

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 1969

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

QUESTIONS

PRISONERS WITH MULTIPLE CONVICTIONS

Mr. W. D. Hewitt, pursuant to notice, asked
The Minister for Justice,—

Of the 2,974 convicted prisoners with three or more convictions, as detailed in Table 7 of the Annual Report of the Comptroller-General of Prisons for the year ended June 30, 1969, how many are constant offenders for other than drunkenness?

Answer:—

“Statistics are not kept covering the information sought. This information could only be obtained by the assignment of a special staff to make a detailed check of at least 4,699 files being the number of convicted persons through all the Prisons for the period. The Office administrative staff in the Prisons Service is only sufficient to presently perform its normal administrative duties. The figures contained in the Report are compiled by the Commonwealth Statistician.”

FATAL ROAD ACCIDENT AT GUMDALE

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

(1) Is he aware of the report in *The Courier-Mail* of November 5 of a collision between a car and a bus at Gumdale when two teenage girls were killed?

(2) Why was it necessary to pursue the car at high speed when the number of the car could have been ascertained and appropriate action subsequently taken?

(3) With a view to preventing road fatalities, will he instruct that the practice of overtaking cars in this manner be discontinued?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "In an endeavour to establish the identity of an offender."

(3) "This is a matter of discretionary decision by the Police Officer concerned depending upon the nature of the offence."

CERTIFICATE OF ROADWORTHINESS OF SECOND-HAND MOTOR VEHICLES

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

(1) Having regard to the number of complaints concerning rust in new motor vehicles and faulty workmanship in second-hand vehicles, has consideration been given to a prototype inspection of new vehicles before they are sold to the public?

(2) Will provision be made for a certificate of roadworthiness to be a condition before a transfer of registration on a second-hand vehicle is effected?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "There is no knowledge of any complaints concerning rust in new motor vehicles. The question of the condition of new vehicles is continually under active consideration by the Australian Motor Vehicles Standards Committee which reports to the Australian Transport Advisory Council regarding the design of new vehicles and in respect of other matters. The Honourable Member also is referred to the Answer which the Honourable the Premier gave on October 29, 1969, to a Question asked of him by the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition concerning second-hand motor vehicles."

SUBSIDY FOR ASSEMBLY HALL FOR SOUTHPORT STATE HIGH SCHOOL

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

Following the unfair and unprecedented occurrence which prevailed at this year's Southport State High School speech night, when attendance was restricted to prize-winning students and their parents owing to suitable hall accommodation being non-existent in Southport, will he give further urgent and sympathetic consideration to the Parents and Citizens' Association's request for assistance by way of Government

subsidy or loan to finance the erection in the school grounds of an assembly hall of sufficient dimensions to accommodate all students and parents at such functions?

Answer:—

"Assistance is available, in common with other High Schools, to the Southport High School, under the scheme of dollar for dollar subsidy to a maximum of \$30,000 for the erection of High School Assembly Halls. The funds available for this financial year have already been committed, but because of an application already made, the Southport Parents and Citizens' Association could qualify for assistance in the next financial year."

BRISBANE MARKET MILK SUPPLY QUOTAS; DAIRY PRODUCTS EQUALISATION SCHEME

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

(1) Which authority is responsible for the granting to country factories of a milk supply quota to the Brisbane market?

(2) Has the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation any power to obtain quotas for certain factories or to have existing quotas varied?

(3) As poaching of supplies from the long-established preserves of smaller non-quota factories by the larger factories with quotas is prevalent in many districts, will he define areas from which such supplies may be collected by individual factories?

(4) In the interests of the dairying industry, will he introduce an equalisation scheme embracing all dairy products?

Answers:—

(1) "The Brisbane Milk Board."

(2) "No."

(3) "Canvassing for milk and cream suppliers is not permitted under the provisions of The Dairy Produce Acts. Should a supplier decide to change supply from one factory to another, the Acts require that 28 days' notice of intention to divert supply be given. Milk and cream routes are gazetted in dairying districts and a licensed carrier is the only person who may pick up milk or cream on a gazetted route."

(4) "As the Honourable Member is probably aware a report on an investigation of market milk supplies in South-eastern Queensland and associated aspects relating to dairy industry production and marketing was issued by the Division of Marketing within my Department last year and criticism and comment was invited from the industry. Many submissions have been received and these are now being examined."

AERATED BEVERAGE "FRIST"

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a television commercial currently being screened on all Brisbane commercial channels, promoting an aerated beverage called "Frist"?

(2) As this beverage is being promoted as a product manufactured from citrus, will he ask the Government Analyst to have the product analysed in order to confirm or deny the view commonly held by growers of citrus in Queensland that the beverage contains absolutely no citrus juice?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "The Government Analyst is currently analysing this product."

IMPROVED ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES AT COOKTOWN FOR ROYAL VISIT

Mr. B. Wood, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

With regard to the Royal Visit to Cooktown next year—

(1) As it has been stated that the water supply scheme will not be in use at this time, have approaches been made by four officials, the Cook Shire Council or local residents for assistance to provide an emergency supply of water for the period of the visit?

(2) Will his Government ensure that an adequate supply of water is available?

(3) In order to cater for tourists, has his Government taken any action in regard to accommodation and in particular did he or will he request the Federal Government to allow the Army to provide emergency accommodation?

(4) Does he consider that existing sanitary arrangements are adequate?

(5) What additional work is to be carried out on the road from Cairns to Cooktown?

(6) Will the old Catholic convent be restored and functioning as a museum by the time of the visit?

Answers:—

(1) "No, but I understand certain local discussions have been held."

(2) "The matter is the primary responsibility of the Cook Shire Council."

(3) "No."

(4) "I am advised that additional temporary sanitary facilities may have to be provided."

(5) "Work, including bridge construction, is currently in progress on the Cairns to Cooktown road. The cost this financial year of such work will be in excess of \$600,000. Immediately prior to the Royal Visit to Cooktown next year, the Main Roads Department will ensure that the road is in the best practicable condition."

(6) "The old Catholic Convent proposed for restoration as the James Cook Memorial Museum is the property of the National Trust of Queensland, and I am assured that with the help of the State Works Department, the Trust will have the building restored and functioning as a Museum by the time the Royal Visit to Cooktown takes place."

CANCELLED RAIL PASSENGER SERVICES

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

(1) What rail passenger services, including rail motor services, have been cancelled since January 1, 1969?

(2) What services does he now plan to discontinue?

(3) Which of these transport school children?

(4) Will he consider the desire of residents north of Cairns that the Redlynch service which carries children to and from school in Cairns be retained?

Answers:—

(1) "The following Rail Motor Services have been discontinued: Bundaberg-Tirroan—Monday and Friday, Bundaberg dep. 6.50 a.m. Tirroan arr. 8.35 a.m. Friday—Bundaberg dep. 3.30 p.m. Tirroan arr. 5.15 p.m. Monday and Friday, Tirroan dep. 8.50 a.m. Bundaberg arr. 10.35 a.m. Friday, Tirroan dep. 5.30 p.m. Bundaberg arr. 7.15 p.m. Maryborough-Bundaberg—Saturday, Maryborough dep. 12.25 p.m. Bundaberg arr. 2.15 p.m. Saturday, Bundaberg dep. 3.40 p.m. Maryborough arr. 5.31 p.m. Maryborough-Howard—Saturday, Maryborough dep. 6.20 a.m. Howard arr. 7.05 a.m. Saturday, Howard dep. 7.20 a.m. Maryborough arr. 8.07 a.m."

(2 and 3) "Train services are continually under review and before any service involving school children is discontinued, the matter is the subject of discussion between the Education Department, the Transport Department and the Railway Department."

(4) "I would refer the Honourable Member to my reply to him on September 9th, 1969."

AWARD WAGE RATES FOR DEPARTMENT
OF ABORIGINAL AND ISLAND AFFAIRS
EMPLOYEES

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

Will he increase the wages of Aboriginal and Island employees of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs to the equal of award rates?

Answer:—

"The Honourable Member is referred to Answers to Questions of a similar nature on September 10th, 1968 and November 6th, 1968. I can only reiterate that the Government has never undertaken to provide employment at full Award rates for all residents of reserves and, indeed, this would be virtually economically impossible when one considers the population densities. Normal Award conditions apply to staff positions on the various Aboriginal and Island reserves and these are held by persons irrespective of racial origin, based on qualifications and ability. When vacancies occur within the Department's staffing establishment every encouragement is given Assisted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to attain these positions, and persons who have received training from the Department are encouraged to compete for normal Award wage positions anywhere in Queensland. I might further mention that allowances paid by the Department to Assisted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders on the various reserves have been substantially increased in recent years and during the past twelve months at least two increases have been granted, directed towards a parity amongst peoples. The Honourable Member is assured that the Government will continue to increase these allowances as high and as rapidly as possible consistent with funds available, responsibility undertaken and in the light of existing circumstances. The overall situation is continually under review."

WATER LEVEL, TINAROO FALLS DAM

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

(1) What is the present level of the Tinaroo Falls Dam below the spillway?

(2) In view of the need for water for irrigation and to develop new areas and the fact that water reserved for hydro-electricity generation at Barron Gorge station is preventing further development of land, will he make a full statement concerning the future of irrigation from the dam and the provision of water for hydro-electric generating purposes?

Answers:—

(1) "The level of the lake at Tinaroo Falls Dam is at present 24 feet 2 inches below the crest of the spillway giving a storage volume of 167,900 acre feet."

(2) "Water has been reserved for 35 new farms mainly in the Paddy's Green and East Barron Sections of the Mareeba-Dimbulah Area, which could be opened for settlement when tobacco quotas are made available. With reference to the availability of water supply for irrigation of further new areas I draw the Member's attention to my previous reply to him on October 15th when I indicated that discussions were in hand between the Irrigation Commission and the Northern Electric Authority with a view to agreement being reached on a long term reduction of the level of releases for power generation at Barron Falls Power Station. These discussions are still proceeding and when finalised a decision on future development will be made."

WATER ALLOCATIONS, MAREEBA-
DIMBULAH IRRIGATION AREA

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

(1) Is there to be any further allocation of irrigation water for new farms in the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation area?

(2) If not, how does he justify the condition of lease of Portion 466, Parish of Masterton, requiring an area of 25 acres to be put under improved pasture in the next two years?

Answers:—

(1) "In addition to farms to which water is currently allocated by way of Water Right, water agreement or by licence, a reservation of water has been made for 35 new farms mainly in the East Barron and Paddy's Green Areas which could be opened when tobacco quotas are made available. Apart from these farms no further allocation of water for new farms can be made available until the level of releases for power generation at Barron Falls Hydro-Electric Station can be reduced."

(2) "The Condition in the proposed lease of Portion 466, Parish of Masterton, was included on the recommendation of the local staff of the Land Administration Commission. The purchase of this land was not proceeded with and if it is reopened the condition in question will be excluded."

RECONSTRUCTION OF CAUSEWAY ON
CHARTERS TOWERS ROAD, TOWNSVILLE

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

(1) Has reconstruction of the causeway on Charters Towers Road, Townsville, been completed and, if so, what was the total cost and its apportionment between the Government and the Townsville City Council?

(2) If the work is not complete, when will it be finished and what is the estimated total cost?

Answers:—

(1) "No."

(2) "It will be completed mid-December 1969 and the estimated total cost is \$480,000. The Townsville City Council portion will be approximately \$23,000."

RESIDENCE FOR STAFF MEMBER, DOUGLAS
CAMPUS, TOWNSVILLE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE

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

With reference to his Answer to my Question on October 9, wherein he stated that a house for a staff member at the Townsville University College was estimated to cost \$28,773 and would be occupied rent free—

(1) How many bedrooms and air-conditioning units are incorporated in the building?

(2) What salary and/or perquisites are paid to the rent-free occupant?

(3) If this rent-free accommodation is an additional perquisite to compensate the occupant for supervision of the Hall of Residence, what other rent-free accommodation is provided for staff members in or adjacent to the Hall of Residence and for what purpose?

Answers:—

(1) "Two bedrooms and one study/bedroom and two wall air-conditioning units. The staff member concerned has donated funds to the University which have made possible the purchase of these two units."

(2) "No salary or perquisites are paid to the occupant but he receives \$300 entertainment allowance. Normal academic salary is paid for his full-time appointment within the University."

(3) "Small rent-free flats within the University Hall are provided for the Deputy Principal and the Vice-Principal (women). This provision is made for the purpose of enabling them to carry out their duties and more particularly for close supervision."

CANCELLATION OF "CASINO ROYALE"
FUNCTION, SURFERS PARADISE

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in *The Mirror* of November 12, wherein a charge is made that police and

Government pressure stopped a "Casino Royale" night being conducted by the Surfers Paradise Lions Club?

(2) Were any raffles or games of chance envisaged for the night and was an application made to conduct them? If so, who made the application and when and, if it was granted, what were the terms and conditions?

(3) In view of the reputability of the Lions Club and its charitable work, what are the full circumstances surrounding the function and its alleged cancellation?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2 and 3) "It is actually unknown to the Department of Justice what were to be the means of money raising to be employed at this 'Casino Royale' night, as no application was ever received by the Department for any permission which could be given under the law. It was noticed that in a newspaper of November 3, 1969, a Surfers Paradise Lions Club spokesman was reported as saying that the casino 'had been arranged in conjunction with the Justice Department so everything was strictly legal'. This is entirely incorrect. This club spokesman on that occasion referred to a roulette wheel which would be a horizontal chocolate wheel which is legal. The use of chocolate wheels, without the requisite permit, for the raising of money is, of course, illegal. Moreover, the playing of any unlawful game, as defined by 'The Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Acts' of this State is absolutely prohibited. Accordingly, and as the type of games usually conducted in modern casinos are prohibited by the law of this State, it would not be understood what is meant by the paragraph in *The Mirror* newspaper which covers the Gold Coast, of Wednesday, November 12, 1969, which quoted a Lions Club spokesman as follows:—'The Casino Royale we had in mind would not have contravened State gambling Acts because patrons would have found only the normal "games of chance" indulged in at most events of this nature.' Although no application was ever made to the Department in relation to this matter, Mr. Haydn Sargent had seen the Arts Unions Officer about two weeks prior to the first newspaper report of the proposed carnival. Mr. Haydn Sargent stated he had been asked by the Surfers Paradise Lions Club to raise funds for them for the purpose of establishing a new 'Glenhaven Hospital' and that the Surfers Paradise Lions Club was in financial difficulties as a result of an art union being conducted by the club for that purpose. Mr. Sargent mentioned several possible methods of fund raising and amongst these was the conduct of chocolate wheels whereby actual roulette wheels would be used. However, Mr. Sargent

was informed by the Art Unions Officer that that officer had no authority whatsoever to issue a permit for the use of roulette wheels as chocolate wheels. Mr. Sargent also asked for an authority to be given for the conduct of 'Unders and Overs' and 'Crown and Anchor' and was informed that an authority could not be given by this Department for the operation of these games of chance. The licensee of a Gold Coast hotel who stated he had been approached by Mr. Sargent with a view to having his hotel opened for the conduct of a 'Casino Royale', later phoned the Art Unions Officer as to the matter, and he was also informed by the Art Unions Officer that under no circumstances could approval be given by this Department to conduct gambling of any description prohibited by the law. Under the circumstances, it will be seen that 'The Mirror's' headline 'Pressure used to stop Lions Casino night' has no factual foundation."

CONSTRUCTION OF RAILWAY TO PORT OF MOURILYAN

Mr. F. P. Moore, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

As a report from a Royal Commission in 1922 mentioned the desirability of the construction of a 3' 6" railway line to the port of Mourilyan, has legislation been passed for the implementation of the construction of the line?

Answer:—

"No."

REFRIGERATED MORTUARY CABINET FOR TULLY HOSPITAL

Mr. F. P. Moore, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

Further to his Answer to my Question on November 12, did the Secretary of the Tully General Hospital write to his Department two weeks ago regarding the matter? If so, why has he not received a reply?

Answer:—

"I refer the Honourable Member to my Answer to his Question of November 11, 1969, in which I said that it is within the competence of the Tully Hospitals Board to submit a proposal for the provision of a refrigerated mortuary cabinet at Tully Hospital, and that such a proposal would receive favourable consideration. A memorandum dated November 10, 1969, from the Tully Hospitals Board, was received in yesterday afternoon's mail, requesting approval for the supply of a refrigerated mortuary cabinet for the Tully Hospital."

GRANT TO ROCKHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL TO ALLEVIATE UNEMPLOYMENT

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

As the Rockhampton City Council has made application to the Co-ordinator-General's Department for a loan of \$100,000 to help alleviate unemployment at Rockhampton, when will a decision be made on this request?

Answer:—

"The Rockhampton City Council's application was for a grant of \$100,000 and not for a loan and the Council may expect an early decision thereon."

PRESENCE OF NATIONAL CHINESE SHIP IN QUEENSLAND COASTAL WATERS

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

As I have been informed by professional fisherman, Mr. Merv. Plahn, that while he was fishing at the Swain Reef on November 8 he radioed Overseas Communications that a Chinese boat with dories was fishing the reef for clams, will he contact his Federal counterpart and request immediate action in the detention of this vessel?

Answer:—

"I understand that Commonwealth Authorities have received in recent weeks a number of unconfirmed reports of the presence of a Chinese vessel in the vicinity of the Swain Reef. It is entirely a matter for the Commonwealth as to what action is taken as a result of these reports."

ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS, LAKE'S CREEK STATE SCHOOL, ROCKHAMPTON

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

Have plans and specifications been prepared or are any contemplated for additional classrooms at Lake's Creek State School, Rockhampton? If so, what is the number of rooms and when will construction commence?

Answer:—

"Yes. Three classrooms. Funds are not available to undertake this project at this stage. The work has been noted for further consideration later in the financial year."

ENTRY UPON RAILWAY PROPERTY, BLUFF, BY HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFICER

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

(1) Are officers of his Department permitted to enter Railways Department property to investigate health complaints and health hazards?

(2) Was an officer of his Department prevented from entering railway property at Bluff to investigate the causes of the recent outbreak of hepatitis? If so, for what reason?

Answers:—

(1) "Officers of the Health Department acting under my direction may enter Railway Department property to make investigations in respect to matters of hygiene."

(2) "No."

ESTABLISHMENT OF DRIVER-TRAINING CENTRES

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

Will he consider the establishment of driver-training centres in the major provincial cities throughout Queensland, based on the scheme at present in operation at Mt. Lawley, Perth, Western Australia?

Answer:—

"This is a matter of policy and has been considered by the Government on several occasions."

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARIES FOR UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS

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

In view of the tremendous burden being placed on principals and teachers at the major examination centres throughout the State in conducting, planning and supervising University examinations as well as the normal Junior and Senior examinations, will he consider appointing examination secretaries at these centres to be responsible for the former and thus leave principals the responsibility of the latter?

Answer:—

"The additional burden placed on Principals at large examination centres by the requirement to plan and arrange supervision of University degree examinations will be investigated. The practical difficulty of increasing staff for short periods will be obvious to the Honourable Member."

POLLUTION OF BURNETT RIVER

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

With reference to my previous Questions concerning pollution in the Burnett River—

(1) What substance caused the pollution which killed thousands of fish and prawns early in the week ended November 8?

(2) As the pollution has not been as a result of discharges from the Bundaberg Distillery, will he take proceedings against the offending company?

(3) Will he consider amending the Act to increase the fine on industrial concerns to \$1,000 for the first offence and \$10,000 for subsequent offences and so make the punishment fit the crime?

Answers:—

(1) "Following representations an Engineer was sent to Bundaberg on Friday, 7 November to investigate the matter and to collect samples and make on-the-spot enquiries. The enquiries did not indicate the reason for the fish kill, and analyses of samples are yet incomplete. Accordingly the nature and source of the pollutant are not known. Further investigations as to sources of pollution are to be carried out."

(2 and 3) "These are not matters coming within the ambit of my jurisdiction."

EYE-TESTING AND SUPPLY OF SPECTACLES, PRINCESS ALEXANDRA AND BUNDABERG HOSPITALS

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

(1) What procedure is adopted by patients who attend for eye-testing at (a) Princess Alexandra Hospital and (b) Bundaberg General Hospital?

(2) If spectacles are prescribed at each of these hospitals, what types of frames are available?

(3) What charges are made for (a) prescriptions and (b) frames?

Answers:—

(1) "(a) Princess Alexandra Hospital: Public Patients under 60 years of age attending for eye-testing are referred to the Hospital's full-time Optometrist for examination. Patients over 60 years of age or patients presenting with symptoms of eye disease are referred to the full-time Ophthalmologist. Spectacles prescribed by the Optometrist or the Ophthalmologist are supplied to the patient by Trevor Henderson, Optometrist under contract to the South Brisbane Hospitals Board. (b) Bundaberg Hospital: Public Patients attending for eye-testing are given an appointment with Trevor Henderson, Optometrist, the Board's contractor, on his next periodical visit to Bundaberg. The contractor supplies any spectacles prescribed directly to the patient."

(2) "Frames supplied under contract are as follows:—(a) Princess Alexandra Hospital: (i) Strong nickel with cylinder bridge. (ii) Strong nickel with pad bridge. (iii) Gold filled. (iv) Xylo (in two shades). (b) Bundaberg Hospital: Nickel with cylinder bridge. The Honourable Member will note that under the contract entered into by the Bundaberg Hospital with the firm of Trevor Henderson refractions are carried out by the staff of the

optometrical firm. At Princess Alexandra Hospital, refractions are performed by the full time staff of the South Brisbane Hospitals Board."

(3) "No charge is made to the patient at either hospital for (a) prescriptions or (b) frames supplied under contract."

DROUGHT RELIEF FREIGHT REBATES FOR SHEEP

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

Because the prime reason for running merino sheep in Queensland is for wool production, will he urgently consider extending the rebate on fodder and stock cartage to embrace wethers as well as breeding sheep as many properties in the West are confined to wethers only?

Answer:—

"Freight rebates and subsidies approved under the Drought Relief Scheme for the transport of fodder and stock in and from drought-declared areas cover both male and female sheep. The Government does not discriminate between the sexes."

POSSIBLE ACTION AGAINST VICTOR COLIN COOTE

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

In view of his Answer to my Question on November 12, will he have inquiries made as to the source of publication and circulation of the booklets referred to on the photographic sheets produced?

Answer:—

"Yes."

RECOMMENDATIONS OF STEERING COM- MITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT OF THE BLIND

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

(1) Before implementing any recommendations of the Steering Committee set up to investigate blind workers and other visually handicapped people, will he consult the Blind Workers' Union and the Society of Blind Citizens as interested parties?

(2) Are any other plans concerning the blind, apart from those of the Steering Committee, being considered? If so, what are they and will interested parties be consulted?

Answers:—

(1) "Consideration will be given to the need for consultation with the Blind Workers' Union and the Society of Blind Citizens when the report of the Steering Committee is discussed by Cabinet. For the information of the Honourable

Member for Norman, I have been advised that the Society of Blind Citizens declined an invitation from the Steering Committee to present its views on the matters being investigated."

(2) "No."

ARRESTS OF EPILEPTIC ON DRUNKENNESS CHARGES

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

(1) Was a Mrs. Doris Trescham arrested last week on a charge of drunkenness and committed to gaol?

(2) How many times has this person been gaoled on similar charges?

(3) In view of her and her doctor's statement that she definitely is not a drinker of alcoholic beverages and she has a medical certificate indicating that she is an epileptic taking prescribed drugs, will he have the case fully investigated to ascertain if the woman was wrongfully arrested and disclose the findings to the House?

(4) If she was wrongfully arrested (a) what redress has she to obtain justice and to have the record of conviction, etc., quashed and (b) what compensation will she receive as a result of her privations in gaol?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Three."

(3 and 4) "The subject is presently under investigation."

ACQUISITION OF LAND BY QUEENSLAND HOUSING COMMISSION, GUMDALE DISTRICT

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

Has the Queensland Housing Commission acquired any land in the Gumdale district for housing purposes? If so, what is its area and where is it situated?

Answer:—

"No."

ADDITIONAL STATE HIGH SCHOOL IN BELMONT ELECTORATE AT MT. GRAVATT

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

Has further consideration been given by his Departmental officers to the providing of a further high school in the Belmont Electorate on the school reserve at the corner of Broadwater Road and Ham Road, Mt. Gravatt?

Answer:—

"The need for additional secondary school accommodation is under continual review. At present the erection of a

new high school on the site at the corner of Broadwater Road and Ham Road cannot be justified, but the position will be closely watched and action will be taken when numbers warrant the erection of a first section."

SHELTERS FOR GATEKEEPERS, CENTRAL TECHNICAL COLLEGE, BRISBANE

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

(1) What plans are envisaged to provide shelters for gatekeepers at the Central Technical College, Brisbane?

(2) If there are no plans, will he immediately consider giving these men some protection from the elements?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "The matter has already been submitted to the Department of Works for consideration and this Department is investigating ways and means of providing such shelters within the funds available."

ALLOCATION OF COMMONWEALTH AID ROADS GRANTS TO CAIRNS CITY COUNCIL

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

(1) Further to the Answer to my Question to the Premier on October 23 concerning Commonwealth Aid Roads Grants, what amounts were received by the Cairns City Council in 1966-67, 1967-68 and 1968-69?

(2) Is Cairns included in the definition "other rural roads" and has the city been classed as "non-urban" in relation to the allocations? If so, for what reasons?

Answers:—

(1) "The allocations were 1966-67, \$25,130; 1967-68, \$25,970; 1968-69, \$25,970."

(2) "Cairns City is not classified as an urban area in the *Commonwealth Aid Roads Act* of 1969. Some roads in Cairns in terms of this Act have been approved by the Minister for Shipping and Transport as Rural Arterial. The great majority of roads, including all roads not declared under "The Main Roads Acts", come within the category of Rural Roads other than Rural Arterials, for which a specific grant has been made by the Commonwealth to the States."

PAPER

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

Report of the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs for the year 1968-69.

DIRECTING OF QUESTIONS

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I am quite sure that the Minister for Health gave the hon. member that information in an answer he gave this morning.

Mr. JENSEN: I should like to redirect Question No. 23 on this morning's Business Paper. In giving notice of it yesterday, I directed it to the Minister for Local Government or the appropriate Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members who address questions to the "appropriate" Minister do not realise the steps that have to be taken by the clerks in this connection. In many instances they have to make numerous phone calls to ascertain the appropriate department.

Recently all hon. members were issued with a copy of State Administrative Arrangements, which lists the various Ministers, their portfolios, the departments they control, and the Acts they administer. I suggest that hon. members search their files and find their copies of that publication so that, when framing questions, they can peruse the list and then direct their questions to the correct Ministers.

Mr. Bennett: It changes every week because the Government changes its policy.

Mr. Chalk: And you have to come here once a week to find out.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for South Brisbane knows full well that cross-firing during question time is prohibited. I also advise the Treasurer of that fact. He knows the rules as well as anybody else in the House, and he should abide by them.

WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILIZATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

SUPPLY

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

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1969-70
DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

CHIEF OFFICE

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Lands) (11.39 a.m.): I move—

"That \$2,064,126 be granted for 'Department of Lands—Chief Office'."

The land resources of Queensland today attract a growing multitude of land seekers and land investors not only from within its own boundaries but also from all the other Australian States and many overseas countries. Indeed, some refer to Queensland as one of the last exciting frontiers where opportunities still abound under a great variety of conditions and circumstances. And, of course, that is very true. As I have travelled round Australia, I have become even more firmly convinced that here lie the greatest opportunities for land-minded men.

The long years of drought have had their serious effect on rural production and have dashed many a hope, but there are yet literally thousands of people still grasping every chance to get a piece of land of their own.

At the present time action is in hand to design several million acres for new settlement, but the release of land for grazing and agricultural pursuits has generally been deferred in the interests of both the outgoing lessees and the prospective new settlers.

Land for residential, business and industrial purposes is, of course, very much in demand always, and, by its estate preparation activities, my department is satisfying that demand to an appreciable extent. In most cases, in compliance with Government policy, such blocks of land are made available under freeholding title for sale by public competition. Generally, prices realised are substantially in excess of the prices being asked by the department, and some critics will say that the department is responsible for establishing high prices. This is not so. The situation simply reflects the keen demand for land, and there is no fairer way of satisfying competition than by the public-auction system.

Some people are inclined to think that available lands should be allocated, say, to landless persons or to young married couples, and this theory may seem to contain certain merit; but the implementation of such a policy would, of course, for the most part and for obvious reasons, be impracticable. The policy is to develop Crown estates to at least the standard applying in the particular local authority area. This generally implies bitumen-sealed roads, kerbing and channelling, sewerage, water reticulation, drainage and allotment clearing and levelling. I contend that the Crown, as the largest estate developer in Queensland, sets an example in this field, and the regularly keen competition at sale illustrates the worth that buyers attach to allotments immediately ready for occupation.

I have been particularly impressed by the imaginative land development schemes that are being implemented in some of the out-of-the-way places where lack of communication, distance from traditional markets, etc., have seriously affected participation by investors with the necessary financial strength to bring ambitious schemes to economic fruition. I shall mention a few such instances.

In the Peninsula area, Comalco Industries applied for rights to develop an area of about 1,140 square miles that had hitherto lain idle because, in its natural state, it was regarded as having virtually a nil carrying capacity. Several inquiries had been received, but the inquirers were not able to substantiate that they had the capital required to bring about development in either the short or the long term. Comalco Industries indicated a desire to invest substantial capital in the area.

Recognising the tremendous cost that would have to be met to achieve the establishment of the area, it was decided that the possibilities of economic development would have to be proved before a lease could formally be granted, and, in the event, Comalco Industries have been granted an occupation license which requires that the licensee will, within a period of three years from the commencement of the licence (1 November, 1968), spend not less than \$20,000 in assessing the economics of the area as a development proposition. I would be surprised if anyone argued against the validity of this decision. I believe that investment of company capital along these lines, rather than being opposed by the administration, should be encouraged at all times. We need to give positive consideration to the development of the North and this is one method by which this can be effected.

Another land developer whose endeavours, I feel, are worthy of mention at this time is Mr. Clive Foyster, the lessee of Butcher's Hill holding in the Cooktown Land Agent's district. Mr. Foyster is possibly better known through his activities in mineral-sands mining.

Mr. Thackeray: What about his race-horses? Has he given you a tip recently?

Mr. SULLIVAN: He has made money from mineral-sands mining, and he is putting it into development in this region. He may also be interested in the sport of kings. I, too, like to attend race meetings occasionally.

Recently, in conjunction with the members of the Land Administration Commission, I inspected the Butcher's Hill holding. The inspection was made as a result of Mr. Foyster's application for a better tenure over part of the holding in the light of his tremendously costly development programme. The lessee, of his own volition, has projected pasture improvement and agricultural activities which are quite unique in the area and, following my inspection and investigation by my officers, I have no hesitation in promising Mr. Foyster that he will obtain permanent tenure over an area of nearly 60,000 acres within the holding upon carrying out substantial improvement conditions involved in the cultivation of an area of about 20,000 acres; expenditure of not less than \$100,000 on the provision of housing and accommodation for employees; construction of permanent water facilities; provision

of cattle yards and buildings, and the construction of not less than 25 miles of stock-proof fencing on the leased land.

I might mention that the development required of Mr. Foyster has already been carried out in the eight to 10 months that he has been in occupation of this land. I believe that this is the type of development we should encourage. This man made his money in other ventures and is prepared to go up there on a pilot scheme and develop this very remote area of Queensland. No doubt what he will prove and achieve will be an incentive to others who will also go up there and see what can be done. I believe this is the real starting point of the development of this vast remote area of Queensland.

Mr. Foyster is to be commended for the conditions he is providing for his employees. When we were there he had provided eight homes for them, built in the form of a township. There are recreation facilities, a school was in the course of construction, and at the same location a motel was being built for the benefit of the travelling public. Men like Mr. Foyster should be encouraged.

The Australian Agricultural Co., the lessees of Wrotham Park holding, have mounted proposals which illustrate another example of present-day interest in significantly increasing carrying capacity by large-scale investment in pasture.

While I cannot divulge at this stage full details of a proposal the company has before me, I can say that it has in mind a project to sow to pasture about 20,000 acres of land within the holding, which is situated about 38 miles north-west of Mungana. I do not think anyone would seriously disagree with me when I suggest again that this sort of endeavour by pastoral companies should be encouraged to the limit. The worth of the attempt lies not only with the company but also with other landholders in the locality who, if the work is successful, will naturally be encouraged to do likewise and thus make their contribution, without cost to the Crown, to accelerated development of the far northern regions.

At this point it might be appropriate to instance what has taken place at King Ranch, in the Tully area. I can recall that when my predecessor, Mr. Fletcher, brought down legislation relative to this land there were many critics of what was being offered to King Ranch.

Mr. Sherrington: Including one of your own former Ministers, Mr. Muller.

Mr. Hanson: Why didn't you cut it up and put 100 families on it?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I believe that if hon. members are fair they will agree that what has been achieved at King Ranch is worthwhile development for both the State and the grazing industry.

An Opposition Member: It is good land.

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is true; but for generations it was allowed to lie in its natural state. Mr. Muir and Mr. Fletcher are to be commended for agreeing to the development of the area, and King Ranch is to be commended for selecting that area. I have visited King Ranch and have seen the development that has taken place. Half of the area is in a very high rainfall belt, and, as King Ranch has dry areas in other parts of the State, it was necessary for it to select an area that was not all rain-forest country. King Ranch has done that so that it can move its store cattle in and gradually condition them on the drier country before fattening them on the pastures in the rain-forest area.

The hon. member for Port Curtis said that it would be better to cut the area up into 100 farms and put 100 families on them. To develop this type of country it is necessary to have a vast amount of finance available. If the hon. member for Port Curtis were given a parcel, it may be that he could develop it. As a result of the development that has taken place on King Ranch, many people who had land nearby were able to look over the fence, see what had been achieved and avail themselves of the knowledge and techniques of King Ranch, which it is only too willing to supply. They are developing their land also. The Government makes no apologies whatsoever for the part it played in the King Ranch scheme.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind hon. members on both sides of the Chamber that the Minister is entitled to introduce his Estimates with the minimum of interjection, and any interjection must be relevant.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The wallum belt had long been regarded as having little potential, if any, for beef production. This myth was exploded by the research endeavours of the C.S.I.R.O. and our State Department of Primary Industries, who established, without doubt, the technical possibilities of replacing useless vegetation with nutritious pastures that would sustain heavy stocking. In the space of a few short years, the outlook changed and tremendous interest in wallum land is now being shown by land investors.

Within two or three weeks of my being appointed Minister, the then Premier, the late Honourable Jack Pizzey, asked me to go with my Chief Commissioner of Lands to Western Australia and South Australia to study the development of inferior lands at Esperance Bay and on the Coonalpyn Plains. What was once useless land has been transformed into an area capable of running about 14,000,000 sheep. In Queensland areas of wallum land are being developed similarly, thanks to the technical know-how of my department as well as the capital supplied by individuals.

Somewhat contrary to popular opinion, the aggregate area of wallum country available to the Crown for settlement is very limited.

About 90,000 acres has already been released, and the time has arrived to make a firm policy decision on the manner and the terms and conditions by which further blocks should be made available.

The A.M.P. Society has signified its interest in developing, in subdivision, an area in the vicinity of 100,000 acres, and other applicants are likewise interested in developing wallum land for personal use or subdivision and sale. To ensure that the right and proper decision in the public interest is made, an investigation is being made of the remaining wallum land between Brisbane and Bundaberg. Until all evidence can be correlated and sifted I do not propose to release any further wallum blocks. My instructions are, however, that the investigation is to be finalised at the earliest possible time. That is important, because we have people anxiously waiting to get some of this land.

The land developer, understandably, looks to security of permanent tenure to protect his financial investment, and the present freeholding laws of Queensland are recognised as providing this source of security. To June of this year, nearly 17,000 applications for conversion of leasehold tenure to freehold had been received. In assessing the significance of this number of applications for conversion, it must also be borne in mind that Government policy has permitted the sale of residential allotments, for instance, under freeholding tenure, or straight-out purchase. Also, in the brisgalow area 60 blocks were made available under purchase lease (freeholding tenure) and others sold as freehold pursuant to the provisions of the Commonwealth-State agreement.

The total area of land either freehold or proceeding to freehold is now approximately 50,000,000 acres. This figure is being increased continually by the regular recording of freeholding conversions. Adverse seasonal conditions and financial implications for lessees have not reduced the flow of new applications.

The extent of my department's activities and responsibilities in the sphere of land title can be gauged to some extent from the fact that during the year ended 30 June, 1969, 2,690 deeds and 2,458 leases were prepared in the Survey Office.

As a result of the several legislative measures, freehold is now available (with minor exceptions) under all but the pastoral tenures. I do not think I need repeat here why pastoral leases should not be brought within the freeholding provisions, but I do emphasise that the availability of freehold tenure has created new interest in, and new impetus to, rural and industrial development and promotion in Queensland. It has been a benefit with many facets. I mention, for example, that it has eased the plight of the humble landowner who, under the perpetual lease system, was caught up in a land valuation spiral such as would force him to abandon his lease.

The amending Act of last year enabled those holding residential allotments to freehold over a period of 30 years without interest, and after paying a deposit of 1/30th of the purchasing price they may now at any time complete the purchase by paying the "present value" of the purchasing price or the balance of the purchasing price, as the case may be; that is, they may take advantage of a substantial discount on the full purchasing price—nearly 50 per cent. in respect of residential allotments. In addition, of course, a lessee on a very low fixed income who owns and resides on land comprised in a perpetual town lease may apply for relief from liability to pay rent in full.

The Annual Report of the Land Administration Commission records that 835 special leases were granted during the year. I think it worthy of mention that this tenure contributes substantially to many phases of development in the community interests. As the term denotes, this tenure is granted for special purposes and it is used, in the main, where permanent tenure is not appropriate at the time. Most of these leases are subject to developmental conditions and, not infrequently, costly developmental conditions. By this method, investment in business, industrial, tourist and rural activities is promoted and where the lessee establishes his bona fides by performance of the conditions, better tenure is then generally available.

The law was recently amended to provide in certain circumstances that a lease term of 75 years could be granted. Provision was otherwise made for conversion of special leases to freehold by terms over a period not exceeding 10 years. This was designed to facilitate freeholding where the lessee was not able to pay the purchasing price in a lump sum. Many lessees are already taking advantage of this purchase arrangement.

I do not propose here to embark on any lengthy reference to legislation. I simply mention, however, that recent amendments have, amongst other things, provided for creation of family trusts and partnerships for the working of preferential pastoral holdings and selections.

A lessee may now, with the prior permission of the Minister, acquire by transfer, and hold, a preferential pastoral holding or selection or any interest therein as a trustee for his children, grandchildren or like descendants if, at the creation of the trust, the beneficiaries are all under the age of 18 years.

Family partnerships, or a company comprising a lessee and his immediate family, or partnerships between unrelated joint holders, have been given statutory recognition.

These provisions, long sought—and reasonably and logically so—have been particularly well received, as instanced by the number of lessees who have acted under the provisions of the new law.

I contend that the land laws of Queensland today provide the avenues and the incentives for positive, progressive land settlement and land usage which, in the end result, will benefit the whole community and enhance the economic growth and civic well-being of the State.

Of course, the work associated with all this law, policy and procedure thrusts many added duties and responsibilities on the officers of my department. But they do not mind this. To their credit, as the testimony of many of the department's clients and inquirers will substantiate, they strive to serve the public in the noblest traditions of the Public Service. This is something that I, as the Minister, appreciate very much.

One of the pressing problems of the time is the survival of several branches of rural industry, particularly the wool industry. It is going through a period of perhaps unprecedented difficulties. A practical solution is exceedingly difficult to conceive. The position has, of course, been kept constantly under examination by me and my officers, and, for that matter, by the Government generally. My department must necessarily look to rental considerations in easing the plight of severely drought-affected clients. In addition to the effects of drought, we must look at the economics of the wool industry itself and declining prices because of competition from substitutes. It has been the policy to adopt a sympathetic attitude and to allow an extension past due date for payment of rent where hardship is particularly apparent.

With a view to examining thoroughly the present rental standards in the light of all the here-and-now circumstances, an inquiry is to be conducted. Mr. Smith of the Land Court is to inquire into, and furnish recommendations in respect of, each land agent's district throughout the State on such matters as whether existing rents being charged for lands held under pastoral and grazing selection tenures should be adjusted and, if so, in what respect. The inquiry will take into account the adverse effects of drought and rising production costs.

As a result of extension of leases as a drought-relief measure in 1967, many sheep and cattle properties will become due for reassessment of rent on 1 April, 1970. The inquiry is aimed at giving those engaged in the sheep and cattle industries an opportunity of stating a case for consideration.

The brigalow land development scheme has, of course, been retarded to an appreciable degree by the prolonged drought. Naturally, some settlers are finding the going a little bit rough but, by and large, they are meeting their difficulties with the landman's traditional brand of courage and, with a firm resolve, are sticking to the task in the knowledge that they have their hands on a very substantial asset and in the hope that the seasons will soon be a little kinder to them. They have faith in the future and they will get their reward. We have

endeavoured to assist them in every way possible; with them, we know that the scheme is basically sound and that the position individually and generally will be retrieved quickly when weather conditions improve.

I cannot sing the praises of these selectors too loudly. On several occasions while I have been Minister, I have been to the area. While they have their problems in developing this type of country, those problems were brought about mainly by bad seasonal conditions. I believe that they have a wonderful asset and, being the type of people they are, as seasons improve they will make their mark in the development of that area.

Design work in Area III is proceeding as a preliminary to opening more blocks for sale and lease when the drought breaks. We feel that it would not be in the best interests of existing lessees and prospective new settlers to open blocks at this particular time.

A feature of the projection of the scheme to Area III will be pre-development, the objective being to secure establishment of new settlers more effectively by placing them on an income-earning basis upon occupation. Again, drought conditions have dictated a cessation of this activity for the time being. Nevertheless, as I say, the design work, including survey, is proceeding. This is a very important phase of the activity. The completion of surveys will facilitate early action to open the new blocks.

That means that when seasons improve and there is a general break in the weather, quite a number of blocks will be ready for settlement. I do, however, sound a note of warning: I ask those going onto this type of country to realise, in the development of their blocks, their responsibility to conserve areas of timber so that the country will not be generally denuded. That has been advocated by many people in important positions, and requests have actually been made to have some limitations or reservations imposed in certain areas. As all hon. members no doubt realise, it is virtually impossible to do that administratively under our freeholding policy.

Mr. Davies: That is quite an admission. You are giving away the people's heritage.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The landholder himself has the real responsibility in this matter, and many of them do measure up to it. We are not a Government that believes in a great measure of control; that is the policy of hon. members opposite.

At this stage I might refer to the work of the Survey Office, administered by the Surveyor-General. Since the time that a hydrographic surveyor named James Cook sailed the eastern coastline of Australia and submitted a factual report, surveyors have made a significant and vital contribution to "conquering the continent". The early surveyors played a major role in exploration and revealing the tremendous pastoral potential of the then new country; some lost their

lives in so doing. Today the work of surveyors is not nearly so dangerous or spectacular, but nevertheless they form, with cartographers, draftsmen and other specialists, a team whose services are essential to orderly land settlement and development.

The Survey Office of my department is the central surveying and mapping authority of the State. The rapid development in Queensland today has accentuated immeasurably the many demands made on all sections of the organisation. Changing land laws and new land development projects—I mention, for example, freeholding and the brigalow land development scheme—have particular implications for the Survey Office.

It is the practice for the Crown to guarantee the dimensions in deeds and leases so that each landholder knows precisely the land granted or leased to him. Likewise, the situation must be established to the satisfaction of all other parties and authorities. Without definition of boundaries, there could be no orderly allocation of land. That substantially is a function of the Survey Office.

The Lithographic Section of the Survey Office reproduces maps to meet the requirements not only of the Department of Lands but also of several other Government departments. The extent of its participation in the over-all scheme of things may be judged from the fact that in the last financial year over 420,000 map copies were reproduced.

The many facets of the work of the Survey Office are too numerous to mention here. I stress, however, that they are all part and parcel of Queensland's progress.

With a view to increasing over-all efficiency, reducing costs under a variety of headings, and expediting plan compilation and mapping, etc., the Survey Office is being supplied with the wherewithal to operate at the highest level of efficiency. For instance, a new phase in mapping will begin in the Survey Office early in 1970 with the installation of a large cartographic camera. This is the latest equipment in its class and is the most modern of its type in the world, designed specifically for mapping reproduction. The equipment is being provided to permit expansion into a wider variety of modern mapping presentation and to expedite and increase volume production.

There are problems associated with recruitment of new staff and retaining the services of qualified and experienced officers. Some have been attracted to employment in other areas of Government. It is hoped that, through future recruitment processes, intake levels will be achieved and staff numbers maintained.

Mr. Bennett: Tell us why Aboriginal and Island Affairs was taken from you?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I think that the hon. member has made the point that he is in the Chamber today. There is no need for him to continue interjecting.

My department, in conjunction with the Co-ordinating Board, continues, with effective results, the fight against the many varieties of plant pests and vermin that would deplete the productivity of the vast regions of pastoral and agricultural lands in this State. The dingo remains the principal vermin, costing the pastoral industries many millions of dollars annually in loss of production, maintenance of netting fences, and contributions to the Stock Routes and Pest Destruction Fund and the Barrier Fence Fund.

After intensive investigations, the Co-ordinating Board, acting with my approval, last year initiated a new method of dingo control. This took the form of distribution by landholders of boneless meat baits impregnated with compound 1080.

Mr. Tomkins: It is a very good scheme, too.

Mr. SULLIVAN: It is a very good scheme. Two such campaigns have now been conducted. Following the first campaign, landholder response virtually doubled, the area baited increased at least fourfold, and the shires embracing treated areas increased from 30 to 63. I think that the hon. member for Roma, who has personal experience of the scheme, will agree that that expansion is an indication of its popularity.

Mr. Tomkins: You deserve a lot of credit for it.

Mr. SULLIVAN: A study of dingo bonus payments made following the first campaign in 11 adjoining shire areas showed a reduction from an average of 10,638 over the previous four years to 6,308, that is, a reduction of about 40 per cent. The saving effected more than covered the cost of the campaign. By comparison, the bonus payments made in eight adjoining shire areas in which no campaign was conducted remained constant, and I emphasise that that is fairly solid proof of the efficacy of the operation.

In both campaigns conducted to date, at least 95 per cent. of the participants were holders of lands located outside the main dingo barrier fence and used primarily for beef production, indicating clearly that many cattlemen are fully aware of the ravages of dingoes in breeding herds and the need to step up control measures. One disappointing feature was the limited landholder response in the far-western and south-western shire areas. However, the Superintendent of Stock Routes has recently visited these remote areas to confer with local authorities and landholders generally. As a result, it is confidently expected that greater response will be forthcoming for the campaign scheduled to begin on 1 May, 1970.

It is worthy to note that, due to the widespread landholder participation in the compound 1080 campaign along the northern and eastern sections of the dingo barrier fence, the Co-ordinating Board was able to

restrict its annual aerial strychnine dingo-baiting to the areas fronting the western section of the fence, roughly from Cloncurry southerly to the New South Wales border. This permitted a saving of \$12,000 compared with the previous years' allocations from the Stock Routes Fund. Provided the anticipated landholder response in the far-western shire areas comes to pass, the Co-ordinating Board may be enabled to consider temporary suspension or even complete abandonment of the long-established aerial strychnine-baiting campaign.

Frequent and constant reports are received from landholders indicating the success of the use of compound 1080 based on greatly reduced dingo numbers and substantially increased calf branding percentages. One interesting report reveals that, following baitings carried out during May and August this year, sheep from the drought-stricken Central West are being successfully agisted on lands in the Burketown district without shepherding or yarding at night. These lands previously carried a large dingo population. No landholder has reported any apparent adverse effect on other wildlife.

Following statements in the Press that the use of compound 1080 would wipe out all wildlife wherever used and criticism from other sources, the Co-ordinating Board—at the suggestion of the American consulate, and in search of further evidence to support or otherwise its own research—obtained reports from five separate sources in the United States of America where this chemical has, for over twenty years, been used and continues to be used in predator and rodent control campaigns.

These reports, including one by a committee of inquiry set up specifically to investigate its effect on desirable wildlife, indicate that, provided the rigid precautions and strict control measures instituted by the Co-ordinating Board are continued, there is little, if anything, to fear from its use in dingo-baiting.

The committee of inquiry stated quite emphatically that the use of compound 1080 in wild canine control was preferable to the use of strychnine or cyanide. It is noted also that compound 1080 is used extensively in Canada to combat coyotes and wolves and in South Africa to control the black-backed jackal, all of which prey on commercial sheep flocks and cattle herds.

If the complete and continued co-operation of landholders adjacent to the dingo barrier fence can be obtained, and this is not impossible, the pressure on the barrier fence would be greatly reduced, if not eliminated.

Groundsel bush is a serious weed of coastal south-eastern Queensland, where many thousands of dollars are spent annually to maintain grazing and dairying land free of the pest and to prevent its spread from its present known limits.

Surveys carried out on behalf of the Co-ordinating Board in 1960 and 1961 showed a large insect fauna present on this plant in North and South America, and field studies, host restriction tests, etc. on nine species of insects were carried out during 1967, 1968 and 1969 in the United States of America by officers of the biological section. These investigations showed that six of the insects were capable of severely damaging the plant and were restricted in their feeding to groundsel bush. The other three species attacked other plants under test conditions and were rejected.

Supplies of the six insect species which include a leaf beetle, a moth, two foliage-feeding moths and two gall-flies, a total of some 26,300 individuals, were received at the Alan Fletcher Research Station during 1969 and, after being bred and stored one generation in quarantine (as required by the Commonwealth Department of Health), are now being mass reared for release in the field.

Releases have already been made of the leaf beetle, two foliage-feeding moths and a gall-fly, and two of these species are now known to be breeding in the field.

Total cost for the three years' overseas programme was \$14,500.

Revenue funds have also been made available to assist local authorities and landholders to control and eradicate the giant sensitive plant, which has proved extremely troublesome in the cane-fields of North Queensland. Provision has been made for this work to continue during the current financial year. The continued co-operation between landholders, cane-growers' organisations and departmental officers will control effectively any recurring growth and eliminate largely any possible spread to clean areas.

Substantial gains have been made in the over-all attempt to control harrisia cactus infestations in the Collinsville district. By deployment of additional men, plant and material, excellent results have been obtained, and the latest assessment of the situation is that the plant is being contained within the known area of infestation and the immediate goal of effective control is being attained.

Landholder co-operation has improved, and I believe that further improvement can confidently be expected. I believe that many landholders have not realised the threat that this tenacious pest plant has posed, not only for those in the infested area but also for landholders far removed from that area. The harrisia cactus has taken over vast areas of otherwise highly productive lands, and under no circumstances can we afford to permit this situation to escape our attention.

Harrisia cactus is a very high-seeding plant. Each fruit pod contains approximately 200 seeds. Apparently the fruit has a great attraction for bird life, and the plant is spread by birds eating the seeds. In the infested area the plan adopted to control it is to work from the perimeter so that new

areas can be dealt with as quickly as possible. The department is receiving a good deal of co-operation from landholders in combating the pest. If the pest can be contained in the infested area, eventually, with co-operation, it will be controlled completely.

The Rabbit Control Authority has reported good progress in rabbit control measures, and the early successes of poisoning with compound 1080 have been sustained.

The authority's operations are naturally limited to funds at its disposal, but by close scrutiny of all operations it has used this available source to best advantage by poisoning where density of rabbit population indicates that it is necessary and otherwise by distributing myxomatosis where immunity to the disease seemed least apparent.

Rabbit control as presently practised in Queensland is still, of course, very much in its infancy, and although it has been directed and developed on the best-known recipes evolved from operations in other States, the Rabbit Control Authority is very much alive to the necessity to continue its own research under conditions and environment peculiar to its area.

Bush Fire Brigade registrations now number 956, representing approximately 16,000 volunteer fire-fighters in all parts of the State from Coolangatta to Normanton and west to Eulo and Thargomindah. This represents an increase of 33 during the financial year 1968-69 and 14 since 30 June this year. The continued increase in registrations indicates the acceptance of the volunteer-type bush-fire organisation, which has been promoted since 1948.

To maintain and expand the organisation, the board's field staff was doubled during 1968-69 by the appointment of an additional inspector in the Brisbane district and the opening of new inspectors' offices in Mackay and Cairns. The Mackay district has a very serious problem of erosion in the Cattle Creek area, which is receiving attention from a number of departments. It has its origin in the repeated burning of hillsides and the removal of the soil-holding vegetation on the steep slopes. Already a number of new brigades have been formed and older units reorganised. The Cairns district has long been the subject of concern about the decreasing scenic value of the hinterland from burning operations, and the appointment of a full-time officer in that area is fully justified. He is doing very good work and is getting good co-operation from the farmers in the locality.

The work of the bush-fire brigades was evident in the latter part of the 1968 season when critical fire conditions occurred, particularly in the south-eastern part of the State. Fires in temperatures over the century mark, with incredibly low humidities (as low as 6 per cent. on one occasion), needed only a wind of reasonable velocity to engulf large areas and cause losses of life and property. Fortunately, we were spared such a wind

and, by the combined effort of bush-fire brigades, police, Army personnel, local authority men and equipment, the fires were brought under control without loss of life or any serious structural damage. Looking at the terrain and the location of properties, it is still amazing that the fires were controlled with such minimal damage. The result is a tribute to all concerned.

Two hundred suspected breaches of the Rural Fires Act were investigated during the year and, of these, 20 (or 10 per cent.), were on demolition sites. This particular aspect of fire incidence is most disturbing, in view of the expansion of work of this nature, and is concerning authorities both rural and urban. Generally speaking, the prospect for the forthcoming fire season is for a season of comparatively restricted fires owing to the scarcity of vegetative fuel.

No State-wide fire season of any exceptional severity has occurred since 1957. Wherever and whenever the drought is broken, however, there is evidence of increased fire-prevention activity and with the increased staff it is anticipated that the organisation of brigades will be maintained at the present satisfactory rate.

Since I have been Minister for Lands, I have been impressed by the dedication of the officers of my department who, throughout the organisation, bring together a great range of administrative and technical skills to serve the State in land administration.

I place on record my appreciation of the assistance given to me by my chief advisers, the members of the Land Administration Commission, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Heffernan and Mr. Cook, and the Surveyor-General, Mr. Yeates. I include in my remarks other officers too numerous to mention by name, some in charge of various sections and others who are doing an honest, every-day job of work. Any expression of gratitude would be incomplete without reference to the secretary of the Land Administration Commission, Mr. Paul O'Gorman, and my own secretary, Mr. Howard Latimer.

It is indeed pleasing to me as Minister to hear the expressions of appreciation from members on both sides of the House and people throughout the State who are interested in land administration matters concerning the services rendered by the department and the approach of the officers.

The members of the Land Administration Commission, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Heffernan and Mr. Cook, have been of great assistance to me since my appointment as Minister for Lands. They are dedicated men who really know their job. I particularly appreciate the complete support and loyalty they have given me as Minister for Lands.

I believe it is important that the Minister, and his Commissioners and administrators should get to know the people in the various areas of the State and the problems of those areas, and I have had the privilege of taking

the Commissioners to many parts of Queensland. It is equally important that the local commissioner should get to know the people in a land agent's district. I am sure that the State has benefited from the relationship established between the general public, the department and me. As I say, it is pleasing to hear these expressions of appreciation from time to time.

I place on record, too, my appreciation of the services rendered by those outside the Public Service who contribute so much to the rural well-being of the community by their services on the Co-ordinating Board, the Rabbit Control Authority, and the various advisory and statutory committees associated with my administration.

I take this opportunity to express a special note of gratitude to Mr. John Mann, the Director of the Alan Fletcher Research Station, who is approaching the end of a long and meritorious career as an entomologist of international fame in his work in the control of the prickly-pears. Over a lifetime, his particular skills have been directed to the control and eradication of pest plants and vermin. Mr. Mann, I understand, is proposing to retire early in the latter half of next year and, in this event, I now record my personal thanks to him and compliment him on ever being a fine officer and an equally fine gentleman.

In my lifetime I have seen the excellent work of this officer, particularly the part he played in the eradication of the prickly-pear. Where I lived was almost on the eastern extremity of the infested area, and there were millions of acres of virtually worthless country at that time because of prickly-pear. Following the efforts of Mr. Mann and others, cactoblastis was brought to Queensland and it set about the eradication of this great curse. It is significant, I am sure, that whenever Mr. Mann is driving in the Chinchilla area he is proud to see the memorial hall erected at Boonarga dedicated to the cactoblastis. To my knowledge, it is the only memorial in the world to an insect. I might be wrong in saying that, but that is what I have been told. I pay a tribute to Mr. Mann for the part he played in the service of the people of Queensland.

The years that lie ahead will not be easy ones for the people on the land or those responsible for its administration. This has been brought about by several things, mainly the adverse seasonal conditions that we have experienced in the past decade. The people in the wool industry, in particular, because of these adverse seasonal conditions and falling prices resulting from competition from substitutes, have real problems. In recent weeks Land Administration Commission members and I have discussed these problems with the Wool Brokers' Association. We are looking for ways and means of re-establishing the people who have been hit so hard by drought if and when we get a general break in the season, which we hope will be this year. This is something

that concerns us. My officers are just as concerned as I am. I believe that it is my responsibility to bring to the notice of my Cabinet colleagues and the Government the problem as it exists. I believe that we have a responsibility to approach the Commonwealth Government and see that money is made available to rehabilitate these people.

Mr. Aiken: When are you going to do this?

Mr. SULLIVAN: Negotiations have been taking place for some time. When a decision will be made is another matter. On my experience in the past 18 months, while I have been Minister for Lands, it is my view that there is a need for the Commonwealth Government to consider the establishment of a Department of National Disaster. Whether the disaster be drought, flood, fire, or anything else, there should be people trained to deal with it wherever it occurs.

Mr. O'Donnell: A disaster mitigation authority is what you want.

Mr. SULLIVAN: That may be so. I know that the hon. member for Barcoo is thinking of drought, and I completely agree with his thoughts. There are at times, however, other disasters such as fires and floods, and I believe that it would be beneficial if there were officers specially trained in relief work to which the State Government concerned could make representations. By that means, relief could be given sooner than under the present method. Much more needs to be done, but we nevertheless appreciate what our colleagues in Canberra have been able to do.

An amount of \$2,162,590 is being sought for the Department of Forestry. This sum covers the amount provided from Consolidated Revenue to cover salaries and contingencies for the department. In addition, under Trust and Special Funds an amount of \$5,950,000 has been provided under the Forestry and Lumbering Fund, and \$6,459,000 under the Reforestation Trust Fund.

Of this \$6,459,000, an amount of \$5,420,000 was transferred from loan funds made available through the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, and \$1,039,000 will be provided by the Commonwealth under the provisions of the Commonwealth Softwood Agreement Act, 1967.

The total of loan funds made available by the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works was \$5,600,000, of which \$5,420,000 was transferred to the Reforestation Trust Fund, as previously mentioned, and an amount of \$180,000 was made available for national parks. That, with \$70,000 provided under revenue, makes the total allocation for national parks \$250,000.

The Department of Forestry has been under my control only since May. It is an important department, large and virile, with duties and responsibilities vital to the welfare of the State, both now and in the future.

There is a wide but mistaken belief that the importance of wood to the economy of an advanced society is declining. It is true that some traditional markets have decreased, but, on the other hand, new uses have been found, and growing demands for particle board, pulp and paper have resulted in higher per-capita consumption of forest products. That, with rising populations, entails a demand far beyond the present capacity of our forests to meet.

That fact was highlighted last month when the Minister for National Development, in opening the Seventh All-Australian Timber Congress at Perth, stated that forest products would soon replace oil products as Australia's largest import item, and pointed out that at the present time the Commonwealth imports timber and wood-based products to the value of \$200,000,000.

This is a matter of real concern to the Government, not only because of the drain on overseas credits but also on account of the uncertainty of continuity of supplies from countries with growing needs at home, or for whose products increased competition will develop. For example, Japan is now a large importer of New Zealand timbers, and recently large shipments have been sent to the United Kingdom. Australia's position in regard to imports, even from her nearest neighbour, can therefore no longer be regarded as secure.

This concern has shown itself in the deliberations of the Australian Forestry Council in which my predecessor, Honourable Harold Richter, a foundation member, played a prominent part. As a direct result of the activities of the council, the Commonwealth Softwood Agreement Act, 1967, was passed and loan funds became available under favourable terms for the establishment and maintenance of additional areas of softwood plantations. This could well be the most important milestone in the progress of forestry in Australia. At present the council is considering the advisability of recommending increased programmes in the extension of that agreement to cover the next five years. The case of the native forests is also under consideration by the council. It is clear that much additional work should be done to promote the production of hardwoods, cypress pine, and the North Queensland rain forests. These proposals were the subject of discussions at the meeting of the Australian Forestry Council at Hobart that I attended a few weeks ago.

Although there is an urgent need for increased production from the forests and expansion of the forest industries of Queensland, hon. members should not underestimate the extent and importance of the timber industry in this State at the present time; nor should they underestimate the work of the department towards improving future supplies. In forest, transport, mill, and factory, the timber industry provides direct

employment to about 16,500 Queenslanders, and the department has a salaried and wages staff of about 2,100. Last year 515 licensed sawmills milled 436,200,000 super feet of logs grown in Queensland forests, both private and Crown. The value of the final product of timber processed in the State would certainly exceed \$100,000,000 a year.

Therefore, the health of the industry is a matter of great importance, and in June of this year I approved a change in sawmills licensing policy to permit the building up, through amalgamation, of milling units large enough to justify installation of new machinery developed by modern technology, which in most cases is essential to full efficiency. That change of policy was strongly advocated by the department and received the unqualified support of the industry. Adequate provisions have been made for the protection of the interests of existing sawmills by the definition of conditions and zones for control of amalgamations. Already a number of firms have taken advantage of the new policy, and many others are planning to do so in the near future.

No doubt some hon. members have already become aware of a side effect of this change through the closure of some mills in their electorates. That is unfortunate, but it is necessary to a healthy survival of the industry. It has only accelerated a slow process of attrition that has been evident for many years. It had its genesis in the past, when mills developed with a combined capacity to process far in excess of the capacity of the forests to produce. The process of attrition has caused the number of licensed sawmills to decrease from 678 five years ago to 515 at the end of June this year. Moreover, more than 40 per cent. of the mills that operated last year had a log intake of less than 250,000 super feet for the year.

The plain fact is that the production of the native forests is limited and cannot be increased in the near future. That is particularly so in the south-east of the State, where the position is critical and supplies cannot support economic operation of the existing mills. The new policy gives industry an opportunity to build up larger units to make the best use of the available material, both in the sawmill and on the market. It is now up to the timber industry to make the best use of these provisions.

The possibility is being investigated of establishing a body representative of all branches of the timber industry throughout the State to perform functions of research, development and promotion of Queensland-grown timbers, with associated activities in education and training. This kind of activity has been found helpful in New South Wales, and the lead has already been followed by Victoria. In the two southern States funds have been provided by a small increase in the stumpage paid on all log milling timber from Crown lands.

During the past year progress was made in the establishment of two new wood-using industries for Queensland. A match factory using hoop pine from the Gin Gin district has recently commenced production and plans initially to use 2,500,000 super feet a year.

Mr. Davies: Where is that factory established? Is it in the Bundaberg-Gin Gin area?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I understand so. I could check on it and let the hon. member know its definite location.

Mr. Davies: It is not being established in a suburb of Brisbane? I saw a news item to that effect.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I will check on it for the hon. member.

In the other case, agreement was entered into for the sale of hoop pine pulpwood from the Mary Valley plantations. This material is to be devoted to the manufacture of particle-board, for which hoop pine is ideally suited. Both of these operations are based on continuing supplies, and, in addition, two smaller sales of hoop-pine plantation timbers were made on a sustained basis. This draws attention to the increasing importance of plantations in the supply of softwoods and the manner in which they are making up for the depletion of the native hoop pine stands. In this regard it is interesting to compare figures for last year with those for 10 years ago. In 1958-59 the cut of hoop and bunya-pine from the native forests was 41,000,000 super feet and that of softwoods from plantations was 20,000,000 super feet, whilst last year the hoop and bunya-pine cut from native forests dropped to 20,000,000 super feet and that from plantations rose to 49,000,000 super feet. A further indication of the increasing importance of plantation-grown timber is found in the fact that the Mary Valley is now cutting each year from its hoop-pine plantations a greater quantity than was removed in the heyday of operations on the virgin stands. It will be recalled that the Mary Valley was one of the well-known hoop and bunya-pine providing areas.

To keep the supplies of timber up to the mills and to ensure correct and orderly logging of the forest, the department faces increasing expenditure on the construction of access roads and the maintenance of roads already constructed. It is also necessary to carry out assessments to permit sound control of sales, to mark trees for removal in accordance with proper forestry principles, and to measure the resulting logs. Another expenditure is on haulage contracts where timber is not sold on stump but is sold either delivered to the mills or on railway trucks. In 1968-69 amounts spent under these heads were—

	\$
Roads	571,570
Harvesting and marketing	1,339,461

In addition, an amount of \$534,049 was expended on hardwood supplies, mainly to the Railway Department.

I am pleased to be able to bring to the notice of hon. members the outstanding performance of the department in a very important field of its reforestation endeavours, namely, the establishment of plantations to build up the softwood estate. In this regard full use has been made of funds available from the Commonwealth to increase the area of annual planting from about 5,000 acres in 1965-66 to 12,002 acres in 1968-69. This is quite a considerable increase and has been effected without any increase in the labour force. It reflects great credit on all concerned whether in office or in the field. Improved techniques, greater use of mechanical equipment and reduced overheads have all helped to keep unit costs down in the face of increases in wages and allowances.

It is of interest to note the growth of the softwood estate in area. The first 50,000 acres took from the early 1920's until 1951-52 to establish; the 100,000-acre mark was reached in the year 1961-62, whilst the 150,000-acre level was passed during 1968-69. With the completion of this year's winter planting the area of effective plantations in Queensland now stands at more than 157,000 acres and the programme for 1969-70 is again in excess of 12,000 acres.

Whilst the plantation programme is widely distributed through the State the increase has been concentrated in the South-east, where the demand for timber is greatest, where a limited demand for pulpwood already exists and where there is potential to develop an integrated industry with a pulp and paper nucleus. In other parts of the State programmes are being maintained to meet local requirements for timber.

The Department of Forestry has always devoted considerable attention to research, and its procedures are soundly based on the results of this work. In the field of tree breeding, Queensland has played a leading role among the nations of the world. In fact, one of its officers was invited to present the position paper and to chair the session dealing with improved growth resulting from tree breeding at the Second World Consultation on Tree Breeding, which was held last August in Washington, D.C. This indicates the regard in which the department and its work are held in Australia and overseas.

Already the benefits of this research are being felt in many ways, particularly in the fact that for the past three years all departmental plantings of slash pine have been made with stock raised from the sowing of improved seed produced in the seed orchards of the Beerwah-Beerburum area. Research work has shown that this stock will produce stems of greatly improved stem straightness and give rates of growth of from 20 to 30 per cent. above that obtained with the former routine. Seed orchards have also been

established with hoop and Caribbean pines, which, after slash pine, are the most important species planted.

Another important aspect of the reforestation work carried out by the department is in the silvicultural treatment of the native forests of hardwoods and cypress pine and of the tropical rain forests of North Queensland. This treatment aims at improving the composition of the forests by removing useless trees and species and promoting the growth of the best individual stems by giving them growing space. In 1968-69 the area treated was 28,769 acres, bringing the total area of forest so treated to 847,000 acres.

The protection of these native forests and of the plantation areas chiefly from the ravages of uncontrolled wild fires, particularly in a drought year such as 1968-69, puts a severe strain on the manpower and finances of the department. It is a tribute to the dedication, vigilance and effectiveness of the fire-fighting organisation that, of a total plantation area of just over 150,000 acres, only 102 acres was burnt over by wild fires. The total expenditure on fire-fighting and patrol for the year amounted to \$265,978, which is more than \$150,000 above that of a normal year. A large part of that expenditure was related directly to the protection of property, both private and public, for which the department has only a "good neighbour" responsibility. In addition to the amount so expended, \$572,000 was spent on the construction of fire-breaks and their maintenance, and on other items necessary to the protection of the forests. Roads constructed in this regard serve for logging access and administrative uses as well as for protection.

The valuation of timber on Crown lands subject to application for freeholding has involved the department in a massive amount of work in field assessment and office computations. Hon. members will appreciate the care with which such work must be done, and no doubt, will be greatly impressed by the fact that the area of selections covered in the field since the Act was amended in 1958 exceeds 18,430,000 acres, which is just over 2½ times the area of State forests in Queensland. During the past year approximately 233 applications, involving 2,367,000 acres, were referred to the department for valuation, and the area covered by field work totalled 2,837,000 acres, in 308 selections. As at 30 June, 172 areas totalling 2,174,000 acres remained to be assessed.

From these freeholding activities the department has gained a far better knowledge of the quantities of timber available, particularly in the cypress pine belt, and this knowledge has been of great use in administering the Sawmills Licensing Act.

One aspect of forestry that is seldom mentioned, but which is of great importance to the State, is the role played by the forests in the provision of recreation and in

the prevention of erosion—the control of run-off, and the regulation of stream flow. It is virtually impossible to place a value on these services rendered by the forests, and by forest management in maintaining the appropriate forest areas so that they fully serve these purposes. It is certain that the role of the forests in this direction is vitally important to the State.

I do not propose to elaborate on this subject—to do justice to it would take considerable time—but I do want to point out to hon. members that although these great services rendered by the forests may receive some recompense, in fact they are seldom recognised by the public.

I now come to the administration of national parks in Queensland, which I am sure hon. members will agree is one of the important phases of the Government activities entrusted to the Department of Forestry. In June of this year, shortly after the administration of the Department of Forestry was transferred to me, I had the pleasure—may I say the honour—of chairing the Third Ministerial Conference on National Parks which was held this year in Queensland. Ministers were present from all Australian States except Tasmania, whilst the Commonwealth was represented by the First Assistant Secretary of the Land Administration Branch of the Department of the Interior. Much fruitful discussion took place at this conference over a wide range of subjects relating to the many problems concerned with the administration of national parks. The personal contacts made not only at ministerial level but also between the various officials charged with administering national parks in the various States should prove invaluable in furthering the national park concept on an over-all Australian basis.

To afford delegates an opportunity of seeing at first hand the management procedures followed in Queensland, they were taken to the Natural Bridge, Springbrook, Lamington and Mt. Glorious National Parks. I know from personal contacts with the Ministers and delegates, both in the field and around the conference table, that they were impressed with what they saw, and with the manner in which national parks are administered in Queensland, particularly the regard paid to managing these reservations with a minimum of interference. I hardly need tell hon. members that in this State the Department of Forestry has followed closely the pattern set by America, where the national-park concept originated, and has managed these areas for the perpetuation of the country's natural and historic heritage.

The total area reserved as national parks at 30 June, 1969, was 2,369,116 acres. When this Government came to power in 1957 the area so reserved was 836,472 acres. Whilst much has been accomplished to date, much still remains to be done before the department reaches its goal of securing within the

national park estate a reasonable representation of the various types of natural environment which occur.

There are several national park proposals at present under investigation, some of them covering extensive areas and some of these in areas where reservations are lacking. In the past year, further progress was made in the reservation of national parks representative of the tropical lowlands with the proclamation of another six reserves. Seven new parks were proclaimed during 1968-69 and, with additions to some existing parks, the total increase for the year was 45,499 acres.

I take this opportunity to announce that His Excellency the Governor in Council has today given his approval to the reservation as a national park of about 27,420 acres located about 15 miles south of the township of Nebo, in Central Queensland. This area was formerly part of Dipperu holding, in Area III of the brigalow land development scheme and contains some 20,000 acres of brigalow scrub. It will be a very valuable addition to the national park estate and will preserve for all time a stand of brigalow scrub of significant size north of the Central Queensland railway. It is an area that will have particular scientific value.

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

Mr. SULLIVAN: I believe that it is important that we preserve such areas for posterity. We in Queensland are blessed with tracts of brigalow country. Hon. members are no doubt aware of the value of brigalow land for cattle-fattening and grain-growing. If we do not preserve these areas for future generations, people will hear about brigalow country and will wonder what it looked like. Therefore, I believe that we are wise in taking this action.

The Department of Forestry has continued its policy of providing facilities to enable the public to enjoy the scenic and other natural features of the parks and the varied flora and fauna therein always keeping in mind the overriding policy of protection and preservation.

Up to 30 June, 1969, \$2,502,765 was expended on national parks. Of this amount, \$1,562,541 has been expended since the Government came to power.

The main work carried out has been the construction of graded walking tracks taking in special features and places of interest, and along which people of all ages may stroll and enjoy, in an intimate way, the beauty of the parks. Picnic and camping grounds with shelter sheds, tables, fire-places and toilets have been developed. In the building of structures, local materials have been used to harmonise with the natural surroundings. I think that all of us, at some time or another, have enjoyed the privilege of visiting a national park in Queensland and found it pleasing to see uniformity of structural improvements which harmonise with local surroundings.

Public reaction to administrative policy has been encouraging and an ever-increasing number of people in the State are recognising the manifold values of national parks. Visitors to the parks number approximately 1,500,000 annually, which indicates the importance of them.

The department, to date, has published brochures on 10 of the main parks, and this work is being progressively expanded.

That is a brief resume on the administration of national parks. I can assure hon. members that the Government appreciates that it has a responsibility to conserve sufficient areas in their natural condition not only for the present generation but also for the generations to come after us, and will do all in its power to fulfil this responsibility.

I wish to pay a tribute to the officers of the Department of Forestry. As I have already mentioned, I have been the Minister in charge of forestry only since May of this year, following the retirement from Cabinet, through ill-health, of the hon. member for Somerset, Mr. Harold Richter. I think it appropriate to pay a tribute to Mr. Richter for the job that he did whilst Minister in charge of forestry.

Mr. Davies: It is nice to see him in such good health now.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Yes, it is very pleasing to see that he has improved in health, and I am sure all members wish him a complete recovery. At the conference of Ministers in charge of national parks, which was chaired by the then Minister for National Development, it was gratifying to hear the many tributes paid to Mr. Richter, and also to the Conservator of Forests, Mr. Trist, who, as hon. members are aware, is nearing the age of retirement.

Mr. Trist has just completed 50 years of service with the Queensland Department of Forestry, and since January, 1964, he has held the position of Conservator of Forests. He joined the department as a cadet in 1919 and served in the field till 1924, when he entered the Queensland University. He graduated as Bachelor of Science from the Adelaide University in 1926, and was selected for higher studies at Yale University, where he was awarded the degree of Master of Forestry. Prior to returning to Australia, he studied forestry in Europe and South Africa.

He has played a dominant role in framing departmental policy in all branches of his chosen profession, particularly the field of silviculture and silvicultural research. He has represented his State and country with distinction at a number of world and British Commonwealth conferences. Like his brother, the late Mr. C. J. Trist, who was the department's first secretary, he has always shown a keen interest in conservation and

national parks. By their dedication, foresight and ability, they contributed greatly to the cause of conservation in this State.

I wish to go on record as expressing my appreciation for the assistance given to me by Mr. Trist in my early days as Minister in charge of forestry. He was of great assistance to me, with his wealth of knowledge and his willingness to impart it to me and to co-operate in every way. I might mention that this year Mr. Trist was awarded what is regarded as the V.C. among foresters, namely, the N. W. Jolly Award. I believe that that is the highest award in silviculture, and I am sure that members are very proud of Mr. Trist's achievement. We wish him a very long and happy retirement.

Mr. Rogers, the Deputy Conservator of Forests, retires on 31 December of this year. He has had over 49 years of service with the Queensland Department of Forestry, and since February, 1964, he has held the position of Deputy Conservator of Forests. He joined the department as a clerk in 1920, and was subsequently appointed a forestry cadet. After a course at the University of Queensland and the Australian Forestry School, Canberra, he graduated with a Diploma in Forestry in 1928.

Mr. Rogers was the first recipient of the Schlich Gold Medal, which is awarded to the most outstanding student in Australia in the final study year at the Australian Forestry School.

From 1929 to 1946 Mr. Rogers served in the Brisbane Valley district, including nine years as District Forester, Yarraman. He returned to Brisbane in 1946 and held the positions of District Forester, Brisbane, Silviculturist and Senior Forester, prior to his appointment as Deputy Conservator of Forests in 1964.

In 1953, at the request of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Mr. Rogers spent about eight months in Brazil and Uruguay, advising these countries on the development of a softwood forest programme and associated research, silvicultural treatment and management. His selection for that advisory position was a tribute to the high regard in which forestry personnel in this State are held. One of the most experienced foresters in Queensland, Mr. Rogers has contributed in no small measure to the sound position that forestry now enjoys in this State.

There, too, hon. members see a record of a very devoted public servant. In the time that Mr. Rogers and Mr. Trist have been associated as Deputy Conservator and Conservator, much work has been done in the development of forests in this State. On behalf of the Government, I thank Mr. Rogers for his dedication during his lifetime of service to Queensland. I have not yet had an opportunity of meeting all the officers of the department, but I have met

quite a number, and I know that the State has a very dedicated band of public servants in the Forestry Department.

Anything that I might say in praise or recognition would be incomplete without some reference to the work of the secretary of the department, Mr. Bill Wilkes. He also has had a very long association with the department and, although he has about 12 months' service to complete before he retires, I think that mention should be made of the magnificent contribution that he has made, particularly in the field of national parks. I often hear him referred to very affectionately as "Mr. National Parks". Queensland is fortunate in having men of his calibre in the Public Service, and I express appreciation to Mr. Wilkes and all the officers of the Forestry Department for the work they are doing.

As Minister in charge of the major departments of Lands and Forestry, I have a heavy responsibility. I am very grateful to members of my Parliamentary committee for the assistance that they give me, and, knowing the type of officer employed in the departments, I am sure that the future of both departments is very bright.

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (2.28 p.m.): I think it could truthfully be said that land is Australia's major national asset. Its ownership is a privilege and, certainly, a responsibility. A number of people in this State accept that responsibility and husband their land well; others—perhaps they are in the minority—do not. I have only 25 minutes in which to speak in this debate; I wish that I had more time to enlarge on the subject of land husbandry.

My colleagues will deal, as time permits, with other aspects of the Estimates, but I shall confine my remarks to the Department of Lands because I believe that the Lands portfolio is one of the most important in the Cabinet of Queensland. As over 80 per cent.—it may be nearer 90 per cent.—of the land in Queensland remains under the control of the Crown, the obligations of the department stand out very clearly. Having regard to those obligations, the Department of Lands does not appear to have a very large staff in comparison with other departments. This is something at which I have always marvelled. When I compare this department, which has so much responsibility and so few staff, with other departments, it appears either that the other departments are overstaffed or that officers of the Department of Lands are often grossly overworked. I suppose the Minister and his departmental heads can deal with this aspect and I am not advocating increases in the staff, but I do draw attention to it. The Department of Lands has a very hard-working, skilful and dedicated staff, as members of the Labour Party in Opposition know.

The Land Administration Commission comprises three senior officers and everyone, from the Chief Commissioner down to the most

junior cadet, is to be commended. Whenever I have asked for information from this department, I have been very courteously received and the information has been supplied with dispatch.

I think the Minister mentioned that the field staff was spread over 18 districts in Queensland. Each district has a land commissioner, an assistant commissioner, land rangers, assistant land rangers, cadets, and, finally, office staff. Their duties include preparation of reports and inspection and evaluation of properties, which is often an onerous duty. They often have to support their valuations in the Land Court. They have the further duty of policing the conditions on which the many leases issued by the department have been granted.

The land commissioner in each district is expected to exercise over-all supervision of his district and to know it from end to end, so that at all times he is able to recommend changes consequent on development. Land commissioners and those who assist them are very important people in the over-all development of the State.

I have found Land Commissioner Hall and his staff in Townsville most co-operative. He is a very efficient and personable man and he and his staff are ready at all times to offer assistance. Although at times I hand out brickbats, on this occasion I wish to hand out bouquets for the development of the Pallarenda area in Townsville. I think it has been done very well, and I am very proud of it. However, I am not proud of the prices being paid for the land there because I feel they are adding to the inflationary spiral in the price of land in Townsville. I know it is not the fault of the department. It is carrying out the policy of the Government which, at the moment, is to develop this land and put it up for public auction. I had hoped that this land might be available to ordinary people in my city, but because of the system of public auction, prices are beyond the reach of the ordinary person.

In many instances the price for a front block reaches \$7,000. Prices paid for the back blocks are not quite so high, but the system of public auction that is applied in my electorate, and in many others, only adds to the inflationary spiral and is most certainly against the best interests of the ordinary people of this State. It is not a satisfactory state of affairs when people are forced to pay for a block of land possibly half as much, or perhaps more, as the cost of the house that they will erect on that land. I regret very much indeed the fact that the Department of Lands abandoned the system of balloting for land under which everybody had an opportunity to obtain a block. With public auction the land goes to the highest bidder, the person who has the most money. Those who do not have very big and deep pockets are excluded. My statements are not an indictment of the

department because it is required to carry out Government policy; it is the policy that is at fault.

In Townsville the department has carried out some very good work at Rowe's Bay. The area behind the Bush Children's Home was once a great eyesore. Some years ago I made representations to the Minister to have something done about that area, with the result that at present it is a great asset to the City of Townsville. It has been filled in and levelled out and is now a very attractive area. The Department of Lands is to be complimented on its preparedness to transform that area. I do not think it has gained very much from it, but it might get its money back when the allotments in that area are sold. I realise that the project was a big one and possibly a costly one, but for the residents of Townsville and particularly the Bush Children's Home, the kindergarten and other centres in that area it was worth it.

The report of the Land Administration Commission includes the reports of the Surveyor-General, the Superintendent of Stock Routes and the Rural Fires Board. I note that the Department of Lands is deeply involved in combating the crippling drought that is presently gripping vast areas of the State. It is quite right that the department should be so involved because a great many people are held in the vice-like grip of the drought. The report refers to the work that is being done to render aid to those people. I have no argument at all with that; in fact I wish that more could be done for them.

I reiterate what has been said before on many occasions, namely, that Queensland and Australia will always be faced with drought. Every few years we may enjoy a very good season, but on the whole Australia is a very dry continent, and there will never be a time in our lifetime, or in our children's, when we will not be forced to grapple with the drought problem.

Queensland is better off than any other State in its total availability of water resources. I shall tie this matter up with land usage. The average annual run-off from all streams in Queensland cannot be precisely gauged but is estimated at 108,000,000 acre-feet per annum. The Australian total is 280,000,000 acre-feet per annum. Those figures show that Queensland is well off compared with the rest of Australia. In other words, Queensland has 39 per cent. of the total Australian run-off. Excluding Tasmania, Queensland has 45 per cent. of the total. A substantial proportion of it occurs in North Queensland. About 83,000,000 acre-feet comes from the area north of, and excluding, the Fitzroy Basin. Therefore, North Queensland, excluding the Fitzroy Basin, has 77 per cent. of the water resources of the State. I make that point because it obviously proves that this area is vital to Queensland.

I have mentioned these statistics because they are essential to any consideration of land usage. If we are to develop land properly we must know what water is available. I think all hon. members agree that we need major water conservation works throughout Queensland, particularly in areas with a big run-off. When there is a good run-off—and it occurs only at certain times of the year—we can store the water for use in drought periods. This supply could carry us over months or even years of dry weather.

If land is to be developed and used properly, close liaison should exist between the Department of Lands and the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply. They should not be controlled by different Ministers. They are so closely associated that the officers should work in close liaison, under one Minister, so that a continuing, established relationship will prevail. The two departments should be integrated and put under the control of the Minister for Lands. It could then produce all the statistics necessary for the development of land.

I think it is acknowledged that development is regulated by the available water supply, so surely there is a great need for precise knowledge of available water supplies. There is a need to know how best to conserve, distribute and utilise that water.

The department collects data and statistics on, for example, how much rain falls in certain areas. All of that work is necessary. Another function of the department is research into evaporation in western areas, north-western areas and other hot areas of the State.

Mr. Ahern: This is always done.

Mr. TUCKER: To a degree, but it is not good enough. If the hon. member had been present at the seminar on water problems in tropical Queensland—

Mr. Ahern: I read the report.

Mr. TUCKER: Then the hon. member knows that many of those men, who are better qualified than he is, claim that not enough research is being carried out into this matter. A certain amount is done, but we do not know enough about it at the moment. They claim that there is a need for hydrological surveys, analyses of stream flows, the designing of dams, and drilling to determine the availability of underground water and how those sources can be recharged. Continuing research is required into those matters, and to a degree, the department carries out that work. However, much more money should be provided so that more research can be done. It would be beneficial to the people of Queensland, and particularly the planners in the Department of Lands, to have that knowledge and data.

I wonder whether much of this information was available, and if it was, whether it was properly considered, relative to the brigalow scheme. I consider that Area I and

Area II were conceived hastily because of previous political repercussions in this State, and that they came into being before there was a chance to assess the area properly and consider all the facts. I was born in Central Queensland and I know that that area is cursed with long droughts. It has been that way since I was a small lad. The droughts seem to go on and on. It is extremely fertile country and in a good season is one of the most wonderful areas of Queensland.

"The Courier-Mail" of 2 November 1969 reports what is happening in that area. This article reads—

"Government help for settlers in Fitzroy scheme

"Settlers within the scope of the Land Development (Fitzroy Basin) Scheme, who are experiencing financial difficulties because of drought, could be granted some relief by the State Government."

This is a good thing. However, it is obvious that this scheme has run into difficulties. I back that statement by referring to page 4 of the Annual Report of the Land Administration Commission where, under the heading "Water Facilities", there appears—

"In Areas I and II the standard 10,000 cubic yard excavation has proved inadequate except on the better catchments. Settlers who consider, after experience during the present drought, they have inadequate water facilities, have been invited to submit proposals for enlarging existing facilities or other schemes to improve water supplies. Several proposals are now being investigated. The dry conditions and requests from brigalow settlers prompted a deep drilling investigation of underground supplies in the Arcadia Valley area, but the three test bores proved unsuccessful."

What I am stressing is the need for research before development, wherever it may be, is undertaken. Was adequate research carried out before this scheme was embarked upon? I do not believe that it was, and those statements to which I have referred prove what I am saying. Rainfall records for the last 100 years show that Queensland has had droughts that have lasted longer than the one now being described as "crippling". It is not the worst drought the State has ever had, as has been mentioned on several occasions by the Water Research Foundation.

I ask: are we creating our own problems by lack of proper research? Because we do not look at all the facts before beginning development, are we periodically placing a crushing burden on governments by producing a need for drought-relief measures? If what was needed was ascertained before development was proceeded with, the effect of drought would not be as severe as it is now. By not making available the necessary reserves of water, are we exposing good citizens to bountiful returns in a good season and the possibility of bankruptcy after three or four years of drought? Are we

allowing development to take place before we are perfectly sure that every eventuality and contingency can be met? I think that at times we have gone ahead with development, only to find later that all the Government's funds have to be used to pull people out of trouble. I do not want to see anybody going bankrupt, and I know that when people are in difficulties they need to be helped, but I still think that it is the Government's approach to development that has caused the trouble.

I should like to see more money channelled to the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, and more emphasis placed upon research and the collection of additional data. The Commission would then be able to say, "Here are the facts," and it would then be for the Department of Lands to interpret them and go ahead with developmental schemes if they were shown to be sound. Are priorities in their correct order in Queensland today? Quite often I wonder whether they are. Should we be developing other land quickly?

(Time expired.)

Mr. AHERN (Landsborough) (2.53 p.m.): I thank the Minister for Lands for his co-operation with me during my time in this Chamber as the member for Landsborough, and I also express my thanks for the co-operation and assistance that I have received from the Chief Commissioner of Lands, Mr. McDowell; Mr. Brian Heffernan and Mr. Neville Cook, members of the Land Administration Commission; Mr. Paul O'Gorman, secretary of the Land Administration Commission; and various other officers of the Minister's department.

I should also like to extend my congratulations to Mr. Alan Trist, who will shortly be leaving the Department of Forestry, for the wonderful service he has given over the years to the Government of this State. He has made a very great contribution to silviculture in Queensland.

I have been to some extent heartened by the contribution of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who urged that more research be carried out into the problems of agriculture in Queensland. It heartened me to hear him say that, because far too often hon. members opposite fail to recognise the importance of research into the problems of primary producers. One of the very great problems when Labour Governments were in office was that they were not prepared to encourage research. I agree with some, but not all, of the points made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and I shall refer to some of them later.

The report of the Land Administration Commission for the year 1968-69 covered a wide field and indicated the tremendous scope of the activities of the Land Administration Commission and the Lands Department in Queensland. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that there should be

greater liaison between the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission and the Land Administration Commission, and I agree with him on that point. There is some heartening co-operation at present. However, if one argues that one Minister should be responsible for both these commissions, surely one must extend that argument and say that primary industries should also come under the control of the Minister for Lands, because the research undertaken by that department has an even greater impact on the efficient management of land than does the research undertaken by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission.

Mr. TUCKER: They have at times been under the one Minister.

Mr. AHERN: All of them?

Mr. TUCKER: Yes.

Mr. AHERN: I respect the hon. member's experience on that matter, but I think it is a question of liaison. If one Minister was responsible for all these tremendously important departments, he could not possibly give attention to all the subdepartments under his control. He would be more of a director than a managing director, as are our Ministers today.

The administration of land in any State, and particularly in this State, is a very important responsibility. Land as an agricultural resource is still, I believe, important in the organisation of agriculture in Queensland. Primary producers have three basic resources that they can employ—land, labour, and capital—even though greater emphasis is now being placed on mechanisation and management, land is still important. It is essential that land policies should be administered well in this State, as I believe they are.

Agriculture is facing challenges that it has never had to face before, and the organisation of agriculture is changing. Everyone is of the opinion that it should change. The introduction of quotas has affected many primary products in this country. Industry reconstruction is on the lips of politicians, industry leaders, university professors and other people who are entitled to express an opinion. Reference has been made already in this debate to the importance of reconstruction of the wool industry in Queensland. If the dairy reconstruction scheme is introduced in the near future, the Department of Lands will have a part to play, and there is no doubt that the Land Administration Commission will have a central role to play in future in shaping agriculture in this State to meet the needs of the 1970's.

The first change needed—and it is not a very great change—is in the number of trained personnel in the Land Administration Commission. The Commission needs officers trained in new techniques, planning, and so on, officers who are qualified and experienced. In future it will be necessary to recruit more university graduates for the Land

Administration Commission. Having these facts in mind, it was rather disconcerting to me to read this paragraph in the report of the Land Administration Commission for 1968-69—

"It is desired to draw attention to the severe staff losses, particularly qualified technical staff, occurring during the year which have placed an extra burden on the remainder of the staff. Unless qualified persons can be encouraged to seek employment in the Department, the Commission will find it increasingly difficult to carry out its charter."

I have been discussing this charter today.

In the first Financial Statement I heard in this Chamber, in 1968, the Treasurer said—

"It has been a matter of concern to me that in our Public Service, the teaching service and elsewhere, the salary scales of the more senior administrative, professional and technical officers have lagged substantially behind those in other States. As a result, we have been losing senior officers whose services we can ill afford to lose. I have thus recommended to the Government that it should consider ways and means to improve the salary scales of these officers and \$500,000 has been set aside for this purpose."

I have no knowledge of how that \$500,000 was appropriated, but there is going to be a continuing need to allocate sums of money of this type to stop the brain-drain from some of our important administrative departments.

In Queensland we place much importance on our agricultural industries, and the most vital departments from this point of view are the Department of Lands, with all its ancillary activities, and the Department of Primary Industries. In my speech on the Financial Statement at that time, I welcomed the appropriation by the Treasurer and suggested to him that he should apply some of that money to the Department of Primary Industries, which was then facing a problem similar to that with which the Department of Lands is at present faced. The Treasurer, in his reply, disagreed that this was necessary at that time. However, time has proved me to be correct. There have been a number of resignations from this department, which represents a serious problem for Queensland's agricultural industries. The position will become progressively worse if it continues. It is vital to keep in the department our most experienced and qualified men, who have taken years to train. It will be necessary, both in this department and in its sister department, the Department of Primary Industries, to increase salaries and improve conditions so that qualified personnel will remain here.

In my speech at that time I drew an analogy between the Commonwealth Public Service, research men in the C.S.I.R.O., and equivalent men in the Department of Primary Industries. Their salary differential at that

time was in the vicinity of \$1,000 a year. I have no reason to believe that the position has changed proportionately since that time.

Mr. Hanlon: The Commonwealth will "up" you again. Whatever you give, they will go above you.

Mr. AHERN: That may be so, but surely the hon. member will agree that if this brain-drain continues it will present us with a very serious problem. We should be doing something about it. We ought to be improving conditions somewhere. This position must be controlled for the good of our rural industries.

It is important also that officers who are recruited in future are trained in all aspects of land-capability planning, land use and farm management. It will be necessary to employ more university graduates and graduates from the institutes of technology. It will be necessary for the department to maintain liaison between the university and the institutes of technology so that the courses required are actually taught at those institutions. It is true that there is good liaison between the Development Planning Branch of the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Lands, but unfortunately the Development Planning Branch is not basing its land-capability planning on economic aspects as a primary concern, as it should be.

This highlights the need for a greater number of trained personnel in the Department of Lands. New techniques ought to be employed in land-settlement policies to a greater degree than at present. Decisions on land-settlement policies must be based on detailed economic studies. I am not prepared to suggest, as a number of economists have, that all land-policy decisions should be based on economic considerations alone, but at least economic considerations should be clearly known when the decisions are made so that they can be weighed against other considerations. New techniques that are employed in other fields could well be employed in land administration.

Computers and linear-programming techniques to determine optimum farm sizes and optimum property sizes are being employed elsewhere in Australia and overseas, and we, too, should look at it. Of more importance is the determination of optimum enterprise-mixes for various areas. For instance, in the wallum area there will be a variety of things that a farmer or property-holder could do. Of course, people might say, "Well, that is for the particular farmer to decide." However, the department, in its policy considerations, ought to know what can be done with that particular land and what is the optimum enterprise-mix from a profit point of view. There can be a difference of as much as 100 per cent. between one enterprise-mix and another, and the decision makers ought to know the optimum farm sizes and enterprise-mixes for a particular

area when a development scheme is envisaged. That is essential in future policy making.

I was gratified to hear the Minister outline that to ensure that the best possible use is made of the relatively limited area of vacant Crown land in the wallum region an investigation and utilisation study thereof is in progress as a preliminary to opening further blocks. I suggest that the points I have covered earlier should be considered in association with this study.

I have with me a linear programming study, which is a very accurate one, of the St. George irrigation area and of the various enterprise-mixes that presently are in operation. Hon. members would be surprised at the net profit variability between one enterprise and another—for example, a fat-lamb enterprise and a cotton-growing enterprise or someone who grows oats by irrigation and grazes steers. If hon. members were to fly over that area, as I did recently, they would see that on the many farms in the area there are just as many differing enterprise-mixes. The study reveals one enterprise-mix that is clearly well above the others, and it is that sort of thing that the policy-makers in the Department of Lands should have at their fingertips when they, in association with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, make decisions on the development of land.

Mr. Jensen: They want advice on changes in world markets, too.

Mr. AHERN: That is so. That can always be written into a programme such as this so that it can be changed from time to time. We should avail ourselves fully of new techniques in this field that are widely developed in other States of Australia.

I was pleased to note that the Minister and his officers had toured the State widely to acquaint themselves of the problems of rural Queensland. The Minister has also visited Victoria, Western Australia and New South Wales to look at land development policies in those States. His visits have been very useful, but there is a need for an even closer liaison on some of the newer techniques in use.

I was pleased to hear on the grapevine that the Federal authorities have received very enthusiastically a proposal to establish an Australian agricultural business planning institute. The plans may come to fruition in the next week or so, and the institute will probably be established at the University of Armidale. This should give much help to all Australian rural policy-makers and also to those employed in rural production.

The Government should use every modern facility to improve rural production, and similar techniques should be applied on properties. I have previously said that the Land Administration Commission is in a unique position to advise its new tenants on the advantages of good over-all economic

evaluation of their management. Today there is no substitute for experience on the land, but on the other hand there is positive proof that new economic management techniques are essential in modern agriculture, particularly in the Australian environment.

In the future, the problems posed by drought, industry-reconstruction needs, new development schemes and other challenges can, and will, be met by a group of highly trained personnel carrying out planning. Much can be achieved in the future, and just as much has been achieved in the past.

We have every reason to be proud of the land policies of this Government. I know that the Labour Party does not agree with our policy of freeholding, but it is a fact of life that equity is necessary if fruitful development is to ensue. That is what has ensued, and it will ensue to an even greater extent when the drought finally breaks.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. AHERN: I know that hon. members opposite are not happy about it, but it is a plain fact of life. That is why this Government decided to institute its freeholding policy, which has worked extremely well.

Mr. Sherrington interjected.

Mr. AHERN: It is good to see the hon. member in the Chamber. He is not here very often.

In the field of agricultural industries, Queensland has become known as the State of opportunity in Australia. Many people from other States are ever-willing to invest in Queensland. A great deal of credit is due to the Land Administration Commission for providing the right climate for attracting investors to Queensland. Much has been achieved since the original policy decisions were made, and I congratulate the Minister and his staff on the proficient way in which land policies have been carried out. I also thank the Minister for the decisions made last year relative to freeholding town perpetual leases. That was a policy that the Labour Party opposed in this Chamber. It was received warmly in my electorate, where there were a number of town perpetual leases.

Mr. Sherrington: How do you get on with Peter Nelson-Gracie these days?

Mr. AHERN: If the hon. member took the trouble to find out, he would know that Mr. Nelson-Gracie does not enjoy the best of health these days. I do not think it does the hon. member well to bandy that gentleman's name around in this Chamber at the present time. I enjoy a good friendship with Mr. Nelson-Gracie, and I can assure the hon. member that that friendship will continue.

There have been hundreds of representations relative to the town perpetual lease problem, which was overcome completely by the Government's decision to allow those

leases to be freeholded at their unimproved value, interest free, over 30 years, with a 56 per cent. discount if the money was put on the line. These leases were freeholded by the hundreds in my electorate, and we are pleased to be rid of them.

The Minister referred to challenges confronting the sawmilling industry in Queensland. This is significant in my area, where a number of sawmills and a large Department of Forestry plantation exist. The Minister referred to the Government's forestry policy. There is no doubt that between supply and demand there is a gap amounting to about 50,000,000 super feet a year. This shortage can be met only by increased plantings of softwoods. The parties concerned must hold a number of conferences in the future to ensure good forestry administration in this State.

(Time expired.)

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (3.18 p.m.): The history of Australia, which is a young country, is bound up with the history of land administration. This is probably unique because of the relatively short time that it has taken this country to reach its present stage of development. Exploration, settlement, land usage and development are all embraced in any textbook dealing with Australia's history. Consequently, it is evident to all students that land administration is a most important aspect of government. The Minister for Lands holds an important portfolio. Although it might lack glamour, the responsibility of the department has grown and the various Ministers for Lands have exerted a marked influence on our future. Therefore, it is important that we consider these Estimates fully.

Lest courtesy be forgotten in the excitement of the next 25 minutes, let me at this stage congratulate the officers of all departments for their interesting and comprehensive reports. I thank them all for their excellent work for the State, and their courtesy to members of this Parliament. It is well known that they perform their duties conscientiously not only in congenial areas such as Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville, but also in the more remote areas where their co-operation and assistance are much appreciated. Being human, I should imagine that at times their personal views conflict with current Government policy, but, in fulfilling the demands of democracy, they perform their roles as true public servants and implement the wishes of those who, temporarily at least, have control of the situation.

I also wish at this stage to add a word of appreciation of the Minister's courtesy in supplying me with a copy of his speech notes.

The responsibilities of the Minister are indeed great, and no Minister in any Government is more open to criticism than is the Minister for Lands. Since the coalition took office, there have been three Ministers in this portfolio, and each in his turn has

had his critics on both sides of the Chamber and, of course, in all interested sections outside Parliament. The present Minister, comparatively new in office, has presented his Estimates for the first time, and it was quite interesting to see how he progressed. I shall deal with certain items in his speech later if time is available.

The personal characteristics of the present Minister are, of course, quite obvious. To anybody of vision, he is truly a man of the virgin soil, noted for his gregariousness and his fine social instincts. Those attributes give him quite an advantage, because at least he will be quite a good public relations man and will have a happy time—until he comes into conflict with certain people in the community who have a very strong influence on Government policy. I refer to a group within the United Graziers' Association. I do not condemn that organisation, but it is quite evident that a powerful nucleus exists within it, and at least two members of the Country Party who have been Ministers for Lands would bear testimony to the claim that it is a strong pressure group.

Mr. Sullivan: Maybe I am naive.

Mr. O'DONNELL: Perhaps the Minister is naive. Nevertheless, I assure him that he will feel that pressure. Because they failed to satisfy the demands of this pressure group, at least two Ministers for Lands passed into oblivion, unwept and unhonoured, but far from unsung.

I, too, have rather strong feelings about the president of the U.G.A., because he never misses an opportunity to criticise past Labour Governments and Labour Ministers. He takes great delight in pointing out past errors, particularly in the subdivision of this State. Nobody in the Labour Party would be foolish enough not to recognise that errors were made in the past, but never were they made for political advantage. As a matter of fact, the subdivision of this State has been to the benefit of the Country Party. I also say without fear of contradiction that in this State, particularly in the western areas, it is the Country Party that has gained as a result of Labour policy.

I wanted to raise this matter today because it is very important to me. I do not mind a person criticising the party to which I belong if he recognises also the sins of omission of his own party. I think it is incumbent upon the leader of an organisation that is, in itself, representative of the graziers of Queensland to show a degree of neutrality as far as political parties are concerned. However, the president of the United Graziers' Association in this State never misses an opportunity to refer to the past. He never says a word about the many fine things that Labour did in government—not one word—but he keeps up a continual condemnation of the A.L.P. because of a few blunders that it may have made in land administration matters. He does

not mention substandard blocks that have been opened by this Government; he does not speak about unsuitable or ineligible applicants for ballots—and some who are ineligible do get in. He does not mention the premature settlement of which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke earlier in the debate.

If I may digress for a moment, I should like to refer to the Arcadia Valley. I do not think that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows that the settlers in the Arcadia Valley actually had grass but had to move their stock out to obtain water.

The trial-and-error approach of the Country-Liberal Government in the brigalow land development scheme is quite evident. One can see in the development of Area III that it has learnt by its past mistakes. The Government—and I thank the Minister for this—has ceased opening blocks at this stage because of the drought. The idea of pre-development, or part pre-development, is excellent, but that was not done in Areas I and II.

Mr. McKechnie: In 1935 I had to move out because of lack of water, but I did not blame the then Labour Government for that.

Mr. Hanlon: No, but your party did.

Mr. O'DONNELL: I say to Mr. Peter Bell that it was the A.L.P. that gave the Country Party an opportunity to build up its numbers in many areas of this State, and that I think it is time the leader of such an important organisation mixed some credit with the discredit that he hands out from time to time.

Quite recently, because of the drought that was affecting the country, Mr. Bell thought that he should go to Canberra on behalf of his members. Although I was sorry in one respect I was pleased in another respect that he did not gain what he wanted from the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, because that refusal should indicate to him that, if he had any respect for his own party, he should have made his representations through the Queensland Government.

Any land administrator today must be very concerned about the trend towards aggregation that has been brought about by drought, road transport, mechanisation, and other factors. As hon. members know, people looking for agistment during the current drought did not just rent properties; they purchased them. Under the circumstances mentioned by the Minister relative to the wool industry, one can see that, because of rising costs of production and static prices, an attempt could be made to aggregate in order to make pastoral properties an economic proposition.

Mr. Lickiss: You would prefer to keep them on a peasant subsistence level.

Mr. Tomkins: You would prefer to keep them at subsistence level.

Mr. O'DONNELL: In reply to that ridiculous interjection, I wrote on the front of the annual report today something I read and on which I intended to enlarge. It referred to Queensland and to a near serf-peasantry class dominated by banks, firms, etc., which obtained the best from their labour.

That is exactly what we do not want in this State. I do not deny the need for some people to obtain more country. Our policy is not directed towards establishing a near serf-peasantry class. The Labour Party does not intend, when in Government, to foster anything so stupidly ridiculous.

I wish now to address an important request to the Minister on his remarks about assistance to farmers and graziers. Naturally, in this respect I can only refer to people occupying leasehold country. I should like to have the Minister's attention because I am serious in what I am asking.

I want the Minister, as head of this department, to ask Cabinet to give serious consideration to a remission of rents to drought-stricken graziers. I make this plea in all seriousness because last year, or the year before, the Government instituted a programme of remission of rents to certain people who could prove they had a genuine case. The same people were further helped by another Government department, the Treasury, in that they were given assistance with their rates. I am making this plea on behalf of western local authorities because I think it is essential that local authorities should be enabled to function as they should. They are instruments of decentralisation.

I am not making this request on behalf of the grazier who is not genuine, but I press the case for the man who really is in need so that he can not only obtain the benefit of a remission of rent but also be granted a subsidy for his rates.

I am not being deceived in this matter. I know of graziers who in the past have received this concession and who, immediately after they had finalised their rate contract with the council, have enjoyed a month's holiday. That is not the type of person for whom I am speaking today. Those people are not genuine. But I think that if the situation of the genuine ones is fully examined—and the non-genuine ones, too—very few mistakes will be made in this respect. I put that thought to the Minister for his serious consideration. It is very important indeed to people in my area.

The Minister raised certain points and one that I thought was very significant was the development of certain areas of Queensland by large companies such as King Ranch, the A.M.P. Society, and so

on. I do not propose to enter into the rights or wrongs of those matters. However, the Minister made a very significant statement when he said—

"The land developer understandably looks to security of permanent tenure to protect his financial investment, and the present freeholding laws of Queensland are recognised as providing this source of security."

On looking at the companies mentioned, we find that they either have been given very great freeholding rights or have been promised them. Where do we draw the line? How do we decide who is eligible for those rights and who is not? Are we simply to depend on a Minister to determine that certain companies will receive this so-called advantage and that others will not? In all seriousness, I ask those questions because the Minister's statement that the security of those companies depends on freehold title is a very sweeping one. I hope that the Minister is gracious enough to answer me on that point.

I now refer to my other point, which has to do with industries in the West. Thoughtful people must be concerned about the conditions that prevail in the western electorates. In three years, the enrolment in the western portion of my own electorate dropped by 300 people. I suppose that in Gregory the loss would have been probably 500 to 600 people, and I should think that similar situations prevail in Warrego and Flinders. As I have said before, certain factors have led to a trend towards aggregation and have sown the seeds of decay. Of great concern is the fact that some individuals will probably have to sell their homes at low prices and that business people will be affected. But it must not be forgotten that the Government, too, has a big investment in the western towns. The amenities that have been provided by Governments over many years represent a considerable investment. If anything can be done to help bolster the economy of the western portions of the State, it should be done. I feel very keenly about this matter because I know the number of houses put up for sale in certain western towns by owners who hope that buyers will come along.

A Government Member: What about the shops?

Mr. O'DONNELL: I know very well that in certain towns a number of shops have closed and others are in the course of closing. I know that the State has been cursed with the drought, which only worsens the situation. Once those people move out from the West, pity help it if it expects them to return. It is essential for the Minister for Lands to put in a strong word to Cabinet for additional drought assistance, particularly as it is nearing Christmas. Some people in the areas that recently benefited from rain may now be somewhat nonchalant, but I assure the Chamber that when I suggested the

establishment of a drought mitigation authority I was very serious because these problems arise so frequently, particularly in our western lands, and must be dealt with promptly.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to liaison between various departments. Liaison relative to the disasters that constantly beset the State should exist not only between departments, but also between Ministers.

Mr. Sullivan: You know of the liaison that exists between the departments.

Mr. O'DONNELL: I know of it very well, but I am talking about the drought situation, and even the flood situations that sometimes occur. Help is more valuable if it is given quickly, and if persistence of interest is evident the people will have more confidence in whichever Government is in power.

I am greatly interested in many of the less-publicised activities of the Department of Lands and the Department of Forestry. It is indeed gratifying to see that the Department of Lands is trying to improve biological controls. From my observation I should say that the prickly-pear menace is not decreasing. I am not sufficiently qualified to say that it is increasing, but I am not blind and I know that it is not decreasing. This could create a good deal of worry. It is gratifying to know that in the areas seriously affected by harrisia cactus, this pest is perhaps on the retreat.

These are all matters of grave concern which entail dedicated hard work.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HINZE (South Coast) (3.43 p.m.): Some idea of the complexities encountered in the Department of Lands, which is so capably administered, can be gained from the references in the speech of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, to the problems in the area he represents. He spoke of the drought and of the loss of population in different parts of the State. In my area, the position is quite the reverse, and I have indicated on a number of occasions that my problem could be the fast-growing population.

I appreciate the remarks of the hon. member for Barcoo. The problems he referred to worry all responsible members. We want decentralisation in Queensland and we want the people of the out-back to enjoy all the amenities available to others in Queensland. We are indeed concerned to hear about the decline in population in various electorates.

In conveying my congratulations to the Minister, who has occupied his portfolio for a couple of years, I draw attention to the vast area of land that he and his officers have under their control. I commend the officers of the Department of Lands, particularly Mr. Gordon McDowell, Mr. Brian Heffernan and Mr. Cook. When I became a member of Parliament three or four years

ago the main problems I had in the South Coast electorate related to the Department of Lands.

Mr. Newton: And the Liberal Party.

Mr. HINZE: I suppose that could be with me for some time yet; I would not know.

Mr. Bennett: The hon. member for Windsor is the land expert; he is a prickly-pear farmer.

Mr. HINZE: The hon. member for Windsor?

In the South Coast electorate there are over 1,400 leasehold residential properties. Their conversion to freehold was a real problem to me. Following three years of discussions with the Minister and his officers, I can now say that I am practically free of that problem. The people at the Gold Coast appreciate the attitude of the department and the way its officers have at all times negotiated and tried to solve the problems of converting to freehold.

As the hon. member for Landsborough and the Minister said, it is now possible to freehold, for cash, for about 50 per cent. of the valuation of the land, or to freehold over 30 years. For those in unfortunate circumstances or on pensions, a remission of rents is available. Only this morning I received a letter telling me that the department had allowed a remission of \$150 owing by a pensioner in my electorate. This satisfies me no end. According to the report, 17,000 applications for conversion to freehold have been lodged.

I congratulate the officers of the Department of Forestry, particularly Mr. Trist, the Conservator of Forests, who is due to retire, and the secretary, Mr. Wilkes. There are a number of national parks in my electorate and, during the past 12 months, I have met these gentlemen, and I thoroughly appreciate the work they are doing.

The Minister said that we have only a limited area of wallum country left. A few years ago nobody was interested in trying to develop wallum country, and it was a liability of the local authorities. The State derived no revenue from it. Because of the work done by the C.S.I.R.O., particularly Dr. Graham Hutton, and the Department of Primary Industries, these waste areas are now sought after; so much so that the Minister indicated that at present no further wallum land is available for development.

The Minister said that a number of companies are interested in developing the Gulf area. I went to that area about 12 months ago and I was amazed at its productivity. There is no doubt that this land could produce good crops of setaria, siratro, lotononis and desmodiums. I have seen them grow. I believe that the carrying capacity could be increased from a beast to 40 acres to perhaps a beast to two acres. That indicates the potential of the Gulf area, which was for many years even being referred

to as a liability for Queensland; but land there is now being taken up by people who are prepared to invest in it and prove to Queensland and Australia that it is a wonderful area. I emphasise that the wallum country, and the land in the Gulf area, are being made productive.

The Minister has within his portfolio the administration of the Department of Forestry.

Mr. Bennett: He used to have Aboriginal Affairs, too, but that was taken from him.

Mr. HINZE: I wish he still had it, because I should like to spend a few minutes of my time discussing Aborigines. Aboriginal Affairs has now been transferred to the Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs, and, if his Estimates are to be discussed, I shall certainly take the opportunity to speak on Aborigines in Queensland.

Mr. Sullivan: Once again it is in the hands of a very capable Minister.

Mr. HINZE: Yes. I have discussed this matter with the Minister who now has control of it, and he also appreciates its great importance.

I wish to return to a discussion of the Department of Forestry, and to try to give the Committee an idea of the magnitude of its responsibilities. We have been told that the annual cost of importing timber to Australia—upwards of \$200,000,000—is second only to the cost of importing petroleum products. When one flies over the State, one sees the many hundreds of thousands of acres on which the department is endeavouring to solve the major problem of providing sufficient timber for the country's needs. It is appreciated that the State has undertaken to plant some 10,000 acres with timber under the softwoods agreement with the Commonwealth, and I understand that the department is keeping up with that programme.

The hardwood chip industry also appears to be gaining in importance, and I understand that production could possibly increase to about 1,500,000 tons annually. However, much investigation has to be undertaken before that can be achieved. The Japanese market is wide open, and Japan is prepared to trade with us if we have the products to sell. It is very important that every endeavour be made to satisfy the timber requirements of this country, and possibly develop an export trade with Japan.

Three or four private plantations can be seen on the drive from Brisbane to the Gold Coast. There is one at Palm Beach, where 500 acres of softwood has been planted by a co-operative. At Coomera and Oxenford hills are being cleared where a plantation is being developed by a company, and I understand that behind Burleigh 1,000 acres has been planted with softwoods. That indicates that the private sector is prepared to consider providing funds for such an industry.

In Victoria and New South Wales, to assist the private sector, funds are made available for clearing, planting, and maintenance, and they have to be repaid over 15 or 20 years. Although the department also gives assistance by providing planting material and expert advice, it may be necessary for the Minister to consider providing a further incentive to the private sector by coming into line with southern States and making funds available, repayable over a long term.

I turn now to the Springbrook area, which I believe could be ideal for the planting of softwoods. I should like the Forestry Department to consider the possibility of afforestation in the area. In the last couple of weeks Professor "Margarine" Gates at the university has said that one means of solving the problems of the dairying industry would be for dairy farmers to grow timber instead of running dairy farms. He did not indicate what the farmers were going to live on for 15 to 20 years till the trees became productive, but he did make that suggestion. The Springbrook area was originally cut up into areas of about 100 acres. In the early days of settlement, that was one good way of encouraging settlers to go to an area. However, dairying in that area has collapsed completely, and I do not think that there are more than two or three dairy farms at Springbrook now. Because of its good soil, high rainfall, and proximity to markets, it may be an economic proposition for the dairy farmers who have gone out of business to amalgamate and plant softwoods if the Government could make funds available to assist them. The young people have gone to the Gold Coast to work, but the parents still own the properties and have to meet the rates and taxes on the land, which is not nearly as productive as it should be. I ask the Minister and his departmental officers to consider the possibility of having Springbrook planted to softwoods.

The Minister referred in his opening remarks to the fact that his counterparts in the various Australian States came to Queensland and that, to afford them the opportunity of seeing at first hand the management procedures followed in Queensland, they were taken to Natural Bridge, Springbrook, and Lamington. All these areas are in my electorate, and I am very proud that the Minister brought delegates from other States to see them and that I had the opportunity of meeting them there.

That brings me to what I regard as the most important industry in my electorate—the tourist industry—and the fact that after the many thousands of visitors to the Gold Coast have spent some time there, they travel 20-odd miles to see the beautiful ranges, the rain forests and the national parks that have been cared for over many years by Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Trist almost as well as they would care for their own families. National parks are a great asset

to Queensland, and many thousands of people who visit the State take the opportunity of seeing them. I remind the Committee that national parks also come under the Minister's control. Many thousands more people will be coming into the area. With the introduction of the jumbo-jet service and other modern means of travel, we believe that thousands of overseas visitors will be entering this area and we will want to show them our national parks and other aspects of our national heritage. Any member of this Parliament who travels to another State takes the opportunity to look at its national parks. We are proud that we can show these wonderful attractions so close to the Gold Coast. We are proud also of the fine job that people like the Grooms at Binna Burra and the O'Reillys of "Green Mountains" are doing. They appreciate the importance of the industry to the area in which they live.

Mr. Bennett: They won't have anything left soon unless something is done about the erosion.

Mr. HINZE: Where would the erosion be?

Mr. Bennett: I am speaking about your electorate.

Mr. HINZE: Has the hon. member ever been there?

Mr. Bennett: I would not waste my time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HINZE: I asked the question, Mr. Hooper, to indicate the hon. member's lack of knowledge.

Mr. Bennett: I spent my honeymoon at O'Reillys'. I was there long before you were born.

Mr. HINZE: Congratulations! When is the hon. member going back? I will try to arrange a bed for him.

Another area that we hear so much about and that I know the Minister has in hand is Tallebudgera, adjacent to Fleays'. The Minister knows my attitude on this. I have indicated to him that I want to ensure that Tallebudgera is preserved in its entirety. I do not want to see anything done to upset that beautiful area.

Another function of the Minister's department is that of acquiring land for other departmental purposes. In my area land is required for school, road and other purposes. The Minister will appreciate how land values in the area are increasing and I believe that because of the tremendous increase in valuations the Government should give consideration now to acquiring more land. The Minister might say that it is not a sound proposition to spend some of our current allocation of funds on acquiring land for the next 10, 15 or 20 years, but I suggest that in an area such as this, where valuations are increasing so rapidly, it must be a proposition.

Our forefathers reserved land for council and other purposes. In the South Coast electorate particularly, we are at present taking the lands reserved years ago by our forefathers and not replacing them. I suggest to the Minister that, as a matter of policy, the Government should consider allocating some funds for this purpose.

The matter would perhaps not be so urgent in other electorates where valuations are not increasing as quickly as they are on the Gold Coast. At the moment land is required for a primary school at Palm Beach. One can guess the sum the department will have to pay for that. Similarly, land is required at Currumbin for a secondary school and further land is required for a number of recreational purposes. I suggest that the Minister give consideration to this proposal.

The Minister also referred to groundsel and the fact that releases have already been made of the leaf beetle, two foliage-feeding moths and a Gall-fly, and that two of these species are now known to be breeding in the field. The total cost for the three years' overseas programme was \$14,500. Hon. members can appreciate the enormous cost of controlling groundsel to landowners, particularly those in the south-eastern corner of the State. Over 25 years that pest has not been eradicated; but, as the Minister said, it is possible that the release of those beetles among groundsel will achieve its eradication.

For nine years I was chairman of the Albert shire and I know the effort and cost involved to landholders and local authorities in clearing areas of land infested with groundsel. I know that certain local authorities provide landowners with weedicides at cost price to spray groundsel, but even that action has not eradicated it. I commend the Minister for authorising one of his departments to release the beetle to help destroy groundsel.

In conclusion, I express my appreciation of the consideration given to me by the Minister. In the very short period that I have been a member of Parliament, I have seen the solution of the major problem that I brought with me to this Chamber, namely, leasehold land. When I entered Parliament I had a great many problems with leasehold, but with conversion to freehold I have none, so I sincerely thank the Minister and his officers, particularly Brian Heffernan and Gordon McDowell, for the assistance they have rendered to me and to other landholders who wish to convert. Every time I have approached those two gentlemen with a problem they have done their utmost to assist me. I greatly appreciate their assistance, and I take this opportunity to express my appreciation.

Mr. BLAKE (Isis) (4.7 p.m.): I was interested particularly in the reference in the report of the Land Administration Commission to the development of the wallum lands on the coastal strip. That development

is of great interest to my electors and me because a large tract of that country lies in my electorate.

I recently asked the Minister to explain the Government's policy on utilising the wallum soil, and he told me, as the report says, that an extensive investigation and study of the utilisation of Crown land on the coastal belt between Brisbane and Bundaberg is being undertaken, and that pending completion of this investigation the further opening of wallum land has been deferred. At that time the Minister told me that nothing had been decided by the committee undertaking that investigation.

I take this opportunity to put before the Minister certain local features and aspects that are of great importance to my electors, and hope that the Minister will consider them in conjunction with the investigating committee's findings when they are made known to him.

The wallum area, particularly that portion in the Isis electorate, contains a great variety of soil types. The farm land in the vicinity of the Gregory River is very valuable, and it has been classed as wallum land. The farms on that land are highly productive, and a number of them have underground water supplies. I would regard them as the most productive farms in the cane-growing area of the Isis electorate. It is reasonable to assume that much of the land adjoining existing farms will be equally productive and that much of it will have underground water supplies. I believe, as many other people do, that the obvious use for this high-quality fertile land is sugar-cane production, because this industry requires a high-labour content, it yields a high production value per annum, it is a big consumer of fuel, machinery, fertilisers and chemicals, and it injects a great deal of revenue into the State's economy. In addition, there is great scope, and need, for the use of this land for future expansion or for present or near-present substitution of cane-growing land.

There are hillside areas in the Isis district which, because of the advent of mechanical harvesting, are disadvantaged. On that ground alone, it is desirable to shift sugar production to more level country such as the area I am referring to.

There are areas of red volcanic soil in the Isis district where extensive erosion has occurred over the years of production. It is essential to use a certain amount of this land for the substitution of cane assignments. I repeat that I know of no other use that would contribute as much to the economy of Queensland as cane-growing.

As it is valuable land we must ensure fair and honest use of it by the allocation of living areas in keeping with intensive, highly productive agriculture. It should not be handed out indiscriminately in large blocks for pasture improvement. If that were

to happen the lucky people would become rich and, conversely, those who acquired small areas would become poor.

I understand that representatives of the sugar industry have made overtures about this land. I request the Minister to give their request his favourable consideration because, if it is used for that purpose, it will be of great benefit to the district and to the State as a whole.

The major soil type in this wallum belt has been well investigated and has been found to be suitable for development as improved pastures. I see from the report on it that applications were called for the development of two blocks comprising 5,613 acres in the Gympie-Bundaberg district and that special 20-year leases have been granted to the successful applicants. Since the inception of the wallum development project in 1963-64, 23 blocks with a total area of 86,613 acres have been made available. That is roughly 4,000 acres a holding.

I am not critical of the size of the blocks because it is doubtful if any person at the present time could claim to be an authority on what is a living area. Nor could anyone state with certainty the capital cost of developing a living area. No doubt the investigating committee will have ideas about that but I advance, for the Minister's consideration, the belief that in some instances areas smaller than normal living areas could be effective economic units if they were worked with existing farms which have machinery and labour. There are periods when labour cannot be gainfully employed on existing holdings, and it could be that the small units would be a slack-season outlet for the employment of those people.

Apart from a bulldozer, a normal farm has the mechanical equipment and tractor power to complete the job of cleaning up these areas when they are bulldozed, namely, stick-raking, cultivating, seeding, etc. That is what I mean when I say that smaller-than-average areas could be economic units if they were used in conjunction with existing farm units with plant.

It is well known—and it is referred to in the report—that the Australian Mutual Provident Society sought the lease of approximately 97,000 to 100,000 acres roughly on each side of the main road and the railway line between Maryborough and the Isis River. I have been asked if I favour this development. Who could answer that question without knowing the terms of the lease; for example, whether the company retains all the area after it has developed it or whether it subdivides and resells approved living areas under stipulated terms of the lease? A liberal point of view—and I do not say this in terms of the Liberal members—has been expressed to me that the A.M.P. is an Australian company, with Australian shareholders, and that if it can develop the

country and at the same time make a killing, good luck to it. I do not share that sentiment when applied to the A.M.P. or to any other organisation or person utilising a natural and national asset. The Government's responsibility is to see that at all times there is fairness and the right of participation by all in our national resources.

Speaking of fairness, I bring to the notice of the Minister complaints from many people that a person who possessed an extensive area of wallum country was allowed to bid for, and purchase, two blocks in the Isis district near the Gregory River, which were sold at auction at the Bundaberg land office. The inference to be drawn is that the well-endowed can become richer by the unlimited purchase of leases of public lands, to the exclusion of those who have moderate capital to successfully develop useful areas of land auctioned from time to time by the Department of Lands. This could be obviated by excluding from further auctions persons who have acquired what is considered by the Government to be a living area in that particular locality. I believe that selective balloting for these pastoral blocks released by the department would be the best and fairest method of deciding who will participate.

Another complaint relative to these particular blocks is the short period of two to three years allowed for their full development. Such a condition precludes a large section of the community from participating. Few people would have the large amount of finance needed to develop it all within two or three years, whereas many people could develop it if the term was longer. I ask the Minister to ease this requirement in the future. It could slow down fractionally the tempo of development, but in the long term this could be beneficial rather than detrimental. We have already seen the financial repercussions of speedy expansion in the sugar and wheat industries outstripping the development of profitable markets. Fears have already been expressed to me about this happening in the beef industry. We must keep clearly in mind the vital difference between available markets and available profitable markets. That is a matter of great concern to the primary producer, and to everybody else.

It is obvious that no such problems appear to exist in the demand, or market, for timber. The value of timber imports to Australia in 1967-68 was \$41,506,000, and imports to Queensland were valued at \$2,759,000. The latest figures, for 1968-69, are not yet available. However, it is quite obvious that the growing of timber can be promoted with greater confidence than can the production of many other products. I thank the Minister for his very interesting and heartening remarks on that matter.

I know men in the timber industry who have travelled the world recently to see how timber is meeting competition in this technological age. They were delighted to find that all over the world the demand for this basic material is increasing.

The trend towards large timber complexes was mentioned by the Minister. It is found not only in Australia but throughout the world, according to those men. It provides a very strong argument for greater expansion of reforestation in the Isis electorate, where extensive State forests already exist. The Tuan and Toolara State forests are expanding to the stage where they will soon merge and, for all practical purposes, become one forest. Other forests, natural and reforested, occupy the area between Maryborough and Bundaberg. The whole area represents a substantial nucleus for a vast forest in keeping with the economic needs of the timber industry, and current trends throughout the world.

Development of this area with timber would bring an additional benefit. The future of the coal towns of Howard and Torbanlea, which at present depend on coal seams with an increasingly-questionable economic future, would be assured if reforestation extended to this area to fill the gaps in reforestation projects in the district and help provide the future needs of Queensland. The harvest from this area could be treated readily in the existing cities and towns by the large-scale operations deemed necessary in the future. Facilities exist for the establishment of any new industries using timber as a raw material. The extensive timber resources of Fraser Island are close by. They would be readily fed, as they are now, into the timber complex in the area, and also into the greatly developed complex if it eventuated in the future.

I hope the Minister and his officers will take a searching look at the foundations that already exist in the areas previously mentioned by me, and decide to develop the suitable areas by reforestation on an economic scale in keeping with future needs. The project requires a large labour content. It would, in its turn, offer timber products and, in attracting new industries, would provide a very high return to the economy per acre.

Whilst on the subject of Fraser Island, and its relationship to the Minister's portfolio and the Department of Forestry, I must state that there is a great body of local opinion that believes that the island's greatest future lies in its tourist and timber potential. I wish I had brought with me a map showing the indiscriminate pattern of mining leases, which virtually cover the island and are a matter of great concern.

Utilisation of the island, or part of it, as a national park, with its high dunes, its lakes, and its sclerophyll wallum preserved, in conjunction with utilisation of its timber resources and reforestation by the Department

of Forestry appears to be desirable, and the influence of the Minister and his officers to that end is sincerely sought. I suggest to the Minister that this is a unique and painless opportunity to secure and preserve an excellent national park. I say "painless" because the preservation of that area of the island, with its many attractions, including the sclerophyll wallum, does not in any way inhibit the development of pastoral interests on the mainland. It is an opportunity too good to be missed, and I hope that the Minister and his officers will consider carefully declaring at least part of the island a national park.

It is noteworthy that the report says that industrial land is set aside, in collaboration with the Department of Industrial Development, and that at all times the Department of Lands will keep in mind the need to cater for the land requirements of a continuing industrial expansion throughout the State. I respect the priorities established by the Government for industrial development projects, but I hope that it keeps in mind the need to "cater for the land requirements of a continuing industrial expansion". The rapid growth of Hervey Bay—and that is no catchword; I mean rapid growth—with rail and port facilities, is such that that area should be kept in mind for the allocation of land for an industrial estate. In the United States of America there is an awareness that industry is a necessary adjunct to the economy of tourist areas, and the Government of Queensland must be made aware of that, also.

I turn now to the comments of the hon. member for Landsborough on Labour's attitude towards freeholding and living areas. I ask him: what represents a living area? Does one gauge it on today's requirements, or does one gauge it on the requirements for 10, 20, or even 30 years hence? Labour's mistakes, if they were mistakes at that time, were made decades ago but are being judged on today's requirements. This Government's mistakes were made yesterday, in terms of time. I suggest that the hon. member should ask the hon. member for Warrego about Nive Downs and the present pressures to reduce areas in the West. A Country-Liberal Government decided that 60 acres of land and 1,000 tons of cane a year represented an economic living unit for a cane-farmer. Within one year, when the price fell to an uneconomic level, that was branded as an uneconomic unit and the grower was branded as an uneconomic producer. That change occurred virtually between one day and the next. The hon. member should not point the finger at the Labour Party relative to living areas laid down 20 or 30 years ago.

No system of land tenure is perfect, but I remind the hon. member for Landsborough that under leasehold tenure future Governments and future generations at least have a chance to rectify the mistakes made in earlier years. I spoke earlier of dissatisfaction arising from the fact that one buyer can acquire

several leases of wallum land. Right or wrong, once the land is freehold that situation is likely to be perpetuated.

Hon. members opposite should not hold themselves out as paragons of perfection in land policy.

An interesting part of the report dealt with biological control of noxious weeds. I admire the officers who are engaged in this type of work because they bear tremendous responsibility in the selection of insects and other biological control factors. There is tremendous responsibility for exhaustive testing before these methods are released. Mistakes can result in anything from nuisance value to catastrophic damage both to the industry and to the country as a whole. Irrespective of Governments, I agree that nuisance and damage are always highlighted and that very often the benefits derived are not. Teenage behaviour is a case in point. Delinquency gets publicity, but good conduct gets little credit.

This tendency applies also to mina birds and cane toads. There is no question that mina birds do much good in controlling the cane grub and that cane toads do much good in controlling the cane beetle. But all that comes to mind when we think of them is that mina birds build nests in the ceilings of our homes and cane toads frighten the ladies. People engaged in biological control have to face up to deciding these things as well as the criticisms that their decisions often attract. I suppose the most outstanding example of success in this field has been, and still is, the introduction of cactoblastis to control prickly pear.

(Time expired.)

Mr. TOMKINS (Roma) (4.32 p.m.): In rising to speak on the Estimates of the Department of Lands, I should like to congratulate the Minister on his presentation of them. His report shows that much work has been done in the last 12 months and I should say that that work has been well done despite the severe drought through which the State has gone. The report of the Land Administration Commission points out that the drought has held up the opening of further blocks and I believe it is only fair that this should be so.

Mr. Bennett: The drought did not affect you when you sold those bulls last year.

Mr. TOMKINS: I realise that the hon. member for South Brisbane knows very little about the land. If he knew anything about it, he would know that if a man produces a good article he gets a good price for it.

The hon. member for Barcoo said that the Department of Lands is one of the most important in the Government. I heartily agree. He also said that previous Lands Ministers had come in for plenty of criticism. This, of course, goes back to Labour's days in Government as well, and it is significant that the present Minister does not seem to attract much criticism. Therefore, we could

say that this job today is on a good even keel. The Minister, of course, is very well supported by Mr. Heffernan, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Cook, and the secretary, Mr. O'Gorman. I should like to thank them all for the assistance they have given me since I became a member of this Parliament. I have gone to them with many detailed problems and I have received nothing but co-operation from them all. While the Minister does a good job, he has the people to back him up.

The Government's policy of freeholding has been very successful. I disagree with the last speaker, who said that he believes that with leasehold tenure people can be looked after better. I believe that if a man actually owns something and pays for it he has solid security and this helps in the development of property management. The Government's policy is a very good one.

On the last occasion that I spoke of land matters I referred to the severity of the drought. I know that the Minister has received scores of submissions from responsible organisations, so I hope that he will consider granting a rebate of 50 per cent. on Crown rentals and freehold-tenure instalments where applicable. I know that rebates would not be applicable in all portions of the State because some areas are reasonably well off; however, two-thirds of Queensland is still in a very bad state. Two years ago a scheme was introduced to give a 50 per cent. rebate on shire rates as well as on Crown rentals, and this was of great assistance to people who were suffering from the drought.

Mr. Aiken: You are supporting me, are you?

Mr. TOMKINS: I will support the hon. member in any sensible suggestion that he makes. However, I put this one up before he did, so perhaps he is supporting me.

Mr. Aiken: When you say they are in a very bad state do you mean they are in Queensland? People are better off in New South Wales.

Mr. TOMKINS: The hon. member can go to New South Wales if he wishes; I am quite happy to stay in Queensland. Over the years on the land I have found that if a man acts sensibly he can get on all right, especially with a responsible Government that helps anyone with a problem.

The hon. member for Barcoo made certain remarks about the president of the United Graziers' Association, Mr. Peter Bell. For 30 years I have been a member of that association, and I know that Mr. Bell has represented the graziers in Queensland in a very able manner. It ill behoves anybody to run him down in his present position.

Mr. Aiken: Why did he run the A.L.P. down?

Mr. TOMKINS: I shall come to that in a moment. Mr. Bell represents a large number of wool-growers, who face a very uncertain future owing to the drop of 7c a lb. in the price of wool over the last few months. Mr. Bell has not overstated the case that he has put to the Government. He has seen the Minister for Lands and the Premier and has stated the case factually. He is entitled to prefer freehold tenure to leasehold, and the U.G.A. favours freehold tenure.

The hon. member for Barcoo amazed me by saying that Mr. Bell runs the A.L.P. down and never says a good word for it. I have not heard Mr. Edgar Williams, the branch secretary of The Australian Workers' Union, say many favourable things about the present Government, nor have I heard Jack Egerton, the president of the Trades and Labour Council, say them; so it is not surprising that Mr. Bell does criticise A.L.P. policy. In these days of power politics, a person who stands his ground when he represents his members is doing the right thing. It is for the Ministers and other politicians to sift all the arguments to determine the ones that appeal to them. Mr. Bell has been president of the U.G.A. for at least 10 years and has done a first-class job. I know that he has the confidence of the grazing industry, because the representations that he has made on its behalf to the Government always receive mature consideration.

Mr. Davies: He's probably outside.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsden): Order! The hon. member will find himself outside in a moment.

Mr. TOMKINS: The hon. member for Barcoo chastised the Government over the Arcadia Valley land settlement scheme and referred to water. That area is one of the best grazing and farming areas in Queensland. When it was thrown open and balloted for, the seasons were good. People took up blocks of land and put down dams with finance obtained from the Government at an equity rate higher than usual, and they got the scheme going.

As the drought continued, a water shortage developed. It is rather ironic that this is one of the few areas without underground water. Not long ago, as the drought worsened, the Department of Lands put down three deep bores, one of which struck rock bottom at 800 feet. The department spent \$24,980 on these projects. It displayed faith in the settlement, although it did only what any sensible person would have done. The fact that water was not found does not detract from the efforts of the people who undertook the job. I applaud their actions. They were grossly unlucky not to strike underground water in

the Arcadia Valley, because in all the surrounding districts underground water is available, in some bores at a depth as shallow as 100 feet.

I suggested to the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Conservation that a storage dam should be constructed on the Dawson River, from which the water could be taken across, and I have been informed that top people in the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply are to make an investigation. This is the only way to correct this problem. Far from decrying the Government's efforts in the Arcadia Valley, I think a first-class job has been done, and I congratulate the Government.

I am pleased to know that, for the first time, the administration of the department of Lands and the Forestry Department has been combined. That is an excellent policy move because the problems of the two departments are closely interwoven.

In my electorate, and in areas represented by the hon. members for Balonne and Carnarvon, problems are experienced with cypress pine. I know only too well the problems created by divided control of the departments, and I should like to bring to the Minister's notice a problem relative to the expansion of freeholding in some of the cypress-pine areas. A person who has a reasonably good block can freehold it, but a person who has a second-rate block with cypress pine growing on it cannot do so. Not only has he a block that is not up to standard, but he has difficulty in getting freehold tenure. I know of one property in the Balonne electorate comprising 10,000 acres, which is not far from my electorate, from which the Forestry Department wanted to take 5,000 acres for national-park use.

Mr. Sherrington: Here it goes.

Mr. TOMKINS: Even the hon. member would support me on this occasion.

This property, which was a pretty poor property, comprised 10,000 acres, yet the Department of Forestry wanted 5,000 acres for a national park. The landholder was having a job to make ends meet in any case. In cases where the pine is of doubtful quality the Department of Forestry should put a price on the pine and let the landholder freehold. Any person who freeholds and pays a high price for cypress pine would not let the money go down the drain. He would sell the pine to the best advantage.

Mr. Sullivan: You said it was for a national park; do you mean that it was to be a State forest?

Mr. TOMKINS: Yes, I am sorry for that slip. I believe that it should be permissible to freehold these areas, because if the Department of Forestry considers that they are worth keeping as State forests, it must think they have substantial value. The landholder has to pay for this over 10 years.

I cannot see the department's argument that the pine must be saved for all time. It is not very good country. It should be used and the man should be allowed to develop it. That would give him a better opportunity to make a living as a grazier. I can see nothing wrong if he sells the pine sensibly. If a man has to pay for something, he will not deliberately neglect it. There are many cases like that in my electorate.

I shall cite another, slightly different, case. It is a family partnership that owns three living areas. Each of them is a cypress-pine area, and here again the State forestry policy applies. These landholders are well known to me. They want to develop their property. It is a substantial area of cypress pine, estimated to be some 12,000,000 super feet, which is a good deal of pine. They say that if they could get this pine and develop it, they would look after it just as the Forestry Department would. They would let it grow, and when it is of millable size, they would sell it judiciously. I cannot see anything wrong with that.

Mr. Bennett: Are you saying that the man on the land will not look after leasehold land?

Mr. TOMKINS: I am talking about cypress pine, not land, so I cannot see the relevance of the interjection.

The Minister should look into this matter. The State would not lose anything by allowing cypress to be freeholded on that basis. After all, if it is milled and the land goes back to grazing, the land has done its job. I am not referring to the higher-rainfall areas where there are forestry plantations and where timber can grow quickly. In the low-rainfall western areas, cypress pine is not of much consequence and it should not be of much concern to the department. The Minister should try to tidy this up. The people on second-class blocks are being penalised twice. If they could take the timber off those blocks, they would be good grazing propositions.

Mr. Sherrington: You are opposed to the national park proposal?

Mr. TOMKINS: Not in certain areas. I think that the area must be defined. I am talking of areas with a 20-inch rainfall or less.

Mr. Bennett: Do you want to denude the whole State of forest?

Mr. TOMKINS: If Opposition members interject like that, I shall just ignore them.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsden): Order! The hon. member for Roma is not obliged to answer them.

Mr. TOMKINS: Thank you, Mr. Ramsden.

To pass from second-rate land to good land—the brigalow lands that have been developed by the Government will contribute a lot to our economy. In this work of timber pulling, raking, and so on, we have discovered some drought-resistant grasses.

I have been amazed at the way in which buffel grass and green panic have stood up to the recent drought. The Department of Primary Industries is now conducting seminars in my area at which people are invited to give their experiences with the drought. From such seminars has come the one story: buffel grass is entirely satisfactory for drought conditions, and, to a lesser extent, so is green panic. As ensilage and hay is so expensive, it could be that the long-term answer to drought conditions is the growing of buffel grass in brigalow areas. I know that this is hard to do, but I think it can be done if we try. If buffel grass can be preserved by understocking, and firebreaks are provided to ensure that it is not burnt, then I believe that this could be a satisfactory method of feeding stock under drought conditions.

I think that in the long term the brigalow lands scheme will do much for the State. The hon. member for Salisbury seems to think that I want to destroy all the brigalow trees. I do not.

Mr. Sherrington: Do you support the proposal put up today for 27,000 acres for a national park?

Mr. TOMKINS: I was not here when that was said, so naturally I did not hear it.

Mr. Sullivan interjected.

Mr. Sherrington interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsden): Order! I do not want cross-firing across the Chamber. The member who is speaking is not obliged to answer interjections. If he does not answer them and a member continues to interject, that becomes disorderly conduct.

Mr. TOMKINS: There are one or two other matters that I should like to mention. The Minister referred to the "1080" dingo-baiting campaign. I support what he said. I believe that "1080" has done much good, not only in cattle country but in sheep country also. It has been used with some success in sheep lands in my electorate and elsewhere, and wherever "1080" has been used the numbers of dingoes killed have greatly decreased. Considerable propaganda has been put out against "1080", but I believe that much of it is ill-founded. I know that dingoes are far less tolerant of this bait than are other forms of life. It is almost impossible to kill birds with it.

Mr. Sherrington: Did you read what Mr. Petersen of the C.S.I.R.O. said about its effect on wildlife?

Mr. TOMKINS: No, I did not. It has little effect. As long as the department continues its campaign in May and August, when goannas are not around, it can do nothing but good. Personally I should like to see more people using "1080". A few are not as yet using it, but those who do use it find it an outstanding success.

Mr. McKechnie: You can feed birds on it and it won't kill them.

Mr. TOMKINS: That is correct. I believe it is one of the greatest break-throughs ever in this field.

In conclusion, I should like to congratulate the Minister on his report to the Committee. I have not had much experience with the Department of Forestry, so I do not know Mr. Trist as well as others know him.

Mr. Row: He is a very courteous gentleman.

Mr. TOMKINS: I have no doubt that he is.

I believe that bringing the two departments together is the best thing that has happened for a long time. As a result of it, I hope that the process of freeholding can be speeded up, as that would be to the better government of Queensland.

Mr. F. P. MOORE (Mourilyan) (4.55 p.m.): Being a new member, I do not intend to go on with the palaver about particular departments that I have heard from a number of Government members who have taken part in this debate. I am sure that the Minister and the officers in charge of those departments do not appreciate it and prefer to hear constructive criticism that might assist them to improve the efficiency of the departments. Although criticism may not always be well founded, it can be constructive, and I am sure that any normal human being appreciates constructive criticism.

A number of constructive comments have been made, and I shall refer particularly to those made by the hon. member for Barcoo. The hon. member for Roma seems to regard Mr. Peter Bell as a paragon of all the virtues, but the hon. member for Barcoo made it clear that Mr. Bell is not as well liked as he could be. Travelling through the West with the Primary Industries Committee of the Australian Labour Party, I found that that is correct, and I confirm the statement made by the hon. member for Barcoo. I have nothing to fear, because Mr. Bell has no great stranglehold on my area. He does not donate money to my campaign funds, although he might donate it to the campaign funds of hon. members opposite.

I wish to comment first on the report of the Department of Forestry. Both the Minister and the Conservator of Forests have stated that stability in the timber industry will come from amalgamation. The Minister said in his speech that the number of mills has decreased

from 678 to 515. I say quite openly that not one mill in my electorate or in any area farther to the north has closed, to my knowledge—and I shall return to that point later—but it is possible that mills farther south have closed. The amalgamation mentioned by the Minister and the Conservator is the easy way out and could lead to a monopoly. It would be easy to monopolise the timber industry in the North, but I am completely opposed to monopolies.

To support my argument, I refer hon. members to this statement in the report of the Conservator of Forests—

"It is inevitable that the implementation of action in this direction will accelerate the closing down of a number of country mills . . ."

That is contrary to the principle of decentralisation, and it was stressed in the recent election campaign that decentralisation was part of the platform of the Country Party, in particular. In the mills in the Mourilyan electorate, which I have the honour to represent, there has been a reduction in the work-force that the electorate can ill afford.

Further on in the report the Conservator states—

"It is unfortunate that efforts to establish a body representative of all branches of the timber industry over the whole State have not yet been successful."

This has been asked for. I can vouch for it because I have spoken to many responsible people in the timber industry in North Queensland, particularly in Zone 2. These people are all in favour of the establishment of a body to study the problems of the industry; but it should not be wholly and solely a Government body. It should comprise people who know the industry and have been established in it in particular areas. To establish oneself in most industries one must have a practical knowledge of the industry and become efficient in it. If we are to meet our problems successfully in this State, we must use the knowledge of people who know the industry.

In saying that, I do not speak solely of Queensland. It is high time that authorities throughout Australia called a conference of everybody interested in the timber industry to work out an over-all system of wood usage. A member of the Federal Government, Senator Cotton, made a statement, which is reported in "The Australian Financial Review" of Wednesday, 12 November, at page 9 to the effect that a detailed examination of the problems of the industry, bringing in private interests as well as Government experts, should be welcomed in the timber industry. This has been sought for a long time and we must continue to press for it.

I often wonder whether the report of the Conservator of Forests is a comprehensive one. I notice that on page 29 of this year's report he sets out the proceeds of sales of timber for the period 1 July 1965 to

30 June 1969. For the information of members, I should like to read some figures applicable to Group 2 in Appendix C of the report, but not from the report itself. I have obtained information from the North Queensland Sawmillers' Association. In 1967, which was a year of floods in North Queensland, the total royalty for timber was \$727,345. This was obtained from a volume of 53,609,895 super ft. of timber; in 1968 the royalty increased to \$1,122,548, from a volume of Crown logs of 64,558,251 super ft. In the last year, ending 30 June 1969, the total royalty increased to \$1,240,764 from a volume of Crown logs of 63,222,007 super ft. I should like to ask the Minister how it was that the Crown harvest in North Queensland dropped by approximately 1,330,000 super ft. while the gross receipts from royalties in Group 2 increased by about \$120,000. It is obvious that the royalty rate must have been considerably increased. I have seen the royalty scale and I am sure that if a timberman wanted to buy a block from the Forestry Department he would need to be a travelling computer to work it out. I do not say that the scale under previous Labour Governments was any better. I am told by many timbermen that at least it was fairer.

It is stated that the amalgamation of mills must result in stability in the industry, yet the Government burdens the timber millers in Group 2, with which I am familiar, to the extent of \$120,000 in royalties on a decreased production of 1,330,000 super feet. That is grossly unfair, and the anomaly should be corrected. It could be corrected by setting up a body of suitable men who know the industry—possibly from the Government and the industry—to study the problem. Once the problem is solved, Queensland could compete with overseas countries from which it imports vast quantities of timber. In three years the imports of veneer have risen from 39,000,000 sq. ft. to 160,000,000 sq. ft., and that phenomenal rise constitutes a problem to the plywood industry. The Government has a responsibility to look after Queensland's industries.

The hon. member for South Coast praised the Commonwealth softwood agreement, but that agreement has come far too late to remedy the situation. In "The Australian Financial Review" of 7 November, 1969, the president of the Plywood Association of Australia, Mr. Denis Cullity said—

"New Zealand manufacturers had told their counterparts they were planning investment in massive plywood plants to supply the Australian market for structural plywood.

"A possible production equivalent to 100,000,000 cubic feet of plywood a year on a 3-8 in basis has been mentioned.

"This could involve more than one plant, each with an output as big as the whole output of the Australian plywood industry at present."

That statement is a very disturbing one. I am sure that the Minister realises it and I hope he will look into the matter. As the Minister has recently taken over the administration of State forests and timber reserves, he may be the first to move towards obtaining better conditions in this State and to give consideration to the future of the State's softwood industry. Excellent work has already been done in the Caribbean pine forests that grow near my electorate. However, if I think that complaints should be made I shall make them.

Queensland could compete fairly well with overseas countries by exporting timber. A report in "The Australian Financial Review" of 10 November, 1969, on page 7, indicates that companies in New South Wales have amalgamated to sell on contract to Japan 220,000 tons of wood chips in 1970. The tonnage is to increase to 400,000 tons in 1971 and to 600,000 tons in 1972. Throughout Queensland there is a tremendous waste of wood chips, but the over-all wastage of wood is equally important.

Investigations could well be made into establishing a cardboard factory in North Queensland. I do not hesitate to say that it should be in the Mourilyan district where there are many sawmills. A ready market is available for cardboard cartons in North Queensland because I know that 3,000,000 cardboard cartons come to the Tully area each year, and banana farmers pay 45 cents for each carton. The expenditure by banana farmers alone on cardboard cartons would be quite large.

Mr. Davies: Where do they come from?

Mr. F. P. MOORE: I do not know the company that produces them, but they come from the South.

Increasing imports are seriously affecting the sales of North Queensland softwoods, joinery and cabinet woods in southern markets. If the Minister is really sincere about decentralisation he should realise that he has a responsibility to help North Queensland.

I commend the department for holding a school or a seminar—or whatever jargon is used to describe it in the forestry field—in North Queensland earlier this year, at which timber millers and timber-cutters received first-hand information about departmental requirements. I commend the Minister and the department for holding it in North Queensland because it brought a closer liaison between the people in the industry and those in the Government department controlling the industry. I attended as an observer, and I believe that many points were ironed out. Timber-cutters learned that they had to cut above a spur, and so on, when cutting timber.

The Minister said that there were great opportunities for getting on the land in Queensland, but I am sure he realises that opportunities for young people today to go on the land are not as good as they were

30 years ago. A young married person finds it difficult to fulfil the financial requirements without the backing of his parents.

Mr. Hinze: It would be nearly impossible.

Mr. F. P. MOORE: It is virtually impossible, but there are people who get by.

I must mention King Ranch, which is close to my electorate. I condemn the department, not for giving the land away, but for the price at which it was sold. One hon. member suggested that it could be divided into lots. Perhaps that could be done, but it is debatable because of the price. One of the best natural plots of maple stood on the land that is now King Ranch, and it was destroyed. That concerns conservation.

Mr. Sullivan: Is King Ranch in your electorate?

Mr. F. P. MOORE: No, it is next door.

Mr. Sullivan: Do you favour the development of King Ranch?

Mr. F. P. MOORE: I said that I commend what has been done by King Ranch in that area, but I do not favour the price paid for it. I certainly do not agree with the total destruction of the maple plot on that land.

The Crown land blocks in my electorate should not have been allocated without access roads. The people had to pay \$2,000 each for an access road. People with blocks on the Palmerston Highway had difficulty getting access roads. One person up there was told by the local body that he would have to pay \$50,000-odd. Where would a person settling on a piece of land get that sort of money, when a new settler on the Crown land cane farms could not find \$2,000? In addition, they are required to pay \$2,000 for electricity.

Mr. Murray: Anybody wanting to establish a thriving business on the land must have capital.

Mr. F. P. MOORE: The hon. member should keep his mouth shut because he would not know. He is a scab on the Country Party, anyhow.

Mr. Murray: He would need that kind of money.

Mr. F. P. MOORE: The hon. member for Clayfield, or the "Clayfield cowboy" as some people call him, would not know how much money these people have. They are broke.

Mr. Murray: I was trudging around your electorate before you knew it.

Mr. F. P. MOORE: I campaigned against the hon. member and he was defeated, and then he scabbled on the Country Party.

Mr. Murray: You need to grow up, and you have a long way to go.

Mr. F. P. MOORE: To win my election, I did not have to drop papers out of the air as the hon. member did, and even then he was defeated. He should have printed his material on paper of another type.

Conditions to be fulfilled by the Government should apply to these Crown land blocks, which were granted to meet the latest increased cane assignments, because they are in swampy areas. I am sure that the Minister's officers know this. I have received many complaints from these people, and they think I can overcome them easily. I do not expect even the Minister to be able to do that, but I feel that these people must be considered. They were granted the blocks by the Government to build up the mill peak of the Mourilyan mill. They are willing to accept their responsibilities but they and their families are suffering because they have not the finance and cannot obtain it from the banks.

(Time expired.)

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (5.20 p.m.): I take the opportunity afforded by the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Lands to express thanks to the Minister and his officers, in both the Lands and Forestry Departments, for the assistance that they have given me on behalf of my constituents. I most certainly appreciate the open manner in which these gentlemen have approached my problems, and the celerity with which they have assisted people in my area.

For the last few years drought has overshadowed all else. I do not want to deal too much with it now because it has been dealt with on other occasions, but I must touch on it as it affects the Department of Lands. It is rather ironic that at the moment flood water is surging down the Dumaresq River through part of my electorate. It is not serious flooding—and it is rather welcome in some ways—but that water is surging down the Dumaresq and will pass on to Goondiwindi, and down the Barwon to Mungundi and Bourke. It will be welcome all the way.

In relating land to drought, everything possible should be done to encourage drought mitigation on the resources of the landholder himself, on his own land, financed from the production of the land. Fodder and water should be conserved to the greatest extent possible. Where it is impossible to conserve fodder, I believe that contracts should be entered into with people in more favoured irrigated areas for the purchase of fodder in times of plenty, when prices are reasonable and when the farmer on the irrigated area is looking for an outlet for his crop. That would also have a stabilising effect on the fodder industry. Everything possible should be done to build up fodder reserves by the growers' own initiative on their own properties, or by the storing on properties of fodder grown elsewhere. That practice would lessen the extremely high

prices that at most times have to be paid for fodder during droughts. That approach to the problem would be similar to the approach of the Commonwealth Government to drought bonds, in that the benefits would be twofold. Drought bonds are applicable only to more or less semi-arid or mountainous areas where fodder conservation, or farming generally, is not a common practice. Those in the traprock country in the eastern areas of my electorate could make use of drought bonds when good years return. The idea behind drought bonds, of conserving in good years to tide over the bad years, is good. Wherever the Department of Lands can help by encouraging preparation for the droughts to come, I believe that it should give all possible assistance.

In the present drought, the department has been of great help to lessees. There have been rent remissions, and assistance with rents generally. There have been extensions of leases for three years, which have been of some help. Legislation concerning family trusts and multiple names on leases has been referred to earlier today, and that, too, will be of great help. In times of drought, a person needs everything working in his favour to overcome the stresses and problems encountered.

The extension of the time for timber payments on land that is being freeholded from five years to 10 years, is particularly acceptable. I know many people who had already started to pay for their timber were very happy to go on to a pro-rata system to lessen the strain in these current years, and people who had paid two years out of five then had six years to pay off the balance. That was appreciated, and was of considerable help.

I suppose that costs are the greatest problem today. They concern me more than either selling price or drought because they have been affecting primary producers for a considerable time. Not only have actual costs increased; the work on the properties has become more onerous, particularly because insecticides used in the sheep industry have lost their effectiveness, as have some insecticides used in the cattle industry. In some areas of Queensland it is a continual battle to keep sheep alive because no effective answer to the blowfly is available, and I believe that if an entomologist with the Department of Lands or some other department could provide an answer to that very distressing problem, it would be of great assistance to primary producers.

Turning from the drought of the moment, I believe that many western leases, particularly those in the Far West, need a spell. Possibly spelling them would create difficulties in many cases, but when the department resumes portion of a lease that eventually will be balloted for, it could hold it in trust for rather a lengthy period. For example, if a resumption is made of land

that has been denuded and needs a spell, the department could hold it in trust for a number of years so that it could rejuvenate and rehabilitate itself. That action would be in the best interests of the land and of the incoming selector who takes possession. Without going into the reasons, I fully understand that a caretaker would be necessary.

If the land had recovered and become well grassed and another drought occurred before the ballot was held, it might be used in the same way as leases held by the Commonwealth Government on the central coast at Shoalwater Bay were used in the current drought. It could be used as a drought reserve. When the next ballot was held, lands that were rejuvenated could be balloted for and the new blocks could be held for at least five years, and possibly up to 10 years if the seasons were unfavourable. Keeping in mind that a caretaker would have to be employed, the Government could again use the lands as a drought reserve or have them balloted for in good condition, which would assist the new lessee, whoever he may be.

On numerous occasions in this Chamber I have appealed to the Minister to allow landholders to distribute prepared baits containing "1080"—sodium fluoroacetate—prepared by officers of the Rabbit Board. I appreciate the Minister's action some months ago in agreeing to allow this type of distribution in my area for a trial period. It will give landholders an opportunity to demonstrate whether or not it is a practical method of handling "1080". In my opinion, men who use their land wisely will regard it as a challenge and make full use of their opportunities.

In an interjection earlier in the debate, the hon. member for Salisbury said that "1080" is dangerous and implied that it would kill all wildlife. It has been proven by officers of the Department of Lands that that is incorrect. I have given in this Chamber figures showing the grams of sodium fluoroacetate that are required per kilogram of weight to kill an animal or a bird. The dog is the most vulnerable of all. If my memory is correct, it takes only .1 gram per kilogram of weight to kill a dog. It takes .8 to kill a rabbit; about .5 to kill a sheep, and 5.0 to kill a human being. The amount required to kill a mouse is 10.0, but it takes 10 to 30 grams per kilogram of weight to kill a bird. It is calculated that one could feed birds on the prepared baits and it would not kill them.

Mr. Davies interjected.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I am accepting the advice of officers of the Lands Department who prepared those figures. They have been published and I quoted them in this Chamber so that they would be on record. The ones I have just given were from memory.

Mr. Davies: What are you appealing for now?

Mr. McKECHNIE: I am not appealing for anything. I am thanking the Minister for granting us the right to use "1080". Evidently the hon. member for Salisbury thinks he has done the wrong thing. As I say, I am thanking him for the opportunity to try it out. There is no danger to bird life from these baits. I know the hon. member will be speaking later in the night so I took this opportunity to state my views and to quote figures calculated by officers of the Lands Department. I do not think the hon. member for Maryborough would question their integrity.

Mr. Davies: I think they are men of 100 per cent. integrity.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I do, too, and I accept their figures.

In the rabbit areas there has been a considerable increase in the number of officers associated with the Rabbit Control Authority. In Goondiwindi alone there are 12 rabbit control overseers and officers in addition to other staff. As a consequence, the administration centre there has become somewhat overcrowded. That is not the entire reason. The town has developed considerably of latter years as a centre of administration and there is a general need for extra office space. What is there is quite good, but I think it will be necessary to make further office accommodation available in the area, and not only for the Rabbit Control Authority or Department of Lands. To make more room other departments would possibly be shifted into new quarters. At the present time the departments are intermingled.

The barrier fence is a project that was criticised to some considerable extent in its early days, but graziers are now most appreciative of it. I certainly am appreciative of it, particularly the extensions in the Millmerran and Inglewood areas. It has obviated many dingo drives and saved many stock. The small amount of precept per property is well repaid, not only in the savings of sheep and money, but in the saving of personal time. I know many people who averaged a day a week every week of the year in dingo drives. That amount of time represents a heavy cost to hold back the dingo. The fence is now doing most of that for us. It is a good scheme.

On the rather critical side, I should like to turn to the Fitzroy Basin brigalow scheme. When I was up there I was a little apprehensive about the large areas being pulled and left without shade breaks. I believe that we should have a closer look at this matter and make the pulled areas smaller than has been the case over the last few years. In the brigalow lands of Southern Queensland we kept pulled areas down to as little as 500 acres and each was enclosed by shade lines. During the current drought it was proved that a shade break makes for a much better paddock, pasture or field of wheat than an area exposed to sweeping winds that dry it

out. Some mitigation of the drought was provided also by the rank grasses that grow in the shade lines and that are not normally eaten by cattle and sheep. These were a form of roughage very useful as a second-last line of defence in that they postponed the need to feed other roughage direct to stock, the last line of defence. I am a great believer in enclosing relatively small areas in shade lines. I have in mind areas of 500 acres to 1,000 acres.

Aerial maps made of the near inland areas of the State have been of great help not only to the Lands Department but also to local authorities, the State Wheat Board and land-owners. However, those areas have developed so rapidly and in such a concentrated manner that the maps are quickly becoming out of date. I realise that the cost of producing up-to-date maps might be considerable, but I suggest to the Minister that he consider an early aerial remapping of the brigalow lands and the farming and pastoral areas of the State so that many people besides the Department of Lands could receive the benefit of those maps. Over the last few years the development has been so rapid that whenever I fly over those areas I constantly need to renew my mental picture of the land below, otherwise I would get lost. Many areas are pulled in both large and small blocks and the appearance of the land is certainly altered. In addition, aerial mapping is of great help to the Forestry Department in finding stands of cypress pine and other timbers. The co-ordinating board has done a good deal of work in my electorate, of which I am deeply appreciative.

I have written to the Minister requesting the installation of watering facilities at the border crossing at Goondiwindi. Admittedly the present time is one of extreme stress. Approximately 160,000 head of cattle have been dipped at that centre this year. It is evident that it is desirable to set up feed lots at that centre so that while cattle are waiting for four or five days between dippings they can be lot fed instead of being allowed to plough up all the lanes, riverbanks and paddocks in that area. Over recent months the border regions have been blessed with relatively good rains, and the huge herds of cattle have partially destroyed and eroded the stock routes in that region. If a feed lot had been established at the border, the ploughing up of stock routes and despoiling of pastures would have been prevented. Also, at Wallangarra feed lots are desirable.

The hon. member for Barcoo attacked the United Graziers' Association.

Mr. O'Donnell: I attacked the president of the United Graziers' Association.

Mr. McKECHNIE: The hon. member attacked him for his alleged favouritism towards the Country Party.

Mr. O'Donnell: No; for attacking the A.L.P. I did not mention the Country Party. I attacked him for unfair criticism.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Perhaps I misunderstood the hon. member.

Mr. O'Donnell: Of course you did.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Just the same, I have the impression that the hon. member implied that the president of the U.G.A. had a political bias towards the Country Party and against the A.L.P.

Mr. O'Donnell: Of course he has.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Right, we are agreed. If he is attacked for that, then should not Jack Egerton be attacked for his outlook?

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Peter Bell is president of the United Graziers' Association, and as such is head of a union of employers. If he is to be criticised for his action, then Jack Egerton should be criticised more so for his action as leader of a union of employees. Many unions impose political levies on people who do not wish to be members of the A.L.P., to back up those unions' opinions. The union led by Jack Egerton provides funds for a political party, and that practice is not a correct one. I am pleased to say that Peter Bell would not engage in it. If members of the Opposition criticise Peter Bell, then impliedly they are criticising Jack Egerton because he uses union funds, raised, in some cases, by imposing levies on people opposed to him politically, to fight for his political party. It ill behoves the hon. member to criticise Peter Bell. When I was a member of the A.W.U. I did not support the payment of fees to any particular party.

Mr. Davies: Didn't you pay your fees?

Mr. McKECHNIE: Yes, I paid my fees, but I did not support this principle. I do not know whether the A.W.U. was supporting the A.L.P. at that time because, as hon. members know, sometimes it supports the A.L.P. and sometimes it does not. It gets brainwaves on occasions and washes its hands of political bias.

Mr. Tucker: Are you in arrears?

Mr. McKECHNIE: I suppose I am 30 years in arrears now because I have not paid any dues for the last 30 years.

I have a great respect for the A.W.U. When I was a member of it I took part in discussions, and I was strongly opposed to the use of union funds by any political party.

I join with the Minister in expressing appreciation of the service rendered by Mr. Trist over the years, and I do so particularly on the eve of his retirement because I will not have another opportunity to do so in this Chamber. I appreciate equally the work done by Mr. Rogers and Mr. Wilkes, but I

have been more closely associated with Mr. Trist. I have always appreciated his advice and the experimental work in which he was interested, particularly chipwood factories.

In Queensland, we handle about 54,000,000 super feet of white cypress log timber every year. Of that total, 26,000,000 super feet are carted to the mills and burnt. A great deal of other timber which is waste in the forests could be used as chipwood. We should do whatever we can by way of experimental work to make better use of this timber. I know that Mr. Trist has been working on these lines and I know that the department will continue the experiments. In my own area, over 3,000,000 super feet of timber is burnt each year which could be converted into chipwood at either Inglewood or Yelarbon. From inquiries I have made I understand that 3,000,000 super feet is about the break-even point of an economic unit for converting timber into chipwood. I look forward to more experimental work on chipwood.

Mr. Davies: Is that figure of 3,000,000 accurate? Is that what the department has said?

Mr. McKECHNIE: It is over 3,000,000 super feet. I am relating my remarks to three towns. There are other mills that could increase that up to 4,000,000. I made sure of the 3,000,000 super feet because I understand that is the amount required for an economic unit.

Research is essential in the timber industry, and a great deal of it is needed so that we can make better use of our northern timbers—cypress and other species. Although we will be exporting many tons of chipwood from Australia to Japan, we will still import \$200,000,000 worth of timber for our own use. We should look for ways to cut down our imports. Conversion of timber to chipwood is ideal because the timber is carted to the mill. It is a horrible waste to burn nearly half of 54,000,000 super feet of cypress a year. How to avoid that waste is the problem. We should do everything possible to encourage the regeneration and development of cypress pine forests on our freehold lands. It is a good economic proposition to farm timber on our cypress lands, although not in the western areas. In the near-western areas, such as those I represent, I believe it is an economic proposition.

Mr. Davies: The more that is handed over to freehold the more it will be neglected.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I hope that the more that is handed over to freehold the more wise men will see the advantage of farming timber. I know that some of them will and some will not.

I should like to discuss our national parks, but I know that my time is about to expire.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AIKEN (Warrego) (5.45 p.m.): I sincerely support the remarks of the Minister for Lands and other previous speakers regarding the personnel of the Department of Lands. I applaud particularly the services of Mr. McDowell, Mr. Cook, Mr. Heffernan, Mr. Trist—in fact all officers of the Department of Lands—who have achieved a marvelous reputation in their efforts to promote closer settlement and to assist new settlers on the land. I cannot speak too highly of these trained and understanding men. As the owner of several bigger-than-average properties in the south-western and far-western areas of Queensland, I have met many of these men and have learned to value their ability highly. However, I do not agree with Government land administration and policies.

The cutting up of Nive Downs, a large property in the Warrego electorate, is a shocking example of sheer Government stupidity and blundering ignorance in spite of local advice given to the Department of Lands. These blocks have proved to be far too small in area. The unfortunate selectors who drew them are doomed to years of hard work, with strain, worry, and possibly failure. They are a very unhappy lot. However, I understand that country is soon to be resumed from a large property named Oakwood, which is close to Nive Downs. On Oakwood, there are two blocks of about 70,000 acres and 20,000 acres which I hope the Minister, in his wisdom, will use as additional areas for the people on Nive Downs who are in so much trouble.

The Minister for Lands holds a responsible position because approximately 90 per cent. of the land in Queensland is in the hands of the Crown. Most of the grazing land of the State lies in the western division. That is the area that has been treated so shamefully by this Government particularly in the past 10 years of persistent and agonising drought. Many men of my personal acquaintance who were financially sound a few years ago now find themselves with a heavily mortgaged property, no stock, a raging drought, no means of arranging bridging finance for carrying on and surviving, and, worst of all, a Government that lacks understanding and is almost completely unsympathetic.

If the West is to survive—and I throw grave doubts on this mainly because of the stupid, sectional Government with its limited primary-industry policy confined in the main to "cow-cockies"—this Country Party-dominated Government must update its western approach to restocking and rehabilitation, and, above all, show some action. My fine-feathered friends on the Government side of the Chamber should not forget that it was the leader of this Government, the Premier, who told me that I am behind the times. He said that my questions were superfluous, and that I was trying to make political capital out of the tragedy

of drought. He said that, mind you, in the face of a statement by the Minister for Primary Industries that the estimated loss to the State through drought was \$120,000,000, plus at least 4,000,000 sheep dead or sold to buyers outside Queensland, and possibly 1,000,000 cattle lost in the same way. What a statesmanlike approach that was!

What a mess the Premier has made with his bungling and completely impractical drought-relief measures! We in the West know these things, and so little material benefit has gone to the very section of the community that deserves so much. The people of the West are the unsung heroes of the drought, and they resent the lousy, niggardly approach of the Government to their problems. They are battling on with nothing but hope and sheer guts.

There is little doubt that under Labour Governments the people were infinitely better off than they are today. How does the Government explain the poverty, privation, and continuing evacuation of the West today, as more and more people turn their eyes and thoughts towards the coast? Although this Government is far from being a great Government, it will go down in history as one that was largely instrumental in the near-destruction of the West, and one that let down the industry that made Queensland great, namely, the pastoral industry.

The hon. member for Chatsworth said in the Chamber on Tuesday, 28 October, that the Government has much to be proud of. I am afraid that the people of the West could not agree less. When will the Government stop talking about the drought and start being honest with the people of Queensland? Through the Minister for Lands, Queensland is the landlord of over 400,000,000 acres of vast domain, and this State is proving that it has a far greater untapped potential than any other State. The Premier, the Treasurer, and other satellites of the Government, tell us that Queensland is the greatest revenue-producing State of Australia today. Why then are we in the West, in our greatest hour of need, being given such a shoddy deal? Why does the Government's drought-planning fall so far short of that of New South Wales, which apparently has not the revenue-producing potential of Queensland? I could go on asking, "Why?", and I would be given the same answer all the time.

Mr. Tomkins: There is no drought in New South Wales.

Mr. AIKEN: There is in the north-west corner. I was there the other day.

The margarine question showed the limited thinking of the Premier, when he said on 22 October that the Australian Labour Party was selling out workers and that the Government's proposed legislation was designed to protect the unsuspecting consumers and primary industry. Are not the animal fats

used in margarine products of primary industry? Does the Premier fully support primary industry himself? Does he wear all-wool shirts, ties and socks? Does he always purchase all-leather shoes? Or does he shop to suit his needs and cut his cloth to suit his measure? Talk about sectional thinking! There is a complete disregard of the consumer. When the A.L.P. attempted to support all primary producers and to serve the interests of the consumer, the Premier tried to convince the people that the A.L.P. did not have the all-embracing interests of the people of Queensland at heart.

Mr. Armstrong: It hasn't.

Mr. AIKEN: What rot! That was an outrageous statement by the Premier, and a deliberate passing of the buck because of his failure on the margarine dispute. I remind the Committee that, at least so far, these are the only "bucks" that the West is likely to receive, although it will not be for the want of asking on my part.

I think it is important to remember that this Government does not own the lands of Queensland, and nor will any future Government. They are and will remain the heritage of the people, and I warn the Government to handle them carefully because it is only their custodian for the benefit of present and future generations. If it handles them foolishly, it will make "countless millions mourn".

Mr. Ahern: Did you have freehold tenure of yours?

Mr. AIKEN: I did not. As I said earlier, it must be remembered that these lands are the heritage of all. If they are to be preserved and if the people presently occupying them are to remain on them, the Government should step into the breach and provide facilities for adequate carry-on and restocking finance.

I ask the Government to be careful not to hand over lands that have been our heritage since the time of Captain Cook to foreign investment companies and other exploiters, or to grazing interests that are absorbing land as grazing freehold in perpetuity. I appeal to it sincerely to desist from "selling off the farm", because this could react very unfavourably in the many years to come. It is true that amalgamated pastoral interests, comprising mainly foreign capital, are buying up large areas of Queensland for breeding, fattening, and cropping purposes. Labour has always supported closer settlement and opposed freehold tenure of large areas. Surely that is a wise policy—one that is logical and that has been proven over the years in other countries. I can point to one property of 70,000 acres in my electorate that was bought under freehold tenure from a Tory Government for only a few shillings an acre. That is now a freehold property, not a terminable

lease. It will never revert to the Crown and be the benefit that it should be to the public of Queensland in the years to come.

However, one thing is certain: one day a Government in this State will be compelled by an ever-increasing number of land-hungry people to resume that property. Because it is not public property, it will cost millions of dollars to buy back. I remind hon. members that the people of Queensland will, in effect, be buying back something that no Government ever had a moral right to sell.

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

Mr. AIKEN: At this stage I remind the Committee that, because of the serious turn of events in western areas, I was happy to take out a delegation of A.L.P. parliamentarians to see for themselves that I am not complaining of something that does not exist. This Government, and all Governments, should implement policies designed to obtain the greatest benefits, not for the privileged classes, but for the community as a whole. This is the sound and fundamental aim of the Australian Labour Party, and we are proud of upholding this policy.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that the people as a whole are sick and tired of the weak and ineffectual policies of this Government, particularly the people in the West.

This afternoon the Minister for Lands, in introducing his Estimates, on top of other promises given mainly at election time, promised that drought rehabilitation finance will be requested from the Commonwealth when it rains. We in the West are sick of promises and will only be satisfied with action and definite proposals.

In 1959 the Payne report was used by the Government to argue that flock and herd sizes were not the necessary determinants of a living area. Instead, the economic argument was applied and consequently today, with drought, price recessions, and rising costs there are far too many substandard, too-small living areas. The type of country, accessibility to markets, average rainfall and the desire of the Government to sponsor successful graziers must be the prime consideration in the full settlement of the West. It is of national importance that necessary attention be given to the building up of substandard blocks that are positively proving to be among the major calamities of the West today.

Mr. Lee: They would be A.L.P. blocks.

Mr. AIKEN: I mentioned Nive Downs for the benefit of the hon. member. I believe that aggregations must be built up, and the resources of the capable Land Administration Board could well be employed to this end. In the Far South-west—I make particular reference to the Windorah district—after World War I subdivision of large cattle properties was unsuccessfully attempted and few, if any, of these small properties remain. They have been absorbed by the

larger properties. The arid conditions of the West are not conducive to small holdings. I know of properties in the Charleville area that have almost destroyed all the edible scrub as graziers have tried by the best method possible to retain their stock, knowing that if they lose the stock that are their real equity they stand little chance of obtaining finance when it does rain—at least under the present system of Government. Thus, instead of selling off the stock, the worried stockman battles on, aggravating the effects of drought, destroying his reserves of edible scrub and trampling his country bare of natural grasses, herbage and shrubs.

Naturally, the availability of new lands for settlement and of lands for the building up of aggregations is becoming very limited. With limited finance the majority of graziers with substandard blocks are not in a position to build them up. This is where an understanding and vigorous government could implement a policy to assist in every way possible the building up of these substandard blocks, in the knowledge that it is much better for the State to have two families doing well than three families on starvation blocks.

I sincerely believe that our greatest natural heritage is the land. Either we develop and populate the country or we lose it, because envious eyes are on our great open spaces and unfortunate under-development.

The flow-on benefits from a prosperous land must be recognised and not ignored. The public estate of Queensland has been responsible for the building up of a great State, but much remains to be done. In the light of this all-important fact, first priority should be given to Queensland's land affairs. However, unfortunately the record of this Government is poor, notwithstanding the fact that primary industries are the broad base of our national economy.

Our future prosperity is highly dependent on land development and maintenance. Continued and expanding policies are of importance if Queensland is to survive as the premier producing State of the Commonwealth.

The challenge is with the Government, and this should be more than a sneering matter with the Minister for State Development, the Premier. As the Minister for State Development he, either unwittingly or not caring, is turning the West into a desert that is rapidly becoming deserted. Notwithstanding that and the threat that it poses to the very existence of this State, he accuses me of asking superfluous questions. Shades again of peanut thinking!

Queensland is in the unfortunate position of being part of the driest continent in the world, but luckily the greater part of its semi-arid country has proved to be suitable for the cultivation of the best merino wool in the world. However, might I sound a note of warning. The fierce and prolonged drought has drained the graziers' purse so much that

cheaper breeding stock is being purchased. This is evident mainly in the purchase of flock rams. Until recently I conducted a ram depot for a leading Australian Merino stud, and I was amazed at the number of private treaties that I had to enter into, selling rams on credit for periods of up to two and three years. The cheaper rams were the ones most constantly in demand and formed a contrast—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the hon. member that we are dealing with the Lands Estimates.

Mr. AIKEN: Thank you, Mr. Hooper. The carrying capacity of western lands—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the hon. gentleman that if he speaks about land and carrying capacity he is in order.

Mr. AIKEN: I am talking about the carrying capacity, Mr. Hooper. If you cannot hear me I shall shout a little louder.

Owing to the drought the carrying capacity of western lands could be grossly overrated, as the recovery and strengthening and thickening of the natural pastures will be slow.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WHARTON (Burnett) (7.25 p.m.): I am glad to join in this debate.

Mr. Davies: Do you think the Treasurer will give any finance—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WHARTON: I would not give the hon. member for Maryborough any, because he would waste it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member for Burnett does not intend to speak, I will give the call to another hon. member.

Mr. WHARTON: I am very glad indeed to join in this debate. If hon. members opposite will cease interjecting, I will get on with my speech so that you, Mr. Hooper, and other hon. members who want to hear me, can do so.

I compliment the Minister on the work he has performed. When he became a Minister I said that he was fair, and he is still fair.

An Opposition Member: He is a fair what?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WHARTON: The Minister is also very just. I admire him mostly because he is a practical Minister who knows how to administer his affairs. He knows what he is talking about and he knows about land matters, like many of his ministerial colleagues. It is good to have a practical man in charge of this department. I can only say, "God help us if the A.L.P. becomes the Government," because very few A.L.P. members know anything of a practical nature

except a few of them who can talk about the working man. As we have not yet got a portfolio for the worker, they would be very embarrassed if they became the Government.

I compliment the Minister and his staff on the excellent work that has been done. He has an excellent Land Administration Commissioner, and a wonderful staff to assist him. He has helped them, too, to make the Department of Lands function well for the benefit of this great State.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. WHARTON: At least members on this side of the Chamber have advanced policies to bring about better land development in the State. When the Minister for Education was Minister for Lands, he had to face the problem of switching from the A.L.P. policy to a good forward-thinking policy. We have benefited from this forward thinking in a common-sense way with the advancement of the well-being of those interested in land in Queensland.

An Opposition Member: Will you tell us how they came down to the House and threatened Mr. Muller?

Mr. WHARTON: That may have happened; but we had the margarine people down here the other night threatening the hon. member.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I appeal once more to hon. members to cease cross-firing in the Chamber to allow the hon. member for Burnett to continue with his speech. I am interested in it, and I am sure other hon. members are, too.

Mr. WHARTON: Thank you, Mr. Hooper. I am pleased to know that you are interested.

I wish to refer briefly to the remarks of the hon. member for Warrego. I was very interested in his written speech, which I might term the third edition of Jack Stana-way's "reflections on the West". I pay a tribute to Jack for his advice—

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. WHARTON: That is all right; but I have a great respect for Hugh Bingham.

Mr. Hanson: Charlie Porter writes your speeches.

Mr. WHARTON: No-one writes my speeches for me—and I do not conserve them, anyway.

I am sure that Opposition members must be very worried when they hear the hon. member for Warrego talking about the problems in the West. We know a good deal about the problems of the Outback; but would it not have been better for the State if he had taken the farms, taken the land, and taken everything else and then said, "Now that there is a drought, I will hand it all back." On the one hand he wants

people and development, and then on the other hand he wants the A.L.P. to do the development. Give me strength!

This is the Government that has developed this great State of ours. We have given the people an opportunity to own a home and land and an opportunity to develop it. That is the criterion of progress. Everybody wants to own something, even if it is only a toy motor-car, or a house, or a little piece of land. Everybody has the desire to own something, and this Government has given people the opportunity to do this.

The hon. member for Warrego gave us an exposition of the policy of the A.L.P. He said that we should socialise the land, hold onto it, and lease it. Who will develop anything unless he owns it? The policy of this Government allows people to own and develop the land. It allows the people to have something of their own. It has given them a sense of pride of ownership. The criterion of development is for everyone to own something and develop it. The State should be owned by the people and not by the Government. A State needs people to develop it. Every person who owns something and develops it has something to be proud of. That kind of development is better than the type of development expounded by the hon. member for Warrego. The hon. member for Warrego twisted round in his argument. He said that he wanted people. I am staggered to think that he spent so much of his time propounding that argument. This Government has given the landholders larger areas in the interests of developing the State. We realise what it takes to run a property and we are proud of this State.

I pay tribute to the Minister and thank him for his personal assistance in overcoming many of the problems in my electorate. The Minister has been right through my electorate and has visited many areas. He helped us to overcome one problem with land for the Barga golf course, by closing roads, which helped our district. If we help the club, we help the district, because many people have an interest in that golf club. It is a community effort. I understand that the hon. member for Bundaberg is the president of the golf club, and he likes a little kudos. When we closed the road and gave the club the land without cost, he stood up and said, "Look what I got for you." He did not get anything at all. The people there said, "Hold it; hold it. Three cheers for the Country Party."

I am as keen as most hon. members on the establishment of national parks. They should be set aside in the proper places throughout the State. The conservationists have submitted a proposal to establish a park at Mon Repos for the turtles. I ask the Minister whether he would rather have turtles or people.

Mr. Davies interjected.

Mr. WHARTON: In reply to the hon. member there—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind hon. members that they must refer to other hon. members by electorate.

Mr. WHARTON: Thank you, Mr. Hooper. The hon. member has a few words to say at times, and I sometimes appreciate what he says. I do not want to be too critical of him.

A good deal has been said about the national park at Mon Repos. The people of the area seem to be quite happy to have a turtle rookery there. They would be quite happy to have it on the seashore, with a wall to protect the turtles from the danger of crossing the road and to ensure that they get back safely to the sea, where they belong. But the people are not happy about having a national park of 100 acres or more of land with the greatest potential for development in the area.

Mr. Sherrington: Only the land sharks would want to develop that.

Mr. WHARTON: I am glad the hon. member makes that point, because I say that not all that land is needed for a turtle rookery.

Mr. Sherrington: Whose opinion is that?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind hon. members that it is difficult to hear the hon. member for Burnett. I say that quite seriously, and if members will pay me the compliment of allowing me to hear the hon. member, I shall be able to follow his speech.

Mr. WHARTON: If you want me to shout, Mr. Hooper, I will do so, but I thought we had equipment here to make it easier to be heard. I do not think it works.

The people generally, and the Woongarra Shire, are concerned at the proposal to develop a national park in an area where obviously it does not belong. There are plenty of areas in my electorate that lend themselves admirably to national park purposes. Up in the Boolboonda ranges there are many suitable areas, and the Boy Scouts are prepared to cut tracks to enable people to visit them, and generally make a worthwhile national park. The proposal to establish a national park in the Bargarra area is bordering on the ridiculous.

I am quite happy if things are kept in their proper perspective. We are quite happy to have a national park, if one is needed, and also a turtle rookery; but they cannot be established in this area. There are miles and miles of suitable coastline still left that is admirable for national park purposes. In the Burnett electorate, there is still plenty of good coastal land between Bargarra and Rodds Bay that is crying out for development, and it is absolutely ideal for a turtle rookery. That is what I want to convey to the Minister. There is no

point at all in endeavouring to develop a national park of any size in an area that is already built up. The city of Bundaberg is a closely settled area, and adjoining it are cane farms and the tourist areas of Bargarra, Burnett Heads and Elliott Heads. It is quite stupid to try to establish a national park there.

I appeal to the Minister to keep the turtle rookery in its proper place. Let us protect the turtles by keeping them in a selected area. An American developer already is interested in developing this particularly fine area; he is prepared to develop the whole of the coastline between Bargarra and Burnett Heads.

Mr. Sherrington: When are you going to put the signs up, "Please do not lie on this portion of the beach."? I have never heard anything so stupid in all my life.

Mr. WHARTON: When the hon. member stops talking, he might hear what I have to say. I repeat my appeal to the Minister. The turtles will be in their proper place. Many other areas are available, and it is not necessary to bring them to this area.

Mr. Aiken interjected.

Mr. WHARTON: The hon. member for Warrego does not tell the truth. He does not know what he wants. First he wants a drought-relief scheme; then he does not.

Mr. Jensen: Tell them about the boat harbour, while the Minister is here.

Mr. WHARTON: The Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs has already said that the Government will consider building a boat harbour, and I am confident that one will be built. The area is developing; it serves a large part of the State; and a boat harbour is needed. A boat harbour and a national park would assist in increasing revenue.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope that the hon. member is not taking advantage of the Chair's not being able to hear his speech. If he is not talking about lands, I ask him to return to that subject.

Mr. MURRAY: I rise to a point of order. Can something be done about the microphone, Mr. Hooper? We cannot hear.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I thank the hon. member for Clayfield for drawing that to my attention.

Mr. WHARTON: You will be able to hear me now, Mr. Hooper. I can hear myself. If you want me to return to lands, I will do so.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WHARTON: I was dealing with national parks, and I had made the point to the Minister that it is of advantage to have further development in an area that already is developing. No-one has any

objection to a turtle rookery; no-one objects to development. However, there is very strong objection to establishing a national park in an area in which it does not fit.

As I said, the area is developing; it is intended to keep it developing. The Woongarra Shire Council has provided amenities between Bargara and Burnett Heads, with good roads, and the area has great tourist potential. Last Saturday night I opened the Galleon Cove restaurant. It is a beautiful structure and it will attract tourists. It is important not only to the Burnett Heads area but also to Bundaberg, which is the best provincial town in Queensland, as I am sure the hon. member for Bundaberg will agree, and it taps a large area.

All these matters should be viewed in their proper perspective. A turtle rookery should be in its proper place, and one does not want a national park in an area on which cattle are depastured or on land that is suitable for subdivision. An American is coming to Queensland and he is prepared to develop the whole of this section of the coastline. I heard the hon. member for Warrego say earlier that the State needs people. I have argued in the Chamber many times that Queensland needs people. It is no good having a huge State without people, and it must be developed.

Mr. Aiken: You can't do it with freehold land.

Mr. WHARTON: I will come back to freehold land. The Country-Liberal Government has given people the opportunity of freeholding land and developing it. The State develops as the land develops.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. WHARTON: Jack Stanaway did not write my speech, nor did Hugh Bingham.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WHARTON: Although I have paid tribute to the Minister for the progress that has been made in freeholding land, there are still a few problems. Delays occur in dealing with freeholding applications, and there have been complaints about offers by the Department of Forestry, and so on. However, the Government has introduced legislation that will enable the department to say, "The forestry is worth so much; will you accept this, or can you come to some agreement on this?" That is a step forward.

I am very glad that the Forestry Department has been put in charge of the Minister for Lands, because I think that land and forestry go hand in hand and that the change will be a help in freeholding and will resolve some of the problems. While I complain mildly of problems facing some people, basically we have made great progress and I commend the Minister for his attitude.

As some hon. members probably know—a good many probably would not—the Burnett electorate has the largest self-generating pine forest in the world. That sounds a tall statement; it took me some time to believe it; but it is true. Six hundred thousand acres have been developed into a self-generating forest in the Goodnight Scrub area. In addition there is a good deal of reforestation.

Mr. Wright: Where is Goodnight Scrub?

Mr. WHARTON: If the hon. member knew his geography, he would know.

Mr. Wright: I do know it. I am checking on you.

Mr. WHARTON: The hon. member need not check on me. I rose to speak to the Chairman and the Committee generally about the Goodnight Scrub forest. If the hon. member does not know, I am just sorry for him. The Chairman knows.

Mr. Jensen: Tell them about taking the timber to Brisbane to make matches. Have a go at them.

Mr. WHARTON: I do not want to make a match with the hon. member for Bundaberg. We have a great deal of forestry in this electorate. The Elliott River forestry station is established and it is a credit to the Government. If one proceeds along that road from Bundaberg one could be excused for thinking that the Elliott River Motel had been reached. The buildings are beautiful and I commend the Government for providing decent accommodation for the men working there. They are doing a grand job. Quite a deal of development has taken place and much more is in the offing. I commend the Minister on it. At Baffle Creek in my electorate there is a macadamia nut farm, which I understand is the largest in the State.

Mr. Wright: Very nice they are, too.

Mr. WHARTON: This is true. The Minister has been there, and I commend the Government for the action taken to develop roads in the area. It is an important area and no area can be developed without good roads. The Government is building roads and bridges into the area so that further development can take place. The project was undertaken by the C.S.R. Company as it is not feasible for an individual to undertake it, because of the high cost and the long term before any return is obtained. I am looking forward to seeing the results of this huge and very important project. The Minister has seen it and I commend him on his visit, not only to the area but to the town of 1770, where we have another developing area, at Round Hill, about which I raised a few points the other day. I commend the Minister upon the subdivisional work that has been done there.

The Government has done a great deal of developing in areas such as this. The area of 1770 is several miles from Miriam Vale.

It is right on the coast near Bustard Bay. It will celebrate its bi-centenary next year. It lends itself to further development. I commend the Minister for the development that has already been done. Blocks will be offered for sale before Christmas and further blocks will be available later. Once this town is established, properly organised and planned, we will have something to build on. I thank the Minister also for making portion of that land available for ambulance purposes. When a town or a city is being planned, if it is done correctly in the first place the result is so much better. The Minister is to be congratulated therefore on making land available, under trust to the State Council of the Q.A.T.B., so that as the town develops they will have land available in the right position for the area.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BALDWIN (Logan) (7.50 p.m.): From the financial tables it appears that in 1969-70 the over-all expenditure in the Department of Lands is to rise by about 8.1 per cent. on that of 1968-69. On the receipts side, as far as I can make out from the scattered figures throughout the Auditor-General's report and the report of the Land Administration Commission, there will be roughly an 8 per cent. rise on the figure for the previous year. Therefore, the receipts and expenditure appear to rise somewhat equally. The Treasurer and the Minister for Lands appear to have done their job well in balancing the Budget; but never have my ears been so assailed with such a plethora of puerile panegyrics as they were today when Government members spoke on these Estimates.

To balance the Budget is not the only desire and motive of the Treasurer and the Minister, and I appreciate that very well. There are clear attempts, clumsily hidden, to implement sectional policies aimed at opening the way to the wealthy to get wealthier on the land and to displace and dispossess the smaller man on the land by a lack of sufficient help, and to pave the way for agglomeration for the wealthy. All that will be done with the assistance of the general taxpayer through the Government departments.

There is nothing new in this; this has been going on ever since centralised government was evolved. In Australia, and particularly in Queensland, the struggle for the right of those who wish to own their land and to have access to it has, since the convict days, been one of the major forces acting on the evolution of our political philosophies and affecting our economy. From the days of "squatocracy" the movement has swayed from the state of relatively few individuals and companies possessing gigantic tracts of land, through closer settlement and subdivision and back again. Moves, both illegal and legal, have taken place, so that today in Queensland we are going through the same sort of struggle again.

As in the 1890's and early part of this century, most of the struggle is in the phase of dispossession of the small man. It is my assertion that the elements that make up this struggle for the land have their source and fount in the Land Acts 1962-1968 and the regulations thereto. My assertion is borne out further by a number of the statements made by the Minister when introducing his Estimates, and reinforced by some of the items of expenditure that are apparent in the Estimates as well as by the receipts as shown in the Land Administration Commission's report and the Auditor-General's statement of account.

A new element has now entered into the conflict, that of the urban family man wanting his own house on his own block of land. Today this part of our landholder population has reached such a size that it is important financially and politically by its number alone.

Mr. Lee: Who wrote this for you?

Mr. BALDWIN: If the hon. member is a calligraphist he can come over and see for himself.

The hub of the conflict is no longer found in the country but in the larger centres of population, the periphery of the older suburbs around the city proper. That is not to say that there is no conflict for the possession of land in the country. Far from it! It is just that it is not the larger of the two areas of conflict. Nonetheless, for all that, the struggle is an important and violent one.

The principles of closer settlement, which the Labour Government alone could conceive and devise, are valid in spite of the shallow, biased and most financially concerned criticisms that have been levelled at them today. It is only the methods of application that were wrong, made more wrong by maladministration, intentional or otherwise. By and large those wrong methods were the result of lack of scientific and technical knowledge to wring wealth from the living areas that were thought to be large enough at the time in their particular localities.

The principle that all who desire to go on the land should be given a chance in order of aptitude, financial ability and sense of responsibility, is democratic. If there were too many applications for the available land, it was balloted for. Such a system threw quite a large share of political, social and financial responsibility onto the Government in the first instance. It was hoped to recoup the former by good citizenship, and the latter by good production.

Today, this State Government, as in another three departments—Education, Health and public security—is endeavouring to jettison its responsibility in land settlement by the application of the most outdated principle of capitalist philosophy, one which even the American monopolists, to whom they pull their forelocks in abject subjugation, have long since abandoned, namely, *laissez faire*.

As the hon. member for Warrego pointed out so ably before the recess, the Government, with its big backers, uses the drougt to dispossess the small man and to jettison its responsibility to re-establish him.

The Minister referred to hordes of land-hungry immigrants wanting to get a foothold in the various occupations in primary industry. That is so, and no-one questions their right to do that while they intend to live on the land and work it. The person to whom I object is the overseas capitalist who uses money got from cheap primary exports that are crippling many of our primary producers to take land from us, not to live on it, but to exploit it for his own gain. I object also to the way the land laws have been amended in the past six years to open the way for them, and to the way that tax money has been used to help them.

In general, the taxpayer pays for all the services the Government provides for the landed monopolists. They do not invest their money for the benefit of Queensland, but for their own benefit. Many of them never live on the land they alienate from the State. The products of many of their activities find their way through company channels to the markets, with minimal return to the State by way of export profit. It is true, as the Minister said, that these developers establish whole villages on their huge holdings, complete with schools, hospitals and even entertainments. Are these anything but modern feudal manors where the workers are virtually the property of the modern feudal lords? Twice today I heard Government members accuse previous Labour Governments of trying to create a modern peasantry. Even if that were so, would it not be preferable to creating a feudal chattel? I accuse the Government, in the name of all the family men who want an allotment of land to build on—a landholding to live and work on—of coldly, calculatedly and callously setting up the machinery whereby a large portion of this State is in danger of being degraded into an agglomeration of modern feudal manors.

I ask hon. members to contrast what the Government is doing to aid the agglomerators with what it is doing for the salary and wage workers who want an allotment to build a house on. I admit that the census figures tell us that over 75 per cent. of private dwellings are owned by their tenants.

Government Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BALDWIN: Any hon. member has the right to answer me. I have my speech ready here.

Let me analyse the situation to show how the statistics can be, and are, deliberately misinterpreted. To start with, the proportion of dwellings rented has fallen from what it was in the 1930's and 1940's, owing to the growing mode of flat-living. Secondly,

of those who live in their own private dwellings nearly half are still paying them off in one way or another. Yet we are told in the statistics that they are house owners. We read also that they are landholders. What does this mean to a man who scrimps and scrapes for 15 to 35 years in debt for his house and the education of his children? What does it mean to his wife and children who are left to finish the payments after his early death or retirement? They never really own it. They are merely landholders, as they were described in a ridiculous pamphlet put out by the Minister for Lands as an election gimmick. It addressed them as, "Dear landholders". This was a costly election gimmick for which the Labour supporter, as a taxpayer, was called upon to pay a large part.

What survey has the Department of Lands undertaken to assess the long-term effect that the building allotment surveys will have on householders and local governments alike? What money is directed to research into the conditions in other countries to try to assess the long-term effect that a headlong rush into freeholding will have on the future revenue of the State and local government and, more so, on the small landholder?

In the Logan electorate, there are hundreds of landholders who would dearly love to unload their small areas and buy a building block closer to the city. There is no future in the farmlets into which they have sunk their savings. The zoning laws which local governments have to devise for their own survival do not allow these landholders to subdivide or sell. They are tied to the land as surely as the fellaheen of Egypt or the peasants of India. Many of them hold their land until they are rated off it. Many of them pray for the big takeover bid. There are thousands of these on the periphery of the metropolis.

There are tens of thousands of inner-suburban families who will be forced and lured to buy the newly subdivided areas at high prices. What will they pay their high rates for when they have already paid for the amenities in the high prices of the building blocks? So the local governments can be less a burden on the State and so that local governments can buy more road and bridge-building equipment to open up more land for the developers at a cheap rate.

What I want to know is whereabouts in the Estimates is there sufficient, if any, provision for the most important investor of all, namely, the family man who invests not for himself, but for the country, for the State of tomorrow, for the man and the woman who invest in a family? What have the Treasurer and the Minister done to get from the Federal Government some aid for the struggling buyers of house allotments?

In concluding this section of my part in the debate I emphasise strongly that my fight is not city versus country or city-worker-house-buyer against country-worker-farmer. It is the fight of the almost-have-nots against the would-be have-alls in the land battle.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I appeal to hon. members on my right to cease their loud conversations. The hon. member for Logan cannot deal with interruptions while he is reading his speech. The noise makes it difficult for me to hear him.

Mr. BALDWIN: Mr. Hooper, I am consulting copious notes.

If this is misinterpreted as a method of driving a wedge between the classes of workers, I say it is done by our opponents out of malice or mediocrity.

The Minister made three interesting statements at the conclusion of the first section of his speech. They were most challenging in their contrast to what had preceded them. The first of these was to the effect that there is a hard time ahead for the people on the land, especially the wool producers. I ask him how much harder it can get for a large number of them. Or has he something in store for them besides the drought they have suffered?

The second statement, again relating to wool producers, concerned the threat from synthetic fabrics. I must say that I am amazed. I thought that all men of the land knew that the price of wool had dropped so far—we all know why—that it was now a threat to synthetics. May I suggest that he cease to read the Grade 7 social studies book put out by his colleague, the Minister for Education, and update his knowledge for the sake of his department.

Mr. Wright: Are you sure that he can read?

Mr. BALDWIN: Not always, from some of the things that he says. The price equilibrium between the cost of the two products was reached long before the latest Grade VII social studies book was compiled. If woollen goods were to become any cheaper, Courtauld and all his mates would have to pack up and go home.

The third of these, which tempts me too greatly to resist, is that he proposed the establishment of a department of national disaster. I was sure that I read that that was announced by the Prime Minister last Friday.

The Minister then went on to illustrate clearly the evolutionary trend of all anti-labour, anti-small-man governments when he traced the development of some of the policies of his Government in forestry. Admittedly the areas of planted forests and nurtured native forests have grown. He complained that the public does not appreciate the work of the Forestry Department. How can they, and why should they, when they see their taxes rising to help to do this,

and see the price of timber skyrocketing and the profits of the big timber companies and monopoly contractors rising?

Here again the problems are those of economic equilibrium, and, as with those of land settlement, they have been established artificially with the connivance of a pusillanimous Government. With the double tax on working families mentioned before, this Government has set up a preserve in timber research, expansion, and supply, at cheap rates for the big mills, and scrubber rates for the small mill. If Australia is going to have to import timber, why is the Federal Government allowing Australian and overseas firms to exploit the cheap timbers of New Guinea for export to other countries? As the taxpayers have to pay for the development of New Guinea, why can they not get more benefit from New Guinea timber? Why can they not import timber at lower prices and conserve our diminishing stands?

Honourable Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BALDWIN: Don't worry; the people to whom I am talking are not in this Chamber. They will read this speech. I am not even worried about those who are interjecting; they might as well go outside and sleep.

Mr. Murray: You are talking to the Kuku Kukus.

Mr. BALDWIN: The Kuku Kukus will cook the hon. member if he goes up there.

The matter of research has been mentioned by my colleagues on this side of the House, and not without good cause. Admittedly much has been done in soil research and timber-type breeding. We do not deny this. What is evident is that not enough is being done, and not enough of what is being done is finding its way through as a benefit to the mass of timber consumers. The agglomeration encouraged in the Government's land policy is to be seen at work in the timber industry. The decrease in the number of mills has been proceeding since 1960. The Minister intimated that they had to go for two reasons—inefficiency and the cut-out rate, which was racing ahead of supply. That is different from what displaced mill owners have told me. They allege that they were given tallies that two or three-man mills could not cut, and, to make sure that they could not cut them, they were given swamp stands and ridges in inaccessible gullies to haul from, and on the rear of boundaries of stands. They were given time periods and time limits in which to cut, which meant that they had to cut roadways through the stands. Roads had to be cut through the outside of the stands, and those roadways were ready for the big milling monopolies who came after on the flat areas. I have seen some of these stands.

Before concluding, I should like to move to another equilibrium question that the Minister brought to mind on his boast of setting aside large reserves as national parks. Again, I would say that that would have to be so. Seeing that so much timber is being cleared, and that so much of our land is being handed over to be cleared by overseas monopolies, there will soon not be anywhere left for people to walk in "intimate communion with nature," as he said, unless something is done about providing such reserves. In his policy relating to park reserves, the Minister is to be commended for at least seeing the need to create equilibrium so that people might have somewhere to go. In the days when Crown lands were plentiful, young people had to go out only a short distance from the cities and towns and it was not necessary to provide at high cost artificial camouflaged nature-like facilities. They were ready-made by nature.

I apologise for not pausing now and then to give my opponents opposite an opportunity to interject.

Mr. CAREY (Albert) (8.11 p.m.): Hon. members realise that I like to give credit where credit is due, and I hand to the hon. member for Logan, Mr. Baldwin, the champion's sash for the best read speech I have heard in this Chamber in the 10 years that I have been a member of the Assembly.

Mr. Tucker: If you want to be dirty about it, keep going.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CAREY: The hon. member for Logan has surpassed the hon. member for Toowoong in using words that are not understood by most of us in the Chamber. Certainly they will not be understood by the people he represents.

The hon. member said also that the Government is anxious to give away land that the people could build homes on.

Mr. Wright: It is a well-made point, too.

Mr. CAREY: Yes, it is a well-made point; but the policy of the A.L.P. is not to give land away but to retain it as the property of the State. I think I remember hearing the hon. member for Logan say that the Government is endeavouring to keep the people as convicts. Probably the policy of his party, not the policy of the Government, will keep the people as convicts.

Mr. BALDWIN: I rise to a point of order. I did not say "convicts"; I said "feudal chattels."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Albert to accept the statement of the hon. member for Logan.

Mr. CAREY: Mr. Hooper, it is my pleasure to accept the hon. member's refutation of my use of the word "convicts".

Mr. Tucker: Get on with your own speech and leave the member who has been here three months alone.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CAREY: Let us be fair about this. I have been in this Chamber 10 years.

Mr. Tucker: You have been here 10 years.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Tucker: I heard you when you first came here, and you were the sickening one in the Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to refrain from cross-firing and interjecting. I endeavoured to assist the hon. member for Logan when he was subjected to interjections of a similar type, and I appeal to the hon. gentleman, as leader of hon. members on my left, to discontinue his inane interjections.

Mr. CAREY: Thank you, Mr. Hooper. The hon. member for Townsville North is at present the leader of a very responsible party in the State of Queensland. It ill behoves him to attack me when he knows perfectly well—he can read every one of my speeches in "Hansard" if he doubts what I am saying—that I have not attacked the Opposition other than by replying to comments, as I am replying now to comments made by the hon. member for Logan in his speech.

Mr. Tucker: You were attacking him personally.

Mr. CAREY: I was not attacking him. I am prepared to continue with my speech, Mr. Hooper, but I should like to be able to say first that the hon. member for Logan knows perfectly well that I would never attack him personally. I merely said that he read the best speech ever read in this Parliament during the 10 years I have been here, and I am saying it again. Every hon. member here who is completely honest knows perfectly well that every word except the last three minutes was read verbatim from a prepared statement. I give full credit to him because he, not somebody else, prepared it. I am not condemning him. I read my first speech but I did not read it as well as he did, and I am giving him the champion's sash. He knows perfectly well that if I get personal, it will be totally different. Nobody will ever accuse me of getting personal against any member.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think the hon. member has made his point. I now ask him to continue with the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Lands.

Mr. CAREY: I hope the hon. member for Warrego will not think I am getting personal when I say to him—and I repeat what he said; I took it down—

Mr. Baldwin: Don't read it.

Mr. CAREY: No, I will not read it. I took down what the hon. member said. He said that the people of the West are getting sick and tired of the ineffectiveness of this Government. What rot! They are very proud and appreciative of what the Government is doing for them. We are freeholding land; we are giving people the opportunity of getting a roof over their heads and a home for their families.

Now I go on to my own speech. I have a very brief time at my disposal and I do not want to be interrupted. Everybody knows I am happy to accept interjections if they are pertinent.

I want to congratulate my very good friend the Hon. Vic. Sullivan. He and I were the greatest of mates and still are. He has done an excellent job since he became Minister for Lands. He did a good job as a back-bencher. It is nice to hear officers of his department acclaiming him as one of the greatest Ministers the State has known and I give him full credit for the work he is doing.

As I develop my case I will show the Committee the wonderful things he has done for my area. So often do we hear condemnation of this Government for not being conservationists that I must repeat, "What rot!" We have already set aside 2,369,116 acres of land for national parks. I know the hon. member for Salisbury must support me when I say that this is a good job and that we want more. Only today the Minister in his opening remarks said that another 27,000 acres of brigalow country had been set aside as national park.

Mr. Sherrington: Ask him who, for three years, has been pressing him to do this. Ask him that!

Mr. CAREY: I am quite certain the Government does not need pressure to do the right thing by the people of Queensland. It certainly does not need pressure from hon. members opposite, because we have the ability on this side of the Chamber and we have the entrée to Ministers to inform them of what we want.

I can remember, as a member of the Wildlife Preservation Society, Gold Coast Branch, getting 100,000 acres set aside by the then Minister for Lands, the Hon. Alan Fletcher, for a national park. I want to take the matter a little further. I am not asking the Minister to set aside that area of land, the major portion of which is in my electorate, as a national park. I hope that he will make every effort to retain the balance of South Stradbroke Island, which is not presently given over to freehold or leasehold tenure, as parks and reserves for recreation purposes. If the land is declared a national park, not even a kiosk can be constructed on it. The area on South Stradbroke is where I, as a young fellow, used to spend half my time after school playing around on the sandhills and enjoying the

freedom of movement. I hope that that area will be preserved so that my children, my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren will be able to enjoy the facilities that I enjoyed during the early part of my life.

Mr. Aiken: What about getting some land so that a railway can be constructed to the South Coast?

Mr. CAREY: I will be coming to the Railway Department land in a few minutes, so if the hon. member will be patient I shall tell him what happened to it.

I refer now not to the big areas of land out in the West that have been freeholded as living areas but to blocks of land on which homes are built and which this Government, particularly since the Minister took over the portfolio of Lands, has freeholded. The Government has provided a very reasonable method of purchase. The Valuer-General values the land, and then the owner of it is given a very lengthy period of time to pay off the purchase price. If he pays cash for it, he is given a 49 per cent. discount. I have very few leaseholders in my electorate, but they are now converting their land into freehold, which they can leave to their children without encumbrance and without a lease.

Mr. Jensen: As long as they don't sell it next week.

Mr. CAREY: I am told that the hon. member for Bundaberg is very anxious to get sufficient money in the bank to purchase a car. Good luck to him. Every man should have a car. Today a car is not a luxury but a necessity.

I sincerely thank the Minister, the Land Administration Commission and all the people associated with the Department of Lands for the land that they make available to churches and charitable organisations. In my electorate several such organisations have already taken advantage of the Government's offer to make land available. The first land made available to such an organisation was from 1,100 acres that was once forest reserve. Forty acres was made available to Aquinas College as freehold, and a Catholic school has been erected on that land to cater for a great many Catholic boys. Allocations of land in that manner have assisted the Crown to dispose of land in close proximity to the Gold Coast. When people saw that Aquinas College was important to the area and that the building was constructed about 1½ miles from the post office, everyone else wanted some of this land. Land has been given to life-saving organisations and fishing clubs. It has been made available to church organisations and for many other purposes.

Mr. Aiken: It was virtually given away to the big graziers.

Mr. CAREY: I do not agree with that. I have not much time for the monopolists.

Recently the Minister and his departmental officers made 10 acres available to the Cooinda Sub-normal Children's Association to build a workshop, and the department is also assisting the senior citizens to get the land that they want.

I thank the Minister and his department for purchasing the railway land at Southport that would otherwise have been thrown open to industry and commerce. I approached the Minister, who, in turn, approached Cabinet about the land. I do not know whether I have the authority to tell the Chamber the price, but it was fairly high. It cost under \$100,000, but the department is prepared to purchase it and to hand it over to the council, on lease, to be held in trust for public purposes. The council proposes to build a bus-transport terminal, a senior citizens' club and a workers' hostel. Opposition members should all take a \$4.40 ticket in this project to help build the hostel as they will want to go down there to get cheap rental accommodation when they become workers.

Land for homes for young married people is becoming very scarce in important areas. No doubt hon. members saw the television programme titled "Four Corners" which revealed that land in Perth is virtually priced out of the reach of young married people wanting to build a home. We do not want that to happen on the Gold Coast. We had an area of 1,100 acres, which is now down to about 700 acres, set aside. I know that the Minister and his departmental officers intend to develop a number of building sites to be sold only to young people who do not own land in the area. That will mean that they will get the land at a much more reasonable price than if the department had to face the barrage of inquiries from people wanting to buy it for resale. I ask the Minister to retain as much as possible of this land so that he will be able to continue developing allotments for sale to young people getting married or to those who desire to own a home but are priced out of home-ownership by high land valuations.

This morning, the Minister told us that destruction of groundsel in Queensland had cost the department \$14,500. In answer to a question asked by my colleague the hon. member for Warwick, the Minister said that the Crown does not accept financial responsibility for destroying noxious weeds on Crown land. I hope that the Minister will have a serious look at this unfair position. I bought 133 acres of land on the Coomera River, and it cost me \$600 to kill the groundsel on it. The Crown land islands in the bay are seed-beds for the groundsel that blows onto our area. If it is good enough to make a private-enterprise man pay to have groundsel destroyed on his 133 acres—and I am only one person, and I am using myself as an illustration, and I

know it will be effective—surely the Government can find the money to spray the groundsel on its land so that it does not spread onto private-enterprise areas.

In my first or second speech in the Chamber I appealed to the then Minister controlling the Department of Forestry to establish a reforestation area in my electorate. Anybody who has any knowledge of the State knows that the Canungra area was the greatest timber-producing district in Queensland. Lahey's sawmill was world famous for the timber it took off that area. It is very steep country. The Minister should look into it and, even if he has to purchase some of the land before its price becomes excessive, establish another hardwood or pine forest so that the land is put under cultivation. There is a forestry reserve at Numinbah, in the electorate of my colleague the hon. member for South Coast, who will support me in this because he supports anything that will benefit the area. He would like to see the forestry reserves at Numinbah and Springbrook replanted where replanting is necessary.

I thank Mr. Trist, whom I have known for many years. I think he swore me in at Rotary, and our friendship has lasted for a long time. The only objection I could take to him is that he will not allow a little sand to be taken off the Spit. I hope that he will brighten himself up and broaden his shoulders and say, "I will be retiring shortly. Let them have what they want so that Carey and Hinze will be happy."

I thank Mr. Gordon McDowell, Mr. Brian Heffernan, Mr. Nev. Cook and Mr. Paul O'Gorman for the courtesies they have extended to me when it has been my pleasure to visit them to discuss the problems of some of my constituents. I have not heard of anyone who has not been perfectly satisfied with the results I have achieved with the help of those gentlemen.

The hon. member for Burnett spoke about turtles. We do not want turtles. However, the Minister takes rabbits under his wing. We know that the brown rabbit and the wild rabbit cannot be caged; but the angora rabbit does not burrow and can be kept in cages and used as food. I am sure that even the graziers would not mind the angora rabbit being used to establish another industry for Queensland.

(Time expired.)

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (8.35 p.m.): I was rather puzzled by the concluding remarks of the previous speaker in which he referred to the fact that the Minister took under his wing a rabbit. I felt quite sure that he was referring to the hon. member for Burnett, because never in the 10 years in which I have been a member of this Parliament have I heard such an amazing speech made by a man who represents a large electorate and one containing an area such as the Mon Repos beach. Never have I heard

such an ignorant outpouring as the hon. member's suggestion that we ask the turtles to be co-operative and move into the national park farther up the beach. For a moment I had the horrible feeling that the hon. member for Burnett was going to ask the turtles to travel overland to a national park at Wallaville.

Mr. WHARTON: I rise to a point of order. If the hon. member wants to think that I said that, that is all right, but I did not in fact make that statement.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I had no intention of speaking in this strain, because I think there are matters to be dealt with in the debate on these Estimates that are far more important than a rabbit that the Minister takes under his wing.

At the outset, I wish to refer to an article by Father Gregory Denning, which appeared in a recent edition of "The Australian". Father Denning deals with the basis of revolt among students in our society, and says of student power that it is both constructive and dangerous. His article reads—

"It is constructive because it points to irresponsibility as the fundamental evil of our times. It is dangerous because at times, in its dismay at the power of irresponsibility, it combats it with the weapons least likely to destroy it—violence, elitism, arrogant unanimity."

There is, he says, a great sense of helplessness in our society, a feeling that we are being carried along, that nothing an individual does can allay evil or avoid the enormity of crimes committed by society. He states—

"We are swept along by politicians who say that war is a sad necessity, by generals who say that nuclear armament and biological warfare are realistic ways to pursue peace."

This esteemed gentleman then continues in this strain—

"I would go further. We watch with helpless despair not only the crazy workings of our leaders and social institutions, but also the continuing rape of our environment. The virgin bushland, the quiet lakes and streams with their birds and animals are fast disappearing with the fungus-like growth of cities, suburbs and holiday resorts.

"The air is heavy with pollution. Our beaches are being ruined in the name of minerals. The Colong Caves await destruction in the name of cement."

I believe those to be very inspiring words indeed because I see in the opinion expressed by this gentleman a great parallel with a situation existing in this State today, on which I have spoken in this Chamber for the last 3½ years and in which I have achieved little or no success. It is my intention tonight to raise once again the threatened destruction of one of our most priceless assets, namely, the Cooloolool sand mass.

Mr. Ahern: You are very happy about the dunes.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I am not going to be side-tracked by silly interjections; this matter is far too important for that. From the way in which the Government is heading, it appears to me that we will have to witness the rape of a national asset that will go down in the history of Queensland as a crime committed against the State by an irresponsible Government. I say that with some feeling, because I believe it to be so. In my opinion, to place in the hands of a Government with the attitude of the present Government an asset as priceless as the Cooloolool sands is somewhat akin to placing the Taj Mahal under the sponsorship of a mob of hippies. The Government has shown quite clearly over the years that it is immature in the field of conservation. In fact, I go further and say that it pays lip-service to conservation and that events prior to the last State election lend credence to that view.

I have not time to recanvass all the great wonders and natural beauties of the amazing piece of country that lies north of the Noosa River and extends for about 35 miles up the coast to a point known as Eight Mile Rocks. That area, which is unique because it is the last remaining remnant of virgin country, will in the years to come, if properly managed and controlled, become a wonderful asset to the State. I forecast that it will become more renowned than the famous Waikiki Beach and many other places the natural attractions of which have been the subject of spurious propaganda. It is the only area in the world, with the exception of Fraser and Moreton Islands, that contains coloured sands. It has wonderful surfing beaches, and fish abound in the waters off the coast adjacent to it.

Fringing these unique coloured sands in dunes rising to about 800 feet (they are probably the largest sand dunes in the world) is one of the great potential wonders of the State—a tropical rain-forest growing on sand, giant eucalypts growing on infertile soil. That alone must be puzzling to soil experts, because insufficient research has been carried out to establish why that situation exists. From a scientific point of view, it would take many years of research to determine the reason, and I believe that the findings of properly applied research in that direction could well provide many of the answers to the use of infertile land in Queensland.

At present the area is being threatened by sand-mining companies; it is being threatened also by pressure from millionaire pastoral companies that wish to use the wonderful wildflower plain of the Noosa River for cattle fattening. In my opinion, as I have said before, such misuse of a wonderful asset is, to say the least, sacrilege, and I believe that any Minister of this Government who sanctions the sand-mining of the dunes or permits the use of the wonderful wildflower plain for beef cattle fattening when so many

other areas in the State can be used for the same purpose is criminally insane and should be incarcerated in an institution.

Over the years, when I have risen in this Chamber to speak, I have heard repeatedly sneering remarks about the "emotional conservationist". That is the only answer that my opponents have. The two things that a conservationist in today's society is fighting are ignorance and prejudice—nothing less.

Mr. Sullivan: I have not heard any sneering remarks.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: The Minister may be slightly deaf. However, I have never been ashamed or afraid to say that I believe in fighting to retain some of the beauties of this State not only for my children but for my children's children and for future generations. The sneering remarks that are made from time to time concerning my attitude in this matter leave me completely cold. Let me quote one small paragraph from a letter I received in the mail this morning. It says—

"We visualise a time say 50 or 100 years ahead when with the accumulation of pressures on space—with the onslaughts of concrete, bitumen, motor-cars and population—our children's children will look at Cooloolo and think 'Thank God that there was someone in those days who could see further than the immediate lure of a few dollars'."

People who think these things are far more important to me than the members of this Chamber who repeatedly indulge in sneering references about my being an emotional conservationist. I have often wondered why they have not tagged me with the name of Communist because I want to do something about the preservation of this country.

The Conservator of Forests—and it is sad to think that he will soon be retiring—has a vision of what is required. I have here a plan on national parks that he put before this Government five years ago and that has been before it ever since. It is one of the most imaginative conservation plans that could come out of a Government department. It is a tremendous tribute to the Conservator himself and to the officers working under him. I sincerely believe that, on his retirement, the Conservator will be a sadly disillusioned man in the knowledge that for five years he had this plan before a Government that was more interested in the short-term extraction of minerals and the quick dollar than it was about doing something of a statesmanlike nature for future generations in this State.

The Minister and the Cabinet, for some time past, have been prepared to offer this insult to their Conservator and his officers and to be guided by a plan of development conceived by the Widgee Shire Council. What does this plan envisage? Just what I have been saying tonight. They want sand-mining leases on the high dunes and fat cattle on

Noosa Plain. While every other State in the Commonwealth is making millions of dollars out of attractions such as this, this Government would sell its soul for the few lousy dollars it will get in return for the short-term extraction of minerals.

I believe that one of the problems encountered by the former Minister in charge of Forestry—and this is why he was rebuffed in Cabinet—was that in this State we have out-moded forestry laws. Section 24 of the Forestry Act gives the power to the Mines Minister to veto any proposal for national parks if the land contains minerals. It is dangerous to put this sort of power into one man's hands, particularly when the present incumbent of the office has the attitude, publicly stated in this Chamber, "I suggest to you gentlemen that if you stand in the middle of an 8-acre scrub you see just as much as if you stand in 48,000 acres." The same sort of statement emanates from Government back-benchers. Every time a national park proposal has been brought before this Parliament, it has been met with the argument that the area is far too large.

We all heard the crazy outburst of the hon. member for Burnett tonight. If the hon. member is afraid that there is no revenue to be made out of the saving of our wildlife, I suggest that he go to Phillip Island off the Victorian coast and view the 3,000 people a night paying 40c each to observe the penguin rookery and the penguins coming ashore. The same hill-billy attitude was adopted by the council in control of that place. It opposed conservation; it wanted houses on that land. The same council, having learned the lesson the hard way, now rubs its hands with glee at the amount of revenue this unique attraction brings in each night of the season.

In his report the Conservator says—

"Australia has one of the most highly urbanised populations in the world, and in a few decades this population will have to rely mainly on National Parks and similar reserves for those forms of outdoor recreation requiring natural surroundings. It has become clear that in a modern industrialised community such recreation is essential for the mental and physical health of the population. These facts should be basic criteria in considering any proposal to set aside an area as National Park."

Those are laudable sentiments. I believe that the unique area to which I have referred is doomed because of the Government's short-sighted policy and its complete lack of knowledge of what is required in conservation.

One of the proposals put forward by the Widgee Shire Council was that a road should be constructed along the coast.

The Council's spokesman said blatantly—

"An outstanding feature of Widgee Shire's proposal is to extend the coastal highway up from Tewantin to the existing

Rainbow Beach road. The Council is confident that mining companies would provide finance for most of this work."

If that attitude is the Government's then it is prepared to destroy one of the most unique and priceless assets of this State simply because a mining company will build a road. That sort of attitude was demonstrated quite clearly in the development of Sunshine Beach north of Maroochydore. The development company was prepared to build a bridge and construct a bitumen road, and huge areas of land were parcelled out for subdivision. The net result is that today trees grow through the bitumen. No demand existed for that land. The Government was prepared to destroy beautiful wallum heath merely because the company was prepared to provide a bitumen road. In the country to which I have referred can be seen the greatest collection of wallum heath in the State. Western Australia has repeatedly attracted tourists by the supposed magnitude and beauty of its wildflower displays. Yet only 100 miles from Brisbane we can see something that at least equals, if not exceeds, the beauty of what can be seen in Western Australia.

In addition to that, the area is unique in that the Noosa River does not rise in the mountains but starts from the waters that are stored in the giant sand dunes. This feature is probably without parallel in the world.

In the same area natural peat bogs abound, and a great volume of water is stored underground. It is estimated that if it were possible to tap the bogs enough water could be obtained to supply a city the size of Brisbane. Yet no scientific study has been made of that area, except by a few individuals, and no study has been made of the botany of the area. I have no doubt that many plants grow in that area that would be the means of providing priceless life-saving drugs, but no study has been made to determine whether they exist or not. No study has been made of the phenomenon of rain forest and giant eucalypts growing on infertile soils. This Government is prepared to gamble away the future of this area merely for the short-term reward of a quick dollar gained from mining operations.

I do not think that any geologist who is true to his principles would dare to predict that it was safe to mine these dunes. Nature itself has provided graphic examples of wind-blown erosion. There is one area known as the "big blow" in which sand has travelled for miles across the country and is spewing over the ridge near Lake Cootharaba. This is a priceless asset containing a maze of waterways, freshwater streams and inland lakes, which, if properly managed, will give the State in the next 100 years a return a thousand times greater than the short-term gain in revenue from the extraction of minerals.

I feel that the fight to preserve this area may be lost already. I know the attitude of the Minister for Mines and I have scant regard for his views on conservation.

He is so dazzled by the almighty dollar that he would——

The CHAIRMAN: Order

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Mr. Hooper, I hope that you will let me continue with this statement, because I should like it to appear in "Hansard".

The Minister's attitude is such that he would give a mining lease over his grandson's sand-castle if there were five-cents worth of mineral in it. He has proved that repeatedly by his actions in this Chamber. I believe that the Minister is responsible for the veto of the proposed national park. If that is not so, who is the culprit? Why has the Minister ignored the plan presented by his competent officers who are sitting in the lobby? Why has the Minister been prepared to accept advice from shire councils or anyone else in Queensland? Is that not the worst insult he could offer a very capable man? In the last five years the Ministers in charge of the department have done everything possible to duck the issue on the Cooloolool sand mass.

I challenge the Minister to explain why the Government has procrastinated. I am not saying that the present Minister is wholly responsible, as he has been in charge of this department for only a short time, but the Government has procrastinated. The public is beginning to think that something stinks about this matter. Why has not the Government put into operation the plan designed by the forestry officers? I ask the Minister to tell me, in his reply, why he will not declare this area a national park. I want the Minister to tell me why there has been procrastination, and to inform the Chamber what pressures are being exerted on him. The Minister has had all sorts of inquiries directed to him. I have asked questions about the matter, but I have been fobbed off with the explanation that an inquiry is taking place. The Minister cannot convince me that, if this area is put to the uses envisaged in this plan, namely, timber production and the tourist trade, the Government will not get the same revenue as if it is used for sand-mining and cattle-fattening.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: The hon. member disgraced himself completely tonight. I will not waste time on him.

I want the Minister to present the figures to prove why it is so important to menace these high sand dunes with sand-mining. Why is it important to fatten cattle on the Noosa plains when there is so much country available elsewhere for this purpose? Why is it necessary to mine these high dunes when

there are vast areas that can be used for that purpose between Sydney and Rockhampton?

Mr. Hodges: Why can't you be factual with your argument?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I am being factual. I have not said anything tonight that is not the truth. I challenge the Minister to point out where I am not being factual. I know the attitude of the Minister for Works and Housing. He is one of the people who has made sneering references about the emotional conservationist. He has only to look at the rehabilitation work at Inskip Point that he talked so glibly about and said would be a success to see that it has now all the elements of a desert in creation. Like many other people, the Minister can only see the fat bulls looking over the fence or the almighty sign of the dollar from sand-mining. In any case, I hope I have conveyed some of the feelings of many notable people in the community who are disturbed because they feel that this unique asset will be lost for all time. No-one can convince me that everything is above board when it has taken the Government five years to consider a plan designed by its own forestry officers.

Mr. Hodges: How long has that area been there?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: It was not being menaced five years ago, and now the cattlemen are staking a claim, and the miners are in, and the land subdividers will want to make some money out of it. The Minister's attitude does not disturb me in the least because I believe that he is in the pocket of the sand-mining companies. If the Government does not put that plan into operation, future generations will look back and say that this Government was politically immature and was immature in matters of conservation. I believe that this Government will go down in history as the perpetrator of one of the greatest crimes ever against this State.

(Time expired.)

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Lands) (9.2 p.m.): To any Minister, the debate on the Estimates of the departments he administers is possibly one of the most important functions of the year. It gives members an opportunity to look into his administration and bring to the notice of the Parliament, and of the Minister concerned, any views that they hold. The first Estimate debate since I became Minister for Lands has been very interesting to me.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition set the tempo for the debate for most of the day. Several interesting contributions have been made. Some hon. members did become a little animated. I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the tribute he paid to my staff officers in both departments. He said that he was proud of the Pallarenda development. We believe that

this is good development. I pay a tribute to my officers and the Townsville City Council, which was the constructing authority for the work done there, on the development of this pleasing housing suburb in such a delightful spot. When my predecessor transferred Mr. McDowell from the Irrigation Commission to the Department of Lands because of his knowledge in this regard—he is an engineer in his own right—probably he was thinking of the spectacular development taking place along the coast of Queensland.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned also the development at Rowe's Bay and expressed his appreciation of what has been done there. He paid a tribute to the Land Commissioner at Townsville, Mr. Hall, and I agree that he is a very conscientious officer and one who is valued by me and by members of the Land Administration Commission for the work that he has done. I know that he is held in very high regard by the people of Townsville and its hinterland, for which he is responsible, and the many other places in which he has served as Land Commissioner.

The hon. member went further in talking of land usage in rural areas. He mentioned the importance of water conservation for irrigation purposes, and he even suggested that perhaps the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission should also come under my administration as Minister for Lands. Another speaker later suggested that the Department of Primary Industries, too, should be under my control. Whilst I appreciate those views, I can assure the Committee that my hands are pretty full in administering the Department of Lands and the Department of Forestry. I can, however, understand those views because all the activities covered by the departments mentioned are somewhat similar. I am very confident that in the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs, the Government has two excellent Ministers.

Mr. Tucker: I made no reflection on them.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I am not suggesting that the hon. member did. There is co-operation between the officers of the various departments.

There is in connection with the brigalow lands scheme a developmental committee, and on it are officers of the various departments mentioned, as well as officers of the Department of Lands. The knowledge that Mr. McDowell, the Chief Commissioner of Lands, obtained in the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission is very valuable to him in assessing the best usage of land.

The first speaker on the Government side, the hon. member for Landsborough, made a very interesting contribution. He expressed concern over the loss of trained personnel. That was mentioned also in the Annual

Report of the Land Administration Commission. It is something that concerns the Government, because we can ill afford to lose trained staff, particularly in the Department of Lands. Land administration in Queensland is a major operation because of the size of the State and the great development that is taking place, and that has taken place in recent years, and I share the concern over the loss of staff.

The hon. member for Landsborough referred also to the best usage of land, and the branch of primary industry to which it should be allotted. Of course, as we are a free-enterprise Government, we like to leave such decisions to the landholder himself. Because of the hon. member's training in this field, I believe that he has put some interesting thoughts before my officers and me. That is the type of thing that I expected to come from this debate.

The next speaker was the hon. member for Barcoo.

Mr. Bennett: He does know something about the land. I would listen to him.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Will the hon. member for South Brisbane allow me to make a similar suggestion?

Mr. Bennett: Thank you. I would be glad if you did.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The hon. member for Barcoo is always very interested in what is happening to the land, and in land administration. I do not agree with him, however, in his criticism of the President of the United Graziers' Association. I do not wish to go into that at length, because I believe that the hon. member for Carnarvon and the hon. member for Roma dealt with the criticism fairly effectively. The point is that Mr. Bell has been to me and to members of the Land Administration Commission on many occasions and has been very helpful in bringing to our notice matters that he thought would be beneficial to the administration of the department. He has never, in the time that I have been Minister for Lands, attempted to bring pressure to bear on me or my departmental officers. He has indicated dissatisfaction with some of the things that are taking place in the Department of Lands at this point of time, and he has expressed his views very frankly. I am pleased about that because he, together with the other members of his executive, is representing the grazing industry, and the department does not want to be at loggerheads with those who are in that industry.

I do not know personally what his politics are. (Opposition laughter.) I have a fairly good idea, because I know that he is a sensible man. I do know that his wife is a member of the Country Party; she comes to Country Party conferences. I do not think that I have ever known Peter Bell to be there himself. However, I imagine

that he would be a member of the Country Party. I do not agree with the criticism of the hon. member for Barcoo in that respect, and I think he lapsed a little. He does not usually speak in that vein.

The hon. member levelled some criticism at the brigalow development scheme. I know that he is interested in brigalow development because quite a large area of the scheme is in his electorate. However, as I mentioned in my introductory remarks, I believe that the brigalow development scheme is one of which the Government can be very proud indeed.

A number of men played a very important part in the development of brigalow land. For many years the land was allowed to lie virtually dormant. It was held in big leases by a few people, despite the fact that a number of people had been land-hungry for a long period. If there had not been a change of Government in 1957, there is a real possibility that the land would still be in the same state.

Although, as I said, a large area of the brigalow development scheme is in the electorate of the hon. member for Barcoo, a vast area is in the electorate of the Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. N. Hewitt, and he was one of the first to suggest to the then Minister for Lands that a development scheme should be implemented. As a result of his interest and the interest of a number of other people, investigations were carried out and the scheme got off the ground. The Government of Queensland convinced the Commonwealth Government that if the brigalow development scheme was to succeed, finance had to be made available, and it was made available because the Commonwealth Government could see that considerable finance would be required.

Problems have occurred; people have had to endure hardship. The problems and hardships, of course, have been accentuated by the seasonal conditions that have existed since the scheme was implemented. I do not intend to traverse again the ground that brigalow suckers prosper in dry weather, when they do not have competition from grass, because I think that has been canvassed sufficiently already. However, I do know that settlers in the brigalow areas are confident that they will succeed. I have met many of them in the 18 months I have been Minister and I am confident that officers of my commission, and members of the Government generally realise that if they are in any financial difficulty from these bad seasons it is our responsibility to do something to assist them.

Mr. Aiken: I hope you will keep to that.

Mr. SULLIVAN: We will keep to it. We have been doing some exercises on this that I cannot divulge at the present time.

Mr. Bennett: Why not?

Mr. SULLIVAN: When I acquaint my Cabinet colleagues and get approval of what I have in mind, I will tell hon. members of it, but not now.

The hon. member for Barcoo expressed concern about freeholding by companies. In my introduction of the Estimates this morning I made reference to some of the outstanding developments taking place in the Gulf country. I mentioned Butcher's Hill, where certain members had been. I said that I had been there myself. I mentioned that we were prepared to allow Mr. Foyster, who is an individual in this project, not a company, to freehold almost 60,000 acres of that pastoral holding.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: He is quite entitled to it.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The Minister has been there and he would know the conditions we have laid down. This is a pilot scheme and the benefits that will accrue from it will parallel those from King Ranch.

I want to make it perfectly clear that very tough conditions of development are put on companies developing in these areas before any better security of tenure or anything of that kind is granted. As hon. members are aware, they are not entitled to freehold, so I believe the conditions we put on them for development entitle them to longer leases over a certain area where the development is done. If we want to attract capital to do this, whether it be overseas or otherwise, we must bend a little. Some people have the mistaken idea that the whole of the Peninsula and the Gulf is held by Americans, just because a few Americans have leases up there; but there are plenty of Australians doing a similar job.

Mr. Bennett: The Americans picked the eyes out of it.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Here we go again! The hon. member would not know whether they picked the eyes out of it or not. I can assure him that they have not.

While we are in favour of giving better security to people prepared to bear this expenditure, we insist on the development that has to take place—and it has to take place before they will be given any better tenure. In doing this we are enticing these people to prove something, and after they have done so, other people will be interested in spending their money there also.

Mr. R. Jones: Is this Foyster the same chap who has the tourist centre on Lizard Island?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I do not know. He was one of the sand-mining people. I think he has interests on Lizard Island.

The next speaker was the hon. member for South Coast.

Mr. O'Donnell: I asked you about a remission of rents. It was my main point and you have not answered it.

Mr. SULLIVAN: To assist people at the present time?

Mr. O'Donnell: That is right.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I am sorry I missed it. In 1967—

Mr. O'Donnell: What about 1969?

Mr. SULLIVAN: Let me talk about one thing at a time. In 1967 we did give remission of rents and this cost the Government \$1,400,000. We did not ask for any pats on the back for this. We believed it had to be done. We know that because of the drought conditions that have obtained over the last 12 months or so, some people will be needing assistance in one form or another. I do not want hon. members to think that we are not considering this. The Commission and I are considering it; but at this stage I am not prepared to say whether remissions of rent will be made or whether some other form of assistance will be provided.

As hon. members are aware, a late payment of rental attracts a 10 per cent. penalty rate. Cabinet agreed to waive that penalty at the beginning of the present rental period early in April, so that no penalty is imposed. The next rental does not fall due until 31 March. It is not necessary to decide at this time on the assistance that will be provided. If the bad season breaks and a good one comes along, it may be that we will not have to do as much; but if the bad season continues, then anything that we decide to do now might not be sufficient.

Mr. Bennett: What—pray for rain?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I will admit that I do pray for rain, not only for myself but for the whole of Queensland, and I would hope that the hon. member for South Brisbane does, too.

Members of the Opposition can be assured that the Commission, the Cabinet Ministers and I are fully aware of the problems that lie ahead for graziers whose finances have been eroded by bad seasons, stock losses and loss of income. A more satisfactory method than rent remissions may be found to assist them, but at this stage it is sufficient for me to say that the situation is well in hand.

Mr. O'Donnell: You realise that I want a follow-up of rent remissions with a rate subsidy?

Mr. SULLIVAN: Yes, I heard the hon. member say that. Similar assistance was provided in 1967. At this stage all I can say is that we are particularly conscious of the financial problems that face many graziers and farmers and will do our best to alleviate them. We will provide the assistance when we feel that the time is opportune.

The hon. member for South Coast made his usual solid contribution to the debate. I

thank him for his expression of appreciation of our efforts to assist people on the South Coast and to help solve his 1,400 problems.

He suggested that at Springbrook, where a number of dairy farms have ceased to operate owing to uneconomic areas and the poor economy of the industry, it might be wise to implement a scheme of reforestation on those farms. I am sure that the Conservator of Forests and his officers will be very interested in that suggestion. I assure the hon. member that we will look at it, because the locality of those farms and the high rainfall in the area might make it an admirable one for reforestation.

During the contribution of the hon. member for Isis, it was difficult at times to keep with him owing to interjections made by his Whip, who made half a speech at the same time. I felt that the Whip was a little unfair to a reasonably new member. It was obvious that he was supporting him; but I hope that he will pay the "Hansard" reporters the courtesy of making a speech of his own. I do not know how they fared in trying to record two speeches at once.

The hon. member for Isis spoke at some length putting forward his views on the development of the wallum land in his electorate. He referred to the varying types of soil and said that some should be used for cane-growing, some for future expansion in the sugar industry, and others for pasture development. I point out with due deference that 12 to 15 months ago I said that the utilisation of the wallum land was under very intensive investigation.

A short time ago the hon. member for Salisbury, in a little cross-firing with the Minister for Works and Housing about certain issues south of Gympie—

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. I do not wish to distract the Minister's attention, but it is reported to me now that he stated that I interfered with the speech of the hon. member for Isis by constant interjections. That is not true.

Mr. R. E. Moore: It is now too late; you should have taken a point of order at the time.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Carey): Order! The Minister for Lands.

Mr. Davies: I ask that my explanation be accepted by the Minister. I did not interrupt the speech of the member for Isis.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I do not believe that the Minister actually said that the member for Maryborough interrupted the speech. He said that it was difficult to hear the member for Isis because of the cross-firing by the hon. member for Maryborough. I call on the Minister.

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is right.

Mr. Davies: The Minister's statement is not true.

Mr. Bromley: He is calling you a liar.

Mr. Davies: Yes, he is a liar.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Maryborough to withdraw that word. It is unparliamentary and he knows it is. He has been a member a long time, and I ask him to withdraw the word that he just used.

Mr. Davies: I will withdraw it because parliamentary practice compels me to withdraw it, but any other word that has the same connotation will apply. The statement made by the Minister is offensive to me and I insist that he withdraw it. I did not interfere with the speech of the member for Isis. I had nothing to say.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member should be well aware that his point of order should have been taken at the time when the actual comment was made. The Minister for Lands.

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I think the member has got my statement a little wrong.

Mr. DAVIES: I have risen to a point of order. The hon. member for Windsor was constantly interrupting at the time and I could not hear the Minister properly. My attention was drawn to what he said by a reputable member on this side of the Chamber. I insist that the Minister withdraw his remark.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I call on the Minister.

Mr. Davies: I am afraid that you are very biased, Mr. Carey.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I hope that is not a reflection on the Chair.

Mr. Davies: You will not give me justice.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member continues in that vein I will deal with him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I am very sorry if I have upset the member for Maryborough. What you said, Mr. Carey, was right. I said that it was difficult for me to follow the member for Isis with his mumbling.

I was about to say that the Minister for Works and Housing has constantly brought to my attention the need to develop this country. The hon. member for Burnett has done likewise and, as I said in my introductory speech this morning, so did the late Premier, Jack Pizzey. Nothing will be done to open up this land until we are certain of its correct usage.

Mr. Sherrington: In other words, you will open it up?

Mr. SULLIVAN: Of course we will open it up. I am referring to the land mentioned by the hon. member for Isis. Noosa Plains is not the only little lump of country in Queensland. The hon. member for Isis referred to the area between Maryborough and Bundaberg, and other wallum country. We are making a complete study of the wallum country and its best use. Many departments are involved in that investigation and I can assure the hon. member that, when we decide on the best method of doing it, it will be opened up for settlement.

Mr. Bennett: When do you expect to get the reports on the matter?

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is neither here nor there at the moment.

The hon. member for Isis asked me to take a searching look at the extension of reforestation in his district. It is in this general locality that the biggest planning programme is currently in force, and the hon. member can be assured that it will be actively pursued.

The hon. member said he is opposed to freeholding on Fraser Island and that a great body of opinion supports the view that the future of Fraser Island lies in its timber and tourist potential. I certainly agree with this. I am sure that the hon. member for Salisbury will be happy to hear that there is a national park proposal over a vast area at the northern end of the island. I believe that the best uses for this area will be timber production and tourism. This will be kept very much in mind.

The hon. member for Roma is a man we are always interested to hear because of his practical knowledge of land usage. He passed some complimentary remarks on our freeholding policy. He referred to the freeholding of cypress pine and mentioned certain areas with which I am conversant. He suggested that private forestry could be the answer where new selections, with large areas of cypress pine, were being freeholded. This is something that the Conservator of Forests and I would like to be able to do. However, there are some problems in it. The area to which the hon. member refers is good cypress pine country. We have a responsibility to future generations to see that timber is always available. If we were certain that these same people would always be there, it would not be so difficult. However, the door is not completely shut. We are looking for ways and means of doing it. There are many people who would do this very well and could save some Department of Forestry finance which could be used in other directions. I am interested in his suggestion in this regard.

The hon. member for Mourilyan could be under a misapprehension about the amalgamation of sawmills. He seems to think that this is a compulsory measure.

All that we have done is introduce machinery to allow the amalgamation of sawmills if the sawmillers so desire. They will not be forced to amalgamate.

Mr. Armstrong: The industry has been crying out for that for years.

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is so. The industry is being given an opportunity to effect amalgamation if that is desired. There is ample evidence, supported by many in the industry, that a number of the smaller mills are becoming uneconomic. The attitude of the hon. member for Mourilyan then amounts to an advocacy of forcing uneconomic mills to continue in operation.

Mr. F. P. Moore: I never made that statement.

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is what the hon. member's remarks conveyed to me, and, strangely enough, to my Conservator of Forests.

Mr. F. P. Moore: I claimed that the mills in my area do not want amalgamation.

Mr. SULLIVAN: If they do not want to amalgamate, they do not have to. That is for them to decide.

The hon. member also referred to stumpage. That is a very complicated problem. I am informed that the average stumpage paid in North Queensland in 1968-69 was, for the same parcel of logs, approximately the same as applied during the last year of office of the Labour Government. If that is so, I think that we have done a pretty fair job.

The hon. member also mentioned a large plymill venture proposed in New Zealand. Apparently he was under the misapprehension that it would be competitive with the veneer and plywood industry in North Queensland. The New Zealand proposal is for the production of commercial plywood, which is quite a different product from the high-quality veneer produced in North Queensland. I was present at a plywood symposium at Canberra a week ago today, I think it was, and that was made abundantly clear at the meeting.

The next speaker on the Government side was the hon. member for Carnarvon. He is always interesting to listen to when he is debating anything about land. He expressed his gratitude to the Land Administration Commission. He mentioned the extension to 10 years of the period for payment for commercial timber when land is being freeholded. I thank him for his remarks on that subject. Many Government members were prominent in influencing the Government to make that concession. I know that the people appreciate it, and I believe that it makes for better usage of the timber. When a landholder has 10 years to pay for it, he can sell it over a longer period, and I believe that to be fairly important in the utilisation of timber.

I listened with interest to his suggestion that when leases expire in the drier areas, they be held in trust by the Department of Lands and allowed to regenerate. That is something that could be of interest, and it will receive consideration.

The hon. member mentioned also the need for the retention of more timber—shade lines, and so on—on properties on which there is development of scrub. Anyone who has been to the hon. member's property and seen his method of development would know that he is talking from experience. As I said in my introductory remarks, I believe that landholders have a real responsibility to do that, and they would benefit by taking a leaf from the hon. member for Carnarvon's book.

Mr. R. E. Moore: He is a model.

Honourable Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! When the Committee comes to order, I will call on the Minister to continue.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The next member of the Opposition who spoke was the hon. member for Warrego, Mr. Aiken.

Mr. Row: I couldn't hear him.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Well, I heard him.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition took the hon. member for Albert, Mr. Carey, to task for being rather critical of a new member of the Opposition, the hon. member for Logan. I think that one has to look at the matter from both angles. In this instance the hon. member for Warrego, who has been in the Chamber for three months, made a shocking personal attack on the Premier of this State. Although his speech may read well in "Hansard" and the local Press when he sends it a copy, and some people may be influenced by it, many people will not even read it. In my opinion, the hon. member gave the Committee a very fine example of trying to please two sets of people. In the three months that he has been here he has tried to indicate that he is the only member of this Assembly who is interested in the western graziers.

Mr. Aiken: It sounds like it, too.

Mr. SULLIVAN: It is easy enough to do that. However, the point is that I know and the people of Queensland know and appreciate the assistance the Government has given to people in the West and other areas of the State that have been affected by drought, and it ill behoves the hon. member to make such unfounded criticism.

On the one hand, the hon. member accuses the Government of giving away vast areas of the State's land; on the other, he tells the Government that it is opening up sub-standard areas.

Mr. Aiken: That is right, too.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SULLIVAN: I agree that the subdivision of Nive Downs, to which the hon. member referred, has resulted in some blocks being somewhat substandard because of the state of the wool industry. However, the hon. member should not forget that in 40 years of Labour Government many more blocks of a similar type were opened. Hon. members opposite talk about small areas and how harsh we are on graziers and then make statements that we are freeholding an area of 70,000 acres.

Mr. Aiken: That is right.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I want the hon. member to give me the information on that and I will have it investigated. He can do it here or privately, as he likes. Does he mean to tell me that a particular tenure out there of 70,000 acres is being freeholded?

Mr. Aiken: Yes, bought from a Tory Government years ago for a few shillings an acre.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The implication was that it was being done now. Because of our legislation the machinery is available to meet what he wants. If areas are substandard because of the continued dry seasons and the economics of the wool industry, this Government's policy allows these people to buy more land. If it is freehold land they can buy it or they can subdivide selections to build up what they consider to be sub-standard areas.

No doubt after 100 years of settlement there will be substandard areas but we cannot just pluck Crown land out of the air to do something about it. The legislation is on the Statute Book to give people the opportunity to do something about their own situation. I know that finance will be a problem in many cases. I mentioned this in my introduction this morning but, for the person who can command the finance, we are allowing the building up of sub-standard areas.

I do not think the hon. member for Warrego can tell members on this side of the Chamber anything. We have plenty of landholders on this side who have endured many droughts and are still enduring them.

Mr. Aiken: They got rain in the last few weeks while we are still starving.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Is the Government to blame for that? I have six men on my parliamentary lands committee with a lifetime of experience in all parts of the State. They are practical men and know what is required. I believe the Government is well equipped in this regard. These men have come into this Parliament, done their jobs as members of Parliament and, at the same time, continued to run their properties. They are the sort of men who mean something to me.

The next speaker was the hon. member for Burnett who received some criticism from the hon. member for Salisbury. I know

the worth of Mr. Wharton as a member, and the people of Burnett have indicated what they think of him at three elections. Unfortunately, when he gets up to speak hon. members opposite know that he is going to make a contribution and they babble and interject. However, he has the courage to take them on. I know the hon. member's views about the turtle rookery at Mon Repos. I have my responsibilities and this is just one more matter we looked at from every angle before a decision was made.

I do not want to make much comment on the speech of the hon. member for Logan. However, I will quote his own words when somebody criticised him for reading his speech. He said, "The people I am talking to are not in this Chamber. They will understand it when they read it." That shows that he is not concerned about any contribution he makes in this Chamber but is happy as long as he can get it in "Hansard" or in his local Press. He apologised for reading his speech too quickly. As he was once president of the Teachers' Union, we expect a better contribution than that from him. I cannot comment on what he said because I just could not keep with him; he was too quick for me.

Mr. Tucker: It could be said that you read your speeches, too.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I have never been guilty of reading a speech from the back-bench. I read my Estimates speech.

Mr. Bennett: Yes, you did. The Minister used to give you a prepared screed to read.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SULLIVAN: If I did read anything word for word, at least I did better than the Leader of the Opposition, who read his reply in a recent debate in a very monotonous tone.

The hon. member for Albert always makes a good contribution to any debate, and I express my appreciation to him for that. He is a very hard worker for his electorate, which has so many land problems. I am grateful to the Commission for doing what it could to help him.

That brings me now to the last member who spoke, the hon. member for Salisbury. As usual, he spoke about conservation. That is fair enough; he believes in it. But if he is so interested in conservation why was he not in the Chamber today when I introduced the Forestry Estimates?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I rise to a point of order. Twice in this debate the Minister for Lands has accused me of not being in the Chamber when he introduced his Estimates. I make it quite clear that, as Secretary of the Opposition, I have certain obligations which take me out of the Chamber. I resent the Minister's implication.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Sherrington: The Minister has no argument when he uses that argument; he is just a mug when he uses it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw the remark he has just made and, in doing so, I point out to him that I was about to ask the Minister to accept his statement.

Mr. Sherrington: I will not withdraw the remark because I resent his implications, and I think he is a mug.

The CHAIRMAN: I appeal to the hon. member to withdraw his remark.

Mr. Sherrington: I will withdraw it, Mr. Hooper, but you cannot stop me from thinking it.

The CHAIRMAN: I now ask the Minister to accept the hon. member's statement.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I accept the hon. member's statement.

Mr. Sherrington: Why do you make such implications?

Mr. SULLIVAN: If the hon. member had only let me continue he would have got the whole story. We discussed this matter earlier in the day. I was leading up to this when I announced that the Governor in Council today approved of the national park at Dipperu. The hon. member indicated that he is secretary of his party. I have no argument with that, but he did not say that he was called out. He said that he was interested in national parks and conservation, I should have thought he would feel it was more important to be in the Chamber when I was introducing the Estimates.

Mr. Sherrington: I would say you have no argument. If that is all you can come up with, you are pretty weak.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Wait a minute; I have just started.

The hon. member for Salisbury made great play on the fact that the area north of Tewantin has been under review for five years and he accused us of humbug and of not coming to a decision. He said that the area at Dipperu had been under investigation for three or 3½ years; I am not sure which he said. All that indicates is that we look at these matters objectively and properly before coming to a decision. It is three years since we started looking for this area of brigalow.

At 9.55 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 22 October, progress was reported.

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.