

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 1968

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

ISIS BY-ELECTION

RETURN OF WRIT

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that the writ issued by me on 14 October, 1968, for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Isis has been returned to me with a certificate endorsed thereon by the returning officer of the election, on 16 November, 1968, of James Robert Henry Blake, Esquire, to serve as such member.

MEMBER SWORN

Mr. Blake was introduced, took the oath of allegiance, and subscribed the roll.

QUESTIONS

NEGOTIATIONS ON CONSTRUCTION OF GLADSTONE ALUMINIUM SMELTER

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

(1) On what date and by what Minister were negotiations undertaken with the Pechiney Company of France regarding the building of an aluminium smelter at Gladstone?

(2) Has any firm decision been made from the negotiations and when will the building project commence?

Answers:—

(1) "The Pechiney Company was represented on the French Economic Mission which visited Queensland from November 6 to 10, 1968. As a consequence, the Company's representative participated in the general discussions which were held in the Premier's Department in regard to investment prospects in this State. He also attended the subsequent discussions, again of a general fact-finding nature, which were arranged by the Department of Industrial Development."

(2) "No."

CONTRACT FOR EXPORT OF COAL FROM BLUFF

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

Did the contract proceed as announced by Cambria Collieries Pty. Ltd. on December 27, 1963, regarding a \$5,000,000 five-year supply to French steel-works of coal from Bluff, Central Queensland? If so, how many tons of coal have been exported and for what financial return during each year since 1963?

Answer:—

"This contract did not proceed. The Cambria colliery ceased mining operations in May, 1966."

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PRISONERS' AID SOCIETY

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

Has he received any communication from the Prisoners' Aid Society seeking more financial assistance? If so, how much assistance has been or is contemplated as being approved and when will it be available?

Answer:—

"A request by the North Queensland Prisoners' Aid Society for an increase in their financial assistance of \$200 per year, made on June 18, 1968, was granted on August 8, 1968, raising the assistance to that Society to the sum of \$1,400 per annum. The South Queensland Prisoners' Aid Society now receives the sum of \$3,400 per annum."

TRAFFIC CHARGES BASED ON BREATHALYSER TESTS

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

(1) Since the introduction of the breathalyser, how many motorists have been charged with driving or being in charge of a motor vehicle under the influence of liquor and have been acquitted?

(2) How many motorists have been convicted of having a .1 per cent. blood-alcohol content but less than .15 per cent.?

Answers:—

(1) "Of the contested matters since the inception of the new legislation up to the time the Question was asked, ten motorists have been acquitted of an offence of either driving or being in charge of a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor or a drug. However, all such motorists were convicted of the offence of having a concentration of alcohol in their blood equal to or exceeding .1 per cent. while either driving or in charge of a motor vehicle."

(2) "Of the contested matters since the inception of the new legislation up to the time the Question was asked, one motorist having a concentration of more than .1 per cent. and less than .15 per cent. has been convicted of an offence of being in charge of a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor."

RETENTION OF STEAM LOCOMOTIVES FOR HISTORICAL PURPOSES

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

(1) Have any redundant steam locomotives been sold? If so, how many, to whom, and for what purpose and price were they sold?

(2) Is it proposed to keep any steam locomotives for historical purposes? If so, what class and number will be kept and under what conditions?

Answers:—

(1) "Since January, 1968, 151 steam locomotives were condemned and written off the books. 142 steam locomotives have been cut up since January, 1968, and the non-ferrous metals, the steel scrap and the cast iron have been sold by public tender. The price received varies with the fluctuation of the metal market. To set out the detail sought by the Honourable Member would require considerable clerical work, the expenditure of which is not considered justified."

(2) An area has been set aside at the Redbank Railway Workshops for the keeping of steam locomotives for historical purposes. It is proposed that the following locomotives be placed at this location:—

Class	Locomotive No.
A.10	6
B.15	444
C.16	106
C.17	2
C.17	1000
AC.16	221
B.18½	771
BB.18½	1089
D.17	1051
C.19	700

It is also proposed at this stage to place rail motor No. 14 fitted with a Panhard engine at this location."

ADDITIONAL LAND FOR HOUSING COMMISSION, NORTH CAIRNS

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

(1) Has any plan been submitted for acquisition and reclamation of lands to extend the Queensland Housing Commission estate, North Cairns?

(2) If not, when and for what purpose was the application for resumption proposed?

(3) If so, why was the application rejected?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "No reclamation works are presently being carried out by my Department in the vicinity of Section 223 (Cairns North) which, I presume, is the area referred to by the Honourable Member, as the Queensland Housing Commission estate. Should the Honourable Member be in a position to identify more specifically the site or area under reference, I will be pleased to make inquiries and inform him of the position should the matter come within my jurisdiction. Alternatively, if the matter concerns purchase or acquisition of

land by the Queensland Housing Commission, the matter could be referred to the Minister for Works and Housing."

DISPOSAL OF INDUSTRIAL EFFLUENT,
NUDGEE AREA

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

(1) Will he have his Departmental officers investigate the creation of industrial effluent pondages in the vicinity of Serpentine Road, Nudgee, wherein thousands of gallons of effluent are discharged from road tankers each week?

(2) Will he have his officers assess the health hazard created by the pondages?

(3) Will he also have investigated the possible effect on nearby farmlands of the distribution of the effluent by flood waters?

(4) If the actual effluent is not deleterious, will he have action taken to reduce the obnoxious odour that emanates from the pondages?

Answers:—

(1) "I am advised that tannery sludge and effluent from a Kedron tannery are deposited in pondages near Serpentine Road, Nudgee. The land concerned is the property of the Commonwealth Government."

(2) "Investigations by officers of my Department have disclosed that no nuisance or health hazard is caused by this practice provided the sludge is dry before other trade effluent is added."

(3) "Investigations have shown that the dry sludge grows grass and it is considered unlikely to have a detrimental effect on nearby farm lands even if flooding occurred."

(4) "I am advised that this disposal site has been used since 1965 and no complaints of obnoxious odour have been made."

PROHIBITION OF HOUSEHOLD OPEN-TOP
INCINERATORS DURING FIRE BAN

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

Does the current ban on open fires apply to open-top type incinerators in house yards in Brisbane suburbs? If so, whose responsibility is it to see that this dangerous practice is stopped?

Answer:—

"Yes. The prohibition of open fires includes all fires to which the Act applies. The Act does not apply to fires in incinerators so constructed as to prevent the escape of fire or any burning material therefrom. Obviously open-top incinerators do not conform to this description and therefore come within the prohibition notice. The prohibition also includes a

requirement that any person finding a fire burning during the State of Fire Emergency must report such fire to the nearest police officer or fire warden in whom is vested the responsibility to ensure that the Emergency notice is observed. In Brisbane the office of fire warden is discharged by the fire brigade."

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION FROM
QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY TO NEWS
MEDIA

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

(1) How are items concerning the administration of the Queensland University which are of public interest reported to Press, radio and television?

(2) Is Professor Sir Fred Schonell the person empowered to comment on administrative matters in the University of Queensland to Press, radio and television? If so, in the event of his being unavailable through illness or other reasons, who is empowered to make statements or answer the queries of Press, radio and television?

Answers:—

The University advises that:—

(1) "Important items of public interest concerning the administration of the University are reported to the Press, radio and television at conferences arranged by the Vice-Chancellor. Other matters are reported to the Press and radio by the University's Public Relations Officer on instructions from the Vice-Chancellor."

(2) "The Vice-Chancellor, Sir Fred Schonell, as the chief administrative officer of the University, is the person empowered to comment to the Press, radio and television personally on administrative matters in the University of Queensland. In the event of the unavailability of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor L. J. H. Teakle, is empowered to make such statements or answer the queries of the Press, radio and television."

IMPROVED ACCOMMODATION FOR
INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

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

(1) Is he aware of the appalling state of the building in which the Queensland Institute of Medical Research is carrying out its operations?

(2) In view of the contribution the centre is making in the field of medical research and the need to ensure that the work of its scientists can be carried out with the aid of modern laboratory facilities, are plans under consideration for rehousing the institute?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "The building in which the Institute is housed is unimposing but the suggestion that it is in an appalling state is unfounded. Recently an offer of a building at the corner of Edward and Mary Streets was under consideration by the Department as interim accommodation for the Institute pending the development of plans for a new building in the grounds of the Royal Brisbane Hospital but the Director indicated his preference to remain at the present location for the time being."

TEACHER TRANSFER SYSTEM

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

(1) Why are so many teachers moved so often during the year thus penalising schools and classes?

(2) Are young and inexperienced teachers more likely to be transferred to the country than to a city? If so, how does this ensure that each school has teachers of equal quality?

(3) Is a teacher on transfer adequately recompensed financially?

(4) As teachers are obviously unhappy about the transfer system, will he state more clearly the principles on which transfers are made?

(5) Will he set up an independent committee of inquiry into the transfer system to ensure that anomalies are removed?

(6) Has he considered setting up a flying squad of emergency teachers prepared to go anywhere at any time to meet an emergency?

Answers:—

(1) "The implication contained in this Question is quite unwarranted. Teachers are transferred during the year to fill vacancies caused by resignations, deaths, illness, transfers on compassionate grounds and changes in enrolment. Such transfers, however, are kept to a minimum."

(2) "Yes. It is easier for unmarried teachers to find accommodation in country areas, and young teachers generally prefer to complete their country service before they marry. Any commonsense appreciation of the situation would indicate this. Young teachers are not necessarily less efficient. Moreover, inspectors' reports indicate that the standard of work in country schools generally is not below that of city schools. This determined attack on standards of teachers in country schools is to be deplored. It seems that the Honourable Member is deliberately trying to stir up discontent and dismay amongst teachers and parents."

(3) "A teacher on transfer enjoys the same conditions as any other member of the public service. All claims for expenses receive careful consideration."

(4) "I question the extent to which teachers are unhappy about the transfer system. A condition of entry to the service is that a teacher is prepared to serve in any school as required. Schools throughout the State can be adequately staffed only if an effective transfer system is adopted. This needs little explanation when it is realised that the vast majority of teachers is recruited in the metropolitan area or large provincial cities. Every teacher is required to perform 'away from home' service for a period of two to three years."

(5) "No. If the Honourable Member can be more specific in respect of alleged anomalies. I shall take this matter up with my senior officers."

(6) "For primary schools there are district relieving teachers to meet any emergency. The Department has given consideration to a similar scheme in respect of secondary schools; but as yet, this has not been found practicable, owing to the various subject combinations, the shortage of teachers to undertake this work and the distances involved."

PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Report of the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply for the year 1967-68.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Order in Council under the Water Acts, 1926 to 1967.

FORM OF QUESTION

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) having given notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I advise the hon. member for Barcoo that I shall have a look at his question. Questions containing lengthy newspaper extracts are not permissible.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—
SIXTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY

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

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1968-69

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

CHIEF OFFICE

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—
Minister for Lands) (11.32 a.m.): I move—

"That \$1,960,870 be granted for
'Department of Lands—Chief Office'."

Before proceeding with the Estimates, I think it would be appropriate for me, as the first Government speaker today, to welcome the new member for Isis.

Mr. Bennett: You were going to say "the new Minister". You are about six months premature.

Mr. SULLIVAN: He would be a better Minister than the hon. member for South Brisbane.

I must be truthful and admit that I would be happier to welcome somebody to this side but, as the hon. member is a man of the land, we have at least something in common and it will be pleasant to make his acquaintance for the brief period that he will be in this Chamber.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to initiate debate on the activities of a department in which I have always been particularly interested. I had long ago concluded that the Department of Lands, by virtue of its functions governing leasing, selling, reserving and generally controlling the public estate, was destined to play a leading role in the growth and development of this great State.

Until relatively recent times, however, it never occurred to me that the responsibility for administering this very important organisation would be thrust upon me. But here I am and in the months that I have been Minister for Lands I have come to appreciate even more fully the importance of this department's work. Under the direction of the three members of the Land Administration Commission and the Surveyor-General, a staff of more than 750 carry out a formidable variety of duties associated with the alienation, leasing, occupation and protection of Crown lands.

In the period that I have been Minister for Lands, since 17 January last, it has been my duty and privilege to travel over many parts of the State and thus inform myself better in order to make decisions. During that period I have had the opportunity of seeing the lands of Queensland and the various districts in which primary industries differ so much. Perhaps one of the most rewarding parts of doing this has been meeting people associated with the land and giving them the opportunity to discuss their problems with me. On most occasions I have taken a member of the Land Administration Commission with me, not so that I can stand behind him or be shielded by him, but to give him, too, the opportunity of broadening his knowledge of the conditions that exist throughout the State.

Mr. Walsh: That is a very sound idea.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I believe that my policy has been very well accepted by landholders all over the State. In fact, it is taking administration to the people.

Metaphorically speaking, the "trek to the West" is still very much a live situation in Queensland today. This State is coming more and more into focus in the eyes of land-seekers from places near and far, and the demand for land is growing at an ever-quickenning tempo. For instance, last year 2,182 parcels of land were made available by the Crown in an effort to meet the needs of the community. Unfortunately, we simply cannot fully meet the demand. I will give

the Committee an instance of this. Within a couple of weeks a ballot will be conducted to determine the successful applicants for four blocks in the Goondiwindi district. A total of 781 applications were received. These have been examined by the committee of review, which has already admitted 533 for the ballot and will possibly admit a good many more at its final meeting. Of course, only four of these applicants can be successful, and the disappointed hundreds will look to me and my department for another opportunity.

The shortage of land for new settlement is being mitigated to an appreciable extent by the brigalow land development project. Despite inevitable difficulties, which are inherent in a venture of this nature, the scheme is proceeding to schedule. In Areas I and II a total of 138 new settlers have been established. Four blocks have been released in the new area, that is, Area III, and there were plenty of applications for them. I think that the very keen interest shown in them is of particular significance. Generally, the blocks in Area III are a bit bigger and a bit rougher than the blocks in Areas I and II, and, for those reasons, may seem to be a little less attractive. However, the 248 applications, of which 197 were admitted to ballot, for the first blocks that were opened tell their own story.

We have required applicants to have substantial financial resources in their own right, to the extent of \$36,000, but the implementation of this policy is necessary in their own interests and in the interests of the State. The establishment of large areas of pasture in this type of country is a pretty critical exercise, and the new settler must be able to step out with a fairly firm financial foot if he is to succeed. Even then, generally speaking, he can look forward to a reasonably hard row to hoe. For this reason, he is permitted to borrow up to \$72,000 from the commission so that he can get on with development. All this represents only the beginning, but it is the sort of beginning that is designed to ensure that the ultimate goal will be won.

It has been held that the amount of money required of applicants has the effect of keeping out the "battler". Of course this is really not so. Personal finance of this order has been stipulated after a careful and indeed sympathetic examination of all relevant factors. The facts of life in the situation are that, in this area, successful development has its price, and, relatively speaking, the "battler" is a man with \$36,000.

A great number of blocks will be made available in Area III as soon as possible. Design work is well advanced, and pre-development work, which is a new feature of the scheme, is in progress. In recent weeks burning has taken place on the scrub that has been pulled. With the good fire conditions that existed prior to the imposition of restrictions in that area we had good

burns. Recently tenders have been called for the seeding of those areas. Only this morning I was informed that a tender of 12c an acre has been accepted. This compares with the cost of 20c an acre in Areas I and II, with the Government supplying the seed. It shows that people who are engaged in that type of aerial seeding are looking to the Government for business.

In other parts of the State my department has in hand the design of about 4,000,000 acres for new settlement, which will result in the availability of about 54 new blocks under the ballot system.

The home-builder, the businessman and the industrialist, like the farmer and the pastoralist, lean heavily on the Crown for land on which to conduct their pursuits. My department has been provided with funds to the order of \$800,000 to develop, by reclamation, "roading" and draining, etc., sites at selected localities, so that land for a great variety of purposes may be available to meet, in substantial part at least, the heavy demand.

This year the Crown estate preparation programme incorporates 54 projects in 42 localities extending from the Gold Coast to Mossman, and inland as far as Emerald and Miles.

Mr. Houston: What will be the requirements for getting onto those 54 blocks?

Mr. SULLIVAN: Some of these blocks will be opened up under the open ballot system, and some under the selective ballot system.

Mr. Houston: What finance will be required?

Mr. SULLIVAN: They will be dealt with as they come forward. I am looking years ahead. Applicants will be required to have experience. Under the selective system—I do not know if the hon. member is aware of this—applicants have to go before the committee of review and must measure up to requirements of experience, finance and age. I would not be telling the truth if I were to say that \$30,000 or \$50,000 was required, because each case is looked at as it comes forward.

Mr. Houston: You must have some idea. Is it just over \$5,000, or under \$20,000?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I would say it would be over \$5,000, and possibly over \$20,000. As the blocks come along they are considered, and the lithographs are sent out as they have been in the past, and the requirements are indicated to the people who want them. They must have finance—

Mr. Bennett: In other words you are pricing the little fellow out of them.

Mr. SULLIVAN: No. As the hon. member knows, the value of the dollar today is not as great as it used to be. Normally, at this time of the day the hon. member is not

here—he is in court. I ask him not to interrupt me as I have not much time and I want to get on with my speech.

In addition to the homesites sold by my department, land is made available to the Queensland Housing Commission for residential purposes. Last year about 82 acres of vacant Crown land were set apart for subdivision by that commission.

The tremendous interest in land-holding in Queensland is also illustrated by the number of transfers of leasehold tenures as distinct from sale, or lease direct from the Crown. The Commission's report for the year ended 30 June, 1968, points out that 3,913 transfers in ownership of leasehold tenures (expressing a total consideration of \$52,051,034) were registered. The significance of these figures, I suggest, needs no emphasis by me.

I should like to include in this report a reference to the freeholding situation. As hon. members are aware, the freeholding provisions of the Land Acts now apply to all but the pastoral tenures. In effect, of approximately 50,000 tenures registered in the books of the department, about 47,000 of them are freeholding, in the process of being freeholded, or are capable of being freeholded.

To date, 15,767 freeholding applications have been received, of which 14,246 have been finalised. New applications are coming to hand at an average of about 100 per month. I think it is fair enough to point out that a tremendous amount of work has been performed by the department. I give it full marks for the excellent manner in which it has caught up the backlog, as it has dealt with 14,246 of the 15,767 applications.

It might be of interest if I mention that approximately 26,800,000 acres have now been fully alienated by issue of deed of grant, and approximately 14,200,000 acres are in the process of being freeholded.

Land development is proceeding satisfactorily throughout the State. One can only guess at what the scene might have been like today had we not just gone through the worst drought in living memory. As I travel through Queensland, I cannot help but be impressed by the obvious courage and the apparent cheerfulness of the many people who have suffered the heartbreak of rainless years. That we still have about 20,000,000 sheep and 7,500,000 cattle is a tribute to a great land and a great people who know how to use land. Landholders in these drought-stricken areas are most appreciative of the drought assistance extended to them by this Government. We do not look for any great thanks in this regard. When people in these areas get into drought difficulties, we realise that we have a responsibility to them, and the \$1,600,000 granted as rent remissions and drought assistance was greatly appreciated by these people. In addition, they were allowed a 50 per cent rate rebate.

Mr. Davies: Not nearly enough.

Mr. SULLIVAN: It might not be enough, but it was something that was never heard of in the days of the Labour Government. Admittedly the Labour Government allowed freight remissions, but, in addition, we are granting freight rebates and this kind of thing. It is easy for the hon. member to sit over there, without any responsibility, and say that it is not enough. It is something that is appreciated by the landholders of this State and was never heard of in the days of the Labour Government. There will not be a Labour Government for many years, so the landholders know that sympathy will still be extended to them.

Mr. Davies: How much land are you giving away to the A.M.P. in Maryborough?

Mr. SULLIVAN: We were heartened early in the year by the recording of good falls of rain in many parts of the State. We hoped (and, of course, we still hope) that the coming seasons will be a little kinder.

I do not intend to create the impression that the opportunities for land-seekers and land-investors are becoming limited. On the contrary, I would say that we are on the threshold of a new and exciting era. Today it is possible to embark on new phases of land development by which land that was previously regarded as waste lands can be converted to useful productive regions. I point to such activities as development of the wallum belt, the wet tropics and the Gulf country, where the injection of large-scale capital is taking place.

Mr. Davies: How much land are you giving away to the A.M.P. in that area?

Mr. SULLIVAN: In answer to the hon. gentleman who insists on interjecting about how much land we are giving away, we will not be giving away any land. I know that the A.M.P. is interested at the present time, but that does not mean that at this point of time that company will be the only party interested. I can assure the hon. member of that. The Labour Government did not make any move to develop this country. This was done by the former Premier, the late Mr. Pizzey. As Minister for Lands, I am not prepared to sit by idly and see country in a good rainfall area not put to use. There is an exercise at the moment to interest people. The hon. member mentioned the A.M.P., I did not. I do not say that the A.M.P. will be the people to develop this country. But, as Minister for Lands, I am not prepared to sit by, with our scientific knowledge, and watch land in a satisfactory rainfall area grow gum trees and rubbish.

Mr. Davies: People want land in that area and cannot get it. You are going to give it away to the big interests.

Mr. SULLIVAN: We do not give land away to anybody; let us put that straight for the record.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I suggest to the hon. member for Maryborough and the hon. member for South Brisbane that if they want to have a conversation with the Minister they do so after he has introduced his Estimates.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Land utilisation is influenced to an appreciable degree by the absence, or the existence, of animal and vegetable pests. Queensland's history includes many references to some critical period in this connection. For instance, we had the prickly-pears, which made serious inroads on production and looked like taking over the whole of the better rainfall areas until they were checked by biological control.

Mr. Houston: The cactoblastis?

Mr. SULLIVAN: The cactoblastis was before the hon. member's time. He would not remember anything about it.

Today we have another particularly serious plant pest—*Harrisia cactus*—which poses possibly an even greater threat than the prickly-pears. Efforts at biological control of this plant have given no useful results to date. In these circumstances it becomes necessary to resort to less spectacular methods of control. However, with the use of modern machinery to pull infested scrub areas and to plough, where practicable, and with the proper application of the best available chemical formulations, considerable progress has been made towards effective control.

Shortly after becoming Minister for Lands I visited the area with the Chief Commissioner of Lands. We saw the problem that exists there and had an opportunity to look at it with Mr. Auld, the prickly-pear warden at Collinsville, a most dedicated man, and Mr. Hunter, the officer in charge of development. We were very aware of the need for more money to attack this pest. I was able to convince Cabinet of this need earlier in the year, and more finance has been made available to assist in the eradication of *Harrisia cactus*. I have spoken on this subject previously, so I shall not deal with it any further at this stage.

Under the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act, a pretty effective campaign is continually waged against a great variety of established weed pests and vermin which, if left unchecked, would seriously reduce the productivity of our lands. I might mention, too, the work of the Co-ordinating Board in preventing the spread of newly-introduced weeds, which is a work of inestimable value to rural industry.

The large-scale land development taking place in many parts of the State means, of course, that a lot of natural vegetation is disappearing from the landscape. This is a worry to some people, but preparation of land for cropping and the growing of pastures is very much an essential part of rural progress. At the same time, however,

the interests of the naturalist and the conservationist can be protected. Indeed, they have been, and are being, protected.

Mr. Sherrington: When are you going to do something about the Southwood project?

Mr. SULLIVAN: In the brigalow land development project, for instance, about 60,000 acres were set aside as a reserve to retain for posterity a sample of the original state of the countryside.

Mr. Bennett: He is not going to answer that one.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I point out to the hon. member for Salisbury that I shall make my speech in my own way.

Mr. Sherrington: Why are you taking so long to make up your mind about Southwood?

Mr. SULLIVAN: If there is something the hon. member wants me to say, it may be said, but I shall say it when I want to say it.

The need for this sort of thing is never lost sight of. The extent and the various types of reservation throughout the State bear testimony to this policy. I might mention the case of an area of brigalow mixed scrub out along the Moonie Highway, near Southwood. I have been considering for some time a proposal that an area of about 17,500 acres be reserved in its natural state. I have now decided that this be done, and action towards reserving and setting apart a selected area under appropriate terms and conditions will now be put in hand. Apparently the hon. member for Salisbury did not hear me. Perhaps some other hon. members opposite can tell him about that later.

Mr. Davies: Are you aware that there are only six members of the Government interested in land? They are interested only in Queen Street and city development, not the country areas and decentralisation.

Mr. SULLIVAN: May I tell the hon. member for Maryborough through you, Mr. Hooper, that I happen to know that a number of members of the Country Party are at this moment attending a committee meeting. We on this side have other things to do.

Mr. Davies: There are only two Country Party members here.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Maryborough is very vocal this morning. I suggest that he contain himself during the introduction of these Estimates.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Hooper. Of course, we must make allowances, because the hon. member is at present so carried away with being such a good trainer and bringing in a winner.

Mr. Sherrington: Will you please repeat what you just said about Southwood? I was not listening; I was speaking to one of my colleagues.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I have just been taken to task by the hon. member for Maryborough over the absence of Country Party members, yet the hon. member for Salisbury now asks me to repeat something that I said because he was not here.

Mr. Sherrington: I was here, but I was speaking to someone else.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Because he is so interested in this matter, I shall, out of courtesy, repeat it if he sits there and is a good boy.

I might mention the case of an area of brigalow mixed scrub out along the Moonie Highway, near Southwood. I have been considering for some time a proposal that an area of about 17,500 acres be reserved in its natural state. I have now decided that this be done, and action towards reserving and setting apart a selected area under appropriate terms and conditions will now be put in hand.

Mr. Sherrington: In other words, it will become a national park?

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is so, but the land will not become available to us for three years. It is still held under lease. As far as the Estimates relating to the Department of Lands are concerned, I am sure that I have made the hon. member for Salisbury happy.

Mr. Sherrington: You agree that I was right in putting the proposal forward, because there is now going to be a national park?

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is what I have told the hon. member.

Mr. Sherrington: Good on you!

Honourable Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SULLIVAN: As hon. members are aware, Mr. Hooper, I have recently taken over the ministerial responsibilities for Aboriginal and Island Affairs. As I wish to devote a considerable amount of time to these activities, I do not intend to speak at greater length on land matters. On Thursday afternoon this week I shall be introducing a Bill to amend the Land Act, and hon. members and I will then have the time and opportunity to discuss land matters in greater detail.

Mr. Houston: Is that what your committee members are doing now—telling you where to go?

Mr. SULLIVAN: It is good to have someone to tell you where to go. Some of your fellows might mislead you.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SULLIVAN: Before leaving the subject of lands, I wish to record my appreciation of the assistance that I have received from the Land Administration Commission. As

hon. members will recall, Mr. McDowell became chairman of the commission only two or three weeks before I took over the portfolio, and he and Mr. Heffernan and Mr. Cook are three officers who are dedicated to carrying out their responsibilities, as is Mr. Paul O'Gorman, the secretary to the commission. All these men are very well known to hon. members, who, in their capacity as individual members, no doubt have had dealings with them. I am sure that all hon. members have always found them to be very courteous and efficient. It is not always possible for the commission to do what hon. members want it to do; but, no matter what the problem is, I assure the Committee that the officers of my department always look at it objectively. I include in my expression of appreciation the Surveyor-General, Mr. Yeates, and all the officers of my department.

Mr. Davies: Excellent men, but sadly frustrated by the policy of the Government.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I agree with the hon. member that they are excellent men; I shall leave it at that. It is the hon. member's hour of glory, Mr. Hooper, so we will tolerate him today. For the information of the hon. member for Isis, I point out that we very rarely hear anything from the hon. member for Maryborough; he is very rarely here. I say to the hon. member, "Make the most of it."

This is the first occasion since this Assembly discussed the general terms of new legislation assented to in May, 1965, that hon. members have had an opportunity to discuss matters pertaining to Aboriginal and Island Affairs. The Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act became effective as from April, 1966, and, with recent amendments, the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs is now constituted under the collective Acts, the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Acts, 1965 to 1967.

I am aware of the pertinent facts of the original Act, which is unique in that it incorporates legislative measures to meet the needs of both Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Recent amendments include the constitution of the Corporation of the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, and amendment to section 26 of the Act—Grants of Aid—which allows for assistance where required for—

(a) assisted Aborigines or assisted Islanders;

(b) persons who, though not assisted Aborigines or assisted Islanders, are descendants of an Aborigine or Islander.

Within present legislation, to the maximum possible extent, Queenslanders of indigenous origin are placed on the same footing as fellow Queenslanders and other members of the Australian community.

Community oversight is now more of managerial responsibility than superintendency; parents now accept responsibility for the guardianship of their children; right of movement is not impaired; no restriction now ensues by race in regard to intoxicating liquor; no reference to electoral enrolment is now made; provision exists for the election of Aboriginal councillors to contribute to the local government of their community; and provision exists for the establishment of Aboriginal courts, which are functioning.

Recently the Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act of 1967 received assent and became effective. This legislation represents the Government's desire to protect and preserve all evidences of the material culture of the Aboriginal people and provides for a programme of preservation of relics and the establishment of a library specifically concerned with archaeological research and the control of archaeological excavation within the State, which will enable scholars to plan and programme their work and so preserve the material cultures of a people outstanding in their ability to depict their attitudes to life in character forms.

POLICY

Generally the department's policy continues to be directed towards assimilation without particular loss of identity, but ensuring that all Aboriginal families may choose to maintain the same manner of living as other Australians. Every opportunity is taken also to foster within the people of the general community of the State a feeling of acceptance of Aboriginal and Islander families, and, progressively, this acceptance without condescension becomes apparent.

POPULATION—GENERAL

Collectively, people of Aboriginal and Islander racial origin in the State of Queensland approximate 50,000, but the important fact is that they are fellow Queenslanders. This population of people of indigenous origin, both assisted and non-assisted, comprising Aborigines, part-Aborigines and Islanders, can be grouped under the following headings:—

1. There are 30,000 assisted people, including 8,000 Torres Strait Islanders and 9,000 Aborigines and part-Aborigines, residing in Government and church-sponsored communities.

2. Approximately 20,000 non-assisted Aborigines and Islanders live within the general community.

Although the actual numbers of Islanders living in the Torres Strait area vary to a great degree as members of that particular section of the indigenous people move within the Commonwealth, following construction work, particularly rail and road building, for which type of construction they show great adaptability and are eagerly sought, the total of 8,000 is assessed as a collective figure.

Mr. Davies: How much is the Government giving towards the water scheme on the Jardine River?

Mr. SULLIVAN: If the hon. member waits, he will possibly learn. I do not know why he is pressing the hon. member for Isis so much in the one morning because, as that hon. member goes along, he will see that the hon. member for Maryborough is not sincere.

Progressively, as certificates of entitlement are issued to include those people living only on reserve areas and those considered to be in need of assistance, the numbers of assisted Aborigines within the State are decreasing and will continue to decrease, and, as no special records are retained in any manner, where non-assisted people reside in the general community it becomes increasing difficult to retain an absolutely correct assessment of numbers. This in itself is an attitude towards true assimilation, as on electoral rolls, hospital and social service registers, and general business records, no separate figures are retained of the Aborigines and/or Islander people, who form a significant part of the general community of the State.

EXPENDITURE—GENERAL

During the past financial year an amount of \$4,500,000 was expended within the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs directly in association with the department's work of maintaining communities, and in general assistance, where required, for people of indigenous origin. Briefly, a break-up of this amount of \$4,500,000 expended during 1967-68 comprised:

Revenue expenditure	\$3,000,000
Departmental Welfare Fund Expenditure	\$900,000
Loan Funds and other general assistance	\$540,000

For economic and staff reasons, during the past few years church bodies sponsoring some Aboriginal communities have withdrawn from this field, and since July, 1960, the State has accepted total responsibility for six former church communities, with an increasing financial burden. The three church communities most recently being administered within the department are the former Church of England communities of Mitchell River, Edward River and Lockhart River, which came within the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs administrative structure in May, 1967.

The communities of Yarrabah, Mapoon and Weipa are included in the six referred to above.

While the department continues to contribute to the maintenance, training and progressive development of the Aboriginal people to the maximum extent of funds available, it is pointed out that the figure of \$4,500,000 does not truly reflect the total actual expenditure, as the expenditure on community hospitalisation, where it occurs

under the auspices of various district hospitals boards, is not included. In addition, on six communities, education expenses are included in expenditure by the Department of Education, and as well many other public services that are available and provided wholly for Aboriginal people, because of population density, are excluded. Further, many Aboriginal people present and receive general public facilities and public services away from their communities. It is conservatively estimated that these activities involve the expenditure of a further \$2,200,000. When that figure is added to the \$4,500,000, it reveals that a total of \$6,700,000 has been expended directly on Aboriginal welfare.

During the present financial year, the proposed revenue expenditure allocated is \$3,660,899; estimated departmental Welfare Fund expenditure is \$891,000; and Loan Fund allocation is \$600,000. These amounts exclude expenditure for hospitalisation and education, and do not include any amount of Commonwealth non-repayable grant funds, to which reference will be made later.

In Queensland, ten Government communities, six church communities and four Government hostels are established. In addition, there are 28 reserve areas. On these established communities, approximately 9,000 people are living, but that number does not include Torres Strait Islanders, to whom I have referred previously.

STAFF

Within the staff structure of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs there are at present 260 salaried officers and approximately 450 wages employees. All these people work directly towards the social and economic development of the Aboriginal community. In addition, approximately 60 church-community staff workers are employed in the interests of the general Aboriginal church communities to which they are appointed.

Staff members, other than administrative officers, include increasing numbers of field officers, who, following appointment within the department, whether of graduate standard or not, attend a special in-service and orientation course that is conducted within the department. Lecturers in this special course include senior Government officers and those of the highest academic repute.

COMMONWEALTH FUNDS ASSISTANCE

For many years the Queensland Government alone carried the burden of Aboriginal and Islander welfare through departmental Vote expenditure, Aboriginal Welfare Fund expenditure, and Loan Funds allocation. An ever-increasing burden is being placed on State funds, although it is appreciated that, with income derived from pastoral and other industrial activities, the people themselves contribute towards their own support to a certain extent.

It is pleasing to be able to mention now that, following the recent referendum decision some 18 months ago, the Commonwealth Government has made available certain funds towards Aboriginal welfare. I refer the Committee to an earlier statement that I made that, following an announcement by the Commonwealth Treasurer in his Budget speech, the Commonwealth Parliament would be asked to appropriate an amount of \$10,000,000 during the present year, half of which would be allocated in non-repayable grants directly towards assisting State Aboriginal Welfare in housing, health and education. The other half of \$5,000,000 would be constituted as a capital fund for assisting Aboriginal enterprises, either corporate or individual.

It is advised that the amount allotted to Queensland out of the \$5,000,000 in non-repayable grants is \$1,450,000. The allocation is as follows:—

Housing	\$800,000
Health	\$325,000
Education	\$325,000

These amounts are additional to normal expenditure, and are not a substitute in any manner for State expenditure on Aboriginal and Island Affairs by the Queensland Government. It must be agreed that the Queensland Government allocation is considerable when it is compared with those of other States and the Northern Territory.

Briefly, it is envisaged that the housing programme for Queensland will include initial housing projects on the Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait Islands reserve areas, additional housing within the boundaries of a number of cities and towns, and the erection of homes within the boundaries of a number of town areas on allotments already secured and held by the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

I might say that within a few days, perhaps towards the end of this week, I hope to be in a position to make an announcement about certain houses that we have procured to house Aborigines in certain localities. I request hon. members not to ask me where they are, because that information will be announced later in the week.

The health allocation will provide hospital and allied capital works, while the education allotment will provide extra school facilities.

In regard to capital-fund projects, either corporate or individual, the amount of \$5,000,000 to be made available is to operate on the basis of projects which the Commonwealth Government considers to be economically viable and which are recommended by the particular States.

STOCK

Within the department, stock-raising as a major enterprise to develop economic viability on reserves is actively pursued. Pastoral activities are also a training field for those who wish to follow the particular calling. The department's activities are co-ordinated by a

pastoral inspector-manager, which allows oversight of Central Queensland properties and the implementation of a progressive programme of stock development and improvements on properties in northern areas and in Cape York Peninsula. As at 30 September, 1968, on Woorabinda, in the Central Queensland area, a beef herd of approximately 2,700, including 1,300 breeders, is established. On Foleyvale, on the Mackenzie River and adjunct properties, 3,300 head of stock are being fattened, including 2,700 head of bullocks and steers. Foleyvale stock numbers vary according to sales conducted.

The number of stock depastured on other departmental properties comprise—

Head 6,300	Cross-branded at September, 1968—	and the check- end	
717	Mitchell River
738	Edward River
700	Wepa
933	Cherbourg
600	Bamaga
200	Palm Island
			Yarrabah

Some of these figures differ from the annual report figures published to the end of June last, as sales were conducted and/or brandings added.

In the Central Queensland area the general programme followed allows for breeding to be carried out on Woorabinda and the male turn-off fattened on Foleyvale. Woorabinda and Foleyvale are run conjointly. Foleyvale, with improvements already carried out and being capable of fattening stock in excess of the male turn-off from Woorabinda, is also stocked with purchased store bullocks.

Recently the department also acquired the area known as the Zamia Creek Depot block, comprising approximately 7,000 acres of improved pasture, which is allowed to mature before use. This is most valuable as a fattening area for stores turned off from northern breeding properties. This was the depot block for Areas 1 and 2 of the brigalow development scheme. It is a magnificent fattening block and, I might say, it was on the recommendation of the hon. member for Mackenzie that the purchase was made. The hon. member was aware of the necessity to have fattening country associated with breeding country.

MITCHELL RIVER AND OTHER NORTHERN AREAS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Since mid-1967, when Mitchell River, Edward River and Lockhart River were taken over for administration purposes at the request of the diocese of Carpentaria, a progressive programme of improvements has been formulated, with particular stress at present being placed on improvements and fencing generally on Mitchell River, and now with an accelerating attitude toward Edward River and Lockhart River.

To the present date, 300 breeders of new blood have been introduced to the Mitchell River herd and 100 breeders to Edward River. Sixty-one Brahman-cross bulls of approximately seven-eighth Brahman strain

have been secured for Mitchell River, and 20 similar bulls for Edward River. Ten Brahman cross bulls have been added to the Weipa herd.

It is possible to foresee in the very near future, with the gradual upgrading of the Mitchell River herd, which at present includes approximately 2,000 breeders, that a minimum figure of 3,000 herd cows will soon be carried there. This will allow of an effective annual turn-off of bullocks, some for sale at store stock sales in the northern areas and the remainder for fattening and ultimate turn-off through their transfer to Foleyvale and Zamia Creek.

During the past financial year, the value of livestock sold by the department approximated \$250,000, excluding beef slaughtered for community purposes. Some interesting figures with regard to stock turn-off, with particular reference to Foleyvale, are quoted to show the gradual build-up of sales arranged in excess of local requirements. I again pay a compliment in this regard to the hon. member for Mackenzie, who acted as departmental cattle adviser for 10 years.

These figures will indicate that the hon. member gave very good advice in the building up of these properties for cattle-breeding and fattening.

	\$
Between 1952 and 1957, turn-off in bullocks averaged	38,000
1957-58 sales netted	13,000
1958-59 sales netted	58,000
1959-60 sales netted	48,000
1960-61 sales netted	44,000
1961-62 sales netted	66,000
1962-63 sales netted	160,000
1963-67 sales netted	125,000
	(average per year)
1967-68 sales netted	217,000

Those figures indicate that much greater use has been made of this land and that we have accepted the responsibility to see that this has been done.

Stock turned off from Cherbourg during 1966-67 realised \$30,000 net, and during last financial year approximated \$28,000.

During July, 1968, approximately 1,000 bullocks and steers and stags were moved south from Mitchell River. Of these, 296 were sold at Mareeba sales, 25 store bullocks were transferred to Yarrabah for fattening and ultimate local use, and the remainder were transferred to Foleyvale for fattening and ultimate turn-off.

The sales returns of all stock are credited to the Department Welfare Fund.

HOUSING

On the Government and church-sponsored community areas, the housing position is improving. Community housing will continue to improve. However, the Government is not unmindful of the needs of Aboriginal and Island people who live away from the reserve areas and, although it is not intended to dramatically extend housing on the reserve areas but rather to maintain

existing establishments, efforts are being made to alleviate the plight of those people living on the fringes of our society.

Much has been said about housing on and in fringe areas. Rather, the phrase should be "lack of housing". However, adequate and suitable housing demands obligations of the recipient, and it is most difficult to formulate plans and extend them and maintain them away from supervision, at a standard equal to their original quality.

As a result of an offer made to local authorities whereby the Queensland Government guaranteed local authorities against losses sustained through erecting accommodation for people of indigenous origin, three houses have been completed at St. George and another is in the course of construction and nearing completion. At Bowen, two houses are in the course of construction. Numbers of other local authorities have submitted loan programme requests. The St. George homes are a pilot venture in liaison between the Balonne Shire Council and the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, and the three homes that are occupied in St. George are a credit both to the scheme and to their occupants.

We all agree that housing of people of Aboriginal and/or Islander extraction living on the fringe of towns and cities is essential. We are aware that the need for adequate housing in congenial surroundings is a "must" to enable the younger generation of Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal blood to concentrate on and continue their education, which is a fundamental to the ultimate benefit of the indigenous people.

The Government feels that any costs which might be incurred are actually an investment by the State in the future of the children and in the future of these fellow Queenslanders.

HEALTH

Generally, the health of those in the Aboriginal and Islander communities is good. Some minor outbreaks of enteric diseases have occurred throughout the year and remedial action, taken in liaison with the Department of Health and the area hospitals boards, has ensured that no major outbreaks of sickness have occurred generally on community areas.

Brief reference only is made to the general aspect of health, but special reference is made to the Thursday Island Hospitals Board, with a base hospital at Thursday Island, which caters for the Gulf of Carpentaria and the Peninsula area people, including Bamaga and the islands of the Torres Strait, while at the older-established Government communities, namely, Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Palm Island and Yarrabah, hospital facilities under the supervision of the area hospitals board exist.

EDUCATION

Hon. members are aware that on the Government communities of Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Palm Island, Yarrabah, Bamaga and Weipa, schools are conducted under the auspices of the Department of Education. Some 1,400 children attend these schools, including a number of students at Thursday Island.

It is expected that in the due progress of time, and as staff and financial pressures allow, Department of Education sponsorship will extend to other Peninsula Government communities to include Mitchell River, Lockhart River and Edward River, where some 280 children are attending school.

Further, there are approximately 1,500 children attending schools in the Torres Strait and church-sponsored northern communities, and 150 attend the convent school at Palm Island. At Palm Island a new convent school for community residents is nearing completion, together with a residence for the teaching sisters, by subsidy agreement with the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

Throughout the State there are approximately 200 assisted Aborigines attending secondary school, and a further 150 Torres Strait Islanders attend secondary school. These include approximately 30 girls attending boarding schools throughout the State from church and Government-sponsored communities of the Cape York area and other centres.

The department has continued its special education and training programme for Islander teachers and at present 11 are attending, at the Teachers' College, Brisbane, a special course of 12 months' duration arranged by the Department of Education. Twenty-nine teachers have completed this course and returned to their respective communities. The department also conducts annual refresher seminars at Thursday Island for Islander teachers, and these special refresher courses will continue during the summer vacation of 1968-69.

Kindercraft training is also being undertaken by selected young ladies. Four are at present attending a course in the metropolitan area, and 10 have completed their special courses and returned to their communities.

Away from the fundamental aspects of education, the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service, has endeavoured during the past few years to provide young Aboriginal people of school-leaving age with employment opportunities in keeping with their scholastic attainment and ability. Secondary-school performance of students from all communities is carefully studied, and steps are taken to secure vocational guidance assessment so that, after discussion with officers of the Department of National

Service, suitable employment opportunities are offered away from the traditional callings that the Aboriginal people have followed.

Every opportunity is taken to raise the aspiration level of Aboriginal scholars and so broaden their experience of employment opportunity. In this manner, throughout a period of 12 months a minimum of 300 children are placed in suitable employment.

It is expected that great benefit will accrue to the young selected students who are brought to the metropolitan area each year to undertake a careers-counselling programme and so gain first-hand knowledge of the various careers offering.

EMPLOYMENT

Much can be spoken at length on employment and employment opportunity. Special reference is made to certain aspects of employment in the department's annual report and I propose to mention only a few significant facts as they apply generally. They are—

(1) During the past year the Station Hands Award—State was varied in that any references to Aborigines are now deleted from the terms and definitions of the award.

(2) At present 80 per cent. of assisted Aborigines employed in the pastoral industry are in receipt of award wages. It is conceded that there may always be a percentage for whom employment and rates of payment will require to be negotiated, and these people are being catered for in terms of the Aboriginal regulations.

(3) The marine industry in Torres Strait continues to be the main avenue of employment opportunities for Islanders.

(4) All Islanders employed on pearl culture projects are employed at the basic rate applicable on the same terms as other employees.

(5) The Weipa bauxite employment avenue provides permanent employment for 50 men, and this number varies with extra employment opportunity available on a casual basis.

(6) The prawn and fish-processing development in the Gulf and Peninsula area is providing avenues of employment at ruling rates for increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Islander people, especially girls whose previous employment opportunity was restricted.

(7) With further development of fish-processing facilities in the Gulf, employment opportunities will increase.

SOCIAL ASPECTS

I do not propose to speak at length on social welfare and other aspects of Aboriginal community life, but I do propose to speak on the social development of the people.

It has been mentioned previously that the social development of the Aboriginal people is gradual but progressive. However,

during the last decade, and with the impetus that current legislation has given the people, a feeling towards development, both economically and socially, that warrants recognition and encouragement of this very significant portion of the State's population, which the Aboriginal people comprise, is being fostered in the people themselves. This is not so much as members of isolated communities, which are self-sufficient to a degree, but as members of developed communities within the social structure of the State.

Aboriginal communities, in fact, are not unlike towns of comparative size. In older-established communities this is apparent with the amenities provided, and endeavours are being made to extend this development in the more isolated areas. It can be claimed that, in a period of 80 years, a full cycle has occurred, in that at present the general population of the indigenous people is approximately equal to that estimated at the time of the first real contact with civilisation.

Hon. members will agree that the department is striving its utmost to encourage the progressive development of Aboriginal and Islander Queenslanders, and it must not be thought that the department is in any way complacent. Indeed, it is particularly aware of the vast amount of work entailed and to be completed in endeavouring to develop the people socially and economically. The problem of co-ordinating work in areas so vastly separated is great.

In spite of setbacks the department continues to progress, and it is establishing within the people themselves and within the communities generally a spirit of self-help, a spirit of movement away from the earlier paternalistic approach, and the statutory council bodies elected in communities are responding magnificently in accepting responsibilities towards self-help that this Parliament has conferred upon them by recent legislation.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I thought for a moment that I was reading it very well.

Mr. Houston: It would be all right if you understood it.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The question is: does the hon. member?

Mr. Houston: Yes.

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is all right, then. That is all he has to worry about.

Indeed, the tremendous advance made by Aboriginal councillors and councils in recent years is a source of pride. As fellow Queenslanders, we can all feel proud of it.

POINTS FOR SPECIAL MENTION

Points worthy of special mention include proposed developments in the immediate future in northern community areas.

I make brief reference, also, to the Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act, which was promulgated recently.

The Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act of 1967 provides for the preservation of anthropological, ethnological, archaeological and prehistoric Aboriginal relics and was proclaimed on 27 May, 1967.

The aims of the Act are to preserve and protect those things pertaining to Aboriginal culture and history, and penalties are provided to protect relics from vandalism and other unauthorised interference. Provision is made for the appointment of inspectors and, in an honorary capacity, wardens to bring about this protection, and the powers of an inspector can extend to the apprehension of any person committing an offence against the Act.

An important feature of this legislation is the formation of an advisory committee consisting of—

- (a) The Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs;
- (b) The Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at the Queensland University;
- (c) The Director of the Queensland Museum; and
- (d) One or more persons nominated by the Minister as he determines from time to time.

The function of the committee is to advise the Minister on all matters pertinent to the objects of the Act, including, inter alia, the anthropological value and significance of a relic or of an area which might be declared as a site, or of acquiring a particular relic, and the extent of an area which might be resumed or, as the case may be, acquired for preservation as an Aboriginal site.

FUTURE PLANS

A number of projects are outlined and are contained in an immediate future development programme on Government communities. The individual listings of projects comprise industrial development but are stated as they are accessory factors on which are based social development of the people.

(a) Northern Peninsula area:

Plans have been prepared for a new water-supply scheme to provide water for the communities of Bamaga, Cowal Creek, Umagico and New Mapoon, and also for major irrigation farming. This was the one that the hon. member for Maryborough was inquiring about. He will be happy about this. Water will be pumped from the Jardine River through 12-inch asbestos-cement piping to storage facilities, and then reticulated to community houses. A complete and adequate water supply will be provided for approximately 1,300 people. The project in the initial stage will allow for the irrigation of 200 acres of cultivation. When funds are available, this programme will be developed.

(b) Weipa—Electricity:

Completion of 240-volt A.C. installations to all community residences will also allow for limited industrial use.

Development of the beef-stock breeding programme includes the acquisition of a number of Brahman bulls for herd-improvement purposes.

Mr. Houston: Where are they getting the power for Weipa, from the company or a separate station?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I think we are putting in our own plants. I do not want to mislead the hon. member, but I understand we are providing our own plants.

(c) Edward River:

Installation of a battery of spears and diesel-pump units to provide a reticulated water supply to all community homes is nearing completion. A new cold room has recently been installed with butcher-shop facilities.

(d) Mitchell River and Bamaga—Electricity:

At Bamaga, plans are under way for provision of a power-generating plant 240-volt A.C. This will ensure that electricity is reticulated to community homes and will also be available for industrial purposes. A similar scheme is being undertaken for Mitchell River.

Mr. Houston: What industries did you have in mind?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I might mention that I intend to visit the area after this session, in company with the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs and the Chief Commissioner of Lands, who is now permanent head of that department, and we will no doubt look at these things. The hon. member will appreciate that I have been in charge of the department for only a short while, and that I will be better informed when presenting these Estimates next year.

(e) Lockhart River:

Action is presently being taken to re-locate the Lockhart River community at a new site at Iron Range. The new location will include an administration block embracing a retail store and butcher shop. Twenty community residences and six staff houses are nearing completion. Generally, reticulated water supply to all residences is being provided. Tenders have been invited for a new hospital, school and additional community residences to complete the totally new location.

(f) Yarrabah:

Development of road access over the Murray Prior Range from Yarrabah to Gordonvale is progressing and will provide an accessory to the present use of water transport for carrying goods and passengers from Cairns to Yarrabah. The new road will open up Yarrabah to a degree previously not possible.

(g) Thursday Island and Cape York Peninsula properties generally:

Basic equipment has been purchased to provide modern, single side band radio communication throughout the area in the immediate future. The installation will include a base station at Thursday Island and 24 outstations. This facility will allow efficient radio communication from the base station at Thursday Island to Gulf communities, which, with present facilities, suffer interference from atmospheric conditions.

Within the staff establishment of the Department, a manager-pastoral inspector has been appointed to co-ordinate stock work in all communities, and in addition another inspector attached to the Brisbane office staff has been appointed to allow the full co-ordination of general administration of all communities.

(h) Cash Economy on Communities:

While the northern and Peninsula communities of Bamaga, Mitchell River, Edward River, Lockhart River and Weipa have functioned on a cash economy basis, the people in southern communities have received a living on the basis of a small cash component with other needs provided, including a full ration scale and clothing issues for all family members.

During the past year, a total cash economy basis of payment for work performed has been introduced at Yarrabah, Cherbourg and Woorabinda, and although the system is presently in a transitional stage it is functioning very well. The supervision of families is undertaken to ensure that no hardship is imposed, particularly on children and family dependants.

The Palm Island community is currently being converted to a similar state of cash economy.

The attitude in encouraging all community residents within the State towards being self-reliant in the provision of their own economic welfare while members of Aboriginal communities is being adopted to enable the gap that faces the Aboriginal people and family members who leave total-welfare conditions and move into the general community to be bridged. In this way, former members of established Aboriginal communities will not have to cope with problems with which, to a major degree, they are not already familiar.

The response of the people in the southern communities to the change-over has been favourable. The system is proving successful in that appreciation of values, monetary or otherwise, is evident in the majority of households.

On 22 August, In the Address-in-Reply debate, the Leader of the Opposition referred to Aboriginal Queenslanders and their participation in development undertaken by Comalco in the Weipa area. There is no doubt that his information is at variance with the actual situation.

At the Weipa South community the total number of employable Aboriginal males is 67, and, of this total, Comalco and its subsidiary subcontractors are presently employing 48, as well as approximately 15 females on full-time domestic duties. In addition, the company employs three Torres Strait Islanders. The fortnightly pay that is received by the male employees by Comalco in the Weipa South community amounts to approximately \$2,400, and their average weekly rate amounts to \$50.13.

It is also interesting, and indicative of the interest that Comalco has taken in encouraging Aborigines to participate, to note that 16 of the 48 Aborigines who are presently employed are original employees of the company since it began its operations in the area, and they are virtually permanent employees. The remainder have been re-employed on two or more occasions following breakdowns in continuity of employment for various reasons.

My department's officers work in close liaison with the company, and they report that the personnel arrangements and considerations implemented by the company for Aboriginal employment at Weipa are above average when compared with those of other large employers of Aboriginal labour throughout the State.

I also point out that Comalco utilises subcontractors in its fields of endeavour and, as a matter of policy, insists that they utilise Aboriginal labour that is available locally and that is ready and willing as well as being able to reasonably perform the particular function. From this, hon. members will be aware that the income from Comalco alone has quite dramatically changed the entire economic outlook of the Weipa South community and that every consideration is given these people for employment.

In addition to the employment opportunity available from bauxite operations, prawning activities are pursued there. Some 11 males and 25 females follow this occupation, receiving normal award rates applicable to the particular function.

Generally speaking, therefore, it can be accepted that full employment is available for all labour. However, I feel that I should be frank and state quite categorically that some social problems have been experienced from time to time, mainly because of irregular attendance patterns and, on some occasions, failure to demonstrate a normal sense of responsibility and attitude to the employer. Where services have been terminated in such instances, after a reasonable period the employee has been given second, third and, in some cases, fourth and fifth chances, for re-employment by the bauxite interests. Every effort is made by the departmental officers and the councillors of the community to encourage Aboriginal residents to take the fullest advantage of all work opportunities

offering. I feel that Comalco is playing its part in that locality in the employment of Aborigines.

Mr. Houston: How long have they had those employees?

Mr. SULLIVAN: As I said, some have been there ever since the company started operations.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I want to push ahead with my speech, because I want to make as much time as possible available to hon. members to make their contributions.

I now want to refer to a statement made by the hon. member for Tablelands. His actions and activities are of particular interest. Some of them, to say the least, could be considered as placing in jeopardy the good relationship that exists between the department and Aborigines throughout the State. I have here a photo-copy of an original letter held in the department, addressed by Mr. Wallis-Smith to Mr. Nigel Pootchemunka, who was in the Cairns Base Hospital following an injury and was apparently visited by Mr. Wallis-Smith.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: I rise to a point of order. I cannot hear exactly what the Minister is saying as he is speaking with his head down. I think he said that I visited a certain person at the Cairns Hospital. Is that correct?

Mr. SULLIVAN: Yes, that is right—Mr. Pootchemunka.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: Irrespective of whether this comes from the department, the Director or anyone else, it is entirely untrue. I have never visited the person mentioned at the Cairns Base Hospital or anywhere else.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Minister to accept the hon. member's denial.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Apparently I must accept it, but this is evidence that we have before us.

The foregoing is but a brief picture. I have spoken for the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, but the work being undertaken by the department speaks for itself. However, when others speak in commendation I feel that special mention should be made of it. I now refer to a recent report to the Australian Board of Missions by the chairman of that body, with special reference to Aboriginal chaplaincies on six reserves visited between 28 July and 5 August last. Of the six areas visited, namely, Lockhart River, Mitchell River, Edward River, Yarrabah, Palm Island and Woorabinda, mention is made of commendation due to the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs of the Queensland Government on the magnitude of its efforts to provide better conditions for the 3,350 people in the six areas visited.

Particular reference is made to staff, and the fact is recorded that 21 former missionaries are now employed as State officers in the areas referred to, as well as numbers in other places not visited. A general statement is made on improved living standards, buildings and plant, chaplains generally, and co-operation received from departmental officers and religious denominations.

The report is covered by a letter from Rev. Canon F. M. Coaldrake, M.A., Chairman, Australian Board of Missions of the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia which, *inter alia*, states—

"The Board considered my report and then resolved: 'That a letter of commendation be sent to Mr. P. Killoran, Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs noting with extreme pleasure the progress being made by the Department in its work among the Aborigines in Queensland.'"

As the Minister who has recently accepted the responsibility of administering the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, let me say how pleasing it is to read such words of commendation. I know, and all other hon. members know, the wonderful work that Mr. Killoran, as Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, has done over the years, and we commend him for the manner in which he has carried out his duties. He is dedicated to his work and to the welfare of these people and, as a result, they will benefit considerably.

Mr. Davies: The Government is not helping him enough.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The hon. member for Maryborough persists in interjecting. What I have put before the Committee this morning gives the complete lie to any criticism in that regard. As I said before, we do not take the hon. member for Maryborough seriously.

I am sure that being in charge of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs will be of great interest to me and will prove a great challenge. I assure the Committee that I shall accept this challenge as I have accepted a similar challenge relative to the Department of Lands.

Because of the attitude adopted by this Government over the past 11 years towards Aboriginal and Island people, and with the manner in which Mr. Killoran and the officers of his department have carried out their duties, those people are receiving a much better deal now than they did 11 years ago.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba—Leader of the Opposition) (12.49 p.m.): I am sure that all hon. members have listened with great interest to the Minister's introduction of his Estimates. I regret that the time for discussing them is so short. The Minister said that land matters can be discussed when he introduces the Land Acts Amendment Bill, so I surmise that in this debate

most hon. members will discuss the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs rather than land matters.

Firstly, allow me, on behalf of the Opposition, to welcome to the Chamber Mr. Jim Blake, the hon. member for Isis. I am in complete disagreement with the Minister, because I feel that Mr. Blake will be here when we are looking in retrospect at the Minister's period in Parliament. There is no doubt that the good sense exhibited by the electors of Isis will be reflected throughout the State at the next State elections. I suggest that the Minister holding this portfolio has shown a complete disregard for the welfare of the great majority of Queenslanders, and he also will come under the condemnation of the electors when they are given the opportunity to express their views.

Mr. Sullivan: Are you talking about me?

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, and your colleagues.

Mr. Sullivan: I challenge you to find the best man you can and send him out to Condamine.

Mr. HOUSTON: It is not a matter of finding the best man we can. We were very fortunate to have Jim Blake; he was a wonderful candidate, and I pay full tribute to his ability. The Minister and you, Mr. Hooper, will, as time passes, see his worth as a representative of his area. The only thing that I regret is that the Government saw fit to delay the by-election for such a long time and thus deprive the people of Isis of a direct vote in this Assembly. I regret that very much, and I trust that when such an occasion next arises the seat is filled quickly.

The Minister compared the Government's drought-relief efforts with those of Labour Governments. I am afraid that the Minister did not do his homework very well. In my trips to rural areas, which have been numerous and extensive, I found even in 1958 that many people were thankful for what Labour Governments had done during previous droughts. We do not deny the Minister's claim that the last drought was the worst so far experienced in this State, but, that being so, one would have expected the Government to do something to help those affected by it. One thing that no Labour Government ever did was to cry, "We are doing something about it" and at the same time increase rail freights, as hon. members opposite did in 1964 and 1966. Let us face facts. When country people were sorely hit by the ravages of drought the Government endeavoured to take the last penny—and certainly the last cent—from them. Now the Government is trying to climb back on the election band wagon by reducing freights.

The Minister dealt at some length with the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, in the course of which he saw fit to reply to what I said on this subject

during the Address-in-Reply debate. I do not retract what I then said. When the Bill dealing with Comalco was before Parliament the Minister in charge of it said that the company would employ every available person who sought employment. When I visited the company's area, very few local people were employed by it. I do not deny that the figures given by the Minister are correct, but it could be a case of figures suiting the situation at this point of time. I shall be interested to find out, when I ask a question to this effect, exactly how long these people have been employed and on what types of work they are engaged. The Minister can take notice that we will be asking some searching questions on this matter.

The facts are that the Government is still treating Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders as second-rate citizens and is not giving them the citizenship rights for which the people of Australia voted overwhelmingly only a few short years ago. Although it is certainly true that there is legislation on the Statute Books of both this State and the Commonwealth giving virtually equal citizenship rights to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, the State Government denies this to them. The Government tries to tell these people to whom they can talk and to what they can listen. It tries to tell them what work they can do and exactly what they must do with every moment of their lives.

I have no quarrel with the State's taking over some Aboriginal communities from the churches. Unfortunately, because of lack of finance, various churches could not carry out the work that I believe should be done in assisting Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders to become full citizens of the State and the Commonwealth. In saying that I have no fight with the taking over of these communities, I am in no way suggesting that the churches have not done a very fine job within their financial capacities. However, they have long since ceased to be able to shoulder this responsibility.

Mr. R. Jones: That was the accepted practice up till a few years ago.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is right. Time will show, I think, that fast action was needed.

The Minister is now telling the Committee what the Government intends to do for these people; but what the people themselves want is important, too. The great majority of them do not want to sit round and live on social service payments or rely on someone else to give them the things they need. The idea of trying to make stockmen out of all of them seems to me to be an isolated approach to the problem.

I do not like the term "settlement" particularly, either. When a settlement becomes a town, the Government should recognise that. After all, if settlements are to be provided with a water supply, electric light, and,

I hope, sewerage, surely they really are towns and they should be provided with the amenities that usually go with a town.

In most settlements, one finds that there is no industry. The men who work with cattle have something to do; others act as part of the Police Force but are not paid anywhere near a policeman's wages; others work there in an endeavour to teach the children, but they do not get teachers' wages. Those people are not being treated in the same way as are people in other sections of the community, and I believe that they should be.

In many cases, too, settlements are in isolated areas. The hon. member for Tablelands can speak with greater authority than I can about settlements and communities in his electorate, and perhaps the hon. member for Cook could speak with more authority than I could relative to settlements in his area. However, the pattern is similar.

While I am speaking of the electorate of Cook, let me condemn the Government for its attitude in refusing accredited persons the opportunity to visit the indigenous people and talk to them. I believe that the Government's refusal to let people other than members of Parliament go to these areas and speak on political matters with the indigenous people was completely wrong. Of course the Government does not need to send its candidates there as candidates. It hunts round till it finds someone whom it thinks it can send there legally and who can disseminate political propaganda and, at the same time, carry out his duties as a public servant. I make no apology for saying that.

Mr. Ahern: Are you taking about Jim Bidner?

Mr. HOUSTON: I am talking about Jim Bidner, if the cap fits him. There could be others, but he is one. The position in that area shows the extent to which the Country Party has degenerated over the past few years. I remember coming into this Chamber and hearing Otto Madsen, Ernie Evans and Lloyd Roberts speaking as Country Party members. They had something inside them. They knew exactly what they believed the people in country areas of Queensland wanted. They were the men whom I recognised as true Country Party members. Today one does not find that. The Country Party candidate for Cook is a man who is a discarded member of the A.L.P.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: He wanted to run as an A.L.P. candidate, but the A.L.P. decided that he was not worthy to represent the party.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Sullivan: He decided that, didn't he?

Mr. HOUSTON: The A.L.P. decided it. He had his nomination in to run as an A.L.P.

candidate, but the party said, "You are not of our tribe. You are not sincere enough for us."

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

Mr. HOUSTON: Dealing further with the refusal of the Government to allow political candidates or others to visit the place of living of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and talk to them, if these people are given the full and free right to vote, surely we do not want them voting on what they hear from one party only, and I do not believe that they should vote only on what they hear during the heat of an election campaign. I think that is denying them of one of their rights as free citizens of this State and nation—the right to hear all sides of a question.

We know that one Country Party candidate, because of the nature of his employment, has the right to go freely into these areas. Admittedly he goes there in the course of his employment and I do not deny him the right to carry out his duties. But there is nothing to stop him whilst he is there from disseminating political propaganda, and if he is the type of person I think he is he would certainly take advantage, as a political candidate, of being there in the course of his duties. My main argument, however, is that we are denying these people the rights of ordinary free citizens in the true sense of the word, and I condemn the Government's attitude in language as strong as it is possible to use in this Assembly.

All people who are entitled to vote should have the right to hear the various views that may be expressed by those associated with all political parties. The way this Government is carrying on, one would think it was a crime to belong to a political party. One would think it was wrong for candidates to express any views. Perhaps the Government is afraid that we might say something that is not to its credit.

Let the Minister say why this ban is necessary, and why it is necessary to institute a type of fatherly protection for some citizens in our community whilst the Australian people as a whole enjoy complete freedom.

Mr. Sullivan: Don't worry about that; I will certainly answer it in my reply, and I will show how ill-informed you, as Leader of the Opposition, are.

Mr. HOUSTON: Any person who is selected as a candidate for the Australian Labour Party has no right to go into any Aboriginal settlement.

Mr. Sullivan: I will tell you the reason for that when I am replying.

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not care what the Minister's reasons are. There is no law in this State to stop an A.L.P. candidate from talking to any other member of the community on any political matter, nor should there be. Why then should the Government set itself up as a protector of these people,

who are supposed to be free citizens? Why should the Government say to them, "You cannot hear this man air his views on any matters"? What right has the Minister, or the Government, to tell any citizen of this country whom he can or cannot hear? I say that the Government is doing this only to save its own political hide.

Mr. Sullivan: I will give you the answer.

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not care what the Minister's answer is; he cannot get over the basic fact that this ban exists, despite the Government's previous boasting—and the Minister boasted of it again on this occasion—that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders are in fact free citizens—in fact, first-class citizens, as my Deputy Leader reminds me—and I agree that they should be. Let us treat them as that. Do not let us treat them as second-class citizens, or babes, or as people without the mentality to understand what is going on and to make up their own minds on it.

The Government is making all kinds of assumptions; it is assuming that these people do not understand; that they have not the intelligence to distinguish right from wrong or truth from lies. What right has the Minister, the Government, or anyone else, to assume these things? I say that if these people are first-class citizens with the right to vote, they should have the right to hear what is to be said on these and other matters. Once the Australian Labour Party, or the Liberal Party or the Country Party, announces that it is putting forward a certain candidate, he or she should have the right to talk to any person who has the privilege of voting at an election. To me, that right is a fundamental one, and no statement made by the Minister or other Government members will convince me otherwise.

I say to the Government that it should show its faith in these people by allowing them to make their own judgments. Naturally, the Australian Labour Party is a responsible party and would not say things to these people that are detrimental to the interests of the State, but most probably we would put before them the true facts about many matters on which they may not be presently well informed. We do that with every other citizen, so, if the Minister is going to tell us what he does for these people, let him treat them as he treats any other section of the community.

In fact, the Minister's actions show that all he is interested in is making stockmen out of our coloured people. I think that I know these people even better than the Minister does, and from my knowledge of them I should say that there are many who could fill any position in our community. I do not want to name individuals, but many of them have shown that they can live what we may call the white man's way of life. Many of us have met and known those who have made a great success of their careers. We on this side of the Chamber

have a very high regard for their capacity to look after themselves, and the idea of trying to make stockmen out of all of them is not in their best interests.

In addition, as I have said before, the communities in which these people live should be termed "towns". Let us get right away from the idea of using words that suggest they are compounds or reserves. Surely the people who live in those areas should be trained to take their places in the general community. In far too many of those areas the Department of Education does not even control the schools. In others we find that the medical services that are provided are well below the standard that is accepted by other sections of the community.

The Minister has said that the Government will be providing water facilities and electric light for these communities. What about communications in general? For months on end a number of them are isolated from the outside world. If a town populated by white Australians, or white Queenslanders, was in a similar situation the Government would chase the 400 or 500 votes that could be obtained in it by laying air strips and constructing roads. The Government boasts about the roads that it has constructed; but in wet weather how can anybody get to Edward River and Mitchell River, and, to a lesser extent, to Weipa? Those centres are completely isolated at times, and there are many others.

Mr. Sullivan: When you were the Government people had a job to get to St. George by road in wet weather.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is very true, and I am not denying that fact. But the Government has boasted about constructing roads. I do not deny that the Government has done that, but it has sectionalised. In effect, it has said to certain people, "We will not give you a road; we are not interested in you". The Government has talked about constructing a road to a place just outside Cairns. We have heard talk about it for a long time. Before the last three elections we heard the Government say that it would construct that road. However, like many other statements the Government has made, this one was made purely as an election stunt.

The Government is making only a token gesture to satisfy these people. Until it takes positive action, until it helps these townships to become self-supporting by assisting them to gain industries such as those in other townships and encourages the children to go to school by providing teachers to give them practical training, it will have accomplished nothing. How many houses, and so on, are built by outside people? I asked the Minister by interjection what industries other than cattle-fattening were carried on in these areas, but he could not answer me. Other than a butcher shop and a store, there are very few. My main con-

demnation of the Government's policy at Weipa is that there are no other industries to provide employment for the local people.

Mr. Sullivan: If you had had your way, Comalco would not be there.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is a lot of nonsense.

Mr. Sullivan: It is not nonsense.

Mr. HOUSTON: It is not true.

Mr. Sullivan: It would not have been there, and you know it.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course it would.

The Government boasts about Weipa, but it had virtually nothing to do other than to follow Labour's planning and continue what Labour had already started.

Before my time expires, I wish to refer to residential blocks in the City of Brisbane. The Government has boasted about helping home-builders, but blocks of land at Tarragindi subdivided by the department were sold for \$5,000, \$4,900, \$5,000, and \$5,250. The lowest-priced block cost \$2,400. How does the Minister expect an ordinary person to own a home when he has to pay such a price for land? Government members call themselves "anti-socialists" and say that they do not believe in Government competition, but the Government is competing with the land developers and keeping land prices sky high. If the Government handled this land properly it would put it on the market at the cost of development, not at the price a land developer would be expected to charge and make a substantial profit for those who have invested in the land-development project. I condemn the Government for its money-making attitude when selling land to needy people. It is absolutely wrong.

A Government Member: What about council land?

Mr. HOUSTON: The land that the council subdivides is already freehold land, but the land to which I am referring was owned by the State and did not cost the Government anything. The only cost involved is the cost of development, yet the Government is charging exactly the same prices—in some cases higher prices—than private subdividers recently charged for land nearby. The Government is maintaining the high prices of land in the City of Brisbane. That is completely wrong.

(Time expired.)

Mr. TOMKINS (Roma) (2.29 p.m.): Mr. Dean—

Mr. Lonergan: We will have a good speech now.

Mr. TOMKINS: The hon. member is right.

I congratulate the Minister for Lands on acquiring control of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

Honourable Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! There is too much cross-firing in the Chamber.

Honourable Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I am having great difficulty in hearing the hon. member speaking.

Mr. TOMKINS: I congratulate the Minister on having this department attached to the Lands portfolio. I can only assume that he was given this extra task because the Premier believed that he was doing an excellent job in the Department of Lands.

I was amazed at some of the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition. I was a member of the party that visited the Torres Strait Islands, and I saw some of the things he spoke about.

Mr. Houston: Do you agree that election candidates should be allowed to talk to these people?

Mr. TOMKINS: I am not coming in on that one. The Minister can reply to it.

Mr. Houston: I want you to reply to it.

Mr. TOMKINS: I do not know what is going on in the area in question so far as this matter is concerned. Therefore, I will not reply to the question.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. TOMKINS: One statement made by the Leader of the Opposition really intrigued me. He implied that Torres Strait Islanders, generally speaking, were not being brought out, given a fair go, given equal opportunities, and so on.

Mr. Houston: Don't separate them. I referred to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Mr. TOMKINS: Well, I am talking about the Torres Strait Islanders. They are the ones I am referring to.

I was one of the party that accompanied the present Premier when he was Minister for Works and Housing and Minister in charge of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. We visited Palm Island, Yarrabah, Weipa, Thursday Island, and the Torres Strait Islands.

Mr. Houston: How many Aborigines did you see working at Weipa?

Mr. TOMKINS: We were on a quick trip. Whenever I saw them they were working.

Mr. Houston: How many did you see?

Mr. Carey: When I was there many of them were working. They were doing a very good job.

Mr. TOMKINS: I did not count them, but I am prepared to say that any I did see were working.

Mr. Houston: They were working well, but how many did you see—five or six?

Mr. TOMKINS: Mr. Dean, I wish the Leader of the Opposition would be reasonable. We were on a trip. We were continually on the move, and we had no time to observe these things thoroughly. We were at Weipa for only two hours, and the Leader of the Opposition was probably there for only half an hour.

Mr. Carey: Many Aboriginal workers bought motor-cars after they started working at Weipa.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! The hon. member for Albert will please refrain from interjecting.

Mr. TOMKINS: I want to deal with the Torres Strait Islands that we visited. They are based on Thursday Island. We visited Yam, Murray, Darnley, Saibai and various other islands, all under the control of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs and, of course, Mr. Killoran. I went there with a completely open mind and I wanted to find out just how our Government administers in this type of situation. From what I observed, the Islanders are extremely well looked after. The medical services are first class. They have an extremely good hospital on Thursday Island, which is in radio contact with the various Torres Strait islands.

Mr. Bromley: How is the water situation on Thursday Island?

Mr. TOMKINS: I shall come to that shortly. One way and another, I think that the Islanders are extremely well fed and cared for.

On the question of equal opportunities, which was raised by the Leader of the Opposition, we could not find anybody who wanted to leave any of these islands. They live there. They were brought up there. When the Premier was talking to them they said, "We want more land to grow vegetables, and so on". He said, "Would you like to go onto the mainland?" They said, "No. We want to stay where we are".

Mr. Houston: I don't want to shift them; I want to give them something to do there.

Mr. TOMKINS: These islands are very barren, with very little good land. They can grow vegetables, fruit and so on. Primary school facilities are excellent on these Islands and the Secondary department is on Thursday Island for those male students wishing to continue their studies, and many take advantage of this. The girl students go to Charters Towers, Herberton, and also to Yeppoon Secondary Schools.

It is very difficult to establish in the Islands any industry because of the nature of the soil in these islands and the fact that many people leave their homes to find work elsewhere. To arrive at a decision on whether or not these people

are well looked after, I took the opportunity, when we were on Daru Island, of accepting an invitation from one of the officers of the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry to visit a place called Wipin, which is about 50 miles inland in New Guinea. It is under the control of the Commonwealth Government. We flew to this place. It is a rubber plantation where, in addition to rubber, vegetables and pineapples are also grown. It has beautiful soil. When we landed, I was surprised to see no fewer than about 200 children come running out from the trees. Here was a cleared area in which a school had been set up. The houses were of a poor type of construction—of local timber, coconut palms, and so on—and in the middle of the area was the school. The children lived in the buildings around the perimeter of the area, and that is where they lived whilst attending school. They even cooked for themselves. When I compared that with what happens in the Torres Strait islands I felt that top marks should be given to Queensland. With those 200 children were approximately five dedicated teachers, but conditions were not good and did not compare at all favourably with those to be found on our islands in Torres Strait.

We also made an inspection of another island, named Sidabadu. It is on the mainland of New Guinea. The difference between the conditions applying there and on our own islands is also most marked. On ours, there are Islanders living under good conditions. They have water, and on some islands have amenities such as picture shows, and they are happy. Primary School facilities exist on all these islands, as I said before. They certainly have a problem in growing sufficient vegetables, but they choose to stay there and, short of shifting them bodily, I do not see how they could be moved. We have to live with that situation.

The Bamaga-Mapoon area, at the north of the Peninsula, has become a series of satellite towns. In 1947 I am informed many Islanders were brought there from Saibai Island and a satellite town was established. This is the area that I believe is capable of great development. There are now actually four places there, namely, New Mapoon, Bamaga, Umagico and Cowal Creek. Those four places have been set up as satellite towns, and they are progressing very well. At Bamaga a farm has been set up under Mr. Harris, who, I understand, has been there for some years, and when one looks at what has been done there, one cannot help but wonder how much more development could take place. At the farm at Bamaga are grasses such as para grass, elephant grass, stylo, hamil grass, siratro, bullrush millet, dolichos lab lab, and even buffel grass, and I do not think that I have ever seen them growing better anywhere else. Townsville lucerne also grows extremely well there. It grows profusely even at the school, where children have been

continually walking over it. The same situation would apply if farming activities were carried on anywhere in this area.

I believe that quite a lot could be done there, and I should like to make some suggestions to the Minister, Mr. Killoran, and the new Chief Commissioner of Lands, who is now in charge of this activity. I am quite sure that when they visit this area they will see its possibilities for further development. The figures show that at present there are only about 950 cattle in this area. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that, with proper development, many more cattle could be run here.

Quite recently the Minister obtained considerable finance from the Commonwealth for the work of this department. It seems to me that in going to the Commonwealth Government for a grant, or perhaps even a loan, for the development of this area, he would have as good a case as the Government had when seeking assistance for development of the brigalow lands. Surely the development of really top-class country such as that in the Bamaga area, near the satellite towns, would meet a lot of the criticism raised by the Leader of the Opposition. It would form the basis of a cattle-raising and stock industry, and it would also provide an opportunity for expansion of the sawmilling industry. There is already a sawmill there, and there are some very good rain forests nearby. If some of the Islanders could be encouraged to leave the Torres Strait islands and come to Bamaga and build up the settlement there, it could become a model for future settlements. I suggest to the Minister that he might look into my suggestions when he visits the area.

I noticed that the Minister said in his introductory remarks that a water scheme had been undertaken to reticulate water from the Jardine River to the Bamaga area, with the idea of irrigating about 200 acres. I suggest that either a committee or the Chief Commissioner of Lands should be asked to investigate the possibility of providing a pasture improvement area. I have no doubt that some of the country could be ringbarked. Perhaps Tordon could be used there; the scrub certainly could be pulled and burnt. The land would grow all the grasses to which I referred earlier—para grass, siratro, Townsville lucerne, and so on—and would become an extremely good cattle area.

In my opinion, a company such as the Clausen shipping company could be of great assistance by bringing in stock from the settlement at Edward River and their taking fat cattle round the Cape to the markets at Cairns and Townsville. It might be better, taking the economics of the scheme into consideration, to set up a small meatworks in the area to supply Thursday Island. I cannot be sure about that, but I do suggest that the area should be developed as a pilot area. I think it would mean a great deal

to the people living there, and it would give the younger people an opportunity of developing a town of their own.

I notice that Thursday Island is under the control of an administrator, and I think he is responsible to Cabinet. I have never yet seen circumstances in which an administrator has done as good a job as has an elected shire council. Although I do not know how it could be brought into being, I suggest that a small shire council elected by the people would do a better job than an administrator. For example, the roads on Thursday Island could well be improved, and the town water supply position attended to, and I think that a properly constituted council could do a great deal of good in this and other fields. I suggest to the Minister that he might give some consideration to my suggestion and make some inquiries as to whether or not it is practicable.

Before I resume my seat, I pay a tribute to the work and thought that goes into the administration of the islands. They all have councils in charge of them, and the work of the councillors is similar to that done by shire councillors. They are responsible for the maintenance of law and order and for carrying out administrative work. Those people do a good job, and a great deal of thought has been given over the years by the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs to the implementation of the system.

Mr. R. Jones: How are they elected?

Mr. TOMKINS: As far as I know, they are elected by democratic franchise. They seem to represent the people.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: No.

Mr. TOMKINS: In any case, it is the type of body that is required. The councillors should represent the people on the islands.

I think that I have covered most of the points I wished to raise. I again compliment Mr. Killoran on the job he is doing. Under his guidance, Palm Island, which at one stage had a rather doubtful reputation, has become a fine settlement, and the Manager is doing a wonderful job. The set-up at Yarrabah, too, is very good, and there is a lot of good country near that settlement.

One way and another, I believe that the Minister and his departmental officers ought to be very proud of what they have achieved. They certainly have nothing to be ashamed of.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (2.44 p.m.): I do not think that hon. members expected to have an opportunity of discussing these Estimates, but I think it is very appropriate that they should be discussed.

Before dealing with them, however, I should like to join my leader in welcoming to this Chamber Mr. Jim Blake, the new hon. member for Isis. I feel that the magic prediction made by the Minister for Lands, in respect of the hon. member will be like

the one that he made about me when I won my plebiscite. Everything the Minister touches seems to turn upside down, and I say, without fear of contradiction, that if he keeps on as he is now his portfolio of Aboriginal and Island Affairs will be upside down as well. Considering the period that the Minister has held this portfolio, the fact that he could not take his eyes off the prepared statement that he had, knowing that he had to read the written words and pronounce the written syllables word for word and syllable for syllable, shows that he knows full well that it would have been better had he concentrated on his portfolio of Lands rather than on the one that we are discussing now.

Government Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: I also draw attention to the late arrival of the report on which we have to base this debate. I received my copy only this morning, when I arrived from the North. This does not give me much of a chance to peruse it. The report was prepared by the departmental officers, and I pay tribute to many of them, but to be given only 3½ hours in which to peruse it is not fair or just to hon. members who are trying to do their utmost for these people.

It is only natural to expect that there will be much hardship and that many mistakes will be made, but one of the greatest mistakes made this morning was the one that caused me to rise to a point of order. I intend to spend a short time on this matter and to read the letter that the Minister mentioned. The Minister need not have had it photostatted. I draw attention to the fact that, of the hundred of letters that I have written, I have apparently had one photostatted—and I point out that sometimes I have waited for months to get a reply. It is like the question answered for the hon. member for Townsville North, when a nice little innuendo was placed at the end of it about his being afraid of losing his seat. This is the sort of rubbish that we have to put up with as members of Parliament. It is not good enough.

I will read the letter that as the Minister said, has been photostatted. When I rose to a point of order I said that I had never met the gentleman in question, and I have not. His name is Mr. Nigel Pootchemunka. The letter is addressed care of the Cairns Base Hospital, and reads—

“Dear Nigel,

“At long last I have received a letter from Mr. Pizzey and I hope that you will be able to understand the fact that you are not allowed to have your money paid into the Commonwealth Savings Bank account.

“Mr. Pizzey says that your interests will be safeguarded by the Department and that you will receive your full payment under the Workers' Compensation Laws.

"I would like to hear what your actual payments have been since you were injured, as sometimes the information we get from the Department is not true—"

Mr. Sullivan: Shame on you. It is a reflection on the department.

Opposition Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! I ask hon. members to allow the speaker to make his speech in his own way.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: The letter concludes—

"I hope by now you are much better.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

E. Wallis-Smith."

The reason for that letter was that I had heard that the gentleman in question was not receiving workers' compensation.

This is the letter to Mr. Pizzey—

"Dear Mr. Pizzey,

"I have received advice that Mr. Nigel Pootchemunka, of Aurukun Mission, who was injured in an accident on a cattle station near Normanton in September, 1966, has not, to date, received any compensation . . ."

This was 1 March, 1967.

The letter continues—

". . . In fact his only income is \$1.50 per week from the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, whilst he is not able to work he has nine children, five of which are under the age of 15.

"I would be pleased if you would investigate this claim as no doubt there could have been a breakdown in the necessary forms and signatures which are required by the State Government Insurance Office for compensation claims. He has expressed a wish that the full amount be placed to his credit in the Commonwealth Bank."

Can the Committee see the picture? Can it see the picture of a man who does not know what he is entitled to, and can it imagine a fellow Queenslander not being advised by anyone at all on how to complete his forms? It is quite difficult for us to represent even our own workers in compensation claims when they do not fill in their forms in the right manner or obtain doctors' certificates. Here we have a man who is suddenly transferred from the Aurukun Mission to a strange place, the Cairns Base Hospital, and because I wrote those letters I am accused of jeopardising the liaison that exists between the Government and the coloured people. Could anyone find any better liaison than that? I do not think it would be possible. So much for the photostat letter that has caused such a lot of heartburning.

The late Mr. Jack Pizzey said that it was the director's ambition to work himself out of a job. I have made a statement, which

appears in "Hansard", that if the director's great-great-great-great-grandson wants to be the director, at the rate we are going the job will still be there for him. I will demonstrate the truth of that statement as I develop my argument.

In the Annual Report of the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs we find these words—

"The immediate result of recent legislation with the stress on education of the younger generation is increasingly apparent in the attitude of community residents and other Assisted and non-Assisted Aboriginal people."

I need go no further than that to be able to talk for an hour and prove just how futile and empty that sort of statement is. Why does the Government make that statement when it cannot do the job? Why does it make that statement when it has approximately 140 children in one place with one white teacher and Aboriginal and Islander teachers? Why bring Islanders down to teach Aboriginal children? Does the Minister know that the Aborigines are not happy with the influx of a great number of Island workers into their midst? I wonder if he does. Does he know that consistently in the minds of the officers of the department the Islanders are on a higher plane than the mainland Aborigines? Does he know these things? Has he ever thought about them? I say that he has not. That is where the breakdown in liaison comes into the matter.

The Aborigines are continually "shown up" by other people who go into their communities. It has happened in the teaching profession. Can the Minister tell us how many Aborigines are qualified to the same degree as Islanders are qualified? I should say the figure would be as low as 1 per cent.; I doubt whether it would be as high as 3 or 4 per cent. The qualified people come from the Torres Strait Islands. They provide the education facilities for the Aboriginal children.

If the Government is going to take over these areas let it do so, but do not let the Department of Education tell me, in answer to my questions, "We have not taken over the full responsibility for the education of these children." The Minister and his officers will say that these people are Aboriginal Queenslanders and are of equal standing in our community. I heard the Leader of the Opposition say when I was called to the phone earlier today, "You have no right to do this. These people are citizens. Let us get away from referring to them as Aboriginal Queenslanders. They are Queensland citizens."

I have been asked by university students how they could get to know the people who live in Aboriginal communities. I have said to them, "If you went to a strange town and wanted to get to know its people, whom would you ask?" They said, "The storekeeper, the mayor, or the alderman." I said,

"That is what you will have to do up there; it is exactly the same. Don't think about them as being other than the normal people you are used to dealing with." This is what we have to drum into members of Parliament, into the Government, and into the people of Queensland. We can do that only if we start at the bottom and give these coloured people equal rights.

I have asked in this Chamber whether any school in Queensland, other than one in an Aboriginal community, would be left without a replacement teacher from 1 February for the remainder of the school year. The excuse given to me is, "We called for applications, but we did not get any." Could this happen at any school other than one in an Aboriginal community? Definitely not. Therefore, Aborigines must be on a different plane from other Queenslanders. Let us treat them as citizens rather than merely talk about them as citizens. I have always said that there is too much talking.

The young mainland Aborigines excel in certain work. They can work much better for graziers and on cattle properties than the Islanders or anyone else. We should exploit this forte by establishing a school not only for Aborigines, but for station hands generally. Station work requires special training. One has only to see the work they do to realise that they are excellent workers. They have gained experience purely by imitation, which is but one of the methods of teaching.

Unfortunately for the Aborigines, the graziers can choose their workers from various communities. It is well known that in some years a community will provide very good workers, but their efficiency is not constant. When efficiency decreases, another community can provide very good workers. The Minister should know by now that graziers ask for boys from certain areas. Let us teach them to work efficiently. In our ordinary schools we have manual-training classes in woodwork, sheet-metal work, and so on. I am not asking for the impossible in these areas, and although I would like these skills to be taught, these people would relish being taught the arts of station management and general station work. I know that for many years the Islanders have been under the care of various departmental officers who have helped them to become good builders, and they have constructed the buildings in the communities. But no attempt has ever been made to give the local people a chance by putting them in charge. They are always labourers. I think we would all get tired of being labourers, year after year, without any hope of becoming more proficient in our jobs.

The Minister referred with great pride to the cattle industry in the communities, and commended the hon. member for Mackenzie on what he has done. I also commend the hon. member, but how long did it take even to count the cattle at Mitchell River? I asked several questions

on that subject, but only today do I learn from the report that there are about 5,961 cattle there. I sincerely hope that the methods are improved, and that these people are taught how to muster and count cattle and all the other necessary things instead of someone saying, "Put 200 breeders here and 400 there; get them from here and there."

I raised another sore point, by way of a question, about sending these cattle away without attendants. I do not know if many hon. members have travelled in the far-flung areas and seen trains waiting for a long time, or road traffic held up because of the very bad roads, but the journey to which I refer was undertaken without an attendant for the cattle. My information did not come from the residents and staff, but from the railway people who carried the cattle. They said it was shocking to think that such valuable cattle should be carried long distances without an attendant for the full journey. It was a short-sighted policy to economise in this way.

The Minister may say that I am being parochial, but this could happen in many areas. The Minister referred to Foleyvale and Woorabinda and he said that there were so many cattle at Foleyvale. I should like the Minister to tell the people up there, and particularly their councillors, what the set-up is with the cattle that come from the Mitchell River Community. When these cattle are sold, will the amount received be credited to their account? If these cattle are on agistment, is any fee being paid into their account?

These are the things we want to know, and the hon. member for Mackenzie would also want to know them if he was in the same position. He would want to know all about these cattle, where they came from, how much he had to pay for them on agistment, and who would get the money when they were sold. But this will all be swallowed up in a mass of figures. It is not good enough.

This is another example of what these people are not being told. Their councillors are high-graded in the report. But this is only words. They are not taken into the department's confidence. They would be to a greater extent if they were elected wholly and solely by the people, who have a very good election system. When the churches controlled the communities the councillors were elected wholly and solely by the people. I say that this is right, and that they should also elect the chairman. It is all very well to say that they elect three out of five and that that is a majority, but it should not be any different from our method of electing councillors. When we have a council election we do not say that we will elect three or four and that the Government can elect the remainder.

It has been said that we gave these people the right to vote and the right to drink. These two things cost us very little, and, as

one gentleman said, the right to drink can cost the Aborigine dearly. There should be better liaison and better education on the drink problem. It should be gone into fully. It should not be beyond the department's ability to send films to the communities showing these people just what effect liquor can have if they do not drink it in a correct manner. These little things are never thought of. The only comment we can get from the average member of the public is, "What more can you expect?" We could expect a lot more if we put into action the things that the Minister and his department merely talk about.

I claim that if we supplement the diet of Aborigines in coastal areas we would help considerably. The quantities of flour and sugar sold to them are out of all proportion to what is required for a balanced diet. The Minister simply says, "The health of these people is good, full stop". The Gulf of Carpentaria and the waters off our eastern coast abound in fish. A cold-room has been provided at Edward River. The Minister is rightly proud of this—it is a very good idea—but where there are fish in close proximity fishing should be encouraged, because it is an industry that these people could be taught.

Mr. P. Wood: Fish are rich in protein, too.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: As the hon. member for Toowoomba East says, fish are rich in protein. We do not want to force the Aborigines to do these things suddenly. We should tell their councillors and show them, by means of films, etc., the value of a good diet and education. We should also explain to them the value of land.

I shall now return to what I was saying in the earlier part of my speech. I forgot to mention that the department claimed—I shall say this straight out—that the hon. member for Tablelands had not pulled his weight or had done things that were showing up in a bad light in the liaison between these people and the Government. I have proof that I went to the missions in my area and implored them to have patience relative to the houses being built and that I told them that when the Government took over they would be told what was meant and why the additional cattle brand was placed over their own brand.

Again, when the trouble occurred at Edward River (the director knows about this because, by chance, he happened to be there), I was at Mitchell River and I received an urgent message over the air saying, "Come at once. We are in serious trouble." Does that sound as though I am somebody to be hated—somebody who is always wrong and wanting to pull these people down? Does that appear to be so when my wife and I offered our services there?

Why are people allowed to say such things here? I think it is time to have a very good look at these statements and see just whom

we are representing. If we are to be called to order, let it be by those who put us here. Let there be no lies told here, such as the statement that I proved today was a lie. I have never met the man who was mentioned, and I have never been to the Cairns Base Hospital to see him. These things should not be said and be allowed to go unchallenged so that people will think that where there is smoke there is fire. Certainly where there is smoke there is fire, but truth will put the fire out—and the smoke-makers, too.

I would say that if hon. members on the other side of the Chamber were accused as I was this morning, they would want to walk out. They would want everything done. But because it is done to the A.L.P., it is allowed to pass. It is allowed to go unchecked for the simple reason that it achieves an objective—or hon. members opposite hope it will. Of course, it will not accomplish anything, because the very people who are in those positions went there under Labour Governments. They were shown how to do the job. But they forget all that; their memories are short. They forget it when they say to a representative of the people, "You are not doing the right thing by your people." I shall let them be my judge. I am proud to say that on many occasions I have had to face ridicule and decide whether to keep on battling for the Aborigines or simply say, "I think they are hopeless. I will let them go on on their own." In my book, they are people, and they always will be. They will always be citizens, and I will treat them exactly as I would treat you, Mr. Hooper, or any of your family.

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT (Mackenzie) (3.8 p.m.): First of all, let me say that I am somewhat amazed at some of the statements made this afternoon. I do not come here to talk politically; I come here to think more of people than of politics. I can, I feel, stand up to that statement.

The two departments whose activities come before the Committee this afternoon are those dealing with lands and with Aboriginal and Island affairs. In land matters, I think I can take some credit from the fact that I was the first to put to this Parliament the need for a brigalow land development scheme in Queensland. Today such a scheme has settled many Queenslanders on the land, and it is a development in which I can feel that I have played some part.

I can also claim that I, too, have thought of the Aborigines as people. When I took an interest in the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, things were not too rosy. Looking back on those days, one readily thinks of Foleyvale, which is a property in which I had some interest. In 1946 it was acquired by a Labour Government from Balcomba, then owned by Wilson and McDouall, and, when I took an interest in it, the boundary was not even fenced and the Aborigines were not getting the full benefit

from the property. I set about trying to reorganise things in the interest of people, not of my Government or any other Government, and I feel that my efforts were able to bring to the Aboriginal people some of the advantages that they now enjoy. For instance, the income from the Woorabinda-Foleyvale area alone has been increased from \$12,218 to \$217,000. That money surely is of some value to the people of the other areas because, as the Minister has stated, it goes to the Aboriginal Welfare Fund.

In addition, in the interests of Aborigines I have travelled to the far-distant parts of the State. I think the hon. member for Tablelands will be fair enough to acknowledge that I have made reports for all to see on Bamaga, Weipa, and other areas. I have flown to these places in single-engine aircraft. I have done a bit of flying in my time, and I can say that it is no real fun flying in that area in single-engine aircraft and tripping round day after day looking at country and making reports that may be of help to these people. I can say quite fairly that at no time did I ever go out of my way to try to talk politics to even one Aborigine. I went to those settlements only to try to give the Aborigines something that might help them on their way.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: All I am saying is that I have made the reports. They can be followed by the department if it thinks they are worth while. I have tried to do something as an individual.

A great deal of publicity has been given to Woorabinda, which is in my own electorate. As far as I am concerned, the A.L.P. candidate could be there every day of the week and I would not be a bit worried. On the other hand, I agree with the findings of the councillors on the islands. If they think that is the way it should be, that is what should be done.

Mr. Houston: The Government will not let them go there.

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: It is not the finding of the Government; it is the finding of the people themselves. I have never tried to play politics; I have no intention of doing so now.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member for Flinders and the hon. member for Port Curtis wish to have a talk on this subject, I suggest that they have it outside.

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: The hon. member for Tablelands raised a couple of matters to which I think I should refer. I am no longer an adviser to Cabinet on these matters. I spent 10 years in that position, and I carried out my duties faithfully and to the best of my ability. The man who has replaced me, Mr. Brian Shanahan, is a first-class citizen of this State. He worked under me, and I do not think that anyone has a better knowledge of the subject than he has.

He is a capable man in every way. As for sending 200 cattle or 400 cattle to the North and not selling them, I could not say whether that action is right or wrong unless I had all the facts.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: You have missed the point. The people want to know what is going to happen to the cattle.

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: That is up to the department. Cattle have been brought from Mitchell River down to Foleyvale. Some were sold in the Mareeba saleyards, and the remainder were brought down to the southern part of the State. I do not know what the policy of the department is. As far as I am aware, the money from cattle sales goes to the Aboriginal Welfare Fund, for the benefit of all Aborigines in this State. Should hon. members care whether it is used for the benefit of Aboriginal people here, there, or anywhere else? That is not the basis on which I took an interest in the work of the department. I tried to work for the benefit of all Aborigines in Queensland. There are very few Aborigines at Woorabinda, and the majority of the people whom I have helped have been in areas far distant from my own electorate. Foleyvale is not in my electorate; Cape York Peninsula and the other places that have been mentioned have nothing to do with me. I have tried to work for the benefit of the department and Aborigines generally in Queensland; I have not given any thought to benefiting one area in particular. That is the point that I am trying to make to the Committee. The hon. member for Tablelands suggests that the money should go to a specific area; I suggest that it should be used for the benefit of Aborigines generally.

The Minister has had a number of charges made against him. As the debate on these Estimates is to close at 3.30 p.m., far be it for me to take up his time and prevent him from answering these charges.

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Lands) (3.14 p.m.): I wish to answer some of the criticisms that have been levelled at me in my capacity as Minister for Lands and also as Minister in charge of Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

First of all, I want to say that I am sorry there is not more time for this debate, but the shortage of time is not of my making as the debate has to finish at 3.30 p.m.

Let us have a look at what has come out of the debate. Perhaps I should deal first of all with some of the criticisms made by the Leader of the Opposition of what is taking place in the Department of Lands. By way of interjection when I was introducing the Estimates, he asked what money was required by people to participate in open ballots. The answer is, as I indicated, that this will be determined as the blocks are made available. Participants in the ballots are required first of all to pay for the improvements, and

this is something entirely between the outgoing lessee and the person who is successful at the ballot. The successful person is also required to pay one year's rent and one-fifth of the survey fees. That is all that a person who is successful in an open ballot is required to pay. As I mentioned, we do not know until the land reverts to the Crown just what those amounts might be.

I made brief mention of the appreciation of landholders as a result of our introducing the rent-remission scheme as a drought measure. The Leader of the Opposition and other hon. members opposite claimed that similar schemes had been introduced as drought measures by Labour Governments in years gone by. If this is so, the Department of Lands and I do not know about them, because our records certainly do not show it. This is the first time that drought measures by the remission of rents have been undertaken. We also have an arrangement with the local authorities whereby half the rates are also remitted. Those are the facts as I know them. Apart from away back in 1902, when a Nationalist Party Government was in office and when some type of assistance was given, we have no record of any other such scheme.

The hon. member referred also to the prices paid for residential blocks in the Tarragindi area. I want to mention this, because the cost of developing these blocks runs into about \$1,700 each; that is, by the time we develop the blocks and provide roads, sewerage, and other services. In the public interest, some additional amount for the land must be included in determining the upset prices. The keen bidding reflects the real attitude of purchasers. Even if the upset prices were halved, the bidders would still determine the purchase prices. What has to be borne in mind is that the blocks to which the Leader of the Opposition referred, very conveniently, are in a fairly select part of Brisbane, and the public itself determines just what the price will be.

I now want to get on to some of the things that the Leader of the Opposition had to say relative to Aboriginal and Island Affairs. I am getting sick to death of listening to the Leader of the Opposition tell half truths. It was rather refreshing to hear the hon. member for Roma speak after the Leader of the Opposition and make some concrete suggestions to me and the department about what should be done. He has been a member of this Assembly for only a little over 12 months, but during that time he has visited these areas to see what is needed in them, and he has made practical suggestions. On the other hand, the Leader of the Opposition has been here for 10 or 15 years, yet he did not put forward one constructive suggestion. Instead, he endeavoured to "knock" the Government.

He is building up for himself as Leader of the Opposition the image of the "knocking Leader". He sickens me.

Let us get a few facts straight. The hon. member claimed that other than employment as stockmen the Government sees no suitable avenue of employment for Aborigines. I will list at least 10 industries that are functioning efficiently in Aboriginal communities. They are: joinery and cabinet making; sawmilling; pre-cutting and pre-fabrication of homes and other buildings; Aboriginal curio workshops; farming development; stores; garages; workshops; pearling and shell collecting; improved pastures; and tourist activities. These are some of the avenues of employment that we are providing for the Aboriginal people; yet the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to say that the department and the Government are doing nothing other than making stockmen out of them. Why doesn't he stick to the truth?

Mr. Houston: How long has that been going on?

Mr. SULLIVAN: It has been going on for years, and we are continuing to develop these avenues.

I have not the time to deal separately with the remarks of the hon. member for Tablelands. He mentioned things that should be done. I said that we had encouraged the Federal Government to make money available for such things as housing, schooling, education and hospitalisation. Surely that indicates the Government's concern for these people.

The hon. member for Mackenzie answered the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition relative to the prohibition on election candidates entering reserves. I reiterate that the Torres Strait councillors resolved at their own conference that approval be granted only to those persons who nominate for election to Parliament to visit islands for the purpose of election campaigning and that they be given the opportunity of one meeting at each island to explain their policies to the people. Each approved person is expected to find his own transport. Surely it is reasonable to respect the wishes of the duly elected representatives of the Island people.

The Leader of the Opposition is prepared to criticise me and my department for not allowing candidates to visit those areas. All we are doing is respecting the wishes of the people who live in them.

Mr. Houston: Why didn't you say that before?

Mr. SULLIVAN: The Leader of the Opposition virtually condemned members of the Police Force for becoming members of the Country Party. He said that he expected Country Party members to be associated with primary industry. Some members of the Country Party in this Chamber are not primary producers. I mention, for example, the hon. members for Redcliffe and Albert.

Mr. Houston: I did not say that at all.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The Leader of the Opposition implied that Jim Bidner, who is the Country Party candidate for the forthcoming election—

Mr. Houston: He is ex-A.L.P. and ex-D.L.P.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The Leader of the Opposition implied that Mr. Bidner tried to get endorsement from the A.L.P. for the forthcoming election. Why doesn't the hon. member tell the truth? Years ago, Mr. Bidner tried to get as far away from the A.L.P. as he could, and he would not go back to it on a bucking bronco.

Mr. Houston: How do you know?

Mr. SULLIVAN: He told me; he has said so repeatedly. He was a strong A.L.P. man when it was a party that he could be proud of. But he woke up to it and is getting as far away from it as possible. And he is trying to get other people away from it.

Why does not the Leader of the Opposition tell the truth in this matter? When Mr. Bidner went to Bamaga he went there as a private individual to visit the local show, just as anybody could do. He went there a few months ago when the local show was on.

Mr. Houston: Where else has he been?

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is the only place I am aware of that he has been, and he went there as a visitor.

Mr. Houston: You want to check up on your facts.

Mr. SULLIVAN: He has to go to other places in his capacity as a plainclothes detective, but he does not go there on our say-so.

Mr. Houston: Do you mean to say that he went there as a private citizen?

Mr. SULLIVAN: He went to the Bamaga show. I do not know what the facts are. He may have been going there as a policeman, but anybody was entitled to go to the show. When the Leader of the Opposition is making innuendoes he should get his facts straight and tell a little bit of the truth.

The hon. member for Tablelands waved a letter about as though he was proud of it. I think there are hon. members in the Chamber who have become used to his trying to hide behind his nice smile, but if this letter was not a reflection on the integrity of public servants in the department, if it was not an attempt by the hon. member to implant suspicion in the minds of the Aboriginal people for whom the department is responsible, I want to know what would be. He stands condemned by all sincere hon. members in this Chamber.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SULLIVAN: He wrote the letter on parliamentary paper, and the last paragraph reads—

"I would like to hear what your actual payments have been since you were injured, as sometimes the information we get from the department is not true."

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind hon. members on both sides of the Chamber that the Minister should be given an opportunity to answer the points that have been raised relating to the Estimates.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Had I been the hon. member for Tablelands I would not have brought that letter in here if I had been guilty of writing it, which I am sure I would not be.

Mr. Tucker: He got rid of your innuendo.

Mr. SULLIVAN: It is here in black and white, and the hon. member should not make any mistake about the fact that I had it here.

Mr. Tucker interjected.

Mr. SULLIVAN: If hon. members opposite are proud of the action of the hon. member for Tablelands in attacking departmental officers and planting the seeds of suspicion in the minds of Aboriginal people, for whom they are responsible, I must say that I am rather surprised.

Mr. Tucker: Why did the Premier apologise?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I am not talking about what the Premier did. I am talking about what is in question now. We will argue this out. It is a shocking indictment of the hon. member for Tablelands. We will have an opportunity to go up there and tell the people the real truth.

Mr. Tucker: Why did the Premier apologise?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I am not talking about that. The hon. member can ask the Premier that question; he will answer him.

The hon. member for Mackenzie indicated the value of his pastoral knowledge to the department over a period of 10 years, during which he was cattle adviser to the department. That is well known to us.

Mr. Houston: Why didn't you make him a Minister?

Mr. SULLIVAN: That was not my prerogative. The value of his work to the department is well known. I was pleased to hear him say that Mr. Shanahan, who has taken his place, is a very capable and dedicated man. The figures I outlined this morning showing the remarkable increase in our cattle interests indicate what a valuable officer he is.

I mentioned that I intend to visit the Aboriginal communities early in December,

when the matters raised by the hon. member for Roma, the hon. member for Mackenzie, and the hon. member for Tablelands—he was not bad all the time; only most of the time—will be looked into by me with very keen interest.

VOTES PASSED UNDER STANDING ORDER
NO. 307 AND SESSIONAL ORDER

At 3.30 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 22 October, the questions for the following Votes were put by the Chairman and agreed to—

Department of Lands—	\$
Chief Office	1,960,870
Balance of Department, Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account	13,363,857
Executive and Legislative Assembly, Balance of Vote	576,353
Premier and Department of State Development	19,919,499
The Treasurer	11,276,324
Department of Health .. .	51,333,795
Department of Justice .. .	7,283,608
Department of Labour and Tourism	3,771,461
Department of Local Gov- ernment, Irrigation and Forestry	5,256,017
Department of Railways .. .	95,226,000
Department of Transport .. .	1,245,668
Department of the Auditor- General	534,713
Trust and Special Funds Estimates, Balance of Estimates	230,053,373
Loan Fund Account Esti- mates, Balance of Estimates	57,583,000
Supplementary Estimates (Consolidated Revenue), 1967-68	18,743,849.63
Supplementary Estimates (Trust and Special Funds), 1967-68 .. .	4,597,227.75
Supplementary Estimates (Loan Fund Account), 1967-68	9,040,381.54
Vote on Account, 1969-70	131,000,000

SEVENTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY—RECEPTION
OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions reported and, on motion of Mr. Chalk, received.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS

The Resolutions being taken as read—

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer—Acting Premier): I move—

“That the Resolutions be now agreed to.”

Honourable members indicating a desire to discuss certain Resolutions—

Resolutions 1 and 2 agreed to.

Resolution 3—Department of Education and Cultural Activities—

Mr. CHINCHEN (Mt. Gravatt) (3.39 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity to speak on this Resolution, because education is of interest to all in the State and, furthermore, Opposition members have indicated over a period of time that in their opinion they have something on which to attack the Government. I say quite emphatically that the Government's record in education cannot be challenged on any ground at all.

Mr. P. Wood: Not on anything at all?

Mr. CHINCHEN: There has been over a period of time a probing here and there by those who are interrupting at this moment, particularly the hon. members for Too-woomba East and Norman. They have for some time been asking questions, posing queries, and endeavouring to raise doubts, and from all that they expect to find something on which to hang their hats at the next election. Without a doubt, the people of Queensland have learnt over the last 10 or 11 years that the Country-Liberal Government is the only Government that has made tangible progress in education.

I was more than amazed this morning to hear the hon. member for Norman endeavouring to indicate that teachers in the country were inferior to those in the city. I think that is a shocking thing to say.

Mr. Bromley interjected.

Mr. CHINCHEN: That is all I could assume from the hon. member's question.

Mr. BROMLEY: I rise to a point of order. I did not indicate in my question that country teachers were inadequate. I ask the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt to withdraw that statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Bromley: I was simply seeking information.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The taking of a point of order does not mean that an hon. member may make a speech. The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt will accept the denial of the hon. member for Norman.

Mr. CHINCHEN: I am sorry that I have stung the hon. member. I can only read into his question the indications that it gave to me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! When another hon. member makes a denial, the hon. member is bound to accept the denial without reservation.

Mr. CHINCHEN: I accept the denial. The only point I was making was that I read my thinking into the hon. member's words, and I think everybody else will put a similar interpretation on them. There is the indication that perhaps there is something wrong with the transfer system, that there is something different about young teachers and

old teachers. There is a rather nasty insinuation in that, and it is a reflection on the teaching service.

Mr. BROMLEY: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is still going on in the same fashion. I did not indicate at any time that I thought teachers were inefficient.

Mr. CHINCHEN: I am quite happy to withdraw the remarks.

Over a period, certain people have endeavoured to cast reflections on the whole of the teaching service and the educational system in this State. That has been done by various hon. members opposite and by people such as Mr. E. A. Baldwin, the president of the Queensland Teachers' Union. Mr. Baldwin began his attack a considerable time ago and claimed that he was making it in the interests of the teachers. It is rather remarkable that he now turns out to be the A.L.P. candidate for Logan. Was that man thinking of the teachers, or was he thinking of himself? That is the question that I pose to the House. There is no doubt in my mind that he was endeavouring to create a clouded atmosphere in the teaching service for his own advantage, and I consider that to be a shocking state of affairs.

I ask hon. members to compare the situation today in the field of education in Queensland with the situation in 1957. Hon. members opposite are quite happy to point the finger at this, that and the other thing; but when they think back to what education was like in this State in 1957—the point was raised a short while ago of their having short memories—they should bow their heads in shame. As all hon. members know, in 1957 the State Scholarship examination was the be-all and end-all of education in Queensland. There were 13,816 pupils in State high schools in this State in 1957. Only the privileged few were able to go to high school; the rest were cast out with an inadequate education.

What took place? As soon as the Country-Liberal Government came to office, big changes were made, and today approximately 78,000 students attend high school, as compared with the 13,816 in 1957.

Mr. Bromley: What percentage of workers' children goes to the university? Tell us that. It is 1.5 per cent.

Mr. CHINCHEN: The point is that so much has happened. There has been a complete change of syllabus in both primary schools and high schools. We have seen the introduction of institutes of technology. Is it not amazing, Mr. Speaker? I came from the city of Geelong in Victoria, and an institute of technology was established in Geelong in the last century. Yet until this Government came to power there was not one institute of technology in the whole of Queensland. Today we have three. The only reason we can think of for this is that the Opposition, when in power,

did not wish to educate our young people. That is the only interpretation I can put on it.

In another State, and in the last century, there was an institute of technology in a city like Geelong, yet in Brisbane, a much bigger city, there was no such thing. In all other States in the Commonwealth there were institutes of technology, but there were none in Queensland because we had a Labour Government. There is no other reason for it; I think that is well recognised.

Let us go further and look at the rural situation and the establishment of the rural training school at Longreach. This is a wonderful concept. The Opposition are status quo people. What they have for 40 years they live with; they stick to that and there is no change. I defy anybody in the Opposition to stand up after I have finished and tell us what happened in the 40 years that they were in office. I should like to learn what they did and compare it with what we have done in 10 or 11 years. I want to hear what happened in the previous 10 years and the 10 years before that.

Members of the Opposition will say that the agricultural college at Gatton was there in 1957. It was, but look at it today. It is an entirely different college now, almost completely rebuilt. Millions of dollars have been spent upgrading the Lawes college. I hope that some hon. members opposite have been there to see it. It is a magnificent college, entirely as a result of this Government's efforts.

The university at St. Lucia is another example. Look what has happened there in the last 10 years. In addition, arrangements have been made for a new university at Mt. Gravatt in the next triennium. Everything points to the fact that things are being done for our young people.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: You can take a lot of credit for that.

Mr. CHINCHEN: I do not take full credit for it.

Dealing now with teachers' colleges, we were bold enough to arrange to extend the period of teacher-training from one year to two. Under a Labour Government there was one year's training for teachers, and we now hear the complaint that two years is too short a period. The training period was extended to two years by this Government with the full knowledge that we would lose 1,000 teachers. It was a calculated risk, but one well worth taking. Opposition members would have said, "We cannot afford to lose a thousand teachers", and the training period would still have been one year, at a time when we are arranging for three years' training for teachers. We know that this is necessary and it will happen, but it can only be done by planning and by putting more money into education.

These things represent true progress made by this Government, compared with the 10 years before 1957, when there was no movement. Do not let anyone say that this would have happened anyway, because if one goes back 10 years and another 10 years one sees that nothing was done, and that was peculiar to this State.

Furthermore, on the technical side there are the perimeter colleges. This again is a concept that happened in all other large cities in the other States, but not in this State. This is the next move, and it will happen. One can see it happening at Eagle Farm and at Yeronga, and it will be happening in other areas. It is necessary for this State. Everything could not be done in five minutes, as things were in such a shabby situation in 1957. What had to be done was enormous, but the job was undertaken by this Government.

At this point I should like to pay a very sincere tribute to the late J. C. A. Pizzey, who was Minister for Education during the years during which this progress was made. I sincerely feel that in years to come this State will know, better than it does at this moment, how much it owes this gentleman for his work in bringing about these great changes in education. The change that the late J. C. A. Pizzey brought about in education was a complete revolution.

When we look at the period of 10 years we realise that it is not a long period at all. In those relatively few short years Mr. Pizzey achieved much in the field of both primary and secondary education. He overcame the problems of insufficient teaching staff and school equipment; in the technical field he established institutes and colleges; he instituted rural colleges and improvements at Lawes; he did a lot at the teachers' colleges and the university. Really, the State does not know what it owes to the late J. C. A. Pizzey. I pay him a very sincere tribute for what he did and the great benefits from his work that will accrue to the people of this State in years to come.

I should now like to draw one or two comparisons. I shall not deal in terms of money, because the howl would immediately come from members of the Opposition that the value of money has changed considerably. Instead, I shall deal with percentages and draw a comparison between what was done by a Labour Government and what has been achieved by the present Government.

When we look at the expenditure on education from the Consolidated Revenue Fund as a percentage of total expenditure, we find that in 1957-58 the provision for education amounted to 14.22 per cent. of the total expenditure; at present the percentage is 23.01. These are percentages of entirely different amounts of money.

If we look at the sums of money, we see that in 1957-58 the total expenditure was \$178,000,000; it is now \$377,000,000. When we consider that the 23 per cent. is of a

much higher figure than the 14 per cent., we realise how much more money is now spent on education. Of course, the expenditure of that sum is necessary because it is difficult for a developing State to allocate its funds to meet the requirements of all departments. Queensland is a developing State; in fact, it is a galloping State. What the Government is doing for education is magnificent. If we care to look at the percentage spent on education as against the total expenditure, less business undertakings, we find that in 1957-58, 24.15 per cent. was spent, and now it is 30.84 per cent. These figures show how far we were behind in the days when the Labour Party was in office.

Mr. Bromley: What about taxation? Work that out, too.

Mr. CHINCHEN: That is an interesting point, and I am glad that the hon. member for Norman has raised it. Expenditure on education from Consolidated Revenue, as a percentage of tax reimbursement, in 1957-58 amounted to 41.25 per cent., whereas in 1968-69 it amounted to 55.35 per cent. Is that not a revelation? This is what the hon. member is interested in.

Mr. Bromley: It is not.

Mr. CHINCHEN: Those percentages show what the Government has done for education; yet no other areas of expenditure are suffering. That has been achieved only by good management, good housekeeping, and good economics by the present Government. We see development on all sides.

Mr. Davies: There was development prior to 1957, too. You are not being honest.

Mr. CHINCHEN: The hon. member will have his chance to tell us about this, and I am waiting to hear it. He should tell us about the technical education that was not provided when Labour was in power, and about the high schools and rural colleges that were not established by his Government. He should tell us what was done by his Government and compare it with what my Government has achieved. He can choose any period that he likes; he can choose the best period if he wishes. I issue a challenge to him, and I hope that he accepts it.

If we look at expenditure on education from Loan Funds as a percentage of total Loan Funds, we see that in 1957-58 the Labour Government spent 10.6 per cent.—and there was a jump-up in that year. Let me outline what happened previously. In the previous year only 8 per cent. was spent, but today we are spending 16.3 per cent. of a much larger amount of money. In 1956-57, \$4,750,000 was spent, and the estimated expenditure for 1968-69 is \$15,000,000. Hon. members opposite cannot tell me that the difference is caused merely by the change in money values. We have allocated large sums of money for specific purposes. This had to be done in a comparatively short time because

of the run-down state of education when this Government came to power. That is known and understood.

I refer now to expenditure on university education. This will interest the hon. member for Maryborough, who is trying to chirp in on the corners as he always does. If he listens to me he will learn something; when I listen to him I learn nothing. I want him to hear this story. In 1957-58 the total expenditure on the university was \$2,788,000. The estimated expenditure for 1968-69 is \$13,812,000. That explains the situation. We are doing the job. I know that this hurts members of the Opposition because they cannot ignore the figures; yet they are trying to tell the people that education in this State is not as it should be.

The pupil-teacher ratio figures are very significant. The hon. member for Toowoomba East has been continually probing these figures to find weaknesses. I point out that in 1957 the pupil-teacher ratio was 32.1, but in 1968, on exactly the same basis, it is 26.4. We all want the ratio to improve, but that can happen only over a period. In every year from 1957 to 1968 there has been an improvement. There has not been one year without an improvement in the pupil-teacher ratio, which is vitally important. When the two new teachers' colleges, at Townsville and Mt. Gravatt, are in full swing, even with the loss occasioned by the three-year training period there will be a further decrease in the pupil-teacher ratio. There will be a distinct improvement because of organised planning; there has been nothing haphazard about it.

Opposition members are continually trying to find weaknesses in education matters generally. They seem to think that there is a perfect system of education, but it is accepted by people who have looked into this matter that there is no such thing. Every country has had its problems, and every country is still having them. We in Australia are not unique in our attitude to education, but we know full well that every country in the Western world has had an enormous teacher problem and that no country has yet found a way to overcome it. No country has found the ideal type of education; none knows just what it should be. We all know of the various experiments that have been carried out, but no-one yet knows what will ultimately be defined as the perfect type of education. I do not think it ever will be defined.

I suggest to hon. members opposite who have not seen the report by Mr. C. R. Roberts, Director of Secondary Education, after his overseas tour that they should read it. It is a very enlightening and factual report. It is not an endeavour to justify anything at all. It tells the picture as Mr. Roberts saw it after speaking to educationists in many other countries. He points out that his three months' tour involved

schools and Education Departments in England, Scotland, France, Germany, Washington, New York, Chicago, Buffalo, San Francisco, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. He said that the change of scenes was most difficult to cope with. This is so understandable.

Mr. Roberts went on to say—

"From the organisational point of view the systems of education we have in Australia are almost unique in that Australian local authorities have no responsibility in educational systems, but generally in Britain and the United States of America and Canada each local authority is the core of an educational system."

He went on to point out that there are some large sections, for instance, in London, New York and Glasgow—

"... but they are not typical; ninety per cent. of the education departments are comparatively small and their authority is limited to a small area."

All hon. members can see the problems associated with endeavouring to cope with the whole State of Queensland. This is the reason for the transfers referred to by the hon. member for Norman in his question today. If he would like to see a change to a system such as that which exists in America, Canada, or England, where the local authority handles its own educational system, can he imagine how teachers would be attracted to our far-western areas run by local authorities? Because of the inability to finance those small areas for educational purposes and the inability to attract teachers, the children in those areas would be getting a poor education. There is no question about this. This is happening in some of the far-flung areas in Canada.

We know that today we have a system under which teachers are transferred from the metropolis and the larger cities to our outback areas, and after a period they come back. This is an excellent system, and results in people in all areas getting the same standard of education. This is very necessary. These other large countries are finding problems in the system of education by local authorities. This is the reason why Federal Governments in those countries are assisting in education. The local authority areas cannot find sufficient money to finance their educational boards and run them satisfactorily.

Mr. Roberts mentioned that there was—

"A marked variation in standards of equipment and personnel even in adjacent areas. Affluent areas do very well; poorer communities are at a disadvantage."

This must be obvious to all hon. members when they think of the local-authority system of education.

He went on to say, and I feel that this is most interesting—

"Critics of education in Queensland often accuse us of being backward, implying

the existence of a perfect system of education which ought to be transplanted here. This is absolutely wrong."

I agree. There is no such thing as a perfect system which can be picked up and transplanted. It just does not happen. Some things that we are doing here are sufficiently forward that educationalists in England and America would like them there. And some things there we would like to have here.

Speaking of overseas schools, Mr. Roberts goes on to mention—

"Generally the high school student has a 'good time', with courses more varied and less challenging than in our schools; in no school I visited did the standard of basic academic work in the upper grades appear to equal that of our senior classes."

This is his conclusion after a good deal of investigation.

Mr. Murray: In any case, a philosophy of change and adaptation certainly applies to education.

Mr. CHINCHEN: This is happening now. That is the point I am getting at. For so many years there was a sort of status quo, and it was carried on the way it was. The books used by my brother who is six years older than I am, could also be used by me. Many people are looking for this today. They say, "Why must there be changes in school books?" There must be change at all times. Education is never static. It must always change. We find different methods, new ways and different procedures. These must be brought into the system. This is why I like what is happening in our Department of Education today. There is this awareness that there is no ultimate. It is something that is coming into being over a period of time but will never be reached.

In mentioning that there is always a cry for elaborate equipment, Mr. Roberts said—

"Canada and the United States lead in the supply of elaborate educational equipment for all types of instruction. But there is evidence in many countries of a growing suspicion of some of this costly equipment. Many people within and outside the teaching service were so carried away by the performance of modern teaching machines that they were ready to believe that they were the complete answer. But this is not so. Even a language laboratory, useful as it is, does not solve the language-teaching problem. Without a very skilled teacher using the laboratory, results are negative."

Today many people try to suggest that our children are not getting a sufficiently good education because of a lack of equipment. We all know that recently new equipment was provided at primary schools, and, furthermore, in some cases parents and citizens' associations are supplying much sophisticated equipment. However, I am one who believes that this must be watched closely, as money can be wasted this way in primary schools.

One of the pieces of equipment supplied in primary schools is a balance. I believe that children would learn more if one day the teacher said, "Here is a pound weight and here is a pound of butter. We want to see if the butter really does weigh 1 lb. It says '1 lb.' on the packet. How do we go about finding that out?" The kiddies would then exercise their minds, and someone would probably come up with the thought, "Why not use a stick and a fulcrum and measure it that way?" After a period of discussion that would probably happen, and the children would thus have taught themselves what a balance is and how it can be used.

Surely that type of education is preferable to the provision of a balance which the children do not understand, anyway, and of which they are simply told, "This is how you weigh things". I think it is possible that some head-teachers are making too heavy demands on parents and citizens' associations for certain types of equipment. If the children educate themselves such as they would in the example that I have given, I think that is true education.

Money is paid out by parents and citizens' associations to obtain equipment to teach children the various shapes. Surely, for example, if a teacher explained what a cube was—its number of sides and the fact that all sides are equal—and then said, "Go home and, in the next day or two, find a cube," each child would hunt around till he found a cube, or else he would make one. When a child was told what a sphere was, he would probably find an old tennis ball at home and say, "This is a sphere". He would then know what these shapes were. These things could be arranged in schools, and this is teaching rather than merely buying equipment that means nothing to the students.

Mr. Porter: You want inquiring minds.

Mr. CHINCHEN: That is what we look for at this level. At the secondary and tertiary stages of education there must certainly be sophisticated equipment, but at the lower level I am inclined to think that so much more could be done by getting the children themselves to move into this field.

Mr. Murray: Make primary education more an adventure of living.

Mr. CHINCHEN: That is how it must be, and the more advanced teachers are doing just that.

I should like to read to the House the conclusion of Mr. Robert's report. He states—

"I came back stimulated by what I saw, but more than ever certain that our system is fundamentally sound.

"When the Minister's special committee, including the most prominent educationists with University and independent school representation, prepared a secondary school curriculum for Queensland about four years ago, there was not one voice

of any note raised against it. When the special subject committees prepared their three years courses, there was general approval in the teaching service and complimentary messages from outside it. Some of these courses have been revised and improved. Yet the system is often condemned. The teaching service, though not as strong numerically as in some countries, is equal to the best in performance. Queensland teachers are highly regarded overseas. Yet some of our local critics pour scorn on our teacher training. The standard of entry to our Teachers' Colleges is higher than that demanded by most colleges in other parts of the world. We lack some equipment by comparison with richer and more developed countries; we need more graduates in the service; we need to look again at our school buildings; but we have passed through an extraordinary period of expansion in secondary education in Queensland in the last twelve years. The number of State secondary students in 1955 was 10,800; this year it is 72,000. Of necessity, concentration has been on the provision of classrooms and laboratories. The time is close, I hope, when we can do far more than this. But with all our shortcomings, I am certain that the secondary school student in Queensland is not at a disadvantage; in several respects he is much better-off than the student his own age in other countries."

I think that describes honestly the situation in Queensland at the moment. There is an awareness here of the need for change and improvement. However, there must be an honest recognition of what has been accomplished, as Mr. Roberts said, in the past 12 years. I think that this must be accepted by everybody who has considered the question. It is not an easy question to answer. It cannot be answered merely by providing more money; it requires an enormous amount of thought and planning. That is being done, and there is no doubt that the ground has been laid in the secondary and technical fields, in the field of teachers' training, and in the tertiary field, and improvement will take place.

I cannot do anything but compliment the Government on what it has done for the young people of Queensland and condemn those who endeavour to find small grounds for criticism. If it is honest criticism, if it is analytical or helpful, no-one will take exception to it; but I do not agree with criticism that is merely an attempt to find some way of poking the finger at the Government and is not justified in any way.

To go back a few weeks, I point out that the hon. member for Barooka stretched the figures a little in his own favour when he made a comparison between the number of children attending primary school under a former Labour Government and the number attending primary school now.

The hon. member did not mention that one grade had been moved from primary to secondary school. The Government still has to look after those children, but the hon. member regarded them as primary-school children and did not take them in age groups. He is sufficiently intelligent to know that he took advantage of the situation, and I do not think it was a very truthful approach to the question that he was raising.

What has happened in Queensland in the last 10 or 11 years, and particularly in the last four or five years, is remarkable, and I believe that the Government can hold up its head because of what is happening in this State in the field of education and in planning for the future.

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (4.12 p.m.): I thought that the hon. member for Maryborough would rise to the challenge that was issued by my colleague the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt, but apparently he declines it.

Mr. Davies: I did take it up. I said, "Read my speeches in 'Hansard.'" I have made three speeches on education in the last 18 months.

Mr. PORTER: Indeed. It is a post statement, apparently. The hon. member is not dealing with the matter on the basis of what the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt said.

The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt gave the House a very stimulating, illuminating and, of course, totally unanswerable case indicating what has been done in the educational field in this State. At the same time, he admitted that the field is one of change, in which there is always more to do.

When the Committee was discussing these Estimates in the Committee of Supply, not a great deal of time was spent by hon. members—certainly not by me—on the cultural activities of the portfolio, which indeed are very important. Much has been done, but more must be done.

Mr. Davies: Is this to be another election promise?

Mr. PORTER: The Government has gone a considerable distance towards leading the State out of the cultural backwater in which it languished for so many years—a cultural backwater which, I am sure, was sedulously maintained by the A.L.P. when it was in government because it seemed so anxious to ensure that the only unions that developed here were non-craft unions. The result of that, of course, tended to make Queensland permanently a State of hewers of wood and drawers of water, if I might put it that way, to the more developed southern States. It was not easy when the Country-Liberal Government took office and occupied the Treasury benches, as my colleague from Mt. Gravatt pointed out, to clean the Augean stables, as it were. A colossal amount of work had to be done before the real, positive work towards progress could be undertaken.

That certainly was the case in the field of cultural activities. But much has been done, and it is important to note that Queensland now has a Minister for Cultural Activities and that a Director of Cultural Activities has been appointed. Of course, with a State election looming next year—and all of us, I should think, are aware of the necessity to watch the winds of change—it is desirable that we should look forward to what else can be done for the future.

Mr. Murray: If we are to have more cultural electioneering that will eliminate the hon. member for Maryborough.

Mr. PORTER: That would be very sad; I should not like him eliminated; he has some entertainment value.

In considering cultural activities, I think it is useful to look at what is done in other States and, very quickly, one can see that in other States' spheres there is much more emphasis on governmental activity than perhaps there is here where, in our capital city, we have tended to leave some things to the local authority, and it is doubtful whether these particular aspects are being capably handled.

Mr. Davies: Will the hon. member admit that it was a Labour Government that started the Conservatorium of Music?

Mr. PORTER: My friend from Clayfield says that I should admit nothing, but perhaps the hon. member for Maryborough may be right. I am not suggesting that the Labour Government did nothing at all. This would be gilding the lily too much. What I am suggesting is that it was left to this Government to make substantial changes, and, of course, when we make changes in terms of improving cultural activities we have to be aware that we have cut our coats according to our cloth. There are clamorous calls on scarce State resources, and while one does not think, in general terms, that there are many votes in culture, usually this is a field that does not get a great deal of attention. So it is to the Government's credit that it has done something about it and shows every prospect of doing much more.

I got to Western Australia a while ago. It is 3,000 miles away. It is a long trip and I do not want to go there twice, but in Western Australia the Government still maintains very effectively a Workers' Educational Association. Some hon. members here may recall the W.E.A. when it was an effective adult educational and cultural body in Queensland. But, for some reason, it has gone into the limbo and, apparently, as far as I can ascertain, only in New South Wales is the W.E.A. effective. I am sorry, I was in Western Australia, but I should be back in New South Wales. As I say, only in New South Wales is the W.E.A. an effective body, spending something like \$100,000 a year.

Of course, in terms of a conservatorium of music we mention that ours has done excellent work, but the New South Wales

Conservatorium of Music costs close on \$500,000 a year; it has world recognition, 3,000 students, and is a very important body indeed. So in terms of a conservatorium there is still a distance we can go. The advice of a new building will be welcomed by all who have the interests of musical appreciation at heart.

In the library field, in New South Wales the library is run as a Government department attached to the Department of Education, operated by a body of trustees, and financed by various parliamentary appropriations and includes, of course, the world-famous Mitchell Library. About \$1,500,000 a year is spent on this library. We find that in other States something of the same thing maintains. In Western Australia there is a library board responsible to the Minister for Education. The Art Gallery operates with a board of five, set up by a 1959 Act. Incidentally, the botanic gardens there operates under a statutory board that is responsible to a Minister of the Government.

It established a botanic gardens in King's Park, with 67 acres now cultivated and, I think, with every known variety of Western Australian wildflower in a special area. It is a most magnificent sight. The point is that things which are left to municipal administration here and done poorly—perhaps only because of lack of funds, but for whatever reason, done poorly—are accepted as governmental responsibility in other States. I think it is interesting to note that in both South Australia and Victoria the department is known as the Department of Culture and Recreation. I think this an important grouping, because, as time goes by and technology makes people more productive, so leisure will become a more important factor in people's lives. I have mentioned before the great problems that will be created if we have an excess of leisure and we do not know how to use that leisure well. Without doubt, cultural education is the basic factor in ensuring that leisure will be put to proper use. It is interesting to see that the portfolio in those two States is entitled "Culture and Recreation".

In South Australia, as in other States, the library is a State library, and is administered by a Libraries Board, which is responsible to a Minister. As an adjunct to that library a children's library is established. It is famed throughout Australia. It contains approximately 6,000 volumes, and I think it is the oldest children's library in Australia. Its development, its policies and its projects all come under the direction of a Minister of the Crown, with Parliament, of course, providing the requisite supervision.

In South Australia the Art Gallery was extended three years ago into a three-storey, air-conditioned building, and many of its most valuable treasures are now kept in that section of the building.

Adelaide can claim to have a certain cultural eminence, which we have not yet achieved, because the Adelaide Festival of

Arts has world recognition. It runs for some 16 days, and nearly half a million people visit Adelaide and attend the various performances in all aspects of the Arts. I think there have been about four over the last seven or eight years. At the last festival there were over 300 separate performances. Adelaide is a city that has made culture a living part of its community.

As in other capitals, the control of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens is vested in a board of governors who are responsible to a Minister of the Crown. Attached to the Botanic Gardens are Zoological Gardens. In them can be seen orderly, sensible and long-term development, which is responsibly administered and effectively operated.

I might mention that the Government accepts the responsibility for developing park and sporting areas. Throughout Adelaide there are now 1,700 acres of developed park lands, and large areas are devoted to sporting activities. We are told that Brisbane possesses the greatest amount of open space in any capital city, but it would be interesting to know how much of it is in a developed state as park land that can properly be used for recreational or other purposes.

Victoria has taken a long leap forward in terms of cultural advance. It has a State library, which is a branch of the Department of the Chief Secretary and is administered by a library council. It contains some very magnificent volumes, as hon. members who have visited it will know. It has some missals that date back to the 10th century, and it embraces the famous Latrobe collection. The Melbourne Art Gallery has always been regarded as a first-rate one, but it has now moved into its new Arts Centre, which has replaced the old Swanston Street building, and it has become the envy and the admiration of the rest of Australia. Its new Arts Centre has become the focal point for all of Victoria's cultural activities, and we in this State should aim at the establishment of a similar centre. It will not only be for the showing of formal art but also for design exhibitions, trade shows, and so on. All of those have a tremendous value in determining elements of good taste in industrial production.

The Arts Centre on St. Kilda Road in Melbourne has a number of auditoria with stage facilities for musical and drama presentations, and it has a restaurant and other facilities. It is a superb building, with its ceiling of coloured glass, its "Ceiling of Light", as it is called. That is something that, in an arts sense, has made this building known to art critics and art lovers throughout the world.

I have only briefly reviewed the situation in other States to emphasise that, no matter how much we have done—and, as I say, we have gone a considerable distance, and much has been achieved—there is a need for more. Cultural activities in Queensland are

like *Oliver Twist*; they will always be seeking more. I think there has been a recognition of the role that culture must play in the community by the increased grants made to cultural bodies and the appointment of a Director of Cultural Activities who already gives every indication of making himself an effective force in this sphere. But to make cultural activities a vital part of our development requires more. I think we should ask ourselves what is culture. Many people think it is something separate, something esoteric, as it were, something strange, something that cannot be comprehended by the man in the street; that art and culture are the province only of the pseudo-sophisticate. They become frightened off by strange blank verse or peculiar novels, streams of consciousness in writing, by pieces of art, abstracts and other paintings that the average man looks at and says, "Well, I don't understand it; I certainly would not like to live with it. Is it art?" Very often it isn't. That, of course, is not necessarily culture or art, but we must recognise that culture is a living, breathing part of human existence at all levels of living. It really is an essential part of the fabric of being, and that is why I think it is proper that cultural activities should be associated with the Ministry of Education.

In my view, it is absolutely essential that children learn early, and learn in the schools, what is comprised in harmony of form, colour and pattern. They must imbibe there, as it were, a basic recognition of what is balance, and what is harmony and what constitutes the elements of good taste, because, if they learn good taste in an artistic sense, they can apply these standards to all their departments of living as they grow older and fashion their environment according to what they have learned. They will be able to shape their tastes in entertainment and literature, and what they wear, the furniture they buy and the houses that they live in. And, as a community which has imbibed the elements of culture and good taste, they will be able to impose on governments and planners all those proper aspects which make for harmonious and beautiful town-planning in the best sense of that much-used word.

In making these brief supplementary comments on this department's Estimates, I recommend that, if at all possible, we should in future put much more emphasis on terms of expenditure and providing the trained people for the task of teaching children at the primary school level. We should not wait until they get to the secondary school level, but should do it at the primary school level, at a tender age. We should teach them the elements of artistic order, of balance and of discipline, because without discipline—and intense discipline—there is no real art. It is only from appreciation of these factors that we can expect to have an adult community which has any critical appreciation based on a proper and recognisable cultural

form. Only in this way can we hope to have a civilised, cultured and sophisticated community, and I use the word "sophisticated" in its proper, literary sense. I further believe that only with this type of community will we get a guarantee that we have people who, as voters, can impose on governments, local authorities and other bodies those standards of excellence which will make us, in this State, pre-eminent in Australia and, I think, eventually admired throughout the world. This is what we should aim at.

Briefly, in conclusion, I point out that the other day I mentioned the desirability of providing an art gallery. Everybody agrees on this. I made the suggestion, virtually in parenthesis, that perhaps we could contemplate building a new Parliament House and making this building an art gallery. I have been rather surprised at the extraordinary measure of support that I have received in artistic circles for this proposal. My colleague, the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha reminds me that even the art expert, the hon. member for Norman, has approved of this proposal, and this is high praise indeed. This is an excellent building. It is a building which would lend itself extremely well to being used as an art gallery.

At some time or another we must contemplate vast extensions to this Parliament House which was built 100 years ago. Indeed, I think the Minister for Works and Housing indicated that possibly some \$6,000,000 would be spent in the quite foreseeable future on a tower block. I venture to say that, even with that expenditure, this will still be an old Parliament House with some improvements. If we contemplate building a tower block and a separate art gallery, I doubt very much whether we will escape for less than something of the order of \$10,000,000 to \$12,000,000—perhaps more—in the two to three years when we are able to get around to it with available funds.

Not only may it be desirable, in an aesthetic sense, to provide a magnificent new Parliament House suitable for the next century and to convert this building, which is a very lovely building and needs to be preserved in the very best way, into an art gallery, but it may also be the best economic proposition. I think that expenditure on a new Parliament House and alterations to turn this building into an art gallery would be less than the cost of a substantial and adequate new art gallery added to the cost of improving the facilities of this Parliament House with the addition of a new tower block.

In general terms in education, I, like my colleague the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt, say to the members of the Opposition that if they believe that this Government has failed in any particular in education, let them make this an issue in the next State elections. Let them stop chanting the word "Isis" as they seem to do over and over

again as if they are a lot of ancient Egyptians, with their faces towards the Sphinx, uttering some sort of incantation to the gods, trying to cast some spell, and get down to the hard facts of life. Let them see if the people believe what they apparently want to believe or would wish the community to believe, namely, that this Government has failed dismally in the sphere of education.

I remind them that in terms of actual achievements and tangible achievements—buildings and money spent—the record of this Government is an excellent one. In terms of introducing innovations and experimentation, again the record is an excellent one. True, the experimentations are of recent times, but they are happening, and this is the important thing. I believe that the people will recognise that, in terms of effective education, there is much more than the mere spending of money. I have pointed out that in other States where the quantum of expenditure is greater than in Queensland, symptoms of teacher unrest and all the other unfortunate manifestations that we have had here have not been inhibited. Indeed, in New South Wales, teachers staged a one-day strike. At least they had the good sense not to do that here. I hope that teachers will always remember that if they want professional status they must not necessarily put themselves into a trades union classification. These two things do not go together.

All in all, I would welcome education being on the battlefield for next year's State election. I have no doubt that on this basis the Government will emerge with a clear victory.

Mr. HOOPER (Greenslopes) (4.34 p.m.): I join in this debate to support the two previous speakers, and I should like to speak particularly on special education. The hon. member for Toowong, who has just resumed his seat, threw out a challenge to members of the Opposition, and I join with him in this, particularly in the field of special education. Hon. members opposite who are so vocal at this stage do not remember—they do not want to remember; indeed, they try to forget—what they did not do for special education.

As the president of the parents and citizens' association of the Queensland School for the Deaf, a position that I have held for some time, I have been able to observe very closely, through serving on the committee since 1958, what the Government has done for special education. Also in my electorate is an opportunity school for assimilation of these children with normal children. Hon. members opposite were not prepared to do this; they would not face up to the facts.

Before continuing to deal with special education, I should like to commend the Government on what it has done for education generally. In my electorate there is

in operation the very first School of Food, at which apprentice chefs are being trained. Hon. members opposite are very quiet now; they were not prepared to do anything like this. They allowed these apprentices to learn wherever they worked, and hoped for the best. They did not even provide a correspondence course of training. The School of Food now operating is the first one to be established in Queensland. A further school for post-Junior training has been in operation all this year at Coorparoo, and the Minister for Education mentioned when presenting his Estimates that another post-Junior school will be established in my electorate, at Ekibin, in the following year.

Let us see what happened in this House when the hon. member for South Brisbane saw fit to question the Minister for Education about the Queensland School for the Deaf. He did not even know the correct name of the school; he called it the "Oral Deaf School". This is a boarding school in his electorate, but never once since he has been a member has he visited it or even been near it. I checked that before I entered the Chamber, because I thought that he may have been there since he asked his question. However, he has not. He has been asked by letter and gilt-edged invitation to visit this school, but so uninterested is he in the education of deaf children that he has not even had a look at the place. One shudders to think how a member of his profession could feel justified in asking such a question, particularly when the information on which he based it was merely given to him, as it must have been because he has not been there.

The first part of his question was—

"Why are two classes conducted in one small classroom at the Oral Deaf School, Cornwall Street, Annerley?"

The answer to that is that the Government is building the finest school for deaf children in the Southern Hemisphere. Its construction is well under way, and the Minister quite rightly answered in that vein.

The second part of the question was—

"When two teachers are teaching in the same room at the same time, is it possible for classes to concentrate on each particular teacher?"

Again, the ill-informed member of the Opposition shows that he has never been there to see what temporary provision has been made whilst new classrooms are being built. The Minister adequately dealt with that part of the question.

The third part of the question deals with an allegation that I did not think any member of this Assembly would ever make against a member of the teaching staff. It reads—

"Are all letters written by teachers to the children's parents censored by the principal?"

I ask you! The Minister gave a blunt and definite "No" in reply to that. Hon. members opposite are not so vocal now.

The fourth part of the question reads—

"Are staff employed to clean refrigerators and walls and to do domestic work or are teachers required to perform the duties?"

This school has operated for a number of years and, for the benefit of the hon. member for South Brisbane and other Opposition members, I may say that a Labour Government established the school as a boarding school. I give the Labour Party credit for that, but I do not give present Opposition members any credit for not putting the hon. member for South Brisbane into the picture when he has not visited the school and does not know what goes on there. Domestic staff and fully qualified nursing staff are employed there.

Let me go a little further. The Minister indicated that a fully-trained sister is matron, a fully-trained sister is sub-matron, and another sister has been appointed to the nursing staff. The domestic staff is under the direct supervision of the matron and of the principal.

If the hon. member for South Brisbane will accept my invitation here and now, I am sure that he will be amazed by what the Department of Education provides for these children.

Mr. Tucker: Why do you reiterate this when it has already been said by the Minister?

Mr. HOOPER: The hon. member had an opportunity of making a speech during the debate on the Estimates. I am making mine now.

Mr. Tucker: You are not. You are only reading what the Minister said.

Mr. HOOPER: I am spelling out exactly what has not been spelt out in respect of the hon. member for South Brisbane. He has tried to create the impression that he has the interests of this school at heart, but he has never been near it. If the hon. member for Townsville North does not like what I am saying, I am sorry.

Mr. Tucker: All you are doing is making a personal attack.

Mr. HOOPER: The hon. member for South Brisbane made an attack on the Minister, and I am answering it. The hon. member forgot to mention what the school does for the children—in fact, he does not know.

His question continued—

"Is there any infirmary for sick children or do children with contagious ailments, e.g., conjunctivitis, still have to attend class?"

I think I have answered that adequately by mentioning the number of sisters on the staff.

He then asked—

“What medicines are available for treatment of the children . . .”

Again, that has been answered by my statement relative to the medical staff available.

The hon. member then went on to talk about a child who had been sunburnt, while on a picnic. The Minister indicated that the child had been sunburnt and that he had been cared for medically. I point out to the House that the hon. member for South Brisbane tried to imply in his question that the child was not treated.

He referred also to teachers being required to work overtime. This is a boarding school, and teachers who apply for appointment there know that they will be rostered to look after children after normal school hours. They expect that and accept it quite readily.

I think that the record of the school should be included in “Hansard”. Fourteen children have recently completed the Junior public examination—it is now a secondary school—and they have been given the opportunity, under Country-Liberal Governments, to undertake secondary studies. Under former Labour Governments, children had to do the best they could for themselves.

Yesterday the principal of the school attended the teachers' college and found, as he always has in the past, a very great interest on the part of the young people who will be going out next year to teach children such as those at this school and at the “Narbethong” school for the blind. This school will lose four teachers, for various reasons, at the end of the year, and the principal is seeking replacements for them and nine additional teachers. There is no doubt that they will be obtained, and, as has been indicated by both the present Minister and the former Minister, the average class that a teacher can take care of adequately is eight children.

If hon. members, including the hon. member who asked the question to which I have been referring, would like to pay a visit to the school, the principal is always prepared to show groups of people over it. The first class room block has been in use for three years, and it is conceded by educationists all over Australia to be the finest block in the Southern Hemisphere for teaching deaf children. The second block is almost completed—in fact, the lino is being laid on the floor today—and it will be occupied by the beginning of the next school year. It was built by the Department of Works.

A further dormitory block is almost completed, and we hope it will be ready for the children early in the coming school year. Another dormitory block is also almost completed. This makes four dormitory blocks, two completed and two almost completed, ready for occupation next year. The Opposition is very silent. The hon. member for South Brisbane can be very critical of what is going on there, but he is not prepared to pay any tribute for what has actually been done.

The equipment in this school is again conceded by educationists dealing with deaf children to be the finest available in this country. In fact, educationists from all over the country have visited this school and taken a lead from the experiments made there. They are being adopted by other schools throughout the Commonwealth. For the hon. member's benefit, may I record that this school was the first to perfect the loop aid. It was the first to effect loop aid in an individual desk, where the child could sit at his or her own desk and have the induction of the hearing aid only to him or her. What goes on in any other part of the school is not inducted to them.

The special floors and special linings that are necessary so that there is no induction from room to room cost thousands of dollars, yet the Opposition, and particularly the hon. member for South Brisbane, find it necessary to criticise the work done for deaf children.

We look back and remember that during the years when Labour was in office—I have already given a Labour Government credit for establishing this school—they talked about rebuilding this school; they talked about moving it to another site. They talked a great deal, exactly as they are today, about what they would do. However, when one looks at what has been done one realises that actions speak a great deal louder than words.

As I said, Labour spoke about rebuilding this school, but it was not until the late Jack Pizzey decided that it could be done, but that it had to be done piecemeal because it was a boarding-school type of institution that naturally could not be pulled down in toto, that it was done. It had to be pulled down piecemeal, but it has been done very well by the architects and the department so that the least amount of disturbance was caused, particularly to the children who board there and also to the day pupils.

This is why we find that in some rooms at the present time special equipment has to be installed temporarily, with special partitions so that there is no induction from one room to another. But this position will be overcome entirely by the beginning of the next school year. We will see the demolition of the old eyesore that has been there for so many years. The administration block and the old dormitory block will be pulled down, and a new administration block, dining rooms and laundry will be built. The Minister has already indicated this in his Estimates.

This is a very progressive type of school, and I should like to commend the principal of the deaf school and the principal of the blind school. In doing this may I also remind hon. members that the deaf school provides boarding accommodation for blind students. This accommodation, of course, is taken care of by the staff of the deaf school. But to show how progressive the principals of both these schools are, they brought a

project to the parents and citizens' association—it was taken on to the Minister to see if the department would give approval to it—which, I believe, is something new, something of an innovation. The parents and citizens' associations of both these schools propose to build a holiday home-cum-project home at a near-country seaside resort for the children of both these schools.

The department, through the Minister, has graciously agreed to make available to us a building that is to be demolished. It will be rebuilt and the activities envisaged are that the children, in classes, will go to this near-country residence, which will be built according to the requirements of the local authority. There the children will have not a week's holiday, as such, but a specified time in which to engage in certain projects, particularly a "getting to know you" project. Seminars will be held at which children will learn not only school work but also, in particular, home etiquette. We must remember that deaf and blind children face a tremendous problem in learning home etiquette, for it is something that their parents sometimes tend to neglect and overlook.

The teachers at the deaf school willingly support the idea of taking the children away on these projects. The habits of the children who attend day classes are not known to the teachers, the matron and the nursing staff. Naturally, of course, the habits of the boarding students are known. The students who attend the blind and deaf schools will be taken away under strict supervision and strict medical care to be taught the simple every-day things that more fortunate children are taught at an earlier age. They will be taught how to feed themselves properly, how to dress themselves properly, and how to perform all the other every-day tasks that more fortunate children learn at a very early age.

Perhaps some of us do not realise that this problem exists, but unfortunately it does. To alleviate the problem that faces these children, the parents and citizens' association has taken the wonderful step of instituting these projects, and I commend the Minister for supporting them and enabling them to be undertaken.

Only last night, after many meetings the parents and citizens' association decided to get down to business, and the honorary architect is drawing up the plans for the implementation of the scheme. I should like to commend the South Brisbane Rotary Club for "coming to the party" and assisting in the transport of materials to the area. I feel sure that when the project is under way we will derive benefit from it in the years to come.

I know that some people suggest that certain members of parents and citizens' associations are here today and gone tomorrow, and that possibly next year a parents and citizens' association may be composed of a completely new team. We

should look closely at this matter, because if future members of the association, or teachers for that matter, do not feel as strongly as present members about the project we should ensure that they have the backing and the attention of the Department of Education to maintain the project as a moving one.

Our desire to carry on with this project has been strengthened by the success of the scheme this year to send children from the deaf school to the youth camp at Tallebudgera Creek while students at ordinary schools were sitting for their examinations. The syllabus for the day indicates just what can be done for these children, so we are eagerly looking forward to carrying out this project.

I have mentioned that the classrooms and dormitory blocks at the deaf school are very well equipped. Adequate safety measures have been taken, particularly in the dormitory blocks. Supervision of the children is maintained throughout the night. The equipment that is installed in the classrooms has to be seen to be believed. The Government, through the Minister, has never been stinting in the assistance that it has rendered to the deaf school. On any occasion when we have asked for the provision of equipment it has been supplied, and on no occasion have we had to request an outside organisation to assist us in providing educational aids.

I commend the Minister and his department, and I express grateful thanks to Mr. Wood for his keen and everlasting interest in this type of school. In June of this year the school found that it had adequate equipment for teaching deaf children, and adequate facilities for boarding both deaf and blind children. But that did not satisfy the department, the Minister or Mr. Wood. They came to us and asked if there was anything else we would like. We went into the matter, and the department supplied extra aids for the school, which I will mention for the record because they have been of tremendous assistance to the teachers at the school.

The Government provided these items of equipment for the deaf school, early in June, additional to the existing equipment—

2 16 mm. Bell and Howell film projectors of the latest design;

2 Tudor film strip projectors;

1 modern overhead projector for language development work.

The Minister will be pleased to hear that at a seminar in the South in August we found we were the envy of all the other deaf schools in Australia.

The list continues—

1 high-fidelity stereogram built to special specifications for deaf children with responses between 50 and 12,000 decibels.

This is a marvellous aid because we just cannot use ordinary everyday equipment for teaching deaf children.

The list also includes—

5 speech-perception films imported from the University of Southern California for speech work with our deaf children.

If I have any criticism at all, it is that we could have another speech therapist. We have one but we could do with another, although I know that they are very difficult to get.

Further items included in the list are—

6 amplivox speech-training units for speech correction work with our deaf children;

1 automatic electric Roneo machine for preparing programmes of work and other associated work required by the teachers.

This is required ever so much more than in a normal school. An ordinary school can manage with one Roneo machine, but that is impossible in a special school.

After all the "bugging" by the hon. member for South Brisbane when he was trying to get under the Minister's skin, I feel sure that he will some day accept the invitation to visit this school. I do not know how we will get him there; it seems to be impossible. We have tried to get him there ever since he became the member for the district. If he does visit the school and sees what is done, I am sure he will not be critical of it in the future, and that he will commend the Minister and Mr. Wood for the great work that is being done for the children at the deaf school.

Resolution 3—Department of Education and Cultural Activities—agreed to.

Resolution 4—Department of Primary Industries—

Mr. AHERN (Landsborough) (4.58 p.m.): I did not have an opportunity to speak on the Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries, so I now gladly take advantage of this opportunity. I commend the Minister and his department on the competent way in which they are administering primary industries in Queensland and progressively solving the very tricky problems that confront primary producers.

I take issue with certain statements made by the hon. member for Port Curtis during his speech on the department's Estimates. He chided the Government with not spending enough through the agency of the Department of Primary Industries in the light of the relative importance of primary industries to the economy of Queensland. I cannot disagree with what he said on that occasion but I think it is particularly relevant, when a member of the Opposition raises such a point, to draw an analogy with what happened in relation to this department in pre-1957 days. From an examination of the tables that the Treasurer provided so that we could study more capably his Financial Statement, it will be seen that, in 1958-59, the expenditure of the State of Queensland on the Department of Primary Industries was

\$2,415,000. Today it is \$5,854,000. I agree with the statement that we are not spending enough on primary industries in this State, but in this respect the Labour Party stands indicted.

Members of the Labour Party could claim that they are not responsible for the sins of their forefathers. But I think that this demonstrates a lack of sincerity on their part in solving the problems of rural industries. It is quite understandable, when they get their riding instructions from the Trades Hall and the Labour unions, as they do on this question, that they do not have the interests of primary producers at heart and are not sincere in the proposals they raise in this House.

The Minister referred, when introducing his Estimates, to the contribution which the Commonwealth Government is making to research and extension in primary industries in Queensland. He intimated that the Commonwealth Government last year contributed \$754,624 in extension grants to the States for regional research and extension. He said that the Commonwealth Government is contributing to agricultural research within the Department of Primary Industries through the various joint Commonwealth-Industry funds which are financed by a collection of levies agreed to by the tobacco, wheat, livestock and dairying industries, plus a subsidy from the Commonwealth Government. On top of this, the fruit and vegetable growers of Queensland continue to assist the department materially with financial and equipment grants. This shows that the Commonwealth Government has acknowledged the worth of agricultural research and extension as a national investment, and I use the word "investment" advisedly because it is an investment, not a cost, to the nation. The United States survey on the cost of and likely return from various government expenditure found that investments in agricultural research and extension returned \$10 to the nation for every \$1 invested. That is a tenfold return. Surely that is an attractive investment for the Commonwealth Government.

The Commonwealth Government has recently advised, through its agency, the Department of Trade, that if we are to maintain the existing growth in our living standards in this country—and surely that is advisable and desirable—we must double the export earnings of this country by 1975, which is not very far away. With all the aura of glory which surrounds the mineral development in Western Australia and the wonderful coal development in Queensland, it will still be left to primary industries to shoulder the greater part of this increased export-earning effort.

The big battle will be for increased prices. I believe that this battle is going on at a rate today which cannot be excelled. Every possible country has an agreement with Australia, including many countries which never had agreements with this country

before and were never likely to under governments of other political colours, and every effort has been made to obtain increased prices for our primary and secondary products under international agreements. We will need increased production and agricultural efficiency. This is where agricultural research comes into its own. I say that the Commonwealth Government should "come to the party" to a greater extent in Queensland, which is the most fertile field for this research, to provide incentives for primary producers to increase production and, by so doing, their profits. Investment in agricultural research is, from the Commonwealth Government's and the nation's point of view, much more profitable than investment in water conservation. That is an undeniable fact.

I have said already that I feel that the Minister for Primary Industries should approach the Commonwealth Government with a view to having a uniform superphosphate price negotiated for Australia. Queensland at present uses only 2 per cent. of the superphosphate being used in Australia. This will increase substantially in the future. Research has shown that there are 150,000,000 acres of potential pasture land in Queensland. That will require a lot of superphosphate, and what is holding back its use at the present time is the high cost of freight on it. The Commonwealth Government has already recognised the worth of freight subsidies on superphosphates by making them available for selected projects in the Northern Territory. I feel that this should be taken a step forward and that, especially in the interests of export action, a uniform superphosphate price should be established for Australia in the very near future. If it is not negotiated now, it will be more difficult to do so at a later stage when Queensland's percentage of the amount used nationally has substantially increased. I hope the Commonwealth Government has the vision to allow this investment in research and extension work to continue at least at its present level, and preferably at an expanded rate in the future.

The Minister referred during the presentation of his Estimates to an increasing tendency in his department to encourage the use of regional committees or centres to focus the research effort on problems of top priority in each area. I should like to commend his department on this attitude. I feel that this is a very worthy means of approach to particular problems, as the value of this type of thing has been proved elsewhere throughout Australia and in other countries. The day when the Department of Primary Industries and C.S.I.R.O. were the only parties interested in agricultural research and extension has gone. Today many people are interested in this type of work, and it is right that they should be interested. I refer to seed companies, fertiliser companies, chemical companies, farm-management consultants, and, to an

increasing degree, the larger, successful farmers. They are all directly interested in research and its applications, and it is through regional centres to which I have referred that the most effective use will be made of the results of basic research work. All of this must be integrated, through a regional centre, into a local situation, such as that which might apply in the brigalow area, the Wide Bay dairying area, the Fassifern area, or the Darling Downs.

The roles of government and private-enterprise bodies who are interested in this type of research differ rather markedly. Government agencies have over the years adopted the stand that their work is done for the benefit of the nation and the taxpayers, and it is only right that that should be so because the Commonwealth relies on increased export earnings and an increased Gross National Product. But private industry—the seed, fertiliser and chemical companies—surely has its sights set on different goals. A private company could well be motivated by self-interest and profit. However, reliable companies—most of the companies in this field in Queensland are reliable—have found that long-term profits depend ultimately on increasing the farmer's profit and, hence, his capacity to pay for more fertiliser or chemicals.

It is only right that the efforts of these different interests should be directed towards one specific problem, and the regional committees or regional centres should have only one aim—to increase the profits of farmers. The main basis of their operations should be economic, and I am aware that the department is already sending economists into country areas to ensure that the work being recommended is properly evaluated economically.

Work of the type to which I am referring was not given very great importance until the Country-Liberal Government came to office. However anachronistic and silly it might sound, the Economic Services Branch of the Department of Primary Industries did not exist prior to 1957, and it is unfortunate that, even today, the resources of the branch are not big enough to meet fully the needs of all sections of primary industry. Its efforts are oriented towards several specific industries, and there are many other industries that would increase their profits if the economic rule was put over their operations.

When the Treasurer introduced the Budget a couple of months ago, he said that \$500,000 had been allocated in order to keep top-ranking public servants in the Public Service of this State and to provide them with an economic incentive to remain here. I believe that it is of vital importance that the Department of Primary Industries should retain the services of people whom it has gone to a great deal of trouble and expense to train. In my opinion, in the past industrial commissions have not recognised the status of scientists in this State in comparison with

officers of the C.S.I.R.O. and private companies, and have not taken into account the increasing demand from overseas. I hope that the Minister for Primary Industries can get his hands on some of that \$500,000 and apply it in the interests of the rural industries of this State.

It is the responsibility of the Minister for Primary Industries to represent Queensland on the Australian Agricultural Council, and I commend him for his work as a member of that council. Its work is of great importance to primary industries in Queensland and, although much has been achieved already, a great deal remains to be done. It is particularly pertinent to the dairy industry. Much has been said in this House and in the Press recently about the entry of dairy products from New South Wales to the Brisbane milk market, and I deplore their entry. Much has been said about the entry of ultra-high-treated milk onto the Queensland market from Victoria. Other products known as "Refresha" and "Vigour", which are milk in a poor disguise, are being brought into the Queensland market situation. I realise that this is happening. It is serious and it is not unique to Queensland. New South Wales is feeling the pinch from milk products coming from Victoria. Quite a number of New South Wales products are on the Victorian market, and in the future, if this trend is to continue, there will be many Queensland products on the Sydney and Melbourne markets. There, surely, is quite a silly situation.

It has been suggested that there should be an absolute price on milk products, as a solution of Queensland's problem in this respect. If it is a solution I will support it; I hope it is. However, I know that the Solicitors-General of the States have for years been looking longingly but with futility at section 92 of the Australian Constitution. If we introduce legislation of this particular type, I express the personal opinion that it would fall in the High Court of Australia.

Mr. Hughes: Are you suggesting pegging a minimum price for milk?

Mr. AHERN: I am suggesting that this can only be resolved through the agency of the Australian Agricultural Council. This sort of legislation has been tried before, not only in the dairying industry with its variety of products; it has been tried in regard to potatoes and many other products, and it has fallen down. A solution can be achieved only through the agency of the Australian Agricultural Council, where Ministers from each State with the heads of their departments come together and talk about an agreement. Surely there must be agreement.

Mr. Murray: Do you think an understanding between the States can be reached on this?

Mr. AHERN: I am saying that that is the only way we can achieve anything on it, and the Australian Agricultural Council is the agency which will see that agreement is carried out or otherwise. It is quite a ridiculous situation when in each State, around Sydney, around Brisbane, and around Melbourne, farmers have much money invested in milk supply plants in milk supply areas, and each State is ruining the markets of the others. That is happening and I urge the Minister to give all his energies to seeing that this particular agreement is reached. I think it is of paramount importance that it be reached, and I say that the Agricultural Council is the only means by which this problem will be solved.

This does not apply only to the dairying industry; it applies more so to the citrus industry in Queensland. I have knowledge of this industry and I saw it get into a lot of trouble this year as a result of operations covered by section 92 of the Australian Constitution. Thousands of cases of Sydney citrus arrived onto our market at critical periods for the Queensland producers. Surely this situation is not fair to our citrus industry.

Mr. Hanson: And much of it was over-mature, too.

Mr. AHERN: As the hon. member for Port Curtis says, much of it was over-mature, but I think that situation is under control now. Equally, it would be a silly situation if our citrus were allowed to go down onto the southern market at a particularly critical period for those growers and destroy their market at that time. It does not usually occur to the New South Wales market for many reasons, but it happened that way in Queensland this year. I know that Queensland agrees in principle to a production rationalisation scheme on a national scale for the citrus industry, again through the agency of the Australian Agricultural Council. However, New South Wales suffers from a high degree of disorganisation in its citrus industry, and that is the stumbling block to reaching national agreement on the industry's policies.

On behalf of the citrus industry of Queensland, I urge the Minister to do all that he can to bring some sensible thinking to bear on the industry and on section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. My remarks apply not only to the citrus industry but also to a wide variety of small-crop and other industries, such as the banana industry.

In his Estimates the Minister referred particularly to the increased realisation by his department of the need to institute farm-management planning. I commend him for that. I commend the sugar industry for taking the initiative in this matter by saying that it will, as an industry, have a look at improving its farm-management services. That is vital to that industry, and to other Queensland primary industries. It is encouraging

to see that the Department of Primary Industries realises this, for very real benefits can accrue from increased farm-management planning in Queensland. In other States for a considerable time it has been well realised that many benefits can be gained from this work. In overseas countries and in Western Australia and New South Wales it has been shown that farm profits can be doubled by the mere reorganisation of farming enterprises. Surely it is worth while for our Department of Primary Industries to look into this matter. We should implement a policy of farm-management on an increasing scale in the future.

I should like the Minister to look again at the possibility of registering farm-management consultants in Queensland. The sugar industry has taken a very worth-while initiative in promoting the concept of farm-management consulting. It is really starting to move in this State. Other States have regretted the fact that they have not considered registering farm consultants because it is now too late to institute such a scheme as some people would have to be culled out. That stage has not been reached in Queensland, so if we can act now in the matter we should experience no trouble. As a matter of urgency we should again look at this proposal because it contains many worth-while points.

I should now like to compliment the department for its efforts in my electorate. There is no doubt that its efforts at the Coolum Research Station have provided a valuable basis for the development of the wallum country. Its research efforts have been of tremendous importance not only to the wallum country but also right throughout the hinterland that lies behind the typical wallum country. A tremendous pasture explosion has occurred. The pasture expansion in that area has been so great that in several cases landholders have been able to obtain an 80 per cent. return on investment. That means that for every \$1,000 invested a yearly return of \$800 can be achieved. Research carried out on the wallum lands is worth while, and it has changed the most inherently infertile soils in the world to soils of the same fertility and carrying capacity as land on the Darling Downs. Wallum land was once land on which horses and even wallabies died, but today it can carry up to 12 sheep per acre, and turn off up to 400 lb. of beef to the acre. The research has enabled a lot of country that previously could not be developed to be opened up for development, and it has made a worth-while contribution to the State's industries.

Mr. Sullivan: The hon. member for Maryborough disagrees with that.

Mr. AHERN: I do not know whether he does or not.

In the limited time still available to me I should like to raise one further matter that I ask the Minister to study, and then to

consider giving it some support. This is a new idea in Australia, although it is not new overseas. In the interest of primary industries in Queensland we should keep up to date with overseas developments so that we will not be left behind the other States when they adopt them.

Today, our primary industries are facing some very tough problems, including that of decreasing prices on world markets. All that can be done is being done in this respect but, nevertheless, it is true that most products are suffering from the rapid decline in overseas prices, with the exception of sugar. I understand the world free price for it today was £stg.27 a ton, which shows that the International Sugar Agreement is working. No-one can deny that the increase in costs of rural industries is about 4 per cent. a year. That is pretty staggering for industries whose prices are not increasing at the same time.

There is a great need in every facet of primary industry to study the problems of rural adjustment. The dairying section is one which has had many problems of adjustment thrust on it by the situation in Queensland today. Many other industries, face not only the cost-price squeeze, but also the problem of much higher land prices. They have had to increase the size of their operations to cope with production problems in the Australian scene. The dairying industry will soon have thrust upon it an amalgamation scheme to assist it to adjust itself to the new Australian situation. These are very big, tearing adjustments, which the industry must make.

There is a proposal in New South Wales to establish a national rural adjustment centre. I should like the Minister to consider supporting such a centre in Queensland. The relatively slow growth in primary production and the poor export prospects for a lot of products, coupled with advances in technology and changes in economies and scale, all point to the need for considerable adjustments in rural industry. Changing circumstances are also creating problems for the wealthier sections of agriculture. Finance problems in rural industry today are very real ones. Labour supply and organisation is another problem. Pressures for horizontal and vertical integration have a very serious effect on the Australian primary industry scene today, particularly in the broiler industry. That industry is in the throes of problems brought about by both horizontal and vertical integration. These are very big problems for an industry to attack on its own. I believe that we need a national rural adjustment committee to investigate problems of rural adjustment, as has been done overseas, with a view to seeing if we can benefit by some of the work done overseas, to carry out research into those problems, and to recommend some changes in policies to the various State Ministers, through the Australian Agricultural Council. It has been called a "think

tank" on the problems of national rural adjustment. When the subject is looked at objectively it can be seen that it is vital to do some research into rural adjustment. Very little research is going on at the present time. I should like the Minister to look closely at this proposal and support it if he considers it worthy of support. It is proposed that it should operate through the University of New England. It is a tremendous idea which is worthy of the consideration of Queensland.

I again commend the Department of Primary Industries on the competent way in which it is going about the job in Queensland and particularly on its achievements in my electorate which mean a good deal of money and profit to the primary producers of Landsborough.

Mr. BLAKE (Isis) (5.31 p.m.): Mr. Speaker—

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. BLAKE: Firstly, I should like to express my appreciation to those who have welcomed me, both inside and outside the Chamber, and to those who assisted in my election to this Parliament.

Secondly, I should like to pay a tribute to the former Premier, the late Honourable Jack Pizzey, who was my political opponent but was also my friend and the friend of most people in the electorate of Isis and in the State of Queensland.

The subject of this debate surely deals with the welfare of primary industry, which is not yet of minor importance in the economy of this State, although the treatment that it is receiving would suggest that it is. The welfare of the people engaged in primary industry is surely more important than statistics in primary industry. Therefore, it must be the concern of any Government to think of the welfare of the people engaged in it.

There are some inescapable hazards that primary producers must face, namely, flood, drought, fire and disease, but perhaps the most costly and unnecessary hazard is the failure of Governments to recognise the rural domestic policies of some industries. A prime example of this is the Government's failure to recognise the domestic policy of the Queensland cane-grower. It has been said by Government members that the sugar industry favoured the scope and extent of the recent sugar industry expansion. This is only a half-truth. It is quite true that the milling interests did support the rate and scope of the expansion. But it is not true that the cane-growing organisation in Queensland supported it. In fact, it emphatically advised the Government against it. Its representatives went to the then Premier, Mr. (now Sir Francis) Nicklin with a written submission on 11 November, 1963. It was quite a lengthy submission and I shall not take up the time of the House reading it

all. However, I shall read extracts which point quite definitely to the fact that the cane-growers of this State did not favour either the rate or the scope of the expansion.

The sugar industry and the cane-growers have always accepted their responsibility to expand within reasonable risks of prudent business practice. In the short time since World War II there have been several planned, sensible expansion programmes, which, although they created problems for the industry, did not cripple the foundations on which the industry rested.

Here are some extracts from the submissions presented by the deputation from the Queensland Cane Growers' Council, consisting of its chairman, two vice-chairmen, and acting secretary of the time—

"Implementation of the expansion measures recommended would amount to a departure from a system of orderly development of the sugar industry based on secure long-term market outlets at reasonably remunerative prices . . .

"At all times the cane-growing industry has been conscious of the implications of the present status of the International Sugar Agreement and of the likely events which would flow from more normal conditions of marketing under such a world commodity agreement.

"We cannot share the committee's optimism regarding the outcome of such an agreement . . .

"The whole of this recommended expansion is designed to take advantage of markets which are not guaranteed as to tonnage or price.

"If they should disappear or be substantially reduced or be available only at an uneconomically low price, then the sugar will not be acquired and the cane grown to manufacture will have to be ploughed back."

This was the experience of lesser expansions prior to this one. The submissions continue—

"The present overseas position is favourable, but on the basis of past experience it would be unduly optimistic to assume that this high level of world free market prices, or even reasonably remunerative prices overseas, will continue indefinitely or even for a term giving the requisite security to the development of such additional areas of cane lands as recommended."

The submissions go on to state—

"The assignment of 150,000 new acres and the settlement of 1,000 new growers immediately would create a situation from which in the event of a substantial slump from the present buoyant position of the world free market, a retreat could only be undertaken at great cost to the economy of all cane-growers and perhaps the general community of the State.

"In such an unfortunate eventuality, the new growers in the throes of establishing production might well be that section of the industry hardest hit.

"It is true that a certain degree of increased production is desirable in the light of present market opportunities, but this can be achieved by means other than the extension measures recommended."

I put it to the House that that was a remarkable document in that it foretold with great accuracy what was going to happen in this industry if the expansion was carried out on the scale and at the rate at which it was.

That submission was ignored by the Government, and what is happening now is only a matter of history repeating itself. The Tory Denham Government in 1913 was under pressure from the cane-growers of this State to bring in a sugar-cane prices Bill which would give a fairer price for the cane that they produced. At that time the miller was in the happy position where he decided what price he would pay the grower for his cane, and that is probably the sweetest situation that ever existed for anyone in a sweet industry. That Bill reached the second-reading stage under the Denham Government but, under pressure from the millers, it was dropped; the Government would not proceed with it. Subsequently the Denham Government was roundly defeated, and in 1915 a Labour Government was elected. In its first session, that Government introduced the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act, under which this industry operated quite successfully from that time till a few years ago. It was one of Labour's "firsts" in the sugar industry, and many others followed, under men such as Ryan and Forgan Smith. They negotiated the Australian Sugar Agreement and the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement, but the benefits of that far-sighted legislation on which the industry rested have been evaporating rapidly over the past four to five years.

Mr. Anthony says that the industry is looking for a scapegoat. One does not have to look far to find who the scapegoats are in this excessive expansion of the sugar industry. The farmers are the scapegoats. In two years of production they have incurred a debt of \$23,000,000 with the Federal Government; in one year alone they incurred a debt of \$19,000,000 in repayable loans. The impression in the cane-growing industry is that that loan is free of interest until 1970 and that repayments do not begin till 1970; yet, in the balance sheet of the Sugar Board, I find that the interest and the bank charges of transferring that loan of \$19,000,000 from Federal monetary sources to the State totalled \$777,587 in the first year. In the next year, which was last year, a further debt of a repayable loan of \$4,000,000 was incurred. In all, a debt of \$23,000,000 was incurred on the production of two years that the farmers of this State consider to be two of the glorious years of production in the history of the industry.

When I said that I was making less money out of 5,000 tons of cane that I cut now than I used to make out of 1,700 or 1,800 tons, I was told, "You have been admired

for the cases you have put up and for the soundness of your arguments, but surely that is a ridiculous statement." If that debt of \$23,000,000 is carried through with the addition of the interest accruing till it is fully paid and applied to the two years in which the loan was used to finance those two crops, I suggest—I wait for my suggestion to be denied successfully—that, using Cane Growers' Council cost-of-production figures, the crops in those two years were produced at a loss.

How does the industry get away from that situation? The market is top-heavy with free-market, dump-price sugar. The industry has to depend on an International Sugar Agreement, and it supports fully the argument that a successful International Sugar Agreement is the only instrument that can get the sugar industry in Queensland off the far end of the limb to which it has been pushed. If it is not possible to reach an international agreement that will lift the world price of sugar to a height at which Queensland growers can produce half of their sugar for firm markets and the other half even on reduced quotas of 28 per cent., which have been applied, and a further 10 per cent., which is going to be applied, it will be necessary to come back very close to the target of expansion that the Queensland Cane Growers' Council recommended originally. That can only imply that the excessive expansion, the years of hardship that have been caused, the debt that has been incurred, and the money that has been put into that expansion, must go down the drain. That cannot be a good business principle, no matter what industry or business one is engaged in. One can only afford the amount of risk capital which, if it fails, will not bankrupt the parent organisation.

This is what has been done by legislation: the sugar industry, particularly the cane-growing section of it, has been put into a situation in which it depends entirely on the state of the world free market for its prosperity or otherwise, because the 1,100,000 tons of sugar for which the industry has a guaranteed price cannot balance the amount, even under the present quota system, that it has at producers' risk on the world free market.

This expansion has been a glorious success for most sections of the community. It has been a glorious success for the fuel companies, the fertiliser companies, the chemical companies, the foundries and the tractor and machinery firms; but the poor bunny who has to redeem at least two-thirds of the loans is the cane-cocky himself. In other words, we have a situation where the national earnings overseas are still in a healthy condition even with reduced prices for overseas sales of sugar—we are producing twice as much at half the price—and, from the national earnings point of view, it is still a success. But why should the cane-farmer be the one who has to underwrite this prosperity in the community? Why should he have to saddle up to

it by repayable loans? He is quite willing to earn overseas credits for the nation, but he believes that if this is the objective of Governments for the sugar industry, he should be assisted by grants, not by repayable loans.

Coming back to the proposals under the international agreement, 28 per cent. reduction is what has been quoted in negotiations, and now a further 10 per cent. may be necessary to make prices rise to a reasonable level, and also a further 5 per cent., which brings us very close, as I said, to the scope of expansion envisaged by the cane-growers themselves. While I am talking about the International Sugar Agreement, the previous speaker said that the price has risen to £Stg.27 a ton and that this was evidence that the agreement is working. Hon. members probably know as well as I do that there is no agreement; there is a draft agreement but it has yet to be ratified, and even if it does become an agreement it lacks what we were told in May of this year was one of the vital ingredients to make it work. It was said in Geneva that a vital ingredient to make the International Sugar Agreement effective was the participation of the European Common Market. However, the European Common Market is not a participant. In addition, the agreement does not have the blessing of the United States.

Through my official capacity as a cane-growers' executive member, I know of official rumours that the administration of the United States is thinking of again talking sugar trade with Cuba. If these things happen, this agreement will not be successful or effective. Even if it does become as effective as previous agreements, which only reached the floor price 56 per cent. of the time they were in operation, there could still be a very tough and dismal economic future ahead of the Queensland canegrower owing to the extent of quotas he has on world market prices. The only way that he will be able to retrieve the situation is for the Government to live up to its responsibility and subsidise export sugar. If that is found to be too expensive, we will have to retract further within more profitable markets. That is definite proof, as the world position has shown, that this expansion was excessive, unwarranted, and unwise.

The business world is littered with skeletons of enterprises that have been foolish enough to over-expand. We do not mind stimulating the economy—the sugar industry has never shirked expansion on a sound basis—and we will go on increasing production, if necessary, to earn overseas credits, provided we are not the bunnies who have to carry the economics of unprofitable production.

There is talk of great development in this State, but development is not necessarily progress unless it benefits the people who are producing it or taking part in it. A great many of our rural industries have developed over the last few years. Of particular significance is the development that has occurred

in the sugar industry. Statistically it is a huge success, and, as I have said, economically it is a success for a large section of the community. But it has represented nothing but retrogression in the living standards of those who are engaged in it. This is not rural justice. The Labour Party has never been guilty of ignoring the domestic policy of Queensland's cane-growers or of those engaged in any other rural industry. I hope that the present Government does not again get the opportunity of ignoring the domestic policies of our rural industries.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (Mulgrave) (5.51 p.m.): Firstly, let me congratulate the new hon. member for Isis on having had the good fortune to win the seat with a very slight margin, although approximately 1,000 electors did not vote.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I should also like to congratulate him on his maiden speech and hope that he does not emulate the manners of many of his colleagues in this House. At least Government members have the decency to sit quietly and listen to what speakers have to say. This morning I witnessed a Minister sitting peacefully and quietly taking all the criticism—and not all of it was constructive—that the Leader of the Opposition could muster. But as soon as a Minister rises to answer members of the Opposition, what is the attitude of members of the Opposition? They remind me of a pack of howling dogs. A member cannot ever hear himself speak. I have witnessed such a display on many occasions when I have risen to speak, and this afternoon was no exception.

Mr. Mann: When we speak we always have a bark. You fellows don't bark very often.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I do not care what members of the Opposition do, and I am not very interested.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The only way I can make myself heard above the interjections of hon. members on my left is by shouting in the same manner as they are. I dislike having to do this, but I warn hon. members on my left that if they persist with their interjections somebody will suffer for it.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: As I have said, the behaviour of hon. members opposite is not unusual and it does not worry me a great deal, but I do like to be heard because I want to make a few points as I develop my speech.

I congratulate the newly elected member on his maiden speech. He had an example of decency from this side of the House, because we paid him the courtesy of listening to him in silence. However, that does not always happen when a newly elected Government member makes his maiden speech. We

always extend courtesy and decency to members of the Opposition, but we never get the same in return from them. Of course, I am not surprised, because I have known members of the Opposition for a number of years.

The newly elected member for Isis said that Governments lack interest in primary industries, or words to that effect, meaning to say that both Federal and State Governments have not done much for primary industries during the last few years. He then pointed out, as many of us do from time to time, the very important part played by primary industries, not only in Queensland but throughout Australia. I have said on more than one occasion that we are still very dependent on our primary industries and that we will continue to be so dependent for a number of years to come. Both the Queensland Government and the Federal Government realises that, and no Government has done more than this one in the field of research and in every other field to assist primary industries. We have only to examine statistics to realise—I am sure the hon. member for Isis knows this—what has taken place in the sugar industry through research, and, as I have told hon. members opposite time and time again, this has been accomplished at the sugar industry's expense.

The hon. member went on to say, amongst other things, that the Denham Government would not have anything to do with the legislation under which we have operated for a number of years, but he did not tell us who was the architect of this legislation. He left us with the idea that it was a good old Labour Party thought, but that is not correct. If hon. members read through the annals of history they will find that the priginator of this idea was not a Labour man. The man who conceived this idea was none other than a man named Crawford, but he could not convince his Government (Opposition laughter). I do not deny that. He put it forward as a private member's motion.

What did the Labour Party do when it attained office? It stole this idea, just as it steals many other things. Today it is trying to fool people by saying, "Put us in and we will look after primary industry." I remember what the good old Labour Government did for the tobacco industry. The hon. member for Tablelands was not here in those days; he would not know anything about it. We could not get Labour to do anything for the tobacco-growers.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: Who provided the water for the tobacco?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Labour started to provide the Tinaroo scheme, but it was talked about for goodness knows how many years.

What did Labour do for the tobacco industry? It legislated for about 4 per cent. of Australian leaf in cigarettes. I can

remember what my colleague Tom Gilmore did when he entered the Federal Parliament in 1949. It was a sorry day for the tobacco industry when he was defeated. Look what this Government has done for the tobacco industry. Hon. members opposite who are interjecting will know all about it after the next election. In case the people have forgotten, I will tell them what the Labour Government did for tobacco-growers—precisely nothing! This Government made the companies increase the percentage of local tobacco in cigarettes very markedly until it now represents about 50 per cent. That increase has taken place since 1949, and is just an indication of what has happened in one industry. What happened in the wheat and beef industries?

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I am telling hon. members opposite a few home truths, which I want them to listen to, about what the various Governments have done.

We would not have sold even a screw to one of the most important countries that we are trading with today if we had listened to the Labour Party of Australia, but we now have the Japanese Trade Agreement. Hon. members opposite are very silent on that score. They opposed the agreement tooth and nail, vigorously and bitterly. Thanks to the Japanese Trade Agreement, what is the position today?

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

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Before the meal recess I was endeavouring to point out the attitude of the Australian Labour Party towards the trade agreement which the Deputy Prime Minister, who is Leader of the Australian Country Party and Minister for Trade, negotiated with Japan some years ago. When he was ratifying that agreement the Federal Opposition opposed it bitterly. It would have been a sad day for Australia if we had had a Labour Government on that occasion. If we had, we would not have had the trade which we are now enjoying with Japan, and which we are pleased to enjoy.

I also point out and put on record, in view of what the previous speaker said about the lack of interest shown by both the State and the Federal Governments in primary industries over the years, that the Commonwealth Government, in conjunction with the Queensland Government, brought into being the tobacco stabilisation scheme, which has meant a good deal to this industry. The scheme put the industry on the road to success. Those in the industry know where they are going and those who lead the industry are happy with this arrangement.

I also spoke about what the Governments had done for the wheat and beef industries, and, for that matter, other industries.

Mr. R. Jones: There is not one primary industry in Queensland that is not at a very low level today.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I would not say there is not one. As I pointed out—and here I agree with the previous speaker—primary industries are the work-horse of the nation.

An Opposition Member: The Liberals don't think so.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Yes, they do. The policy of this Government is to work in partnership with industry and not to try to inflict something on it that it does not desire. We work in conjunction with private industry. That is part and parcel of our policy, and we carry it out.

Mr. Houston: Do you believe in the State or the Commonwealth competing with private industry?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I do not know what the Leader of the Opposition is leading up to. If he is suggesting that we believe in any form of socialism, which is Labour's main policy, I say definitely no, and I will have a bit more to say about that later on.

Mr. Houston: The Commonwealth competes in the shipping industry.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: We run the railways and various other things too, which private enterprise is not able to do in this country.

We have embarked on a vigorous scheme of research in all fields. The hon. member for Cairns said that all primary industries were in difficulties. I do not think that this can be said of the beef industry. This reminds me of the tremendous opposition there was when this Government saw fit to give the King Ranch interests a lease of some 52,000 acres in the Tully area. On that occasion the Opposition had a good deal to say about the granting of that lease. Today, however, we do not hear much from the Opposition on that matter. The King Ranch people have spent many millions of dollars in that area. Although I am not sure of the number of cattle being run at present, I think it is approaching 20,000.

Mr. Houston: Where did they spend millions?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: In Tully. The Leader of the Opposition should visit the area and have a good look at what is happening to help him when he is called upon to speak here. That enterprise has done much for the meat industry along the coast. The Department of Primary Industries has shared substantially in this work by establishing experimental plots of various pastures and legumes, and generally assisting in no small way. This development will ultimately mean a great deal to Tully. Quite a few people are now gainfully employed there, and their standards of living and housing are good.

Mr. Carey: This will assist not only Tully but the State as a whole.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: That is quite so; Tully is only one section to which I was referring. There was originally much

opposition to this project from hon. members opposite. Someone today referred to the wallum land. Here is another object lesson which has to be learned.

Mr. Davies: Who started the research in the wallum country?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: This Government played its part. As a matter of fact, if the hon. member for Maryborough wants to hear a little of the truth, I shall give it to him. Research on the use of wallum land has been carried out in Western Australia for some 30 years, and one of the difficulties facing the Government here was the small amount of work that had been done in Queensland in this field.

Mr. Davies: You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I have nothing to be ashamed of, nor has the Government, as the people will demonstrate at the polls next year.

I should perhaps have referred in my opening remarks to the "temporary" member who was sworn in today, because I feel that he will be here only temporarily. He is a leader in the sugar industry and holds a responsible position in it in his area, and it rather surprised me to hear him attack the expansion of the industry in the way he did. It is true that there was some opposition to expansion—indeed, I have never known anything to which there was no opposition—but I should like to remind the hon. member that the expert committee that inquired into this matter was set up at the request of the industry. That committee heard evidence up and down the coast. I attended some of its sittings, and I did not see too much opposition to expansion. Rather, from what I witnessed, were most people who appeared before the committee trying to get as much as they possibly could.

The hon. member for Tablelands will remember that there was even great agitation for the establishment of a sugar industry on the Atherton Tableland. In fact, I was accused on more than one occasion of being a bit of a "knocker" of the proposal for an industry on the Tableland. If hon. members opposite care to read the Gibbs Report, they will find that that is so. People on the Tableland formed committees and gave evidence before the committee of inquiry.

That committee travelled up and down the coast and listened to all who wished to give evidence, including millers, mill suppliers, and representatives of chambers of commerce and various other bodies.

Mr. R. Jones: What about the Jones committee?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I do not know what "Jones committee" the hon. member is referring to. I have no knowledge of any Jones committee.

Mr. R. Jones: He was a Gordonvale man.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: At that time sugar was at a very high price, caused substantially by the collapse of the previous International Sugar Agreement. There was agitation to grow sugar on the Ord River.

I have said before—and I say it again—that if the Government and the Australian sugar industry were foolish in agreeing to expansion, so were all the other sugar-growing industries in the world, because they followed the same pattern. No evidence was put before them to indicate that a collapse in price would occur even before the expansion programme was completed. That, of course, is now history, and it is easy to be wise when the party is over. Every mill along the coast fought for a higher peak than it eventually was allocated. I heard my friend from Isis talking about 1,800 tons and then about 5,000 tons, so it is reasonable for me to assume that he was not too proud to take part in the expansion when the opportunity offered.

An Opposition Member: He was forced to.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: He was not forced to. I have no knowledge—the Minister for Primary Industries will correct me if I am wrong—of anyone who refused an expansion of peak or a new assignment. On the contrary, as the Minister well knows, I went to him many times on behalf of people from various mill areas who wanted new assignments or increased peaks, but their requests could not be granted because of the findings of the committee of inquiry. No-one will ever convince me that anybody was forced to take part in the expansion of the industry.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I would appreciate it if hon. members on both sides of the House would allow one person to make a speech instead of all trying to make a speech at once.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a welcome change to be heard in silence; it is not often that I have that privilege.

Mr. Bennett: Why don't you say something sensible? We will listen to you if you do.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Goodness me! This is the first full day that the hon. member for South Brisbane has spent in the House, so I do not think he should be talking too much. Apparently he has run out of clients. When he does come into the Chamber, he is here only about two minutes before he is on his feet speaking, and two minutes after he concludes his speech he leaves. That is the usual pattern followed by our friend from

South Brisbane. I do not intend to comment now on some of the speeches that he makes. On another occasion I may endeavour to do so.

When an opportunity to develop the country presents itself, an industry comes along and says to the Government, "Will you have a look at the situation? Will you do this or that and see whether it is wise to expand?" What would happen if the Government had said in this instance, "No, we are not going to be a party to this. We will not have any part of expansion. We do not believe that the time is opportune."? What would hon. members opposite have done about it?

Mr. Houston: What did you do about the liquor question?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The House is not discussing the liquor question tonight. The Leader of the Opposition would have been on his feet kicking up a shindy for political reasons, as the hon. member for Isis did earlier in the debate.

How is the country going to develop if the Government does not take action? No matter what industry it is in which expansion occurs, risks have to be taken and almost invariably troubles are encountered. The sugar industry has experienced teething troubles before now. When an industry is expanded, things get out of balance and it takes a short while to get back to normal. Naturally, the unduly high prices would cause everybody who could grow sugar to hasten to grow it. Even my friend from Maryborough would have grown sugar in his back yard if the price had remained at its then height and, of course, if the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board had seen fit to give him an assignment.

It is utter rot and nonsense to suggest at this stage that it was unwise to embark on an expansion scheme. As I said, everyone whom I saw or spoke to at that time was in favour of it. I should like to know the attitude of the canegrowers' executive of the Isis area on the expansion scheme at that time. It is true that we ran into trouble, as did nearly every other sugar-growing country in the world. Incidentally, who worked harder than the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade in this country to try to stabilise this industry, as he has also done for others?

Mr. Davies: What did your Premier do?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Everything in his power, just as the Minister for Trade did in the Commonwealth field. In addition, years of very hard work were put in behind the scenes by some of our great industry men and some of our senior public servants, both Federal and State.

Mr. Davies: They kept it very quiet.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: If the hon. member read the newspapers and followed things he would know that it was not kept quiet.

I do not know how many times John McEwen went overseas to point out to the countries involved just where sugar was going and what it meant in general to world trade. Naturally, some of the countries that depend substantially on sugar were not able to trade and it was in the interests of everybody, as we well know, to get an agreement. After several years of very hard work a draft agreement was finally arrived at, and in my view it is the best International Sugar Agreement ever drawn up.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I spoke to the hon. member about this sort of thing the other day. Naturally, if he and I sit down and come to an agreement on some transaction we have to put it into legal form, which takes some time. If the hon. member looks at the last official cane-growers' journal he will see what Mr. McAvoy says. I will not read it.

Mr. Houston: Why not?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Very well, if the hon. member wants me to read it I shall do so. It reads—

"This was the reaction of Mr. F. T. McAvoy, Chairman of the Queensland Cane Growers' Council, upon hearing details of the Agreement reached and considering its effects upon the economy.

"He paid tribute to the work of the Hon. J. McEwen in the six weeks he had spent in Geneva following a visit there earlier in the year in an endeavour to bring the conference to a successful conclusion—this, notwithstanding other heavy calls upon his time as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade. Tribute should also be paid to the Queensland Premier who had given four weeks to the task in Geneva despite the importance of the Budget debate in the Queensland Parliament.

"Mr. McAvoy went on to say that the London Daily Price had risen to £23 sterling, showing a favourable market reaction to the possibility of an agreement even before the Conference in Geneva had been formally concluded."

That shows what this gentleman thought about it. Not only is he the leader of the sugar-growers—

Mr. Houston: He is a member of the Country Party.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: That, I would not know.

In addition, he is looked upon by the sugar industry as a very responsible man. I am sure the Minister will agree with what I say, as he is chairman of the Australian Farmers' Union and on a number of parent bodies. As well as Mr. McAvoy, many other people speak in glowing terms of the agreement.

I have here a number of circulars issued by the Queensland Cane Growers' Council. In one dated 5 November, it says—

"The Agreement, the text of which was approved by delegates representing more than 70 countries, will be open for signature until 24 December, 1968, and instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval, must be deposited by 31 December.

"Votes necessary for ratification:

The Agreement will enter into force on 1 January, 1969, if by that date Governments holding 60 per cent. of the votes of the exporting countries and 50 per cent. of the votes of the importing countries have signified their acceptance."

Mr. Ramsden: The Premier told us that.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No doubt he did. Mr. McEwen has also said it. The important thing is that we have to keep saying it as often as we can, because hon. members opposite have tried to "knock" every worthwhile proposal that has been put forward in this House. They are against foreign capital; they are against the Japanese Trade Agreement; and they are against the King Ranch trial. I could go on reciting other things that they are against. Not once have I heard them give the sugar-industry leaders one bit of praise. I have heard them tell us what the Labour Government did for the sugar industry when it was in power, but they entirely disregard the work done by the industry leaders. If they read what Mr. McEwen said they will see that he paid a very high tribute to those behind the scenes for the work that they have done.

Mr. Sullivan: Don't you think that members of the Opposition have indicated tonight that, for political purposes, they are hoping that this agreement will fail?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I have reason to believe that that is how the Isis by-election was won. I am very sorry that I was not there at the tail-end of the campaign to take part in it.

Mr. Houston: Why didn't you go up there?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I was up there, and we were in front when I was there. I was there a little too early. These are the tactics that members of the Opposition employ. The only thing that they are concerned about is politics. They are kidding to the primary industries. As a matter of fact, this morning we were nearly washed out of the Chamber by the tears flowing from the eyes of the Leader of the Opposition when he spoke about the lousy deal that the Minister for Lands is allegedly handing out to the poor, drought-stricken farmers.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: I didn't notice you here.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The hon. member may not have noticed me here.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: You weren't here this morning.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I know something about what happened. It is very interesting to look at the Labour Party's platform.

Mr. Houston: What is it?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Surely to goodness the hon. member does not expect me to recite Labour's policy to him, although I know it fairly well. I was rather amazed to find a man who admits that he grows 5,000 tons of cane walking into this House, and sitting on the other side. He knows what will happen to him if he sells his land under a Labour Government. In fact, in days gone by Labour imposed taxes on the land and forced the farmers to sell it.

Mr. Blake: I may not want to sell it.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The hon. member may not just yet, but the way he was talking—

Mr. Blake interjected.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The way the hon. member was crying and screaming this afternoon I thought he was wanting to give his land away. That is how I understood his remarks. He certainly was not too happy with it. The only part that I could not understand was that if he could see all this trouble beforehand, why in the name of goodness did he take part in it?

Mr. Blake: We were forced to retain our equity in the industry.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I am now beginning to understand. The hon. member must have a fairly tough executive in his area if they force him to do things like that. We do not operate that way in the North. I can well imagine that the hon. member's area would be one of the first that would be into the expansion.

The new International Sugar Agreement embodies many more nations than the previous agreement did. It also contains different provisions. The hon. member says that it has not yet been ratified, that possibly it will not be ratified, and that there are "ifs" and "ands" and all sorts of things associated with it, but it is very interesting to note that since the conference concluded, the world free-market price of sugar has risen to £Stg.27 10s. That is the price as from today. No fewer than 49 exporting countries are associated with the agreement.

Mr. Bennett: What about the European Common Market?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I will talk about that if I have sufficient time.

There are 30 importing countries associated with the agreement. They are the main ones, although my friend is a little frightened of the Common Market countries. I do not think we have to worry too much about them at this stage.

Mr. Bromley: Why not?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I will tell the hon. member in a minute.

I want to quote what the Geneva experts think about the agreement. They said that there were seven points in the new International Sugar Agreement making it better than the 1958 pact.

Mr. Houston: Who said that?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The experts at Geneva.

Mr. Houston: What are their names?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I have addressed school-children from time to time, and I am bound to admit that they have exhibited much more intelligence than is coming from the Opposition side of the House tonight. Opposition members get up as experts and tell us all about the sugar industry, and now they want me to tell them who the experts were. That shows how much they know about this matter. I think it is fair to say that we can gauge their knowledge on statements such as that. The following points would seem to provide for more effective regulation of world trade in sugar.

I said there were seven points, and I want to tell the Opposition about them. They read—

"1. Quotas are more realistic and the Agreement provides for a maximum cut of 15 per cent. in basic export tonnages as against 20 per cent. in the earlier pact."

This was also something that was used politically.

They continue—

"2. The price range, now transformed into a scale with several reference points, is wider and provides for controls to be introduced or relaxed at various stages in the range.

"3. The new pact bans imports from non-members if the price falls below 3.25 cents per lb. lowest reference price. No such provision was contained in the old Agreement. This clause could also influence the Common Market to join the Agreement at a later stage."

This is the important clause that I want to speak about. It is difficult to do so and I have only 40 minutes altogether. One Opposition member is most disturbed because Common Market countries are not in the agreement.

Mr. Houston: Aren't you?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I do not think I should answer that question.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (7.47 p.m.): I should like to clear up a few anomalies mentioned by the hon. member for Mulgrave. First of all, he commended the hon. member for Isis on delivering such an outstanding maiden speech. He congratulated him on his very small win.

I think he did so with tongue in cheek. He also said that members of the A.L.P. did not give a new member a chance. This is entirely wrong. As all hon. members know, every member receives the courtesy of the House when making his maiden speech, and he is subjected to no or few interjections. This is what happened on this occasion. Let us start off in the correct manner that we should like to finish in.

The hon. member for Mulgrave tried to enlarge on this by likening members of the A.L.P. to a pack of howling dogs. I took strong exception to this, and that is why I am raising it again. How would the hon. member for Isis feel? He came here, not knowing what to expect, and did his best, and then received a half-hearted sort of plaudit from the hon. member for Mulgrave, who then immediately likened all Opposition members to a pack of howling dogs. That is shocking language to be used and I hope that the hon. member for Isis let it pass over his head as he will have to let pass many other remarks of the hon. member for Mulgrave.

The hon. member for Mulgrave said that what the hon. member for Isis did not mention was that a Mr. Crawford engineered the scheme to bring about the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act of 1915. He tried to say that Crawford drew up this scheme but that the Government would not accept it. Whom does the hon. member for Mulgrave want to make the laws, one man or the Government? The answer is that the Government must make the laws. The Tory Government of the day would not accept the scheme, but the Labour Government did. The Labour Government provided the basis for the establishment of this great industry that we have always been proud of and in which the hon. member for Mulgrave has got his livelihood for many years. I should like to ask him if he refused extra cane at the time of the expansion. I do not know whether he will answer that, but I should say that the answer is, "No." As the hon. member for Isis said, he was forced to accept it to retain equity in the industry. So much for my introductory remarks, which have been a little astray from the subjects I intend to raise in this speech.

I wish to deal with the tobacco industry, of which I have been told that I know nothing, and do my best for those in it, just as Labour Governments did previously in the early days of this industry when water was scarce and men walked off their farms. There were then no marketing arrangements, and they could not get decent prices. The Mareeba-Dimbulah district, which is the largest tobacco-growing area in the State, now has adequate water, and efficient departmental officers deal with the marketing of the product. The Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board has been set up, and growers now have their own association and their own research

officers, and they are constantly endeavouring to improve their industry and keep it on an economic basis. It is, however, an uphill fight because of the increase in cost of production. What I am stating are facts, and I do not want to be diverted by interjections from those who would like to get me off the track.

Poisons, for instance, are very necessary in this industry, and there is an ever-increasing range of them. "The Australian Tobacco Journal" of August, 1968, lists 30 new poisons tested in the last four years, two of which have been released for specific purposes. At a meeting of the Mareeba Shire Council on 23 November, 1968, which is fairly recently, Councillor C. Davies queried the use of new tobacco pesticides throughout the tobacco-farming area. A news item states that one tobacco farmer was taken to hospital after coming into contact with the poison. There is a reference to the use of poisons from the health angle. When the Department of Primary Industries recommends the use of a poison, it always stresses that the instructions on the container must be followed at all times.

From the August, 1968, edition of "The Australian Tobacco Journal" I should like to read just a few paragraphs dealing with tobacco pest control. They state—

"Two of the new insecticides, 'Cyolane' and 'Matacil' are now approved for sale. An application for approval of a third material is also likely.

"Dr. Brimblecombe said that 'Cyolane' at a spray strength of 0.025 per cent. active constituent and 'Matacil' at 0.05 per cent. are now recommended for looper control. It is expected that growers will make full use of these new materials."

There are two new insecticides for control of one pest that attacks the tobacco plant. The very next paragraph states that the new materials are not recommended for the control of bud worms or leaf miner; something altogether different is required for them. The journal also states that DDT at 0.1 per cent. is still outstanding against these pests. It says also—

"Endrin is still available for any grower who prefers its use against loopers.

"As with the earlier materials, Dr. Brimblecombe stressed that to be of greatest advantage the new insecticides must be applied carefully, and with close attention to spray strength and rate of application. Thorough spray coverage of both leaf surfaces is essential for good pest control. Applications then can be effectively timed against the young stages of the pests and normally should not be required at intervals less than a fortnight."

That is one example of two separate poisons, both of which are expensive, having to be used for two separate pests, and so it goes on.

Then there is weed control, and another poison is used in greater strength than it ought to be because farmers are of the opinion that it reduces labour costs. They come to the conclusion, quite naturally, I think, that if they use double the recommended strength they will get double the effect and it will last twice as long; and if people have to be employed to apply the weedicide, it cuts down on costs. However, there is an effect in the opposite direction, too. I remind hon. members of the amount of poison that is being released not only into the atmosphere but into the ground and carried down into streams by storms—there was quite a serious storm in the tobacco-growing areas last week-end—and then into the pastures.

South Australia wishes to introduce legislation to eliminate the use of DDT, and on Friday, 22 November, I asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“Has his attention been drawn to an article in the Queensland Graingrower of November 20 on the decision to ban the use of DDT on farms?”

In the “Telegraph” of 19 November this report appeared—

“The insecticide, DDT, will be banished from farms in South Australia under a new law to be introduced in State Parliament soon, said Agricultural Minister, Mr. Story.

“The legislation would be introduced as soon as possible, in line with other States.”

I sound a note of warning, because in the last part of the Minister’s answer he said—

“I may definitely say that considerable progress has been made in reducing DDT usage on farms from both departmental recommendations and farmer co-operation. This improvement is now in an accelerated stage and special legislative change has not been required as yet.”

Mr. Row: As yet.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: As yet. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the House goes into recess in another week, and we will not be back here till August next year. I wonder whether this is not a case of the Minister’s keeping his fingers crossed and hoping that nothing happens. Industries that may be affected cannot afford to have that happen. The DDT affects not only tobacco but also grasses, pastures, fruit and vegetables. Another article that I have here lists many of them. I am particularly concerned about the dairy industry and the beef-cattle industry. It is quite likely that beef animals will be found to contain a percentage of DDT, because recently DDT was found in seals and fish as far south as the Antarctic. Where did that come from? No-one can say that it is part of the natural make-up of the seals and fish. The situation has arisen because poisons are constantly being poured into the air and the soil. As I said earlier, they then

get into the rivers, into the fish that are in the rivers, and then into the oceans in distant areas of the globe.

I have here an article that deals with the percentage of DDT contained in human beings. It is an article by Professor L. C. Birch, a professor in America, who said that it is concentrated in the bodies of American people to the extent of 11 parts per million.

Mr. Chinchen: Is that harmful?

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: Hon. members opposite may interject and try to convey the impression that statements like that are out of tune with present-day living, but I say they are as serious as a declaration of war by one country on another. If we are lagging behind other States—I have already pointed out that the South Australian Government wants to get in line when the Commonwealth is ready—then let us get into line. The Minister knows the trouble he had with the hen levy. That has nothing to do with DDT, but in that case, as some States were not ready, the whole scheme was held up. I ask the Minister to consider this seriously. With its dependence on rural industry, can Queensland afford to take this risk? Can it afford to wait until next August before legislation is even thought of? I do not think it can, and although the Minister’s advisers might say we can wait, I should like them to compare the position here with that in South Australia. They should ask themselves why South Australia has done this? It will not be good enough for us to say, “We hoped it would not happen, but unfortunately we made a mistake.” There has been mention in this Chamber today of mistakes being made in other directions in the rural industries. This is one we can avoid.

The tobacco industry is finding it more costly to produce a lb. of tobacco, and at the same time is creating a hazard that will affect each and every one of us.

I compliment the Minister, and in saying that I should like to draw the attention of the hon. member for Mulgrave. He said that we never compliment anybody. During the last fortnight, every member on this side has complimented the officers in every department whose Estimates were discussed. Where would we be otherwise? They are specialists in their own field. We should not ride rough-shod over everyone and say that we know all the answers. The man who has never made a mistake does not know anything, and the man who knows all the answers has a lot to learn, and I should say that that goes especially for the hon. member for Mulgrave. As I say, I want to compliment the Minister for clearing up this knotty problem of the rolls that has been worrying him in a couple of elections—he seems to have them ironed out now—mainly for the hail damage scheme.

Mr. Row: You can thank our member for that; he did a very good job.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: The hon. member can tell him that. I say they all did a very good job. I do not want to pick out any particular one. I can see in the lobbies some men who do an excellent job. In fact, I think they get too many jobs and that there should be more people to take some of the responsibility.

Mr. Sullivan interjected.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: If the Minister for Lands took a page out of some of their books he would not make the mistakes he made this afternoon.

As we know, tobacco research is to be undertaken at another station at Mareeba, which will relieve much of the pressure that has been on some of the other stations. It will probably lead to a solution of more problems and probably to some better strains. We have been shown a freak tobacco plant about 12 to 14 ft. high, which has never been heard of before. Who knows? Before long this may be the means of producing more leaf on the one stalk. I do not know whether the mechanical picker that is about to be introduced can pick the crop. These things are happening in an industry that is finding it very difficult to balance its budget owing to increasing costs.

The hon. member for Landsborough mentioned the standard price of fertiliser. I agree entirely with his remarks. First of all, an insufficient quantity of fertiliser is used throughout the area, and, secondly, it is necessary that exact amounts be applied. It is absolutely essential that a landholder does not over-fertilise or under-fertilise. The cost of fertiliser has to be met when an order is placed, and many farmers find it difficult to meet the cost at that stage. If the Government can find some means of applying a standard price even to the lowest possible cost then everyone will be able to gain some advantage from it.

Mr. Ahern: Most of those growers got increased quotas this year.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: Yes, they did, but I doubt whether the quotas will be reached. No-one knows, because tobacco is such an unpredictable crop. A hail storm tomorrow could result in under-production. Already several serious fires have occurred, and these have resulted in decreased production.

Mr. R. Jones: If they do not get rain shortly, too, they will be in trouble.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: The very high temperatures and dryness of the atmosphere have resulted in insufficient quantities of water being poured onto the soil to nourish the plants. That has not occurred before in that area. The result is that the plants absorb the water very quickly and then give it off through the leaves, which then curl up in the excessively dry atmosphere.

I now raise a very important point relative to the rice soils at Arriga, in the same area. Two blocks were developed there by

the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply, and under the auspices of the Department of Primary Industries they were tested for grasses and pastures for stock. Unfortunately, this project has been mismanaged. It is almost dust there now as a result of over-stocking. Right opposite that block another block was used for rice-growing. This project was not mismanaged by the Department of Primary Industries, but has proved to be quite a profitable one. As much as 3,000 lb. per acre has been harvested. This year's crop will amount to 10 tons. A volume of 61 inches of irrigated water, costing \$17.60 an acre, was required, and in addition nearly 35 inches of rain fell on the crop. A crop like rice requires that great quantity of water. Rice has been shown to be a soil-improver. This is a very good feature of its production, because up to the present time we have been dependent on legumes and similar crops for improving soil in that area. According to Mr. John van der List of the Walkamin Research Station, rice is a profitable crop and also a great improver of the soil in that area.

I turn now to a matter that affects the whole of the State. I have previously asked the Minister to consider a rebate on improved stock, for stud bulls that are transported long distances. A certain number of conditions are set out on the application form that is issued by the Department of Primary Industries, and if the animal comes within a certain category quite a high rebate is made on the cost of transport. Unfortunately, Rule 3 says—

“The bull shall be registered in a recognised Herd Book or be eligible for Herd Book entry and must be identified positively.”

Rule 6 reads—

“The bull shall be the progeny of an approved sire and an officially tested dam which has reached the undermentioned butterfat standards.”

That seriously limits the number that are eligible. When people are improving their herds, they should receive a rebate not only for bulls but also for the females in the breed. Some breeds are recognised up there, and they are being built up, but because they do not appear in the Herd Book—they appear in the herd books of other countries—they are eliminated. The Minister should know quite well, as should the Minister for Lands, the case to which I am referring, because he met the gentleman in question. Anyone who is trying to improve his herd by buying stud stock from recognised breeders should receive assistance by way of a rebate. However, the animal must be positively identified and all the other conditions—I think there are 10 of them—must be satisfied, otherwise the rebate is not payable. I should like the Minister to look into this matter again to see if he can provide some assistance.

I was surprised that the hon. member for Mulgrave mentioned King Ranch and did not know the number of stock carried, or very much about it at all, except that we were a little opposed to the initial plan. If he read in "Hansard" the speech made by the hon. member for Mourilyan when the legislation was promulgated, he would find all his questions answered in such a way that he would not mention this matter again or try to create the impression that we are opposed to development or improvement of any kind.

I ask the Minister to appoint more stock inspectors in Queensland. I suppose he will say, "If I had the money I would appoint them." That is a short-sighted policy when we compare the cost of appointing more stock inspectors with the permanent savings to be gained by their appointment in areas where there are large grazing holdings, and where there could be pleuro or redwater outbreaks. The stock inspector must be on the spot. The Minister may well say that, with present-day communications, they can be flown from any part of the State but, if they are stationed in the area they know it well, and when doing their rounds, can issue a word of warning to the graziers if they see cattle in poor condition. Prevention is far easier and far less expensive than cure.

I asked the Minister a question today about the stock inspector at Georgetown. I know that a relieving man stationed there at present is doing a very good job. Many other places may be in the same position. It would be in the interests of the industry at Georgetown if he could be stationed there permanently, or if the position could be advertised as a permanent one.

The 1964 investigation into the Tableland area provided only one real answer for the dairy farmers, namely, that they could supplement their income by producing more bacon. It was very heartening to see, on 16 November, 1968, an article in "The Cairns Post" headed "More new piggeries in North Queensland". A new officer, Mr. Fearon, has been appointed in charge of the piggery section of the Department of Primary Industries to take the place of Mr. Gibbs. He said that inquiries are constantly coming forward concerning new piggeries in the area. It appears that there has been a vast improvement in the whole system compared with what we remember in the days when the farmer spent most of his time in keeping the place clean and, to a degree, free from odious smells. I have been to many piggeries which are absolutely spotless. This is to the credit of the farmers and the department, which is able to advise and assist them in keeping piggeries up to the present standard.

I hope that this continues because bacon is a product that has good overseas and home-consumption markets. It provides a wonderful supplementary income for dairy-farmers who at present are being asked by

the Federal Government to consider aggregation of farms. This may have to be undertaken, although we hope it will not be necessary as it will lead to a decrease of population in the area. I am not sure whether the coalition Government believes in decentralisation, but the A.L.P. does. It believes in people in our outback areas. I believe that it is foolish to suggest that this is the only method to solve the problems confronting the dairying industry.

This is a headline in "Sunday Truth" of 13 March, 1966, "Report on Dairying Dynamite. C. P. put on spot." We do not want this to happen. We do not want this sort of advertisement; we do not want any Government to be put on the spot. We want the dairy-farmer on his farm earning an income to provide for his family, with more farmers coming from his family to keep the dairying industry going. We have known for many years, and the maps in the Year Book make it clear, where our dairy farms are. There are very few in Queensland. We should not be hoping that the number of dairy farms will be reduced by aggregation.

Last but not least I mention soil conservation. This is also a Queensland-wide problem. It is very well covered in the department's annual report. This should be done step by step. It should not be up to the farmer to make application. It should be the law that he must carry out this scheme if his farm is one of those in the chain. A chain is only as strong as the weakest link and, if one farmer does not pull his weight, the whole scheme will break down. When farms change hands the new farmer might not know the district well and might want to eliminate the contour banks in order to get more land and make it easier to farm. It should be made mandatory that on no account can these banks be touched, and heavy penalties should be imposed if they are. I do not think that the penalty can be too great because the wonderful, valuable topsoil that is so important and is the lifeblood of all plants cannot be recovered.

The report reads—

"The number of graduate staff engaged on soil conservation research was raised to six during the year."

It may be necessary to employ other people who have knowledge of soil conservation, but who may not be on salaries as high as those of the top officers. The report contains a fine photograph depicting contour farming on a tobacco farm in the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation area. Where soils are light and have a large sand content, soil erosion can be frightening. Large areas barren of topsoil can be left which will never grow grass unless properly treated for some considerable time.

Whilst speaking on the subject of soil erosion, I sound a note of warning about the constant clearing of areas, whether they be

suburban sites in Southport, Bundaberg, the suburbs of Brisbane, or scrub blocks on which all the trees are felled right to the fences. Those practices merely assist soil erosion. Grass and tree roots are Nature's way of holding soil together, and a cover of grass slows down the run-off of water in floods and prevents erosion by wind. If the natural covering of the land is destroyed, and subdividers in suburban areas continue to raze whole areas of plants and trees, only supermen will be able to prevent erosion when there are storms or heavy rain.

I conclude on that note of warning on soil erosion. If the Minister can find ways of tightening up in this most important matter and making it more difficult for people to disregard soil conservation anywhere in Queensland, I ask him to take that action. It could be a further step towards achieving a worth-while result.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (8.22 p.m.): It was not originally my intention to enter this debate. However, in view of the numerous statements made in this House and the Press publicity recently given to the interstate marketing of some primary products, the Minister has been urged to do something to control the introduction of dairy produce to Queensland from other States.

Before dealing with this problem, I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Isis on his maiden speech. The way in which he collated and presented his figures showed to me that he has a clear knowledge of the sugar industry. There is no doubt in my mind why he won his seat. With his knowledge of the sugar industry, I feel quite sure that it was not the A.L.P. tag that won him the by-election; he could have won it as a Liberal, a Country Party member, or an Independent. I congratulate him on his thorough knowledge of his industry.

One of the pieces of advice that I received when I entered this House 30 years ago, not from a member of my party but from a member of the Government, was, "Never speak of things about which you know nothing". The hon. member for Isis has given a clear description of his industry, and obviously he knows it thoroughly. I commend him on his speech and congratulate him on the way in which he presented his case. Regardless of the side on which he sits, I am sure that he will be a valuable member of this House.

I have had a good deal to do with the stabilisation of marketing, and I held office in the dairying industry, with which I was associated for over 30 years, right up till the time when I became a Minister. I held office not only in this State but on all Commonwealth bodies operating at that time, and I know some of the problems to be contended with. The difference between the sugar industry and the dairying industry is that the sugar industry has been able to base stabilisation on restricted production. The dairying industry, however, has not been

able to restrict production. The sugar industry is confined to Queensland and a small portion of New South Wales.

One point has been troubling me, and in this respect I wish to be fair to hon. members on both sides of the Chamber. I was a member of this Assembly when permission was granted to increase production in the sugar industry, or to increase peak, as the hon. member for Isis said. I do not know whether the information on which the increased production of sugar was decided upon was reliable. It is quite clear now that the decision was unwise, and I do not think that the present problems would be as great as they are if production had not been increased at that time. I am concerned about primary producers producing under these conditions, and dairymen are in a position similar to that of the sugar-growers.

It is not only a question of price. The real trouble that primary producers are facing is the costs that they have to carry with the industry. In my opinion, the cost of keeping the industry going is an even more serious problem than the low return, and I have a suggestion to make to the Minister before I proceed to deal with the question of stabilisation. Because the dairying industry is so disturbed about the low return to producers, I suggest that, for the benefit of the industry and for his own benefit, the Minister should convene a conference—it could be called a special committee—of four or five members on this side of the Chamber and four or five members of the dairying industry. I would not object to a few members of the Opposition being included, if they wished, because I think it is a question that is too big to be made the plaything of party politics. I believe that an attempt should be made to find a solution.

All hon. members are appalled, I am sure, when they read in the newspapers from week to week that Queensland is importing 5,000 boxes of butter a week from Victoria. One might offer the excuse that dairying areas in Queensland are in the grip of drought; but there have been worse droughts than the present one and the State has never had to import very much butter. It is not something of which the State can boast. Production has dropped to such a low level that butter has to be imported from other States, and I believe that action should be taken in an attempt to overcome the problem. If it is not taken, even more people will leave the industry. As it is, it is safe to say that at least 40 per cent. of dairymen have left the industry in the last four or five years. Some of them have turned to pig-raising, and until the price fell some months ago they were doing fairly well. While they were receiving about 30c or slightly more than 30c a lb. for their pork, they were doing fairly well;

unfortunately, the price fell to about 25c a lb., their profit fell, and they are now in a bad way.

I can understand that in an election such as the one that took place recently in Isis, in which one has to contend with a number of dairy-farmers, sugar-farmers, and other farmers who are not doing any good in the business, they are likely to do anything politically and are likely to vote against anyone.

Mr. Davies: The fishing industry, too.

Mr. MULLER: Yes. Well, there it is. The primary producer is coming out of this inflationary position very badly.

I am horror-stricken when I think of the move that has been made in Canberra in the last week to bump up the salary levels of members of Parliament. Such an increase can only cause further inflation, and that is what makes the working man sour—I include the farmer—because he is getting less and less and these salaries are increased still further. He is in a hopeless position, and if the trend continues there will be even more unrest in the farming industry.

Getting back to the question of stabilisation, I mentioned earlier that I had seen very difficult times in connection with the stabilisation of the dairying industry. The hon. member for Isis mentioned that stabilisation in the sugar industry began in about 1913, which is perfectly true. It took time to complete the stabilisation plan, and the dairying industry did not move in that direction until about 1924. I well remember—this was my first experience in public life—a meeting that took place in Ipswich. It was the annual meeting of the dairy company and the first I had ever attended. A couple of gentlemen from the Darling Downs advocated the formation of a butter marketing board. Hon. members will readily appreciate the conservative thinking of many people at that time. They said, "We do not want any form of control; we do not want this, that and the other", but we were starving in the job. I was a young dairy farmer at the time, and I stuck my neck out and said that I for one had had enough of cut-throat competition. I said, "Let us get together and do something about it". As a result of what I said that day, during the next year I found myself on the board.

The Butter Board was formed and I was asked to contest a seat on it by Queensland Farmers' Association, one of the biggest dairy associations in Queensland at that time, with five factories. A few years later I became a member of the Butter Board. After the Butter Board was formed in 1924, the Australian Dairy Board was formed in 1925, Commonwealth Dairy Industry Equalisation Board was formed in 1935 and I was a member of each of them. I was chairman of the Queensland Butter Marketing Board, chairman of

Commonwealth Dairy Industry Equalisation Board, and a member of the Australian Dairy Board, and as a result of that experience I think I know something about the problems of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution.

Mr. Davies: Who passed the legislation to enable the Butter Board to be formed?

Mr. MULLER: That is beside the question. The farmers asked for it at that time. To be honest about it, at the time it was set up a Labour Government was in power and put the legislation through. What is more, I sat over there where the hon. member who interjected sits, and I was man enough at that time, more than 33 years ago, to thank the Government of the day for the legislation it had introduced. The hon. member will find it recorded in "Hansard" if he cares to look for it. In those days we did not make such matters the plaything of party politics. When I was on the Australian boards, if we had quibbled about political differences we would have got nowhere. We forgot about party politics, we forgot the proprietary manufacturers and the co-operative manufacturers and we did something in the interests of the industry. We looked upon ourselves as Australians for Australia.

The Minister cannot do anything to prevent interstate competition, and I really appreciate the problem that has been set before him by those who are asking him to prevent the flow of dairy products from other States. I tell him that it cannot be done.

Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution provides that trade among the States shall be absolutely free, and the word "absolutely" cannot be got around. The section means what it says. No-one can be prevented from marketing interstate. Whilst there have been times in our lives when those of us engaged in the stabilisation of an industry have hated this section, nevertheless, when we give regard to the whole of the circumstances we could not be in a hurry to ask that it be deleted because many other things would arise and make the position very much worse.

I suggest for the information of the Minister that there is one way to get over this problem. It lies in the hands of the dairy-farmers themselves. I do not know that it can be done any other way. If I thought it could, I would say so.

We made a success of stabilising Commonwealth marketing in the dairying industry purely on a co-operative spirit. We would not allow anyone, whether proprietary factories or co-operatives, to cut the markets. After we got together and understood each other we would soon see to it that if anyone intended to use our product for the purpose of reducing the price, which in the long run was carried by the farmer, his supply was cut off. The only way to stop people from marketing milk products here

at a lower price than they are marketing them for in the other States is to cut off their supplies.

Look at the milk set-up in Queensland. I give Queensland United Foods Ltd. full marks for the way they are treating milk and distributing it, but I am shocked to think that a man like John Bryant, whom I have known well for years, should have made the statement a few weeks ago that he was shocked to think that his company would not be allowed to market U.H.T. milk.

The fact of the matter is that if the company was allowed to sell this milk it would be cutting the price of the liquid milk that is sold to the people of Brisbane every day. The reason for taking the extra milk is that each milk supplier has a quota—I know something about this matter because I have arranged these quotas—and in recent years the milk suppliers have been taking extra quantities of milk for manufacturing purposes, such as for manufacturing milk powder, and the dairymen, in turn, were prepared to take a quota of manufactured milk with the quota of liquid milk. That milk is supplied at a lower price than the milk that is used as liquid milk. If we were to allow the manufacturers to treat it under the U.H.T. system and compete with the whole-milk or fresh-milk market, the price would be broken down. Nobody could allow that to happen.

It has been suggested that this type of milk is being sent to this State from New South Wales, and the Norco company is the one that is most likely to do that. The present chairman of that company, Mr. Keith Donaldson, is chairman of the Commonwealth equalisation body, and if there is one man who is hell-bent on seeing that farmers get a fair deal and that stabilisation is maintained it is Keith Donaldson. He will not allow his company to cut Queensland prices. The only satisfactory approach to this problem is to get in touch with him and have it rectified. It is of no use approaching the problem from this end and saying that we will not let the company sell the milk in this State. Even though we might embark on a policy of price-fixing, we have to remember that all that does is to prevent someone from selling the product at more than the fixed price. We cannot prevent anyone from selling it if it is bought interstate at a lower price.

I appreciate what the hon. member for Isis said today, because I have been through this experience in the dairying industry and I know what needs to be done. Until we get the other States to work in harmony with us, we will continue to have this struggle.

I should like to recall some of the early experiences of the Butter Marketing Board before I was a member of it but at a time when I was a member of a co-operative factory that was supplying it. Butter was sold locally, it was sold interstate, and it was sold overseas. Its sales were in the hands of agents who competed with each other and

received any profit that accrued from the sales. That practice had to be stopped. We showed New South Wales that that could be done, and that State, through its Primary Producers' Union, came in willingly. Later we got Victoria, through its Dairy Farmers' Union, to join with us. In that way the whole stabilisation of the butter industry was built up.

Quite a few very big proprietary companies were operating in Victoria, and we thought that we would have trouble with them. For a little time we did, but they were big enough to see the benefits that would accrue from our scheme, and they sat with us in committees and worked with us as if they were co-operative associations. In that way we were able to obviate our difficulties. As a result of what happened on the other side of the world, and again through the Commonwealth stabilisation or subsidy scheme, whichever it may be called, which was introduced in about 1932 or 1933 and subsequently grew and grew, the markets in the United Kingdom and on the Continent adopted a similar scheme and began to subsidise their growers. Today the stage has been reached where they can sell butter to us, and because of that we are in a difficult situation.

I do not think that can continue indefinitely. They cannot continue to produce at the price at which they are selling, and the surplus that they have today must decrease. But we must remember that unless we do something for the primary producers we cannot squeal if they turn us down. I assure hon. members that throughout my district, and throughout Queensland, the dairy farmers believe that they are having a bad time. If they are having a bad time when an election is about to take place they are likely to do anything. I therefore appeal to the Minister to go into conference with these men. They have an excellent organisation in the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation, which represents all dairy-farmers. The Minister's committee should be prepared to work with it and accept responsibility for what is done.

It is useless throwing stones or saying that the Government should do this and that. Many of the suggestions cannot be implemented because they are impracticable. If restrictions are necessary—and restriction has taken place automatically in that farmers are giving the job away—and we produce less butter, nevertheless we cannot let the producer starve. If we let the man who follows the plough and produces our food starve, we betide the nation.

This is my last opportunity to speak on these matters in the House, and, whilst I did not speak on these Estimates when they were before the Committee of Supply, I cannot but feel that I have a bounden duty to tell the Government, and the Opposition for that matter, that we must do something for this stricken section of the community

that is being hit to leg because of the inflationary trend. If low prices were their only worry their problem would be only half as bad. I am a primary producer, although I am not in dairying. I had to give it up when I became a Minister; we closed our two dairies and are now running only beef cattle. However, we are in a similar position, and if hon. members could see the monthly accounts of dairy-farmers, cattlemen and so on, and examine their costs for repairs, renewals, machinery, and running expenses, they would realise that there is nothing in it and would themselves very soon get sick of it.

We must provide help in some way. I do not want the Minister to do it on his own, because I know that someone will be ready to jump on his back and say, "You did not do this, that and the other." I have spoken to various members of the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation, and they have informed me that they would willingly go into conference with us. If the Minister wishes, I am prepared, because of the experience I have had, to join with him and get the members of the organisation together to see if we can do something for them. I feel it is our duty to do something. If we do not, the industry will decline much further.

I know that Queensland is now experiencing a dry spell, but the idea of importing butter from another State is an awful thought, especially into a State such as Queensland, which comprises such a large area. It is very hard to accept that we must depend on a small State like Victoria for our butter supplies. I know that we can excuse ourselves by saying that we had the three-day sickness, but we should forget that; that was a long time ago and the damage is not as bad as some people think. The drought is playing a part, but it is not responsible for all the trouble. Everyone is looking to us to do something.

I listened very carefully to the debate the other day, and I was impressed by the speech made by the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt dealing with the Cannon Hill sales and the abattoirs. I do not know where the hon. member got all his information from, but the sad part of it is that most of the things I heard him say were true. If something is not done, the position at the Metropolitan Public Abattoir will slip a good deal further. The economy of this abattoir is based on turnover.

As the turnover falls, the profit falls. The number of stock going to the abattoir has declined because people have lost confidence in the method of selling. It is no good anyone saying that it is due to drought, because it is not. The report shows that we must combine Southern and Central Queensland. A few years ago, before the extra facilities were provided in Central Queensland, a number of Central Queensland cattle were brought down here. I had a

place up there and sent some down myself. But I got to the stage where I would not send another beast to Cannon Hill.

As the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt said, a number of men get books and pencils—they are called operators—and they can go there and buy and the works will treat their cattle, and they can do what they like with the beef. At the end of the week they make a statement that the cattle made \$26 or \$28. That is not true. Some weeks those reports are correct and some weeks they are not. The person who sends in his cattle has a pretty good idea of what they are worth. My experience has been that if I sold on weight I would be \$10 a bullock better off averaged over a year.

Mr. Houston: You are suggesting that some of the facts you get over there are not accurate.

Mr. MULLER: That is right. Some weeks the return is probably more than it should be, and other weeks it is less. The reason why the numbers have fallen at Cannon Hill is that cattlemen have lost confidence in the show. This is nothing new, and I do not know why it has happened.

The Meat Industry Authority and the department have failed over the years to install scales. We could not have a better authority on the beef industry than Mr. Jim Sparkes. He advocated many times that scales should be installed. Only last week Mr. Wallace Skelsey, of "Queensland Country Life", returned from the United States. He is advocating the same thing. He saw it in practice all over the United States. For some reason or other that I do not know, we are told it would not be worth while and that these fellows do not want it. Of course they do not want it. If the weight is disclosed, the seller knows what his cattle should make. They are sold at auction in exactly the same way, but they are sold at so much per lb. of the weight of the beast. If these weights are not deliberately wrong, they are bad judges of weight. I have sent cattle to meatworks and I know the returns. The seller can see them weighed if he likes, but he does not have to go there because he can rely on any of them that can be mentioned. The weights are ever so much better under that system than at Cannon Hill.

If we go on this way the position at Cannon Hill will get worse. I cannot see why it cannot be done. I should like someone to tell me the reason. Many of us have advocated it for years and have put up with the present system for so long. I have studied the annual reports of the Meat Industry Authority and have noticed the figures falling. There must be some reason for that. Like other people, I can be wrong, but I have no doubt where the trouble lies. The producer is entitled to all he can get. Anybody carrying cattle through seasons like this knows that the cost of fattening is more than it is worth. This happened to us in the past few months. We fed cattle on cultivation and irrigation

feed and we did not get much out of it. We cannot put up with this kind of thing. Here is an opportunity for the Government to do something for the industry.

I should now like to deal with the tick problem. The tick is nothing new. I am old enough to be able to say that I was here before the tick. But I remember when the ticks came, and I know the problem they created and the state we have got into. Tick resistance is man-made. Either the cattle were not properly dipped or the dips were not kept up to the required strength, and the ticks developed resistance to the chemicals used. If the chemicals were changed, very often the new chemical was effective.

Although some people say that ticks develop a resistance to dipping, I am still prepared to say that if cattle are dipped properly the ticks are disposed of. Those people in the quarantine area are not complaining too much because they are getting their chemicals for nothing. But, with the restrictions that they have to put up with, the people in those areas can scarcely breathe. For cattle-owners, conditions are intolerable. If there was to be complete eradication of ticks, I would not oppose these measures. If the Crown likes to bear the cost and say, "We will dip regularly and see that the ticks are cleaned up", that will be all right, but tinkering with the problem, quarantining some properties and not others, and making the movement of cattle difficult, is a different matter. I am still receiving bags of letters from people in the Boonah district complaining about the inconvenience of it all.

The powers that have been given to stock inspectors have made a lot of cattlemen hostile. They are prepared to vote any way if this treatment is to continue; they have told me that again and again. I have told the Minister, and I repeat tonight, that there is a limit to what people will stand in this kind of inconvenience. I suggest, for the consideration of the Minister and his advisors, that the Minister bring down legislation to exercise greater control over all dips. Most people are pretty careful, but I had one neighbour who would never dip his cattle in one of my dips till the ticks were rolling off them. He would bring them in with ticks dropping off them into the yard. I said to him, "Johnny, this has finished. Unless you are prepared to dip your cattle regularly, you won't put them through this yard."

There were hundreds of people like that, and if the Minister introduced legislation to exercise control over all dips, I think the problem could be cleared up. It would not be such a tremendous job; indeed, it would not be as much trouble as is now being experienced with the application of restrictions. If legislation was brought down requiring dips to be registered and ensuring that they were properly charged, the people would have confidence in them to such an

extent that the problem would largely be overcome. If the Minister cannot get anyone to do that job, I will guarantee to do a district myself. It would not hurt me, and I would do it well. All that has to be done is to go to the people and tell them what is expected of them, and have samples taken of their dips. I do not want to be crying "blue ruin" all the time. The department is doing some good work, but I think that its approach to this matter is all cockeyed. That is about as plain as I can put it.

Last night in Boonah an address was given on foot and mouth disease, and I heard very favourable comments made on the work of the officer concerned. He pointed out to stock-owners just how dangerous this disease is, and he won the confidence of all who attended the meeting. He related how the germ of the disease is air-borne, which is something that I did not know, and carried by the wind. I think that the people should know all about a disease as deadly as this one. Last night's address was an excellent piece of work, and I congratulate Dr. Harvey and his officers on sending that man to the district to warn people where the dangers lie.

In conclusion, I should like to say that whilst we pass and enforce laws, I am one who places a tremendous amount of importance on the practical side of things. You cannot walk roughshod over the man who is doing the job. That applies not only to cattlemen but also to those who raise sheep or produce wheat, vegetables, hens or anything else. A man must know his job, and it is not merely a question of theory and what ought to work out, but what will work out. In a matter of this kind, I think that if tick eradication or any other matter is to be handled efficiently you must have, besides departmental officers, at least a couple of practical advisers who know the job. By that means I believe that we would get over a lot of our present difficulties.

I have spoken for considerably longer than I wanted to, but I do want to repeat my reference to the control of products from interstate. That question is very much bigger than a number of people think it is.

I should like to say, too, that the report on the Brisbane milk market has been bandied about as being an awful report. I had a good deal of experience in marketing milk in the years that I was with the Queensland Farmers' Co-operative. As a result of my experience, I think that the two men who compiled the report did a really excellent job. They have not directed the Government to do anything. They have given a complete picture of what the position really is and have left the Government to make up its own mind.

To say that the suggestion is that the right to supply milk should be taken away from someone and given to someone else is just not true. People who have been in the business and who have permits will be

allowed to remain in it as their activities expand. There is no intention of taking anything away from them. The point is that the officers concerned have given a clear picture of the position, and if the Government wants to rob Peter to pay Paul, that is its responsibility. I do not think that is its intention.

I have always held the view that it would be sensible to market milk along lines similar to those that operate in New South Wales and create a zone. At present, trucks run to Warwick and nearly as far as Millmerran. They go through milk-producing areas within 50 miles of Brisbane to bring that milk in. It is only common sense that if a tanker runs 120 miles to Inglewood and back to collect milk when milk is available within 40 or 50 miles, someone has to pay for the additional running. They go through the Lockyer, too. It is a wonder that dairymen in that area have not kicked up a row long ago. I represent the factories at Boonah, Laidley, Grantham, and Booval. Hon. members in this Chamber have mentioned Booval, but it is only a small corner of the milk-producing area around Laidley and Gatton. People in the area have simply to put up with it, but in the end the consumer, the producer or the company has to pay.

This is the last opportunity I shall have to make recommendations. Mark my words: the sooner the Minister takes the bull by the horns and does something similar to what is being done in New South Wales, the better. The milk should be brought from the most convenient areas, instead of being brought from all over the country, which must mean that somebody has to bear additional costs. If it is decided to make a change, I suggest that it should be made in that way. As the Minister knows, I am not suggesting that anybody should be held out, but I think it is a bit silly to send tankers 120 or 130 miles for milk when it is obtainable within 40 or 50 miles. If a person was doing that for himself he would not do it for six months, but in this instance it has been going on from year to year.

I say to the Minister, "Before you go into the question of trying to prevent interstate trade, have a look at all the problems surrounding it." I think that he will get the co-operation of the producers in both New South Wales and Queensland to get him out of his difficulty.

Mr. WHARTON (Burnett) (8.59 p.m.): I appreciate what the hon. member for Fassifern has said. I have known the hon. member for many years, both when he was in Opposition and since he has been on this side of the Chamber. I respect him for the part that he has played in the dairying industry, and I compliment him on his many fruitful years in it. He is very knowledgeable, and I am sure that hon. members on both sides of the House will wish him well in his retirement.

I welcome the hon. member for Isis to the House and congratulate him upon his contribution to the debate. I am glad to see that we have another farmer in the House. It is a very good thing indeed. But I am worried about the ex-teachers who will "lose their heads" in the next election. I worry for the hon. member for Maryborough and the hon. member for Barcoo. We will certainly miss their contributions. We certainly will miss the hon. member for Maryborough. However, the electors have given us a farmer and we are grateful for that.

I want to pay tribute to the hon. member who has just entered the House; he is typically A.L.P. I do not know where they educated him but he is a typical calamity howler like other A.L.P. members. I inform the hon. member that we have a Grievance Day in this Chamber during which he can grieve for 10 minutes. We have a wailing wall, which is perhaps just as well for hon. members opposite who seem to do nothing but continually wail and whinge. They cannot win elections with that.

Mr. P. Wood: The electors are howling too.

Mr. WHARTON: The hon. member would make anybody howl.

I could not help but notice that the new member had "two-bob each way". He wants the benefit of Country Party policy but still wants to be an A.L.P. knocker. He cannot do that all the time. For the benefit of the hon. member for Isis I draw attention to the carryings-on of A.L.P. members. I have never seen such carryings-on since I have been in this Chamber.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: You are not here very much.

Mr. WHARTON: I am here; tell the truth. When I heard their loud "Hear, hears" today, I thought there must be a new spirit and drive among Opposition members, a spirit I have not seen for years. They have been sleepy and tired, exhibiting no progress and contributing nothing to the debates, but today we have had a real revolution. Seeing the attitude of hon. members opposite during the speech of the hon. member for Isis, I felt that we had a new Labour Party policy, looking to the future and walking backwards. I have never seen anybody as bright and cheeky as hon. members opposite, all for the benefit of the hon. member for Isis.

I rose primarily to compliment all those employed in the Department of Primary Industries for the part they play. It is a department with very wide ramifications; it has a very wide bearing on the State's progress, and I could go so far as to say that if the hon. member for Isis did have something to growl about, and it was fair enough, I would go along with it. Primary producers constitute the most important section of population of our State;

there is no question about this, because primary industries wherever situated provide employment—and that applies in industries of the sugar-grower, the wheat-grower, the pig and veal man, the cotton-grower, and so on.

Primary producers play a very important part in the community. Upon their prosperity depends the prosperity of towns and cities. Apart from their contribution to employment in those centres they contribute largely to employment in our capital city, throughout the State, and even throughout the Commonwealth. In addition, they play an important role in the transport and shipping industries, and in all the other places where the needs of primary industries are felt.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: Do you have any problems in your area?

Mr. WHARTON: Of course we do. Everybody has problems. Our primary industries are passing through difficult times. I heard the hon. member for Fassifern and others complain about the difficulties that confront our industries. I recall that when I went to work in a grocery store and received a wage of only £3/4/0 a week it was possible even then for primary industries to develop. Today they cannot because the policy of the Australian Labour Party has resulted in increases in costs to almost 400 per cent. Every time the basic wage is increased or an electrician is paid an increase, or a sugar-mill worker obtains an increase, costs rise and farming costs rise. The Australian Labour Party is responsible for driving our primary industries out of the country. Opposition members are trying to bring about the swansong of primary producers, but they are endeavouring to get the farmers on side. They are quibbling. The hon. member for Isis was worrying about the "bunnies" in his electorate. I can only hope that he does not make "bunnies" of the sugar-growers.

Mr. R. Jones: You think you are a primary producer just because you are making yourself "hoarse".

Mr. WHARTON: It took the hon. member for Cairns a long time to think of that one.

I do want to refer to our sugar industry, because here I think we need to answer some things that have been said. Obviously the hon. member who has just been elected to this House does not expect the sugar agreement to be ratified. I suppose that if it is not ratified by 1 January he will say that he should resign. He says that we will not get this and we will not get that. What about some forward thinking? He cannot win any votes down here. He might win them up in Isis, but he will not win any down here unless he thinks and speaks in a forward way.

After four years of relatively low prices, the new International Sugar Agreement will place the industry on a sound basis for the recovery of prices within reasonable limits. Therefore, the new agreement is of immense importance to the Australian sugar industry. Yet we have heard members of the Opposition say that the agreement will not be ratified. I appreciate the problems that confront the sugar industry, but I look further than the mere howling, whingeing and wailing that we have heard about all of us facing ruin. I am sure that the agreement will provide benefits to our sugar industry for a long time to come.

Mr. Davies: Can you tell us why there's 26 per cent.—

Mr. WHARTON: Would the hon. member like to shut up for a moment? It would do us all a lot of good if he would.

Mr. Davies: Did you tell the same story in the streets of Childers?

Mr. WHARTON: I never told any story in the streets at all. The hon. member told all the stories, and told a lot of untruths about the tourist industry and the sugar industry. He is still on them and he cannot shut up. Will you shut up, please? I am sorry, Mr. Speaker.

As a Government, we have tried to ensure that the sugar-grower gets \$86 a ton for his sugar. Costs have not stayed put; they are rising every day, and they will continue to rise, so obviously we will need a little more. If we cannot get \$86 a ton from the various sources and pool prices, we must come in with a support scheme from the Commonwealth Government to try to ensure that growers get an adequate return to cover their costs. That is what we must aim at. We cannot say, "If this does not happen, we will all be ruined." The new International Sugar Agreement will help the sugar industry greatly. I am sure that it will be signed; I have no doubt about that. In that event, if we still cannot get enough for the sugar farmers, we will just have to supplement their returns with a support scheme.

I regret that I cannot say more. I know that the Minister wants to say something about the loans, etc., which the sugar industry appreciates. The agreement, I hope, will progressively help our sugar industry.

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (9.12 p.m.): Firstly, I emphasise my appreciation of the speakers on both sides of the House who have taken part in this debate. The first speaker was the hon. member for Landsborough, who made quite a number of very good points. In his short term in this House he has shown that he is a very thoughtful young member. Every speech he makes is based on sound premises of thought, concept and application. I was most impressed by his grasp of the over-all economic situation of our rural industries. I know from past

experience that he has a good knowledge of the position in his electorate, which comprises a great number of facets of primary industry, each and every one of which he studies with acumen. Every time he makes a speech he shows that he has a knowledge of each of the industries, which is most important. I took particular note of his appreciation of the need for regional research and extension, and the need for professionally qualified people to provide these services. Indeed, he is a Bachelor of Agricultural Science and, naturally, is a successful farmer. As such, he appreciates the value of the scientists in my department and the part they play in giving service to agricultural industries throughout the State.

On the matter of co-ordination in agriculture, I was indeed pleased to hear the hon. member's reference to the Australian Agricultural Council. I have no doubt that that council will be the body that eventually has to sort out most of the problems associated with section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. The Ministers for Agriculture or Primary Industries from each State meet twice a year, and I believe that much good comes from our deliberations. It is only by an association of ideas among Ministers and their advisers at these conferences that we get some comprehension of the difficulties faced by each State, and by this method we are able to iron out some of the troubles associated with interstate trade.

The second speaker was the hon. member for Isis, whom I congratulate on his election to Parliament. I congratulated him on his election this morning, and I now congratulate him on his speech. I was particularly impressed by his reference to his association and friendship with our late Premier, the Honourable Jack Pizzey. Indeed, from the Isis electorate, and from the town of Childers itself, have come some remarkably competent men in the sugar industry. I refer, for instance, to the late Mr. Ben Foley, who was Chairman of the Queensland Cane Growers' Council for many years. There was also Sir Alfred Brand, a former State and Federal Member of Parliament, who was President of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association for many years. So the hon. member can be proud that he is following in the footsteps of prominent men who played an impressive part not only for the electorate of Isis and the town of Childers, but for the State of Queensland, and indeed, Australia.

As I expected, and, I suppose, as we all expected, the hon. member's speech was confined to the sugar industry. As a cane-grower, I have some knowledge of this industry. While I agree with him on the importance of the industry, I believe that he will in time discover that there are other important rural industries. Almost all of his remarks were concerned with the 1963-64 expansion programme and its effects. In

this connection I reiterate my remarks during the debate on the Estimates of my department, and I say this quite factually. Over all, those in the sugar industry were generally in favour of expansion. There were, of course, some who disagreed, most of whom, like me, were confined and had no room to expand, so they did not want any expansion. But most of the growers—the old growers with land available for additional assignment and the new growers—wanted to take part in what was referred to as the golden era.

I have been a grower for many years. In fact, my family has grown cane since the beginning of the century. We have seen the ups and down and the hills and dales in the sugar industry. Every time a grower came to me, particularly a new grower with little or no finance, I advised him to be careful because we were on the hill and the dale was below us. Nevertheless, there are always people who are against expansion. I sincerely hope that the hon. member for Isis does not associate with some of the "knockers" we have had in this House who have been opposed to any form of expansion.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. ROW: Opposition members should not try to talk me down. They are not in the race, because I am in full voice tonight.

I wonder if the hon. member for Isis has fully considered what the position would be today if we had not expanded. Admittedly the new International Sugar Agreement is only a draft until it is ratified. However, I believe that it will be ratified, and apparently so does the world sugar market, because since this agreement was reached in Geneva the London price of sugar has jumped £Stg.10. Under the agreement we have a basic free-market quota of 1,100,000 tons. Is the hon. member aware that if we had not expanded our quota would be less than one-third of that, because our combined peak production was previously about 1,250,000 tons?

Much was made of the position of growers. If I remember rightly, the hon. member said that although his production has been increased from 1,700 tons to 5,000 tons he is worse off financially.

Mr. R. Jones: He did not say that.

Mr. ROW: I may be wrong there, but I understood him to say something like that. If I am wrong, I apologise to him. If he sold his farm with a 5,000-ton peak, I wonder if he would get the same amount as he would have got when he had a 1,700-ton peak. The Isis area's peak was increased by 75 per cent. That gave it an additional 30,000 tons of sugar. This meant at least 25 to 30 new growers in the area. So I believe that overall the expansion did play an important part in accelerating the growth of those towns and cities that rely mostly on sugar for their economy.

Then there were the new growers. There were about 8,000 persons who wanted new assignments, but only about 1,200 were able to get them because there was only sufficient sugar available for that number. Since I have been a Minister I do not know how many letters I have received from members on both sides of the House asking me why so-and-so did not get a new cane assignment. No-one thought then that the industry was going to be in serious straits in the next three or four years.

There is one other point that I should like to clear up. On the matter of loans to the industry, I remind hon. members that these were negotiated by the industry itself. The representatives of the industry—the Queensland Cane Growers' Council, the Australian Sugar Producers' Association and the Proprietary Sugar Millers' Association—met the Premier and decided to approach the Commonwealth with this application for a loan. Presumably they knew what they wanted. On the point of the interest which was quite rightly raised by the hon. member, the interest on the \$19,000,000 loan relates to the initial period when the money was made available from the Reserve Bank. Once the Commonwealth Government "came to the party", the interest ceased and it will not apply again till 1970. The hon. member for Isis was quite right in raising this point, but I thought that I should tell the House the history of it.

I believe that we have to look at the over-all long-term result. It is true that there has been a period of difficulty, but it is a temporary situation and the industry's long-term prospects are much better because of the expansion. I believe, as I have always said, that in the ultimate the sugar industry will be as prosperous as it has always been, and always will make a magnificent contribution to the economy of Queensland. I know this industry too well. I have faith in it and the people in it.

Mr. Houston: They haven't got much faith in you.

Mr. ROW: My word they have! Let hon. members opposite try to wrest my seat from me and see how they get on. And I am in a Labour seat, in which there are two large sugar mills. You can have a go at me with anyone you like to send up.

Mr. Tucker: Wouldn't your face be red if you were beaten!

Mr. ROW: The hon. member for Mulgrave, in his own inimitable fashion, made a very good point. He indicated quite clearly that the new growers did not turn their sugar assignments down; every time they got a chance for an assignment, they grabbed it. In fact, they scrambled for them. There were over 8,000 applications, and only 1,200 became new growers. That is what those people thought about the need for expansion.

The hon. member also mentioned Joe McAvoy. I was pleased to hear him mentioned, because he is president of the Queensland Cane Growers' Council and has been elevated to office in the National Farmers' Union, which is a great honour for a very good Queensland. He is one of the most level-headed men that one could find anywhere, and he supports the new agreement. He is not a "knocker"; he is a man of broad outlook and it seems to me a great pity that there are not a few more Joe McAvoy's in the sugar industry today.

I was pleased to hear the hon. member for Tablelands say that the tobacco industry stabilisation scheme was working well. It is in fact working well. It was introduced by the Government, and it is a good scheme. When we get an Australian quota of 32,000,000 lb., it will really be an excellent one.

We endeavour to screen all new pesticides to the maximum extent possible. As regards DDT, a hydrocarbon, I might mention that we have already made much progress and, as I said in my answer, it should not be necessary as yet to introduce legislation to deal with it. It has been dealt with by co-operation among my department, chemical firms and, above all, farmers, who are the people who have to accept the responsibility. I always believe that co-operation is better than legislation if the objective can be achieved in that way.

There is one further point that may be of interest to the hon. member. I made a Press statement earlier today advising tobacco growers that the ballot papers on their hail insurance scheme are on their way to them. I thank him for his compliment to me and to my departmental officers for the way in which the rolls have been cleaned up.

I congratulate the hon. member for Tablelands on his support, for once in his life, of soil conservation. I will certainly support any move for a maximum effort in that field.

The hon. member for Fassifern mentioned ticks, and I entirely disagree with him on that matter. There is a multi-resistant tick in Queensland and most stock inspectors are presently engaged in the tick areas. If ever the real problem is solved, more stock inspectors will be available to send to areas in which the problem does not arise. Unfortunately, the problem relates not only to stock inspectors but also to agricultural scientists and veterinarians. In fact, it is not so much a question of a shortage of funds—thanks to a very good Treasurer—as an acute shortage of qualified men, and the department is endeavouring to supplement its own veterinary resources by using private practitioners where possible.

Although I must take issue with the hon. member for Fassifern on his concept of and thoughts about the facts relative to the sugar industry, I do appreciate his

thorough and complete understanding of most rural matters, more particularly the dairying industry, with which he has had a very long and very close association. He put his finger right on the pulse when he said that the industry will have to sort out its own problems. I assure him that I do meet leaders of the industry from time to time. I met some last week and some this week, and I am to meet some tomorrow and some next week. I am very happy to meet them and talk their problems over with them.

I think that the hon. member's idea of a committee of Parliamentarians, irrespective of the brand of politics to which they adhere, and representatives of the dairying industry is quite a good one. This is not a political matter, and I think that the people on such a committee could well get together and thrash out the industry's problems.

The hon. member mentioned also the report on the Brisbane milk market. I do not intend to touch on that subject, which is full of problems.

He mentioned the weighbridge at Cannon Hill. If the industry wants a weighbridge, I shall be very happy to co-operate. The reason for the decrease in the number of stock at Cannon Hill is that the Queensland Meat Industry Authority is now allowing 14 abattoirs to supply meat to Brisbane.

Mr. Houston: It was your recommendation. You want all these little abattoirs.

Mr. ROW: I want them, and I want Cannon Hill, too.

Mr. Houston: You do not.

Mr. ROW: I do.

I congratulate the hon. member for Burnett on his very accurate, if rather acid, summing up of the new injection of life into the Opposition. As he did, I also predict that it will be short-lived.

At 9.30 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, I shall now put the Resolution under discussion and all other Resolutions not already agreed to by the House.

Resolution 4—Department of Primary Industries—agreed to.

Resolutions 5 to 23, both inclusive, agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS

OPENING OF COMMITTEE

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

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer—Treasurer): I move—

“(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1968-1969, a further

sum not exceeding \$176,650,545 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1968-1969, a further sum not exceeding \$251,201,242 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1968-1969, a further sum not exceeding \$52,112,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(d) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1967-1968, a supplementary sum not exceeding \$18,743,849.63 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(e) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1967-1968, a supplementary sum not exceeding \$4,597,227.75 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(f) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1967-1968, a supplementary sum not exceeding \$9,040,381.54 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(g) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1969-1970, a sum not exceeding \$59,000,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(h) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1969-1970, a sum not exceeding \$58,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(i) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1969-1970, a sum not exceeding \$14,000,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.”

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported, received, and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2

FIRST READING

A Bill, founded on the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means, was introduced and read a first time.

SECOND READING

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer—
Treasurer) (9.32 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

With a final Appropriation Bill, it is usual for the Treasurer to inform the House of any likely departures from his Budget. I think it will be apparent to all hon. members that, subsequent to the framing and presentation of the Budget to the House, factors can and do arise which have a material effect on the Budget. This year is proving to be no exception to this general experience.

It is already very clear that the State will incur, both directly and indirectly, a heavy additional cost in salaries and wages above the appropriations provided in the Budget. There will be the factor of the “flow-on” from the added 30 per cent. under the Metal Trades Award. However, the really big factor will be the \$1.35 a week awarded in the national wages case and its “flow-on” under State awards. It is also apparent that there will be other increases.

Now it is true that the total cost of all these increases will not fall solely on the State's own resources. Each State can expect an increase in the amount of the Financial Assistance Grant from the Commonwealth because of these added salary and wages costs. The added costs will reflect themselves in the application of the present formula under which the amount of grant is assessed. However, that formula will by no means provide sufficient funds to meet all extra costs in 1968-69. Unfortunately, I am not in a position at present to be able to state definite figures of the likely net additional cost in the Budget. Some costs are known, and others are yet to crystallise. However, it is clear that the net cost will be a substantial figure and will be well in excess of the tentative provisions made by me in the Budget for salary and wage escalations generally.

Other than the wage “flow-on”, expenditure seems to be well contained to the present time and, in total, should keep within the approved Estimates. In this direction, I think I should say that I am indeed appreciative of the action taken by my ministerial colleagues and departmental executive officers in their careful handling of their departments. Income is moving satisfactorily, and promises at this stage to be well up to the estimate.

The one factor that is causing me some concern is the deteriorating seasonal conditions in some of our rural areas owing to a very hot dry spring and an early summer without the usual storm rains. Some unfortunate storms have occurred, and some light rainfalls have occurred, but there is no real indication of an early general break in what can be described as the dry spell. The wool industry is already suffering serious effects from adverse seasonal conditions that follow so closely on the dreadful drought, which is still so fresh in the memory of

the western people. The dairy industry is also feeling some serious effects, and it would be right to add that a great many other rural industries are equally affected. Without early storm rains and a good wet season the seasonal position could again become very serious. I think it would be fair to say that seasonal conditions are the one big question mark in assessing likely results for the financial year 1968-69, and at this stage it would be quite impossible to make any dogmatic assertions as to the likely financial position by 30 June, 1969. However, if we are given a reasonably normal season and sympathetic consideration by the Commonwealth of the State's claims relative to unforeseen salary and wages costs, I see no reason for worrying greatly about the general financial position.

Another matter of interest, which has arisen since I last spoke on an Appropriation Bill, is the abolition by the Commonwealth Government as from 1 November, 1968, of the income tax rebate of 10c for each dollar of Commonwealth loan interest. I think it is good for the House to know that this rebate was introduced in 1942 to retain the benefit of the exemption of Commonwealth bond interest from State taxes which applied before the uniform tax arrangements came into existence. The rebate was considered at that time to be equivalent to the value of the previous exemption. The rebate was also applied in respect of certain loans issued by semi-governmental bodies in some States where the issues were free of State income tax. As hon. members are no doubt aware, the rebate was allowed as an offset to the tax payable on all income of the taxpayer. Its effect was therefore the same as additional tax-free income to the taxpayer, and its value to various taxpayers varied according to the rate of tax payable by the taxpayer on his income.

Where the holder of the bonds was not liable to pay income tax, then, of course, the rebate was of no value. It could only be of value where there was a tax liability against which it could be offset. Where, however, the taxpayer had a large taxable income, the rebate was quite attractive. To such a taxpayer, an effective pre-tax yield of nearly 6½ per cent. was possible. The comparable yield for a person on, let us say, an annual taxable income of between \$4,000 and \$4,800, would be about 6.07 per cent. and, for a company paying tax of 45c in the dollar the effective yield was 6.20 per cent. I believe that members of the House will be able to see from this that the rebate had widely varying effects on different taxpayers and could hardly be said to be an equitable arrangement for attracting Commonwealth loan subscriptions. Furthermore, the difference in effective yield to different taxpayers made it very difficult to compare Commonwealth loan yields with yields of other securities available to lenders for the purpose of deciding changes in Commonwealth loan interest rates.

Hence, the rebate really deprived the long-term bond rate of some of its importance as a key rate in the structure of interest rates in our economy.

Recently, however, the rebate gave rise to some abuse through the procedure which has been termed "rebate-washing". This involved purchasing Commonwealth securities near the date on which interest became payable, collecting the interest, and so becoming entitled to the rebate, and then immediately disposing of the stock. The amount of redemptions increased substantially under this practice, thus reducing the amount of loan money available for new works. This "rebate-washing" was a practice obviously adopted purely for the purpose of reducing income tax liability, and it did nothing but harm to the organised development of the Commonwealth loan market, with which we are very closely associated.

These were the main reasons why the Commonwealth Government decided to discontinue the entitlement to the rebate as far as future issues are concerned. There will, of course, be no repudiation as far as past issues go. The Commonwealth will continue to allow the rebate on existing issues until they mature, some as late as the year 2004.

The Commonwealth has recognised that any upward adjustment in interest rates to compensate for the discontinuance of the rebate will fall initially on the States which meet the interest bill, whereas the benefit of the abolition of the rebate will accrue to the Commonwealth through increased income tax collections. The Commonwealth has therefore undertaken to take this additional cost into account when reviewing the Financial Assistance Grants in 1970, and has also promised to reimburse the cost to the States until that review takes place.

It is of course difficult at this stage to gauge the effect of the discontinuance of the rebate on the level of over-all Commonwealth loan subscriptions. For the first loan offered without the rebate, the long-term rate has been increased from 5.25 per cent. to 5.4 per cent. and there have also been small increases for the shorter-term securities. These increases will not anywhere nearly compensate for the loss of the rebate to individual holders with substantial taxable incomes or to companies which were previously able to claim the rebate against tax paid by them. On the other hand the increased interest rate will prove more attractive to investors who were not able to benefit from the tax rebate. Some interchange of holding of existing securities can be expected with those investors who can benefit from the rebate tending to buy existing issues on the market, and those not able to collect the rebate selling their existing holdings and subscribing for the higher-interest new issues. The 30/20 rule which at present encourages the investment of life insurance and superannuation funds in

Commonwealth securities will continue to apply and will assist in maintaining previous levels of subscriptions. Hon. members will recollect that, under this rule, life companies and superannuation funds which invest at least 20 per cent. of investible funds in Commonwealth inscribed stock and, at option, up to a further 10 per cent. in semi-governmental debentures, obtain very attractive taxation concessions.

The discontinuance of the rebate will tend to make semi-governmental loans a more attractive investment than Commonwealth loans without the rebate. The new long-term bond rate of 5.4 per cent. is below the current maximum semi-governmental loan rate of 5.625 per cent. for public issues and 5.875 per cent. for private loans, whereas previously the rebate made the Commonwealth loans more rewarding than semi-governmental securities. It will take time for the various lenders to adjust to the position. At this stage I shall only remark that some large semi-governmental loan offers have been made since the abolition of the rebate and that these lenders were probably influenced by that factor. I will watch with interest to see how the market sorts itself out, and whether there is any marked adverse effect on the level of subscriptions to Commonwealth loans.

I now want to make some brief observations on the question of overseas investments in Australia. I say quite sincerely that there is a lot of nonsense being talked about this subject, and in my opinion there is a tremendous body of uninformed opinion. I am not going to exclude the Opposition from that category. The Opposition is, of course, anxious to accept all the benefits which flow from overseas investment in Australia, but it does not seek to accept the responsibilities. I think it is about time we started to look at this position in the broad, and tried to see the balanced picture. It is about time that we paused to consider where we might have been on a national basis without this large influx of overseas capital in the past few years.

Usually the criticism levelled at the Government over its policy of encouraging overseas investment is on a local basis. Objection is taken to some particular condition or form of assistance in a particular case. Tonight I want to draw the attention of this House to the wider principles connected with overseas investment, and some of the debits and credits of the flow of overseas investment to Australia.

First let me point out that the Australian economy is devoting more than a quarter of Gross National Product to capital expenditure. This is one of the highest rates of capital expenditure anywhere in the world. A publication issued by the United Nations entitled "Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics" gives figures for many countries, from which the percentages of capital expenditure for major countries have been calculated. The latest figures available at

the time of publication were for 1965-66. Japan heads the list with 31.3 per cent., followed by Norway with 29.2 per cent., Switzerland with 27.7 per cent., and Australia with 27.6 per cent. The percentage for West Germany is 26.6, whilst for Canada it is 24.6, for the Netherlands 24.5, for New Zealand 24.1, for Sweden 23.6, for France 21.7, for the United Kingdom 17.6, and for the United States 17.2.

For the year 1967-68 the Commonwealth Bulletin "National Income and Expenditure", issued in conjunction with the 1968-69 Federal Budget, shows that gross fixed capital expenditure in Australia, excluding increases in stocks, was \$6,261 million, which represents almost 26 per cent. of Gross National Product. These figures are on a slightly different basis from those published by the United Nations, but they show the same picture. The point I want to make is simply this: that, but for the net capital inflow into Australia of \$1,159 million for that year, we would have been unable to devote such a high proportion of Gross National Product to capital expenditure.

In very broad terms, the national product can be used only for consumption or for capital purposes. Expenditure for capital purposes represents the amounts provided by businesses by way of depreciation allowances, undistributed profits, and other forms of retained income, plus savings by individuals, any surplus by public authorities and the capital inflow. It will be realised that, without overseas assistance, the amount normally available for capital purposes could only be increased in total at the expense of expenditure in some other area, such as expenditure on consumer goods.

Let us look at this in another way by considering the total resources available in Australia. If more of these resources are to be directed to provision of capital equipment, then obviously there must be a reduction in the amount available for other purposes. It is here that overseas investment has been particularly helpful to our over-all development. It has provided an increasing proportion of the funds available for capital expenditure, about 18½ per cent. being provided from this source in 1967-68.

Apart from an immediate benefit to Australia's overseas reserves, investment from overseas is vital in the longer term to Australia's balance-of-payments position. Much of the overseas capital investment has been directed to export projects, particularly in the mining sphere, and will add substantially to our future export earnings. It is certain that, for every dollar of profit or capital charges to be repatriated at some future date from Australia, there will be a considerably greater amount of export income available to finance imports or add to Australia's external balances.

There cannot be any doubt that overseas investment must be of considerable net benefit to Australia's future balance-of-payments position, whether through direct increase

in export earnings or by cutting down on the need to import commodities that would otherwise have been a charge against our external balances.

Another way of appreciating the benefits of overseas investment is to consider what the situation would have been in the absence of such investment. With imports running at high levels and with export returns depressed by drought and by low export prices, Australia would have had little practical alternative but to take action to cut down imports. Just what form this action would have taken is not my concern at the moment, but it would have been action of a type that would have affected every citizen throughout the nation. A policy of restriction does not appeal to me as a means of overcoming a chronic balance-of-payments problem. I far prefer the bolder line of action to stimulate export projects. As I have already stated the fact is that the necessity for restrictive action on imports has been avoided by the inflow of overseas capital. Moreover, this inflow has had the further advantages of speeding up the rate at which we have been able to develop our resources and providing a better chance of stabilising our balance of payments in future.

Queensland will, of course, take part largely in these advantages since this is one State where the resources are available for development. It is clear that Queensland stands to gain from the accelerated rate of development. This has been the Government's confirmed view and this has been its policy. We want to see major projects established with Australian capital, but the plain fact is that there is just not enough local capital available to meet local needs. If we waited for this capital to become available, Queensland would miss the opportunities that are offering. Failing full Australian promotion of these developments, we would like to see Australian participation wherever possible. We feel this is a sound principle, but we are not going to take this policy to a point where it results in little or no development because of a lack of local financial resources. Queensland had enough of stagnation when the Opposition was a Government.

In addition to sharing in the national advantages certain other benefits flow, from Queensland's point of view, from the assistance of overseas capital. One of these is greater stability in our economy and less dependence upon seasonal conditions and overseas prices. Queensland has a definite seasonal cycle in employment, created by the high demand, during certain months of the year, for labour, for such industries as sugar, meat and shearing. In addition to this problem that recurs every year, our economy has been seriously affected by drought and the instability of overseas prices for some of our major products. Industrial development, even if it is financed by overseas capital, will reduce the relative importance of seasonal effects in our primary

industries and also the relative importance of fluctuations in seasonal conditions from year to year.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: It has been ironed out very substantially already.

Mr. CHALK: There is no doubt about that; the influx of capital has assisted in that direction.

There has been criticism of the Government for allowing the export of large quantities of coking coal. Again, our critics have missed the most important point associated with such development. While the export of coal is important from the national point of view in assisting the balance-of-payments position, there is a more important fact so far as Queensland is concerned. The development of huge mines and special railways is awakening the world to the fact that cheap coal can become available on the Queensland coast and this, in turn, is leading to the likelihood of industrial developments which need massive quantities of heat or power. I see these export projects mainly as stepping stones to large-scale utilisation of the other mineral and chemical resources available in this State.

It is well known that the establishment of one industry triggers the establishment of subsidiary industries, and I believe that, given the availability of a major power-house with cheap coal available for fuel, the inevitable chain reaction will result in the establishment of a wide range of industries. Taking this a stage further, I expect that special industries will not only expand our population by creating employment opportunities but will also improve the welfare of Queensland's residents by increasing average earnings in this State. Altogether the opportunities offering are exciting to a degree and are a complete vindication of the Government's policy of development from Australian and overseas financial resources.

I have tried to present this appreciation in considered terms and to draw the attention of the House to the broad issues. Of course, use of overseas capital has its advantages and disadvantages. But to my mind it is clear that, in our local context, the advantages both short and long term so outweigh the disadvantages that the wisdom of the Government's policy is beyond any possible doubt.

The three issues on which I have touched in the course of introducing this final Appropriation Bill are, in their own way, matters of prime importance.

I feel that, at this stage, the Consolidated Revenue Fund for 1968-69 is heading in a satisfactory direction, with seasonal conditions the one source of possible future worry.

It is yet too early to judge the effect of abolition of the 10c tax rebate on interest on Commonwealth Inscribed Stock. However, I have the feeling that the net effect of the abolition might well be some lessening of support for Commonwealth loans. If this

does occur we must face the possibility of a further increase in interest rates—a course which I do not favour. Whilst any increase would be recouped to the States by the Commonwealth, it would be a matter for considerable concern if semi-governmental debenture rates also moved in sympathy. In this behalf the recent movement in the bond rate did not affect the debenture rate—but it is questionable whether further increases could be absorbed without some sympathetic movement in the debenture rate.

I have put to the House some national aspects of the effect of foreign investment in Queensland, especially in the mining industry. For all the argument that the Opposition has adduced in opposition to development by means of foreign capital, the fact is that it is this very investment that has helped Australia in its remarkable developmental effort in recent years. It has also made possible the many national benefits, both direct and indirect, that have flowed from that effort.

It is with these thoughts in mind and conscious of the fact that the Budget for 1968-69 highlights Queensland's march to progress, that I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba—Leader of the Opposition) (10.9 p.m.): I am sure that, as the Treasurer's speech indicated, this is the last open debate before the next State election. A month or so ago we heard the Treasurer speak of his Budget in glowing terms and tell the people of Queensland that there was nothing to worry about; that the economy was buoyant; and that it was a "march to progress" Budget. In other words he painted a glowing picture of the tremendous progress in Queensland under the guidance of this Government, but since the Isis by-election he has had second thoughts and has come to the conclusion that maybe the public as a whole is not accepting his submissions in the way he intended. He is now starting to make excuses so that, if things go wrong, he can say, "Well, I did forecast this when I spoke on the second Appropriation Bill." I am not surprised at the Treasurer's taking this step because it is very clear that the Government got a jolt and is now looking for a way out.

I do not think that we can deny that Governments are judged on two main factors. The first relates to the handling of finances, and how the Government can put its story across to the people to persuade them that they are better off under the Government than under any previous Governments; that they are better off under the Government, than under the alternative Government. If the Treasurer and the Government can do that successfully, that is fair enough, and they get the electors' support. I suppose I should admit, and I can admit, that, in later years, they have been able to fool enough of the electors into believing that they have been managing the State's affairs successfully whereas, in

fact, as we have pointed out on several occasions, there have been many shortcomings in governmental expenditure.

In the Budget debate which has just concluded hon. members on this side of the House definitely and conclusively proved that the Government's handling of finances has not been up to the expected standard.

The other factor, of course, is the public image, that is, whether or not the public thinks that the Government of the day has a united front and is administering the affairs of the State in a businesslike manner.

I will deal with the second factor first. I do not think anyone can say that the Government is a united and happy force, but we have a situation in Queensland where the Government is not even governing. Every issue of importance is shelved for consideration on another occasion. If it runs into something that is a little difficult, the Government, instead of handling the matter in a businesslike way, with Cabinet accepting responsibility, forms a committee and passes the matter to it for recommendations.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: Would you not say that the Public Service legislation was major legislation?

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not want to run contrary to Mr. Speaker's wishes. A Bill is before the House, and the hon. member should know full well that this is not the time to debate the issue.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: I am just asking you if you think it is important legislation.

Mr. HOUSTON: I will tell the hon. member all about the issues in the Public Service legislation at the second-reading stage. I will admit that the Government introduced a Bill relating to the Public Service, but I can cite many issues that the Government has run away from; it has run away from the issues relating to education; it has run away from the land valuation issues; it has run away from the issue of doing something about a civil defence organisation; and last, but not least, it has run away from the liquor issue. If the hon. member wishes to deny that there is dissension within the Government ranks on liquor matters I am willing to hear his arguments.

Mr. Wharton: Would you like liquor extensions, too?

Mr. HOUSTON: I tell the hon. member that we want some liquor justice around the place. We do not want sectional legislation that the Government talks about and fosters.

Mr. Miller: What sort of justice would you like?

Mr. HOUSTON: I will tell the people of Queensland quite definitely in about March exactly what the Labour Party will do. If

Government members who are so intent on quoting Labour's policy from some documents—I do not know where they get them—cared to look at Labour's official policy documents, they would clearly see what Labour's official policy is on liquor. We certainly do not want to do what the Government does. Let us look at some of the things the Government has done and has talked about.

Mr. Wharton: What about casinos?

Mr. HOUSTON: I am quite aware of the arguments on casinos and everything else.

An article in 1963 shows how disunited the Government was and how it was at cross purposes. I shall be pleased to hear the Treasurer's views on the Liberal Party's attitude. This article states that uniform drinking laws of Queensland were adopted the previous day as State Country Party policy. The Country Party policy in 1963, according to its convention, was uniform liquor laws. The Country Party believed there should not be sectional legislation. When did it change? What was the factor that caused it to decide to introduce legislation a couple of years ago which broke away from that policy? What pressure was exerted?

And we are accused of getting directions and so forth! I do not suppose anyone would suggest that "The Sunday Mail" is a bosom pal of the Labour Party. It is always quick to hit the Labour Party on receiving directions and so forth. "The Sunday Mail" of 10 November contains an eye-opening statement that the Liberals got the message on liquor changes. It looks as if the Liberal members got their directions all right. Which section of the party got the directions and what did the directions amount to?

Mr. Wharton: Did you get a couple of bottles of beer in Isis?

Mr. HOUSTON: As a matter of fact, I did, and I got them on a Saturday. On the Sunday I had a drink in a hotel in Isis quite legally, the same as everyone else. I want the Treasurer to tell me why it is all right if we are campaigning in Isis to have a drink on a Sunday, and not all right to have one anywhere else on a Sunday. These are the things we want to know. The Country Party's policy is that hotels throughout the State should be open. The Premier cracks the whip and says that there will be no drinking on Sundays. The Treasurer believes that people should drink every day. The Minister for Justice says that major liquor law changes will be made.

Mr. Wharton: What do you say?

Mr. HOUSTON: As I said, I shall state exactly later on where we stand.

Mr. Knox interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am sure that the people of Nundah want to know exactly where the Minister stands on this matter.

I do not raise this matter simply because of what the Press reported but because of the propaganda nonsense being disseminated that the Government is united when in fact its members are fighting amongst themselves like Kilkenny cats. At every opportunity they are scratching at one another, not knowing where they are going. First of all there is to be a change, and then there is not to be a change. I do not care about their fighting and all this type of nonsense because that is to be expected in a marriage of convenience as exists at present. While the leaders of the Government parties select Cabinet Ministers, naturally there will be those who want to curry favour with their leaders. I am annoyed and concerned at the fact that the Government is trying to fool the public of this State.

What will be the Government's policy on liquor? Surely it has a policy. Or is it like everything else? Those who support the non-drinkers will tell the electors, "Our policy is not to extend the drinking laws. We believe it is all right to have the hotels closed all the time." Those who want to drink will tell the electors that they support drinking 24 hours a day. The Country Party fellows will say, "Have no fears. The hotels will be open on Sundays. It is those jolly Libs who want them closed." The Liberal members will say, "Look, fellows, we want the hotels open in Brisbane and we want an extension of the drinking laws, but those Country Party fellows do not." This is the type of cross-talk going on. I have heard them say it. I have been in their company many times. The Treasurer had a chance to tell us his policy and deliberately evaded doing so. I hope that in his reply he will have something to say about it. The only thing that I regret is that it happens to be the Treasurer to whom I have to put this question. I would have been happier if I could ask it of the Premier because he is the one whose views I should like to know. I regret that when he came back from overseas hon. members opposite had not made a decision that would have let him off the hook. Unfortunately the hon. member for South Coast mixed things up a bit by asking for a recommittal, which put the whole matter again up in the air and caused the Premier to crack the whip to get all Government members at a meeting. Imagine what would have happened if the Labour Party had called a meeting and only 19 out of 47, less than half, turned up! One can imagine the headlines that that would have caused. Hon. members opposite are running away every time a decision has to be made.

On the one hand, the Minister for Justice has stated that in his opinion cafes that come up to the required standard should be able to obtain liquor licences. I do not want to misquote him, and I am referring only to his public statements and not things that he may have said in private conversation. In taking that attitude, I am not like some

people whom I could mention. In his public statements the Minister for Justice has indicated that he believes that more liquor licences should be issued, and by that I take it that he means to those cafes that come up to the required standard. Where did that idea fall down? The Government Caucus decided that there would be no restrictions on the issuing of liquor licences to cafes, then over-night members opposite decided that that would not be so. They also decided at a caucus meeting that there would be an extension of liquor-drinking opportunities at motels, and again that was thrown out.

The position is not whether we, as an Opposition, want any extension of drinking at all. It is obvious that the law at present is not being enforced, and it is also obvious that there is sectional legislation on this matter. I believe that the Government should have ascertained, before discussing it at all, whether or not there was a need to open hotels in Brisbane on Sundays. A decision should also have been made on whether or not there is justification for extending the number of restaurant liquor licences. Surely the Government can come down with something definite.

As the Treasurer is Acting Premier, no doubt he will have, on behalf of the Government, some definite views to express on the matter. The people of Queensland are entitled to know exactly where the Government stands. As far as the Opposition is concerned, let there be no doubt that our policy will be clearly defined in our decisions, and I shall be enunciating it in detail on behalf of my party at the proper time. We will not run away from any decisions that have to be made. One thing about the A.L.P. is that when we go to the people with a policy they know without any doubt that that policy will be put into effect. Hon. members opposite have as many different policies as there are factions in their parties. They are no longer a coalition of the Country and Liberal parties; they are now in a factional state and cannot make up their minds on major matters.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: How long did it take your party to get a policy on State aid?

Mr. HOUSTON: We have had a policy on State aid for quite a long time. The policy of hon. members opposite is to give some measure of aid as a means of buying votes. Government members have no definite knowledge of the requirements of other than State schools in this State. They do not know anything at all about which schools require help and which do not. This is shown quite clearly in the policy of granting \$25 a head. The Government is not saying to schools that need aid, "We will help you."

Mr. Campbell: You want to discriminate.

Mr. HOUSTON: What is the Government doing for State schools? Is every State school being given exactly the same amount of money to spend? Of course not. The Government says to them, "You collect so much and we will give you a certain subsidy on it." If I ask the Minister for an additional classroom for a school in my electorate, the reply that I receive is that a decision will be made "after the priorities have been looked at" as to whether or not an additional classroom should be built. No matter what State school parents and citizens' associations or headmasters ask for, they have to line up under a system of priorities determined according to the funds available. I have no argument with that; I think it is quite logical to do it.

Mr. Lee: It is a sensible plan.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course it is a sensible plan. But there is no sense in saying to every private school in this State, "We will give you an amount of money based on the number of children at the school, irrespective of whether you have a science block, a library, or an assembly hall." Some of the older and better-known schools in this State are so well endowed that people cannot get their children into them unless they enrol them at birth. In some instances they have to take a punt before birth as to whether it is going to be a boy or a girl. The public thinks that these schools are first-class teaching establishments, otherwise that sort of thing would not be going on. Do hon. members opposite think that schools such as these need money as much as do some primary schools in other areas?

Mr. Miller: Of course they do. They are all in debt.

Mr. HOUSTON: In reply to the hon. member for Chatsworth, I say that I do not think that the Government has a worthwhile policy. Its only consideration is whether it is possible to buy the votes of parents of children who go to the schools to which I have been referring by giving them a few dollars. That is the policy of the Government, and I say that it is a policy that is not in the best interests of the great majority of the people of Queensland.

In regard to civil defence, what preparation has the Government made to meet problems arising from bush fires, droughts, cyclones, and so on? When something happens, it says that it will take action; but no organisation has been set up in the State and no money is available for any such undertaking.

Mr. Davies: The Government could not find a Minister to go up to Killarney, and it rushed one Liberal Minister up to the by-election at Isis.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is true. The Minister for Transport was the only Liberal who went up to Isis, and I should be very interested to know what he told some of the Liberals there relative to the way in which

to cast their votes. It is well known that the Liberal Party is very anxious to become the senior party, and it might think, by deduction, "If we can kill off enough Country Party seats, that might make us the senior party." I warn the Treasurer that the Liberal Party has no chance of winning any seats from the Australian Labour Party, so all he can hope for is, at best, to be the Leader of the senior party in Opposition.

In his introductory remarks, the Treasurer made many comments relative to salaries and wages. He said that the increases have been passed on and will come through to the State. Who is going to take the responsibility for the constant and consistent increases in wages? From hearing members of the Government speak, one would think that it is the employees who bring about increases in wages. In fact, as we all know, rising costs cause wage and salary earners to go to industrial tribunals and seek wage justice. If the Government is going to cry about having to pay additional wages and salaries, I suggest that it should look at the action of governments in both Federal and State spheres and see whether or not they are contributing greatly to the increase in costs and to the constant increase in wages and salaries.

No-one in this country looks forward to the escalation of costs. Certainly, as has been said in this Chamber, the primary producer does not want it; I agree with that. If the State is to export its primary and secondary production, it has to keep costs down. Certainly the wage-earner does not want it, because every time prices rise he is a little worse off. Those who are on a fixed income do not want it, either, because the greatest burden of all falls on them. When the Federal Government is so unsympathetic, I do not know how pensioners even exist, let alone live, under present conditions.

Mr. Wharton: Why don't you help the pensioners in Hervey Bay?

Mr. HOUSTON: The pensioners up there had their greatest possible help a week ago when they elected Jim Blake as their member. When State and Federal Labour Governments take office we will do many things to help them. If the hon. member wants to know what we have done, the Labour Party gave them Jim Blake as a member. If the hon. member could persuade his Federal colleagues to do something about the pensioners I am sure that would be a great help. Every man and woman in the Labour Party in the Federal house, the hon. member can rest assured, is constantly advocating a better deal for those on the lower incomes. There is only one State in the Commonwealth held by Labour. That is Tasmania, and the rest, Federal and State, are held by anti-Labour Forces. There is not way the hon. member can pass the blame onto us.

In most States those anti-Labour forces have held office through fear and other sly practices in campaigning. But I think the

day has passed when hon. members opposite can get away with these things. They are the greatest exponents in the world of the fright and fear complex in political campaigning. They started off, at the beginning of my political career, with the Petrov case, and, on the success achieved with that fear complex, they have continued at every election to come up with a new gimmick. This time, however, the bubble will burst.

The Treasurer again started to use the fear complex in his speech tonight, but he is not frightening me. I am not worried whether or not he or any other member of his party comes into my electorate. There is some advantage in having an opponent in that your own name is kept before the public.

The Treasurer mentioned overseas capital. If ever the Labour Party has been misquoted on anything it is on its attitude to overseas capital.

Mr. Lickiss: Are you running for cover now?

Mr. HOUSTON: I have never run for cover in my life. I have always said, and so have my predecessors, that we welcome overseas capital. "Hansard" will show John Duggan's attitude; before that, Les Wood's; before that Vince Gair's; Ned Hanlon's, and Forgan Smith's. Hon. members can go back to all Labour leaders and see that our attitude has always been to welcome overseas capital. Full stop there!

But there is a great difference between our attitude to overseas capital and the Government's. We welcome overseas capital when it is prepared to assist this nation to develop and to put back into the nation some of what it gets out of it. Some of the companies have done this. I suppose one of the worst examples of companies that take money out of this country is General Motors-Holden. And who assisted it to get on its feet? Who assisted Mt. Isa, Mary Kathleen, the meat-works and many others? I could name plenty of them; so let us make it very clear that the Labour Party welcomes overseas capital provided it is not used here simply to exploit us. I do not believe that overseas capitalists themselves come with any intention of simply exploiting, but they do try to get as good a bargain as they can. The Treasurer himself quite correctly said that there seems to be an attitude here against overseas capital, but that is only partly true. It is not correct that we are opposed to overseas capital, as I said before, but it is correct that there is opposition to the Government's attitude. The Treasurer believes that he should have overseas companies here at any cost. In fact, these companies have struck a hard bargain with the State Government and the Government has turned in a very weak-kneed attitude in its dealings with them. The Government has a reason. It sees the companies as a means of circulating propaganda. Every day we see the Government's attitude that we are

developing Queensland because many companies have started their operations here, whereas in fact the companies have been given every assistance to the detriment of many of our local people.

I do not want to reiterate statements that were made during the Budget debate relative to housing and State financial assistance that was provided to those companies instead of being provided to other industries; but the Treasurer cannot deny that most of the equipment that is used in the alumina works at Gladstone, in the bauxite development at Weipa and in the coal mines, was made outside Australia. When the Treasurer talks about the amount of local money that is spent to buy things, he is really referring to its use to get these industries under way. I would be much happier if these companies came to Australia with their money and fostered development and used local industries. I know that hon. members on the Government side will say that we do not have the know-how. I do not accept that as a logical and valid argument. I mention the railway wagons that are used to transport our coal. They were built in Japan. How much work did that create on the local scene? Surely no-one will argue that we are not capable of building those wagons. What about the pipes used in the pipeline to carry oil from Roma to Brisbane? Surely it cannot be said that those pipes could not have been manufactured in Australia. I have looked at the draglines that are in use at Blackwater and Moura. I do not believe that the engineering and electrical skills of our tradesmen were incapable of constructing them. However, even those draglines were imported.

Mr. Lickiss: You would be joking on that one, wouldn't you?

Mr. HOUSTON: Not at all. Australian tradesmen can build power-houses.

Mr. Lickiss: What would be the cost of that?

Mr. HOUSTON: Now we get down to facts! Is the Government going to work on the basis that it is all right to import something as long as it can be imported more cheaply than it could be manufactured in Australia? Is it going to give an open go to Japan, Hong Kong and China? It is going to embark on a policy of importing something because it can be obtained cheaper overseas? There would not be many commodities that are used in Australia that cannot be made cheaper in another country.

Mr. Lickiss: Have you ever heard of economics?

Mr. HOUSTON: I have heard a lot of economics. But we do not fill bellies with economics, and the pensioner does not get his food from economics. The Government applies economics only when it suits

its mates. Why did the Australian Government institute tariffs on the importation of Japanese cars? Was it not because the Japanese were dumping cars on the Australian market and interfering with our work-force and the sale of Australian-made vehicles?

Mr. Lickiss: You were talking about two draglines.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am saying that they could have been manufactured with the skills of the Australian workers, and that if Australian workers can construct power-houses they should be able to build something like a dragline. After all, draglines consist of steel structures and electric motors. What else do they consist of? Australian engineers and tradesmen are as good as those in other parts of the world.

Mr. Tucker: They built ships during the war.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course they did. All that the Government is interested in is getting a company here and letting it impose any terms that it wishes. The Treasurer can laugh—

Mr. Tooth: Give the Treasurer a go.

Mr. HOUSTON: He has had as good a go as anybody in this State could have. He has had quite a lot of money to play with. As I say, I do not think he has spent it wisely. But he has had an added advantage in holding the position of Premier of the State for a short time. That is quite a prestige position, as we know. At the present time, he is again acting as Premier.

The Treasurer also said that we oppose the export of coal. That, again, is untrue. The Labour Party has never opposed the export of coal from Australia or Queensland. We fostered the export of coal from Blair Athol hoping to get markets.

Mr. Hanlon: The Federal Liberal Government was subsidising Indian coal when we were trying to sell it to Melbourne.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is right.

We object strongly to the 5c a ton royalty. I know the Treasurer can say, "You have said that a dozen times", but I will continue to say it because, to me, that is the factor that makes the difference.

Mr. Tooth: Don't you think we are getting anything out of it?

Mr. HOUSTON: We are getting too little from our coal—far too little! Every time I hear the Minister, or another Minister, talk about lack of money, I think of all the money that could be available from our natural resources for which we are not getting a fair deal. As I have said, I think we got only \$171,000 last year in royalty from coal.

Mr. Tooth: Is that all we are getting?

Mr. HOUSTON: That is all that the Government is getting in royalty. The Minister need not tell me how much the Government is getting from railway freights. Is that important?

Mr. Tooth: My word it is.

Mr. HOUSTON: Does the Minister know how much profit we are making out of the railways in freights?

Mr. Chalk: Do you?

Mr. HOUSTON: No, because the Treasurer refuses to tell us.

Mr. Chalk: Well, what are you talking about?

Mr. HOUSTON: The Treasurer refuses to tell us because it is nothing to boast about. I respect the Treasurer in various fields, and I will say that if he gets an opportunity to boast for the Government—I have no argument against that—he will do so. He is not telling us what the profit is only because he knows it is not sufficiently high to boast about. I deliberately asked a question about how much coal was exported but even that is something that must be hidden away. The Treasurer will regret the day that he refused to make public information which, I believe, the public is entitled to, because no-one likes to feel that he is not being told the whole story. So far as I am concerned, there is much more to be said about coal, and coal contracts, between us and Japan. As to secret arrangements, the Treasurer can say that they are private arrangements between the Commissioner for Railways and the company, but that is a lot of nonsense because public money is involved. If it is good enough for the Minister for Mines to go up to Isis and boast about millions of dollars, and if it is good enough for the Minister for Health to know how much is involved, it is good enough for those in Opposition in Parliament to know how much is involved.

Mr. Tooth interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Minister is in the dark? He is in the dark, and he has been in the dark for years, but Hadyn Sargent will get him out of the darkness and put him back into the teaching profession.

So much for our attitude to investment, but let me be precise about it: firstly, we are not opposed to overseas investment but we are opposed to investment when it is all one way. We are opposed to the Government's weak knee'd attitude of allowing things to be put over it. Secondly, on the export of coal, provided we have the resources, we are quite happy about that, too; but we demand a fair return for our natural resources.

Mr. Chalk: You want a bigger royalty?

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, we do want a bigger royalty. Let there be no doubt about that. I, and my predecessors, have said on

numerous occasions, that we think that a royalty of 5c a ton on coal—the equivalent of an apple or an orange, to put it in such terms—is far too little.

Mr. Chalk: Do you favour the other fellow building the railway line?

Mr. HOUSTON: The Treasurer should not get really childish. I pay him the compliment of understanding English. I know that his officers have read the speeches that I and other members of the Opposition have made, and I am sure that they have said to him, "Look, he is not in favour of private railways". I hope I have made that very clear. The Treasurer knows that and has quoted me as saying that on several occasions.

Mr. Tooth: It sounds as if you approve of the policy.

Mr. HOUSTON: Approve of what?

Mr. Chalk: Private people building a railway line.

Mr. HOUSTON: That was not Government policy. Government policy was privately owned railway lines. Of course it was. That is the Government's policy, and it only switched when it knew that the company would not meet its obligations. So Government members should not start telling me about Government policy because it was made clear in the Bill introduced into the House. The Treasurer said that Ernie Evans put it in and that the Minister for Health supported him, and the Treasurer, of course, was against it at that point of time.

Mr. Hanlon: There was provision in the existing Act for a privately owned railway but the Government didn't go ahead with it.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is very true.

Let me return to the question of rising costs. To me this is one of the important features. The Government boasts of great development and of companies coming here, yet we find that the average person is finding it more difficult to live and to clothe and educate his children. Rising costs have brought about an economic situation that is not in the interests of this State or nation. Through economic circumstances, married women with young children are forced to go to work. I agree with the principle—it is our principle—that anyone who wants to work should have the right to work, but there is a difference between having the right to work and going to work merely because they feel they would like to go to work as they have little else to do, and women with young children being forced to go to work because their husbands' salaries are not sufficient to maintain their homes and educate their children. This is what the Government's policy has brought about.

Mr. Porter: Insufficient in what way? Do you suggest that because somebody wants a new refrigerator or a second motor-car a woman is forced to go to work?

Mr. HOUSTON: This is the attitude. This is Liberal Party thinking. Because a worker has a refrigerator, Liberal Party members say it is too good for him. This is their attitude. According to them, it is too good for him, far too good. We have heard their attitude on this. I say that every family who lives in this State is entitled to its own home, amenities that we normally consider essential, such as vacuum cleaners and the like, and it is entitled to a means of preserving food, which is a refrigerator.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: I was thinking of a hole in somebody's head when I referred to vacuum cleaners.

These people are entitled to these amenities as a right, not as a luxury. As for a motor-car, the way the Government is building their houses and sending them out to Woodridge and Lawnton and other places miles away from public transport—

Mr. Porter: Who is sending them?

Mr. HOUSTON: The Government, deliberately. The Government is sending them out there.

Mr. E. G. W. Wood interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: What public transport? How does anyone get to Redland Bay at night-time. They have to walk.

Mr. E. G. W. Wood: We have one of the best train services in the suburbs.

Mr. HOUSTON: To Cleveland? That shows how long it is since the hon. member has been in his electorate because there is no train service to Cleveland and the hon. member should know this.

Mr. Miller interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: I know exactly what I am saying. The hon. member for Logan said there is a train service to all parts of his electorate and there is no train service to Cleveland. I asked him—

Mr. E. G. W. WOOD: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: I asked the hon. member how people living in Cleveland, Raby Bay and Redland Bay get there at night-time. The Government saw fit to close the railway line. I say that there is an absolute necessity today—

Mr. Porter: Are all the people living there unfortunate people who have been chased down there by the Government? No-one is living there by choice.

Mr. E. G. W. Wood: There is a bus service every night.

Mr. HOUSTON: What time of night?

Mr. E. G. W. Wood: You know that very well.

Mr. Newton: You thumb a lift.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, you thumb a lift. What time of night do the buses run?

Mr. E. G. W. Wood: At 6 o'clock and 11 o'clock.

Mr. HOUSTON: For most people today a motor-car is needed not as a luxury but a necessity. So far as "back to Woodridge" is concerned, if the Housing Commission had not decided to build homes in outlying areas the people would not have gone there to live. The people want homes, and there is a desperate need for rental accommodation. If there is one thing for which the Government will always stand condemned, it is its failure to provide the number of homes required by the people.

Mr. Porter: Are you attacking the Arbitration Court now? Are you suggesting that the basic wage is inadequate?

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course it is inadequate. If the hon. member wants me to say that I disagree with the Arbitration Court in the lowness of its awards, yes, I do disagree with it. Wages are far too low.

Mr. Porter: Now tell us the next thing.

Mr. HOUSTON: What is that?

Mr. Porter: What is the percentage of wage earners earning the basic wage only?

Mr. HOUSTON: For the hon. member's benefit, perhaps I can go back and start all over again. I began by saying that there is a need for married women with children to go to work because of the paltriness of the purchasing power of the wages received by their husbands. If the hon. member believes that every woman who goes to work goes because of a love of working for an employer and because she would rather be at work than at home looking after her young children, I would be very surprised.

Mr. Lickiss: It could be that there are job opportunities available to them.

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not deny that there are job opportunities.

Mr. Chinchin: They did not have those opportunities in your day.

Mr. HOUSTON: What a lot of nonsense! In fact, it is only a short time ago that people were heard saying that under a Labour Government labour could not be obtained.

Mr. Newton: When you were at the Ford Motor Company, you had a gang coming, a gang going, and a gang working.

Mr. HOUSTON: The only sensible thing that the Ford Motor Company did at that time was to get rid of the hon. member.

Let us look at another attitude of the Government with regard to rising costs. People are being forced into the consistent use of hire-purchase, and in some cases unfortunately they over-reach themselves.

Mr. Chinchin: Whose fault is that? It will be the Government's, too.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is brought about because people do not have sufficient direct income to buy the things to which they believe they are entitled in this community and in this day. They buy things on hire-purchase only because they do not have cash available for them. They go to hire-purchase companies because they have not the deposits required on articles, and because the Government has not taken the necessary legislative action to meet this situation, many people are being forced away from hire-purchase companies and into the hands of money-lenders. One thing that the Government's actions and attitudes and lack of legislation are doing is forcing people into the hands of moneylenders and money sharks.

Mr. Chinchin: Tommy rot!

Mr. HOUSTON: The hon. member may say "Tommy rot". It is all right for hon. members who represent silver-tail electorates. They may not come in contact with the people who—

Mr. Porter: What about giving us some facts?

Mr. HOUSTON: I will give the hon. member some facts—19.752 per cent. for a loan.

Mr. Porter: You said that many people were forced to go to money-lenders.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is correct.

Mr. Porter: Give us some facts. What is the proportion of the community?

Mr. HOUSTON: It does not matter whether it is only one person.

Mr. Chinchin: You want us to legislate for one person?

Mr. HOUSTON: The hon. member may not consider that one person is of very much concern, but the worry of one person is of great personal concern to me. It needs only one person in my electorate to come to me with a problem and I am involved.

Mr. Chinchin: So are we all.

Mr. HOUSTON: Apparently the hon. member is not. Apparently he does not care two hoots whether or not people are being fleeced right and left. Do hon. members think it is right and just that advertisements should appear saying, "We will lend you money to buy a motor-car or a refrigerator. We will take over your debts. It is a personal loan, with or without security.?" These are the advertisements that the Government allows to appear.

Mr. Murray: Would you stop them? They appear in the newspapers in Tasmania.

Mr. HOUSTON: People say, "The Government would not allow anything to be advertised that was not honest and above board."

Mr. Porter: That is a new one. The Government is responsible for all advertising, is it?

Mr. HOUSTON: I say that it is responsible for untruthful advertising. One of the important factors when people want to borrow money is the rate of interest that they are to be charged. They find that information in the small print after the documents have been delivered to them. People are human beings, and in good faith they sign on the dotted line and then find that the interest rate is, as I said earlier, 19.752 per cent.

Mr. Chinchin: Who charges that?

Mr. HOUSTON: More than one company in this State, and I shall name them at the appropriate time.

Mr. Chinchin: What about naming them now?

Mr. HOUSTON: One of the Ministers is very kindly looking into the position in one case, and I do not want in any way to prejudice that investigation.

Mr. Murray: You said that we are not interested in these matters; now you say that a Minister is looking into one case.

Mr. HOUSTON: I said that a Minister is, following my representations. Hon. members opposite generally are not.

Mr. Porter: We are concerned about this.

Mr. HOUSTON: No, hon. members opposite are not. They might be concerned now, but they were not concerned before. I will tell the hon. member the name of the company—eventually. (Government laughter.) The Treasurer does not know what is on the Business Paper—perhaps the Premier has not told him—but a Bill relative to financial matters will be introduced later. It will give me an opportunity, provided the Chairman of Committees does not object, to refer to interest and to give the name of the company concerned. From my point of view, a company of that type is not welcome in this State.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOUSTON: The Government allows companies such as that to charge 20 per cent. interest. It is the Government's legislation that allows them to do it, and at present they are not breaking the law. I suggest that their practice is questionable. They are preying on the needs of the people,

and if it was not for rising costs and the decrease in the purchasing power of wages—

Mr. Chinchin: Wages have risen faster than costs.

Mr. HOUSTON: Earlier the hon. member was criticising the Industrial Commission. Is he now trying to say that the Commission has been over-generous? Never have I found that an industrial tribunal has been over-generous in its judgments.

Mr. R. Jones: The Commission froze wages for 12 months.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am pleased that the hon. member for Cairns mentioned that subject. Was it not this time three years ago that the court said, "We will not do anything about the basic wage"? Was it not just before the election of 1966 that by some miraculous means the court decided that it would have another look at the basic wage and allow a dollar or two increase? Was it not just three years ago that there were campaigns by the unions about rising prices? Is that not important? I say the Government has a responsibility to keep prices down.

At 11 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, the sitting will be extended to enable the Treasurer to speak in reply.

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer—Treasurer) (11.1 p.m.), in reply: This is an Appropriation Bill dealing with the finances of the State, a Bill which I believe is of quite some importance to the people of Queensland as a whole. Because of that, I chose to follow a fairly well-prepared script to deal with three points which I believe have a bearing on the loan raising of finance in this State and the Commonwealth, a matter which referred to overseas capital and the general prosperity of Queensland as I see it at the present time.

I devoted the whole of my introductory remarks to that subject. I propose, because I realise that there are people in Queensland, if not the Opposition, who are interested in the finances of this State, to devote a few moments now to replying fairly carefully to a matter that was raised in this State yesterday and which has a bearing on the citizens of Queensland. When I have disposed of that point, I hope I will have a few moments to reply to the greatest lot of twaddle that I have ever heard from the mouth of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Davies: How easy it is to say that.

Mr. CHALK: After listening to him, it is easy to say. I want to reply firstly to a matter that was raised yesterday afternoon, when a report was released by the Queensland Housing Industry Association dealing with an economic research by that department, which report was given considerable publicity today.

I want to say that I appreciate the part being played by housing societies in the financing of homes in this State. I feel however, that some of the statements in that report are misleading, and consequently I take the first opportunity available to me to correct them. Possibly the difficulty is caused by the report being prepared by a Melbourne economist who is not fully familiar with the conditions in this State.

The report quotes the Queensland allocation under the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement at just about half of the Australian average. It goes on to say—

“It nevertheless appears that the priority for housing in this regard in Queensland is much lower than in other States.”

I draw the attention of this House and of the people of Queensland to the fact that in this State the funds received from the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement are supplemented not only by funds available under the agreement with the Commonwealth Savings Bank but also by the allocation of the Queensland Housing Commission from State funds and debenture allocations.

The test of whether sufficient priority is being given to housing in Queensland is the over-all rate of building and not the effort in one limited field. Indeed, the figures given in the Housing Industry Association report are adequate proof that sufficient priority is being given to housing in Queensland. The report gives figures covering a 10-year period. If hon. members will take time to read the report they will note that the percentage of Queensland completions of dwellings to those for Australia as a whole was higher in 1966-67 and 1967-68 than in any other year during that 10-year period. In fact, in 1966-67 our percentage of completions was higher than our percentage of Australia's population. This indicates that housing in Queensland is running at a very satisfactory level, and does not support the allegation that only a low priority is given to housing in this State.

The report by the Housing Industry Association is critical of the Queensland Housing Commission in several respects. It quotes a profit of \$291,688 made by the Housing Commission in 1967-68. The economist author ignores the fact that no-one except home-builders benefits from profits. This arises from the fact that profits are reinvested in the provision of further housing. In any case, the profits of the Housing Commission represent a very modest percentage when it is considered that as at 30 June, 1968, the assets of the Commission totalled \$184,000,000.

The report also states that a larger proportion of funds should be directed to the building societies and a lesser proportion to the Queensland Housing Commission. Let us look at the over-all situation. I point out that the proportion of new homes in Government ownership in Queensland is lower than in any other State. It is not

possible to obtain for all States the number of homes built by Government authorities and by private authorities, but figures are published for the ownership of homes that are completed during a year. If we use these figures, which are used also in the Housing Industry Association's report, we find that the percentages of Government-owned houses completed during 1966-67 were as follows:—

	Per cent.
Queensland	9.7
Victoria	10.8
New South Wales	12.7
Western Australia	16.1
Tasmania	22.3
South Australia	28.6

In view of these figures, I can see no virtue in cutting down further the activities of the Queensland Housing Commission and relegating it to the role of providing cheap land.

The Housing Industry Association report also makes some general recommendations upon which I feel that I should comment. One is that a greater amount of available housing finance should be directed to new homes and a lesser amount to established homes.

While the desire of the building societies to encourage new construction is understandable, it must be realised that to concentrate on new homes while an increasing and excessive number of established homes are standing unoccupied would constitute economic waste. I believe that the need to provide finance for the purchase of established homes has an important place in the over-all housing finance structure. The important thing is to retain a balance between finance for established homes and that for new homes.

Let me look at another recommendation, which seeks to reduce the percentage of funds that savings banks must hold in Government securities. Apparently the aim is to increase the amount available in other directions, including housing. Here again, I feel that there is no reason to vary this percentage unless there is clear evidence that the rate of dwelling construction is insufficient to meet requirements. I have already dealt with the rate of housing construction, and I need only make the further comment that funds lent by savings banks to Governments and semi-governmental bodies are used largely to provide the various services required in a modern community. It is important for Governments and semi-governmental bodies to have sufficient money to provide these services to homes as they are constructed, and also to provide the services necessary to allow industry to function and thus create employment for the occupants. Again it is a matter of providing a balance between the requirements of housing and those of other sections of the community.

Another recommendation is that private investment in housing be encouraged and fostered, particularly in Queensland, through the thriving permanent building societies. I do not know why the recommendation used the words "particularly in Queensland", since the level of private ownership of houses in this State is already high. At the last census, the percentage of occupied private dwellings that were occupied either by the owner or by the person purchasing by instalments was 71.05 per cent. in Queensland, or a little higher than the figure of 70.81 per cent. for Australia as a whole, so why single out Queensland for this type of criticism?

As I say, I never object to constructive criticism, but in the field of housing, where the Government is proud of its record of substantial increases in the rates at which new dwellings are being constructed in this State, I feel that statements that could be misleading should be corrected. It is a pity, of course, that the report was not prepared by a Queensland economist, because I believe that if that had been done, not only would valuable material have been available but the author would not have been caught in the trap in which this particular Melbourne economist found himself. As this House realises, housing societies are only one of the groups through which finance for housing becomes available. I concede that they have an important part to play in the over-all picture and I applaud the societies for the very good work they are doing in Queensland, but, as I have already indicated, they are not alone in the picture that has been painted.

I hope that my remarks will put the situation in better perspective by showing that private ownership and private initiative are strong in this State, and that there is no need to reduce the activities of the Queensland Housing Commission. The various sectors through which finance becomes available for housing are all combining in this State to produce a final level of home construction that is far in excess of that achieved some years ago, and that, in my opinion, appears to be meeting our current requirements.

I feel that I have dealt with the four points I wanted to touch upon during this debate. But as there is a certain amount of time still available to me, far be it from me to miss the opportunity to reply to what I have described as the greatest twaddle I have ever heard from a Leader of the Opposition. I make no apology for saying that. After all, this is a Bill dealing with the finances of this State. It is a Bill that is important to every Queenslander.

What did the Leader of the Opposition do? What did he talk about? First of all, he talked about some glowing picture. He dealt with the Isis by-election. He talked about the Liquor Bill. He talked about a public image. He talked about education. He criticised the Government. He said it

was not a band of happy fellows. He denied aid to certain denominational schools. He talked about the price structure. He talked about overseas capital. He criticised all the activities of industries that have come in and built up this State.

Mr. Houston: No, he didn't.

Mr. CHALK: Well, what was he talking about if he was not talking about that? He talked about coal wagons coming in from Japan. He talked about pipelines. He talked about draglines.

Let us examine these things. First of all, it is true that the Government did receive a jolt in the Isis by-election. That is not denied. There were problems associated with that by-election. All I say to the Leader of the Opposition is that when we go to the people next year he will have an opportunity to place before them the policy that he has placed before this House tonight. He will have an opportunity to see what the people of Queensland think about some of the tripe and twaddle that he has spoken here this evening.

Let us look at this talk about the public image. What on earth that has to do with the finances of this State, I do not know. But it is true. That is all that the Leader of the Opposition can think of.

Having got away from Isis and the public image, the hon. member immediately got onto the liquor question. There was ample opportunity for him to discuss this matter previously.

Mr. Houston: I can pick my own time.

Mr. CHALK: The Leader of the Opposition can pick his own ground; I do not deny him the right to talk about liquor. But when an important issue comes before this House and when there is an opportunity for him to discuss the finances of Queensland, he should do so. After all, he has stomped around the country criticising the finances of this State, but when he comes into this Chamber he says not one word about them.

Mr. Houston: Rubbish!

Mr. CHALK: The hon. member can say "Rubbish" if he likes. He can look at his "Hansard" proofs and see if he mentioned one matter directly concerned with the finances of Queensland.

Mr. Houston: What do you think I have been doing for the past three weeks?

Mr. CHALK: What has he been talking about? I do not know what he has been talking about, nor do the people of Queensland.

Having got over these issues, he proceeded to get on his hobby-horse. I want to nail him on this point. Ever since the Budget was introduced there has been from members of the Opposition this story of giving aid to certain denominational schools. What sort

of body would the hon. member set up to decide between this school and that school, and which would get some funds and which would not? He will have an opportunity to explain fully to the people of Queensland, during the next election campaign, where he and his party stand on this issue. Not only from those attending denominational schools, but also from those responsible for them, have come letters of commendation of the Government for the part it has played. The Opposition will deny this.

Mr. Newton: Rubbish!

Mr. CHALK: The hon. member's Leader said it. He said that they would cut out certain schools.

Mr. Houston: I never said that.

Mr. CHALK: Yes, you did. The Leader of the Opposition can wriggle and squeal as much as he likes, but he said that there were certain schools that were not entitled to assistance.

Mr. Houston: Not as much as some others.

Mr. CHALK: The Leader of the Opposition was prepared to deny them this right. He will have a chance at the appropriate time to say to the people in certain electorates, "We would not give you so much". The hon. member will not do that. He will do what he has done on the liquor question. The Leader of the Opposition tonight got up in this Chamber and talked about the 40-mile limit.

Mr. Houston: I never mentioned it.

Mr. CHALK: The hon. member talked about sectional legislation.

Mr. Houston: That is right.

Mr. CHALK: "Wipe it out", was his cry. What sort of a letter did he write to the Queensland Temperance League? Perhaps he doesn't remember?

Mr. Houston: It is your responsibility.

Mr. CHALK: It is good that the Leader of the Opposition apparently has not a memory. It is most interesting that a circular sent out by the Temperance League, which starts, "Dear Member" and is signed by the general secretary, reads—

"It was most important that you write to your local member before. It is even more important that you write now expressing your appreciation to him for what he has done."

I have a list of the names of those to whom the letter was sent, and included in that list is a man named J. W. Houston, Esquire, Bulimba. Does the hon. member now deny that he was opposed to the 40-mile limit?

Mr. Houston: What has that got to do with it?

Mr. CHALK: It has a lot to do with it. Innocence is bliss in this particular issue. Here is a letter, written and distributed to members of the Queensland Temperance League, asking its members to write a letter of thanks to those members of Parliament who subscribed to that which the League supports. I have also a list of those to whom the letter was sent. I shall not quote them all.

Mr. Houston: What does that prove?

Mr. CHALK: It proves that the utterances of the Leader of the Opposition here tonight are a matter of having "two bob each way". Otherwise, he is not sincere when he writes to organisations.

Mr. Houston: Nonsense!

Mr. CHALK: The hon. member cannot back this horse both ways.

Mr. Houston: That's nonsense. What are you talking about?

Mr. CHALK: I have a copy of the letter.

Mr. Houston: You haven't got a copy of my letter.

Mr. CHALK: No, but I have the hon. member's name on this list.

Mr. Houston: What has that to do with it?

Mr. CHALK: Does the hon. member think that they simply put his name on the list?

Mr. Houston: I once saw "G. Chalk" on a list of prisoners. Was that you?

Mr. CHALK: On a list of prisoners?

Mr. Houston: Yes, in Tasmania. Was that you?

Mr. CHALK: Does the hon. member deny that he is J. Houston, Esquire, Bulimba?

Mr. Houston: That is right.

Mr. CHALK: It was someone else. I accept the hon. member's assurance that it was not he.

Let us look at some of the things that the hon. member said about dealings with overseas capital. First of all, he criticised the Government's attraction of overseas capital, and he indicated that he will not have a bar of the type of activity with which the Government is associated in the development of the mining industry with foreign capital. I said earlier that we would never have developed these mines had it not been for the amount of overseas capital available to us. The hon. member then criticised the fact that 200 coal wagons were made in Japan. Is it not true that we called tenders for them? Is it not true that the best delivery time that we could get was 11 months? Is it not equally true that to get the amount of coal required out of this country we had to start shifting it within five months? Is it not equally true that the Japanese were able to land these wagons in Queensland

and the Commonwealth Government, because of the national wealth that they would help to produce, allowed them to come in and be in operation for six months during which no wagons would have been in use if they had been built in Australia? Is that not good economics, and was that not a sound reason for bringing them in?

Let me turn now to the pipeline. The Leader of the Opposition was critical of the construction of the pipeline. What was the situation? Orders for pipes were placed in Australia, through my own efforts. Telegrams were sent to manufacturers in Sydney indicating that if they could not supply the pipes it would be necessary either to close the job down or bring pipes in from overseas. In the interests of Queensland workers and the people of Queensland, thank goodness those pipes were available to keep the men engaged on the construction of the pipeline actively employed. Above all, thank goodness the pipes are available so that it will be possible to complete the job on time and feed the fertiliser industry and the other associated industries with the gas that they need. In the face of that, the Leader of the Opposition is critical of the importation of something that this State could not produce sufficiently quickly for its requirements.

Let me then consider the question of the dragline. Here, hon. members heard from the Leader of the Opposition the greatest statement of all time. He said, "Build the dragline in Queensland". Of course it could be built here, if we could wait long enough and could get all the designs and the drawings necessary to build it. Having got all those things, what would the position be? It would be possible to build a new motor-car here, too. But it would be necessary first to design it and, having designed it, there would then be the cost of production. What would the dragline have cost if it had been manufactured in Australia? What would have been the time factor in its delivery? Possibly it would have been years and years; but even if it had been only 18 months, what was the output of that great dragline in those 18 months.

I said earlier that I had heard tonight the greatest lot of twaddle that I have ever heard. When we analyse what has been said by the Leader of the Opposition, the man who seeks to be the future Premier of this State, we see what a lot of twaddle it is. In my 21 years in this Chamber I have never before seen such a display.

Mr. Tucker: He is not frustrated, as you are.

Mr. CHALK: I will deal with the hon. member for Townsville North in due course. He is the most frustrated hen that I have ever met.

I come now to the question of the employment of married women. The hon. member will have an opportunity before the House rises to endorse what he has

said tonight. I am prepared to call "divide" and see what he will do on the question of the employment of married women within the Public Service. The hon. member has said that a woman's place is in the home, with her vacuum cleaner and all the other things that are part of her domestic life. I point out to him that many women are now playing a part in the life of the community equal to that played by men. After all, a woman is a member of this State House of Parliament. Does the hon. gentleman suggest that, before the death of her husband, she should have been at home with her vacuum cleaner? That is the sort of argument that he has put up in this Chamber. I say to the hon. member that there is a place in the community for women who desire to work and that, as far as the Government is concerned, they will be given the opportunity to work.

The hon. member for Salisbury made an interjection relative to there being no railway to Inala. That is true. But which Government designed Inala? Which Government should have taken into consideration the provision of a railway line when the construction of Inala was first begun?

Mr. Sherrington: There should be a line there.

Mr. CHALK: The hon. member cannot have it both ways. A former Labour Government did not see fit to design a railway or to provide the amenities that should have been provided at the time. Those are matters that have to be taken into consideration. After all, this Government cannot clean up all the mistakes made by former Labour Governments, even though it is trying to clean up many of them.

Let us look at the last point that the hon. member raised, concerning money-lenders. It is true that here are some people in our community who are charging high rates of interest, but we are looking at this. We are prepared to bring down legislation to prevent this very thing. It is not something that sprung up yesterday; it has been with us year in and year out, and there will always be someone in the community who can be lulled into a false sense of security. But I believe that we will be able to grapple with this in due course.

I shall conclude my remarks by putting one more record in "Hansard", because I believe that the policy of this Government in regard both to its educational activities and to those things that the hon. member criticised demands it. After all, he criticised our policies on education, land valuation and civil defence. In other words, he is the greatest "knocker" or all times. He knows the basis on which civil defence activities were set up. He knows also that the Minister for Lands has set up a Rural Fires Board. He knows that during the height of the recent fires there were men associated with the Government as well as volunteers who played their part in trying to prevent fire

risks in this State. But we hear not one word of thanks from the hon. member. We hear only criticism because the Government did not have some civil defence activity. This Government lent, to the greatest extent it possibly could, the services of its employees and those associated with rural fire brigades to do all that was possible to prevent the spread of fire, and we will extend it as far as possible according to the finance available to us. Not a word of praise or thanks did we hear.

This is an indication of the depth to which the Labour Party is prepared to sink in this Chamber in kicking those who are prepared to do everything possible to protect the citizens of this State. All I can say is that I hope those in the community who gave up their nights to fight bush fires will remember the "knockerism" of the Leader of the Opposition.

I now want to read a letter that was handed to me by the hon. member for Yeronga that I believe typifies the appreciation of the people of Queensland for what this Government has done for education. This letter, written on behalf of a parents and citizens' Association, refers to the extra provision for education in the recent Budget. It reads—

"At our recent Parents and Citizens' meeting appreciative reference was made to the extra provision for education in the recent budget. To add to our satisfaction, our Head Teacher was able to display an array of recently arrived items of equipment including, inter alia, an expensive tape recorder and microscope.

"I am instructed to convey to the Government, through you, the appreciation of the Parents and Citizens'. As was mentioned in our meeting, when this Government came into office, Education held the lowest place in Cabinet rank. In a few short years, gratifying improvements have been made and, we assume, the recent increase in budget allotment is an earnest of further progress in this vital field."

I am prepared to leave it to the people of Queensland to read the "Hansard" report of this debate. I hope they do. If they do, then I say it will not be a question of rejoicing over Isis after the next election but of licking the wounds. Members of the Opposition who have stood up in this Chamber tonight and condemned the Government will not then be here to condemn it.

Motion (Mr. Chalk) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 8, both inclusive, schedule and preamble, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

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

The House adjourned at 11.38 p.m.