fruit and vegetables. I believe that in the long run we will achieve something in this way.

I express my appreciation for the many courtesies that the Minister's officers and his staff generally have extended to me on many small, and not so small, problems in my area. I know that they have treated other problems that have arisen throughout Queensland in the same way. In no small way they have played their part in expanding our wheat and beef industries, and we have received a lot of help and guidance in the tobacco, fruit and other industries.

I trust that the Minister's department will be able to assist us in many other ways to return greater wealth from our land, particularly in view of the ever-rising spiral of costs, which so far we have met with greater production and reduced costs within the holdings. It is rather significant that our primary industries are the chief source of export wealth for the State and the Commonwealth.

(Time expired.)

Mr. R. JONES (Cairns) (9.24 p.m.): If the hon. member for Carnarvon feels that his contribution transcends to a degree that of the prospective Commissioner of Police or comptroller-general of ticks and that he should wilt under the submissions of a so-called expert, I feel that he has failed in his mission on this occasion.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr. R. JONES: Not only should he be arrested but he should also be cast into the wilderness and be given six months without the option.

I shall deal firstly with the Kamerunga Horticultural Research Station which is on Kamerunga Road, just outside Cairns. It was proposed to remove some 28 varieties of mango trees to extend the area of the station. I discovered, after some investigation, that the reason for the proposal was that the general development of this area was desirable. The mango trees were to be removed to enlarge the area and the scope of the research. This can be done in other ways; I suggest by lease or resumption of additional land. If we are to extend our activities at this station to the full, in an effort to get better quality and greater productivity in these horticultural varieties in the tropics, and test the profitability of selling these fruits on local markets and, with new methods of refrigeration and fast air transport, on interstate markets, more land must be made available. This area was used as a military staging camp during the war. It has only 3 or 4 acres of usable land, and unless additional land is resumed or taken over, the station's work will be hampered.

The station is connected to the town water supply, but some consideration should be given to providing irrigation. This would cost approximately \$1,000.

If the station is extended there will be need for the extension of the two laboratories outside with provision for administrative offices.

There is scope in this area for propagation techniques and field research, for instance, relative to cashew nuts, lychee nuts, macadamia nuts and other nuts and mangoes that could be grown for Queensland interstate consumption. Some mangoes in North Queensland are not particularly suitable, but experimental work could be carried out to see if it is possible to produce varieties suitable for preserving or canning for export.

With coffee and tea production starting in the area, the station could study their productive capacities, etc.

In Cairns there are two graduates, two diplomats, five inspectors, no cadets, and two clerical staff.

While speaking about primary industries personnel in Cairns, I must pay a tribute to a very competent and experienced officer who has recently retired, namely, Mr. Ernie Stephens. I want to record my good wishes to him in his retirement. I have had a close association with him over the last few years and he has always extended every courtesy to me. With plenty of spare time, I feel that Ernie Stephens will be of great help in community activities.

Mr. Row: He was very well thought of.

Mr. R. JONES: Yes, my word he was! Gillie Bates, at the sugar experiment station, was another who was a great character in his own right. His cheery disposition will be long remembered in all departmental and sugar circles throughout Queensland.

I want to draw attention to the International Sugar Agreement. Here I reserve the right to be a little sceptical. I do not automatically concede that our problems have come to an end simply by the return of the Premier and the Commonwealth Minister for Trade and Industry from Geneva. Although I do not profess to be an expert in this field, my electorate, the City of Cairns, relies heavily on the sugar industry and I have interested myself in it. Whilst the experts on the other side of the Chamber feel that one has to be involved directly in the industry to understand it, I feel that by carefully assessing the situation and weighing and evaluating it one can form an opinion whether the agreement is the be-all and end-all of the sugar industry's problems.

I do not believe it is. To take first things first, the agreement has not at this date been ratified. If the exporters jumped in the air and were so jubilant about it, I have the feeling that a number of importers were also very jubilant, particularly the Japanese, who are very shrewd negotiators. The sugar

industry is an industry in which the Japanese, as negotiators, have come to the fore in anticipating a very advantageous and far-sighted deal for themselves. After all, during their last negotiations with the "great Australian negotiator", as Mr. McEwen was described by members on the opposite side, the Japanese were able, at a crucial time, to negotiate for 500,000 tons of sugar at world market prices, and they have been able to benefit very singularly ever since, while market prices have remained depressed.

It must also be taken into consideration that in 1966-67, which is the last year for which figures are available, world production of sugar was 65,654,000 tons, and world consumption was 65,530,000 tons. That seems quite a nice little balance, and hope lies in the ability of the International Sugar Agreement to maintain the present level and contain increased production to the level of world requirements.

If notice had been taken in 1963, in the boom years, of the remarks made by some people on that occasion, I think there might now have been a balance between production and requirements. The former member for Cairns, Mr. Watty Wallace, an old colleague of mine, had something to say then which has a great deal of relevance today, and it is recorded at page 426 of volume 235 of "Hansard." He said—

"As I said some years ago in the House, the sugar industry is now in a very sound position, and members of the Australian Labour Party can take a great deal of credit for that. But, notwithstanding the fact that we are in such a very promising position and that it looks as if we have a bright future for a few years at least, it is possible that what I said some years ago would happen, could happen again.

"Cuba has decided to treble her sugar production by 1970. Should she do that and flow onto the world's markets that extra production, instead of sending it behind the Iron Curtain—and politically speaking that could be a very wise move on the part of certain people—the sugar industry in Queensland could be very adversely affected."

He then said—

"I point these matters out because I believe that there must be very careful handling of the sugar industry and other industries in their relation to the future of Queensland. The following report appeared in the 'Cairns Post' of 12 August—

'Cuba's Premier (Dr. Castro) last night announced plans for nearly tripling Cuba's sugar production between 1965 and 1970.

'Dr. Castro said the State planned to plant an additional 640,000 acres of irrigated sugar in the next 10 years.

'The Plan would produce 8 to 9 million tons of sugar annually between 1965 and 1970 compared with this year's production of about 3,500,000 tons.'

"As I say, I point these things out to draw attention to the fact that the sugar industry, which is an industry of major importance to Queensland and Australia, must be carefully handled and watched."

Of course, subsequent to that there was the Gibbs' report, the expansion of the sugar industry, and so on.

I think that it would have been much more realistic to control the flow of our sugar stocks on to the world sugar market. However, it was not controlled and large and unwieldy stocks were accumulated and, because of low and falling prices, a buyer's market developed, and it still is a buyer's market. The good judgment that had been shown in the years prior to 1963 did not prevail.

Hon. members opposite have emphasised what a great negotiator the Right Honourable John McEwen is, and he made his most famous statement in those days, a statement that cane-growers frequently repeat, "Before you sell, you must produce". On the other hand, the Honourable W. Forgan Smith, a former Premier of Queensland, secured the market and then said, before returning from overseas, "I have got the sales. You start producing and fill the quotas that we have negotiated." The Honourable E. M. Hanlon, another former Labour Premier of Queensland, returned after negotiating the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement in 1948—I remind the Committee that the two Labour Premiers were the chief negotiators on those occasions—and reiterated that the correct thing to do was negotiate and then tell people to produce, not to produce and then try to sell the sugar.

Of course, these were stabilising factors in earlier years; they were not stabilising factors in the difficult years. I again remind the Committee that the chief negotiators on those occasions were the Premiers of Queensland, and the off-sider to the Hon. E. M. Hanlon was the Commonwealth Minister for Trade, the Right Honourable John McEwen.

People engaged in the sugar industry were too silent during the difficult years. Cane-growers were not prone to criticise the Government or others within the industry. They had implicit faith in them. I do not know whether it was born of fear—whether they were afraid of being called "knockers", because anybody who criticises these days is called a "knocker"—or whether it was misguided loyalty on the part of cane-farmers, but they put their faith in the leaders of their industry and resolutely and stubbornly carried on. I do not know whether it was born of putting too much faith in many of the people who professed to be acting in their interests, but they were told, "Don't

criticise; hang on; don't rock the boat; everything will be all right". This applied even up till March last year, when Mr. Anthony, the new Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry, said—

"You must always remember that in a nation such as ours what any industry can expect to take from the community must be in balance with what the industry contributes to the community."

I hope that we are not following blindly the belief that the new International Sugar Agreement will be the be-all and end-all for the industry. Many primary industries in Australia—dairying, wheat, wool, meat, to name but a few—are not prospering today. In recent years major primary industries have had direct financial assistance by way of non-repayable grants to the alarming total in Australia of \$902,000,000. The Commonwealth Government has been stabilising these industries with non-repayable grants to the tune of \$179,000,000 per annum throughout Australia. In contrast, the sugar industry over this period received no grants and no assistance. When it got into difficulties it was granted a loan of \$19,000,000, which had to be repaid, with interest. There was no grant to the sugar industry. It is sometimes referred to as a grant, but it was not a grant; it was an interest-bearing loan. The interest amounted to approximately \$6.8 million, which had to be found by the industry in addition to the amount of the loan, making the total repayment in the vicinity of \$25,000,000.

Recently, in a budget in another place amounts of \$28,000,000 were set aside for wool promotion and research, \$27,000,000 for the dairying industry, \$3,000,000 for meat research and so on—all non-repayable grants. When I asked the Premier recently—as a matter of fact, he answered the question last Friday—whether or not Commonwealth assistance for the sugar industry will be forthcoming again this year, and what would be the declared price for No. 1 Pool sugar, he said no, that there had not been any negotiations with, or indication from, the Commonwealth on assistance to the sugar industry. That was his answer last Friday.

The hon. member for Roma said that primary industries are prospering, that we have more cattle in this State so we should have more men. I do not think the hon. member for Roma did his homework. He certainly did not check his figures when he said that increased primary production resulted automatically in an increase in population, because this statistic simply does not apply to Queensland. Queensland has a reputation as the greatest export-earner from primary industries, but Queensland's population statistics are not keeping pace in proportion with those of Australia as a whole. The proportion of Australia's population resident in Queensland was significantly higher in 1954 than it is today.

Queensland relies very heavily on the sugar industry. I shall read some paragraphs from

"The Australian Sugar Journal" of September, 1968, which are very enlightening in this regard—

"Four of the statistical divisions of the State, in which the populations of local authority zones are grouped, suffered a decline in numbers. These were the divisions of Roma, the South West, the Central West and the Far West. These four divisions contain mainly pastoral areas.

"All the statistical divisions in which sugar areas exist had increases in population. These are Maryborough, Mackay, Cairns and Townsville—the last-named taking in Ayr and Giru, and the Thuringowa and Dalrymple Shires."

Further on, the article continues—

"The interesting and important fact is that, whereas many other communities in Queensland dependent upon other forms of employment had substantial reductions in population, the sugar industry, despite improved methods and efficiency, greatly assisted to 'keep the home fires burning' so far as the State's vital statistics are concerned."

What we have to realise is that the buoyancy of the State relies heavily on the sugar industry, and we cannot allow it to retreat any further from its present position. The result could be very grave for Queensland.

When the sugar industry was tied to the domestic market and the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement, an export surplus of only about 20 per cent. was considered to be wise. Today, about 50 per cent. of Australia's total production is put up for sale on the export market, of which 70 per cent. is on the free market. In the days of Forgan Smith and Ned Hanlon the wise margin was considered to be 20 to 25 per cent. In the boom year of 1963 less than 25 per cent. of the 1,235,000 tons of mill peaks was sold on the world market.

I, for one, will be reserving my assessment of the International Sugar Agreement and its results until such time as we have definite prospects of prosperity within the industry. Of course, many people share my view.

I will read from "The Cairns Canegrower" of September, 1967, in which this motion was unanimously carried by one of the mill suppliers' committees in that area—

"That it be a recommendation to the Mill Suppliers' Committee to seek a Federal Government Committee of Enquiry to enquire into results stemming from the Gibbs Report, to investigate if a stabilisation scheme for the growing side of the industry is feasible and wise, and whether it is wise for the industry to continue employing the C.S.R. as a marketing agent in view of its variety of interests, particularly where such interests are tied up with domestic and foreign sugar industries."

I leave that without comment.

I want to comment, if time will allow me, on a further article in "The Cairns Canegrower" of May, 1968, which reads—

"Recently, Mr. L. Prince, Manager of Mossman Mill, was reported to have commented on the manufacture of refined sugar at the source of supply to the effect that Northern mills employed staff to see that impurities were kept in raw sugar for the homemarket to allow southern refineries to employ staff to remove the impurities."

It is very interesting to consider the views of Mr. Prince, who is well recognised as a sugar industry authority in the technical field.

(Time expired.)

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.51 p.m.