

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 28 AUGUST 1969**

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## THURSDAY, 28 AUGUST, 1969

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

### QUESTIONS

#### CARD RECORDING OF MOTOR VEHICLE SPEEDS BY RADAR UNITS

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

Has the Government given any consideration to the possibility of radar machines being so equipped with a recording card showing the speed at which motor vehicles were travelling, that a card could be issued for each alleged offence? If not, why not? If so, with what result?

Answer:—

"Yes. However, it is not possible to equip radar units being used by the police with any device capable of producing a card indicating the speed of a relevant vehicle. The accuracy of the radar units in use has been thoroughly tested both in and out of Courts, and such units are considered adequate for present speed detection requirements."

#### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR QUEENSLAND SUB-NORMAL CHILDREN'S WELFARE ASSOCIATION

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

Did the Queensland Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association recently make a detailed submission seeking additional financial assistance? If so, when and with what result?

Answer:—

"Yes, a submission dated March 12, 1969, was received by me on March 20, 1969. The proposals contained in the submission were discussed at Cabinet and the Association's request for additional financial assistance will receive sympathetic consideration when the 1969-70 Budget estimates are being finalised."

#### ENROLMENT AT BRISBANE STATE HIGH SCHOOL OF NEW FARM STATE SCHOOL PUPILS

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

(1) Is he aware that there are at least 40 children capable of satisfactorily completing the academic high-school course at present in grade 7 at New Farm State School?

(2) Is he aware that the children referred to would be capable of completing their secondary-course studies at the Brisbane State High School without lowering its achievements?

(3) Is he aware that the nearest high school to New Farm State School is the Brisbane State High School and that there is no high school available to New Farm pupils which does not necessitate at least one change of transport and that in some cases at least three changes are necessary?

(4) In these circumstances, will he give consideration to having an allocation of a minimum number of places in the first year, i.e., grade 8, at the Brisbane State High School, reserved for the benefit of New Farm State School pupils?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Yes."

(3) "Yes."

(4) "In order to reduce the size of the Brisbane State High School, enrolments in grade 8 have been restricted. The restriction does not, however, apply to children who reside in the neighbourhood of the school. Academic ability has not been the basis for entry. In 1969, 40 former pupils of New Farm State School enrolled at the State high school, Kelvin Grove, to which transport is relatively easy; some pupils from the area elected to enrol at Balmoral State High School. In the circumstances taking into account the overcrowding at Brisbane State High School reservation of places for New Farm children is not considered advisable."

#### DECLARATION OF MON REPOS BEACH AS NATIONAL PARK

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

Has any finality been reached concerning the declaration of Mon Repos beach as a national park to ensure the protection of breeding turtles? If so, when is it expected that this area will be declared?

Answer:—

"No."

#### DEVELOPMENT OF NOOSA PLAINS; ARMY LANDHOLDING IN TIN CAN BAY AREA

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

(1) Have any applications or enquiries been received by his Department for development of the Noosa Plains for improved pastures for cattle fattening?

(2) If so (a) from what companies or individuals have these been received, (b) what is the nature of the proposals and (c) what is the Government decision in this regard?

(3) How much wallum land is held by the Department of the Army in the Tin Can Bay and adjacent area and is this land suitable for pastoral development?

*Answers:—*

(1) "General interest has been indicated in the Noosa Plains area for improved pasture. No specific applications have been made."

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

(3) "The Commonwealth acquired by compulsory acquisition on January 2, 1964, an area of 49,316 acres in the Tin Can Bay area. The suitability of this land for cattle fattening could be evaluated when the results of the overall survey and utilization study of wallum land are available."

#### SUBSIDY FOR PRIMARY-SCHOOL LIBRARIES

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

In view of his Answer to my Question relative to Commonwealth Library Grants in which he advised that primary schools do not benefit under this scheme and in view also of the necessity to stimulate primary-school pupils to early reading, are any plans under consideration for increased assistance to primary schools by way of increased subsidies or other means to supplement these school libraries?

*Answer:—*

"There are plans to appoint to the school library service, an officer who will advise on the development of primary-school libraries. The total amount for subsidy on the purchase of school library books is being increased in the estimates for the current financial year. The basis for subsidy is however unchanged."

#### SCARBOROUGH BOAT HARBOUR AND RAMP

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

(1) With reference to the recent deputation to him regarding the Scarborough boat harbour, when is work likely to recommence on this project?

(2) When will the Scarborough boat ramp, which has silted up following the construction of the harbour wall, be put in order?

*Answers:—*

(1) "I fully appreciate the importance of pressing on with developments of this nature until a stage is reached where benefits accrue to the boating public and I am having the matter reviewed to see whether additional funds can be made available for the second stage of the Scarborough boat harbour development."

(2) "The Scarborough boat ramp, which is outside the boat harbour, was originally designed and constructed as a part tide ramp. An investigation into the siltation referred to is in hand. A new boat ramp within the boat harbour is to be constructed during the 1969-70 financial year as part of Stage One of the boat harbour for which parking facilities will be provided by the Redcliffe City Council."

#### RAILWAY WORKSHOP BUILDINGS, NORTHGATE AND BANYO

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

(1) What action is contemplated regarding the renovation or repair of the railway workshops at Northgate?

(2) Is it proposed to complete the semi-constructed workshop buildings at Banyo?

(3) Is he aware of the damaging effect of the unsightly buildings at Northgate on the value of private properties adjacent to the workshops?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 3) "An investigation is at present being undertaken by technical officers into the future of the Northgate Workshops and the completion of the workshop buildings at Banyo."

#### TORRES STRAIT ISLAND TEACHER TRAINEES

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

(1) How many Torres Strait Islanders are at present receiving teacher training at Brisbane primary schools and at which schools is training carried out?

(2) What will be their duties and responsibilities on their return to their respective islands and what will be the salary paid to them?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Eleven. These students are receiving a special course of training at Teachers' college, Kedron Park. On one day per week they attended State school, Boondall, for observation and practice teaching."

(2) "These teachers are sponsored by the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs and on completion of training will return to that department. I suggest, therefore, that the Honourable Member discuss the matter with my colleague, the Minister for Lands."

STAFF, MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT  
WORKSHOPS, NUNDAH

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

What was the number of (a) tradesmen and (b) clerical staff employed at the Department of Main Roads workshops at Nundah at June 30, 1967 and 1969, respectively?

*Answer:—*

"At June 30, 1967, there were 63 tradesmen (including supervisors, foremen and apprentices), and seven clerks; at June 30, 1969, there were 48 tradesmen and five clerks."

RAIL FREIGHTS, GOONYELLA PROJECT

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

(1) Has he seen the statement issued last week by Mr. K. M. Fitzpatrick, Manager of the Townsville District Development Bureau, concerning the supply of materials, plant and equipment to the Goonyella coal project?

(2) If so, does he agree with the figures on comparative freights given in the statement?

(3) What is the basis upon which an *ex* Brisbane rail freight as low as \$11.50 a ton, which is claimed to exclude northern manufacturers from tendering competitively, is calculated?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Yes."

(2) "The rail freight, Brisbane to Sarina, in accordance with By-law No. 982, would be \$11.52 per ton. I have no reason to doubt the correctness of Mr. Fitzpatrick's figures for sea and road haulage."

(3) "The rail freight of \$11.52 per ton is based on a rate of 2 cents per ton per mile and has application only to the Goonyella Railway Project. A freight rate of 2 cents per ton per mile would favour the nearest supplier to Sarina. The following are the mileages from Brisbane,

Mackay, Townsville and Cairns to Sarina:— Brisbane, 576, Mackay, 23; Townsville, 255; and Cairns, 466. There have been several complaints from the Townsville District Development Bureau regarding costs of supply to various projects. If the information that the spokesman for the Bureau has published is correct then it is clear that these costs he refers to are not under the control of the Railway Department. The Government has played its part in reducing costs by seeing that railway freights for the Goonyella project are as low as possible. However, even as low as the railway freights are it does not seem possible for some Townsville firms to compete against competitive industries in North Queensland who enjoy similar freight advantages. There are other costs which seem to require examination."

INVESTIGATION OF SITES FOR CENTRAL  
QUEENSLAND POWERHOUSE

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

In view of the Answer given to the Honourable Member for Callide on August 20, 1969, regarding the investigation of sites for the proposed super powerhouse in Central Queensland—

(1) When were the sites of Rockhampton and Bajool investigated?

(2) Who made the investigation?

(3) How was the investigation carried out?

(4) Who in the Rockhampton area was consulted when the investigation in question was made?

(5) What were the requirements deemed necessary for the siting of the proposed powerhouse?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 5) "For a period of three years to mid-1969 the State Electricity Commission of Queensland carried out a series of economic and technical studies to determine the most suitable location for a power station to supply the increasing power demands of South-East and Central Queensland at the lowest possible cost. The major electricity authorities in these areas assisted the Commission in this work. The studies covering each location investigated included access and site conditions, sources and cost of coal to be delivered to the power station, availability and cost of cooling water, cost of transmitting electricity from the power station to centres of demand in South-East and Central Queensland so that the most economic supply would result."

**SICK LEAVE ENTITLEMENT, RAILWAY EMPLOYEES**

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

In view of the sick-leave provisions applicable to Public Service employees and employees attached to semi-government authorities, will he consider amending the sick-leave provisions of the Railway Employee By-law 690-39b to make provision for an employee to be granted ten days' leave per year on full pay and, when his sick leave on full pay is exhausted, to be permitted to compound to full-pay leave any half-pay leave standing to his credit?

*Answer:—*

"It is not the intention to alter the already liberal entitlement of sick leave for railway employees. In addition to the entitlements in By-Law 690, the Government on and from October 22, 1962, approved of a special sick leave grant of 13 weeks sick leave on full pay to railway employees with meritorious service of 26 years or more. Still further, on and from January 1, 1965, the Government approved of a Special War Service Grant of 13 weeks sick leave on full pay to all employees of the Railway Department who were in the employment of the Department at the time of their enlistment for war service."

**NEW UNIFORM STYLE FOR RAILWAY EMPLOYEES**

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

Has a committee been set up to investigate the question of a new type of uniform for railway employees? If so, will he table the findings of this committee and advise when the new uniform will be introduced? If not, what is the reason for the delay?

*Answer:—*

"I would refer the Honourable Member to my Answer of August 27, 1969, to a Question asked by the Honourable Member for Wynnum on the subject of the committee. It is important that a thorough study of all the requirements be made in order that the best result may be achieved."

**FACILITIES FOR PATIENTS AT BAILLIE HENDERSON HOSPITAL, TOOWOOMBA**

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

(1) How many patients at Baillie Henderson Hospital, Toowoomba, are in receipt of age or invalid pensions?

(2) What Commonwealth subsidy is paid for each person in receipt of an age or invalid pension?

(3) What amount of each patient's pension is retained by the hospital authorities?

(4) What Commonwealth benefit, if any, is payable to patients at the hospital, who are not in receipt of age or invalid pensions?

(5) Are mentally-ill patients at the hospital, who receive a pension and for whom a Commonwealth subsidy is paid, provided with day-rooms and amenities?

(6) Are non-pension patients denied such amenities? If so, will he take the necessary action to have all such patients treated equally with regard to the provision of amenities?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Two hundred and fifty-two."

(2) "Nil."

(3) "That portion as defined by the Commonwealth Social Services Act as relates to an inmate of a Benevolent Home. The amount varies in accordance with the rate of pension being received by the patient."

(4) "Nil."

(5 and 6) "The facilities provided for day rooms and amenities are not related to the payment of Commonwealth Benefits. Activities areas are provided centrally and patients from all wards, for whom activities are prescribed, participate in them. Approval has been given for the construction of recreational centres at two non-pensionable wards at a total cost of about \$57,000, as these patients are unable to participate in a central activities programme."

**RAILWAY SHUNTING YARDS, TOOWOOMBA**

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

(1) Is he aware of the congestion that exists in the Toowoomba shunting yards due to long-length trains and inadequate marshalling roads? If so, what arrangements have been made to (a) enlarge the existing shunting yards and (b) build new yards?

(2) If it has been approved to build new shunting yards, where will they be built?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "Congestion does occur in the Toowoomba shunting yards due to the restricted area. Preliminary investigations have been made and are continuing into the possibility of constructing new marshalling yards."

## CONCESSIONAL HOLIDAY RAIL FARES

**Mr. Lonergan** for **Mr. Aikens**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Does the Government grant reduced rail fares to workers taking their annual holidays and, if so, is there a means test determined on the salary or wages of the worker applicable to this concession? If so, what is it?

(2) If there is such a means test, will consideration be given to relaxing it, consistent with the rapidly-deteriorating real value of wages and salaries?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "The issue of rail tickets at excursion fares at other than specified holiday periods is subject to certain conditions including a stipulation that there is no entitlement to the concession if an applicant's annual salary is in excess of a stated amount. However, in accordance with the promise I gave in the Election Policy Speech, rail travel at excursion fares will be made available to everyone at any time. The relevant By-laws of the Railway Department are in the process of being amended to give effect to the Government's promise."

## NEW TOBACCO QUOTA ALLOCATIONS

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

In view of the fact that a second quota increase has been made to the tobacco industry and no new quota farms have been opened for a number of years, will he give consideration to opening new farms with a living quota? If not, when does he intend to open new farms and thus increase the rural population?

*Answer:—*

"Consideration will be given to the opening of new farms for tobacco production when the State Tobacco Quota is increased to a level which will ensure that both existing tobacco growers and any new farms which may be opened are able to operate on a satisfactory and economic basis. There were no increases in the Australian or State quotas until last year. Increases were obtained last year and this year and these increases were fully utilised in restoring to existing growers some of the severe cutback they suffered on the introduction of the Tobacco Industry Stabilisation Scheme and eliminating cases of hardship as far as practicable."

(b) **Mr. B. Wood**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Primary Industries,—

When will the new tobacco quota distribution be made to tobacco farmers in Queensland and how will it be made?

*Answer:—*

"The distribution of the most recent increase in the State tobacco quota has already been made. The basis of distribution of the most recent increase has been that recommended by The Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board on behalf of the industry. This basis was—(i) that the increase should be made on a *pro rata* basis to those growers whose quotas were still below the average of their best two years in the base period (1960-61 to 1963-64 inclusive) or the base figure taken as the basis for determining the initial interim quota subject to:—(a) any increase not to exceed such base figures, (b) current soil limitations, (c) production record since stabilisation taking into account the factors mentioned in (d), (d) the allowance made in arriving at the grower's average of the best two years for hail, cyclone, flood and pest damage be taken into account; (ii) that in the process of allocating the additional 538,000 lb. in accordance with the previous resolution the Tobacco Quota Committee take cognisance of the fact that excessive over-allocation may not be in the interests of all growers and they exercise discretion and do not over-allocate excessively; (iii) that the Quota Committee, in looking at soil limitations, must follow the present criteria; (iv) that no special group other than as above be considered excepting that the committee in accordance with the provision of the Act has the right to exercise its discretion in individual cases."

## ESTABLISHMENT OF RURAL TRAINING SCHOOL, NORTH QUEENSLAND

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

(1) Will he give consideration to establishing an agricultural college in Far North Queensland in an area which will provide features consistent with the cattle industry and all farming activities?

(2) If this project has not yet been considered and with the knowledge that land will be required, will he have a survey made for a suitable area and have it set aside so that it will be available when needed?

*Answer:—*

"Consideration is being given to the establishment of a rural training school in North Queensland. The Agricultural Education Advisory Council has been advised to make a recommendation with regard to a suitable location."

ADDITIONAL TEACHERS, MITCHELL RIVER  
AND EDWARD RIVER SCHOOLS

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

In order to fully staff Mitchell River and Edward River schools with fully-qualified teachers from the Education Department—

(1) Have applications been called for teachers in these two areas and, if so, are they for replacement?

(2) Will he consider calling applications for extra teachers at each school in order to provide education equal to that in other schools throughout Queensland?

(3) Are these schools inspected by district inspectors?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 3) "The Head Teachers at Mitchell River and Edward River will have served two years at these centres at the end of this year and in accordance with Departmental policy are due to be relieved. Currently, applications have been called for teachers for these areas and whether the appointments will be replacements or not is a matter for decision in the light of applications received. The introduction of additional teachers at each school is constantly under review having regard to accommodation problems, availability of teachers, funds, commitments and needs of other centres. The matter of inspections of these and other schools under the control of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs has been the subject of recent negotiations with the Education Department and it is expected that an inspection of all of the schools will be made either later this year or early in 1970."

PREVALENCE OF CROWN OF THORNS  
STARFISH, LADY MUSGRAVE ISLAND

**Mr. Jensen**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

(1) Has he seen the Press report from the Bundaberg Skindiving Club denying the statements made by Dr. Endean about the Crown of Thorns starfish damaging the reef around Lady Musgrave Island?

(2) Will he obtain a statement from Dr. Endean as to the source of his information?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Yes."

(2) "No. Dr. Endean is not an officer of my Department."

POLLUTION OF BURNETT RIVER BY  
MILLAQUIN SUGAR CO.

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

Has any action been taken against the Millaquin Sugar Co. for killing fish and polluting the Burnett River with "spent wash" from the distillery and caustic soda and other toxic wastes from the sugar mill? If not, why not?

*Answer:—*

"I have not been advised of any recent fish kill in the Burnett River. Distillery wastes are one of the causes of pollution. Steps have been taken to solve the problem. It is considered reasonable under the circumstances to allow the Company time to develop an economical solution."

AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATION AT UNITED  
NATIONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
THE SEA-BED

**Mr. Bennett for Mr. Hanson**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

Is he aware of an Australian top-level mission which is to attend a meeting in New York of the United Nations Standing Committee on the Sea-Bed, in a few days' time? If so, (a) were invitations extended to this State to be represented, (b) are there any Queensland personnel with the Australian delegation and (c) was the Government invited to submit items for the agenda or consulted in any way regarding submissions to the Standing Committee?

*Answer:—*

"The United Nations Standing Committee on the Sea-Bed is now meeting in Session which commenced on August 11 and is due to rise on August 28. As is the normal practice relating to a United Nations Standing Committee, the Australian representative on this particular Committee is a member of the Australian Mission accredited to the United Nations. Consultations between the Commonwealth and this State were not held for the purposes of this particular session, but I have every confidence that the briefing for the Australian representative was prepared with a sensitivity and understanding of this State's interests as the questions involved have already been the subject of a number of Commonwealth-State discussions."

STATE REPRESENTATION IN AUSTRALIAN  
EXHIBIT AT EXPO '70, JAPAN

**Mr. Bennett for Mr. Hanson**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Are any exhibits, objects of art or other material being supplied by the State to Expo '70 in Japan?

(2) Was the Government consulted on the State's contribution to Expo '70 and, if so, what will be the contribution?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "The Right Honourable the Prime Minister did approach the Queensland Government in 1968 when Australia first accepted the invitation from the Japanese Government to participate in the Universal and International Exhibition to be held in Osaka in Japan in 1970. Subsequent discussions took place between the late Premier, Mr. Pizzey, Departmental officers and the Australian Commissioner-General for Expo '70. The Honourable Member can be assured that the Australian Exhibit at Expo '70 will project a proper image of Australia which naturally includes Queensland. All exhibits are planned around a central theme and each Nation participating will endeavour to present a national exhibit in conformity with the central theme reflecting their culture, way of life and contribution to the benefit of mankind. Australia's aim is to give a broad impression of contemporary life in the Commonwealth. I would point out to the Honourable Member that this is a Commonwealth project and for his information the Australian Budget for Expo '70 is approximately \$6½ million which is almost double the Budget for Expo '67 in Canada. In place of the audio-techniques such as the unique 'talking chairs' which were used in Montreal, it is planned to use mainly visual techniques including a film in which Queensland scenes will appear. In addition the Queensland Government has accepted a commitment to collect coral for inclusion in a Great Barrier Reef Display. A Queenslander will also be included in the Australian Police Unit serving with the Australian Exhibit at Osaka and it is anticipated that some Queensland girls will be included among the pavilion hostesses."

ACCIDENTS, MT. GRAVATT-CAPALABA ROAD

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

(1) How many accidents have occurred on the Mt. Gravatt-Capalaba Road between Logan Road and the bridge over Bulimba Creek, Mt. Gravatt, for the years 1966, 1967 and 1968 and to June 30, 1969?

(2) How many persons were (a) killed and (b) injured?

(3) To what causes did the Police Department ascribe the accidents?

*Answers:—*

(1) "1966, 12; 1967, 12; 1968, 21; and from January 1, 1969 to June 30, 1969, 17."

(2) "(a) 3; and (b) 32."

(3) "Excessive speed, 20; driver dazzled by headlights, 1; following too closely, 2; fail to keep left, 4; pedal cyclist hit stone and fell to road, 1; child pedestrian cross road without due care, 1; child passenger fell from motor vehicle, 1; fail to signal intention, 1; fail to give way entering road, 2; fail to give way at intersection, 23; drive without due care and attention, 2; defective brakes, 1; insecure load, 1; pedestrian carelessness, 1; and unlighted pedal cycle, 1. Causes of the fatal accidents were ascribed to: fail to yield right of way, 1; excessive speed, 1; and pedestrian carelessness, 1."

BULIMBA CREEK BRIDGE APPROACH,  
MT. GRAVATT-CAPALABA ROAD

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

Has the Main Roads Department given any consideration to straightening the approach to the bridge over Bulimba Creek on the Mt. Gravatt-Capalaba Road? If so, what work is to be carried out and when will it commence?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Yes. The Main Roads Department has a proposal for realignment on the Brisbane side of Bulimba Creek, but taking into account the greater claims for improvement works of many other sections of roads in this area and other areas, it has not been possible at this stage to allot a priority for this work."

(2) "In the meantime, land has been resumed for the future alignment so that clearing of timber and visibility improvement work can proceed."

MEDICAL AND THERAPEUTIC STAFF,  
BAILLIE HENDERSON HOSPITAL,  
TOOWOOMBA

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

Is it proposed or desired to increase the number of medical and therapeutic staff at the Baillie Henderson Hospital, Toowoomba? If so, what are the details?

*Answer:—*

"The approved establishment for full-time Medical Officers at Baillie Henderson Hospital is six, but it has not been possible to recruit the total number approved. It is expected that a fifth Medical Officer will commence duties on September 29, 1969. Vacancies also exist for one Psychologist, one Social Worker and an Occupational Therapist. It is anticipated that these positions will be filled early in 1970. Approval has also been given for the employment of four Recreational Officers during the current financial year, and it is anticipated that these positions will be advertised in the near future."

GOVERNMENT HOUSES, NORTHERN CAPE  
YORK PENINSULA AREA

**Mr. B. Wood**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Lands,—

(1) What department or private firms have constructed houses in the Northern Peninsula area?

(2) As washing facilities at many of these houses remain uncompleted, will he instruct the builders to complete the work?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "The Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, in the normal course of its training programme for Aborigines and Islanders, utilises such forces at its command to construct all homes in the Northern Peninsula Reserve Area. It is appreciated that certain washing and other facilities may not be completed at a number of the residences, but it will also be appreciated that a normal water supply is still in the course of installation. As this water supply extends, so also will the additional facilities, in the light of existing circumstances and financial resources available."

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER ON  
OIL EXPLORATION, GREAT BARRIER  
REEF

**Mr. Marginson**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. Gorton, in Toowoomba last week-end in which he stated that he was opposed to drilling on or near the Great Barrier Reef?

(2) Does this statement conflict with the policy of the Queensland State Government? If so, will he make a Ministerial Statement on the Prime Minister's remarks?

*Answer:—*

"My Government's policy on this matter has been clearly and fully stated publicly on a number of occasions, and I see no reason for any further comment."

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATION, VICTORIA  
PARK STATE SCHOOL, MACKAY

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

(1) As the proposed new Victoria Park Infants' School will not be available for classes in the 1970 school-year, what arrangements will be made to provide for the additional class intakes forecast for the coming year and for additional staff rooms?

(2) Is he aware that existing temporary classrooms, under seven feet high, are on concrete floors at ground level, that two are unceiled and that all have a light reading of between five and eight foot-candles on a dull day? If so, will he treat as urgent the modifications necessary to bring them up to standard?

*Answers:—*

(1) "It is expected to commence work on the construction of the Victoria Park new school for Infants at an early date. Classroom and staffroom accommodation will be available for the opening of the 1970 School year."

(2) "I am aware of the existing ceiling heights in temporary classrooms at Victoria Park State School and a report has been furnished of light meter readings of such rooms. It is not proposed to carry out modifications to these temporary classrooms which will no longer be required upon the accommodation becoming available for the 1970 School year at the new School for Infants."

COST OF ADVERTISING INDUSTRIAL LANDS

**Mr. Casey**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Industrial Development,—

In the financial year 1968-69, how much did his department spend on advertising in relation to (a) industrial sites in Queensland generally, (b) industrial lands in the Brisbane area and (c) industrial lands in provincial city areas?

*Answer:—*

"Departmental advertising during the financial year 1968-1969 was designed to highlight the natural resources of the State and the opportunities for investment in relation to specific opportunities. No advertisements dealt primarily with Industrial Estates, although the availability of industrial land throughout the State was emphasised. For the year 1969-1970 steps have already been taken to include in the new series one advertisement dealing specifically with industrial land in provincial centres and another covering Estates in the metropolitan area. For the information of the Honourable Member, I might add that the Department has prepared colourful brochures both in respect of the Wacol Estate in Brisbane and the Bohle Estate in Townsville. Further brochures of this kind will be issued as additional Estates are developed."

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE,  
PUBLIC HOSPITALS

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

(1) For each five-year period since June 30, 1949, what has been the amount paid to public hospitals in Queensland from

(a) State Government sources, (b) Commonwealth Government sources, (c) patients and (d) other sources?

(2) What has been the capital expenditure on public hospitals for each of these periods?

*Answers:—*

(1) "The amounts paid in respect of maintenance of State controlled public hospitals in Queensland were—(a) 1949 to 1954, \$44,301,834; 1955 to 1959, \$74,725,620; 1960 to 1964, \$98,776,412; 1965 to 1969, \$138,363,549. (b) 1949 to 1954, \$12,600,450; 1955 to 1959, \$20,113,390; 1960 to 1964, \$29,960,704; 1965 to 1969, \$41,422,780. (c) and (d). Separate figures for (c) and (d) for the twenty year period requested are not readily available. Combined totals of (c) and (d) are as follows:—1949 to 1954, \$3,783,088; 1955 to 1959, \$7,838,750; 1960 to 1964, \$18,546,444; 1965 to 1969, \$22,380,755."

(2) "Capital expenditure on State controlled public hospitals was—1949 to 1954, \$13,388,558; 1955 to 1959, \$18,599,683; 1960 to 1964, \$17,881,391; 1965 to 1969, \$21,991,910. For the period, 1965 to 1969, the expenditure for 1968-69 has not been finally calculated and the total shown is an estimated figure."

#### SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE

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

For each year since June 30, 1949, what was the number of (a) school dental officers, (b) school dental nurses, (c) children examined at schools for dental defects and (d) children treated for dental defects?

*Answer:—*

"I refer the Honourable Member to the Annual Reports of the Director-General of Health and Medical Services, which are tabled in this House every year. Any information that is readily available for the years commencing July 1, 1949, to June 30, 1968, is contained in these Reports. Statistics for the year 1968-69 have not yet been finalised. These will also be published in the Director-General's Annual Report for that year."

#### CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC

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

(1) (a) When was the building known as the Queensland Conservatorium of Music originally built, (b) what has the building been used for at various times since, (c) how many conversions and reconversions have taken place and (d) when was it officially opened as the conservatorium?

(2) (a) How much has been spent on improvements to the building since it was opened for music and (b) are any plans in hand for much-needed improvements or for a new building? If so, what are the details?

(3) (a) How many staff, including the director, are employed at the conservatorium and how many (b) full-time and (c) part-time students attend lectures and lessons?

*Answers:—*

(1) "(a) It has not been possible to establish the date of the erection of the present building. It is understood to have been built in the 1890's. (b) Originally it was the Council Chambers and the administrative centre for the South Brisbane Town Council. Prior to its purchase by the Government the building was used as housing accommodation. (c) Before it was occupied for its present function the interior of the building was extensively altered to provide a concert hall, studios and administrative offices. Subsequently, further studio accommodation was provided by the acquisition of an adjoining building. (d) The Conservatorium was officially opened on February 16, 1957."

(2) "(a) The building was acquired at a cost of \$80,000. Costs of alterations and improvements since and including the initial conversion have amounted to \$78,191. (b) Plans are in hand for the provision of a new building for the Conservatorium under the programme for the 1970-72 triennium for Colleges of Advanced Education. The proposed site is within the grounds of the Queensland Institute of Technology, Brisbane."

(3) "(a) The full-time staff consists of the Director and six lecturers. There are 20 part-time teachers. (b) 49 full-time students. (c) 273 part-time students."

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF TEA FACTORY, NERADA AREA

**Mr. F. P. Moore**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

With regard to his Answer to my Question of August 27, has he given consideration to the request by Dr. A. P. Maruff contained in a letter to him dated at Innisfail on July 16, 1969?

*Answer:—*

"I received the letter from Dr. A. P. Maruff, dated July 16, 1969, to which the Honourable Member refers. Following certain inquiries and discussions, I have requested the Right Honourable the Prime Minister to reconsider the decision taken by the Commonwealth on the matter. Advice is now awaited from the Prime Minister."

SURVEY OF CROWN OF THORNS STAR-  
FISH INFESTATION, GREAT BARRIER  
REEF

**Mr. F. P. Moore**, pursuant to notice, asked  
The Minister for Primary Industries,—

Has any official survey been undertaken of the numbers of Crown of Thorns starfish on the Great Barrier Reef? If not, in view of the constant allegations being made relative to the encroachment of the starfish having reached plague proportions, will he have his Department undertake such a survey to ascertain the true position?

*Answer:—*

“No official quantitative survey of the whole Barrier Reef has been undertaken as respects the Crown of Thorns starfish. This would be a massive operation and could take several years to carry out with any degree of thoroughness. Future action as respects this matter is presently under consideration by both the State and the Commonwealth.”

ROAD TRAFFIC DELAYS AT RAILWAY  
LEVEL CROSSINGS

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

As longer trains powered by modern locomotives, when stationary, have resulted in unreasonable and costly delays of up to fifty minutes to road traffic at level crossings, including Isis Junction and Goodwood, and in view of written complaints to me, will he issue instructions for train crews to part trains at realistic intervals to avoid prolonged and costly delays to road traffic?

*Answer:—*

“The introduction of diesel-electric locomotives and longer trains results in more economical working and contributes to stabilisation of freight rates. To divide a train as suggested by the Honourable Member would occasion delays to rail traffic with consequent inconvenience to the Department’s customers and additional expense to the Department. The matter of delays to road traffic at the crossings mentioned by the Honourable Member will be investigated.”

OIL SPILLAGE BY SHIPS IN COASTAL  
WATERS

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

(1) Did he or his departmental officers receive a complaint regarding an oil slick on the Keppel coast in March this year?

(2) Was a sample of such slick handed over to Captain Rapp, Harbour Master for the area, was it examined and what was the report?

(3) As there have been similar occurrences during the last two years on beaches in the Keppel area, what safeguards are there to prevent such spillage by oil tankers at sea?

(4) As the Torres Strait Pilot Service is called upon to navigate ships between the Reef and the mainland, are any men from this service instructed under our marine laws to police the discharging of oil from ships at sea?

(5) Are any of our dockyards equipped with discharge facilities to prevent these occurrences?

*Answers:—*

(1) “Yes.”

(2) “The sample received by Captain Rapp has been examined at the Government Chemical Laboratory and the analyst has reported the substance to be a hydrocarbon residue derived from a refined petroleum product.”

(3) “At the Commonwealth level the Pollution of the Sea by Oil Act requires ships registered in Australia to be equipped so as to prevent the escape of oil into the ships’ bilges or into the sea. The Commonwealth Act also provides for the inspection by Commonwealth Officers of ships registered in other countries which have adopted the International Convention for the Prevention of the Pollution of Sea by Oil in order to ascertain if these vessels are so equipped. In the circumstances where the vessels are not so equipped the Commonwealth may report these circumstances to the country of registry and it is a matter for that country of registry to prosecute the vessel for a breach of the Convention. At the State level regulations under the Pollution of Waters by Oil Act require ships trading intrastate to be equipped so as to prevent the escape of oil into the ships’ bilges or into the sea.”

(4) “Pilots in the Torres Strait Pilot service are not officers of the Crown and furthermore pilotage in these waters is not compulsory. Whilst no instructions can be issued to the Pilots to police the Pollution of Waters by Oil Act an arrangement exists with the Service whereby Pilots have been asked to report any infringements of the Act.”

(5) “Facilities for the reception of oily residue are provided at each of the oil refinery terminals in Brisbane.”

APPLICATIONS FOR DROUGHT-  
RELIEF LOANS

**Mr. Aiken**, pursuant to notice, asked The  
Premier,—

(1) In the case of graziers whose applications for drought-relief loans have been approved since June 30, 1968, what is (a) the area of each successful applicant’s

property and (b) the stock still held on each of the properties at the date of the application?

(2) How many applications have been rejected during the period mentioned and on what grounds were they rejected?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "The number of new applications approved since June 30, 1968, under the Scheme then operating to the date of termination of the Scheme on September 30, 1968, was six. Only one application was declined during this period. With regard to the Scheme which was in force from March last to July 31, 1969, 265 applications were approved and 150 declined. The general grounds for the refusal of applications have been—(a) The applicant has been credit-worthy; (b) The applicant's lending authority, be it bank or wool firm, or both, has been prepared to make funds available to meet essential carry-on requirements; (c) The assistance sought has been outside the scope of the Scheme; for example, the application was for capital works; and (d) The returns from the property and/or the applicant's financial position was such that any additional borrowing could not be serviced. As I mentioned in my Answer yesterday to a Question asked by the Honourable Member, a primary producer, to be eligible for drought relief assistance under the legislation, must be in necessitous circumstances as a result of the drought, have no liquid resources of his own, be unable to obtain further credit through normal channels and have a reasonable chance of continuing in primary production if assistance is granted. The processing of the detailed data sought by the Honourable Member would present an almost impossible task in view of the complete commitment of the Agricultural Bank staff in the administration of the present Drought Relief Scheme, in addition to the Bank's normal operations. As the Honourable Member should realise, the furnishing of the information sought would necessitate the public disclosure of the financial position of many applicants (and I must stress that this would be a breach of trust by any Bank) and it would also involve the release, by the Agricultural Bank, of confidential information received from numerous sources."

RENOVATION WORK, PARLIAMENT HOUSE

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

(1) What work, other than that to strengthen the foundations, is presently being done at Parliament House?

(2) What is the estimated cost of the work?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Rearrangement and provision of accommodation and maintenance."

(2) "\$21,000."

DREDGING AND MOORING PILES,  
WYNNUM CREEK

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

Has his Department received a request that Wynnum Creek, in the Fish Board area, be dredged and mooring piles erected for the convenience of professional fishermen? If so, with what result?

*Answer:—*

"Requests have been received for the provision of moorings in Wynnum Creek for the benefit of commercial fishing vessels. In 1963 the Brisbane City Council objected to the construction of certain catwalk moorings for this purpose in the downstream section of the Creek as the Council proposed to reclaim part of the foreshore in the Creek. Apart from commercial fishing vessels over 30 private launches are moored in the upstream section of the Creek and in the circumstances it is not possible to consider moorings in this section of the Creek for commercial fishing vessels only. The Department of Harbours and Marine is at present examining the area to determine the feasibility of improvements for small craft generally."

APPLICATIONS FOR HOUSING COMMISSION RENTAL ACCOMMODATION,  
TOWNSVILLE

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

How many applications for rental accommodation are presently held at the office of the Queensland Housing Commission, Townsville and what is the number in each priority?

*Answer:—*

"224 applications were on hand at July 31, 1969, comprising 100 points 2; 80 points 1; 40 points 3; nil priority 182."

PROVISION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AT  
PALLARENDA, TOWNSVILLE

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

(1) Has any survey been carried out in regard to the provision of a primary school for the Townsville suburb of Pallarenda and, if so, with what result?

(2) Has any land been reserved for school purposes in this suburb and, if so, where is it situated?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes. The investigating officer has found that the establishment of a school at Pallarenda at an early date is not justified."

(2) "Yes. A school reserve has been set aside in the Three Mile Creek area."

FIVE-HEAD CREEK WATER SUPPLY  
SCHEME, TOWNSVILLE

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

With reference to the proposed Five-Head Creek scheme designed to store additional water for the city of Townsville, will the main western or southern roads be inundated at certain points when the scheme is fully operative? If so, will the road or roads be re-aligned and are any plans yet available showing the new routes?

Answer:—

"Sections of the Flinders Highway in the Anthill Plains area could be inundated in Stage II of the proposed Five-Head Creek scheme. The Bruce Highway will not be affected. No plans of any proposals for relocation of the Flinders Highway are yet available, but investigation surveys will be commenced shortly in conjunction with the Railway Department."

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OFFICE  
RENTALS, MARYBOROUGH

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

What are the terms and rental being paid for the occupation of rooms in (a) Maryborough Commonwealth Bank for the Regional Education Director and his staff and (b) premises in Eleana Street, Maryborough, for Adult Education staff and classes?

Answer:—

"(a) Contract entered into with the Commonwealth Bank is for two years from January 18, 1969, with the option of a further three years. Annual rental is \$635 payable at the rate of \$52.92 per calendar month. (b) Contract entered into for five years from March 26, 1966. Annual rental is \$1,560 per annum payable at the rate of \$130 per calendar month."

S G I O THEATRE

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

(1) Who decided that State Government Insurance funds should be used for the construction of a public theatre in Brisbane?

(2) Who decided the rental charges and what are the details relating to them?

(3) Has a manager been appointed and, if so, what is his name and what are his duties?

Answers:—

(1) "The expenditure was approved by the Governor in Council."

(2) "I table the scale of charges approved by Cabinet. Cabinet also approved that the scale be rebated by 15 per cent. when our own Queensland Theatre Company uses the theatre. The cost of the rebate is set off against the annual payment made by the Office to the State in lieu of income tax."

(3) "Mr. Donald Batchelor has been appointed manager. His duties are to manage the theatre, organise bookings and undertake all matters normally handled by a theatre manager."

Paper.—Whereupon Mr. Chalk laid upon the Table of the House the paper referred to.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS,  
AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURAL  
COUNCIL

Mr. Baldwin, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

Will he table a copy of the decisions and recommendations from all the meetings in the last three years of the Commonwealth Council of Agriculture? If not, why not?

Answer:—

"It is assumed that the Honourable Member is referring to the Australian Agricultural Council. The issue of statements and the release of information concerning decisions of the Australian Agricultural Council are the prerogative of the Chairman of the Council who is the Federal Minister for Primary Industry. I am not therefore in a position to accede to the Honourable Member's request."

PRICE OF WHEAT SUPPLIED TO  
POULTRY FARMERS

Mr. Baldwin, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

Will he direct the relevant Board to supply feed-wheat to Queensland poultry farmers at the same price as it is supplied to the Chinese Government in Peking?

Answer:—

"The home consumption price of wheat is fixed annually by agreement between the various States and the Commonwealth. The only practical way for providing wheat at a price lower than the home consumption price would be for the State

Government or the Commonwealth to subsidise such purchases. Because of limited financial resources it would not be possible for this Government to give this assistance. Consequently the State Government has requested the payment by the Commonwealth of a subsidy on the price of wheat for drought feeding. However, to date, the Commonwealth has not been agreeable to subsidising purchases of wheat or any other fodder. The Premier, as you may no doubt be aware, recently made further representations to the Prime Minister on the question of cheaper wheat for drought feeding. These representations are now receiving consideration. My Department does not direct any marketing board set up under State legislation. These Boards are autonomous bodies and do not represent the Crown for any purpose whatsoever. The price at which wheat is exported is a matter within the jurisdiction of the Australian Wheat Board and would not be subject to any direction by this Government."

#### RECOMMENDATIONS, COMMITTEE ON TEACHER EDUCATION

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

(1) What stage has been reached by the Committee on Teacher Education in planning the new course for recruits entering the secondary section?

(2) With regard to this course (a) what period of training is envisaged, (b) what will be the various courses available and the elements thereof, (c) where will the courses be conducted, (d) what will be the entrance qualifications, (e) what will the terminal award be called, (f) on what level of the salary scale will the graduates be admitted and (g) will the terminal qualifications be professionally viable throughout Australia?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "The Committee on Teacher Education is discussing courses of training for secondary teachers. As details of various courses are still under consideration and have not yet been submitted, I am unable to provide the information sought. It is envisaged that there will be a minimum of three years training for secondary teachers and that the qualifications arising from these courses will be acceptable throughout Australia."

#### JAMES STREET AND COLLINS AVENUE LEVEL CROSSINGS, CAIRNS

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in the *Cairns Post* of August 16, relative to the proposed warning lights at the railway level crossings at James Street, Cairns?

(2) Has any comparative vehicle usage, traffic count or accident rate been conducted by the Railway Department on either James Street or Collins Avenue railway level crossings, Cairns and, if so, what are the figures?

(3) Has any priority been given to either or both of these crossings and when can it be expected that both of them will be equipped with automatic warning devices and flashing lights?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 3) "The programme for installation of flashing lights and boom gates at level crossings is determined by consultation between the Main Roads Department and the Railway Department. The programme for 1970-71 is not yet finally determined and the matter of Collins Avenue and James Street will again be considered by officers prior to the finalisation of the 1970-71 programme."

#### SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

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

For each year since June 30, 1949, what has been the number of (a) medical officers attached to the division of School Health Services, (b) trained nurses attached to the division of School Health Services, (c) children given a full medical examination in (i) metropolitan areas and (ii) country areas, (d) children examined by medical officers, (e) children examined by trained nurses and (f) overall number of primary-school children in Queensland and/or ratio of doctors and nursing staff separately to primary-school children?

*Answer:—*

"All the information being sought by the Honourable Member is not readily available. The Annual Reports of the Director-General of Health and Medical Services, which are tabled in this House every year, contain the information that is available for the years commencing July 1, 1949, to June 30, 1968."

#### NEW ACCOMMODATION, TOURIST BUREAU, CAIRNS

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

Due to the cramped nature of the present locations becoming increasingly apparent, has any consideration been given to re-siting or constructing new accommodation for the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau at Cairns to provide for the convenience and comfort of tourists and staff and the overall expansion of the tourist industry at Cairns over a long period of time?

*Answer:—*

"I have not received any complaints regarding cramped conditions in the Cairns Branch of the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau. The present premises were remodelled early in 1966 at a cost of \$6,730 and are considered to be satisfactory. The present site of this Branch in the business area in Abbott Street is considered to be an excellent location."

#### DISALLOWANCE OF QUESTION

**Mr. HUGHES** (Kurilpa): Yesterday I gave notice of a question to the Premier containing questions that I had not raised previously and asking if he would reconsider the matter of the safety of pedestrians using the new Victoria Bridge.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. HUGHES:** It is not on the Business Paper.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I was wondering when the hon. member was going to ask why it is not on the Business Paper. It was considered that the question had been answered adequately by the Premier yesterday morning.

**Mr. HUGHES:** It was a new question.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

#### FORM OF QUESTION

**Mr. JENSEN** (Bundaberg) having given notice of a question—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! It would appear that a similar question was answered this morning.

**Mr. JENSEN:** No, it was not.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I will look into the matter.

**Honourable Members** proceeding to give notice of questions—

At 12 noon,

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! This being a day allotted for the debate on the Address in Reply, under the provisions of Standing Order No. 17 the House will now proceed with that debate.

**Mr. Bennett:** I have three very important questions to ask.

**Mr. Chalk:** You have not been in the House all this week.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. Bennett:** I have three important matters that I should like to raise. They cannot wait until next Tuesday. I do not see why we, as an Opposition, should be gagged.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. Bennett:** The Government is treating us like schoolboys.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

##### RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—FIRST ALLOTTED DAY

Debate resumed from 21 August (see p. 171) on Mr. Hungerford's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT** (Chatsworth) (12.1 p.m.): It is my pleasure this morning to associate myself with the motion moved by the hon. member for Balonne and seconded by the hon. member for Wavell. It is a particular pleasure for me to take my seat in the House once again, and I acknowledge the support of the electors of Chatsworth and the fact that they were good enough to return me with an increase of 3½ per cent. in my voting figures.

**Mr. Bennett** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member for South Brisbane is continuing to interject. He has no right to come to the centre table and interject.

**Mr. Bennett** interjected.

**Mr. Chalk** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I must ask hon. members on my right, particularly those on my immediate right, not to interject.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! the hon. member for Port Curtis is acting in a rather unseemly way.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! If there are any further interjections and if this noisy interference with the conduct of the House continues, I will have no hesitation in dealing with the members responsible under Rule 123A.

**Mr. Hanson:** My electorate is entitled to representation, the same as anyone else's.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member for Port Curtis is going the right way for me to deal with him under Rule 123A.

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT:** I also record my appreciation of the very many friends who supported me in the electorate, and I thank them not only for their tangible support but also for the firm friendship that they extended to me during my first term in Parliament.

This Parliament is distinguished by the fact that some 14 members have taken their seats for the first time. This represents the biggest turnover in this House since the dramatic times of 1957. When we recall that since the State election of 1966 three other hon. members have found their way here by by-election and that the 1966 election brought six new members here, that identifies the fact that about 26 per cent. of the present personnel have been serving here for three years or less. That proves that there are

some rigours in political activity, and that the turnover in personnel in this House is extremely high. The important thing is that this Parliament has undergone a "younging" process. The average age of members of this Parliament is significantly lower than previously. I believe that this is good. The problems that beset us year by year become more urgent, and it is important that younger men find their way to this House.

I extend my congratulations to all those members who have been elected for the first time. I hope that their tenure of office in this House will be satisfying in personal terms and that it will also be enriching to the State that they serve. On a personal note, I say to every new member and, indeed, to my older colleagues that while I play the game of politics for all it is worth within this Chamber, I do not wear my politics on my sleeve and, I hope that they, likewise, do not.

I now wish to extend particular congratulations to my namesake from Mackenzie upon his elevation to the Ministry. It is well known that he springs from noble stock, that he claims distinguished ancestors and that he is possessed of all the finer virtues bestowed so generously on all members of the Hewitt clan.

The opening ceremony was performed on this occasion by the Administrator, Mr. Justice Sheehy. In many ways, I felt that his speech was like a mini-skirt; it was revealing, but at the same time tantalising, because there were some things we would have expected to be referred to but that were rather significant by their absence. I venture to suggest that, in the course of time, all will be revealed. But this, of course, is in the hands of the Government.

The Administrator mentioned that our distinguished State Governor attended the investiture of the Prince of Wales. I do not think that it is untimely to make some reference to that significant occasion in the history of our Commonwealth and to the young man who was so involved in it.

Prince Charles has upon his young shoulders the ultimate responsibility of carrying the monarchy of the Commonwealth. Having watched the ceremony itself, as well as a most revealing interview with some B.B.C. commentators to which he subjected himself, I consider that the hand of his father is heavy upon him and that the succession is in very sure hands.

It is to the continuing credit of his father that he has associated himself with so many matters in the Commonwealth and has tried to break down the remoteness that once enshrouded the monarchy; that he pioneered Commonwealth Study Conferences, which have done so much to wrestle with the problems of mankind; and that he is the author of a well-known lecture devoted to the subject, "Evolution of Human Organisation". I am pleased to recognise this democratic process which is creeping more and

more into the monarchy. I believe that this process will accelerate in the hands of Charles when he becomes the ultimate king of our Commonwealth.

While we acclaim the young Prince, it is nevertheless important to recognise that great changes have taken place in our Commonwealth and that it is not the close-knit community it once was. Indeed, there are members of it who pay respect to the Queen, not as monarch of their own countries, but as leader of the family of nations; and there is a great distinction. Our nation will enjoy its bonds with the United Kingdom longer, and there are no great reasons why they should be severed. However, it should be acknowledged that if there is some loosening of those bonds, it will be contributed to by the United Kingdom as much as by Australia.

This country will forever be grateful for the finer institutions that it has inherited from the British way of life. I constantly applaud them. But, at the same time, I acknowledge that there are no good reasons for slavishly adhering to old customs, just for the sake of retaining them. There are great processes of change taking place in our life-time, and while no structure must be torn down just for the sake of doing so, as some of these stupid anarchists would have us believe, we must acknowledge change, bow to change, and, on occasions, help change to come about.

Having touched on that subject, and before I get to the burden of my speech, I wish to refer to some of the comments made by my friend and colleague, the hon. member for South Coast, who spoke in this debate a few days ago. I listened to his comments with great interest, as I always listen to the comments of such an erudite gentleman. However, I would be less than honest if I told him that I was in total agreement with everything he said.

The hon. member made the great mistake of trying to oversimplify the problems that beset our universities these days. It is not good enough to make a blanket approach and condemn all students out of hand and think that all problems can be solved by imposing the heavy hand of Government control. In fact, such an approach could be for the worst.

There are disruptive elements, not only in our university, but also in every other university in the world today. I have referred to anarchists. Some of them exist in our university. I can only express the fond hope that, in the fullness of time, they will reach manhood and recognise the stupidity of what they advocate. Society cannot be put right by pulling everything down first, so I dismiss them out of hand. I identify the so-called revolutionaries who allow themselves to be used viciously for ulterior purposes, and I believe that their activities must be watched closely. But there is a great body of students who apply themselves actively to thinking

about the social ills that still prevail in our society, and I will do nothing to gag them. It is certain that there is still poverty and want in this world of ours in which we are now racing into the 1970's, and, if students want to think seriously about these things, we should listen to what they are saying.

If there is any one thing that presents a problem with universities it is the lack of dialogue that exists between universities and members of Governments. I think that if a continuing dialogue with responsible elements at the university could be established, many of these problems would disappear overnight. I remind the House that six days before he died the late Jack Pizzey attended a luncheon at the university. Present at it were leading figures in the Students' Union at that time. The atmosphere was cordial, and I believed that a new relationship was being embarked upon.

I say to the Premier that his first 12 months have been turbulent. I believe it takes a Premier 12 months to grasp the reins of office, to settle in, and to understand the intricacies of his office. I hope that now that he has settled in and taken the reins firmly, and now that he enjoys the undoubted loyalty of every last member of his team, he may be able to follow the lead set by his distinguished colleague and establish continuing contact and dialogue with the Students' Union, and try to understand some of the things they are seeking.

**Mr. Hinze:** With Laver and that ratbag group out there?

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT:** Again my friend makes the signal mistake of trying to associate everyone with this fellow Laver. I remind him that during the last few years, when there have been elections for the presidency of the Students' Union taking place in the glare of publicity, on every occasion a responsible person, with his feet firmly planted upon the ground, has emerged as the clear winner.

**Mr. Porter:** An overwhelming winner.

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT:** An overwhelming winner, as my colleague reminds me. I think that this identifies the fact that there is clear responsibility at the university. It is a mistake to believe that everything that university students advocate is wrong and must be dismissed out of hand. If the hon. member for South Coast wants me to identify one thing in which I find my thoughts substantially in line with those of the students, I mention some of the permit arrangements that prevail in this State. By way of example, I remind him that when we, as members of Parliament, contest elections each three years, the type of nonsense to which we have to subject ourselves with regard to signs and similar trivial things establishes, in my view, that there are grounds for an overhaul of certain things. I mention this merely as an aside and not as the main purpose of my speech today. I hope that hon. members will not

make the mistake of oversimplifying a problem that is complex and does not lend itself to so simple a solution.

The debate in which we are now participating was initiated by the hon. member for Balonne, and the motion was seconded by the hon. member for Wavell. Their efforts were, I submit, predictable, and they were commendable. The hon. member for Balonne rightly reminded us of many of the problems that beset the countryman. We are indebted to him for bringing them to our notice, and I hope that he is able to find solutions to some of them. I welcome him as a friend and as a colleague.

The hon. member for Wavell came to this House preaching the doctrine of divine discontent. He did not do so flippantly, wantonly, or destructively but indeed with due deliberation and study, and fortified by the extensive experience that he has gained in the higher echelons of his noble profession. It would be a great mistake to suggest that all he said was right—I am in no position to make any valid judgment upon it—but it would be equally wrong to suggest that everything he said was wrong. Somewhere, by virtue of his professional background, there must be something in what he said that has validity. I believe that the sensible thing to do would be to enlist his services and test the validity of his claims.

I think it is good at times to look closely at all avenues of Government enterprise and Government endeavour, and I do not believe that a Government climbs down at all if occasionally it says, "We are going to have a look at this." A Government is criticised more frequently for doing nothing than it is for taking due action, and I would hope that we do not see the development of a totally unnecessary Donnybrook between a private member, a Minister and a Government department. The hon. member came here and made comments that he believed were constructive, and they should be so construed.

Finally, it is important also to recognise that the hon. member for Wavell has not attacked the free-hospitalisation scheme, and we should identify the fact that the recommendations of the Nimmo report, if accepted in totality, will entrench free hospitalisation in this State to a greater degree than it has ever been entrenched before. I establish that argument by referring to the appropriate clause in the recommendations of the Nimmo committee, which reads in these terms—

"That the Federal Government agree to pay the full Federal hospital benefit (at present \$2 a day) to hospitals in respect of all public ward patients in Queensland as long as Queensland's present policy of free public ward treatment without a means test is continued."

I wish to move from those passing comments to the main burden of my speech today and discuss with the House the impact of automation as I, a layman, see it.

It is true that automation is not some latter-day phenomenon. It has in fact been with our society for many years. There are those who will argue that automation started with the industrial revolution, and there were those who tried to fight it in the days of the industrial revolution in the same way as some try to fight it today. The important thing to acknowledge is that this is an accelerating process, and it should be hailed as a method to ease the burden upon man and to allow his burgeoning intellectual capacity to have full blossom. It relieves man of the drudgery of every-day endeavour and allows him to engage upon finer pursuits.

But, unfortunately, there are many misconceptions about automation, and these, too, must be dispelled. It is not something to be feared; it is something which will provide greater opportunities, providing its implementation is watched with great care and great caution. Certainly it will shift emphasis quite startlingly, so that training and education will receive even greater emphasis than they presently do. But I return to a theme that I have developed many times in this House, and which I suspect I will return to many times in future years. It is a strong belief of mine that in the technological society into which we are fast racing, the uneducated will not only be unemployed; they will be unemployable. This presents a clear challenge to our educators.

The effects of automation, particularly in these days, are clouded by the buoyant economy that we constantly enjoy, and in the situation of full to over-full employment that currently prevails, it is easy for the impact of automation to be overlooked or under-estimated. Workers displaced because of it are readily absorbed into other openings. Thus it is that sugar harvesting and handling, bulk grain holding, streamlined killing arrangements and changed stevedoring methods, while causing considerable contractions, have had little effect upon the unemployment figures. Indeed, the changes in the sugar and meat industries have had the effect of levelling out the seasonal unemployment fluctuations and have stabilised the graphs.

Because of this there is the temptation to play down the effects of automation or to be complacent about its impact. That is the great peril that we must avoid. The significant drift from country to city indicates that there is a great change in employment patterns. To absorb the growing work-force, domiciled and immigrant, there are not enough labour-intensive industries coming to Queensland. The great industrial complexes, including the new mining enterprises, are substantially automated before they arrive. They produce export earnings, development, and initial, though not continuing, stimulus to heavy industry; they do not provide proportionate employment opportunities.

In the United States of America the Labour Department estimates that 1,800,000 workers per annum are displaced by automation while an extra 1,000,000 per annum enter the work-force and that is at a time and in a situation where everyone would shout for joy if their unemployment figure could be reduced to 5 per cent. As all hon. members know, a 5 per cent. unemployment figure in this country would be totally intolerable.

In the 12 years from 1950 to 1962, 1,600,000 farmers, representing 20 per cent. of the agricultural work-force, left farms in the United States because of increased technology in agriculture and, at the same time, farm output increased by 28 per cent.

It is important to relate this fact to the comments made by the hon. member for Balonne in his Address-in-Reply speech and also to questions recently asked by the hon. member for Barcoo. It is not good enough merely to say that there is a drift from country to city and that that is to be deplored. We must, at the same time, question whether production is increasing or decreasing and whether the over-all economy of the country is suffering in consequence. The stark fact of life everywhere in the world is that this drift from rural occupation to urban occupation is taking place.

**Mr. Hughes:** And it is by choice.

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT:** Certainly it could be by choice. The issue which Kennedy described as the major problem of the '60's will undoubtedly be a searing situation in the '70's. Kennedy's advice was timely when he said—

“There is essential thinking and planning which we must do in order to make automation our servant rather than the master of the American people.”

The Commonwealth maintains a close and constant brief through the National Labour Advisory Council, and I have enough respect for that body to believe that its studies, guidance and recommendations are extensive, but significantly, no Australian Government, to my knowledge at least, has yet taken any legislative action to define automation, to spell out a specific protection for displaced workers, to make provision for redundancy or severance, or to stimulate interest in re-training. This contrasts sharply with overseas countries whose programmes are outlined in a series of interesting documents issued by the International Labour Organisation. Countries with specific manpower and adjustment programmes include Canada, Italy, Japan, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Republics, the United States, France, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Importantly, none of these countries have industrial laws comparable to ours. I plead innocence about the form of legislation the Soviet works under, although when one refers to the series of articles recently printed in “The Australian” by the Soviet journalist who

defected, one suspects that they have not moved far away from the Stalinist days. But, with the exception of Russia, all the other countries I have referred to have a collective bargaining form of industrial agreement.

The overriding advantage in collective bargaining, as I see it, is that the unions bargain directly with industry and they can insist on provisions for redundancy being written into the awards. The dialogue that exists between industry and union as a consequence is infinitely better. Short of Government action, and possibly in unison with Government action, collective bargaining presents better opportunities to unions to protect the interests of workers, particularly with regard to the effects of automation; but there is a requirement first of all of trade union officials, a requirement which—

**Mr. Newton:** What about the employer? Since you know so much about it, tell us his side of it.

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT:** I am attempting to. On past occasions the hon. member has given me credit for trying to present a balanced point of view, and I am trying to do that today. But I suggest to him, with great respect, that before trade union officials in this country can enter into any basis of collective bargaining they have to demonstrate some degree of competence, comprehension, responsibility and sense of participation. Let me dwell on the last point for a moment. That sense of participation would be in a situation in which unionists would sit down with the employers and say, "If you perfected this process or if you did this in a different fashion, or if you had a closer look at this, you would increase your own profitability."

The trade unionists must possess a vested interest in the profitability of the enterprise, because under a collective-bargaining system they are the ultimate beneficiaries. I respect the point of view of the hon member for Belmont—and he knows this—but I say to him, with great respect, that today, unfortunately, the trade unions still place too much emphasis on the tradition of coming up through the ranks. I think that they need to have some movement away from this tradition, and to get away from the old ideologies and class concepts, and the constant conflict that presently prevails. I believe that this is the first challenge that the unions have to face, and I wish them all the luck in the world; I hope they respond to it.

I would like to see some movement towards collective bargaining, but, as I have said, this must be preceded by a great reorientation in thinking and approach. And the reorientation must take place at the employer level also.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions and the employer groups have gone on record as making certain comments about

automation in this country. I think that we should look at the comments of the two groups in order to identify the degree of unanimity that flows between them.

At the 1957 A.C.T.U. Congress these principles were spelt out—

1. Increased production to be reflected in increasing purchasing power;
2. Joint consultation to ensure the planned introduction of automation with the least possible dislocation;
3. Maintenance of full employment;
4. Training and retraining programmes to be provided where necessary;
5. Increased leisure or a living standard increase;
6. Planned resettlement of displaced labour; and
7. Severance pay.

**Mr. Newton:** Do you agree with that?

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT:** I am not arguing against it.

I turn now to a Press statement made by Mr. Ralph James, the director of the Queensland Employers' Federation, as quoted in "The Courier-Mail" of 29 July, 1968. This is the way that he spelt out his approach to the situation—

1. A longer period of notice of termination and early consultation between employers and unions;
2. An objective labor engagement programme which anticipates changes in the future work-force;
3. Active assistance in securing alternative employment;
4. A review of the unemployment-benefit schemes operating within the social-service network;
5. Establishment of training and retraining centres to enable employees to acquire new skills and other jobs; and
6. A positive approach to the difficulties of the individual in moving from one location to another to take up a new job after dismissal because of technological change.

The hon. member for Belmont would agree, I think, that there is no conflict, or very little conflict, in broad terms between the ideals expressed by the two groups. Indeed, there is such little conflict that a Government could well interest itself in this matter, knowing that it sees remarkable unanimity between those on both sides of the fence. To this end, I believe that if Government actions were contemplated they could go along certain lines to formalise what are accepted sentiments. The Government should collate information of work-force movement and displacement as a result of automation; set about making a detailed study of overseas experience, particularly in industrialised countries; set up an investigation into retraining programmes; and, in addition, have compensation considerations.

**Mr. Bromley:** I said this years ago.

**Mr. W. D. HEWITT:** But the hon. member did not say it as well.

Finally, the Government should set up a functioning committee representative of Government, quasi-government, employee and employer organisations.

It is certain that there are many natural consequences of automation. Certainly within our life-times we will have a shorter working week, extended leave, earlier retirement and expanded benefits, which presently are the problems of a tribunal. They will be welcomed, but we will identify in their wake a new set of social problems which will arise as a consequence.

It is interesting to note that problems will occur not only because of increased leisure and what people will do with it, but also because of changed working habits. I will illustrate that by one example only. Recently the Bureau of Census and Statistics in Canberra entered into an agreement whereby its computer will work for 24 hours a day, and, if necessary, seven days a week. It can be readily seen that the clerical staff will have to make adjustments as a consequence of this. Once upon a time the white-collar worker enjoyed a regular 9-to-5 day, but he will now have to adjust himself to certain shift work conditions. As I say, it is not only a question of problems of leisure, but also a question of change in working habits. It is certain that in their wake will come a need for massive retraining and expanded education.

I believe that all this can be best spelt out in the sentiments uttered by the Duke of Edinburgh in his address, "Evolution of Human Organisation", when he said—

"What matters is that man should improve his control over his environment and his relationships so that, both as an individual and in his groups, he may be able to make a living in peace and in partnership with all his fellow creatures."

I do not believe that at this time there is any call for excessive reaction to automation, but there is a need for a reasonable, watchful approach so that as transitions take place we will be geared and ready for them to ensure their implementation as smoothly as possible. It is necessary, not only in this field of endeavour, but in all fields, for the Government to think big and to act big. I favour the sentiment expressed so well by David Burnham over 60 years ago, when he uttered this imprecation—

"Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realised. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work—remembering that a noble plan, once recorded, will never die but long after we have gone will still be a living thing—asserting itself with growing insistency."

**Mr. CASEY** (Mackay) (12.33 p.m.): I desire to associate myself today with the sentiments of the mover and the seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply in expressing the loyalty of this

Parliament to the Crown. In taking my oath of allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen, I also associated with it the people of the Mackay electorate.

I was proud on that day to have my predecessor to witness my swearing-in. Frederick Dickson Graham devoted 26 years to the electors of Mackay, and the State of Queensland, in this Parliament. Only those who have given their time to public life can fully appreciate just what that means. For 26 years he did anything for anyone, at any time, irrespective of colour, class or creed. That was typical of the service given by Fred Graham. It is unfortunate that in the twilight of his career great personal sadness and sorrow has befallen him through his family. My heart, and the hearts of those who really know him, go out to him at this time, and I sincerely hope that things may change and that he may have a long and happy retirement, which is his just reward for his years of work.

From the time when Francis Thyssen Amhurst was elected as the first member for Mackay on 21 November, 1879, that city has been well represented in Parliament. While seven different people were elected during the first 36 years of representation, there were only two during the next 54 years. Firstly, there was the late Honourable Forgan Smith, who was the member for 27½ years. During that period he served with great distinction as a member, as a Minister of the Crown, and as a long-serving Premier. Following him was Mr. Fred Graham, who served for 26 years.

During that period Fred Graham was opposed by 16 different people. More importantly, he faced 10 elections. The people of his electorate continued to support him, and I think that that illustrates the true worth of any politician. Perhaps the best tribute I have heard paid to Fred Graham came from a member of the staff of this House. When I came here a few weeks ago to take his place, the staff asked of Fred Graham and how he was, and one member of the staff said, "Fred Graham was one of the kindest men I knew."

I record my thanks and appreciation for the wonderful service Fred Graham gave me personally in acting as my campaign director in the recent election campaign and in spearheading the drive that resulted in my election to Parliament. Fred Graham and Peter McSherry, my campaign secretary, headed a wonderful team of workers from the Mackay Branch of the Australian Labour Party. The Mackay electorate has a long tradition and history of support for the Labour Party and I shall do my best to carry on that tradition with the good will and support of my workers and supporters and the confidence of the electors of Mackay.

As all hon. members are no doubt well aware, Mackay is the sugar capital of Australia. That great industry is the backbone of our northern settlement, and it will be for years to come. I look forward to a

bright future in this industry despite the many hazards confronting it today and the many ways in which it is suffering through actions of this Government. It pays dearly for rail transportation. The very high freight rates in the district have forced many mills to swing to road transportation of cane because they could get no satisfaction from representations for a reduction of the high rates they were paying. And even with this swing to road transport, the Mackay district is recognised as one of the highest income-earning areas in Queensland, comparatively speaking, for the Queensland Railways.

However, the sugar industry will continue to prosper despite the present trend by the Government to allow confectionery shops to be filled with sweets made from sugar substitutes, including beet sugar from other countries, and the Government's history of trouble in this industry after years of stability resulting from good Labour legislation.

The Government even failed to grasp an opportunity, when negotiating the Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement for the sale of Queensland coal to Japan, to negotiate, in turn, a firm price and quota for our sugar, our greatest northern agricultural industry. I know that a good deal was said when that agreement was before the House. I also know that a World Summary of October 1968, stated—

“Because of recent signs of a strain of the world's supply of coking coal and rising prices in the U.S., Japanese steel firms regard Queensland as holding the key as to whether it will successfully meet its tremendous requirements of coking coal in the 70's.”

This indeed shows that further negotiations could have been conducted for the protection of our primary industries. Further negotiations could have been possible even earlier, particularly relative to the sugar industry, when the Japanese trade treaty was being negotiated. If one notes the countries that are buying cheap sugar on the world market today, one will see how badly the Government slipped up.

For the purpose of making a comparison, I might mention that it has been said by the Government that the \$100,000,000 required to finance the Goonyella project was not available in Australia. I have made an assessment of the capital value of the expansion of the sugar industry in the Mackay district. Capital aspects, such as the sale value of the new farms created, increased valuations of existing farms, capital expansion in the eight sugar mills, extension to the bulk sugar terminal at Mackay Harbour, extension of mill tramlines, additional rolling stock, tractors, implements, houses, farm buildings, increased mechanisation of the industry with harvesters, wagons, bins and other machinery, and the construction of the molasses terminal, all represent in the vicinity of \$150,000,000 for the Mackay district alone. All of that work was carried out with Australian capital

by Australians and, more importantly, for Australians. The profits from this great agricultural industry will therefore remain in Australia. But when this industry encountered its problems, no freight concessions or subsidies were forthcoming—only repayable loans.

The sugar industry is a practical example of the way in which the Labour Party encouraged decentralisation, and development of the northern areas of this great State. The other day the Premier challenged the Opposition to say that the Government was not furthering decentralisation. I would say that the Government has followed a set of policies that have bled the life-blood of this State to the south-east corner. Every endeavour has been made by the Government to create in this area the transport hub of the State, the chief port, the chief manufacturing centre, the main tourist area, the centre of commerce and learning, the chief processing centre for the State's primary industries, the distributing point for the State's imports, and, of course, the normal spread associated with the capital of the State and its administration.

I point out that this does not happen in the United States, where the policy is to distribute industry throughout the length and breadth of the country. Quite often the comment is heard that we should be supporting free enterprise. The United States would be perhaps the greatest bastion of free enterprise in the world, and in that country a strong and firm policy of decentralisation is followed which begins with the awarding of Government contracts to industries established, or intending to become established, away from the more populous areas.

To me, decentralisation means the even expansion of all settled areas of the State simultaneously with the closer settlement of those areas in need of development. It also means giving people the opportunity to raise their families in their own areas, so that the young people, in their turn, can work, live and bring up their families in such areas. In my district of Mackay, unemployment has remained consistently high in recent years, and it has been ascertained that 40 per cent. of those without work have been under 21 years of age.

What has the Government done about this? What has been its reaction to the problem of decentralisation? This year, when it appeared that decentralisation would become an election issue, a sudden announcement was made that the Premier would have Mr. Barton, the new Co-ordinator-General of Works, carry out an investigation and make a report on rail freights. Since the election further publicity has been given to this matter, and the Premier announced the other day that he would have discussions with a firm of consultants on having this job done.

The truth of the matter, of course, is—and this has been pointed out for some years in this House by members of the

Opposition—that the rail freight anomalies in existence in Queensland are the greatest deterrent to decentralisation. In the past five years the Government would have received or seen many reports dealing with this subject, including the famous Loader report, which all Governments have seen fit to ignore. Foremost in all these reports has been their condemnation of the Queensland Government and its system of rail freights, and in addition they have advocated the setting up of a special decentralisation fund. I wonder whether they have been ignored because these two points are at the top of the list of A.L.P. policy on this matter?

High cost of transportation has two results: a higher cost of living, and the inability of local manufacturers to compete. Things are worsened by the fact that freight concessions have been given willy-nilly to southern manufacturers where they have the advantage of lower unit rates because of turnover and cheaper primary costs in both labour and the obtaining of supplies of goods. As recently as this morning we have heard the Minister for Transport speaking in this Chamber of the special freight rate for the Goonyella project. Do you realise, Mr. Speaker, that the 2c a ton-mile that the Government will get from that project is less than it would receive from road transport tax? It would get 3c a ton-mile from the road transport contractors.

I am aware that the Minister says, "We want to assist and further development, and this was a special project that required assistance." However, in reading through "Hansard" for the last Parliamentary session, I noted the statement that the full cost of the Goonyella railway line project would not impose any burden upon the people of this State. I should say that the freight rate of 2c a ton-mile that has been established represents a direct subsidy to the company concerned, which is supposedly contributing the full cost of the project.

To illustrate my point, I might take structural steel, one of the items affected. The normal freight rate on structural steel from Brisbane to Mackay is \$43.55 a ton. Anyone fortunate enough to be able to negotiate a special rate with the Railway Department would probably pay about \$35 a ton. For this project it will be \$11.98 a ton, which certainly is a very low rate.

If the Minister is sincere on the question of making rail freights assist in decentralisation, I would ask him to make 2c a ton-mile the standard rate for northern industries. Such a rate would assist in establishing and fostering northern industries and give them an opportunity to compete on all markets, not only on markets connected with the Goonyella project.

One of the first and best methods of assisting the establishment of industries away from the south-eastern corner of the State is to give greater encouragement to local

manufacturers. These men, scattered throughout the provincial cities and country areas of this State, have the know-how, experience, ability, initiative, drive and faith to build industries in country areas, and they are ably and strongly supported by the men and women whom they employ. Undoubtedly, the wealth and the future of Queensland lies in the relatively untapped mineral and land resources in its central and northern areas, and these should be used to form the basis for the development of processing and manufacturing industries. Exports of processed and manufactured goods could then actually be made from these areas. When our major markets were on the other side of the world the increased distances from southern manufacturing centres did not matter greatly. The freight component in cost was relatively small. However, now that the largest part of our export markets is in our near-North, or the northern half of the Pacific Ocean, it matters a great deal, and southern manufacturing industries, particularly the foreign-owned ones, are still putting it over Queensland.

I suppose the real truth of this lies, as it does so often, in the figures of our interstate imports and exports. According to the Queensland Year Book—I will take the last five-year period fully mentioned in it, 1962 to 1967, which is a fair period because it is away from the tragic drought years that we are presently experiencing—our interstate exports totalled \$1,627 million whilst our interstate imports totalled \$3,352 million, a deficit of \$1,725 million. In fact, in that five-year period Queensland had four over-all trade deficits, the worst in our State's history, and if we take into account our overseas earnings over that period, we had an over-all trade loss of \$215,000,000.

As so many members on the Government side like to make comparisons, in the years 1952 to 1957—10 years previously, and the last five years of Labour administration—there was an over-all trading profit of \$262,000,000. We have even fallen behind in the production of goods for our own use.

As I said earlier, all the State's great mineral wealth, all of its land, its sunshine and its water, must be used to form the basis of our processing industries. The real wealth of this area of the State, and consequently of Australia, is falling into overseas hands whilst Australian capital is being spent on what I consider to be nationally unproductive ventures in the densely settled areas. In insurance companies and other such groups we find heavy capital outlay on such projects as multi-storey office blocks, parking lots, urban roads and bridges, super-highways to coastal resorts, luxury theatres and so on. These are relatively unproductive investments so far as increases in real economy and the income of the nation are concerned. There is no doubt in my mind about the direction in which the capital of this nation should be turned. Water has

determined the course of civilisation and undoubtedly this is just as true today, but what we need is men of vision, ambition and imagination; we need leaders who are prepared to fight tenaciously and to use every means within their power to develop the great untapped water resources of Central and North Queensland.

Water development can be divided into three classifications—firstly, to consolidate and stabilise existing production and to minimise drought; secondly, to allow for steady expansion of industries, both primary and secondary, and thirdly, to allow for the creation of new industries, both primary and secondary.

Let me deal with the first of these. Perhaps there could be no better time than now because drought still remains the conqueror. How very much could have been done had the millions spent on drought relief, and the great financial loss of national income, been spent on water projects. It amazes me to hear, at such times as this, hon. members talking about a national disaster fund to provide for such emergencies, and some sort of drought insurance or drought bonds. Let us be objective about this great problem. What we require is a national development fund—and I am not referring to the sham that the Federal Government calls its National Water Resources Development Programme. It has been estimated that within the catchment areas of the Burnett, Fitzroy, Pioneer and Burdekin Rivers there are over 12,000,000 acres of arable land that could be turned almost immediately to agricultural use. That acreage is equivalent to the whole of the area in Australia that produces crops other than wheat. The catchment areas of those rivers contain an area that is greater than the whole of Victoria. What would we see in that area if the spending on the development of water resources had been as great as it has been in Victoria? What could have been done if this State had leaders who could be as convincing in their approaches to the Federal Government to obtain a fair deal for our State as were the leaders of that State in their approaches?

Let us look at some recent occurrences in other States. "The Sydney Morning Herald" of 12 August, 1969, contained a lengthy article in which it was stated that the Commonwealth would provide one-quarter of the funds for the construction of the \$60,000,000 Dartmouth Dam and that the balance would be financed by each of the States of Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia providing one-quarter, and much of that amount would, in turn, be provided by Commonwealth loans. The same article signified the Commonwealth's agreement to provide by direct grant \$20,000,000 of the \$45,000,000 that is required by the State of New South Wales for the construction of the Copeton Dam on the Gwydir River. That amount is almost

the same as the amount to be provided by the Commonwealth for the construction of the Fairbairn Dam.

While speaking of "Fairbairns", I remind hon. members that the Minister for National Development, the Honourable David Fairbairn, in a statement in Federal Parliament in May of last year referred to the Gwydir River as being the only major tributary of the Darling River on which no large regulated water-storage system had yet been provided. How nice it would be if we could say that of the tributaries of the Burdekin and Fitzroy Rivers. All that we can say is that from Federal funds we are constructing only the first large regulated-storage system on either of these two great rivers, which, between them, carry a run-off that is estimated as being approximately 40 or 50 per cent. of the total run-off in Queensland.

I feel that part of the blame for this situation must be laid at the feet of the Queensland Government. It must become more convincing in its approaches to its Federal cohorts. So far it has received no response to its appeal for funds for the Burnett area, and no increased allocation from the National Water Resources Development Programme in the recent Federal Budget. I feel quite sure that my colleagues, the hon. members for Isis and Bundaberg, will be able to tell the House quite a story about that particular project.

Queensland has not received anything like its share of money from the Commonwealth for this work. Money that has been contributed by way of taxation paid by the people of this State has been used for the development of areas in other States. The irony of the situation is that owing to the drought Queensland graziers are now forced to sell their herds at bedrock prices. Those herds are being taken to New South Wales and Victoria, where they are being kept alive in areas that are irrigated by water stored in structures built with money provided by those same Queenslanders.

In the last 20 years approximately \$1,000 million of Commonwealth money has been spent on, or committed to, projects of this nature. Queensland's quota has been \$20,000,000, towards the Nogoia scheme. The remainder has been shared by the other States. In other words, this State has received a lousy 2 per cent. of the money spent, despite the fact that its rivers contain 75 per cent. of Australia's natural water.

Personally, I would rather see \$200,000,000 spent on water projects in this State to stabilise its existing production, which will be of immediate benefit to all Queenslanders, than on a super power station if that power station is to be used solely to assist large overseas companies. The Queensland Government must challenge the Federal Government on the issue of increased funds for development of the water resources of this State. In addition, it must increase considerably its own contribution towards these

projects, for there is an urgent need to construct both large-scale and small-scale water projects to enable producers not only to stabilise present production but also to expand production on a sound basis.

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

**Mr. CASEY:** Before lunch I was speaking about problems associated with water development in Queensland and the need for a great uplift in spending by both the Commonwealth and the State Governments on this function. It is a stark fact that Australia is a dry continent. It has been estimated that all the water that flows down the rivers on our east coast to the Pacific Ocean would provide only enough water to irrigate the coastal areas and the area between the coastal ranges and the Great Dividing Range. However, it would be possible to run major pipelines to inland areas to supplement dwindling artesian supplies and to provide additional water for those areas. I realise that the high evaporation problem in the west of Queensland is very difficult to overcome. However, in Western Australia, water has been taken into the arid areas by pipeline since 1903. Originally this water was designed for the Kalgoorlie gold-fields, but, by using it to assist farm storages and underground supplies, formerly sparsely populated areas have been turned into closely settled rural communities. Yet in Queensland today, we still find people who shake their heads when we talk about pumping water hundreds of miles.

I turn now to the most recent work undertaken in Queensland in water development. All of the projects most recently constructed, or under construction, are within a radius of 250 to 300 miles of Brisbane, other than the Fairbairn project to which I have previously referred. This Government has not constructed any major water-storage scheme for irrigation purposes north of the Tropic of Capricorn. The Eungella Dam was constructed, but it was originally designed to provide water for the Collinsville Power Station and the Collinsville water supply, and any spare water from this project has now been allotted to Central Queensland Coal Associates for the washing of coal at Goonyella.

To gain the true worth of schemes such as the brigalow land development scheme they must be backed by water-development projects. The area in Queensland today encompassed by this great scheme is amongst the worst of the areas suffering from drought. Serious consideration must be given to the development of schemes such as the brigalow scheme without an adequate water supply to back them up.

On the points I have mentioned, I feel that there has been discrimination against North Queensland in the matter of water development. I wonder if that is because the Government holds only seven of the 18 electorates which have the biggest portion

of their areas north of the Tropic of Capricorn. What I have said is true, and it means that the people of the north generally do not support the present Government. While on that note, I point out that the contempt in which the Government's decentralisation policies are held in the more populous country areas of Queensland is shown by the fact that the Government does not hold a single seat in the provincial city electorates.

I should like to refer to one final point concerning water development, namely, the great shame inflicted on the nation by the disbandment of the constructing branch of the Snowy Mountains Authority. There is no doubt that if Labour Governments had been in power in this State and in the Federal House, this great, magnificent body would now be engaged on major work in Queensland. Its disbandment was brought about by many things, among which were petty jealousies of State departments.

The Snowy Mountains Authority proved by the construction of Australia's greatest project that Australian professional men, tradesmen and workers, given proper conditions and incentives are more efficient than their counterparts overseas. But the Snowy Mountains construction team is almost disbanded, and there is no authority in Australia capable of handling such major developmental projects. All that the team needed was encouragement, an invitation from the State, the strong advocacy of the State, and a dream of what could be done in some areas of this State, and it could have turned the dream into reality.

The main requirements in a major water scheme are consistent rainfall areas to provide the water and high country which can provide gravity feed of water towards large areas of arable land. The Mackay district and hinterland provide such an area. The Eungella Ranges receive up to 100 inches of rain per year and feed water into the northern half of the Fitzroy River basin and the southern half of the Burdekin River basin. A scheme could be planned for the area where these two great rivers rise, and, with the intermingling of their head waters, it could be greater than the Snowy Mountains scheme. Unfortunately, the political machine has decreed that the great Snowy Mountains Authority should become a consultant body which will compete with consulting engineering groups throughout Australia.

I support the remarks of my colleague the hon. member for Mourilyan on the Great Barrier Reef. This great national asset, with its environment and its marine and natural wonders, must be preserved for future generations. Tourism and fishing would be far more valuable to Queensland, relative to population and investment, than mining and oil drilling. Are we satisfied that every effort has been made to discover

oil on the mainland? Before allowing limestone to be mined on the reef, are we satisfied that there are no great deposits of it in Queensland?

The Great Barrier Reef, together with its associated island resorts, forms Queensland's greatest tourist attraction. Would the New South Wales Government be foolish enough to start mining limestone in the Jenolan Caves or would the Commonwealth Government set up a stone-crushing plant to nibble away at Ayer's Rock?

The value of the reef cannot be assessed in monetary terms. Its waters are pure, warm and clear, and it abounds in natural and marine life. The unravelling of its mysteries still provides one of the greatest challenges to the scientists of the world.

The only point in favour of mining and drilling is that they provide further investment opportunities for large companies, many of which are foreign in nature and control, so that with the use of relatively little labour, they can obtain large profits and pay only the usual poor-box royalties to the Queensland Government. On the other hand, the reef, together with its associated resorts, is, for most of the year, bathed in beautiful tropical sunshine and forms a tourist mecca second to none.

As 50 per cent. of these resorts are between Mackay and Proserpine, this area should have been not the first but the last considered for drilling.

The Government speaks proudly of the \$100,000,000 Goonyella investment deal; yet it is prepared to run the risk of destruction similar to that which occurred at Santa Barbara at an estimated cost, to date, of over \$1,000 million or even the lower figure quoted recently in the House.

The tourist industry has a high labour content and is thus helping to settle more people in northern areas. In addition, its encouragement would be of great assistance in decentralisation. The resorts that are established in association with the Barrier Reef earn a good deal of foreign income for Queensland. The money spent by overseas and interstate visitors to these resorts is increasing each year. The industry needs strong support from Governments, both State and Federal. Many people do not feel that tourism can be considered as a separate industry; they think that, because people have money to spend on holidays, the Government should not use money to develop tourist activities.

Tourist operators need, first and foremost, access to long-term finance, and the best way for that to be provided is through the Commonwealth Development Bank. Unfortunately, because tourist operators are not regarded as being part of an industry, it is very difficult for them to obtain such finance. It has been said, "How do you define tourist operators?" There is no tangible way of working out exactly who gains from tourism. However, just as it

is easy to define primary producers and to work out who should get the benefits accruing to that industry, I feel that it is also easy to decide where the benefits should go in the tourist industry. They must go to the people who provide the beds; whether they be in hotels, island resorts, cruise yachts or caravan parks, those who provide them are the ones who retain tourists in their areas by giving them the opportunity to stay overnight.

There are many other matters on which I should like to speak, but time precludes my doing so. I point out again that there are two great needs for northern areas today. The first is a positive decentralisation policy backed by actions, not merely words, by the Government. The second is the need to increase spending on the development of water resources.

Many may think that I have been emotional in some aspects of my comments today. That is because of my love of this State and its people. I speak from the heart of my firm belief in Queensland's future. I believe that our leaders should do likewise; they should use their hearts as well as their heads and preserve this great State for its own people.

**Mr. BIRD** (Burdekin) (2.27 p.m.): As a newcomer to this House about to make his maiden speech in an atmosphere and circumstances strange and very different from anything that I have previously experienced, I rise with considerable diffidence and not a small measure of trepidation to support the motion so ably moved by the hon. member for Balonne and seconded in an equally able manner by the hon. member for Wavell. I congratulate my colleagues on their very interesting and helpful contributions.

I am fully sensible of the great honour that was bestowed upon me by the electors of Burdekin when they elected me as their parliamentary representative. I thank them most sincerely for the confidence they have placed in me, and my greatest endeavours will be directed to proving that I am worthy of their support and that their confidence in me was not misplaced. Their interests will be my first concern. It is my intention to approach the all-important task of participating in the government of this State with earnestness and humility, determined that the advancement of Queensland and the well-being of its people will be my first and paramount consideration.

I, like all other hon. members, subscribe wholeheartedly and sincerely to the expression of loyalty contained in the motion, and I wish at this stage to express my unswerving loyalty and allegiance to Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. How fortunate we are to live in a democracy presided over by a Monarch is realised and appreciated by all of us.

I join with other members of the Government, and, I am sure I can truthfully say, with all members of this Parliament, in expressing pleasure at the news that Her Majesty the Queen will visit Australia next year and that Queensland will be included in her itinerary. I am sure, knowing the loyalty of the Australian people as I do, that her welcome will be affectionate, sincere, and enthusiastic.

To the Premier and the members of Cabinet who have been chosen to guide the destiny of this State I offer my heartiest congratulations. I have no doubt that they will discharge the duties of their respective high offices with sound judgment and great confidence. It is comforting to the Premier, I am sure, and a source of great strength and security, to know that he will always have the wholehearted support and co-operation of every member of the Government. I say to him, "I sincerely hope your term of office will be eminently successful".

It is a great pleasure for me to extend to you, Mr. Speaker, heartiest congratulations on your re-election to the high and important office of Speaker of this Parliament. You have already demonstrated clearly that you possess the qualifications so necessary for the successful conduct of the business of this House. You have always, since you were first elected as Speaker, carried out the duties with great credit to yourself, and almost invariably to the satisfaction of the members of this Assembly. You have always been impartial, your judgments have been sound, and by a judicious and tactful approach to the more difficult situations that have arisen at times, you have most commendably, and with distinction, preserved the decency and decorum of this House.

I am grateful for this opportunity of paying tribute to the late Mr. Arthur Coburn, my predecessor as the representative of the people of the electorate of Burdekin. I know that the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Townsville South spoke at some length earlier this week about Mr. Arthur Coburn. However, I should like to briefly go over Mr. Coburn's life as we knew it.

As you are aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Coburn was elected to the Parliament of Queensland in 1950 and held the Burdekin seat continuously for 19 years, until his retirement from politics this year. Born in Ravenswood, a small mining town, he was admitted to the Department of Public Instruction as a pupil teacher in 1911, after having been educated at the Ravenswood State School. He later taught children at the Ravenswood, Mundingburra, Ayr, Bowman, East Brisbane and Maida Vale State Schools.

During this time he did not confine himself to the schoolroom but strove untiringly to serve the community. This work included that of chairman and/or committeeman of

many well-known organisations. In fact, there are many organisations in existence today that would not have been in existence but for the efforts of Mr. Coburn.

After his election to Parliament, he became a forceful advocate for the construction of a major Burdekin Dam, a project that he had envisaged as far back as 1944. His presentation of the case for its construction was so lucid and forceful that those in influential places are convinced of the benefits that would accrue from its construction. A perusal of "Hansard" will reveal that there are more references to the Burdekin Dam scheme than to any other subject, and for almost all of those he was responsible.

That Arthur Coburn worked untiringly for the benefit of his electorate can be seen in things such as the fine roads, bridges, schools and public buildings and amenities that stand as monuments to his efforts. His service to the people of the Burdekin electorate is reflected both by the high majority of votes that he polled at each election and by the high regard in which he was held by the people of the district.

There is no doubt that Arthur Coburn was respected not only by his constituents but also by his parliamentary colleagues. From the time he entered Parliament 19 years ago until his retirement this year he remained a staunch Independent because it was his belief that he should be free to exercise his vote in the manner he thought best. He did not want to be tied to party decisions which, at times, could conflict with his own.

As I said earlier, Mr. Coburn was highly respected in this House. That I have learned from conversations during my short time here. He was known as an honest, straightforward, clear-thinking member who had a kind word for everyone. He was always ready to assist and advise his fellow-members, regardless of their political beliefs or followings. He always put his case in a clear, forceful and unbiased manner and consequently won the admiration of all.

During his life-time, Mr. Coburn was a most methodical man. He showed a clear determination to strive for the betterment of his fellow-men with little or no thought for his own well-being. So methodical was he that his sad death was almost as though he had planned it in the same way as he had planned his life's work for his people. It would appear that, having given his efforts to the people of his electorate and the State, he died as he had lived, without fuss or bother to anyone. There is no doubt that, having retired, he was determined to assist me, and this he did from the time of my election until his passing. I spent many hours in discussions with him on such matters as parliamentary procedure and how best to serve the people I represent. His knowledge was unbounded and always absolutely sound. One of his last thoughts

was of me, for I believe that he said to his wife many times, "I wonder if Val has delivered his speech yet."

You may be sure, Mr. Speaker, that I, like a great many other people, lost a wonderful confidant and friend in the passing of Mr. Coburn. I know hon. members will all join with me in an expression of regret to Mrs. Coburn and his loved ones who are left behind.

I wish now to pass on to a subject that in my electorate is considered to be one of very great importance. I feel that I am following in Mr. Coburn's footsteps in this regard because, like him, I believe so much in the benefits to be gained from the construction of the Burdekin Dam hydro-electric irrigation and flood-mitigation scheme.

There are many who believe that the conserving of water by the construction of a major dam on the Burdekin River is the only way in which the water problems of the extensive area extending from the Don River in the south to the Black River, north of Townsville, can be solved. The great multiple-purpose Burdekin River irrigation hydro-electric and flood-mitigation project for the development of the water resources of the Burdekin River and its tributaries is planned for three main purposes, namely, the growing of food and other agricultural crops, the generation of hydro-electric energy, and the mitigation of flooding. It will utilise the waters of the Burdekin River and its tributaries, which form one of the major river systems in Queensland, draining an area of over 50,000 square miles, and will gradually bring into production large areas of land which offer great possibilities for development.

Irrigation water will be provided for the growing of food and other agricultural crops in the first instance, and, as the scheme develops, substantial quantities of hydro-electric power will be generated. Irrigation development will be expanded and the risks of flood damage along the river in the closely settled Burdekin Delta area will be appreciably reduced.

The complete project was fully investigated by the Burdekin River Authority, whose members were J. R. Kemp, then Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, as chairman, W. Nimmo, then Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, as a member, and Mr. Neil Smith, Commissioner of Electricity Supply, also a member. The report on the project, furnished to the Premier of Queensland on 19 December, 1951, showed that in its investigation and planning full regard was paid to its potentialities for ultimate development, when some 350,000 acres of land will be irrigated each year. The hydro-electric power station will have an installed capacity of 120,000 kilowatts and the staging of development will enable works to be put into service and production to commence as construction proceeds.

It is planned that the main storage dam required to store water for major irrigation development and for the generation of hydro-electric power, as well as for the mitigation of flooding, should be built above the Burdekin Falls, 99 miles from the mouth of the river. The dam will conserve water from the 44,100 square miles of the catchment area above the dam site, which drains an area with an average annual rainfall of 23 inches, with considerable variations to that average. A gravity-type mass-concrete dam is planned to be built to a final height of 150 feet with a crest length of 3,040 feet. When the dam is completed the reservoir will store some 6,584,000 acre-feet of water, which is more than 16 times the volume of water in Sydney Harbour and three times the capacity of the Hume reservoir on the Murray River when the Hume Dam is raised to its final height. In addition, it is appreciably greater than the combined storage capacities of the seven major dams in the Snowy Mountains project.

The capacity of the completed Burdekin Falls reservoir will provide for a continuous daily output of not less than 5,400 acre-feet over the worst drought period that is likely to be experienced. This is equal to a flow of 2,700 cubic feet, or 17,000 gallons, a second. It is sufficient for the firm generation of 80,000 kilowatts at 50 per cent. load factor and for the irrigation of at least 350,000 acres each year without restriction. In most years water will be available for the irrigation of a greater area than the minimum of 350,000 acres and for the generation of additional hydro-electric power.

In the time available in this debate it is not possible for me to refer in detail to all aspects of the proposed Burdekin dam project; however, I would point out that the extent to which the Burdekin River Authority, which is better known as the Kemp Committee, was enamoured of the project can be gauged from statements that were included in its report.

The report said—

"Australia cannot afford to continue allowing the waters of the Burdekin River to run to waste and to lose the potential wealth to which construction of even a 75-foot dam would contribute. Speedy construction of the Burdekin Falls Dam to this level is therefore imperative as a national interest."

Later the report said—

"The Burdekin River Authority is convinced that the project is a sound one and that the implementation is essential in both the State and National interest. It will bring closer settlement and industrial development to an area which is at present sparsely populated and which could not be developed without irrigation."

The area to be developed within the Burdekin River hydro-electric and flood-mitigation project was part of the terrain initially

under examination by the Northern Australian Development Committee, of which the Co-ordinator of Public Works, Sir John Kemp, was a member.

A report on the progress of the investigations was submitted to that committee in February 1948. Subsequently the then Prime Minister suggested that the Burdekin project should be considered as a separate matter to be examined by a Commonwealth committee when further information was available.

By 1949 it was felt that the investigation was sufficiently advanced to leave no doubt as to the practicability of that scheme. Accordingly the findings of the several State investigating authorities were embodied in the report of August 1949 by the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works in consultation with interested departments, with the recommendation that it be referred to the Prime Minister for examination of the proposals by Commonwealth technical officers with a view to Commonwealth participation. Owing to the national importance of the project it was considered that the Commonwealth Government should assist both in its implementation and in the further investigation that was still to be undertaken.

The committee that was appointed by the Commonwealth Government to examine the Burdekin proposal visited the area in October 1949 and made a preliminary report to the Prime Minister dated 10 November, 1949. That report was tabled in the House of Representatives on 20 April, 1950. It indicated that the committee considered the engineering proposals advanced by Queensland to be basically sound. A large volume of water could be made available and substantial quantities of hydro-electric energy could be generated at low rates. The volume of water likely to be available would not be fully and profitably utilised until solutions had been found to a number of major technical and economic problems associated with crop and pasture production, but the committee was reasonably hopeful that, by the time the design and construction of the project had reached the stage where water was available in the quantities envisaged, considerable progress would have been made in resolving the outstanding difficulties as far as soils and land usage were concerned.

The report is now 20 years old and since it was presented to the Prime Minister in 1949 considerable investigation has been undertaken in respect of soils and land usage in the commandable area. It is now generally accepted that the undeveloped soils can be used for the profitable production of agricultural and horticultural crops, and of animals.

It is implicitly believed by many that it is imperative that water for irrigation must be available at all times, and under all conditions, if our established agricultural and grazing industries are to be conducted efficiently and profitably, and the economic development of the great potential for

enormous additional agricultural and animal production made possible and encouraged. A request has been made by representatives of widespread local interests that the Commonwealth Government be urged by the Queensland Government to have the promised investigation for the purpose of reappraising the Burdekin irrigation, hydro-electric and flood-mitigation project undertaken immediately, and proceeded with expeditiously, so that the report on the reappraisal will be finalised and ready for presentation to the State and Commonwealth Governments at the earliest possible date. The urgency of the completion of the reappraisal cannot be too greatly stressed.

The main problem facing the sugar industry in the Burdekin River delta is the diminishing reserve of underground water. Despite the successful operation of two water-replenishment schemes, the water reserves are at a level which is causing a deal of concern in the North Burdekin Water Board area, and a deal of alarm in the South Burdekin Water Board area because of the distinct possibility of the unavailability from the river of water for pumping. The prolonged dry spell has created a desperate situation and has resulted in much irrigation and consequential pumping by cane-growers. As a result there has been a great drain on the underground reserves. The benefit of the 1968 floods has therefore been practically nullified.

Since the period of investigation immediately preceding the presentation of the Kemp Report, the acreage devoted to the production of sugar cane on the Lower Burdekin has more than doubled. The resultant total sugar production has been consistent with this expansion of acreage. The production of sugar since 1931 has been as follows:—

Year	Tonnage
1931 .. .. .	78,844
1935 .. .. .	82,397
1940 .. .. .	89,704
1950 .. .. .	127,173
1963 .. .. .	273,119
1964 .. .. .	303,329
1968 .. .. .	406,698

During those years the Lower Burdekin has proved to be the most reliable sugar-producing area in Queensland, and on numerous occasions it has been called upon to produce sugar in excess of peak allotment to meet the requirements of the Sugar Board.

The report of the Royal Commission on Sugar Peaks and Cognate Matters published on 27 April, 1939, contains, inter alia, the following statement relating to the lower Burdekin:—

“For many years development was slow and the annual production was irregular at first. The area can now be regarded as the best in the State from the point of view of regular production and high average sugar content of cane.”

The marked improvement followed the practise of irrigation on a highly efficient and extensive scale.

Since the introduction of mill peaks in 1929, the Burdekin is the only sugar-producing district in Queensland that has not failed to produce its mill peaks. Irrigation is the main factor in providing a livelihood for those engaged in the Burdekin sugar industry, and when water supplies are threatened, so is the entire Burdekin economy.

Rainfall in the lower Burdekin is insufficient to support a viable sugar-producing industry, and this natural source of water is supplemented from water in the underground basin. The replenishment schemes have been very good and have resulted in excellent crops in 1968. However, the river failed to run from 30 September, 1968, to 14 January, 1969, and water for replenishment was unavailable. With the continuous dry spell, large-scale irrigation has imposed a drain on the underground supply and, without natural or artificial replenishment, this supply has diminished to a stage where it is causing considerable alarm.

Some form of control of the Burdekin River is necessary to make possible planned regular and stable artificial replenishment of the underground supply. This could best be served by the proposed dam on the Burdekin River. The fast drop in the underground water levels in latter months indicated that the Burdekin area could not produce the present high tonnages for an extended period should it experience a series of dry years of a more serious nature than those in the recent dry years resulting in an absence of flow in the river.

Since the advent of the Kemp report in 1951, sugar-cane production has more than doubled, and other crop-growing has developed to such an extent that a reappraisal of the Burdekin Dam scheme is an urgent necessity. In the past 10 years we have seen a steady and consistent growth of the Clare, Millaroo and Dalbeg regions from a very depressed tobacco area in 1958 to one of stability where, for the first time since the inception of the War Service Land Settlement Scheme in 1949, there is an air of, if not prosperity, certainly of confidence with a promise of prosperity in the near future.

The present economic stability in the area is due largely to the granting of sugar assignments in 1962-63. Nevertheless, the contribution to the income of the area by a wide range of other crops has been substantial and significant. The production and variety of crops for seed, of vegetables for southern markets, and of maize and sorghum, have played an important part in the economy. With the area's ability to produce excellent yields of high-quality grain from land which had previously not been productive, rice-growing now provides a potential which will contribute perhaps most of the future income

to the area. The gross income of the area in 1967-68, at \$2,181,342, will be greatly increased during the next few years when the income from rice is added. Great expansion of the rice industry must be coupled with beef production, using pangola grass under irrigation.

An evaluation of the bean-seed production of the area will establish its worth as being of no small significance in the economic structure of the area. The availability of water in the Burdekin River from September to December last year, and from April to the present time, caused great concern in the irrigation areas of Clare, Millaroo and Dalbeg, and in the delta areas of Ayr and Home Hill. The total area irrigated in the Clare, Millaroo and Dalbeg regions increased from 3,099 acres in 1963-64 to 9,775 acres in 1967-68. That was an increase of 215 per cent. in four years.

The water-supply position has reached the stage where crop production towards the end of the year is considered to be a gamble on whether or not there will be an early flow in the river. Therefore, considerable loss of production is inevitable at regular intervals, and the availability of water in the irrigated areas is often strained to its limits.

Obviously, this is serious enough, but now a further factor has to be taken into account. The extent of rice-growing in the irrigation area has risen from approximately 200 acres in 1968 to 1,450 acres this season. A further expansion is expected in 1970.

As rice requires about 3 acre-feet per acre, the drain of this crop on the available water is very considerable. To this must be added some 700 acres of rice planted this season, which will need to be supplied with water from underground sources, and a comparable increase in the number of acres that will be planted in this region next season. In view of the information published in the National Resources Survey that an average of from 70,000 to 100,000 acre-feet per annum is necessary at present to recharge the underground water resources of the Burdekin Delta, to avoid a serious shortage and prevent extensive salt-water intrusion into the aquifer, it is obvious that an immense storage of water is essential to enable the required amount of pumping to be carried out and to provide an adequate supply for future expansion.

It is realised that the current rate of expansion is anything but prudent in view of the present water position. The fact that farmers are prepared to gamble on the river's producing, at the eleventh hour, flow from somewhere or other, as it almost invariably has done, is not good enough. To establish an efficient rice industry, it is imperative to have quantity production, and extensive areas of rice require vast quantities of readily available water. This infant industry is dependent for success almost entirely upon the ready availability of water. As many

believe that rice is a crop capable of unlocking the door to development of thousands of acres of flood-plain soils commandable by the Burdekin River, the Lower Burdekin region could well be on the threshold of an exciting period of extensive agricultural and pastoral development, the like of which this State has not yet seen. This development will depend upon how soon the waters of the Burdekin River are harnessed. I submit that the construction of the Burdekin Falls Dam is no longer only desirable, but that it is an urgent necessity. Failure to construct it in the near future will not only stifle progress in this fertile valley but will place in serious jeopardy the primary industries already established and flourishing in our district.

According to the report of the Burdekin River Authority on the Burdekin River Irrigation, Hydro-electric and Flood Mitigation Project, presented to Parliament by Sir John Kemp in 1951, the Burdekin Valley has a commandable area of 800,000 acres, of which 350,000 acres could be irrigated from the Burdekin River project, which could in addition supply the water requirements of the city of Townsville and the town of Bowen. In the past much has been said against the productivity of these lands, but, following extensive experimentation, it has now been proved that with irrigation they are quite fertile and are capable of producing outstanding crops of sugar-cane, rice, grain, fodder and improved pastures. It is the contention of many experienced and well-informed people in the Lower Burdekin that the best use for much of these lands would be cattle fattening and fat lamb production. At the present time we have the ludicrous practice of lamb in considerable quantities being brought in refrigerated vans from Victoria to Ayr, Home Hill and most other towns in North Queensland.

A pilot area of 22 acres of irrigated pangola grass at Millaroo, planted in February 1968, was stocked in August, six months later, with 33 head of cattle. It was found necessary to increase the stocking rate by a further 33 head to keep the grass in check. It is estimated by the Department of Primary Industries that up to four beasts to the acre could be carried on this pasture. The weight gain was estimated at 2 lb. daily per beast live weight.

Cattle live-weight gains believed to be the highest in the world have been recorded on irrigated and fertilized pure-grass pasture at the Department of Primary Industries Parada Research Station, near Mareeba. In almost 12 months pangola grass pasture returned live-weight gains of 1,855 lb. an acre. The officer in charge of the research station (Mr. J. Evans) said it might be possible to obtain even better live-weight gains from the pasture. It might be possible, said Mr. Evans, to increase the stocking rate of the pasture to four beasts an acre with a fertiliser application of 400 lb. of nitrogen

a year. Annual maintenance costs for pangola grass are \$90.68 an acre. Costs take into account fertiliser, water, wages, rates, repairs, fuel, maintenance and depreciation. Mr. Evans said that one of the notable features about pangola-grass pastures was that there was a complete suppression of weeds, even with the high stocking rates. All trial pastures are irrigated with 4 acre-feet of water a year.

On the result obtained at Parada, namely, a gain of 1,855 lb. live weight in almost 12 months, a calculation based on a 100 to 55 live-weight to dressed-weight ratio reveals that the dressed-weight gain an acre was 1,020½ lb. On today's market price of \$23 per 100 lb., this represents a net profit of \$144.07 an acre. On this reckoning, the income from 200,000 acres would be \$28,814,000 annually. In 1951, when the Kemp Report was compiled, the market price for cattle was \$7.60 per 100 lb.

Allowing for 200,000 of the 350,000 acres of irrigable land in the Burdekin Valley, all of which is equal to or better than the land in the Mareeba district, and working on the estimate, based on the results obtained at the Department of Primary Industries research stations at Millaroo and Parada, of three beasts to the acre, the Burdekin Valley could fatten annually 600,000 head of bullocks on irrigated pastures.

In 1968 the Q.M.E. meatworks at Townsville killed 54,000 head of cattle, Swifts, also of Townsville, killed 71,000 head, and Borthwicks at Bowen killed 53,700 head, making a total of 178,700 head of cattle for the season. At the present time these works operate for only seven or eight months of the year, according to seasonal conditions. Consequently, it is obvious that the Burdekin Valley could supply enough cattle to keep these three meatworks operating all the year round, thus improving the operation of these works in addition to providing continuous employment. Today most of the work in North Queensland is of a seasonal nature, with the result that a number of men travel to the South during the slack season, and many of them do not return. In addition to being able to supply sufficient cattle to keep the three aforesaid meatworks operating throughout the year, the Burdekin Valley would be capable of supplying sufficient cattle to three more meatworks of comparable size to ensure continuous operations throughout the year.

Experience has shown that, under normal seasonal conditions, Townsville lucerne can be grown successfully on much of the remaining 450,000 acres of the Burdekin Valley to which the project does not provide water for irrigation but is capable of supplying water for stock use. Townsville lucerne has been quoted at being rated equal to Hunter River lucerne.

According to Mr. K. F. Howard, Senior Adviser in Cattle Husbandry for the Department of Primary Industries, in a report prepared in September, 1965, the average total

loss of cattle in the northern section of North-west Queensland was 10.8 per cent., while the percentage of branded calves that do not reach the market was 44.3. The report pointed out that an adequate supply of water is the only solution to this problem and would assist in substantially reducing these recurring losses. It is authoritatively claimed that the expansion of the grazing industry in the Burdekin Valley could basically supply the solution to these enormous stock losses in the inland areas.

Any water supply that is not permanent is dangerous and must sooner or later bring about disaster. A dam on the Burdekin River to a height of 100 ft. would provide an enormous storage that would guarantee a permanent supply for at least 350,000 acres under the worst drought conditions ever experienced. I implore the Government to give its utmost co-operation in having the reappraisal of the Burdekin irrigation, hydro-electric and flood-mitigation project completed with the greatest celerity, so that construction of this great national project may be undertaken as soon as possible.

**Mr. JENSEN** (Bundaberg) (3.4 p.m.): First let me express my sincere appreciation to the electors of Bundaberg for their confidence in electing me as their member. It is indeed an honour, and I am proud to represent such a charming and progressive city as Bundaberg.

I must express my thanks, too, to my campaign director and campaign committee, members of the A.L.P., members of unions, and all my friends who ably assisted me throughout the campaign. The A.L.P. has fought hard over the years to win back Bundaberg, and this time their efforts were not in vain.

The city of Bundaberg, in the past, has gained much publicity from the actions and calibre of its representatives in this Assembly. The late Mr. Frank (Bombshell) Barnes, known as "Bombshell" here and in Bundaberg, achieved notoriety because of some of his actions, and my predecessor, Mr. E. J. Walsh, whom the A.L.P. sent to Bundaberg to defeat Mr. Barnes, was once a stalwart of my party who attained Cabinet rank and was Treasurer of Queensland. There is no doubt that while holding the portfolio of Treasurer of Queensland he was outstanding in that office. However, after his defection from the party he continued to hold Bundaberg until his retirement this year. I might mention that I owe no thanks to Mr. Walsh for my election, because he placed his paternal hand on the head of my Country Party opponent. I understand that one often hears here references to "Tory Tom". Mr. Walsh could have been called "Tory Ted" so far as I am concerned.

**Mr. Wharton:** He was a better Labour man than you are.

**Mr. JENSEN:** I will prove that later. The trouble with Mr. Walsh was that I expected him to revert to his true colours after he retired from Parliament, but he did not; he returned to the Tories. Nevertheless, the actions of my predecessor leave a challenge for me and I trust I can meet this and represent my electors well. My city then will not stagnate but will continue to progress—with the help of this Government, I hope—as it has progressed over the past six years in spite of this Government, or virtually in spite of it.

At this point, I should like to reply to a couple of deliberate mis-statements made by the hon. member for Burnett. He stated that Bundaberg had been well looked after. This is rot. How could Bundaberg be said to be well looked after when it has the highest unemployment rate in the State? I have here the figures for June and July, and they show that Bundaberg has the highest unemployment rate in the State. The cities of Toowoomba, Rockhampton and Townsville, with twice our population, have fewer unemployed. The city of Rockhampton had only half the unemployment that existed in Bundaberg, yet the hon. member says we have been well looked after. Bundaberg had 263 females unemployed and the highest number of persons receiving unemployment benefits. That was the first mis-statement made by the hon. member for Burnett. The next one was that I had not asked a question about Bundaberg. If the hon. member refers to the questions and answers in "Hansard" he will see that not one question that I have asked in this Assembly has not been particularly related to Bundaberg. One question that the hon. member said I asked about his electorate dealt with the water-supply scheme. I asked that question because it is vital to the city of Bundaberg. The Premier in his reply gave me a lot of political jargon, and I resubmitted the question.

The other question I asked that had some reference to the hon. member's area dealt with the boat harbour at Burnett Heads. That boat harbour also concerns the city of Bundaberg because our citizens use it, or will use it, and they know they have more chance of getting it by my fighting for it than through him.

His next mis-statement was that the hon. member for Maryborough ably assisted me. The hon. member for Maryborough did not enter my electorate during the campaign. The hon. member for Burnett does not know anything about what is going on in Bundaberg. He made a speech a few days ago and he had about two paragraphs in it referring to the planned Burnett water-conservation scheme, yet this is the most important matter that he could mention concerning his own electorate. He spoke a lot of piffle about everything else.

I congratulate the hon. member for Burdekin, who spoke about water conservation. This is a very important subject. I hope that

I can present him with one of my cards "Fight for Water", and present each Cabinet Minister with one, too.

I would be remiss and failing in my duty to my electors if I did not use this opportunity to promote the Kolan-Burnett water conservation scheme and stress the need to relieve the serious unemployment that exists in Bundaberg owing to the drought and the Government's lack of concern about decentralisation and the establishment of secondary industries there.

I wish to outline some important facts relative to the Kolan-Burnett water conservation scheme; they should be indelibly imprinted on the minds of hon. members. I shall not burden them with a great mass of detail and facts or figures that are contained in the copious report compiled by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission.

**A Government member:** What is the name of that report?

**Mr. JENSEN:** This is the full report on the Kolan-Burnett water conservation scheme. I think that all hon. members have received a copy of this report, and I hope that they have read it. I shall not read out figures for the number of acres that have been irrigated or numbers of farms, as hon. members could not digest that information. It is sufficient to deal with a number of relevant facts.

The Kolan-Burnett scheme has been proposed to ensure the security of 1,458 sugarcane farms in addition to providing an adequate water supply for many small-crop farms and the city of Bundaberg, which will require additional supplies of water for its future needs and secondary industries. It will remove the threat of serious losses that occur in drought years and the fear of a catastrophe from another prolonged drought similar to the one that extended from 1899 to 1910.

The late Mr. Inigo Jones forecast that such a drought would occur from 1983 to 1991, and Mr. Lennox Walker agrees with that forecast. If their forecast should prove to be correct then without the water conservation scheme the district will lose in excess of \$50,000,000 in those years alone. As the scheme would take 12 years to complete, it could be finished by 1983, the year of the commencement of predicted drought, if it was started early in 1970.

The following words are very appropriate:—

"Water water everywhere flowing out to sea;

Water water everywhere but none for industry."

They relate to the situation in Bundaberg.

The Commissioner, Mr. Haig, considers that there is a real threat of salt intrusion into the underground water supplies if some action is not taken to supplement or safeguard that supply. If salt intrusion should occur it would have disastrous results to the district. This year the loss to the city and

the district as a result of the drought was estimated to be over \$15,000,000. This loss on top of the loss of \$18,000,000 suffered in 1964 and 1965 will have a serious effect next year on the district and the city of Bundaberg. It takes many years to recover from such losses. Hon. members may not know that Bundaberg has the lowest average annual rainfall of any Queensland non-irrigated sugar-producing area.

The Burdekin area is entirely irrigated. I know that the hon. member representing that area is very concerned about the underground waters running out. We are similarly concerned because irrigation in our area has increased enormously in the last 10 years. The levels are now so low that Mr. Haigh considers it very likely that we will get salt intrusion, which could ruin the city of Bundaberg and the surrounding farms. This year those without irrigation have no crops, or only very small crops. The hon. member for Isis will cut about 50 tons instead of 5,000 tons. Some farmers who usually cut 2,000 or 3,000 tons will not cut a stick of cane this year. Those with irrigation will cut 70 to 80 per cent. of their normal crop and some will cut as high as 100 per cent. As the hon. member for Isis knows, anyone who has irrigation can grow good cane, but without irrigation or a reasonable rainfall nothing can be grown.

The average annual loss caused by drought, calculated over a 40-year period, is \$5,500,000 on our present sugar peaks at \$89 a ton for sugar. In any 10-year drought period the loss would total \$55,000,000, which is greater than the estimated cost of the completed first stage of the scheme—\$47,000,000. The first stage of the scheme would not only provide stability for the sugar industry in the district, but would also open up many thousands of acres of land for other crops and provide for future expansion in the sugar industry in the district. Further, it would ensure an adequate supply of water for the city of Bundaberg and the growth of secondary industries. Rainfall this year has reached only 17.9 inches compared with the average of 44.3 inches.

**A Government Member:** We have had only five inches.

**Mr. JENSEN:** The irrigation undertaken in Bundaberg is nothing like that in the Burdekin area.

The Kolan-Burnett Water Conservation Scheme is not a hare-brained scheme. About \$750,000 has been spent on investigation by the Queensland Government alone, and the scheme has been economically justified in every way. It has been recommended by the Commissioner of Irrigation, Mr. Haigh, and has been given first priority by the State Government. If we are not let down, as we were once before by the Government, all will be well, although I have just heard from Bundaberg that the Federal Government has shelved the scheme, which

means that the State Government will have to push a little harder. The State Government says that it has been pushing the scheme but apparently it has now been shelved—probably for the \$200,000,000 powerhouse.

The initiative now rests with the Queensland Government to commence building the tidal barrages on the Burnett and Kolan Rivers, and the weirs at Gayndah and Bucca. The hon. member for Burnett said that the scheme was a little beyond the resources of the State but I do not believe that. The Government has said that it may go ahead alone with the construction of the \$200,000,000 powerhouse, yet the hon. member says that this scheme is beyond the Government's resources. It is not beyond the resources of the Government when it can spend money on Goonyella and other projects to provide profit for the Japanese. It is not beyond the Government's capacity at all. The Government has not to lay out \$47,000,000 in one year; that will be done over a 12-year period.

It is not beyond the Government to get a move on with the scheme. The two barrages across the Burnett River and the Kolan River, the weirs at Bucca and Gayndah and all the ancillary works will cost \$8,000,000. The expenditure of that amount would remove the fear of salt getting into the underground water supply. That would be a national calamity, because it would ruin Bundaberg and district. For \$8,000,000, half of the farms in this scheme could be irrigated, and the water supply for Bundaberg assured.

The scheme could be started now if the Government wanted to implement it. It is no use the Government continuing to shelve the responsibility for it onto the Federal authorities. If the barrages were commenced now, the Bundaberg water supply would be assured and the Commonwealth Government would realise that the Queensland Government agrees that the scheme should be proceeded with.

There has been a good deal of talk about a \$200,000,000 powerhouse. We all realise what a great asset that would be. It would provide cheap power for industry. But the big industrial concerns that would use the cheap power would employ only a couple of hundred people. In addition, their profits would go to America. I agree with the hon. member for Mackay that irrigation is much more important than the powerhouse. It is important for the Government to remember that this scheme would be based on an existing industry. The sugar industry alone is worth \$30,000,000 a year to the Bundaberg district. It is fundamental to the welfare of the whole district, which supports up to 50,000 people, not 200. The expenditure of this \$8,000,000 would save the district. That amount would be recovered with interest in a few years by having an assured

sugar-peak production. It would also ensure that Australia could meet its commitments under the International Sugar Agreement.

The present system of drought relief is wasteful. The money spent on it could be used to guarantee the farmers and workers an income from production which would benefit both the State and the nation. I realise that drought relief is warranted at a time like this, but a good deal of the money could have been spent on weirs and barrages. That would result in increased production and could allow drought relief to be extended in areas where there are no dams.

Let me now turn to unemployment relief. In the first allocation, up to June, Bundaberg received \$17,500 in unemployment relief, compared with \$19,000 by Mt. Perry. In the second allocation, Bundaberg received \$7,000 and Mt. Perry \$10,000. Bundaberg had the highest number of unemployed in any provincial city, namely, 800, and received \$24,500, whereas Mt. Perry, with a population of 350—that is men, women and children—and 16 unemployed, received \$29,000.

What Government officer gave that information to the Minister? How did he work out that every little shire and small town round Bundaberg should receive more than the city of Bundaberg? Not one of those areas has a population approaching that of Bundaberg, and the number of unemployed in Bundaberg is greater than the population of some of the towns and shires in the area. That is the allocation that we received for unemployment relief.

Let us look at the small-crop industry in the Bundaberg district, which is fast expanding. Last year there were 4,000 acres under small crops, the value of which was nearly \$2,000,000. There were 2,300 acres of beans grown, with a value of \$620,000. A total of 16,000,000 lb. of beans was produced. There were 200 acres of tomatoes grown, with a value of \$600,000. There were 480 acres under pineapples, and the crop was valued at \$350,000. There were a thousand acres of melons grown, worth \$250,000. Beetroot, peas, and cucumbers and other crops totalled 100 acres, for a value of \$30,000. It will be seen from those figures that in the near future Bundaberg could well become the vegetable and salad bowl of Queensland. In addition, there were 1,000 acres under tobacco, the value of the crop exceeding \$1,000,000.

Bundaberg has a climate which permits the production of two crops of beans a year. This is unique, and has allowed the district to become the second largest producer of beans in the Commonwealth. Last year Bundaberg's production exceeded that of Tasmania, and half the frozen-pack beans consumed in Australia were grown in the Bundaberg district. Large processing companies such as the Edgell group and Panozza & Co. each contract for approximately

500 acres of beans a year, and Cottees Ltd. contracts for 100 to 150 acres. Further, some 200,000 half-bushel cartons of tomatoes are exported to southern markets each year.

It is a crying shame that Bundaberg has not a large fruit and vegetable-processing factory, which could absorb some of the 200 to 300 unemployed girls and women in the city. Bundaberg has the climate and good-quality water, and grows substantial quantities of the products needed for canning and deep-frozen packaging. Last year two companies, Panozza & Co. and the Edgell group, set up new processing factories in Brisbane. A Government decentralisation programme should have been able to entice one of these companies to set up in Bundaberg. A very small processing factory producing canned fruits and vegetables is operating in Bundaberg, and it could have been given assistance by the Government to expand and absorb some of the surplus labour available. There is experienced labour available in Bundaberg. Scores of people leave there each year in the slack season to work in the southern States. Bundaberg therefore has the climate, the good water, and the necessary labour and products to conduct a fruit and vegetable-canning and processing industry.

I now turn to manufacturing industries in Bundaberg. I make no apology for being parochial in my speech today, because I wish to state what is happening in Bundaberg and refer to the treatment it has received from the Government. Manufacturing industries in Bundaberg have expanded through the production of cane-harvesting and farm equipment. It may not generally be known that Bundaberg is the largest producer of cane-harvesting equipment in the Southern Hemisphere. This industry has expanded through the initiative and foresight of Bundaberg farmers and businessmen, and it is now the mainstay of our secondary industry. The Bundaberg Foundry was once the backbone of industry in Bundaberg, but today it is just keeping its head above water. The locomotive work for the Government, which in past years was good business, has been discontinued, and the sugar mills are not spending on new capital equipment because of the drought and the low return from world market sugar.

This company has branched out into ship-building and has to compete against established firms that tender under Commonwealth shipping subsidies. Only recently the State Government has assisted with financial aid to enable the company to survive, and thanks are due to the Government for that aid. Now it is important to obtain orders for work from the Government, as the loan must be repaid and such repayment can be made only from profits from productive work.

Many other small manufacturing industries are languishing because of the drought and its consequent effect on the spending power

of the sugar industry and the related industries, such as field equipment and machinery. Even the building industry is already feeling the effects, and next year it will feel the full effect of the slump in the sugar industry. This may have serious consequences for Bundaberg. In the "Bundaberg News-Mail" of 16 August an article referred to a slump in building and the fact that one sawmill had closed down. The position will be even more serious next year, and if a recession hits the building industry its effect will snowball throughout the businesses in Bundaberg. Government works programmes on new schools, the railway station and the goods yard would assist the city and district during the recession expected as a result of the serious drought.

People in the Bundaberg area were under the impression that a new primary school was to be built at Norville for 1969 and that a new high school was planned for North Bundaberg. These were the promises that were made—the hon. member for Burnett said we have been well looked after—but they were not kept and work on the schools has not been started. The Government reserved land for these schools years ago, in addition to land for primary schools at Millbank and Kepnock. The Education Department continues to add temporary classrooms and new extensions to the over-crowded high school and the West Bundaberg primary school instead of proceeding with the erection of the new schools that the people of Bundaberg expected would be built three years ago.

The Bundaberg High School is a disgrace to the city. As an article in the "Bundaberg News-Mail" of 21 June says, it is "The school that just grewed." The article says—

"What a cluttered hodge-podge we've allowed the Bundy State High to develop into over the past decade or so.

"Buildings, old and modern, tangle around each other in an architectural ugliness of overcrowded growth. I'm pointing the bone at no-one: merely observing that what we've now got does no credit to anyone. It's a monumental piece-meal patchwork."

The article mentions also the tennis courts at the high school, and it is expected that they may be replaced. It continues—

"Now, High School tennis players scatter around the city to play."

The school has just grown; there has not been any planning. The area at the Bundaberg High School on which the parents and citizens' association built the tennis courts is now occupied by a Commonwealth science block, and there is virtually no recreational area left at the school on which the children can play sport. They have to go to public courts, and parents have to pay hiring charges of about \$200 to \$300 a year to allow their children to play tennis. That is how Bundaberg has been looked after by the Government.

There is no doubt about the Railway Department. It has allowed railway activities at Bundaberg to become chaotic. Some years ago, particularly under Labour Governments, there was a hive of railway activity at North Bundaberg, but today there is only a skeleton staff of three or four left, and very shortly only the station master will be there. All inward and outward goods are shunted for loading and unloading at the Bundaberg railway station. Because of the long goods trains that are used today, the main street of Bundaberg is often blocked as a result of shunting operations, and I have often written to the Minister for Transport about the situation at the Bundaberg station. I have here a cutting from the newspaper of Saturday, 12 July. The headline, which reports a goods train smash in Bundaberg, reads:

"Goods train smash blocks Bundaberg line; guard's van, wagons wrecked."

We were very lucky it was only an empty cattle train because there could have been fatalities and the line could have been badly damaged.

I invite any hon. member to look at the Bundaberg railway station and the conditions under which goods clerks work there. They are a disgrace to the city of Bundaberg. In the last month the railway checkers' room has been moved. It was beside the line, but it has now been placed between two sets of lines which are not even standard distance apart. The distance from either door to trains passing by is only 27 inches. I have already informed the Minister for Railways that the checkers' lives are now in danger. They are using an old box wagon which has been placed in between two sets of lines and they have no light or gas, which they had previously. Their conditions have been made worse and their lives have been put in danger.

Some years ago the department bought many acres of land at North Bundaberg for a new goods yard but this is now rented for agistment. The volume of goods traffic in and out of Bundaberg has increased over the years owing to the export of cane-harvesting and field equipment and the large usage of fertiliser in the district. Freight from the export of harvesters alone is \$15,000 a month; cash revenue totals \$150,000 a month; and credits on the "to-pay" book are \$70,000 to \$80,000 a month. This does not include handling charges for steel that is sent up from Brisbane and on which freight is paid in Brisbane. It is unloaded in Bundaberg but these handling charges are not shown at Bundaberg. This means that railway revenue from Bundaberg amounts to over \$250,000 a month or \$3,000,000 a year and the clerks work with little office equipment and under shocking conditions.

A new station and receiving depot for goods are urgently needed in Bundaberg. The Railway Department could well afford to spend money in my city and in that way give some assistance towards overcoming the

serious unemployment situation which will occur next year. Although Bundaberg is the largest city in the Maryborough division, which itself is the third largest division in Queensland on a population basis—Brisbane and the Downs being the only larger divisions—the divisional head offices for Education and Railways are situated in our smaller sister city of Maryborough.

It would appear that Bundaberg is not getting the consideration due to it, taking into account its future expansion. I should be happy to accompany the Minister of Education and the Minister for Transport on a tour of Bundaberg so that they may see for themselves some of the things about which I have spoken. Mention has been made of Ministers travelling all over Queensland, but I am anxiously awaiting their visits to Bundaberg.

I have written to the Minister for Transport asking him to give some consideration to our sawmilling industry instead of taking logs from the district for the Ipswich workshops. One sawmill has already closed down, yet our industry could supply sawn timber to the department, and that would ensure employment in the district. I am concerned about the export of logs to other areas to be cut into sawn timber. The Government professes a policy of decentralisation. It may be of interest to this Parliament to know that a new match factory was constructed near Petrie and that it is using timber from the Goodnight area within 40 miles of Bundaberg. What happened in this case to the policy of decentralisation of secondary industry? This industry would have been a God-send to Bundaberg and it would have helped considerably in giving employment to some of our citizens.

I have already mentioned the unemployment census. Bundaberg's figure is the highest in the State. I have the figure here for June and it will be the same for July. Is it any wonder that I have censured and criticised the Government for its past neglect of Bundaberg, the failure of its decentralisation policy and the lack of funds for developmental work in Bundaberg? I trust that the Ministers who have listened to me will give some consideration to Bundaberg in the near future in view of the huge losses that have been suffered by industry as a result of the drought. I hope that the Government will see its way clear to commence the Kolan-Burnett water conservation scheme while waiting for funds to be provided by the Federal Government. If the State Government proceeds with the scheme it will indicate to the Federal Government its faith in that scheme.

It would have been much more pleasing for me today to have been able to praise the Government instead of criticising it. However, the hon. members who represent the areas of Moura, Blackwater and Goonyella will be in a position to bestow praise upon the Government.

In conclusion, I point out that rural development is still very important to this State and that the Kolan-Burnett scheme is essential to the future welfare of the Bundaberg, Burnett and Isis districts.

**Mr. AHERN** (Landsborough) (3.41 p.m.): In this the first session of this new Parliament, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to the esteemed position of Speaker of this Assembly and to express my opinion that you will carry out the duties of your job competently and will uphold the traditions that pertain to your high office. I also congratulate you on the way that you called the House to order today at 12 noon to proceed with Government business. This is an indication of the competent manner in which you will carry out your duties for the next three years and is in keeping with the manner in which you have carried out your duties over the period that you have occupied the very high office of Mr. Speaker. The Government had to do something on that matter because of the great number of frivolous questions that have been asked by members of the Opposition.

**Mr. Ramsden:** It is a House that runs on the law.

**Mr. AHERN:** As the hon. member for Merthyr reminds me, the House is run according to law. That law is that Standing Orders shall be observed, and you, Mr. Speaker, were quick to see that they were observed.

I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Neville Hewitt, the hon. member for Mackenzie, upon his promotion to the Ministry as Minister for Local Government and Marine Activities. I express my confidence in his capacity to do a good and efficient job.

This is a new Parliament, so I should like to express my loyalty to the person of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth. In addition, I should like to thank the electors of Landsborough for returning me to this House with a record majority. On this occasion my majority was increased by 12 per cent. I should also like to thank the Queen's representative, Mr. Justice Sheehy, for his Opening Speech.

In the recent State election, for the first time since 1957 we saw the Labour Party frontally attack my party, the Australian Country Party. That attack was conducted at great expense to the Australian Labour Party machine. In the recent election campaign the Labour Party spent two or three times the amount spent by my party, and it spent that money in spite of the withdrawal of financial support by the Right-wing trade unions in this State. For the first time also we saw a decentralised policy-speech procedure, which, on an objective assessment by my party, would cost \$300,000,000 to implement.

**Mr. P. Wood:** That's not the first time.

**Mr. AHERN:** As the hon. member for Toowoomba East said, it was not the first time that this sort of proposal was put before the people of this State—and soundly rejected. That sum of \$300,000,000 did not include the amount obtained in private treaties that were entered into over cups of tea or at other meetings held throughout the State.

Despite the attack by the Labour Party on the Country Party and its esteemed leader, the vote for our party rose by 1.87 per cent., a greater increase than that gained by the other political parties in the recent election. The vote of the A.L.P. rose by only 1.43 per cent. Our vote rose substantially and it is interesting to note that it would take more than a 4 per cent. swing against the Government to unseat any member of the Country Party.

Many people have attacked the Country Party. In his Address-in-Reply speech the Leader of the Opposition again saw fit to launch an attack on the Country Party and said that it represents only pastoral combines in the State. I place squarely on record that the Australian Country Party represents the people of Queensland and, in the Australian sense, the people of Australia. It is the only party on the national scene that recognises the vital importance of primary industries to the future of this country. It has always participated in administering portfolios throughout the ambit of Government activity in every State of Australia and the Commonwealth. It has always put the people of Queensland first, and I express the opinion that our party will expand its influence in the future.

It was Mark Twain, I think, who said that many people talk about the weather but nobody does anything about it. This afternoon we heard the hon. members for Bundaberg and Burdekin, in their maiden speeches, direct their thoughts to local irrigation schemes that they consider to be important to their electorates. I relish the opportunity this afternoon to make a few constructive comments about this Government's record in drought relief and to offer some criticism of the Labour Party's policy in this respect. His Excellency the Administrator, Mr. Justice Sheehy, when opening this session of Parliament, said—

"My Ministers advise that State finances in 1969-70 will face a number of difficulties. Receipts will be depressed due to the drought . . . Additionally, drought outlays are expected to run at a high level."

It is to the very great credit of this Government's policy that His Excellency was able to say that although the State's finances were considerably influenced during the year by unforeseen heavy wage costs and drought-relief expenditure, Queensland finished the year with a surplus of \$59,000 in its Consolidated Revenue Fund.

In the election campaign completed some months ago, many misleading statements were made about drought, principally by the Australian Labour Party, and particularly by the Leader of the Opposition. He was very keen throughout his whole election campaign to capitalise on drought and drought mitigation and to equate the solution of those problems to the providing of vast water-conservation schemes throughout the State. He repeatedly equated Queensland's drought problem and its solution to the implementation of vast State and Federal water-conservation schemes and massive financial assistance from State and Federal authorities. It is interesting to look at what the Labour Party's attitude to this matter is in the Federal sphere. A week ago in Federal Parliament Dr. Rex Patterson, when raising a matter of public importance concerning drought and condemning the Government's attitude to drought mitigation, again completely ignored the dictates of his own profession of agricultural economics, which is my profession also. He again equated the solution of Australia's drought problems to vast water-conservation schemes, with no thought whatsoever for the priorities which might be involved in this matter. I believe that he "sold out" some of his professional thoughts on this subject for votes on 25 October.

I am astounded at the attitude of this man. Two years ago he said that the sugar industry, when it was in financial straits in obtaining overseas markets, should stabilise production and that it should look at what was done by the wheat industry. Now that the wheat industry is in trouble with overseas markets, he has turned 180 degrees and has advised the wheat industry to do what the sugar industry did. I think we have reason to question this man's attitude to agricultural policies.

I believe that some members of this Government, and indeed the Press in this State, have been far too quick to adopt the attitude that if vast Federal funds were appropriated for water conservation, Queensland would be drought-proof. Research indicates that Government-sponsored irrigation schemes represent much less than 20 per cent. of the solution to drought problems in Australia.

At the outset, I acknowledged that a tremendous amount of work has been done in drought-mitigation schemes in Australia. The attitude of this Government to water conservation, in the light of its resources, has been tremendous. The attitude of the Federal Government in involving itself in this field in 1966 more actively than before was commendable, and Queensland was fortunate to participate in that \$50,000,000 appropriation to the extent of \$25,000,000 for the Fairbairn Dam. The Commonwealth Government has said it will introduce a drought-bond scheme. The most recent Budget contained new and powerful incentives for drought mitigation by providing

that the cost of all structures used for fodder conservation and for water conservation and its reticulation are fully deductible in the year of their purchase. In the past, income-tax deductions like these had profound influences on the Australian agricultural scheme, but I consider that this step is very well-founded indeed.

A tremendous amount has been done under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act in this State in providing vast sums of drought relief. In Labour's day, precious little was done.

**An Opposition Member:** You are not old enough to know.

**Mr. AHERN:** I can read.

In the light of experience—and this State Government has been unfortunate enough to have a good deal of experience in drought—there is a need for a reappraisal of State and national drought planning at this stage. There is a need for greater research, firstly, to identify more clearly the problems that exist today and, secondly, and more importantly, to establish new priorities for drought mitigation in future. This research should be conducted in terms of the cost and in terms of the benefit to the greatest number of people in Australia in the light of market considerations, and taking into consideration both the short-term and long-term measures.

**Mr. Jensen** interjected.

**Mr. AHERN:** I shall deal with the hon. member for Bundaberg in a moment.

Given that a tremendous amount of work has been done, I am sure that research will show that emphasis is at present being placed a little on the wrong priorities and that there is some lack of co-ordination of State and Federal Government effort in drought mitigation. I do not propose, in the limited time available to me today, to suggest a comprehensive drought-plan formula, with all its priorities. However, I do want to touch on some points, and I should like to consider the part that Government-sponsored conservation schemes ought to play in terms of priorities.

First of all, in 1966 the Federal Government appropriated \$50,000,000 for this work, and half has already gone into the Fairbairn Dam. Several million dollars have been appropriated for the Ord River scheme, and Federal money has been involved in many other schemes throughout Australia. In the Federal Government's attitude to water conservation in this country, there is a clear emphasis on development of high-risk agriculture rather than drought mitigation.

I bring before the House a statement made by Mr. Fairbairn in Federal Parliament only the other day after he had been questioned on the priorities by which the

Federal Government would assist such conservation schemes. He said—

"In selecting the remaining projects use was made of the crude rate of return of each project, which is the estimated net increment in value of annual production at full development expressed as a percentage of the total capital costs."

In other words, the priority is development, not drought mitigation.

It is interesting to look at what other projects are currently before the Federal Government for the \$25,000,000 remaining from the original \$50,000,000. Again referring to this document that I have in my hand, I note that New South Wales has five applications before the Commonwealth Government, with a capital cost of \$62,000,000. Victoria has seven applications, with a capital cost of \$87,000,000. Queensland has four applications, with a capital cost of \$75,000,000. South Australia has 10 applications, with a capital cost of \$20,000,000. Western Australia has two applications, with a capital cost of \$12,000,000. Tasmania has four applications, with a capital cost of \$6,000,000. Projects to a total value of \$292,000,000 are therefore currently before the Federal Government for the remaining \$25,000,000. On this basis, it will be interesting to see what will be the Government's attitude to the Bundaberg project.

This afternoon the hon. member for Bundaberg spent a third of his speech condemning the efforts of the hon. member for Burnett, who has fought strongly and worked tirelessly in this House for the implementation of the Bundaberg scheme, or the Burnett-Kolan-Isis scheme, as it was known in those days. If all the reports in "Flansard" on this issue were put together, they would make a large book, yet the hon. member for Bundaberg comes in here and spends about a third of his time condemning the efforts of the hon. member for Burnett.

If this scheme comes to fruition—and I hope it will, because there has been a considerable amount of hardship in that area—it will be in no small measure due to the efforts of the hon. member for Burnett. All hon. members in this House know that. During the last State election campaign the Deputy Prime Minister said that the Burnett-Kolan-Isis scheme, as it was called then, is next on the priority list for the remaining appropriation of \$25,000,000 of Federal assistance. I hope that is so.

In the past, water-conservation schemes as proposed by the Federal Government have not resulted in vast areas of waving grass and lucerne waiting to be consumed by drought-affected stock. What such schemes have done is to create new areas of development in high-risk agriculture with crops such as cotton, sorghum and rice, and, to a lesser degree, intensive beef production. In the light of Australia's market prospects

on the international scene, I believe that a change in Federal Government policy on this matter is indicated, and that a policy of consolidation is more important than development in future water-conservation schemes.

However, assuming that that happens and there is an increasing amount of investment in water conservation—I hope there is—it will still be a small contribution to the solution of a nationally recurring problem. I have mentioned the figure—less than 20 per cent.—and I am convinced that research will show that that is so. It is easy for the Opposition to ignore priorities and to say, "Well, drought mitigation is terribly important; there is exceptional hardship. Governments ought to do absolutely everything in their power and appropriate huge sums of money for water conservation." But, for a Government, priorities are a fact of life, and I submit that they ought to be a fact of life for responsible members of the Opposition.

The State Government has been guilty, but to a lesser extent, in not providing schemes that would initiate the development of drought mitigation. Although this policy may have been justified in the past, I believe that it must be reviewed in the future. In earlier years the State Government had the responsibility for providing for the needs of towns, but it must increase its appropriation for drought-mitigation purposes in the future.

I take this opportunity to say that the amount of drought-relief finance provided by the Queensland Government is extremely commendable when viewed in the light of the demand that is continually made upon it. However, there is need to plan for a continuing demand for drought-relief finance at this time. It is not possible or profitable for a farmer to plan for a devastating drought such as the one that has occurred, and is occurring, in North-west Queensland, and a continuing appropriation of huge sums of money for drought-relief finance is absolutely essential for the future. It is on the farm that a great contribution can be made by Governments. Indeed, that contribution has been made in the past; it will, I believe, be made in the future. In my opinion, research will show that higher priority should be given to on-farm measures in attacking the problem of drought. The Federal Government provided expanded taxation incentives in the last Federal Budget; but, when arguing this question, one must face the fact that these concessions assist the man on the higher income more than they assist the man on the lower income. Allowances for on-farm water conservation and fodder conservation do not compare favourably with those applying in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, or Canada, where 50 per cent. subsidies apply fairly widely to on-farm water-conservation measures. I submit that that is something we ought to be examining.

**Mr. Hinze:** It is something we should have a look at.

**Mr. AHERN:** The hon. member for South Coast agrees with me that this should have high priority. In the past the Government has acted along these lines by subsidising phosphates and nitrates, and efficiency measures must be subsidised. The Government has also said that it will introduce a drought bond scheme. This will give tremendous assistance to rural industries, and it will be greatly appreciated in drought areas in the west of Queensland. Once the practice is instituted, I believe that it will extend, in the light of experience, to the eastern areas of the State and will be very beneficial.

The Federal Government has assisted also in underground water investigations and these, again, have been of great assistance in Queensland.

**Mr. Jensen:** How much has the super-phosphate subsidy assisted Queensland?

**Mr. AHERN:** I could go into the question with the hon. member as to why Federal Governments have not assisted Queensland to the point they should have. The principal reason is that former Labour administrations in this State did not give a sufficiently high priority to Queensland's special problems. The C.S.I.R.O. was chased out of the State before 1957. Since then, it has been actively involved in Queensland and an immense amount of research work has been done. That is why a continually increasing amount of superphosphate has been, and will be, used in Queensland.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr. Sullivan:** Do you think, from the persistent interjections by the hon. member for Bundaberg, that he is trying to cash in on the work done over the years by the hon. member for Burnett?

**Mr. AHERN:** I am certain that is so.

There are other areas in which Governments, both State and Federal, can assist still further in drought relief in Queensland, as long-term measures. This is with reference to the subject of research again—research into on-farm problems. Do hon. members realise the impact that the use of molasses and urea roller-licks has had on drought mitigation in Queensland? A couple of years ago this was unheard of, but today it has had a tremendous impact on making Queensland more drought resistant than it was. This has had a tremendous impact throughout Western Queensland. It is significant that it has been used on our property for the last 10 years.

I believe that research will indicate that there are new drought-tolerant species which will be important to Queensland, particularly in the semi-arid and arid areas. I know it is easy to scoff and I can see from the expression on the face of the hon. member

for Bundaberg that he does not comprehend or believe what I say, but throughout other countries of the world a tremendous amount of research work has indicated that there are species that are drought tolerant and resistant. There are species of cattle and, more importantly, species of plant with deeper rooting systems which can resist drought more effectively. This has been of tremendous use in the United States of America, and there is no reason at all why this research should not indicate to Queensland, and to Australia, ways of mitigating the effects of drought which would mean many millions of dollars to the nation.

I can understand the Opposition not being able to comprehend these matters, but who knows what research work might produce in the drought-mitigation field in the future? Research has done a tremendous amount in the past. There are other ways, too, and I have no doubt that with other hon. members speaking on drought mitigation they might well leave this question here. However, drought occurs to varying degrees throughout the Commonwealth and I should like to make a couple of points concerning its mitigation in some of the closer-in areas, although I feel that the remarks I intend to make will have much wider application throughout the State than many people believe.

Drought-planning cannot be divorced from ordinary on-farm planning, and this, despite many people's belief to the contrary, is a real area where the Government can assist. It can help to increase on-farm managerial efficiency.

In 1966 the Commonwealth Extension Services Grant was initiated, and an amount of \$4,000,000 was appropriated by the Commonwealth Government to go to the Governments in each State. This opened up a new era in agricultural extension and farm management extension in Australia. It provided the seed for the development in Australia of new services that had been growing overseas for many years. Without a doubt, this will have a tremendous impact on the Australian agricultural scene. It has led to the development in the State Department of Primary Industries of new agricultural economic services which did not exist in the days of the Labour Government. Heaven knows how one can get along without an accountant, someone to put an economic rule over one's business, but that is the way it existed in the days of the Labour Party administration.

The money that came from the Federal Government led to a tremendous growth in these services in Queensland, and this State was quick to use these funds to develop new management services. I think that the Government has put 17 or 18 agricultural economists into the field, and they are doing a wonderful job. In the other States also a tremendous amount of work was done. This was the seed that rapidly grew into

farm business management on the private side. This growth occurred mostly in the other States and only to a limited degree in Queensland. I think that this has a lot to do with drought and cannot be divorced from it.

It is interesting to look at the percentage of farmers who use the services of private farm management consultants. In Western Australia, 9.55 per cent. of all farmers use intensive private farm management services. That percentage represents a figure of one farmer in 10, and that is a very high percentage. In South Australia the percentage is 2.5; in New South Wales it is 2.24; in Victoria it is 1.00; in Tasmania it is .36; and in Queensland it is .35. In other words, Queensland is on the bottom of the ladder in the use of private farm management services. I believe that there is scope in Queensland for a rapid growth of those services. The sugar industry has been quick to realise their value and has put before the Federal Government and the board that administers the Commonwealth Extension Services Grant a proposal for funds to develop private farm management services. The C.E.S.G. Committee donated \$70,000 to the Queensland sugar industry, and that donation will have a profound effect on the State's sugar industry. Queensland has been slow to make use of private farm management services, and no doubt that has something to do with the growth of the Government's services in this State.

**Mr. Bennett:** That is the fault of the Government.

**Mr. AHERN:** I was just about to say to the hon. member for South Brisbane, who has just entered the Chamber, that obviously it has something to do with the growth of Government services in the State. It also has something to do with the lack of initiative of the university in this matter. The universities in the other States have provided positive incentives in the development of this kind of service. We have acted positively in this field, and I have organised extensive tours to be conducted throughout Queensland in the next couple of months by farm management consultants and the head of the Farm Management Service Centre of the University of New England to preach this doctrine. If farm management services are improved, Queensland will be more drought-proof than it is at the present time.

**Mr. Jensen:** Are you going to be paid for it?

**Mr. AHERN:** It is costing me a lot of money.

I have no doubt, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that throughout the current drought many wrong decisions have been made on drought planning.

**Mr. Bennett:** The Deputy Speaker knows nothing about it.

**Mr. AHERN:** I have no doubt in my mind that the Deputy Speaker knows a tremendous amount about what the drought means to Queensland.

There is no doubt that in drought management the farmers and property-owners could well use the services of farm management consultants, especially on their own farms. That has been the experience in other States, although I know that the hon. member for Bundaberg could not appreciate that. However, I do not intend to start educating him on this because I would have to start with the alphabet. This has been the Australia-wide experience, other than in Queensland. The development of these services has been vitally important in the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom. Organisations such as the United Graziers' Association, the Grain Growers' Association and Rural Youth should take a more active interest in providing these services to their members. In other States these graziers' and grain growers' organisations have been politically powerful in lobbying for greater investment in this field. That is very important.

In the ambit of Government activity in Queensland, and throughout drought and agricultural extension services, we could well benefit from the experience in other States. The relationship between the university, the agricultural extension service, the farm management service, and the Public Service as a whole, is vastly different in Queensland from that in other States of Australia. It could well be that we could learn tremendously from other States in this field. I propose that the Premier should appoint a select committee of this Parliament to investigate this matter, and visit other States to examine what goes on there, because I believe that these things could have an even greater impact on the Queensland agricultural scene than they do at present.

I have summarised the few points I wished to raise, but I do not want them to be misconstrued by the hon. member for Bundaberg. This is wishful thinking. I repeat that I wish to see increasing investment, both State and Federal, in water conservation schemes. I should like to see the Bundaberg scheme come forward, but I cannot stand idly by when I hear the Opposition say it is a matter of top national priority to appropriate \$500,000,000, or \$1,000 million for water conservation schemes in Australia at this particular stage of our development. There are other matters which deserve higher priority if hundreds of millions of dollars are to be appropriated. There are on-farm measures that are vitally important to this country so far as drought is concerned. We need new drought planning throughout the ambit of Government activity, and new planning in relation to the relationship of farmers and graziers to Government. Greater research is needed to determine priorities and I am not prepared to accept the Labour Party's propositions in this respect. No doubt the Labour Party will repeat them

in the forthcoming Federal election campaign. Wherever a gully is to be found in Queensland they will promise a dam, as happened, through private treaty, at many of the Opposition meetings during the election campaign.

In the light of past experience in relation to drought mitigation schemes, I believe that we can now pay heed to what we have learnt and plan more effectively for the future.

**Mr. BOUSEN** (Toowoomba West) (4.20 p.m.): I join with the mover and seconder of the motion in expressing my loyalty to the Throne and to the Person of Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. I bring greetings of loyalty from the electors of Toowoomba West.

I offer my best wishes to His Excellency the Governor, and congratulate him for the good work he has done as Her Majesty's representative in this State.

In common with other hon. members, I refer to the able manner in which the Administrator, Mr. Justice Sheehy, delivered his Opening Speech. It is regrettable that the Chief Justice, Sir William Mack, is suffering from a serious illness. I trust it will not be long before he is restored to good health. On many occasions prior to his illness Sir William deputised for the Governor, Sir Alan Mansfield.

As a new member of this Parliament, proceedings will be somewhat strange to me. I hope that it will not be long before I become familiar with Standing Orders and the rules of debate and that I shall have the privilege of taking part in debates.

My next important duty is to express my thanks to the electors of Toowoomba West for the confidence they displayed in me by electing me as their parliamentary representative. I thank all members of the Australian Labour Party and of the trade union movement and others who assisted me in my campaign. In this democratic age, people are free to consider the claims of more than one candidate. On this occasion I had three opponents who offered themselves for election. Consequently, the electors' wishes were spread over a fairly wide field. To those who voted for me, I express my sincere thanks. To those who did not vote for me on this occasion, I express the hope that, because of my sincere desire and resolve to serve all electors in my constituency faithfully, impartially and well, they will support me in the future. However, I am certain that the decision made by the majority on this occasion was the correct one.

My election resulted from the retirement of my predecessor, Mr. John E. Duggan. He served this Parliament for 33 years as a private member, a Minister of the Crown, a Deputy Premier and Leader of the Opposition. He displayed many qualities and I am sure hon. members will agree that his service was meritorious.

He had a logical mind, a fluent tongue and a wide knowledge of many subjects. He served his constituency, this Parliament and Queensland faithfully and well.

**Mr. Wright:** Were you his campaign director on many occasions?

**Mr. BOUSEN:** Yes.

In Toowoomba and throughout the State there is much evidence of his valuable work. "Hansard" contains examples of his thoughtful, constructive and eloquent speeches. On this occasion he was my campaign director, and both he and his good wife did all they could to assist me. I am sure that hon. members on both sides of the House will wish Mr. and Mrs. Duggan good health to enjoy a long and happy retirement.

I come to this Parliament at a time when perhaps the most spectacular and courageous achievement in the long history of mankind has just taken place, namely, the landing of two men on the moon. It is now widely known that stupendous sums of money have been spent on the technical and scientific skills required to make this outstanding feat possible. This Parliament, whilst acknowledging this scientific achievement, must, however, concern itself with problems far removed from those of placing men on the moon. Our job, with the help of skilled public servants, is to use our resources in the most productive and efficient way to improve the State of Queensland, and the nation to which we belong.

Since the beginning of time, rulers of all kinds, whether they accepted their obligations or not, have had the responsibility of looking after the people. True it is that many of them exploited the people for personal gain, and unfortunately, there are still some people in our midst who are more concerned with personal gain than with seeing that justice is done for all. A great responsibility falls on all of us to make, according to our talents, the best contributions that we can for the welfare of our fellow citizens. I realise that, as individuals, we cannot do as much as we would like. We are bound, of course, in a common-sense approach, to join the major political party whose policy we think is in the best interests of the people. I do not doubt the sincerity of hon. members opposite in their belief that they are striving to obtain the general objectives that I have outlined. On the other hand, I make no apology for the fact—indeed, I am proud of it—that I belong to the Australian Labour Party, which party I feel is better equipped than are all others to achieve the best results for the people of Queensland.

During my term in Parliament, which I hope will be a reasonably long one, I feel confident that opportunities will present themselves to speak on matters of importance. On this special occasion, I want to speak particularly about the city which has honoured me in a very special way, and about some things which extend beyond the

boundaries of Toowoomba. Toowoomba, as all members know, justifiably has the reputation of being one of the finest cities in the Commonwealth. It is perhaps unique in that geographically it is favourably placed, and is blessed with a very invigorating climate. It has a population approaching 60,000, which makes it large enough to provide the facilities and amenities of a modern city, and also opportunities for employment over a wide field.

However, it has both the advantages and disadvantages of being reasonably close to the metropolis. Because of its close proximity to Brisbane, many find it advantageous economically to send their representatives by car from Brisbane to transact their business in Toowoomba. In the case of cities of comparable size and population such as Rockhampton and Townsville, which are geographically far removed from the capital city, offices and warehouses have been set up because representatives cannot be sent there from Brisbane as they can be sent to Toowoomba. Therefore, Rockhampton and Townsville have additional employees who are useful members of the community, although the services that they render and the goods that they supply are not appreciably greater than those supplied by Toowoomba and its rich district.

I believe that Toowoomba has a more balanced economy than most other areas because of the diversity of its industries—wool, wheat, dairying, fat lamb raising, maize, barley, and some manufacturing and preserving—and that this reduces the depressing effect of failure in any one industry as a result of drought or slackening demand. However, one factor that militates against manufacturing industries in Toowoomba is that raw materials have to be hauled to the city, processed or manufactured, and then the bulk of the products returned to Brisbane for metropolitan or State-wide distribution. Therefore, transport costs are considerable, and it is imperative, if more than lip service is to be given to decentralisation, that these costs be given early consideration.

It is not generally appreciated, I think, that the country makes a contribution towards the building of a capital city and the cost of maintaining it. As industry increases and as population increases in the capital, as it seems to be at an accelerating rate, problems such as air pollution and traffic congestion increase. The cost of mitigating these problems in Brisbane is met in no small measure by country interests. As an offset to this and other country contributions, the capital city, or the Government that operates in it, could do much more to aid decentralisation. Despite all the claims that the Government makes, the cold, hard fact is that more and more country people are gravitating to the capital. Freight assistance is one obvious method of assisting decentralisation.

In speaking of industry in Toowoomba, I wish to refer particularly to the barley-growing industry on the Darling Downs, the returns from which are substantial. Mr. Dalzell of the Barley Board pointed out recently that in the 1966-67 season, the gross realisation was \$10,000,000. Because of Government policy, the industry is in danger of losing at least \$1,000,000 in sales. According to Mr. T. A. Kelly of Carlton United Breweries, rail freight discrimination will cost Darling Downs barley-growers an annual sale of 500,000 bushels, and the future loss could be an additional 300,000 bushels. Mr. Kelly said recently that the absurdity of the Railway Department's freight structure was evident in the fact that the rate for malt between Toowoomba and Cairns was \$22 a ton, while the rate from Redbank to Cairns was \$20.50 a ton. Road freight from Redbank to Brisbane was only \$3 a ton (tax exempt), compared with \$7 a ton (including \$2.50 tax) from Toowoomba to Brisbane. It has been established that malt barley from New South Wales is available to Carlton's Toowoomba brewery at slightly more than \$1 a bushel plus freight, and by purchasing this barley the brewery saves more than \$10 a ton.

Many other telling arguments have been advanced by Mr. Kelly, but these accusations have only evoked a retort from the Minister for Transport that Mr. Kelly was either ignorant of the true position or was deliberately misusing rail freights as an excuse for Carlton brewery to obtain its barley requirements from outside the Barley Board. I, and many other people in Toowoomba who are in a position to know, think that the argument so far has clearly been won by Mr. Kelly, who has challenged the Minister for Transport to reveal the secret freight policy that favours Brisbane and is killing country areas. Mr. Knox has not accepted Mr. Kelly's challenge.

It is interesting to point out, however, that when the Labour Party was in power concessional freight rates when given were published and advertised together with the reason why the concessional freight rate was granted, but that is not done by the present Government. It has declined to follow this practice. The matter has become too important to be merely an academic debating exercise. I invite the Government to call appropriate conferences with interested parties so that a common-sense decision can be arrived at.

Only last Monday, the manager of Carlton United Brewery was invited to address the Chamber of Commerce in Toowoomba and in his speech he very effectively pointed out to all those concerned what the position was. I have here a newspaper report of his statement. It reads—

“Our quarrel with the State Government has been—like so many provincial manufacturers—that the Railway Department gives us no regional consideration and in fact, by confidential private contract, allows

metropolitan manufacturers to invade the accepted marketing areas of provincial industry.

"Our own provincial breweries have suffered this invasion from Brisbane. We are a decentralised operation and we do not like our Brisbane brewery competing on an unfair freights basis with our provincial breweries.

"Why not, you may ask? The alternative offered to us (by this railways offering of ex-Brisbane concessions) is that we simply shut down three important provincial city operations and supply the State totally from Brisbane.

"Is this decentralisation? Of course, it is not. And we will have no part of it. But as most of you are aware the Railway Department's actual policy on decentralisation and the Government's professed policy on decentralisation in the past have been two completely separate quantities."

It goes on further—

"... both rail and road operating to the disadvantage of the provincial communities."

And he went on—

"Is it fair (or even sensible) that we should find it cheaper to supply our northern breweries with malt from our competitor malsters? If it remains cheaper, how can we (in all conscience) go ahead and increase the capacity of our Toowoomba maltings?"

I might mention that only last year they spent \$1,000,000 renovating the malt-house at Toowoomba only to find they may have to go to the wall and out of existence because of this great discrimination between the Red-bank malt-house and that at Toowoomba in supplying malt to the provincial breweries throughout the State. He goes on to say—

"Let me, however, give you one example of how freight rates affect us: Railway concessions given to Brisbane breweries mean that bottled beer—same tonnage, same mileage—can be landed in Cairns cheaper than malt."

One can see what is going to happen. They are going to do away with the sending of malt to these provincial breweries and supply everything from Brisbane in its raw state and as the finished product. He goes on—

"Provincial manufacturing industries—the lesser industry, small or big—must be kept resilient. As it is, the railway freight contract system of confidential negotiation can virtually determine the economic success or otherwise of any provincial manufacturer."

So it is quite obvious that unless something is done by the Government the brewery and the malt-house at Toowoomba will eventually close down. I am sure that no right-thinking person would like to see this happen. This Government merely talks about decentralisation.

Speaking further on industry, the Government can do much more to make decentralisation work; otherwise our country areas will increasingly become depopulated. With a view to maintaining population in Toowoomba, the Government should give early consideration to the establishing in the city of the following light industries: a factory for the manufacture of chocolates; a potato and vegetable processing plant; and a factory for the manufacture of cotton towelling. I feel sure that hon. members are all aware of the prolific growth in the Darling Downs and Lockyer areas of fruit and vegetable production, and Toowoomba is the most ideally situated centre for the establishment of a processing plant. The Darling Downs is recognised as possessing one of the greatest dairying industries in this State, and, with the relatively close proximity of the sugar industry, that lends itself to the establishment of a factory in Toowoomba for the manufacture of chocolates and other sweets.

Recently, the cotton industry has grown up overnight, as it were, near Cecil Plains, which is approximately 50 miles from Toowoomba, and two large gineries were recently established in that area. In addition, cotton is grown at Clifton and in the northern part of New South Wales. I hope that the Government will provide some assistance to the establishment of light industries in the city of Toowoomba as they would give a great boost to the population of the city and would help it to develop.

It is probably unusual for a member of the Opposition to congratulate the Government, but I do congratulate it on the assistance that it has rendered to the establishment of an institute of technology at Toowoomba. The institute is doing magnificent work and is providing industry with trained personnel. In spite of the promise to grant the institute local autonomy, there is nothing to suggest at this stage that the promise will be honoured. Therefore, it is felt that the time is now opportune to set up a statutory body to control the Queensland colleges of advanced education.

I believe that the following scheme would be an ideal one. In control of the council would be the Minister for Education, and he would have a number of personnel under his direction. They could constitute a co-ordinating council for advanced education or a board of advanced education, whichever is preferable. In addition to this body, a number of councils could be set up for the agricultural colleges, the institute of technology, the teachers' colleges, the conservatorium, and so on. The activities of the colleges of advanced education could be co-ordinated if the optimum utilisation of the available resources is to be achieved and if unnecessary overlapping and inter-college competition are to be avoided.

The functions of the co-ordinating council or the board of advanced education would be as follows:—

1. The co-ordination of the activities of the colleges of Queensland;
2. The review and approval of the capital and recurrent expenditure submissions of the individual colleges;
3. The recommendation to the Minister of conditions of service of and salaries payable to the academic staff and other staff;
4. The investigation of deletions from or additions to the range of courses offered by individual colleges;
5. The carrying out of such surveys or investigations in relation to the colleges or any of their functions as it thinks fit.
6. The report to the Minister on the need for and location of any new colleges in the State.

It should be noted that it is not intended that this council should exercise any direct supervision over the management of the individual colleges. However, it is considered that existing teachers' colleges should be treated as colleges of advanced education and should come within the province of the co-ordinating council. There appears to be no apparent reason for the establishment of further teachers' colleges as such, so I urge that, in future, teacher education be incorporated within the existing colleges of advanced education or any new colleges that might be established. Each college council should have sole responsibility for the management of the college. Its only limitation would be a requirement of over-all budgetary approval and the introduction or deletion of courses.

The planning of these colleges is carried out on a three-year basis. As the present three-year period expires at the end of this year it is vital that a decision be made on the principles of such a scheme to enable the necessary legislation to be drafted, and passed by Parliament, before the end of this year. It is felt that such an announcement would have an intense revitalising effect on colleges in this State at a time when uncertainty as to their future, and persistent internal dissatisfaction, are taking their toll.

It must be borne in mind that these colleges are not glorified technical colleges. They are colleges where young adults are being introduced at tertiary level to professional training in technology, business studies and the liberal arts. They cannot be run on the lines of primary or secondary schools. They need a measure of independence which, in Queensland, is at present associated only with the university. This independence is not available to them under departmental control. In other States and overseas, the autonomy of these colleges is an accepted fact.

I might say that, at present, the Institute of Technology at Toowoomba has some of the best professional-academic brains available. These people are working for a much lower salary than they could get in other colleges of advanced education or even at the university. Because they like the city of Toowoomba and its invigorating climate they are waiting for the time when they receive local autonomy.

Queensland has always been recognised as a low-wage State. In last Tuesday's "Courier-Mail" the earnings of the ordinary working-class people in this State were shown to be \$7 lower than the average of the other States. Who would be more competent to say what these academics are worth than the people whom I suggest would form the college councils? Let the Government create local autonomy as soon as possible for the Institute of Technology at Toowoomba. If autonomy is gazetted, it is important that the majority of the councillors should be people who have graduated through tertiary education. Also, by past activity, they must have evinced some interest in tertiary education and have shown that they are capable of, and likely to, make a worthy contribution in this field.

I will deal now with price control. During my election campaign I was inundated with requests from constituents in Toowoomba West about what could be done in relation to this matter. It is generally recognised that, on the average, prices rise 4 per cent. each year, which represents 4c in the dollar. That runs into a considerable part of a person's earnings over 12 months. Those hardest hit by price rises are pensioners, people on superannuation and fixed incomes, and those in the lower-wage bracket whose wages have been frozen for a long time. If all goods and services—instead of only a few as at present—were brought into the Consumer Price Index, which is used by the Government Statistician, the 4 per cent. increase would probably be as high as 8 or 10 per cent. For instance, doctors' fees, hospital and dental charges, chemists' costs, education fees, school books, and school uniforms are not included in the Consumer Price Index. Neither are insurance premiums or rates and power charges.

One might ask why prices rise. At one time there was free competition between sellers of goods and services, but today many products and their sale in the retail field are in the hands of monopoly groupings which can and do fix wholesale and retail prices at will. Competition has not, as the Government claims, reduced prices. Today, we are witnessing a race between wages and salaries on the one hand and prices on the other hand. At one time, one could say that competition was the life of trade, but that does not apply today because cartels and monopolies fix wholesale and retail prices of commodities which are necessary to life today.

Increases in direct and indirect taxation are widely used by Governments to increase their revenue. This makes price rises inevitable, as do increases in local and overseas freight rates, insurance charges, etc. Large-scale expenditure on war materials brings about increased prices for metal, timber, steel, wool and so on.

Contrary to popular belief, increased wages do not result in increased prices. The rises in prices cause workers to seek higher wages, and if they are not successful there is the possibility of industrial trouble, with consequential hardship to many people.

With advances in mechanisation in big industries, one expects prices to fall rather than rise, because the cost of producing so many articles is cheaper with mechanisation. It is felt that a special Government-appointed body, with consumer and trade-union representation, should examine the economics of the major industries which produce consumer goods and provide consumer services, to ensure price reductions where there are lower costs.

Poor quality and planned obsolescence, which shorten the life of products, raise indirectly the price of many goods and services. We therefore need to establish a consumer protection council with direct effective consumer representation and wide powers to investigate prices and lack of quality, which is so prevalent today.

I suggest that the Government demand that the Commonwealth Statistician set out in detail and price the minimum living needs of a family in this modern-day Australia. A similar living standard should be established for young marrieds, the sick, the infirm and the aged. The Government should reintroduce automatic basic-wage adjustments each quarter to compensate for rising prices.

It is perhaps ironic that in the recent election the Country Party, which had not previously contested Toowoomba West, fielded a candidate who was my runner-up after having established a commanding lead over his Liberal Party rival. The Country Party candidate, who is president of the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce, owes his selection as that party's candidate to his claim to be fighting for the unemployed young girls in the city of Toowoomba. Because the Government has not decentralised industry, young females in Toowoomba have had to go elsewhere to obtain employment.

The Country Party candidate was not the only one interested in the unemployed female youth. The trade union movement played an active role in this matter and, as president of the Toowoomba Trades and Labour Council, I did much to try to find employment for young girls.

I now refer to the character assassination indulged in by my opponents during the recent State election in a professionally prepared advertisement which took up a whole page

in "The Downs Star". The advertisement also occupied almost half a page of the morning issue of "The Toowoomba Chronicle", and it drew attention to the fact that some nine years ago I was privileged to be able to join a trade union delegation which travelled overseas to visit Japan, China and the Soviet Union. This was a scurrilous, filthy, gutter-type attack made on my honour as a reputable citizen of Toowoomba, and it was degrading for any political party to make such an attack. It appeared in the Press on Friday, 16 May, the day before election day.

I have lived in Toowoomba all my life, as has my family before me. I worship with my family at one of the Anglican churches every Sunday, and I categorically deny that there is any subversive element in me or my family. Yet those responsible for this advertisement, some of whom did not even know me, attacked my character in a manner that, to say the least, was degrading to any political party. That advertisement alone would have cost approximately \$150 or \$160, so it can be seen that more than \$300 was spent in one day by my opponent on advertising in the Press.

After the election, when it was found that I was not again contesting the presidency of the Trades and Labour Council, I was eulogised in the Press and told what a great fellow I was, and how, as President of the Trades and Labour Council, I had shown sane judgment for a period in excess of 12 years. It was also hoped that the Trades and Labour Council would not be controlled by the Left-wing movement, because I had set an example of stewardship that had averted many industrial disputes in Toowoomba. One day I was told that I was subversive and that my affiliations were not with my own country, and the next I was eulogised and told what a great fellow I was and it was hoped that the Trades and Labour Council would not fall into the hands of the Left Wing.

When the Leader of the Opposition referred during the election campaign to the Premier's dealings in oil shares, he was castigated and told that that happened seven years ago, so why bring it up now? What was referred to in my case happened almost 10 years ago and I was elected to the presidency of the Trades and Labour Council more than 12 years ago, yet this, more or less bordering on defamation, was raised against me by the parties opposed to me at the recent State election. Despite all that, the majority of electors in Toowoomba West saw fit to elect me as their parliamentary representative, and I feel that I will be able to sustain the confidence that they have reposed in me by giving them able and sincere representation during the life of this Parliament.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Hughes, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 5 p.m.