Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 1970

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

FEES PAID BY CROWN TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS

RETURN TO ORDER

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an Order made by the House on 23 July last, on the motion of Mr. W. D. Hewitt, showing all payments made by the Government to barristers and solicitors during the 1969-70 financial year, stating the names of the recipients and the amounts received, respectively.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

KANGAROO HARVESTING INDUSTRY

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

(1) What is the known number of each variety of kangaroo killed in Queensland during each year since 1965?

(2) What numbers of (*a*) kangaroo, (*b*) wallaroo and (*c*) wallaby skins have been exported from Queensland for each year and since January 1, 1970?

Answers:—

(1) "Numbers of grey and red kangaroos, taken in Queensland for the years 1965 to 1969, both inclusive, are detailed below:—

	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
Grey kangaroo	787,955	640,985	662,319	612,323	774,881
Red kangaroo	353,223	269,377	198,294	235,123	325,299"

(2) "The information is not readily available and its preparation would be a major task for which staff are not available."

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

(1) How many carcass and skin-dealing licences in connection with the harvesting of kangaroos are currently in operation?

(2) Who is the holder of each licence and for what area or location does each licence apply?

(3) How many boxes are concerned with each licence and where are these located?

(4) How many (*a*) professional and (*b*) casual shooters' licences are now current?

Answers:—

(1) "Forty-three."

(2 and 3) "I lay on the Table statements setting out the information sought by the Honourable Member."

(4) "Permits to take marsupials, presently in force are—To take for sale, 1,997; to take for personal use, 41."

Papers.—Whereupon the statements referred to were laid upon the Table of the House.

(*c*) **Mr. Houston,** pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Primary Industries,—

(1) What is the royalty at present paid on (*a*) kangaroos, (*b*) wallaroos and (*c*) wallabies and from what date did this rate apply?

(2) What was the previous rate, for how long had it applied and why was it increased?

Answers:—

(1) "Royalty at the rate of 20 cents each is payable in respect of kangaroos, wallaroos and wallabies. This rate applied from January 1, 1970."

(2) "The previous rate was 5 cents each and applied, other than during certain periods when exemptions were granted for red and grey kangaroos, from April 1, 1965. Rates were increased to provide additional revenue to the State, to allow additional funds to be allocated for fauna conservation services and to make the harvesting of small kangaroos less profitable for both shooters and dealers."

KOALA AS STATE FAUNAL EMBLEM

Mr. V. E. Jones for **Mr. Houghton,** pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

Now that the decision has been taken to adopt the koala as the faunal emblem of Queensland, what steps does he propose to take to give effect to this decision?

Answer:—

"When the decision was made to adopt the Cooktown Orchid as our floral emblem, '*The Badge, Arms and Floral Emblem of Queensland Act of* 1959" was amended to give statutory effect to this decision. Similarly, recognition can be given to the Koala Bear as the faunal emblem and legislation will be introduced for this purpose. I might mention that my colleague, the Minister for Labour and Tourism, is immediately embarking on a promotion and publicity campaign based on the Koala Bear and the Cooktown Orchid, and a quantity of souvenir pins, depicting the two emblems, is being manufactured for presentation by the Minister to overseas visitors associated with the tourist industry."

PERIODIC RELEASE OF LONG-TERM PRISONERS

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an editorial in the *Caboolture News* of October 21 concerning his reported proposals to release long-term prisoners at intervals to see their wives?

(2) Is he aware that the editorial describes the scheme as female prostitution and in view of the prominent political standing of the newspaper's chairman of directors, why did he allow this release before receiving Country Party approval?

Answers:—

(1) "No."

(2) "I am not aware that a husband can engage in prostitution with his wife."

HARBOUR BOARD FOR PORT OF BRISBANE

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

Is it proposed to establish a harbour board for the port of Brisbane and, if not, how much will the taxpayers, through the State Department of Harbours and Marine, have to find every year to keep the present inequitable arrangement in operation?

Answer:—

"The Port of Brisbane is financed under exactly the same principles as the ports of Townsville and Cairns. It generates its own income through harbour trade, shipping and other harbour activities and receives no financial assistance whatever from taxation. The Honourable Member's attention is drawn to the provisions of the Harbours Acts, particularly sections 11 to 14 dealing with the administration of harbours in Queensland where there is no constituted Harbour Board."

LAW REFORM COMMISSION

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

(1) Do members of the Law Reform Commission, in addition to being paid the salary applicable to a District Court Judge, also receive the same non-contributory, lavish pension rights and enjoy the same long holiday periods as are applicable to the District Court?

(2) Did a member of the Law Reform Commission recently offer to forgo a considerable portion of the salary granted on the grounds that the work being done was in no way commensurate with the salary and, if so, who was the member and was his offer accepted?

Answers:—

(1) "Apart from the payment of salary, the members of the Law Reform Commission may, under the provisions of the *Law Reform Commission Act* 1968, only receive such allowances for reasonable travelling expenses as may from time to time be determined by the Governor in Council."

(2) "No."

BUILDING SUB-CONTRACTOR AS A.L.P. CANDIDATE FOR TOWNSVILLE SOUTH

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

Has his attention been drawn to an article in the *Telegraph* of November 12 wherein Mr. F. Whitby, Secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, is reported as saying, *inter alia,* "many sub-contractors are non-unionists working for sub-standard wages and conditions and are being used more and more by large companies and other employers to beat the system of unionism" and making many other remarks in a similar strain, including his final reported remark, "We want to eradicate this menace before it erodes away the benefits gained for members by unions"? If so, was the A.L.P. candidate selected by the Trades Hall-dominated Q.C.E. of the A.L.P. for the seat of Townsville South at the last election one of these sub-contractors and what is his name?

Answer:—

"The A.L.P. candidate for the seat of Townsville South at the last State Election was Leslie Aubrey Moon. It is understood from enquiries made that Mr. Moon has worked as a sub-contractor."

LIQUOR LICENCE TRANSFERS

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

(1) Does section 49A of *The Liquor Acts, 1912 to 1965*, enable the transfer of a liquor licence to a completely new locality?

(2) For the purposes of section 49A of the Liquor Act, is the whole of the Greater Brisbane area regarded as being the "same locality"?

(3) Because of road works and/or re-routing of any road on the northern side of the river in Brisbane affecting a licence, is it possible for that licensee to get approval to shift completely out of the locality to the south side of the river in Brisbane?

(4) Are hotels owned by breweries allowed to stretch the section of the Liquor Act in this fashion while private individuals may not do so?

Answers:—

(1) "The Honourable Member is well qualified to interpret section 49A of the Liquor Acts. For the Honourable Member's information, the existing section 49A was enacted by the Amending Act of 1970."

(2) "The term 'district' used in section 49A is defined in section 4 of the Liquor Acts."

(3) "This is governed by section 49A of the Acts."

(4) "The provisions of the section apply to a hotel owned by a brewery to the same extent as a hotel owned by a private individual."

GRAND HOTEL, BRISBANE

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

(1) As sales of liquor are regularly conducted in the Grand Hotel, Mary Street, Brisbane, outside trading hours, why can this blatant breach of the law be committed even under the eyes of the Licensing Police?

(2) Who is being paid and by what consideration to allow this unsatisfactory state of affairs?

Answers:—

(1) "A great deal of attention has been given and is still being given to the Grand Hotel by members of the Licensing Branch, particularly in respect of the hotel trading outside the permitted hours. No evidence is available to indicate that breaches of the law have been committed under the eyes of the Licensing Branch Police. Since January 1, 1970, action has been instituted for 59 breaches of the Liquor Act dealing with either the sale or possession of liquor during prohibited hours in relation to this hotel."

(2) "There is no information available to indicate that any person has been paid any consideration to allow the licensee of the Grand Hotel or any person connected with the hotel to contravene the provisions of the Liquor Act. However, the Commissioner of Police is arranging for an investigation to be carried out to determine whether there is any truth in the suggestion. If the Honourable Member has any worthwhile information in respect of this matter, he has an obligation to make this available to the Commissioner."

AIR POLLUTION CONTROL, BRISBANE AND GLADSTONE

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

(1) Has Brisbane the worst smog problem potential of any Australian capital city?

(2) How many are now attached to the Air Pollution staff in Queensland?

(3) In what cities are they working?

(4) Is it possible that Gladstone will become worse even than Brisbane in regard to air pollution?

(5) Will he confer with the Honourable Member for Port Curtis so that safeguards can be suggested by this Honourable Member who is well acquainted with the problem?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes, Brisbane is considered to have the greatest potential for air pollution of any capital city in Australia."

(2) "The Division of Air Pollution Control has three professional staff (including the director) and three supporting staff including a typist."

(3) "The Air Pollution officers maintain surveillance in all areas where air pollution problems are likely to develop."

(4) "This will not occur if adequate precautions are taken by the industries concerned in compliance with the requirements of the Air Pollution Council of Queensland."

(5) "The Director of Air Pollution Control is prepared to examine any proposal submitted by the Honourable Member for Port Curtis."

SUSTENANCE ALLOWANCE FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS

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

Has a report been submitted by the Public Service Board on investigations made in May-June, 1970. into the necessity for an increase in sustenance to public servants? If so, was the report favourable and what is the intention of the Department in relation to its implementation?

Answer:—

"The report is before Cabinet."

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, POLICE FORCE

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

What is the number of (*a*) male police officers, (*b*) female police officers, (*c*) male civilian staff and (*d*) female civilian staff employed in the administration of the Queensland Police Force and what were the amounts appropriated in salaries and administrative expenses for the years 1967–68, 1968–69 and 1969–70?

Answer:—

"Information is not readily available as to the number of police officers employed in administration throughout the Force, as at district offices and police stations some officers would perform a proportion of administrative duties, varying with existing circumstances. Administrative expenditure, other than salaries, is not readily available, and the collating of such expenditure would involve considerable time and diversion of staff from other duties. However, the following table shows the number of police officers at the Office of the Commissioner of Police; also civilian staff (male and female) engaged on duties relating to administration of the Police Force, and salary expenditure for the financial years 1967-68; 1968-69 and 1969-70.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

—	Male Police Officers	Female Police Officers	Total Salaries
			$
1967–68 ..	19	Nil	96,154.00
1968–69 ..	20	Nil	105,127.00
1969–70 ..	19	Nil	110,537.00

CIVILIAN STAFF (WHOLE STATE)

—	Males	Females	Total	Total Salaries
				$
1967–68 ..	134	120	254	533,982.00
1968–69 ..	160	141	301	626,482.00
1969–70 ..	178	176	354	832,252.00

LIGHTING OF HEADLAMPS BY FUNERAL VEHICLES

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

Is there any specific regulation applying whereby vehicles in a funeral cortege should exhibit lighted headlamps to assist in identification and purpose on public highways? If not, will he give early consideration to making this action mandatory and so assist motorists in traffic to recognise and respect such processions?

Answer:—

"No. It is not considered that such a regulation is necessary."

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY HOSPITALS

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

In view of the importance of health services required by Aborigines in isolated areas and the time and expense necessary to transport patients to a base hospital, will he consider requesting the Health Department to take over the hospitals at all Aboriginal communities?

Answer:—

"Health services and hospital facilities established on Aboriginal Communities are under the continual oversight of Health Department professional personnel and administrative arrangements are regularly reviewed. The Department's ultimate objective is that the specialist Department assumes full responsibility. The Honourable Member is advised that already the Hospitals at Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Palm Island, Yarrabah and Bamaga have been taken over by the Health Department and are being serviced through the local hospitals board, and at other centres very close liaison exists between my Department and the Health Department. A full-time medical officer was recently employed, in addition to two full-time health inspectors, specialising in the field of Aboriginal and Islander health. These services are additional to all of the services and facilities generally available."

Q.C.W.A. STUDENT HOSTEL, ATHERTON

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

(1) Is he aware that the students' hostel at Atherton conducted by the C.W.A. is expected to be closed down at the end of the year?

(2) As this hostel provides a much-needed service for students whose homes are in isolated areas, will he make early inquiries with a view to retaining boarding facilities at the hostel for 1971?

Answers:—

(1) "As the result of inquiries made of the headquarters of the Q.C.W.A. I am now aware that the students hostel at Atherton, conducted by a committee of the local branch in a building owned by the Atherton Shire Council, intends closing down at the end of this year. I have also been informed that there has been a serious decline in the number of students boarding at the hostel."

(2) "The matter of the continuation of the hostel is one for the local authority and other interested bodies in the area. I shall have inquiries made concerning the numbers boarding at the hostel this year and the demand for accommodation in Atherton by students living outside the town area."

WOLFRAM ROAD, MAREEBA SHIRE

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

As the section of the Wolfram Road beyond James Creek is causing concern to all users including the school bus, Wolfram Camp miners and a number of tobacco farmers—

(1) Has any approach been made to him by the Mareeba Shire Council concerning this road and, if so, with what result?

(2) Will he have an inspection made of this section with a view to having permanent work carried out?

Answers:—

(1) "No approach has been made by the Mareeba Shire Council concerning the section referred to in the Question."

(2) "As the secondary road declaration extends for only approximately 1½ miles beyond James Creek, the problems would appear to refer mainly to the local authority portion. Inspection with a view to any future work would therefore be a matter for the Mareeba Shire Council. An inspection of the declared section will be carried out by departmental engineers."

WAGE GUARANTEE FOR TRAINMEN, TOOWOOMBA

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

(1) Is he aware that for some weeks a large number of trainmen at Toowoomba have been regressed and compelled to work in a lower classification?

(2) Why are these men compelled to work on a lower grade instead of being paid the fortnightly guarantee as provided for in clause 42 (21) of the Railway Award?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "Trainmen employed in a classification lower than their permanent classification are paid the rate of pay applicable to their permanent classification. They are being employed in a lower classification due to the shortage of work within their particular grade."

NESCAFE PRICES

Mr. F. P. Moore, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Tourism,—

(1) Is he aware that a product known as "Nescafe" is selling in suburban stores in Brisbane at prices varying from $3.09 to $3.39 for a 1 lb. jar and that the price of this item was recently increased by as much as 40 cents in some stores?

(2) What is the reason for this variance and what control does his Department have over such blatant profiteering?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "Due to keen competition, prices of some commodities vary between stores. The keen and discerning shopper obviously will patronise the store where the best price to his advantage can be obtained."

SUNDAY CLOSURE OF BRISBANE SUBURBAN RAILWAY STATIONS

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

(1) Were the offices of a number of Brisbane suburban railway stations closed at short notice on Sunday, November 15, and will they be closed on each future Sunday?

(2) In view of the large number of complaints received by me from passengers entraining at Zillmere, Banyo and other suburban stations, why was adequate notice of the Sunday shut-down not given to the public?

(3) Does he realise that all facilities such as toilets were locked?

(4) In view of the Government's professed desire to attract more patronage to the railways, will he reconsider the closure of ticket offices at these stations?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "The employment of ticket sellers on trains has been in existence in Brisbane at weekends for a number of years and was further extended on and from November 15, 1970."

(3) "Toilets are locked when no staff are on duty."

(4) "An improved service is rendered to the travelling public by the ticket sellers than existed at partly attended stations."

MORETON BAY TOURIST RESORT FACILITIES

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

In view of the A.B.C. news report of November 17 wherein it was claimed that he had made announcements concerning a

proposal to integrate development of tourist resorts from Fraser Island to the New South Wales border and assuming the report to be accurate, and in the interests of family men who do not want to spend long hours and take high risks travelling long distances to seaside resorts, will he, in collaboration with the Minister for Labour and Tourism, give sympathetic consideration to the improving of facilities of the near bay resorts such as Redland Bay and bay islands such as Macleay, Russell and North Stradbroke, which have such high potential?

Answer:—

"The Honourable Member's suggestion will be examined by the appropriate authorities."

ALLEGED STATEMENT BY PROFESSOR RENDLE-SHORT ON ABORIGINAL CUSTOMS

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

(1) Is he aware of a report given on the A.B.C. news on November 17 of a statement made by Professor Rendle-Short of the Queensland University concerning the alleged ethnic custom that Aborigines starve their children?

(2) Will he assure the House that he will continue to expand a policy of Christian charity and responsibility to uplift the Aborigines above this alleged and unnecessary custom?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "I did not hear the report, but have been in consultation with Professor T. J. Rendle-Short, Professor of Child Health of the University of Queensland, who assures me that he did not make the allegation that by ethnic custom Aborigines starve their children. Professor Rendle-Short further advises he did not hear the alleged statement and broadcast."

SURVEY OF TINANA CREEK

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

(1) Have any detailed surveys been made of the basin of Tinana Creek, a tributary of the Mary River, in regard to (*a*) the maximum number of additional weirs that could be constructed, (*b*) any possible site for a dam, and (*c*) underground water supplies?

(2) If so, what were the results of the investigation and, if no survey has been made, will he arrange for one to be made in the near future?

Answer:—

(1) "No. Only preliminary inspections and consideration of possibilities have been made in this area."

(2) "The preliminary inspections and assessments made have not indicated favourable prospects for water conservation works or underground water supplies in the Tinana Creek Basin. Because of the many commitments which the Irrigation Commission has on hand further investigation in the Tinana Creek Valley at this stage cannot be justified."

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

FEDERAL MINISTER'S VISIT TO RUSSIA

Mr. F. P. MOORE: I ask the Premier: Is he aware that the Governor-General, Sir Paul Hasluck, when Minister for External Affairs, visited Russia on an official Government mission and that on that occasion Sir Paul was feted by his Communist hosts? Is the Premier critical of that type of overseas visit undertaken by a Federal Minister at public expense?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am completely unaware of the trip to which the hon. member refers.

PREMIER'S SHAREHOLDINGS

Mr. F. P. MOORE: Will the Premier give this House a positive assurance that he does not hold any shares in any company under the guise of a nominee company?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I do not know what the hon. member is making reference to. His question could apply to a whole host of things.

SNAP-FREEZING WORKS, LOWER BURDEKIN

Mr. BIRD: I ask the Minister for Industrial Development: Will he prepare a progress report on the feasibility study into the establishment of a snap-freezing works in the Lower Burdekin district?

Mr. CAMPBELL: As the hon. member is aware, the Department of Industrial Development, in furtherance of its belief that a lucrative market exists for processed mangoes and in conjunction with officers of the Department of Primary Industries, has been conducting an intensive study into the prospect of merchandising this very delectable commodity. Earlier this year a consignment of this fruit was processed at the Food Preservation Laboratory at Hamilton and subsequently subjected to consumer reaction in retail stores in the city of Brisbane. The department was so impressed by public reaction to this product that further tests are being made. Only this week, to ascertain consumer reaction in retail stores in the southern States, action was approved to obtain a further consignment for preservation in a similar manner. When the results of that test are known, further information will be given to interested parties.

WEEK-END MAGISTRATES COURTS

Mr. TUCKER: I ask the Minister for Justice: If Chief Magistrate Dillon was correctly reported in a Sunday newspaper when replying to the suggestion of week-end courts, has Mr. Dillon now set a precedent in regard to replies, and will those who are requested to accompany policemen to a police station for questioning now be able to use the same three-word phrase with impunity and immunity?

Dr. DELAMOTHE: No.

COMPULSORY MEMBERSHIP, AUSTRALIAN WORKERS' UNION

Mr. WHARTON: I ask the Minister for Labour and Tourism: Is it necessary for farmers temporarily employed on shire council drought-relief work to obtain A.W.U. union tickets?

Mr. HERBERT: This matter has been brought to my attention. Under the Hanger judgment it is legal for the union to demand a union fee, and the A.W.U. is doing so. I leave the community to judge the morality of its action. The A.W.U. says that it has to do it because of the body-snatching activities of the Trades Hall unions.

POLITICAL MEETING ON LICENSED PREMISES, CALOUNDRA

Mr. TUCKER: I ask the Premier: Further to his observations and statements about political meetings in hotels, is he aware that the Country Party endorsement of the present member for Landsborough for the by-election following the retirement of Sir Francis Nicklin was conducted in the Hotel Perle at Caloundra? Will he investigate whether this action by the Country Party represented a breach of the Electoral Act?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: This, again, is a matter of which I have no knowledge. It happened in the past and it is quite irrelevant to the question raised in the House yesterday about a meeting which, it is alleged, is to take place today, tonight, or at some other time.

Mr. Marginson: You want to look through your past before you start making those statements.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Ipswich East will have ample time under Standing Order No. 123A to look at his past if he does not remain silent.

NAZI PARTY PREFERENCES, SENATE ELECTION

Mr. DAVIS: I ask the Premier: In view of the Nazi Party giving its Senate election preferences to the joint Liberal-Country Party team, and the statement by one of the Nazi Party candidates that the basic policies of the Nazi Party and of the Liberal and Country Parties are the same, has the Premier been personally involved in the current negotiations for amalgamation of the Liberal and Country Parties and the Nazi Party?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Here again, the hon. member is trying to be funny, witty or critical. If he likes, I will go, in detail, into all of the ramifications of the negotiations between his own political party and the Communist Party, and the way they work together. If he likes, I shall deal with that particular subject now or at any other time.

SIR WILLIAM GUNN

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: I ask the Premier: Is he aware that a person named Sir William Gunn has encouraged and promoted trade with mainland China? Is he aware that Sir William Gunn has actually visited the country and been feted there? Is he also aware that Sir William Gunn once stood as a candidate for Country Party selection in the Federal electorate of Maranoa?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That is not a question; it is a plain statement. It is disallowed. I propose to put a stop to this sort of thing.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (11.37 a.m.), by leave: In accordance with my life-long policy of being meticulously truthful and transparently honest, I inform the House that in a speech made by me on Wednesday last, and by inference in a question that I directed to the Minister for Education on the same day, I stated that a Professor Harris of the James Cook University of North Queensland had addressed a moratorium meeting at Townsville.

Although it is merely a distinction without a difference, I inform hon. members that the meeting referred to, which was organised and conducted by the same people who organised and conducted the moratorium meeting, and in the same place, namely, Hanran Park, was in fact a meeting of protest against the Federal budget.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH ALLOTTED DAYS

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

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1970–71

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, MARINE AND ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF IRRIGATION AND WATER SUPPLY

Debate resumed from 17 November (see p. 1825) on Mr. Hewitt's motion—

"That $2,045,043 be granted for 'Department of Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs—Department of Irrigation and Water Supply'."

Dr. CRAWFORD (Wavell) (11.38 a.m.): In discussing the Estimates introduced by the Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs, there is every reason why one should look with some care and in some detail at the situation pertaining to the Aboriginal citizens of Queensland at this time.

There is no doubt that, over the years, Aborigines have been treated as second-class citizens and that, as the original inhabitants of this country, they have had less than a fair deal. Various efforts have been made to improve their situation, and as all hon. members will recall, a few years ago a referendum relative to Aboriginal Affairs was carried by an overwhelming majority. To my mind, on that occasion the electorate endorsed the opinion expressed by those who were instrumental in having the referendum held, namely, that a great deal still needed to be done to bring Aboriginal citizens to the stage at which they could attain full citizenship.

It is, of course, very easy to talk about what should be done without making any form of constructive suggestion, but if one examines the present Act under which we function in Queensland it becomes very obvious indeed that the citizens to whom it applies have much to complain about. Aboriginal opinion varies widely regarding the type of reform they would like to see instituted. There must be some kind of compromise between those who wish to see the Queensland Act repealed entirely and those who wish to see it modified. When one considers the actual functioning of this Act, one must admit that it does contain some very gross anomalies and, despite the diversity of opinions, as members of the Legislative Assembly we should be able to bring forward constructive suggestions to achieve the best possible conditions for Aborigines, whether they be assisted persons or so-called "free" Aborigines.

The Act contains many repressive provisions that we would not be prepared to tolerate if they applied to the white population. The various reserves are so organised that Aborigines living on them are completely under the control of the officer in charge. No facilities exist—and permission is difficult to obtain—for outsiders to visit reserves, and Aborigines can be transferred, on the order of the district officer, from one part of the State to another. In the absence of an educational standard that would enable a person to work out the rights and wrongs of a situation, it is extremely difficult for an Aborigine to actually appeal against a decision of his superiors.

An interesting situation develops in various Aboriginal reserves relative to whether all the active males in a reserve should, and/or can, be gainfully employed. I believe that it is part of the universal human rights entitlement in all countries that every man should be able to find constructive employment which suits his particular physical and mental capabilities. However, over the years, the situation has developed in which, because only a certain amount of money is allotted to a particular reserve, it is spread rather thinly between all the able-bodied males on the reserve rather than being used to pay an adequate wage to a particular section. This, of course, might give rise to a question of fairness, but we must remember that on very few of the Aboriginal reserves are there any industries which are, in themselves, productive. It is simply not good enough, over the years, for us to continue to hand out finance or goods to Aboriginal citizens on reserves without encouraging the establishment of some form of industry there. It must be absolutely demoralising for a person simply to receive a type of pension or hand-out, week after week, without any attempt being made to provide him with adequate employment.

The educational situation, of course, has its own difficulties. Various attempts have been made over the last few years to enhance the level of education to which, up to date, Aboriginal citizens have been subjected. If it were possible, by the waving of a wand, to bring educational standards on Aboriginal reserves to an acceptable level that we would consider adequate for ourselves, many of the problems would disappear.

I am aware of many instances in which, following a brief primary education, Aboriginal boys and girls have been given the opportunity to attend secondary school. However, it would appear that very few of them possess the potential that would enable them to benefit to the maximum from that opportunity.

This situation is associated partly with the physical aspect of inferior nutrition. It is very easy for a man to carry out—any hon. member could do so—a 10-day fast and note down exactly what happens to both his physical and his mental capabilities during that time. For the first two or three days his hunger is quite extreme, but after that it wears off. In most people, physical strength continues unabated for four or five days, but it then decreases markedly. At about the seventh or eighth day that marked physical deterioration is followed by a very noticeable decrease in mental capacity and the ability to make decisions and to analyse a situation.

This may seem to be an extreme example, but it is a fact that if a person does not receive adequate nutrition from soon after birth, his mental capacity simply will not develop to the highest level that his potential allows. I have said previously that over the years many medical surveys have been conducted into Aboriginal health, and they have demonstrated beyond any shadow of doubt that a very large percentage of Aboriginal babies are mal-nourished even by the time they reach four or five months of age, and that by the time they are in their second

year at least one-third of them, statistically, are below the optimum height and weight for that age.

As well as the starvation experiment to which I have referred, it is easy to look at other peoples in the world whose opportunities are fewer than ours and find the result of vitamin and protein deficiency. For example, cancer of the liver is virtually unknown in the white man, but the incidence of that unpleasant and rapidly fatal disease is very high among the Bantu in Africa. The explanation is very simple: it is due to a vitamin deficiency which has remained uncorrected over the years.

It behoves us as part of the government of our land to bring these facts to the notice of those who can make some constructive effort to correct these deficiencies. As education is the basic factor in this situation, I realise, as, I am sure, all other hon. members do, that until we can work out some way of educating Aborigines to an acceptable standard, we have not solved the problem. The health aspects are a direct result of the inadequate education that Aborigines receive. As well, we must make an effort to educate the parents so that not only will the nutritional aspects be corrected, but, in addition, parents will encourage their children to take advantage of the educational opportunities that are offered.

We are all aware of the fact that, even in our own community, if parents are not keen and enthusiastic about initiating and helping to maintain an adequate educational level in their children, those children tend to leave school at an immature and tender age and join the work-force. As with other Aboriginal problems, the difficulty is that the parental attitude must be drastically amended in order to save the children and enable them to become useful citizens.

Mr. Tucker: It will be very hard to make them grasp the significance of vitamins and nutrition.

Dr. CRAWFORD: This is indeed so. A few months ago I visited the Weipa reserve. As hon. members are aware, Comalco has given large parcels of shares to Aborigines for their advancement in that area. With a well-organised industrial complex next door to the Aborigines, and with the adult males being employed by Comalco, the Aborigines should improve their educational standards in both the physical and the health aspects.

The nursing sister in charge of the clinic at Weipa, which the Aborigines attend, told me that she literally has to police the handing out of vitamin pills and other essential nourishment materials on a day-by-day basis. If we are to retain any of the paternalistic attitude that we are now adopting to Aborigines, it will have to be enforced by providing nourishment for them, again on a day-to-day basis, remembering that, at six months, many of them are malnourished and, in their second year, are beginning to fall behind from the aspect of physical development.

Mr. B. Wood: Did you make a comparison between the medical post at the reserve and the hospital in Comalco's area?

Dr. CRAWFORD: I grant that there is a vast difference between the two. There are outstanding Aborigines who, in spite of the difficulties that halt their progress, have overcome the greatest possible difficulties and disadvantages. The Aboriginal painter Namitjira was one of them. Recently I was interested to note that his sons and other family members are conducting a picture factory near Alice Springs. They are busy churning out these paintings at what is no doubt an acceptable standard from the tourist point of view, and this does provide an adequate income, at least for their family group. But there will never be progress unless we can inculcate into the Aborigines a dignity in their being and arrange our educational programme until they come to the full rights of citizenship that we enjoy.

It must be a most unpleasant experience for any person, even though he may not realise what he is missing, to be treated in every aspect of his being by a completely paternalistic overlord. I should not like to be in the situation where somebody could come to me and say, "You will go and live in Dirranbandi" or, "You will move yourself to Julia Creek," simply because of some infringement of a local law. In this situation we must be prepared to establish appeal tribunals of the type to which every white citizen has the right and duty to appeal if he thinks his civil liberties are being impeded in any way.

If the lot of the Aborigine does not improve, we will have progressively increasing trouble in the future. The recent example set by the deaths of the children in the Camooweal area is but one mass example of the problems with which we have to contend. When any person is mal-nourished, or has a long-standing deficiency of the essential amino acids or vitamins, he is very likely to be subjected at a particularly early age to every type of known infection.

Aboriginal children readily succumb to respiratory infections and enterocolitis infection, and an enterocolitis epidemic can occur easily. A widespread epidemic exists in Asia at the moment as a form of cholera, and large numbers of people are dying. It is not good enough for us or any other authority to try to immunise people against a particular disease when the real treatment and cure of the whole situation must start with nourishment from birth onwards. If we can do this, and implement an educational programme properly, the result will be that a reasonably self-sufficient type of Aboriginal citizen can be produced.

Mr. B. Wood: Are you supporting my call for the abolition of the present Act?

Dr. CRAWFORD: I do not know that the complete abolition of the present Act would accomplish what individual people say it would.

Mr. B. Wood: Do you think it should be changed?

Dr. CRAWFORD: I am sure that the Act needs to be looked at in great detail.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: I told the hon. member for Cook that I was prepared to do that. I told him that a long time ago.

Dr. CRAWFORD: This is true.

Mr. B. Wood: When?

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: After the Estimates have been debated. During this debate you had your chance to make any suggestions, but you did not come up with any worthwhile ones.

Dr. CRAWFORD: I have spoken today to bolster the Minister's determination to look at the Act in the greatest possible detail. It is possible to bring individual Aborigines to talk to any committee.

As this Committee is well aware, there was a well-attended meeting of Aboriginal people in Townsville in May of this year, and their basic request was the abolition of the Act and the setting up of six regional councils throughout the land to look at individual situations, to control finance, and to maintain law and order. If this can be done—even if these councils can be set up prematurely—it might be possible, by involving them in their own type of government, to accomplish some of the things we wish to see implemented and to raise their citizenship to a higher level by seeking their opinions and fostering their desires to accept the administrative responsibility which they should accept.

Mr. INCH (Burke) (11.58 a.m.): My contribution this morning will deal, in the main, with the position of the Aborigines who are camped on the banks of the Georgina River at Camooweal. A good deal of Press publicity has been given to the conditions under which these people are living, and reference has been made to the death of children in this camp. There has been some sensational reporting in this respect, which, if my information is correct, is not factual.

These Aborigines came from Avon Downs in the Northern Territory and camped on the banks of the Georgina River in close proximity to the township of Camooweal. I visited this camp a few days ago. I was told that, prior to my visit, some 40 adults and 15 children were in the camp. I found nine adults and six children there. I saw no evidence of 40 or 50 people, but it is quite possible that a number of them had returned to the Northern Territory.

I found that the camp had been cleaned up to some extent as a result of the visit of health officers from Townsville and Mt. Isa and of an official of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. That clean-up occurred a few days before my arrival. I found that, unfortunately, because there was no daily supervision, the Aborigines are apparently reverting to their habit of discarding meat bones, offal and rubbish a few feet from their camp fires. In the hot sun, these scraps gave off a sour odour and attracted myriads of flies.

Such camps can be kept clean only by making the Aborigines realise that it is their job to keep them clean rather than rely on others to do it for them. The only way to do that is to have an official make a snap inspection and say to the Aborigines, "This place was nice and clean yesterday. Look at the mess here now. It is your job to clean the camp, and keep it clean." In that way, there will be cleanliness round camps.

The conditions in the camp prior to the visit by officials must have been atrocious, because the conditions under which they are living now are appalling. They have no shelter from the blazing sun. There are only a few stunted trees, which afford a minimum of shade. With the exception of a couple of gunyahs made of sheets of iron and a little canvas, there is no shade. The gunyahs are low to the ground, and the heat inside them must be overbearing indeed. I had a look inside one of them, and there I saw an old fellow and a young lad of possibly no more than five or six years of age. The lad had been burnt in a camp-fire, and had received attention from the matron at the Camooweal Hospital. He was lying on the bare earth in that heat. Those are the conditions under which the Aborigines were living at that time, and still are.

Prior to the visit of the officials, I understand that the camp had no sanitary arrangements at all. The Aborigines would go to the river, from which they obtain water for washing and cooking, and use the bank as a screen for toilet purposes. Action has now been taken to provide toilets. I asked a question on this matter last Tuesday. At that time, the toilets were enclosed with a single thickness of hessian and gave no privacy at all. I know that, because I stood up to about 70 yards away from them and could see the full outline of everything in the enclosure. That is why I asked the Minister to have something done about the toilets. His reply was that a second thickness of hessian had been put round them.

Unfortunately, there is no shelter over the top of the toilets, and those using them are exposed to the blazing sun and dust. The temperatures there are extremely high. I took a thermometer with me, and after about five minutes holding it in my hand exposed to the sun, it showed the maximum reading of 120 degrees Fahrenheit. If would not register any higher. It can readily be imagined how uncomfortable the toilets would be

under those conditions. It is little wonder that the Aborigines were reluctant to use them, because, apart from the heat, they have moral standards of their own and they do not like to be exposed to public gaze.

Whilst at the camp, I conversed with the people there. They were, to a great extent, bewildered and frightened. This no doubt was the result of the disturbance to their life in the camp by the visits of those who went there to see what could be done about cleaning it up. I saw one young native woman sitting under a tree, in little shade, with three or four kiddies around her. There were two or three other woman there, too. This young woman had a baby on the breast and another little one, approximately 18 months old, near her. Although I am not qualified to form a medical opinion, it appeared to me that that child was suffering from malnutrition. Having in mind the conditions under which the people are living in that camp, I think it is likely that there would be cases of malnutrition.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: Four of these children came in from the Northern Territory.

Mr. INCH: As far as I am aware, they did come in from the Northern Territory.

On questioning the woman, I found that the welfare officer from the Northern Territory had come to the camp and taken her husband back to Tennant Creek and left her there to look after the kiddies. I do not know his reason for doing that, but, frankly, I do not think there could be anything worse than separating a family. If the welfare officer was prepared to come from the Northern Territory and take the man back to Tennant Creek, he should also have taken back the wife and two kiddies. In a sense, it was a cruel action on his part.

I believe also that the welfare officer in the Northern Territory wants some of these Aborigines to return. Some of them have indicated that they are prepared to go, provided transport is made available; others have indicated that they are on holiday and that they will return after Christmas. Knowing how the Aborigines measure time, I point out that, to them, Christmas could be three days away, three weeks away, or six months away. Just when they intend to return home over the Northern Territory border, I do not know.

While I was at the camp, I also took the opportunity of visiting the Aboriginal reserve. The welfare officer from Mt. Isa had been there on Friday and had ordered a clean-up programme at the camp on the reserve. It was not before time, either, because they were in the throes of the clean-up when I visited the camp on Saturday morning and, from what I could see, it badly needed cleaning. There were bones, parts of stoves covered with sour grease and what looked like excreta lying round the houses on the reserve.

Mr. Thackeray: How many dogs?

Mr. INCH: I did not count the dogs or take particular notice of them. I was more interested in the Aborigines.

I understand that the State health inspector from Townsville, Mr. Hoffman, spoke in very firm terms to the Aborigines, as well as to the council health inspector and the officer of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. Mr. Hoffman ventured to remark that, although he had seen some filthy villages in his time in Malaysia, the camp on the banks of the Georgina and the reserve at Camooweal were their equal. Hon. members can imagine their condition. The Minister should not think that there is no health hazard on the reserve at Camooweal.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: At the same time, you will agree that the liaison officer and the health officer have a major problem on their hands getting the Aborigines to clean up these places.

Mr. INCH: I intend to make a suggestion to the Minister in a moment relative to that. Snap inspections are needed to ensure that cleanliness is maintained. It is no good cleaning up the reserve or the river camp and not making follow-up inspections for weeks and weeks.

I suggest that a programme of painting be carried out on the houses on the reserve. They do not look clean. One could pour all the caustic soda in the world on them and they would still show grease marks unless a coat of paint was applied. I cannot guarantee the truth of this statement, but it was reported to me that the houses were in such bad condition that the employees of the Department of Works who were asked to carry out repairs to them refused to do so because they were afraid of contracting a disease of some sort. Judging from the state of the houses, it is quite possible that their fears may have been well founded.

Let me revert to the situation in the camp on the Georgina River. It is obvious that Aboriginal people will continue to come to Camooweal from the Northern Territory. It is not just a matter of sending them back over the border and saying, "You stay there now." Once they get the "walkabout" feeling, they are likely to come back over the border at any time.

Mr. Tucker: What would happen then?

Mr. INCH: They will return, and, unless something is done, they will continue to exist under these appalling conditions. The various instrumentalities in the State have been passing the buck on responsibility for sheltering these people. Both the Commonwealth Government and the State Government have a responsibility to Aborigines, so I suggest that the present situation could be overcome and the future welfare of these people protected by providing them with accommodation in a transient camp that was the responsibility of both Governments.

Perhaps the present houses on the Camooweal reserve could be renovated and others built for this purpose.

The present occupants of the houses on the reserve could be provided for by the construction of homes on land which I understand the department has acquired in Camooweal itself. However, as I have mentioned before, daily inspection and supervision would be required to maintain the standard of cleanliness necessary to safeguard the health of the whole community and not just that of the inhabitants of the camp. This could be achieved by the appointment of a welfare officer stationed at Camooweal. For hundreds of years these people have lived under conditions such as now exist at Camooweal, and unless they are supervised they will continue in this way because they do not seem to understand that they themselves have to keep these areas clean.

Of course, it is only natural that the people of Camooweal are perturbed at the way these Aborigines are living, because they come into the township of Camooweal, go to the picture theatres, cafes and hotels, and, as there have been a number of deaths of children from over the border, the people of Camooweal are naturally worried as to whether this disease, or whatever it may be, might be contracted by white people. Over the years, Aborigines have built up some sort of immunity, and such a disease could knock white people over 10 times as quickly as it affects Aborigines. It is only natural that the people are worried.

In regard to the deaths, I understand that there have been seven but that the children concerned were not actually from the camp, as has been implied by some newspapers. According to my information, four of them were from Avon; two of them were children from Camooweal——

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: Three from Avon Downs and one from Soudan Station.

Mr. INCH: I will accept that correction. One was from Mt. Isa. I understand he had been sick at Mt. Isa, went out to Camooweal, and then returned to Mt. Isa where he was put into hospital and died. I understand that an aunt of his mother from Avon Downs had been visiting the family, so it is quite possible that there was transmission of the complaint, or disease, or whatever it may be, from that person to this kiddie at Mt. Isa. Although it is reported that the children who died were from the camp on the river bank, according to my information they were from Avon, from Camooweal itself and from Mt. Isa, not from the camp.

As I said before, Aborigines come over the border from Avon and it is possible that the disease or complaint from which these children died could have been contracted through contact with persons in cafes, hotels and so on.

The other point I want to raise is that bodies have been lying in the morgue at Mt. Isa for 12 weeks. What would the position have been had there not been refrigeration at Mt. Isa! Government departments have been haggling as to who is responsible for burying these children. They could not decide whether it was the responsibility of the local authority, the hospital or the Government. They are all haggling and buck-passing as to what should be done with the bodies in the morgue. Fortunately, a couple of days ago the Justice Department realised that the Burials Assistance Act gave it authority to bury or cremate bodies that other people would not dispose of, and an officer of the Justice Department was sent to Mt. Isa to arrange for the burial of those Aboriginal children. It is time that this buck-passing ceased and the Government got down to providing for the basic needs of Aborigines both at present and in the future. I trust that the Minister will consult immediately with his Federal counterpart to resolve the issues that I have raised.

Before concluding I wish to pay full measure of praise to the Mt. Isa Aboriginal Child Health Association, which operates under the chairmanship of Dr. David Cooke, the Royal Flying Doctor stationed at Mt. Isa. This association consists predominantly of a number of ex-sisters and nurses, and, as well, it comprises many lay people. All of its members are imbued with a desire to help the less-fortunate children in the community. They have voluntarily given up their time, which could otherwise be devoted to their own homes and families, to tend the needs of Aboriginal children who reside in the camping area on the bank of the Leichhardt River as well as others who live in Mt. Isa.

Without the daily care and assistance rendered by the members of this association it is possible that an outbreak of disease and mortality among Aboriginal children could have occurred before this. They ensure that Aboriginal children receive medical care and attention, and, in addition, supervise the taking of medicines and vitamin tablets, look to the correct feeding of infants, and pay strict attention to the personal hygiene of parents and children alike.

Mr. Tucker: Is it a voluntary organisation?

Mr. INCH: It is. I believe that when it commenced its activities it experienced some difficulty in gaining the confidence of the people, but by its persistent efforts and its kind but firm approach it has overcome the fears held by both Aboriginal children and adults, who now look forward to visits and ministrations from members of the association. They are doing a mighty job for the Aborigines, and it is a pity that their efforts cannot be emulated in other areas that contain a fairly high percentage of Aborigines. I reprimand the Minister and his Government for their reluctance to

tackle the Camooweal issue, but I acknowledge the Minister's efforts to assist the organisation in obtaining a suitably equipped vehicle that will enable it to carry out its worth-while and humane services to Aboriginal children in the Mt. Isa area.

Mr. HINZE (South Coast) (12.18 p.m.): The Minister who has presented these Estimates is responsible for irrigation and water supply, conservation, Aboriginal and Island affairs, and harbours and marine matters. In anybody's language that is a mouthful. His portfolio is a very extensive one, and I cannot understand why conservation was tacked onto its other very important aspects. I suggest that conservation could more appropriately be administered by the Minister who is responsible for forestry and land matters.

I am particularly interested in the functions performed by the Department of Harbours and Marine, the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission and the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, and I wish to deal briefly with the activities of the Department of Harbours and Marine in my electorate. Owing to the great amount of harbours and marine work that is carried out on the Gold Coast, it is desirable that a branch of the department be established there. In the past, certain delays have occurred in the marine work that is carried out, so perhaps the Minister will consider my proposal favourably.

During the last couple of days the member for Albert and I, representing opposite sides of the Nerang River, have expressed conflicting opinions about what people in the area think is necessary in the way of dredging the Nerang River. On the Sunset Boulevarde side of the Nerang River, residents have made representations to me for certain dredging work to be carried out. On the other side—in the area represented by my colleague from Albert, on the Promenade of the Isle of Capri the residents held the reverse opinion. On Sunday I went to see for myself, so that I could try to form an opinion on what was necessary. I saw a little sandbank in the middle of the Nerang River, which undoubtedly would be a hazard during flood periods. We all know what happened during the last flood, because of the intense development on Sunset Boulevarde, and no doubt more serious flooding will occur in future.

There is not much point in the member for Albert or I trying to express an informed opinion. An engineering exercise is necessary to decide what is best for the area. I should like the Minister and the department to re-examine the proposal and determine what should be done rather than carry on with the present dredging, which in my opinion will accentuate the problem because of the revetment works. Ample evidence of revetment walls falling in can be found in the newly developed areas. From my observations on Sunday, I visualise greater problems arising during the next flood.

Mr. Sherrington: Some of the canal development down there should be filled in. It is a great hazard in flood-time.

Mr. HINZE: That is not correct. The opposite view is correct. The canal work has provided greater ponding areas. Before the canal development was undertaken there was no ponding area. The hon. member may believe that the canal development has created problems but, in effect, it has created greater ponding areas.

We are very pleased with our efforts in canal development. As hon. members know, there were no other areas in Australia to turn to for guidance. We had to learn for ourselves, and we can be justly proud of what we have achieved. In the early days of the canal development, legislation had to be passed governing the canals, but no serious damage has been caused by them.

Mr. Sherrington: There have already been complaints that they are polluted.

Mr. HINZE: Early in the piece there was talk about the canals becoming backwaters for dead cattle, old cans, tins and paper. Anybody is at liberty to view the area at any time. It will be seen that there is no pollution in any of the canals. I often see evidence of the fact that they are quite clean. There was also concern about one of the first lakes established at the back of Palm Beach. Again there was no pollution, because a large body of surface water cleanses itself.

The department will have to consider seriously what is to be done to deepen the navigation channels in the Broadwater. The prawners based in the Broadwater approached the Minister, through me, about dredging the channels, which would save them having to wait two hours for the tide, and the Minister readily agreed to allocate funds when available.

Some of the 50 000,000 cubic yards of sand in the Broadwater may be required by the Beach Protection Authority, but the sandbanks are causing many serious problems. When I sought permission to pump sand from the Broadwater for a bowling green at Main Beach I was told that the sand could not be tampered with until the Delft Laboratory Report was presented. As the report is now in the hands of the Premier and the Co-ordinator-General, I make a further plea to release some of the schemes that have been held up for many years. I have been extremely patient pending the release of the report, and it is only reasonable to expect approval of some of the schemes that I have been advocating for so long. A bowling green would require a mere thimbleful of the 50,000,000 cubic yards of sand in the Broadwater.

This morning, at the invitation of officers of the Department of Harbours and Marine, I went to the university to see the great work that Professor Gordon Mackay is doing on a model of Currumbin Habour.

Mr. Sherrington: He is a very capable officer.

Mr. HINZE: He is an extremely capable officer, and he should be given the greatest respect by every member of this Committee. We must be proud of the work he is doing. He has conducted tests on the type of wall to be used in the Currumbin Estuary, and it will not be long before he can tell the Government that it will be economic to build retaining walls there. If this takes place, it will be one of the greatest tourist attractions in the Gold Coast area, where there is no safe harbour at the moment.

Mr. Davis: What about the plan for the Currumbin Hotel area that was put forward six years ago?

Mr. HINZE: I think that was called the P.B.C. plan. One day we might have to get back to some form of private-enterprise participation, because the scheme could cost millions of dollars and the Minister is very restricted in the funds granted to his department. I believe that this will be possible if the Government and private enterprise join forces. The scheme should be self-financing. From what I have seen, there will be ample room for mariners and small craft, and even trawlers. I am extremely happy with the work being done at the university, for which the Government allocated $14,000. I asked Professor Mackay how he was going, and he said that he thought he had sufficient funds to complete his tests. He told me he would continue this work until he can give us the answer.

I was pleasantly surprised at the amazing build-up of sand at Palm Beach and the adjacent areas to the north and south of the model test on Currumbin Beach. The hon. member for Maryborough has a house there, and he should be pleased to know that he has selected one of the pick spots on the Gold Coast. The model test will build up the beaches that were so badly eroded a couple of years ago and make both Palm Beach and Currumbin Beach fantastic beaches. I hope that, in the near future, Professor Mackay will be able to say to the Minister, "I have done my part towards it." Then I will be asking the Minister to get the scheme under way, and to get cracking and allocate funds out of the paltry amount he is allocated by the Treasury to conduct the affairs of this very important department. I know that funds are being spent along the coast of Queensland, and I want my "chop" out of them.

Mr. Hanson: You could be a bit greedy, too, you know.

Mr. HINZE: The hon. member could not say honestly that I am too greedy, because that is not a fair statement.

There is a training wall at the mouth of almost every stream in northern New South Wales, and there is a remarkable sand build-up at each outlet to the sea. This is the only thing that has Professor Mackay stumped at this stage. We do not want the same type of training wall, because it is not a success and would saddle us with the cost of continual dredging.

There is no political mileage in the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, and all hon. members should do everything possible to uplift the status of our Aboriginal people. It is understood that there are 50,000 Aborigines in Queensland, and their rate of population growth is twice that of Europeans. We therefore have to get together and discuss the problem, as there is no doubt that it will be with us for a very long time. What is needed is sensible planning by all of us to make sure that we do the right thing by the Aborigines and the Islanders.

Mr. Thackeray: The Commonwealth Government has to come in on it, too.

Mr. HINZE: I think they are trying to.

We in Queensland are proud of our native population. Recently I had the opportunity, with others, to go to Possession Island for the re-enactment of the landing of Captain Cook. Whilst there, I was impressed, as I always am, by the Torres Strait Islanders and the Aborigines. Thousands of young people of these races are now being educated. Mr. Killoran is doing a wonderful job for the Government, and he is held in the highest esteem by all Aborigines and Islanders. He needs all the assistance he can possibly get from the various Government departments.

Reference was made to the development of Bamaga. As a primary producer, I appreciate the ability of this area to grow virtually anything. There is no better land anywhere else in Queensland.

Mr. B. Wood: Mr. Ahern might have some comment on that.

Mr. HINZE: If he has, fair enough. So far as I am concerned, I am prepared to play my little part in the development of the Bamaga area. There is no political mileage in this for anybody. Bamaga is represented by the hon. member for Cook, and I am sure he will not mind my speaking about it. We hear of the problems presented by the increasing numbers of Aborigines and Islanders, and there is no reason why anyone should try to score off anyone else in this matter. We all have to accept responsibility for assisting our native people. If something is not going right for them, we have to accept the responsibility for it.

Mr. Sherrington: I have already indicated we are prepared to do that.

Mr. HINZE: The hon. member for Salisbury indicates that he feels as I do in this matter. That is very good.

I return to Bamaga, and the trip to that area that I had the privilege to make. I was very greatly impressed by the people themselves. They are industrious. I saw them working in the sawmills and the fields. I saw

them driving tractors, and planting tropical legumes and pastures. Nowhere else in Queensland have I seen legumes and pastures grow as they do there.

Mr. B. Wood: I don't think Dr. Crawford quite understood the position.

Mr. HINZE: I did not hear him speak, and I am not greatly concerned about what he said. I am only saying what I know, what I have seen, and what I should like to see happen.

I should like to see everything possible done to provide industry, with its employment opportunities, for young Aborigines and Islanders. One of the best schools in the State is at Thursday Island. The Department of Education should be commended for providing such a school and bringing young people there from the Torres Strait islands for their education. But it is bad when no industries are established to provide jobs and allow them to marry and live comfortably in their own areas.

I mentioned that some houses need painting—and they do. The man-power is available to paint them. As I said on a previous occasion, when I went to one of the islands I had to tramp through mud for about 50 to 100 yards to reach the island. The man-power and the skill is available for building wharves and providing a few other benefits.

Mr. Davies: Every shire in the State is losing population because people cannot get work there.

Mr. HINZE: The hon. member for Maryborough makes the point that urbanisation is proceeding throughout Queensland, and indeed the whole of Australia, as Europeans move to the cities because of the more pleasant conditions provided there. I suppose he is saying, in effect, that it is only to be expected that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders will do the same thing. Frankly, I do not think they want to. I think they want to stay in their own areas.

An Opposition Member: You speak for yourself.

Mr. HINZE: I am speaking for myself. I think that Islanders want to stay on their islands. What they want is industry and the other things to which they are entitled, and it behoves every member to see that they get them.

I conclude my remarks on this point by saying that the Government of Queensland has a responsibility to the Aborigines under the Charter of the United Nations, and the people of this State must at all times be able to hold up their heads relative to the treatment of the native population.

In referring to the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, I again congratulate Mr. Killoran on his work. I hope that, at some time, the Government will see fit to provide him with an expert committee composed of representatives of every relevant Government department to ensure that the areas on which Aborigines live develop to their full capacity and extent. In one instance that I know of, broken-down graders were sent to an area to grade roads. I do not think that Aboriginal reserves should be a dumping ground for obsolete equipment of the Main Roads Department. Such a policy is not wise, and quite clearly the Government should embark on an over-all scheme to construct good roads in all areas inhabited by Aborigines.

Finally, let me say that I am very impressed by the record of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in the 13 years that Country-Liberal Governments have been in office. In that period, $80,000,000 has been expended on various dams and weirs in Queensland. What a wonderful job Fred Haigh has done since he was brought to Queensland! He is recognised throughout Australia as an expert in this field, and Queensland is fortunate indeed to have the benefit of his services.

Mr. Davies: It is a pity he is starved of funds by your Government and the Federal Government.

Mr. HINZE: Yesterday the hon. member for Maryborough was crying and screaming about the Department of Education being starved of funds.

Mr. Davies: The Minister was, too.

Mr. HINZE: Now the hon. member is screaming about the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission being starved of funds. He is not the shadow Treasurer. If he were, I would very quickly ask him where he would get the funds.

Mr. Davies: You are quite happy with things as they are?

Mr. HINZE: I am saying that one has to cut one's coat according to the material available. In my opinion, the Minister is doing an excellent job with the various departments under his control, and he is receiving wonderful assistance from the Treasurer and Mr. Haigh in the field of irrigation.

In my own electorate, I have the problem of the Advancetown Dam. About $15,000,000 has to be found for a water supply, and I am endeavouring to put forward the suggestion that it would perhaps be better to declare the whole of the Numinbah Valley a national park.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BOUSEN (Toowoomba West) (12.38 p.m.): I agree with the hon. member for South Coast that the title of the Minister's portfolio is something of a misnomer. When one speaks of conservation, one has in mind the preservation of the State's wildlife, both fauna and flora, the development of national parks, and the conservation of water supplies for domestic use and irrigation. However,

in this debate I wish to make some remarks relative to the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

When I received the director's report only a few days ago, I was very impressed by the photograph on the first page of a rather good type of bungalow situated in a suburban area. It was obvious that the house was well cared for and well preserved, with the grass round it, and even on the footpath, cut low and providing an ideal setting. Who occupies that house? An Aboriginal family. In my opinion, the department should concern itself with settling Aboriginal people in the suburbs of towns and cities throughout the State. I do not think anyone would take exception to an Aboriginal family that settled in and maintained a house as well as the one shown in the photograph. The report mentions also that more than 100 families have been settled in similar houses and that there have been very few failures. I believe that is significant. If the right approach was made and the right surroundings were supplied, there could be no objection to these people and they would be accepted socially in the various suburbs where they desired to live. On the other hand, I want to draw attention to the shocking and appalling conditions on Thursday Island. What a contrast they are to the illustration in this report!

It was my privilege earlier this year, in company with other members on this side of the Chamber to make a tour of some of the Aboriginal mission stations on Cape York Peninsula and Thursday Island. The housing standards for people living on Thursday Island are, to say the least, shocking and deplorable.

Mr. Miller: Did you have a look at the school?

Mr. BOUSEN: Yes, I did.

Mr. Miller: What did you think of it?

Mr. BOUSEN: Very good. In the absence of adequate housing, these people are forced to live in broken-down shacks and sheds with no windows or doors and, in some places, with iron missing from the roof——

Mr. Porter: Who forces them?

Mr. BOUSEN: Where else are they to live? The Government of the day does nothing, so they have to live wherever they can find some sort of a shack.

Mr. Porter: You regard it as totally the Government's problem?

Mr. BOUSEN: Of course it is. These people are compelled to pay from $6 to $16 a week for this slum accommodation, and that is the only way it can be described.

A Government Member: Did you look at Tamwoy?

Mr. BOUSEN: No, I was not able to get there. I do not know whether the Minister is personally aware of the conditions on which I am elaborating, but I do know that he is a very sympathetic person who can always be approached. I hope that he will make it his business to look at some of the matters I am mentioning with a view to taking remedial action at the earliest opportunity. I feel that he should approach the Housing Commission or make some recommendations with a view to obtaining suitable houses and other accommodation for the native people living on Thursday Island. I appeal to him to try to do something for them.

I should also like to refer to the two liaison officers—I think that is their title—who are domiciled on Thursday Island and to their duties. If that is their correct classification, it is indicative of what their duties should be, but I understand that they are bogged down with office work and are unable to get out and see how people on Thursday Island are not living, but existing. It is unfortunate that in our civilised and so-called affluent society we should see Islanders living in such conditions. I also ask the Minister if he would know when these welfare or liaison officers last visited any of the other islands in the Torres Strait in close proximity to Thursday Island. I believe that other islands in this area come under their direction. If that is so, then, of course, they should spend some of their time on those islands, to see how the people there are faring.

I do not blame the welfare officers—I do not know them personally—because I have no doubt that, like other Crown employees, they are required to obey instructions and perform certain duties. If they are required to spend all their time at their desks, field officers should be appointed to look after the welfare of the Aborigines and Islanders.

From personal experience I know that the hon. member for Cook has tried to do a great deal for the native inhabitants of the Torres Strait islands but that limitations are placed upon him. He feels very deeply for the Islanders, and I only wish that the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs displayed his sympathetic understanding of their problems. If it did, the standard of living of the Islanders could be raised to the level that would enable them to be assimilated into our community and settled in suburban homes like the one illustrated on the first page of the report. I ask the Minister to acknowledge the efforts made by the hon. member for Cook by assisting him in his good work.

Of course, I know that Thursday Island is not recognised by the Government as an Aboriginal reserve; however, the department is not exempted from accepting its responsibility to look after the native people. I hope that the Minister will take steps to raise their standard of living; however, if he feels that his other responsibilities preclude him from doing so, I suggest to him that the

administration of Aboriginal and Island affairs be handed over to the Government departments that could adequately cater for the needs of our Aborigines. I refer, of course, to the Health Department, the Education Department, the Housing Commission and the Transport Department. If responsibility were passed on to those departments, they would, I am sure, very quickly appreciate the need to look after our coloured people.

Mr. Ahern: They co-operate now, you know.

Mr. BOUSEN: Apparently they are not co-operating as much as they should. I hope that the Minister sees fit to rearrange the administration of Aboriginal and Island affairs as I have suggested.

Our party also visited Bamaga, and I was very interested to learn that a pipeline had been constructed to bring water from the Jardine River to the reserve for domestic use and irrigation. An assured water supply has enabled the reserve to make tremendous progress. Crops are grown on an experimental basis, and I hope that it will not be too long before they can be grown commercially. I was also impressed by the willingness of the inhabitants of Bamaga to accept responsibility for management of their own affairs and I have no doubt about their ability to take greater responsibility.

I was very impressed with facilities at the Lockhart River Reserve, which is fairly new. They were under construction at the time of our visit. It has a school, administrative buildings, a butcher shop and other stores, and a number of new houses. The buildings are a credit to the department and to the people living there. As time passes they will be able to look after their affairs as do the residents at Bamaga.

Mr. B. Wood: It is so good that many of the Lockhart people now at Umagico want to go back.

Mr. BOUSEN: That could be so.

I hope it will not be too long before these people, too, can play a part in managing the affairs of the Lockhart River reserve.

I turn now to a matter nearer home. Two huge dams known as the Cooby Creek Dam and the Perseverance Dam supply the City of Toowoomba with water for domestic purposes. The water, which is treated to make it fit for human consumption, is hard and will not lather in the bath, or kitchen sink. A good deal of detergent has to be used to soften it. Responsibility for softening water should not rest solely on a city council. The Minister should be aware of problems confronting cities in providing a good soft-water supply. The Toowoomba City Council has a long-range plan to supply a water-softening plant, but finance is a problem. I appeal to the Minister to confer with the Toowoomba City Council on the installation of such a plant as soon as possible.

I hope that the Minister, in the near future, will act on the points I have raised, particularly about Thursday Island, and the Aborigines there, and the possibility of giving some financial assistance to the Toowoomba City Council in order that it may provide a softening plant for water from the Cooby Creek and Perseverance Dams.

Mr. AHERN (Landsborough) (12.54 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join in the debate on the Estimates under discussion. I have a few brief remarks to make about each of the administrative fields controlled by the Minister.

First, I record my thanks to the Director of Harbours and Marine, Mr. Peel, for the assistance he has given me in my electorate in the last couple of years. The people of the area pride themselves on having a $2,000,000 boat harbour at Mooloolaba, where recently we were hosts to the crew of "La Balsa," who had journeyed 8,500 miles across the seas. The harbour is tremendously important in my electorate as a focal point of a wonderful prestige development on the Sunshine Coast, and it is the nucleus of a system of canals which will be a great asset to our tourist industry in the future.

The creation of this complex system of canals resulted in some significant engineering problems which have been overcome with the welcome co-operation of the administrators of the Department of Harbours and Marine, and I mention particularly the efforts of Mr. Alan Britton in this respect. Every assistance has been extended to make this a well-planned and harmonious development. Development of this kind is as essential to the future development of the Sunshine Coast as it was in the development of the Gold Coast in the past.

The Maroochy River, in the Cotton Tree area of Maroochydore, is badly in need of dredging. This small swimming area is a focal point in the tourist industry in my electorate. I know that this department, like all other Government departments, is short of money but I hope that, in the near future, some money can be made available to assist the shire council to dredge this area so that the future of this great tourist attraction is not placed in jeopardy.

Like the hon. member for South Coast, I congratulate the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, Mr. Killoran. It is a great pity that other departments do not follow the lead given by this department in conducting yearly or two-yearly all-party visits to Aboriginal and Island reserves in Queensland. This is a very productive exercise which contributes greatly towards finding sensible solutions to the very complex problems that exist. I hope that other departments will realise the great value of these visits by all-party committees and will follow the lead given by the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

I commend the department on what I saw of its administration during my visit, as a member of an all-party committee, to the Torres Strait, Bamaga and Yarrabah reserves. Great credit must be given to the department for its endeavours to bring industry to those areas and to sponsor it, and also to raise the standard of living of those people who are under the department's care. We must all accept that there can be only a gradual raising of their standard of living. From what I saw, the department is doing a very good job.

It is very easy to misinterpret the actions of the department, and to look academically at the power the department has under the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act and say that it is unduly restrictive of human rights. I do not really think that this criticism is as valid as the critics claim. These controls are not used lightly by the department, but they ought to be there to deal with realistic situations, which arise from time to time. I hope that this Government will not act precipitately to destroy what has been achieved by this type of administration in the past. I know that the Government is receiving pressure from well-meaning organisations and also from the Federal Government.

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

Mr. AHERN: Before the lunch break I was counselling the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs not to cast aside lightly the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act, and, with it, all that is being done in Aboriginal communities to bring about the assimilation of these people with the rest of the community.

No better example of what is being done for Aborigines can be found than Bamaga Mission, which I had the pleasure of visiting with the all-party parliamentary committee. There is no doubt that much has been achieved there. Shortly the new primary school will be opened by the Minister. A new wharf has been opened. A new and expensive water system has been installed. Looking to the future, a power supply has also been provided. There is also at Bamaga a brand-new hospital that people anywhere in Queensland would be proud to have. There is also a new secondary school, with boarding facilities planned. The Government has truly established its bona fides in this area.

When these developments are considered with the other industries that have been established there, and the great possibilities for beef-cattle production, I think this area has a great future as the capital of that part of North Queensland. There is great potential for pasture development and beef production not only in the scrub areas but also in the forest areas. There is no doubt that, because of the rainfall and the soil types in the area, cattle numbers will increase, and this will be for the good of the people.

I now wish to discuss some of the activities of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. In the first place, I extend my thanks to Mr. Haigh and his officers for the assistance they have given to me during the past couple of years. I believe the Government has much to be proud of in the assistance given to individual farmers throughout the State, particularly under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act. I understand that approximately $1,000,000 is spent annually on such assistance. Since the scheme began $7,100,000 has been spent in this way. That is the type of assistance that is much appreciated and is very worth while in rural industries. It has been badly needed, for ours is a dry continent.

Rural industries have also received useful assistance from the Commonwealth Government's making expenditure on irrigation and water supply improvements fully tax deductible in the first year. This has been an important step forward in on-farm irrigation and conservation planning in Queensland, and indeed throughout Australia.

I believe that the Government has much to be proud of in its promotion of irrigation. I refer to the vast number of water conservation and irrigation projects that were mentioned earlier in the debate. I instance the Bundaberg irrigation project, the Mareeba-Dimbulah scheme, the Burdekin irrigation area, the Ross River Dam development, the the new developments in water conservation that will follow mineral development in the North-west and in Central Queensland, and the rural water supply schemes which, though smaller, are also greatly appreciated. In addition, the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission administers underground water supplies, bores, underground water replenishment schemes, and so on.

Expenditure on major dam development, as was said earlier in the debate, has totalled $76,300,000 since 1957. That is no small achievement when considered in conjunction with the expenditure of $2,990,000 on the development of weirs. But, in discussing these Estimates, I wish to make some brief remarks relative to the over-all concept of water conservation in the community in which we are living, and they will relate equally to Queensland and Australia.

Water conservation and the justification for it in today's economic climate is, I think, worthy of more analysis than it has received in the past by Governments and politicians in this country. Let us face it, Mr. Ramsden. The over-all climate in which most primary industries are operating in Australia is not good. I need not detail again the problems that rural industries are facing today, but I remind the Committee that one of the greatest challenges is the challenge of abundance. That applies to most rural industries in Australia. The wheat industry has been forced to accept production restraint; the sugar industry has accepted it and profited from it for many years; the fruit and

vegetable industry is in a simliar situation; and the cotton industry, upon which many irrigation schemes in this country have been based, also is facing production restraint. The tobacco industry——

Mr. O'Donnell: Rice, also.

Mr. AHERN: Yes, the rice-growing industry, too, as the hon. member for Barcoo says.

What are the alternatives that can be sponsored in connection with irrigation development? Fat lambs? Yes, perhaps to some degree. The cattle industry? Certainly. The sorghum industry could also be sponsored to a limited degree. But the old thought that conservation of water for rural use ought to go ahead at an increasing rate on the basic rationale that this is a dry continent and that we therefore owe it to ourselves to conserve water is, I believe, basically wrong. The suggestion that the State must have a percentage of water conserved in weirs as part of its heritage is also basically wrong.

I remind all hon. members that I refer specifically to water supplies for rural industries, not to water for industrial and mining development and town use, which must increase in future. The over-all concept is one that will need careful review, placing the emphasis not so much on new development of primary industries as on consolidation of those we already have. I believe that some brake must be placed, on a State and national basis, on new developmental schemes for rural water supply. I know that this sounds like heresy, but I think that in the prevailing climate of primary industry, it is a fact of life that must be faced by politicians. It is not likely to come from irrigation and water supply commissions or authorities.

I suggest also that if Governments are taking decisions to invest huge amounts of public capital in expanding beef production, lamb production, and sorghum production, there are alternative ways of going about it that will be much less expensive and provide much more benefit for the cost involved. I am not advocating that we should stop new investment in water conservation. What I am saying—and I wish to emphasise this—is that we should be more selective in future investments in the massive expansion of development schemes as opposed to the consolidation of present industries. I believe that development schemes of that type have lost some of the glamour they might have had originally and may even be resisted in the farming community. Indeed, I hear that opinion being expressed throughout the State now.

I also suggest that, in the light of these facts, this State Government must in future face up to a greater extent than it has in the past to cost-benefit studies related to schemes deserving of public fund investment in this State. The type of cost-benefit studies that have been applied to the Commonwealth schemes must be applied to a greater degree to State schemes with greater over-all planning to integrate the agronomy of crops being grown with the channel systems provided, with the engineering design behind the dams and with the economics of the industry. Greater over-all planning must be taken into account now, in today's climate. It is more necessary now than ever.

In the time left to me, I want to make brief reference to a major problem in the community in which we live in Queensland today. It is one that must be squarely facing the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission and about which it must be very worried. I refer to the salinity that exists in many of our State's water resources. This is becoming an increasing problem. I refer particularly to pollution caused by sodium salts that occur naturally in higher country and are released when this higher country is cleared. I know that the Commissioner is well aware of what I am referring to when I say that the problem is of paramount importance in the Lockyer Valley, where, when higher areas are cleared, huge amounts of sodium salts are released into an irrigation system that is vital to the farmers in the area as well as to the development of south-eastern Queensland.

I suggest that the Government as a whole will have to look at these higher areas and decide either to reserve some of them in their present state for forest development, or to plant them to trees. This is their most useful land utilisation, and they will then not be releasing huge amounts of salinity into water systems, which must be causing the commission great concern in this area. And it is not only in this area that the problem exists; it occurs in certain brigalow areas, too. In the high-ridge areas, natural salts are present in concentrations that are almost mineable and, when they are cleared, the salt is eroded very easily by natural rainfall water, which runs into catchment systems and works to their detriment. I bring this matter to the notice of the Minister and his Commissioner, and I hope they will be able to do something about it.

I know that a problem also exists in the eastern Darling Downs in relation to some of the aquifers being used to irrigate crops, to the permanent physical detriment, over a period of years, of the soils involved. I have mentioned this problem previously, and I know that the Minister and his departmental officers are concerned about it.

I have much pleasure in congratulating the Minister on the way he is administering his three departments, which represent three very difficult portfolios. I thank him for the assistance he has given me in the past, and I hope he will go on to do further good work for the benefit of Queensland in the future.

Mr. THACKERAY (Rockhampton North) (2.29 p.m.): I thought it most likely this afternoon that the hon. member for Rockhampton South and I would view with gloom the activities of Port Alma that come under the

Minister's portfolio. However, it is pleasing to note that Port Alma has been given a reprieve, from the point of view not only of the ratepayers but also of the waterside workers and their families, which in Rockhampton number about 150. The Minister's statement that he fully supports a feeder service from Port Alma to Brisbane for the meat trade to Great Britain is indeed welcome. It is in line with the thinking of many interested bodies in Central Queensland.

I know the Minister is a Central Queenslander and a grazier, and is fully cognisant of the requirements of the port and the meat trade. However, Port Alma has "missed the boat" as an overseas port. It should be the container port for the whole of Queensland's meat-export trade. It is centrally situated and is the outlet for an area that breeds the greatest number of cattle in the State.

Instead of being connected to Brisbane by a feeder service, Port Alma should be the main port for the export of meat, which could be transported to it from both the South and the North. Of course, I realise that the hon. member for Townsville North would hold certain views on that suggestion. It is very pleasing to learn that the Columbus Line will be shipping meat from both Port Alma and Townsville to the east coast of the United States.

Mr. Tucker: The secretary of the Townsville Harbour Board went to Rockhampton this week to discuss this matter.

Mr. THACKERAY: That is right. Everyone is on the ball, and I realise that Port Alma has been given a reprieve. However, one point that does concern me has been highlighted by the hon. member for Port Curtis. If a caustic-soda plant is established in Gladstone, it will require supplies of salt and soda ash. It is open whether the salt will be shipped down the Narrows or transported by rail from Port Alma to Gladstone. The establishment of a caustic-soda plant in Gladstone is still in the planning stages, but I assure the Minister that Port Alma will fight the issue when it arises.

In answer to a question by the hon. member for Mackay, the Minister said that tenders have been called for the provision at Mackay and Port Alma of incinerators to dispose of ships' garbage. It is hoped that they will be installed early in the New Year. That news is welcomed by the coastal ports and Rockhampton.

The Opposition's shadow Minister has referred to certain aspects of conservation that are administered by the Minister for Primary Industries. The report of the Department of Harbours and Marine reveals that a number of people have been convicted of taking undersized crabs and female crabs, and undersized fish and oysters. Although the Minister for Conservation should rightly be responsible for fisheries, I suggest that he should be relieved of certain other responsibilities. The Minister's portfolio has been overloaded; however, I suggest that the conservation of all marine life should come under his control and the other functions associated with harbours should be the responsibility of another Minister. By this means, all aspects of conservation would be controlled by one Minister and placed in their proper context.

Recently the hon. member for Callide asked a question relative to oyster leases. I did not realise the great number of leases that are situated off the central coast in the Keppel Bay area. I have fished around many of the islands in that area, and I can assure hon. members that registered oyster leases are not clearly marked. A tourist who is spending a holiday at Great Keppel Island is able to hire a boat and visit nearby islands, and it would be very easy for him, quite innocently, to take oysters from a registered lease.

Mr. Hanson: That is a matter for the legal section of the Department of Harbours and Marine. The leases could soon be defined.

Mr. THACKERAY: That is a very good point. The hon. member is fully cognisant of the problem, as it exists in his electorate, too. The leases should be clearly marked, particularly those off the central coast, because the best oysters in Queensland are transported to markets throughout Australia.

Undersized crabs and female crabs are being taken. I know that the detention of offenders does not come under the Minister's control, but I hope that it will at a later stage. We should introduce legislation similar to the Western Australian Crayfish Act to control the number of crab-pots used by professional fishermen.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsden): Order! The hon. member has made his point. As he said, the matter does not come within the Minister's portfolio.

Mr. THACKERAY: That is so, but the prosecution of offenders comes within the Minister's jurisdiction.

We should try to maintain our crab industry. Talking as an old crabber, I have not put a crab-pot into Cooriman Creek, in the Keppel Sands area, for the last five or six years because the crabs are fished out. Half a dozen pots are adequate for any family. If a person cannot catch enough crabs with six pots, he should not go crabbing. To protect our crabbing industry, we will have to institute control similar to the Western Australian crayfish laws.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: The Fisheries Act is administered by the Department of Primary Industries, not by me.

Mr. THACKERAY: That is what I am saying, but prosecutions are launched by the Minister's department. The report of the Department of Harbours and Marine states that 32 prosecutions for taking female crabs

were launched in 1969-70. The Minister attends to the prosecutions, but the Department of Primary Industries detects offenders.

In Rockhampton, Mr. Daniels conducts investigations into offences, which are then referred to the Department of Harbours and Marine for prosecution. If I am incorrect in that statement, I should like someone to tell me why prosecutions under the Marine Act and the Fisheries Act are listed on page 17 of the report of the Department of Harbours and Marine. The report indicates that in 1969-70, off the eight beaches between Yeppoon and Emu Park, 344 sharks, 137 pups and 160 rays were taken. I have referred previously to the setting of shark drumlines and the problems occasioned thereby. The Minister has told me that the department is considering placing marker flags on drumlines so that in a running or rising sea boat-owners will be able to see where the drums are when they are approaching the various beaches. I know that they are set in a line at the entrance to Ross Creek, Yeppoon, and Emu Park, but there are other places where people with speed boats run onto the beach to take off for the islands. When returning at dark, or just on dusk, from the islands, it is impossible to see the drums. A number of amateur fishermen have hit them, and their boats have suffered a lot of damage. Considering that some outboard motor-boats travel at 30 knots, it is fortunate that there has been no loss of life. When a boat hits an obstacle at such a high speed, the occupants are thrown straight out unless they are wearing safety belts and, without life-jackets, they could be in a lot of trouble. I know the difficulties, because I have had some experience on the water.

I hope the Minister will do something about these shark lines and drums off the beaches at Yeppoon and Emu Park. The people in the area are pleased that the net and drum fishing for sharks will be maintained, because the highest number of sharks in the State was caught there.

I thank the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, Mr. Killoran, for his assistance during the past year, and Mr. Brian Shannon, who is manager and inspector of pastoral activities, and Mr. Shane O'Connor, the Rockhampton resident officer, for the magnificent jobs they are doing.

On page 1 of the annual report there is a picture of a departmental home occupied by an Aboriginal family in a Queensland suburb. I am proud to say that this home is in Rockhampton, directly opposite mine.

Mr. R. E. Moore: Give us the street and the number.

Mr. THACKERAY: It is situated at the corner of Donellan and Hook Streets. The couple occupying it are very good people; they are very quiet and well behaved. I have heard no complaints about them. They have fitted into the community in that area. This is not always the case when coloured families move into a home. Opposite my sister's home in Townsville there is a family that is very good until Friday night; on Saturday night there is a corroboree, when families visit there. However, the people opposite me have fitted in very well, and are a credit.

The hon. member for Cook has suggested that the Act needs amending, and I think that all hon. members would agree with him. I have studied the Federal report or policy on assimilation, and I think it is fitting to have it included in "Hansard", because many people do not realise what the Federal Government and the various State Governments have defined as their policy.

The report reads—

> "The policy of assimilation seeks that all persons of Aboriginal descent will choose to attain a similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community—enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities and influenced by the same hopes and loyalties as other Australians. Any special measures taken are regarded as temporary measures, not based on race, but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their social, economic and political advancement."

All hon. members, and people in all walks of life, would agree that there is no political mileage in this matter. It is an exceedingly difficult and complex problem. Even 35 years ago we had do-gooders preaching what should and should not be done to assist Aborigines.

Recently the Prime Minister said he would be implementing legislation to give the coloured people of Australia their rights and freedoms. Everyone agrees that these people should have their freedoms, but this poses many problems. The hon. member for South Coast said that there were 50,000-odd Aborigines in Queensland today. We could have 1,000 families requiring housing accommodation, which must be provided by the Commonwealth Government. Members are continually asking for the provision of more Housing Commission houses, mainly for white people.

If real progress is to be made in assisting Aborigines, the Commonwealth Government must accept most of the responsibility. When these people decide that they want their freedom and are given all their money from trust accounts, what will happen? Do we simply leave them in the wilderness? Or, for their assistance, do we provide social welfare officers and experts in nutrition? The hon. member for Wavell said that one of the things required by coloured people is advice on nutrition. No doubt he is associated with an organisation that is interested in Aborigines and will give his time freely to assist Aboriginal children. If what he

has said are indeed his sentiments, I give him full marks. However, he did not say whether his assistance would be in an honorary capacity, or whether he would seek remuneration for it. However, what I have mentioned are some of the problems that will have to be dealt with.

There is at present before the House a Bill to provide protection for our race against exploitation in the marketing of goods. Similar protection will have to be afforded the coloured people. Some Aborigines will have to be trained as guidance officers for their fellows. When Aborigines leave places such as Woorabinda, Foleyvale and Cherbourg, an officer will have to be available to say to them, "Look, the Government has provided a home for you. You have to furnish it. You have to go to one of the co-operatives or hire-purchase organisations and say that you require $500 worth of furniture, including a refrigerator." When that money is made available, there will have to be someone to see that it is spent immediately on household requirements or it will all go in a big "booze" session. Aborigines are the greatest socialists in the world; if one of them has $20, all his mates have $20. Money made available to them will soon go in that way.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: That is one of the real reasons why liaison officers are needed.

Mr. THACKERAY: That is so. If a check is not kept on Aborigines in this way, within six months all their money is gone and the Commonwealth Government has to provide social service benefits. We, as members of Parliament, must do all in our power to see that they have employment opportunities open to them. I have heard that today it is difficult to get enough Aborigines to take jobs as stockmen. I have seen the conditions under which some Aboriginal people live, and I have been shocked by them.

Much good work is being done at the Cherbourg Aboriginal Community. Last year the annual report of the department contained a photograph of a home that had been prefabricated at Cherbourg. I believe that there is only one tradesman there.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BIRD (Burdekin) (2.49 p.m.): In the first place, I should like to congratulate the Minister on the way in which he has settled in to the administration of the three most difficult portfolios of Conservation, Harbours and Marine, and Aboriginal Affairs. I hope that he will not concentrate on one to the detriment of the others; I am quite sure that will not happen. This afternoon I intend to deal mainly with Conservation.

There has been much debate in this Chamber on water conservation and whether or not an attempt should be made to conserve more water, either by damming or by other means. An hon. member on this side of the Chamber told the Committee that Queensland has an average yearly rainfall of 25 inches. Surely to goodness that emphasises the dire need to conserve as much water as possible. It must be remembered also that almost the whole of the 25 inches falls in two or three months of the year and that we then return to semi-drought or, in many instances, drought conditions.

Another hon. member said that he doubted whether it was economically wise to spend money on water conservation for primary production. I assure hon. members that anyone who has been associated with a primary industry that is dependent upon irrigation will realise how important it is in bringing stability to an industry and to a district. Because I represent the Burdekin electorate, I appreciate how much water conservation has meant to the Burdekin area over many years. I remind the Committee that when the Bill was introduced to implement the Bundaberg scheme, as it is commonly called, I welcomed the beginning of that scheme. The Bundaberg district had suffered greatly over the years and I realised what an assured water supply would mean to the people living there.

The following list of weirs and dams that have been either commenced or completed in the past 13 years, together with their cost and the water storage, will be of interest to hon. members—

WEIRS

——	Date	$	Acre-feet
1. Blue Valley (Burdekin River)	1963	50,000	2,550
2. Proston Weir (Stuart Creek)	1967	210,000	295
3. Moolabah Weir (Thuraggi River)	1969	135,000	3,200
4. Buckinbah Weir (Thuraggi River)	1968	26,000	4,150
5. Bedford Weir (Mackenzie River)	1968	1,300,000	5,200
6. Buaraba Creek	1968	71,000	60
7. Glebe Weir (Dawson River)	..	1,200,000 Est.	16,000
		$2,992,000	31,455

DAMS

	Date Completed	Cost $Million	Storage Acre-feet
1. Tinaroo Falls Dam	1958	12.54	330,000
2. Moogerah Dam	1961	2.49	75,000
3. Borumba Dam	1964	4.63	34,500
4. Leslie Dam	1965	4.52	38,200
5. Callide Dam	1965	6.26	37,800
6. Wuruma Dam	1968	5.46	157,000
7. Coolmunda Dam	1968	6.86	61,000
8. Eungella Dam	1968	6.98	106,000
9. Atkinson Dam	1970	2.40	25,400
Total		$52.14	
10. Beardmore Dam Est. 5.4m		..	81,600
11. Maroon Dam Est. 4.6m		..	31,600
12. Fairbairn Dam Est. 18.7m		..	1,170,000
13. Monduran Dam Est. 8.0m		..	475,000
		$36.7	
Total		$88.84	2,623,100
Less Tinaroo above		12.54	330,000
		$76,300,000	2,293,100

It is interesting to note, too, that the total expenditure on dams alone over that period was $88,840,000 and that the total storage area is 2,623,100 acre-feet. Although I am pleased to see that increase, I certainly wish to see many more water conservation schemes implemented.

In my electorate one finds a very good example of what can be done with irrigation. I admit that the Burdekin River irrigation area was originally established under an A.L.P. Government, but production in the Clare, Millaroo and Dalbeg areas under irrigation last year was valued at $2,800,000, and over the last two years about $400,000 has been spent on improvements to the system. It also is very heartening to see that a further $200,000 is provided for the expansion of the irrigation system in these three areas in the current year.

The system of artificial replenishment used in the Burdekin area is unique in Queensland. I hasten to add that the Government should not rush in and take very much credit for that, because the cost has been borne almost entirely by the cane-growers and millers in the district. I was secretary of the investigating committee in its very early stages. I saw the scheme come to fruition, and I know how valuable it is to the Lower Burdekin District. When the expansion is completed, it will have cost in the vicinity of $1,500,000. In addition, $250,000 was provided by the commission for investigation and planning. I feel that the time is fast approaching when we cannot expect the millers and growers to continue to improve and enlarge on this scheme without some form of subsidy from this Government.

Whilst I am on the subject of the replenishment of the aquifers in the Burdekin District, I want to issue a word of warning. There is a distinct fear in the district that, as a result of pumping water during times of fresh—this is when the bulk of the water is pumped into the aquifers—siltation will cause a blocking of the filtration areas of the aquifers and that, in time, this will render them useless. For this reason, I feel that further storages are required on the Burdekin so that the water can be allowed to settle before it is pumped from the river into the aquifers.

You will have noticed, Mr. Ramsden, that over the last couple of days I have asked the Treasurer some questions about the provision of water for the Greenvale nickel project, at both the mine site and the treatment works somewhere in the vicinity of Townsville. In this, I certainly was not being facetious. I think this is something about which we in the North should all be concerned because over the years, we have seen the City of Townsville suffering greatly from water shortages. Even in the days of my youth there were shortages. If we trace the history of Townsville, we will find that there have always been water shortages in that city.

Only a short time ago I read in a Northern newspaper that representatives of a firm of consultants had warned that within 20 years we in Australia—and particularly people in the North—could be drinking our own bath-water. With this, I agree; in fact, I should say that for some time now Townsville-ites have been drinking their own bath-water. We know that, prior to the expansion of the sewerage system in Townsville, many people

distributed their waste-water over their back-yards. Nowadays, every Townsville newspaper contains advertisements to the effect that for a small charge a person can have a spear pump put down in his back yard to improve the supply of water to his home and it is this waste water they are using.

Obviously, Townsville is again desperately short of water. Earlier this year I saw in the newspapers that the Townsville water supply was expected to cut out within two or three weeks. Fortunately, the rains came and saved Townsville from a very desperate situation.

Over the years, we on the Burdekin have felt that Townsville should come to the Burdekin for a guaranteed source of water supply. I am not blaming Townsville City Councils, past or present, for what has happened, but I do feel that the time has come when Townsville must come to the Burdekin for an assured water supply.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsden): Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. BIRD: If we look at Townsville's present water storage, we find that its reservoirs will accommodate 80 acre-feet; the Ross River weirs 2,600 acre-feet; and Paluma Dam 10,400 acre-feet, giving a total of 13,080 acre-feet. I am not saying that this is the total to carry Townsville for 12 months. Fortunately, the Paluma area has a fairly high annual rainfall, and water continues to flow for the greater part of the year. However, the Ross River rises in an area of fairly low annual rainfall, and when the wet season is over the flow of water in the river ceases.

Stage I of the Ross River Dam, which was formerly referred to as the Five Head Creek scheme, is under construction. When that stage is completed it will hold 48,000 acre-feet. I do not know when it is planned that Stage II will be completed, but it is envisaged that it will provide an additional 338,000 acre-feet. It is rather startling to learn that the Greenvale nickel project will require approximately 5,000 acre-feet per annum. That will place a severe drain on Townsville's water supply, unless it is greatly improved. I hope that the Ross River Dam will bring about that improvement. I am not trying to take anything away from the hon. member for Townsville North, and I remind him that part of this area is in my electorate. The general feeling in Townsville is that the project will not be so much a water-supply scheme as a flood-mitigation scheme. I realise that a flood-mitigation scheme in Townsville is needed, but of greater importance is an adequate water supply, so I hope that the catchment area of the dam will receive sufficient rainfall to provide all the water that Townsville will need.

I have said that eventually Townsville must receive its water supply from the Burdekin River. For many years a great number of people in North Queensland have shared that belief. Townsville is the second largest city in Queensland and I do not think it is likely to lose that distinction, but if it is to continue to expand into a large industrial centre it must be provided with an adequate water supply. The only place from which it can be obtained is the Burdekin River, which has a catchment area covering approximately 52,000 square miles. The provision of water from the Burdekin River to Townsville would alleviate the situation in Giru, Majors Creek and Woodstock.

I thank Mr. Fred Haigh, the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, for the assistance that he has given over the years, both in my dealings with him when the replenishment of the aquifers on the north and south banks of the Burdekin River was planned and, again, in giving his time to address the farmers of the Giru area. He was able to tell the farmers the true position, which, although not what they wanted to hear, was what they had to hear. They hoped to hear a good deal more about the early possibility of getting them out of their trouble.

Mr. Tucker: In other words, they got nothing.

Mr. BIRD: If the hon. member could come up with a satisfactory scheme I assure him that I would take it to the Commissioner and get it under way.

Briefly, I would like to go back over the figures relative to the Burdekin and what a major storage scheme on the Burdekin could achieve.

As hon. members are aware, I was a member of the Minister's party which inspected the Snowy Mountains Scheme and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. It was one of the best educational trips I could have undertaken. I was surprised to learn that total water storage area in the Snowy Mountains scheme is 6,865,029 acre-feet. If the dam proposed by the Burdekin River Authority in 1951 was constructed, it would store 6,584,000 acre-feet—only 300,000 acre-feet less than the combined capacity of storages in the Snowy Mountains scheme. That scheme has one advantage in that interest and redemption payments are met entirely from the sale of electricity, which returns about $44,000,000 per annum. The best we could hope to get from the sale of Burdekin scheme electricity would be about $1,420,000 per annum. Any scheme on the Burdekin cannot depend on the sale of electricity to meet interest and redemption payments. It must rely mainly on the sale of irrigation water.

I intended to speak at length on the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, but it seems that my time is running out. I should hate to see the relevant Act abolished. An Opposition member said yesterday that it should be, but I was pleased to hear him say

later on that, if it were abolished, another Act should be implemented. Our Aboriginal people will need protection for many years. It is unnecessary for me to canvass at length this afternoon why they should be protected, because several hon. members on both sides of the Committee have already dealt fully with that matter.

Mr. Armstrong: Anybody who knows anything about our people will agree with you.

Mr. BIRD: That is so.

We should not rush in when people say we should give them equal rights and every freedom and act without thought.

Although I did not meet Mr. Killoran until just prior to our trip to the Torres Strait islands I have always had the utmost admiration for the way in which he administers the department. It was obvious from the response he received wherever he went that he is highly respected by the people. I do not think that is because he goes around saying, "You must have equal pay, you must have everything that everyone else has." He knows full well how Aborigines should be treated, and he is discharging his responsibilities in a proper manner. As a result of his direct, honest approach to these people, they respect him highly for the work he is doing.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) (3.9 p.m.): These are very important Estimates, as is evidenced by the number of speakers who have participated in the debate. I wish to deal with two matters, one concerning flooding in my electorate, and the other, Aborigines.

Firstly, I refer to a notification sent to me last year by the Minister for Lands. It relates to a sale of industrial land at Stanley Street East, Coorparoo. You might think, Mr. Ramsden, that this does not come within the Minister's portfolio, but I will show you that it does. This land is below flood level. Was the Government aware of this when it decided to sell the land?

The owner has built a retaining wall on top of, and in line with, the existing canal, and the land is being built up with fill to a height of 4 ft. or more. The owner has not yet applied to the Brisbane City Council for a permit to construct a building. As the Minister has often expressed concern at the flooding and causes of flooding of creeks and canals, he will realise that the work being done here will cause back-flooding in this area. Flood waters will not be able to get away, and neighbouring homes, factories and other properties, as well as streets, will be affected adversely. This matter should be investigated.

Because the area is described as industrial land, the wall and filling will be completed before the owner applies for a permit to build, and when he does apply, the Brisbane City Council must, under the law, grant the application. The area is low lying and, in times of heavy rain, water will back up. Under the terms of the sale, the council has to maintain the drain and make sure that flood waters, which will bank up as a result of this work, are able to get away.

For many years I have received complaints about the debris, rubbish and filth that collects in Norman Creek, or is thrown into it. Of course, some of it floats up from the Brisbane River. A large number of people throw rubbish—even car bodies—into Norman Creek, and I wonder if people who do this have any sense of pride. Surely neither the Government nor the Brisbane City Council can be expected to be continually cleaning out creeks. On many occasions people have rung me and said, "This is the Government's responsibility: what is being done about it?", or they have rung the local alderman and said, "This is the council's responsibility; what is the council doing about it?"

All creeks should be kept clean. If they are not, they are a health menace to all who live near them. Vermin and snakes live on the banks and in the waters of creeks, and the number has to be seen to be believed. In addition, these creeks are silted up during floods. I believe that this problem is the Government's responsibility, although I admit there is a demarcation line, and I suppose that the Minister in charge of this portfolio must be concerned about who really is responsible.

The city council has occasionally cleaned up Norman Creek. I have frequently telephoned the Department of Harbours and Marine, and they, too, have been very co-operative. In fact, officers from that department have gone up and down the creek looking to see what could be done to keep the area reasonably healthy for the people living nearby. I do not care who does the work, as long as Norman Creek is attended to and the people stop worrying me, the alderman, and themselves, over it. Without any doubt, particularly with school holidays approaching, many people, especially parents, are going to be worried about it.

I said that I would speak briefly on the Aboriginal question. When the Aboriginal Relics Preservation Bill was before Parliament in 1967, I said it was one of the best pieces of legislation to be presented for a long time, as its aim was the protection and preservation of the relics of the original Australians. Much has been said about Aborigines during this debate, and quite rightly, because they are just as important as any other people. At times there has been some woolly thinking about Aborigines, and I should like to correct some of the things that have been said and to put before the Committee the A.L.P.'s policy and outlook on Aborigines.

In the first place, I pay a tribute to all those dedicated people in Government departments, universities and private organisations who over the years have made financial and physical sacrifices to advance the cause of

Aboriginal rights. In passing, I might mention with gratitude Abschol scholarships, the first of which was granted in 1965. Others have been granted subsequently. Those who have made these scholarships possible should be commended, as they are at least doing something to assist Aborigines.

Recently more booklets and papers have been published, more articles and letters have appeared in the Press, more submissions have been made from various bodies and organisations, and more opinions have been expressed in this Chamber, on the Aboriginal question than on any other topic. There has also been much discussion about integration of Aborigines with the white community. This is a most important subject. Over the years there has been a growing awareness of the civil rights and social activities of Aborigines, and the integration of all races as a civic right is part of the freedom of all. We all know, of course, what the various charters say about freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of religion, freedom at law, and legal safeguards against Governments. These freedoms are necesary if all people, including Aborigines, are to have the right to express their thoughts and to live a life unfettered—I use that word advisedly—by unnecessary interference or coercion, or opinions forcibly imposed upon them by political parties or any other groups in society.

In many instances Aborigines have had opinions forcibly imposed upon them. A person is not free if he cannot choose for himself or make decisions for himself, or if he is a prisoner of society—and very often Aborigines are prisoners of society. Some people might say that, under the Act, they are not; but if one looks into the question, one finds that they are. A person is not free if he does not possess a sense of responsibility and understanding towards others, and particularly towards Aborigines.

As far as integration is concerned, the Aborigine appears to be a lone person. Despite the fact that so-called "do-gooders" and others wish to help him, that is how he appears to me. The majority of people do not want him. That has been proved, because an attempt has been made to get rid of Aborigines from various States and send them to Queensland, or to get rid of them from stations or push them off their own land. In fact, today the Aborigine is a prisoner and I do not think that the Government possesses a complete understanding of his needs.

I have had quite a lot to do with Aborigines, both in Brisbane and in certain country areas, and I have spoken to many of them during my travels round the State and on my visits to Aboriginal settlements. I believe that, because of the education they are receiving, the younger generation of Aborigines already have a sense of responsibility, and therefore education is very important. On the other hand, when I visited some of the missions and settlements I formed the opinion that a number of the older Aborigines did not wish to change and perhaps could not be taught anything.

In spite of that, there is a need to assist people, and I suggest that a secretariat for Aborigines be set up. The Government has stated that the law is available to all Aborigines, but that is so only in theory. In my opinion, a committee of legal men should be established to protect all the legal rights of Aborigines, not merely one or two of them, both in court and outside it.

Mention has been made of trade training for Aborigines in Queensland, and in Australia generally. I do not know of any place in which trade training is being carried out. In fact, such training is almost completely non-existent and the position is hopeless. Trade-training facilities should be set up in many places throughout Queensland and they should be financed—the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs might not agree with me on this point—by the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. I say to the Director, through you, Mr. Ramsden, that he should get onto the Minister's back and see what additional finance can be made available for some of the proposals that I have put forward.

There should be more scholarships for Aboriginal apprentices and trade trainees. These should be made available at technical colleges and similar institutions. I am very happy to acknowledge that many Aborigines of both sexes have been able to further their education. For example, Aboriginal girls have studied nursing, and that is very good to see.

I also think that Aboriginal reserves should be open to all. In fact, many of them are completely closed to most people. Some are able to get in and some are not. Some ask for permission to enter and are refused, It makes one wonder why this should happen. Possibly it is the thought that the set-up might be criticised, but surely any place should be open to criticism and the criticism taken notice of if it is of assistance to the authorities.

University academics and students should be both encouraged and assisted to enter the service of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. From my knowledge of people at the university to whom I have spoken, I believe that they would be only too happy to enter this service. One has only to speak with members of Abschol to realise this. I do not intend to mention any of their names, although I have a list of them here.

I now want to explain, for the benefit of those members who may not know, the difference between assimilation and integration. It appears to me that some sections of the community, as well as certain Government circles, misinterpret these two terms. It has been noticeable in this debate that they have been used interchangeably, but there is a difference between them.

I intend to spell out in fairly simple and concise language the meaning of each term. I have made it my business to obtain them. Assimilation means, "The idea of absorption into the general community". This may be all right for Aborigines or Islanders who are already living in the midst of the general community—many people come into this category—and may wish to continue to do so and be accepted on the same basis as everyone else. On the other hand, integration means, "Retaining a measure of group identity within the larger communities".

The International Labour Organisation Convention (107) on indigenous minorities recognises that Governments have the responsibility of "creating possibilities of national integration to the exclusion of measures tending towards the assimilation of these minorities". Opportunity of assimilation may be offered, but acceptance must not be forced. A policy of assimilation on a voluntary basis also requires the provision of alternatives to the participation in the general way of Australian life, one being an opportunity to remain outside the main stream of that life if the Aborigine so desires.

Therefore, I think Governments must be prepared to assist in the progress of these groups by giving, as I said before, adequate financial assistance for their own communal development. The choice for Aborigines between isolation, assimilation and integration can be made only if they are economically able to do so.

(Time expired.)

Mr. NEWBERY (Mirani) (3.29 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise this afternoon to take part in the debate on these Estimates. Before proceeding, I should like to pay tribute to the leaders of the respective departments: Mr. Haigh (Irrigation), Mr. Jim Peel (Harbours and Marine), and Mr. Pat Killoran (Aboriginal Affairs). I feel that we are very fortunate indeed to have men of the calibre of these gentlemen directing these particular departments.

This afternoon it is my intention to dwell on the activities of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, and I apologise to Mr. Peel and Mr. Killoran for not referring to the activities of their departments. I commend the Government on the interest that it has shown in providing irrigation for sugar-growing areas, and its continued encouragement of the use of irrigation to stabilise and improve both production and efficiency in the sugar industry.

The popular concept of the sugar industry is that it is located in areas that receive copious rainfall, where irrigation is not needed, whereas the fact is that, although many sugar-growing areas receive in excess of 44 inches of rain annually, the average annual rainfall varies to such a degree that in many years low-rainfall figures are recorded. Furthermore, even in the wettest areas of the State a great deal of the rainfall is received during a few months of the year, so that for a large portion of the year inadequate rainfall is available to ensure continued growth.

Sugar growers have recognised this fact, and, as indicated in the commission's report, in 1968-69 approximately 153,000 acres of sugar lands were irrigated. That area represents approximately 38 per cent. of the total area irrigated in Queensland, and 28 per cent. of the total sugar-growing area. A great deal of this development is the result of growers' efforts in developing underground water supplies and in making the best use of surface supplies. However, in many areas, the use of water has exceeded the natural supplies. This applies particularly to Gin Gin and Isis. Sufficient natural water is simply not available.

The important Burdekin Delta area provides a good example of an area in which the use of water has exceeded the available supply. With the onset in the mid 1960's of a dry season, a critical situation arose in that area. A unique scheme was devised to artificially improve the available water supply by conserving the underground water beds, from which surplus water previously flowed out to sea. The hon. member for Burdekin has referred to this scheme. Two boards have been established to make recommendations, and work is being carried out to ensure an adequate supply of water. Admittedly, the cost of the work is being borne entirely by the local growers and millers, but the Government provided substantial financial assistance for the original investigation and planning of the scheme. All costs of subsequent detailed investigations for submission to the boards have been met by the Government. The Government is to be commended on its very fine effort.

Portion of the Bundaberg area is in danger of being over-developed with the result that an excessive demand will be made on the underground water supplies. There is no need for me to elaborate on this, because all of us know what both the Federal and State Governments are about to do for that area. This scheme is one of consolidation. It will serve only the existing areas, and at this stage any increase in production will come only from those areas and not new assignments.

Incidentally, I point out that, before an assurance was given, we in the Mackay area were concerned about the economics of the Bundaberg scheme and believed that its implementation would depend upon increased assignments and peaks; however, the Minister has assured us that that is not so.

Hon. members are well aware of the details of the scheme, having recently approved its implementation. It is important to remember that in the debate on the scheme not one hon. member opposed it. The Government is to be congratulated on its efforts in obtaining Commonwealth financial assistance to implement the first stage of the Bundaberg

scheme. The proposal to approach the Commonwealth Government again for further assistance to complete the scheme, when detailed planning is completed, is to be commended.

A very interesting example of the need for irrigation in the sugar industry is to be found in the Eton area of the Mackay district, in my electorate. Although the average yearly rainfall is more than 54 inches, the vagaries of the rainfall in annual total and distribution throughout the area cause frequent losses in production, which, in the period 1965–1967, resulted in shortfalls in mill peaks with an aggregate value of about $3,750,000. The Eton area is excellent for irrigation. The soil on farms in the area is very good, but rainfall is erratic. In the last five or six years, four successive drought-affected seasons have created great difficulties.

The suggested irrigation scheme has been well received. The Government, recognising the growers' difficulties, initiated a joint investigation by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission and the Department of Primary Industries into the possibility of providing water conservation and irrigation in this area. Earlier this year, a joint report set out a very interesting proposal for conserving water from the Pioneer River and distributing it to the farms in the Eton area. In view of excessive costs of conservation in the river itself, the scheme involved a weir on the Pioneer River and the diversion of river flows into off-stream storage where the supply would be carried over the succeding dry months. From the storage, supply would be reticulated through channel systems into the individual holdings in the Eton area.

The estimated cost of the Eton scheme is $8,760,000. In the long term, it would serve 190 existing holdings with a gross assigned area of 13,600 acres, which could be increased, when opportunity offers, to a total of 21,000 acres. Most of the holdings are in the North Eton mill area but the scheme will also serve a number of holdings in the Marian, Pleystowe and Racecourse mill areas. Other areas to be included are Oakenden, Brightley, on the southern side of the river, the Mia Mia, and the other areas I have mentioned.

The scheme has been approved in principle by the Government for inclusion in its works programme, subsequent to agreement by the landholders that they desire it. The views of landholders were recently sought, and it is pleasing to record that, to date, 85 per cent. of landholders have indicated their acceptance of the scheme. In view of that, I urge the Government to consider an early start on it, to provide the benefit of irrigation to growers in this area.

The losses through shortfalls between 1965 and 1967, aggregating some $3,750,000, are equivalent to 43 per cent. of the cost of the scheme, and this alone indicates its desirability.

Following the production of the report, I received requests from surrounding areas. One came from the North Branch of Sandy Creek, in the Mia Mia area, and others came from the Septimus and Upper Mia Mia areas. Since that date, it has been indicated that the North Branch-Sandy Creek-Mia Mia area will get a supply if the scheme is approved by the 190 growers in the Eton area. Septimus area growers have been informed that the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission will have a close look at their area following the introduction of the North Eton area. A similar investigation will be conducted in the Upper Mia Mia area, on the northern side of the Pioneer River above the tramway bridge.

Another aspect of the Government's policy for which I commend it is the planning of water conservation for multi-purpose use. There are many examples of this in the commissioner's report. One of them, with which I am familiar, is the Eungella Dam on the Broken River, which was completed recently at a cost of $6,900,000. Its holding capacity is 106,000 acre-feet, of which 22,000 acre-feet was to be committed for a guaranteed minimum yield in the worst rainfall year.

Mr. Davis: Is it full?

Mr. NEWBERY: It is not full, but it has been very close to full.

The dam supplies 4,500 acre-feet of water to the Collinsville Power Station, and assures supply to the Clare-Millaroo-Dalbeg irrigation area and significant private diversion along the Bowen River and the Broken River. Further supply is available for some expansion of irrigation along these streams. An allocation of 4,000 acre-feet per annum has been made to Utah Development Co. for its mining activities at Goonyella. Bearing in mind the difficulty of obtaining substantial water supplies in the upper Isaacs River catchment area, it is doubtful whether the estimated 1971-72 production from the Goonyella mine would have been possible if the Government had not provided sufficient capacity in the Eungella dam to meet not only known requirements but also possible additional development. Extensive investigation was carried out along the Isaacs River, but it was found there was not sufficient water for development there.

Mr. Hughes: A member of the Opposition claimed that Eungella Dam was built to supply Collinsville Power Station and township and that the balance was to be allocated to the Goonyella project.

Mr. NEWBERY: That would be absolutely incorrect. The Eungella Dam was built to supply the Collinsville Power Station and township, plus other areas.

Mr. Bird: And to augment the supply in the Burdekin area.

Mr. NEWBERY: To augment the supply in the Burdekin area. In the main, it has made water available for the Burdekin area.

Mr. Hughes: So the Opposition was quite wrong.

Mr. NEWBERY: Completely wrong. At present, the allocations from the Eungella Dam include 4,500 acre-feet to Collinsville, 4,000 acre-feet to Goonyella and 840 acre-feet to graziers. That leaves about 13,000 acre-feet to be committed. As the hon. member for Burdekin acknowledges, it has done a wonderful job in augmenting supplies in his area. As the hon. member for Kurilpa pointed out, an Opposition member—I think it was the hon. member for Mackay—claimed that the remainder had been committed to the Goonyella project. This is not correct.

I commend the Government on its initiative in arranging to make use of the pipeline being built to the Goonyella project. The Government has made available about 6,000,000 gallons per year to each of 35 graziers, at a cost to the Government of about $81,000, and $300 per year to each grazier. I understand that there is to be a contribution to maintenance by the Government. The graziers will pay 30c per 1,000 gallons for anything in excess of that 6,000,000 gallons. I claim that this is a wonderful gesture and, contrary to what the Opposition has said, this water supply is not only supporting Collinsville and other coal projects, such as Goonyella, but is assisting graziers and the cane-growers in the Burdekin area. Appreciating this situation, the Government has arranged with the company to meet the cost of increasing the size of the pipeline up to an agreed figure.

Another aspect of the Government's programme in the water-supply field, on which it is to be congratulated, is expansion of activities in the investigation and assessment of underground water supplies. This is a most important aspect of the State's water resources, as already vast areas of the State depend on underground water for stock and irrigation. I understand that more than half the State's irrigated area obtains water from such sources.

Before resuming my seat, I should like to mention how concerned I am over the report by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission to the seminar that dealt with the utilisation of bagasse. It was indicated to that seminar in Mackay that there was insufficient water for a paper-pulp project using bagasse in the Mackay area. As I feel that we have sufficient water in the Mackay area to supply a factory of this type, I do not agree with that claim, but, then, who am I to disagree with the experts?

I mentioned in my very first speech in this Chamber in 1965 that I thought there was behind Mackay what could be made into a little Snowy Mountains scheme. With the Eungella Dam, of 106,000 acre-feet, and the proposed Uranah Dam, of 700,000 acre-feet, we have already proved that water can be stored in the area. As I see it, the position is that we are building dams in the hinterland of Mackay and impounding water which, in my opinion, belongs to Mackay. But I would be the last person to step in and stop development in other areas because we need the water. I am delighted, of course, that there is water available for the Goonyella project, and I am also delighted that my area is of some assistance in supplying the Burdekin district.

I feel that whilst we have this water in the hinterland we have other sites, too, that can supply the paper-pulp project. Before the Eungella Dam was built, a considerable amount of investigation was carried out in the upper regions of the Broken River. It was found that there was there sufficient water for a 24 MW peak-load station. Water could be poured over the range to the Pioneer River, at a height of about two-thirds the height of the range, to give a 24 MW peak load. This water could be diverted to the Pioneer River as could that of the Eungella Dam and the proposed Urannah Dam.

A plant to produce crude pulp, 300 long tons a day, would use 11,000 U.S. gallons per metric ton, or 3,000,000 imperial gallons per day for 330 days, or 3,300 acre-feet per year. A more sophisticated plant, producing 300 long tons of bleached pulp, would use 40,000 U.S. gallons per metric ton, that is, 10,000,000 imperial gallons per day or 12,200 acre-feet per year. I claim again that we have the water, and, before resuming my seat, I suggest that a full survey be carried out by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission into the availability of water in the Mackay area, so that in the future there would be no uncertainty about the amount of water available. Several suitable sites are available on the Pioneer River, one 41 miles upstream of 125,000 acre-feet, and another at Dumbleton, of 5,000 acre-feet. I repeat, therefore, that Mackay has sufficient water for any future industrialisation.

Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT (Mackenzie—Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs) (3.49 p.m.): As the debate on my Estimates has now proceeded for two days, I feel that I should make some comments on the contributions of the various members.

The first to speak was the hon. member for Salisbury, who showed a lack of knowledge when he referred, among other things, to accommodation for transient Aborigines. There are centres already established not only at Cairns and Townsville, but also in remote areas such at Mt. Isa.

Of course, hon. members will recall the commendation by the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt of the purchase of the Brisbane Motel, which was converted to the OPAL Joyce Wilding Home. It is heartening to have the approbation of the hon. member for Salisbury to hostel-type accommodation for students and apprentices, because this has been departmental policy and practice, and it also has been implemented in the same humane and

beneficial way. Large homes have been acquired by the department and suitable couples assisted into them on the understanding that they will accept up to six paying guests, nominated by the department, from the ranks of students and/or apprentices. Because of my desire to respect and preserve the privacy of the family atmosphere and the family home environment, it is not my wish to highlight this; but it is indicative of the very humane and understanding work of the department in Aboriginal welfare.

Perhaps hon. members will be interested to learn also that in the Torres Strait area a major research project is under way—it has been developing for some time—directed towards turtle farming, in an endeavour to introduce a new industry. Of course, I mentioned earlier the introduction of a prawning-training vessel to encourage the development of the prawning and fishing industries.

I regret very much the efforts by the hon. member for Cook to follow the negative patter of "abolish the Act". Admittedly, when challenged by Government members, he suddenly realised his total lack of constructive alternatives and hurriedly made some submissions, which I shall certainly study. But one thing that did interest me was his attempt to bolster his argument by referring to the appeal rights and then claiming that appeals would not be very frequent. Surely that is evidence of satisfactory administration of the legislation, rather than an argument bolstering advocacy of abolition without alternatives.

The hon. member for Cook has indicated a very real problem confronting all persons associated with the administration of Aboriginal welfare in drawing the line between welfare assistance and paternalism, for which, however, he has no ready remedy. Surely the measure must be the need of the individual, not obsession with a word or a phrase.

The hon. member was generous in commending the practice of having councillors' conferences, and I assure the Committee that both all-Aboriginal and all-Islander conferences will continue to be held at, I hope, increasingly frequent intervals. Further, I am happy to inform him, in relation to consultations with councillors and reserve managements, that regular conferences are held, at approximately weekly intervals, on Queensland's Aboriginal reserves between the manager and the councillors to ensure a total two-way participation in the general management and development of the community and the reserve. These are all necessary steps in the education and training programme established under current legislation.

I next wish to emphasise that the Government dissociates itself from and totally rejects the policy enunciated by the hon. member for Bundaberg. As I said in my opening remarks, the present proud record that Queensland holds in Aboriginal well-being would not exist but for the dedicated work of Christian missionaries who penetrated the isolated areas of the State when no other persons were even interested. When in this Chamber a member of the Labour Opposition condemns Christianity and the work of those Christian people, I must confess to a feeling of abhorrence.

Mr. Tucker: I think you misinterpreted what he was trying to say.

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: Perhaps I did.

Again, I think I should make some comment on the remarks of the hon. member for Mourilyan, who said that, in the main, the Aborigines are, in a sense, primitive. My experience has been that Aboriginal Queenslanders are human beings possessed of all the simple dignities and individualities and also of a sense of responsibility. I am the first to concede that there are problems with some persons, but that certainly is not true of the main stream of population.

The hon. member for Mourilyan referred also to the problems of drainage of sugar lands in North Queensland and the difficulties that are being experienced between adjoining landholders because of the diversion and blocking of watercourses, and he suggested that steps be taken to educate landholders in their rights relative to drainage.

Unfortunately, the question of drainage and the rights of individuals to divert water from their properties elsewhere, or, alternatively, the right of an individual who has water ponded or diverted onto his property, is very complex. All defined watercourses clearly come under the provisions of the Water Act, and permission to divert or carry out works on such watercourses must be obtained by licence under the Water Act from the Irrigation Commission. However, difficulties occur in the case of natural depressions which carry run-offs for brief periods of the year but do not have a well-defined stream channel. The judicial decision on a case now before the Supreme Court might clarify this situation somewhat. However, because of the complexities in the law, the issue of a pamphlet on this matter would present difficulties.

It is suggested that in such cases the hon. member advise landholders to contact their solicitors in respect to their rights and the applicability of the Water Act. Where cases are clearly indicated to come under the provisions of the Water Act, then I request that he contact the commission and we will have the matter investigated.

The hon. member for Fassifern made a useful contribution in pointing out the extent of the Government's approach to water conservation and improved water supplies. He illustrated this by referring to the multi-purpose use of water supplies from the Moogerah Dam and the minor diversion works that have been added to extend the availability of the water to areas other than those immediately adjacent to Warrill Creek, and, as a result, the large number of

281 pumps licensed to utilise available supplies. He also drew attention to the important task of providing adequate water supplies for stock and domestic purposes by the provision of rural water supply schemes.

These illustrations admirably indicate how the Government is endeavouring to direct its programme on rural water supply improvements primarily to existing areas to consolidate such development and to provide landholders with the means of improving their production, efficiency and over-all output to counter the cost-price squeeze. He further suggested increased activity in the investigation of underground water supplies.

The hon. member can be assured that the Government is very conscious of the importance of this source of water for stock, domestic and irrigation supplies. It has greatly increased its programme of investigations since 1964, not only by obtaining Commonwealth funds to assist in this work but also by increasing the amount of State funds available. This has resulted in expenditure on this work increasing from $184,000 in 1963–64 to the allocation of some $500,000 for 1970–71. Unfortunately, a good deal of our current expenditure has to be directed towards examining possible ways and means of improving supplies in known areas of underground water supply where use is now exceeding a safe yield. This has limited the search for new areas of supply. However, in spite of this, investigation of new areas in the coming year will extend from Weipa to the Isaacs River catchment and west to Julia Creek and the Warrego and Boulia areas.

I should now like to turn to the hon. member for Mackay, who drew attention to the difference between subsidies to river improvement trusts in Queensland and those provided in New South Wales and Victoria. It is fully appreciated that the subsidy in Queensland is substantially lower than those in the other two States. It must also be appreciated that the available funds in Queensland differ very markedly from those available to New South Wales and Victoria. Furthermore, the question of subsidy for any particular activity cannot be dealt with in isolation. The subsidies made available for other local government activities must be taken into account. In this regard, in the over-all I believe that subsidies made available by Queensland to local authorities compare quite favourably with those in both New South Wales and Victoria. To grant further subsidy to river improvement trusts would inevitably mean a requirement to reduce subsidy on other activities. I suggest this would be most undesirable.

There is another important aspect of this matter. The benefits created by river improvement trust work are relatively localised. For this reason, while there is a good argument for all landholders in the catchment area of any stream contributing significantly towards the cost of river improvement and flood-mitigation works, since run-off from their lands contributes to the problem, it is difficult to justify contributions of more than 33⅓ per cent. from the State as a whole in view of these very local benefits. Therefore, I suggest that the one-third subsidy is reasonable.

With regard to Commonwealth finance, it is also appreciated that certain river authorities in New South Wales have obtained substantial Commonwealth assistance towards their work, as a result of well-prepared cases setting out the need and benefits for their works, which were largely flood mitigation.

Furthermore, the Commonwealth has indicated that in the most recent allocation to the National Water Resources Development Fund consideration will be given to Commonwealth grants for flood-mitigation activities. When this information became available, the Irrigation Commission communicated with all river improvement trusts and asked them to submit estimates of their desirable programmes over the next five years and information to support the compilation of a case to present to the Commonwealth for financial assistance for these works. This information is not yet available from all trusts.

In addition, the fact is that a large amount of the work done by river improvement trusts in Queensland is more along the lines of river training and prevention or repair of bank erosion caused by floods than of true flood-mitigation work. Some difficulties may, therefore, be expected in obtaining Commonwealth assistance for this type of activity. Nevertheless, it is intended to make representations for such assistance when the information from all the trusts is available and an over-all case can be prepared.

The hon. member for Mackay referred to the port of Brisbane. It is true that the costs of maintaining the river channels are fairly high, but it is also true that my department is planning towards the movement of the port further downstream. Proposals at present in hand for further deepening of the port for container ships have been thoroughly examined and are quite economic for the existing trade, the present terminal facilities and the proposed American container trade. As in the past, any future proposals for channel dredging to accommodate larger container ships than those at present under construction will be considered on their economic merits.

The hon. member for Mackay was badly informed on the use of the harbour industrial lands in the port of Brisbane. Last year every one of the 6,400,000 tons of cargo shipped through the port was dependent upon these harbour industrial lands for processing, storage or terminal facilities, or a combination of all three. About 4,600,000 tons of this cargo was processed at oil refineries, fertiliser works, mineral sands plants, and meatworks, built on hundreds of acres of harbour industrial lands, which apparently are classified as "mythical" by the hon. member.

The hon. member for Brisbane raised the matter of responsibility for stream improvement, prevention of bank erosion, and pollution and flood mitigation in Breakfast Creek, Enoggera Creek and other streams in the city of Brisbane area. I made the position quite clear in answer to a recent question on the subject. I agree with the hon. member that the behaviour of certain industries in the Breakfast Creek area in dumping their rubbish in the creek is deplorable. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to trace the responsible parties, and my department is taking steps to clear rubbish from the creek-bed where it is likely to interfere with navigation.

Machinery has now been established for the State-wide control of water pollution, and for some time the Department of Local Government has been working on this problem. The Committee is aware that it is proposed to strengthen the powers of the department by legislation.

Mr. Davis: When do you think you will start dredging?

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: We have it in hand, and, as promised, the clearing of the tidal section of Breakfast Creek of litter, which is a hazard to navigation, will commence as soon as possible. Dredging was never mentioned.

The hon. member for Clayfield asked why we do not exploit lands that receive an annual rainfall of 25 inches or more instead of proposing large irrigation schemes. As well, he queried the establishment of irrigation schemes to increase primary production when markets for it cannot be assured. Hon. members are well aware of the brigalow land development scheme, which is a major dry-land development scheme, aimed primarily at exploiting some of our more fertile lands in better-rainfall areas. However, as all hon. members are aware, 25-inch rainfalls do not occur every year, and at this very time many areas in which that rainfall is to be expected are subject to drought. In fact, they have faced difficulties for several years. That is why, to take advantage of the better-rainfall areas when they are free from drought, we need to balance our primary production between dry-land output and the assured output from irrigation, free from violent fluctuations due to drought.

With respect to the marketing problems facing primary production, the current situation indicates the wisdom of our policy to aim irrigation development primarily at existing developed areas and to consolidate and improve production efficiency in such areas, rather than at the creation of large new areas of production. We feel that in this way we are assisting primary producers to meet the problems of market situations and the cost-price squeeze.

The hon. member for Carnarvon referred to the Border Rivers scheme, in which he is greatly interested. We are doing everything to have it implemented as quickly as possible.

The hon. member for Burnett referred to the benefits to be derived from the Bundaberg irrigation scheme.

This morning, the hon. member for Wavell spoke. I strongly question the desirability of his proposal to set up a separate electoral authority for Aborigines, which will be, in effect, another Parliament. Is that not another form of racial segregation? At the same time, however, the hon. member advocated removal of special sections of the Act relating to Aborigines. He should realise that we, as members of this Assembly, should accept this as our responsibility. It is quite apparent also that he is not abreast of modern affairs in his profession relative to Aborigines and is unaware of all that is being done.

I will mention but a few of the projects that have been undertaken. From 1967 to 1969 special studies and surveys were undertaken by the Queensland Institute of Medical Research; a supplementary feeding programme for children at a very early age has been introduced; there has been a university department of child health series of studies under Professor T. J. Rendle-Short, a study by Dr. S. Latham, senior pediatrician, and a health education programme by the Queensland Health Education Council. In addition, I have here a six-page detailed statement of what is being done in relation to health and facilities for Aborigines in this State.

Hon. members can be assured that the Government is fully conscious of the need to press on with these matters. I am fully conversant with most of the problems that face many of our Aborigines. Some are living under conditions that none of us would want to tolerate. We have a problem that must be solved as quickly as possible.

The hon. member for Burke spoke about a recent episode that was unfortunate in that it involved seven deaths. Immediately this matter was brought to my attention I acted in an effort to solve the problem. I have a high respect for the member for Burke, but I regret that at no stage has he drawn my attention to the problem. I represent a rather large electorate, but I know what is going on in it. If any hon. member has a similar problem in his area, for heaven's sake let me know so that I can try to rectify it quick and lively. It is not my aim, nor is it the aim of any member of this Parliament, to get unnecessary publicity of this kind. We can well do without it.

The hon. member referred to a child welfare organisation in Mt. Isa about which he has spoken to me frequently over a period. Like him, I feel that it is doing a wonderful job for Aborigines. Naturally, I was pleased to help him obtain a van, as well as other amenities that are required. The incident referred to was very unfortunate. I only hope

that in the future we can solve these problems in such a way that the people themselves will not be subjected to undue publicity.

The hon. member for Toowoomba West spoke about Thursday Island. I think we all know about the housing problem that exists there. I do not suppose that any previous Minister in charge of this portfolio, in such a short time, paid as many visits to Thursday Island as I have. I will shortly be making my fourth visit to the island in 12 months. I am fully conscious of the need for further housing there. I regret that the hon. member said that he had not visited the Tamwoy settlement, where about 40 Aboriginal homes are established, some of them excellent.

I appreciate the problems on Thursday Island and, naturally, all departments concerned will try to remedy them as quickly as possible. At the same time, we should realise that Thursday Island presents problems in many ways. Those of us who know the island realise that work facilities are limited. It is unfortunate that visiting Islanders sometimes choose to stay there under adverse conditions when they could be back on their own islands enjoying better conditions.

The hon. member for Landsborough spoke about crop-marketing difficulties and the need for investigations. Before we proceed with any irrigation scheme in this State we always seek advice from the Department of Primary Industries and, at the same time, study the markets, and so on. In recent times our policy has been aimed at consolidation by providing irrigation in established areas rather than opening up new ones. This is even the basis of the Emerald scheme, which eventually could give security to many graziers in Central Queensland outside the irrigation area. We take all these matters into account.

The hon. member also spoke about water salinity. The sampling of water, as well as the observation of bores, is carried out regularly. We are very conscious of this problem and will continue to do the best we can.

The hon. member for Burdekin spoke about problems in his area. I visited Giru and know the problems that exist there. It is a matter of money in these cases to do the things we would like to do. He also referred to the Townsville water position. Stage I of the Ross River Dam will give Townsville an additional 10,000,000 gallons a day, and Stage II will give a further 18,000,000 gallons a day making a total additional supply of 28,000,000 gallons a day. The nickel refinery will require 4,000,000 gallons a day, so there will be no need for Townsville to get water from the Burdekin River for some time.

The hon. member for Norman referred to filling in flood areas. At present, there is no satisfactory legislative power to control this problem, and this deficiency will be examined. The Brisbane City Council has power under the City of Brisbane (Flood Mitigation Works Approval) Act of 1952 to require clearing, stream improvement and flood mitigation work associated with Norman Creek.

The hon. member for South Coast was quite reasonable in his approach to the subject of the Currumbin Creek boat harbour. Two complete models of this harbour have been constructed at the University of Queensland, and the current model has been tested with 25 wall-shape variations. The first 23 variations, which used conventional methods, were unsuccessful. The university then resorted to an unconventional concept in an attempt to overcome siltation problems. These problems are critical in the Currumbin environment, as a very large quantity of sand drifts northwards each year. If it was permitted to enter the harbour, it would render it useless for moorings and would result in severe erosion of Palm Beach. Sand entering the harbour could be transferred to Palm Beach by mechanical means, but the cost involved would be very high.

The most recent report from the university is that the unconventional concept has been tested in two variations which initially gave results that were most encouraging and justified further trials. In more detailed testing, however, sand has again entered the harbour in large quantities, and it appears necessary to make significant alterations.

It is by no means certain that an economical solution can be found to this problem, and it would be premature to commence construction of any part of the harbour until it is proved beyond reasonable doubt that construction at this location is in the best interests of the Gold Coast and that the cost of the whole development can be met.

The hon. member for Rockhampton North referred to Port Alma. As a Central Queenslander who has grazing interests in that area and has lived there all his life, I naturally have a very keen interest in Port Alma and will do everything possible to ensure that the meat trade continues to go through that port.

The hon. member also spoke about Aborigines. He has a sound knowledge of their problems because he has mixed with them over a period of many years. On various occasions he has, with me, when I was honorary pastoral adviser to the department, visited Foleyvale and other places, so he has a knowledge of what these people need. It is always refreshing to hear the difficulties from a person with a practical knowledge of the problem. As has been stated, this is a non-political matter.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (4.15 p.m.): In addressing myself to these Estimates, it is not my intention to refer to the whole ramifications of the portfolios of Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs. Aboriginal Affairs has been well covered by members

on both sides of the Chamber, and, in addition, as a metropolitan member, my knowledge of that subject is not very great. Although I have travelled through areas in which Aborigines live, I have only a superficial knowledge, and a general idea, of their living conditions. I have the highest respect for them as the true people of Australia, and I hope that it is not long before many of the things said during this debate to be necessary for their advancement are done. It is my hope that they will become one with the people of Australia as a whole.

I propose to confine my remarks to the Department of Harbours and Marine. When one glances at the table of contents on the first page of the Department's annual report, one sees that it is not possible in the time allotted for speeches in this debate to canvass widely all aspects of the department's activities. Some sections interest me very much, because for many years before I entered Parliament I paid close attention to the Brisbane River, the port of Brisbane, and the development taking place there.

At this stage, I think it right and proper to compliment and congratulate my colleague the hon. member for Brisbane, who is one of the new members in this Chamber, on his contribution as it concerned the Brisbane River, Breakfast Creek, and other creeks in the Brisbane electorate. From my period of service in the local authority field, I know those problems only too well. Many of them are common to council and parliamentary representatives. It was therefore gratifying to me to hear a new member join me and the hon. member for Nudgee, who also has an interest in parts of the Brisbane River and Moreton Bay, in drawing attention to these problems. I feel it only right and proper to compliment the hon. member for Brisbane on the interest that he is showing, early in his parliamentary career, in the port of Brisbane and the Brisbane River generally.

For a number of years dredging of the Brisbane River has been taking place, and this has had the effect of mitigating flooding. We are told by experts that there could not now be a flood as catastrophic as the 1890 flood because of the way in which parts of the river have been straightened, and channels have been deepened, to allow faster run-off of flood water.

Dredging of the river serves a dual purpose. In addition to deepening the channel to provide a deeper draft for shipping, the spoil removed has played a major part in the development of low-lying reaches in the Hamilton area, in the electorates of Nudgee and Brisbane. Thanks to the efforts of the Brisbane City Council over the last few years, that area has now become a very strong industrial section of the city. It is not so long ago that many parts of it were infested with groundsel and not fit for use. Today, however, the land is very valuable.

The Minister's responsibilities will increase if action is not taken to prevent the dumping of rubbish in the river. No doubt industrial concerns are largely responsible for that practice, but individual boat-owners and those who are privileged to reside along the beautiful Brisbane River also make a contribution. It is, in fact, one of the most beautiful rivers in Australia. The city is about 21 miles from the mouth of the river, and the beauty of the river and the city are best seen in the early morning. At that time, one realises the contribution that the river makes not only to the commerce of the city but also to its beauty. Anti-litter legislation, to be introduced later by the Minister and one of his colleagues, will apply also to the Brisbane River, and I expect that people will have to be compelled by law to stop dumping rubbish in the river.

Earlier this week I went with the Leader of the Opposition to visit a Japanese trade ship moored in the river. As we sat on the top deck of that ship and looked down on the river, I could see a great deal of floating debris—pieces of wood, boxes, packets, and almost everything that one could think of. Some of it may have been thrown from ships in the river, but most of it, I am sure, had been dumped from the river banks. In the afternoon, it was finding its way down the river on the outgoing tide. It showed how necessary it was to have an Act to control the dumping of rubbish into the river. The provisions of such an Act will be difficult to police, and heavy penalties will have to be imposed to prevent people from breaking the law.

The report of the Department of Harbours and Marine mentions the quarrying that is taking place at Kangaroo Point. If one looks across from the Botanic Gardens, one sees the activity on the river bank opposite. Valuable blue metal is being taken away from the area and used in the construction of retaining walls, and so on, but the report does not mention what action will be taken to cover the ugly bare face of the cliff and the disfigurement caused by the extraction of that material. I hope that something is done much more quickly there than at Mt. Coot-tha. One has only to look from the veranda of this building near the billiard room to see the great scar of the quarry on Mt. Coot-tha. The department should already be taking action to establish some type of vegetation at the Kangaroo Point quarry. I have been told by leading botanists that there is a type of native creeper—I do not know the name of it; it was not given to me—that can be grown to cover a bare cliff face such as that. Of course, I am not suggesting that the removal of that material is unnecessary. It is very close to the river and can be transported quickly and cheaply to the place where it is needed.

Of course, another aspect of this very important report that attracted my attention was that dealing with small-craft facilities in the Brisbane River and Moreton Bay. That naturally brings me to my own electorate of Sandgate which I think everyone here will agree is the premier seaside resort

on the coast of Queensland. Although I waited for the reaction, it was not very great. Nevertheless, I feel sure that hon. members appreciate that this is a very important small-craft area and important to the boating fraternity. I appreciate the fact that a considerable sum of money has been spent in making a boat harbour available.

In the Cabbage Tree Creek section of the Sandgate electorate, we have gone a fair way towards providing a boat harbour. More than $50,000 has already been spent, and I look forward to the time in the not-too-distant future when the Minister might be able to make another allocation towards finishing this very important small-boat harbour, which is so badly needed not only for the people at Sandgate but to service the whole of the North Brisbane area. Wynnum and Manly play a similar part on the other side of the river. We in the Sandgate electorate hope to play our part, when we have this boat harbour, in allowing small craft to enter from the bay much more quickly and obtain safe anchorage in inclement weather. In addition, it will obviate the necessity for many craft to travel all the way down the Brisbane River.

The harbour, of course, is being used in its present state. The Sandgate Yacht Club contributed $1,500 to augment the money the department spent there. That may not seem much to hon. members, but it represents a considerable sacrifice to a small sporting club.

The main problem at the moment is the silting up of the creek at the particular spot where we want the small-boat harbour. The sand, or mud, as some people very unkindly refer to it, is being washed into the mouth of the creek, which fills up very quickly and necessitates frequent dredging. The suggestion has been made to me by people who claim to have some knowledge of building walls that we could prevent much of this by creating a sandbank on the other side of the creek—that is, on the Nudgee side of the creek, towards the Cribb Island and Nudgee Beach areas. I am told that there is no need to use costly materials, such as concrete, which of course would be the best. However, it was suggested by one gentleman, who claimed some knowledge of building artificial reclaiming walls with other material, that he had seen it done by using old motor-car tyres. The idea, of course, is that nature will build a wall of sand once something is put into the water at the correct location. The incoming and outgoing tides will naturally build the sand around the obstacle placed there. According to this expert, we would very quickly have a retaining wall that would help to keep the channel much cleaner, and at the same time would dispose of a nuisance that has become almost a colossus in America, namely, the disposal of used motor-car tyres and motor-car bodies. They may not look very attractive when they are first put there, but I am assured that nature soon covers them with sand or silt.

Mr. Davies: It sounds a good idea.

Mr. DEAN: I meant to check on this with my colleague from Bundaberg. I am not sure, but I think something of this nature was carried out in his area some time ago.

Mr. Davies: It was Maryborough.

Mr. DEAN: I put the idea forward for what it is worth and hope that perhaps the experts in the Minister's department—officers trained in marine life and also in the building of these walls—will give it some consideration.

Another matter in the report that I wish to mention is the Boating Patrol, which has been in operation for the last 12 or 18 months. These boats have done very good work, but, of course, there are not enough of them. The patrols have not time to cover the whole area and apprehend many of the transgressors on the bay. Vandalism occurs in Moreton Bay as well as on the land. Certain people shoot up beacons and damage buoys, which are designed to protect those who use the bay from the many hazards that exist. Unfortunately, the patrol boats cannot cover all areas of the bay quickly enough to apprehend the offenders, so I appeal for a greater allocation of funds to the Boating Patrol service. It is doing very good work, but additional funds are required to increase its fleet so that it can carry out its duties even more efficiently.

I now wish to refer to the activities of fisheries inspectors. Their numbers should be increased so that they, too, can enforce the laws. Many people ignore the one-mile limit that is imposed in Moreton Bay and thereby destroy many of the fishing grounds. I suggest that fisheries inspectors be required to work shifts so that they can exercise a continuous vigil on the activities of those people who pay no regard to the future and destroy the natural fish-breeding grounds.

I have spent nearly all my life on the shores of Moreton Bay, and I remember that not many years ago, there were good oyster grounds in the bay. The policing of oyster grounds has been neglected, with the result that today they have been practically wiped out. In the Hawkesbury River, oyster-farming methods have been improved, and similar methods should have been adopted in Moreton Bay. Although a certain amount of research has been carried out and many things have been blamed for the disappearance of oysters from the bay, I assure the Minister that vandalism is the main cause.

Cabbage Tree Creek flows through my electorate, and also through that of the hon. hon. member for Nudgee, who, I am sure, will support my remarks. The creek has become cluttered with rubbish dumped by thoughtless people, and as well its channels have become silted up. On many occasions more than 100 prawn-trawlers are moored in the creek, so no-one can deny that prawning is an important industry. It employs a

number of people and is an important aspect of the commercial and industrial life of both the city of Brisbane and the State.

Mr. Bennett: Are many prawns being caught at present?

Mr. DEAN: At present the season is slack. Of course, the prawning industry is affected by the natural elements. At times catches are good, but at other times, owing to inclement weather and other natural conditions, they are very bad. Cabbage Tree Creek lends itself admirably to the commercial side of the prawning and fishing industry, and to providing recreational facilities for people visiting the Sandgate area to take advantage of its modern boating facilities.

(Time expired.)

Mr. W. D. HEWITT (Chatsworth) (4.36 p.m.): I hope that Hewitt, participating in Hewitt's Estimates will not create too much confusion in this Chamber, but there are some comments I want to make about the Minister's Estimates.

Mr. Bennett interjected.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: At the outset it might be useful if I acknowledge the interjection by the hon. member for South Brisbane so that we may all know that he is here and so that I may proceed in the fond expectation that he will keep quiet for the next 20 minutes. That is a pious hope, but hope springs eternal.

I have a few words to say about the problem of being Hewitt. Since the Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs assumed ministerial office, there has been no small amount of confusion among letter-writers, concerning the degree to which they think I am him, and he is me. When he first became Minister for Marine Activities, I received a number of letters from all over Queensland asking me for jetties and ramps. Later on, when he became responsible for Aboriginal affairs, I received regular phone calls from the coloured community in Brisbane outlining their problems. When I said very patiently, "The Minister lives in Rockhampton," they proceeded to outline their problems to me anyway. Consequently I am somewhat versed in them. A few weeks ago, when we had the continuing controversy about flooded creeks in Brisbane, so many people in Brisbane thought I was their salvation that, ultimately, I again wanted to cry, "Halt". It became a little painful, Mr. Ramsden, at the time of the Comalco share controversy, when Mr. Neville Hewitt received the shares and I, in Chatsworth, received the kicks. For the first time, I found it necessary to go to some pains to establish that there are two Hewitts in Parliament. However, I did think that maybe there was a bonus in it after all when, on two occasions, I received his pay slip and, with eager anticipation, phoned the bank. But, to my remorse, I found that, nevertheless, a lesser amount had been credited to my account. To avoid continuing confusion I should like to attempt to establish that N. T. E. Hewitt is the member for Mackenzie, and a Minister of the Crown, and W. D. Hewitt is member for Chatsworth, a humble back-bencher.

Mr. Bennett: Which one is the more intelligent of the two?

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: I think we are both pretty bright fellows. We come from noble stock, as the hon. member should know.

I now wish to refer to some comments made by the Labour Party's shadow Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs about conservation. I fall on side with his criticism when he said, in effect, that these days the title "Conservation" is a misnomer because, in the popular connotation in this day and age, it has a much wider meaning than that attached to "Conservation" in the Minister's portfolio. When we talk about conservation these days, we talk about preservation of the over-all environment. I believe there is a telling case to look at the designation of this portfolio.

While I am in the same charitable mood, I fall on side with the comments of the member for Brisbane about flooding in Breakfast Creek. I support him for purely sentimental reasons. He well knows that, in his words, I am an old "Windsorite". I lived in that district for 26 years and, from personal experience, I know the situation that he outlined. Indeed, the creek that he is concerned about was the source of great happiness to me as a boy. On many occasions I swam and boated in it. When I pass through that district these days and see the mess the creek is in, the environment and the filth, I am terribly sad. I hope that his representations in this matter meet with some success because it is a major waterway in the suburbs it passes through. While it is allowed to silt up and be filled with filth, the flooding problem will be aggravated. I say to him, with respect, that he is a little wrong if he thinks that flooding is a latter-day phenomenon, because I recall, as a young boy, paddling through flooded Northey Street and, on occasions, seeing some near crises in that situation. I concede readily that the pollution of the creek by dumping has probably aggravated the flooding, but it has always been a flood area.

I lend the burden of my brief remarks today to the question of Aborigines. I venture to say that, to this point of time, comments on this aspect of the Minister's administration have been constructive and have been ventilated in a positive fashion. Indeed, it is interesting to note that the term "do-gooders" has been used as much on the other side of the Chamber as on this side. I, for one, deplore the emotionalism and extreme points of view that are often ventilated when we talk about the Aborigine problem.

Everything is not right in this field, and I would be the last to suggest it is. There is much to do and there are many reforms still to be carried out. I think that the speech of the hon. member for Wavell this morning, in which he dealt with infant mortality, highlighted this fact very significantly indeed. Nevertheless, over-emphasis, emotionalism and exaggeration do nothing at all to overcome this problem, because the simple fact of the matter is that we are making significant progress.

To me, those people who went to the United Nations a few weeks ago did us, as a nation, a great disservice. Someone went to that world forum and put forward the proposition that the Australian Government was indulging in genocide. These are pretty rugged comments to make, and the claim would be hard to prove—in fact, it would be impossible to prove—because the Aboriginal birth rate is rising very significantly.

Some 30,000 Aborigines in Queensland alone have been totally and successfully assimilated into the white community, and Government participation at both State and Federal levels is higher than ever, and is increasing year by year. To look at Commonwealth participation is to unearth an interesting story indeed. Commonwealth participation has, among other ways, been advanced through the State Grants Aboriginal Advancement Act. Its money vote year by year has risen dramatically, as the following figures indicate—

Year	Vote	Queensland Allocation
	$	$
1968–69 ..	3,650,000	1,450,000
1969–70 ..	5,410,000	2,055,000
1970–71 ..	7,000,000	2,538,000

Pleasingly, and running true to form, Queensland's share on all occasions has been the major share, and this evidence of Commonwealth participation gives the lie direct to such an outlandish suggestion that genocide is taking place in this country.

Let me confess that my contact with Aborigines is, of necessity, limited. I am city born and bred and therefore I am not competent to assess some of their problems in depth. Very readily, I lower my colours to people like the hon. member for Cook, the hon. member for Tablelands, and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, who has had close personal contact with these problems.

However, I am permitted to make my own observations on the Aborigine problem as I see it, and I believe that the first and greatest folly is to oversimplify it. The so-called "do-gooders" tend to identify the Aborigine problem as being on a level plane. Of course, this is the greatest mistake that could be made because there are peaks and hollows, and the problem falls into many categories.

First of all, there are those very happily assimilated Aborigines to whom I have already referred. They go to work, and they return home each evening. They live in the white community, and they have equal opportunities and responsibilities. Contrasted with them are those at the extreme, opposite end of the scale. They are typified by the Bentinck and Mornington Islanders. The cruellest thing that could be done to them would be to remove them from their present environment. All help must be given to them where they are. They are simple people, still living close to nature. They are poles apart from those in the first category.

Looking at another category, I refer to the young children at Doomadgee, which I was privileged to visit a few years ago with a few of my Federal colleagues. I was tremendously impressed with the calibre of those children. We went to the school. The children stood up to greet us. They were clean and tidy, neat, and well groomed. My immediate impression was that I could take any of those children with me back to the plane, bring them home with me to my home unit, send them to school with my own children, and assimilate them and bring them up happily in the city environment, with little difficulty indeed. Again, this gives an example of the contrast to be found when dealing with this problem. I take advantage of this opportunity to pay a great tribute to the people at Doomadgee, and the wonderful work they do for the children there.

In another category again are Aborigines in missions, who are susceptible to gradual influence and gradual assimilation. They are quite different again from the Bentinck Islanders, and they, in the fullness of time, will come close to assimilation. But, again, the cruellest thing that could happen to them would be a rushed programme. This must happen to them slowly and gradually, with movement from point to point.

I now come to the last category. I do not believe that my categories are exhaustive by any means, but they are the ones that I can identify. In the last category are those Aborigines in the city who are faced with social problems; those who have fallen upon hard times; those who have mixed with bad company and are finding the going rather rough. But they are no different from many white people in the city who have also fallen upon hard times. They do not need assistance as Aborigines; they need social assistance as city dwellers.

I submit to the Committee that, as the problem has no uniformity, so the solutions have no uniformity. Flexibility in Aboriginal administration must surely be the order of the day. It is useful to look at what is the defined policy on Aborigines. It is spelt out in the annual report. It is attributed

to both State and Federal Ministers which, in other words, obviously means that it is an Australia-wide policy. It reads—

> "The policy of assimilation seeks that all persons of Aboriginal descent will choose to attain a similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community—enjoying the same rights and privileges, the same hopes and loyalties as other Australians. Any special measures taken are regarded as temporary measures, not based on race, but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their social, economic and political advancement."

To me, the salient words in that policy statement are, "Any special measures taken are regarded as temporary measures." They are to be measures that will assist in gradual development, and gradual assimilation. If there must be flexibility in Acts, there must be an upgrading of administrative acts from time to time. We presently see great pressures being applied to the Government to either abandon the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act in its entirety, or substantially amend it. That does not mean that the Government deserves condemnation for that Act. Indeed, it should be noted—and reference to "Hansard" proves it—that an atmosphere of goodwill pervaded the Chamber when the late Jack Pizzey brought down the legislation in 1965. A number of men on both sides were almost specialists, and the Leader of the Opposition at the time, Mr. Duggan, was generous in his praise. He commended the Minister for giving hon. members an opportunity to visit Aboriginal reserves and missions. I think that all members of the Legislative Assembly at that time saw the Act as a trail-blazer, one that was going to do things, and it was greeted with goodwill from both sides.

If that situation prevailed in 1965, it is nonsense to say that, in the course of five years, the Act has become totally bad. It could not have been so good then and so bad now.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: It was amended in 1967.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: It was amended in 1967, as the Minister has said.

Mr. Bennett: It needs amending again, too.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: We have not said it does not.

Mr. Bennett: Why don't you do it?

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: If the hon. member for South Brisbane listened to the debates occasionally, he would know that the Minister has indicated several times in this debate that he is open to constructive comment upon the Act and is not averse to the idea of amending it. Surely that is a very good start. He has indicated that he is listening closely to the speeches made in the debate on his departmental Estimates and that constructive comments will be listened to. In his own way, he is receiving specialist advice, and I am sure that the Act is receiving in-depth study by his departmental officers.

It was my great privilege in January of this year to go to Palm Island with the Minister and see at first hand some of the problems that prevail there. I saw also the degree to which many of the indigenous people enjoy the atmosphere and the degree to which they are satisfied to live in the community that is provided. But the administration of that island, as with the administration of all the missions, would come under close scrutiny on the occasion of an amendment of the Act. I associate myself with the Minister when he says that he is not averse to amending the Act.

Mr. Bennett: Were you up on Palm Island with Pastor Brady?

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: He has been up there a few times, but I think he has about the same level of intelligence as the hon. member. He is rather a strange fellow at times.

Mr. Bennett: He must be brilliant.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: That is the hon. member's opinion, not mine.

Let me conclude on this note: the Liberal Party takes great pride in the fact that it is offering as a candidate at next Saturday's Senate election a man who is an Aborigine, who will be able to go into Federal politics and advance the cause of his own people by being their spokesman and their watchdog. I am quite sure that on 1 July, 1971, when Senator Bonner takes his seat in the Senate for the first time, the Aborigines will have an even better spokesman than they have now. They will be pleased also that the Liberal Party was the party that offered an Aborigine an opportunity to enter that august Chamber.

I am very happy to have taken part in the debate on these Estimates. I assure the Minister that I commend him for what he is doing and that I will associate myself with any amendments to the Act that he brings forward.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (4.54 p.m.): This is the first occasion on which the Minister has introduced departmental Estimates since taking over his portfolio, so it is quite an important occasion for him. These Estimates are of great interest to hon. members on this side of the Chamber because they cover three very important departments—the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, the Department of Harbours and Marine, and the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

In looking through the reports of the three departments, I was interested to note the size of each of them, and I intend to refer to that point at various stages of my speech. The report of the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply contains 44 pages, that of the Department of Harbours and Marine 22 pages, and that of the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs 16 pages. The first two do not deal with people; the last one does. I do not know whether this has any significance. I hope not, and I sincerely trust that more attention will be given to the latter so that it may be kept more in line with previous reports. I have here the 1965 report on Aborigines, which was much larger. It contained 27 pages. These are some of the things that I noticed in browsing through the reports.

Turning now to irrigation, I hope there is speedy completion of all existing schemes. By "speedy completion", I mean the completion of these schemes right to the last stage. In the building of homes one frequently sees a number commenced but not completed. There is often a waiting period before they are completed. This seems to be also a feature associated with water conservation schemes.

One hears in this Chamber so many speeches outlining the ravages of drought that it is very obvious that the sooner these irrigation schemes are completed, the sooner we can get on with the development of this State. I point out, too, that there is great danger in curtailing or altering them. This has occurred in my area, where the scheme initiated by the previous Australian Labour Party Government has been curtailed and people in districts where the scheme was supposed to operate are being deprived of water. This has been done by the simple process of turning of a valve to overcome the necessity for building a separate dam to supplement the water now needed for the Barron Falls hydro-electric station.

We must learn by our mistakes. This is a mistake, so let us learn from it and not prune the costs of certain undertakings by asking one project to carry the burden of another. I think the Government's policy should always be to have one major scheme in the course of construction. I know that these things need finance and that it takes several months, and sometimes several years, to obtain the necessary finance from the Federal Government, but planning should go ahead so that the spade work is done and the scheme is not simply kept dangling in front of us like a bunch of carrots in front of a donkey. When this happens, the break between major schemes is usually so long that the work-force is dispersed over the State, equipment is sold—usually very cheaply—and much time and money are wasted because there is no continuity in schemes such as I envisage.

Smaller schemes could be handled by the State and the local authorities. These could take up the leeway and continue in employment people whose jobs in the major schemes have finished. We would then always have on hand a specialised work-force and the necessary equipment for the speedy completion of major irrigation schemes.

Speaking of the need for water, I draw the Committee's attention to two towns that have been mentioned recently and another one that is in my own electorate. The two that have been mentioned in the Press are Giru and Mt. Morgan, and the one in my area is Karumba. These three places have attracted Government attention, but the need for water, whether it be in a mining settlement, an agricultural area, a fishing village or a railway community, is the same. people in all such communities are entitled to an adequate water supply. The days of catching water in tanks and, when they have been emptied, of carting water by truck from nearby water-holes, should have gone long ago.

I draw the Minister's attention to the necessity of taking action before an emergency arises. In this Chamber I have raised the need to provide places such as Forsayth and Einasleigh with adequate water supplies. Those two townships are of great importance to the cattle industry, as they are the outlet for large cattle-raising areas, but, whereas Forsayth has a water supply, Einasleigh has not. I have been told that the provision of a water supply is the responsibility of the local authority, but I claim that the Government should have the responsibility of providing water for the inhabitants of Einasleigh. Of course, the same old excuse of cost is raised. The local authority says, "We are not receiving sufficient rates from that township, so it would be far too expensive for us to provide it with water." Local authorities should be entitled to give priorities to certain areas, and the Minister should accept submissions from other bodies on special needs that may arise. Many agricultural bodies require water, and they should be entitled to make submissions to the Minister to have his department draw up a list of priorities for the supply of water. Such a system would not only provide adequate water supplies but would also ensure the continued employment of the work-force.

On many occasions I have referred to desalination. This method of obtaining fresh water has been overlooked. Although great play is made on the establishment of large industrial complexes in coastal towns, very little is said about the means by which those industries will obtain adequate water supplies. The Greenvale nickel project is a classic example of this. The claim has been made that Townsville's water supply will be adequate for the next six years. However, it is futile to think of such a short period. Instead, we should look 100 years into the future and begin making provision for ample water for the inhabitants of the city for generations to come.

Before I leave the irrigation aspect of the Minister's portfolio, I wish to pay a tribute to Mr. Haigh and his officers, particularly those in my electorate, whom I know so well. They are very efficient officers and are always courteous.

I turn now to the Department of Harbours and Marine. I have made a comparison between 1969 and 1970. Of particular interest is the number of prosecutions laid by this department each year. In 1969 a total of 589 people were prosecuted, whereas in 1970 the figure dropped to 397. I hope that is the result of the establishment of the Boating Patrol service. In 1968, when the service was formed, 405 prosecutions were laid. I suggest to the Minister that although he has mentioned adult lectures, films should be made of procedures and distributed throughout the State, in the adult education sphere. In that way the ideas will gradually trickle through to the public.

People do not have to live on the coast these days to be interested in boating and fishing. Residents of Cairns travel 500 miles to Karumba and think nothing of taking with them their boats and all the equipment they require. People living 500 miles inland also require all the facilities and help that the department can provide.

I noted Mr. Peel's statement that he is disturbed about the large turnover in personnel. I advise the Minister to examine closely the standard of accommodation in some of the isolated places. Some employees have told me that they are not altogether happy with their living conditions, although they asked me not to do anything about it because it might seem that they were trying to "push their own barrows". It should not be necessary for a member of Parliament to say, "So-and-so wants a new stove or some work done on his house". All requests made by officers in remote areas should receive prompt attention.

The Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs has suffered as a result of the sensationalism that has been headlined in the various news media throughout the State. Sensationalism should not be resorted to in attracting public attention to this department, because it is one that deals with human beings. If that thought is to the forefront in our minds, our course will be different from the one we have followed for some time. When attention is focused on Aborigines, confusion arises in the minds of people outside who say, "They are a problem, full stop. They will always be a problem, full stop. They cannot hold their liquor, full stop." We hear those statements everywhere. The Aboriginal people suffer because of sensationalism concerning them in the news media. It seems that we have to put up with it. We certainly cannot control it.

I have already referred to the poor standard of the report of the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. I should now like to show the Committee the difference between that report and the one from Western Australia, which creates a pride in the Aboriginal population. If our department were to produce a similar report, it would show that we are getting out of the rut.

Year after year we get the same old drab report which differs only in that it gets smaller. As we are dealing with people, not with machinery and projects, let us put things in their proper perspective instead of trying to blame one another for what was done 40 years ago and what is not being done today. The Western Australian report contains a photograph of Phillip Ugle, who is a parliamentary attendant. Our report contains a full page picture of two ladies at Government House. Each year, at the opening of Parliament, we see two Aborigines in attendance. That is not advancement. We want advancement in the way of permanent employment and by their taking a place in society where we treat them as equals. The correct approach to the advancement of these people is to get among them and find out what they want and what they think of our efforts, not to highlight one or two days in the year.

Aboriginal councils are only partly elected by these people. They should be elected completely by them. Again, these people are often referred to as Aboriginal Queenslanders. This practice should be stopped. They should be referred to as Aborigines, without the word "Queenslanders" tacked on. This does not do them or their cause any good. They should be treated as all other people are. A community of 600 should be allowed to elect its own council instead of electing two members and the Government electing two members. We do not have two elected members and two Government members on our local councils; we elect all council members and the chairman or mayor, as the case may be. If anybody who is in doubt about what to do forgets about colour and thinks what he would do in normal circumstances, he will not go far wrong. These people think and react just as we do, so let us give them a lead.

On Monday I was at the Mitchell River reserve, where I met two new councillors. The others have not been there for three years. These people are elected, and pass out, and others are then elected. This is not the correct procedure. If they are asked what they want, they will provide the answer. The council should be elected by these people, and it should be given far more power. I should like to see something like a local authority in an area where the numbers are sufficient and the area is large enough. I know many areas where this would work.

Special permission is required before anyone outside can go into these areas. For instance, the Carpentaria Shire Council will not provide roads inside the reserve. Why not have a local council there with its own equipment and workers to do this work? The reserve is 1,000 square miles in area—it is

much bigger than the Greater Brisbane area —yet it has to depend on Normanton, which is 200 miles away, and the council will provide roads and facilities only to the boundary.

The schools have been brought up to departmental standard, and I make a plea for the provision of accommodation for married teachers.

(Time expired.)

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) (5.13 p.m.): At the outset, I commend the Minister and his officers on the very good job they are doing throughout Queensland. I am very impressed with the way the Minister is handling his departments and with the courteous and quick action he gives to my communications and representations from time to time.

I was interested to hear the remarks of the Minister and of the hon. member for Burke relative to the Camooweal affair and the death of Aboriginal children there. I was pleased to hear that the matter has been handled satisfactorily. The Minister, while he has been a member of this Parliament, and probably before that, has been very interested in the welfare of the dark people of this State, and I am pleased that he is administering the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

I can remember my father and grandfather passing on to me some incidents concerning Aborigines in the early days. I was the youngest of a family of nine and was, for the most part, brought up by a black lady called Lucy. She was a thorough lady, and a very highly-respected citizen in the Maroochy area in which I live. I therefore have a great admiration for dark people, and I am pleased to note that greater emphasis is now being placed on their welfare than was the case years ago.

I have several other matters to raise. The first concerns the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act, introduced by the late Alf Muller, and now under the control of the Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs. I was quite pleased when that legislation was introduced, and I am happy to say that it has since been well received by producers. Many farmers, who in the past did not have available to them the expert advice that they now receive from engineers of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, now have ample supplies of water. The recent drought brought home to me very clearly the amount of help that primary producers have received under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act in the provision of dams. I therefore hope that the Act will continue to operate for the development of Queensland, as it allows farmers to prepare for droughts rather than suffer their consequences.

I should also like to remind the Committee that early in the Government's term of office a very large dam was established at Borumba on Yabba Creek, which flows into the Mary River. I am pleased to say that that dam has proved a very valuable asset to the farming community in the Mary Valley. It has also provided a supplementary water supply to the Gympie City Council. When first mooted, the dam appeared to be quite a costly undertaking. I am pleased to say that, with the assistance of Mr. Haigh and his departmental officers, the dam has become a reality. The hon. member for Somerset was the Minister at that time, and on the day of the official opening of the scheme it rained so heavily that the function had to be held in the public hall at Imbil. That was the beginning of this project, which, I am pleased to say, was one of the first monuments erected to the Government in the electorate of Cooroora.

I also want to say a word or two about control of the biting midge. This work is part and parcel of the activities of the Department of Harbours and Marine.

Mr. Thackeray: Marty Hanson knows a lot about them.

Mr. LOW: That is so. I have in my possession a letter from the Noosa Midge Control Organisation stating that Mr. Martin Hanson has by letter indicated his support for any move to eliminate midges along the Queensland coast. My wife and I are members of this organisation, and I want to see every encouragement given to it to continue its work for the eradication of midges along the Queensland coast. I am pleased to say that full co-operation has been received from Dr. Reye, of the Queensland University, who is making a complete study of biting midges. Local authorities from Coolangatta to Cooktown have been circularised, and the response has been very gratifying.

I ask the Minister to give this matter his earnest consideration and try to make finance available to the organisation so that it can improve its methods of getting rid of the biting midge, which is a health menace and a great deterrent to the full development of the coastal tourist industry. This insect does not belong to any union. It settles on a person and immediately begins work. It is a great nuisance. I am very pleased to say that a number of hon. members who were sent circulars have responded spontaneously and indicated that they will join in the fight to get rid of the biting midge.

About six or seven years ago, when Sir Thomas Hiley was administering the Department of Harbours and Marine, a meeting was held at Tewantin to try to have some improvements effected to the Noosa bar. It was decided at that meeting to make a survey, but up to the present no permanent action has been taken. I appeal to the Minister and the Director of the Department of Harbours and Marine and his officers to give urgent consideration to this matter. Noosa is a very important centre. It has not only a river but also a number of lakes adjacent to it, and it is one of the best fishing resorts in the State. As a matter of fact, the only assistance that the Noosa-Tewantin area has received from the Department of Harbours

and Marine is a new wharf at the Fish Board office, through which fish, prawns and crabs are supplied to the Brisbane metropolitan market. It is very important that improvements should be carried out to the bar of the Noosa River so that fishermen can operate in open waters as well as on the river and the lakes.

Ample stone is available at Maroochydore, a short distance down the coast, and it could be used to build excellent training walls, which would bring about a great improvement. Sir Thomas Hiley, a former Minister in charge of the Department of Harbours and Marine, thought Tewantin was the best place to which to retire. He established a seaside home there, and I am pleased to say that he is enjoying his retirement. The local people have asked him about this project, which has my full support. I hope that the Minister will be able to provide funds in the next financial year to enable these improvements to be effected.

Today I received a copy of a further letter from the Tewantin-Noosa Chamber of Commerce. It says—

> "Further to a letter from the Treasurer of Queensland to the Member for Cooroora—Mr. D. A. Low, M.L.A.—dated the 4th July 1968, members of this Chamber wish to know of any results of a survey undertaken by your department about that time, on the mouth of the Noosa River, with a view to improvements.
>
> "The matter had been taken up at that time by the Noosa River Bar Development Association."

It is addressed to the Secretary of the Co-ordinator-General's Department, Administration Building, Brisbane, but I think it should have been directed to the Director of the Department of Harbours and Marine, who deals with problems of this type.

As a result of these representations, I hope that the Minister will look back through the records over the years. I was one of the instigators of the establishment of a port at Mooloolaba, which is in the Maroochy Shire although it is in the Landsborough electorate. When I was chairman of the shire council, I was in touch with Mr. Peel almost every week asking about the implementation of this scheme. On behalf of the local authority I initiated a very satisfactory deal with him to build retaining walls on the north and south sides of the mouth of the Mooloolah River. Later the department dredged the river and it has now become a very flourishing resort. The people are very proud of their harbour. It has been extremely well used. I make an appeal for the improvement of the Noosa River bar, because it was the next on the list. We hope that the project will be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. So long as the work is done, we do not care where the money comes from, whether it be financed by the State or from Commonwealth Aid Funds.

I should now like to draw the Minister's attention to another matter which also affects the Department of Primary Industries. During the winter months each year large shoals of mullet travel from south to north. They get about as far as Maryborough, but after they leave Brisbane they are polluted with a kerosene taint. This is proving a great handicap to fishermen north of Brisbane.

Mr. Davis: Do you know where it comes from?

Mr. LOW: **No,** I do not. I think it comes from the Brisbane River.

Mr. Davis: It comes from Mayne railway yards.

Mr. LOW: It is very disastrous to the livelihood of fishermen at Noosa and Tewantin. Large shoals of these fish, which bring very reasonable prices, are caught on the beaches between Caloundra and Double Island Point. A haul can amount to several thousand cases of fish.

Mr. Sherrington: Does this taint occur only above the mouth of the Brisbane River?

Mr. LOW: Yes, only above the mouth of the Brisbane River. I have been informed on various occasions that this matter is being thoroughly investigated, but no satisfactory answer has been arrived at. It would appear that detergents or pollutants coming out of the Brisbane River have this tainting effect on the fish. Fishermen have now reached the stage, when they take a big haul, of cooking fish selected at random and, if they are tainted, a bulldozer is brought in and the haul is buried.

If these fish are sent to the markets without first being tested, the fishermen receive a bill for the cost of transport, fees for storage at the market, and other associated charges. In the circumstances, the position is not good enough. Therefore, I appeal to the Minister and to the Cabinet of Queensland to look into this matter, which, as I say, is affecting the livelihood of many people. It is certainly not a very creditable performance to simply say, "Well, it is being looked into". Although it is mainly a matter for the Department of Primary Industries because it administers the Fish Board Act, the Department of Harbours and Marine is responsible to some extent for the river and the ocean from which the fish are taken. I appeal to the Minister to treat this matter very seriously indeed.

I should now like to pay a tribute to one of my constituents, who is engaged part-time in the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply. I refer to Mr. Hamar Midgley, of National Park Road, Nambour. He is a research and advisory officer for the department in the stocking of dams and freshwater streams in Queensland with freshwater fish.

Mr. Sherrington: He has been outstanding in his work.

Mr. LOW: He has been outstanding in his work. I have been watching it with great interest. As a matter of fact, I was instrumental in giving him his start in this work by engaging him on behalf of the local authority of Maroochy to stock the Poona and Wappa Dams. He has done a good job. He has made contact with many local authorities and also with Mount Isa Mines Ltd. He deserves every encouragement. The services of this man were very much appreciated by the Minister's predecessors, as I am sure they are by the present Minister. His efforts have prevented freshwater streams and dams from becoming completely denuded of freshwater fish. The Government should pursue a policy of replenishment of freshwater streams and dams, to improve angling and attract tourists.

Mr. Sherrington: One of the problems is the lack of fish hatcheries in this State.

Mr. LOW: That is so. It is important that additional funds be made available for the development of fish hatcheries.

Approximately 18 months ago this Government applied to the Commonwealth Government for permission to import Nile perch from Africa for the stocking of dams. Information that I have obtained from Federal sources reveals that the committee that was appointed by the Australian Fishing Industry Council to consider the application has been dithering and dallying instead of holding a meeting and bringing the matter to its conclusion. A period of 18 months is a long time for a State Government to wait on the Commonwealth for a reply to its request; therefore, I urge the Minister to take a firm stand and demand a reply. The request was made following a decision by Cabinet. I have asked the Premier to look at the matter of stocking dams and freshwater streams with Nile perch so that the numbers of freshwater fish can be increased.

Mr. N. T E. Hewitt: That is a matter for the Department of Primary Industries.

Mr. LOW: That may be so, but one of the Minister's departments constructed the dams.

Mr. Sherrington: Do you think the delay in Canberra might be due to the fact that some Federal Ministers are more interested in "birds" than in fish?

Mr. LOW: They could be. I propose to make a "bird" of somebody if something is not done soon. The Government must look seriously at the restocking of dams and streams. I know that the Department of Primary Industries is responsible for that, but the officer to whom I have referred is employed by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission.

(Time expired.)

Mr. R. JONES (Cairns) (5.33 p.m.): In introducing these Estimates the Minister said he accepted the contention that the introduction of costly container ships to the United States trade must result in the rationalisation of services provided by the companies involved in the interests of efficiency. The Minister's statement debunks his earlier claim that the annual throughput of cargoes in all Queensland ports highlights his Government's progressive decentralisation policy. Similarly, the figures of both import and export cargoes quoted by the Minister could be drastically affected if the container facilities provided in this State's northern ports are not utilised to the fullest advantage.

If feeder services are to be commenced and, as a result of certain shipping companies' decisions and a change in policy, later withdrawn, a sorry state of affairs will be created and a good deal of public money will have been wasted. If the container facilities that now exist later become superfluous, the Government must stand condemned for not having realised that those facilities are interwoven with the over-all planning. That is understandable, considering the Government's philosophy that all is right provided it is done by, or in the interests of, private enterprise.

Previously the Federal Government and its supporters shunned the idea of a national shipping line, which they now embrace. Gradually, for the benefit of Australians, they are proceeding with a policy that over the years has been expounded by the A.L.P., that is, to institute a national shipping line to compete with overseas shipping companies in the Australian overseas trade. Gradually these ideas are being implemented in practice. They have now permeated through to them and, indeed, are being canvassed by members of Liberal–Country Party coalition Governments. However, as usual, they are 20 to 30 years behind the rest of the world, to the detriment of Australia and its way of life and progress.

The Government's policy is not an example of ultimate efficiency. I believe we bow too easily to the whims of overseas companies. That is not a great advertisement for our national perseverance and negotiating ability, which we have upheld for a long period, nor is it a good exercise for Australians to bow consistently to overseas shipping companies and combines. Efficiency in running our State is paramount, but that requires proficiency in statesmanship and diplomacy, which is apparently lacking. That is a moot point in our dealings with overseas shipping companies and the rationalisation of ports in Queensland. After all, we are the investors and we have the goods, which should maintain our bargaining supremacy.

The outlying ports and districts of Queensland have been let down badly by what the Minister describes as bowing to the efficiency, or for the efficiency, of overseas companies. Inter-related to that is a letter I received in the mail today pointing out that the

"Alagna", which provides the sole shipping service to Cairns from Brisbane, will cease running after January next. I believe that a public announcement to that effect will be made next Tuesday, but at this stage it is doubtful that, in future, John Burke will have a ship calling at Cairns. Apparently the "Alagna" has been sold and will not be replaced.

I ask the Minister in charge of marine activities if he can advise us what will happen if this state of affairs eventuates. It will be the first time in history that a boat service has not linked Cairns and Brisbane. A sea service is essential, particularly for the type of cargo carried. The merchants of Cairns believe it is cheaper for them to receive cargo by ship than by other forms of transport. I should like the Minister, when replying, to outline anything that can be done to replace the "Alagna".

I noted in the Minister's introductory remarks that he is negotiating with shipping companies for the reconstruction of the wharves at Smith's Creek. These are important wharves for ships plying to ports on the Cape York Peninsula and in the Gulf of Carpentaria. I make a strong plea for early agreement on the construction of these wharves.

Another matter of paramount importance mentioned in the annual report of the Department of Harbours and Marine—it was also mentioned by the Minister in introducing his Estimates—is a boat harbour in the Cairns area. The present plan seems to be that this will be done in conjunction with off-shore tourist and real estate development, and a report on the scheme is being processed by the departments concerned. I think it is time we got down to digging the ditch.

I have worn out four Ministers with my pleas for this boat harbour. It was used as a political gimmick by the then Treasurer, Sir Thomas Hiley, during the Cairns by-election. It took four years during the term of the present Treasurer to decide where it would be located. Then the Minister for Local Government and Electricity, who controlled this department at the time, came to Cairns and said we would get a boat harbour. Now the present Minister promises that the boat harbour will become a reality and says that studies are in hand, that certain things will be incorporated, and that there will be some reclamation work. I accuse, not the Minister, but the Government of dithering in this regard. The result has been a good deal of adverse publicity.

During the five years that we have been waiting, Cairns has become well known as a big-game-fishing centre, and, in this regard, an article in "Walkabout" of February, 1970, headed, "For the Marlin Men of Cairns Four Yards of Fish is Not Enough", reads—

> "There is one substantial blot on the marlin picture at Cairns, and it is drawing increasing rumbles of protest from both visitors and boatmen. The boat facilities of Cairns Harbour are shabby or non-existent, in incredible contrast to the skilled crews, top-grade accommodation, well-run Game Club and hospitable locals. The fishing may not be enough to hold top boats in Cairns, because skilled game crew command a premium overseas, and good facilities are a substantial lure."

This industry is an export-income earner and the boat harbour should be given high priority.

The Minister mentioned reclamation in connection with this project. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha, doing a little bit of kite-flying, claims that he is the person who discovered regional planning. Of course, there are advocates of reclamation in Cairns and elsewhere throughout the State who claim that it was their idea in the first place. When I was browsing through some pamphlets the other day, as a member of the Cairns Historical Society, I came across a brochure issued by the Cairns Harbour Board in 1926, on the 50th anniversary of the settlement of Cairns. I saw that it contained a diagram of a proposed reclamation scheme from about the present position of No. 1 wharf right across to Ellie Point. The schemes presently and formerly proposed are therefore nothing new.

However, I think there are some aspects of reclamation in Cairns that have not been canvassed. I refer to reclamation, not from where it is presently proceeding but from the opposite end—the Ellie Point, or aerodrome, end. It is necessary to exercise a little foresight, and to realise that Cairns is presently the third airport in Queensland in terms of passenger traffic. I think there is therefore a need to increase its size. Such an extension would, of course, require a vast reclamation scheme. I feel that the Department of Harbours and Marine should enter into negotiations with the Department of Civil Aviation for the implementation of a reclamation scheme from that end. If a strip of land could be obtained on the seaward side facing south-east of Ellie Point to the end of the Cairns Esplanade, and negotiations could be successfully conducted with the Department of Civil Aviation, I am sure that, after reclamation from the point to the Esplanade, allotments could be put up for sale. The considerable return that they would produce to the Department of Lands, or whichever department carried out the reclamation, could be used for other reclamation in the area towards the city.

This is not a new suggestion. A new tarmac and a larger movement area are needed at Cairns, and these thoughts could well be given consideration as a means of providing them. The day is fast approaching when the runway will have to be shifted in the interests of noise abatement, and the take-off area removed from the city proper.

This matter was brought forcibly to my attention when, in travelling down the coast as a member of the Parliamentary Labour Party's Labour and Tourism and Industrial Development Committees, as they then were, I noticed reclamation schemes in Townsville, Mackay and the Gold Coast. In those places, pumping from suction dredges was being carried out, and I feel that that method could easily be adopted in Cairns. I see that this is now being advocated even by the Country Party.

Over a period of some time we have all often heard the saying, "Look out! The Coms are coming!" or "The Reds are coming!"

Mr. Miller: We are going there.

Mr. R. JONES: Are we? The latest cry seems to be, "Look out! The Victorian A.L.P. Executive is coming!"

However, the Country Party in Cairns is now adopting a new line. There was a heading in "The Cairns Post" of Friday, 26 July, "Mayor of Gold Coast Coming". I do not know whether the Country Party is waiting for his recommendations as an expert. However, it is said he is coming to Cairns to make an investigation. The article says that Alderman Small is a veteran of many reclamation projects on the Gold Coast and is regarded as an expert in that field. That is why he was invited to Cairns. Later, in smaller print, the article mentions that the member for South Coast, Russ Hinze, has also been invited to make recommendations on possible methods of reclamation.

I do not know why it is necessary to invite the mayor of the Gold Coast to Cairns to give advice. There are men in the Department of Harbours and Marine who are experts on reclamation. A number of people in the Cairns area claim that they are experts in that field, too, and I am sure that the department has been inundated with advice from them. The question of reclamation is of paramount importance to the Cairns area from the point of view of both the tourist industry and the development of the port.

I have read a very good article that appeared at pages 138 and 147 of "The Australian Geographer". It was headed "The Deltaic Shoreline Near Cairns, Queensland", and was written by E. C. F. Bird, who is reader in geography at the University of Melbourne. It referred to only part of a survey, and I look forward with interest to reading the second part of it. I have not yet been able to get my hands on it. Perhaps it has not been printed; perhaps Dr. Bird has not completed his thesis. I certainly commend it to other hon. members, because it throws new light on the hydrographic situation at Cairns.

Before concluding, I draw the attention of the Committee to the desire of the Cairns Motor Boat Club to form a rescue squad at Cairns in conjunction with the Boating Patrol. The club has already formed its own rescue squad, the purpose of which is to locate and assist small craft that are overdue. To do that, of course, they must ascertain from boat-owners their expected time of return. It is thought that the most efficient method would be to have an illuminated board on which the position of boats in the bay could be shown. These safety boards could be erected close to boat ramps, or perhaps a more sophisticated method could be devised. As hon. members know, squalls blow up very quickly in Trinity Bay, particularly at this time of the year, and the report of the Department of Harbours and Marine shows that the registration of small craft in the Cairns area has increased to 1,368. That is a large number of boats, and I believe that the club's suggestion should be given very serious consideration. I understand that the club has received one knock-back, and it has now asked me to make emphatic representations relative to this facility for boat owners.

(Time expired.)

Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT (Mackenzie—Minister for Conservation, Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (5.54 p.m.): I wish at this stage to reply to the comments of one or two hon. members. I replied earlier to the points raised by the hon. member for Norman on certain matters, but I did not deal with his remarks on Aboriginal and island affairs.

For the information of the hon. member, I point out that reserves are established for the benefit of the Aboriginal people, and reasonable access to them is available. However, hon. members will appreciate that any access has allied servicing difficulties, such as accommodation, and that must be taken into consideration. The views of the residents must also be considered, and they have shown distress at being continuously under inspection and public view. Surely they have some right to privacy.

It is pleasing to hear that some university academics and students are interested in entering the service of the department. Positions are advertised regularly, and those who are interested are invited to apply for these vacancies.

In reply to the hon. member's suggestion that more scholarships should be made available for Aboriginal children, I say to him that any Aboriginal child can expect the fullest support by way of scholarship if he shows by his academic attainments that he has the ability to progress through to university level.

Turning from the hon. member for Norman, I should like to say something in reply to the hon. member for Chatsworth. For his sake, I regret that he and I have the same name. From time to time this gives him a little bit of extra work.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt interjected.

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: It is ideal, because at times it relieves me. I believe he gives people some very good advice and help, saving them a trunk line call to Rockhampton by handling the matter here as a local call.

When the hon. member said that there is no simple solution to the Aboriginal problem, he was certainly guilty of an understatement. We have a very long way to go. However, I think in this debate most hon. members have indicated that we are ready and facing up to it. The hon. member himself took the opportunity of going to Palm Island with me when we had problems there. He had a good look round and found out for himself just what takes place. I advocate that all hon. members of this Committee get to know the problems of our Aboriginal people at first hand, because this is the only way they will be able to speak on the matter in a practical way. There is no way in the world that money or academics will solve this problem without also having some practical knowledge as well.

Mr. Bromley: We made a trip with Jack Pizzey on one occasion.

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: As I said earlier when speaking of our trip this year to the Torres Strait islands, every hon. member learnt a lot. As Minister, I learnt a considerable amount, although I had been to Thursday Island and Bamaga on numerous occasions. Going far afield and having a look at the transport problems and at what makes these other islands tick really gives one an insight into what is required.

The hon. member for Chatsworth also referred to flooding in Brisbane creeks. These problems arise in towns because people build in low-lying areas which are part of the natural drainage of the whole surrounding area. In addition, urbanisation naturally creates a tendency towards flooding in times of heavy rain. We have had that situation in Brisbane recently, and it was highlighted during the heavy downpour of a few weeks ago.

The hon. member for Sandgate spoke about the very real problem of debris on the Brisbane River, which not only pollutes the stream but also presents a navigation hazard of no mean proportions. Small craft are regularly being damaged by pieces of timber, bottles and other rubbish. Strangely enough, members of the boating fraternity themselves are as much to blame as anyone else for this state of affairs. At present, my department has one vessel and a barge working full-time clearing debris from the Brisbane River, and I have issued instructions to the Boating Patrol to step up its supervision of boating people who throw empty bottles, cans and other rubbish into the water. It is certainly a problem that we are aware of, and we will keep on endeavouring to remedy it.

In reply to the hon. member for Tablelands, I do not intend to touch on his comments about Aborigines. However, I do want to say something about his comments on the Irrigation Commission. The growth of State allocation for irrigation is evidence of the Government's desire to complete schemes speedily. Introduction of Commonwealth finance totalling $6,250,000 in 1970–71 is further expediting progress, and arrangements to provide more water for irrigation from Tinaroo Falls Dam are approaching finality. The Government does not have only one major project under construction at present, but four—Emerald, St. George, Maroon and Bundaberg.

The hon. member also spoke about the use of desalination to augment water supplies. The cost of desalination is very high. A plant was established on Heron Island at a cost of over $5 per 1,000 gallons, including amortisation of capital; so that hon. members will realise that desalination plants cannot be set up cheaply.

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

Mr. MILLER (Ithaca) (7.15 p.m.): The more one studies the Annual Report of the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs and listens to hon. members bring forward the problems associated with the administration of his department, the more one admires the director and his staff for the valuable work they have done over the years. Contrary to the claims made by a number of people, the director has not endeavoured to create settlements that could be misconstrued as prisons.

I wish to read portion of the report under the heading "Policy", because I am concerned that although this policy has been adopted by both the State and Federal Governments it has been strongly opposed by the Aboriginal and Islanders Tribal Council of Brisbane. I fail to see why the council is opposed to this policy.

The section of the report to which I refer reads—

> "The policy of assimilation seeks that all persons of Aboriginal descent will choose to attain a similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community—enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities and influenced by the same hopes and loyalties as other Australians. Any special measures taken are regarded as temporary measures, not based on race, but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their social, economic and political advancement."

In the November monthly report of the Aboriginal and Islanders Tribal Council, Denis Walker, who is the son of Mrs. Kath Walker, said this about assimilation—

> "Among those who work for Aborigines' independency of Governments assimilation is something of a dirty word. It implies that the Aborigine is inferior to the white man and that is worthless until he takes up the white man's ways. It gives white Australians a comfortable feeling of their own superiority. And it assumes that two people of two different cultures can never live amicably together unless one is to be absorbed in the other. The precise meaning of assimilation was spelt out most clearly at the conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers concerned with Aborigines at Darwin in 1964.
>
> "The policy of assimilation means that all Aborigines and part-Aborigines will attain the same manner of living as other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community, enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians."

Then he said—and this is the sting—

> "Assimilation, in other words, is the old death-wish policy in disguise, with the death transferred to the Aborigines. The aim, as it was in the ruthless days of exploitation, is that eventually Aborigines as a race will disappear. They will become white in everything, except the colour of their skins."

Denis Walker's ideas on assimilation are shared by his mother. She has written a poem titled "Assimilation? No".

Mr. Hinze: Would you say he is a misguided soul?

Mr. MILLER: There are some misguided souls in the council, and I think he would be one of them.

Mr. Bousen: Do you believe in what his mother says?

Mr. MILLER: I believe that she, too, is misguided, very much so.

The fact that half of the 50,000 Aborigines now live as normal members of society speaks well of the director and his staff. Eventually the whole of the Aboriginal tribes will be assimilated into our community. Aborigines work, play and become involved in community affairs, as do all other Australians, and that fact discounts the claims of those people who criticise the department's work. I support the establishment of centres for those who cannot, and will not, accept the responsibilities that accompany the privilege of living in a society such as ours, and the laws necessary to run these settlements.

There has been criticism of supervision of settlements established for Aborigines who are not prepared to be assimilated into our community. As well, there has been criticism of regulations for the peaceful and orderly running of these establishments. It has been claimed that these restrictions stem from a racist attitude. I disagree entirely with that thought. There are regulations controlling the orderly running of all Government institutions. Our hospitals are a typical example of institutions in which patients and visitors are told what they can and cannot do. Visitors are told when they can visit and for how many hours. Patients cannot leave without permission and alcohol cannot be taken in. I suggest that there would be chaos in any institution if controls were lifted, and that would be a disservice to the Aborigines themselves.

I condemn the irresponsible attitude of the member for Cook, who called on the Government to abolish the whole Act, without suggesting an alternative to replace it.

Mr. Bousen: He will frame one for you.

Mr. MILLER: He has had the time to frame it.

After reading the speech made by Senator Georges on the Aboriginal question in the Senate on 4 November this year——

Mr. Hinze interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Toowoomba West——

Mr. Bousen: Send out the member for South Coast.

The CHAIRMAN: How many times have I to inform hon. members that when I am on my feet I will not tolerate interjections, particularly those directed at me. The hon. member for Toowoomba West is warned under Standing Order No. 123A. He was warned this morning by Mr. Speaker and I warn him again.

Mr. BOUSEN: I rise to a point of order. I was not warned by Mr. Speaker at all.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MILLER: After reading a speech of Senator Georges on the Aboriginal question, made in the Senate on 4 November this year, I should say that the hon. member for Cook must be a protege of his.

Mr. B. Wood: I don't mind admitting that I am a good friend of his.

Mr. MILLER: I hope the hon. member is not going to Stockholm with him.

I was appalled that he should refer to the Prime Minister and Mr. Wentworth as radicals. Surely that was an irresponsible statement. Those gentlemen have a very sincere desire to help in the assimilation of Aborigines. We are indeed fortunate to have a Prime Minister who is so inclined, and we are certainly fortunate in having as Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs

the Hon. N. T. E. Hewitt, who has acted not only as a friend but as a counsellor to these people for many years. Senator Gair said during the debate on the States Grant Aboriginal Advancement Bill that he was amazed at the number of people who have taken an interest in Aborigines since they were granted adult franchise. Unlike Opposition members, the Minister is not in this category.

I assure hon. members that there are radicals who say they want to overthrow the institutions. They are opposed to the assimilation of Aborigines and prefer them to live in separate communities. I find this hard to understand, because the radicals also claim that they have the interests of the Aborigines at heart.

Mr. B. Wood: You had better be more specific.

Mr. MILLER: If the hon. member for Cook wants to be more specific he should read the report of the Aboriginal and Island Affairs Council.

I should think that the experience in America would be sufficient to encourage complete assimilation of Aborigines in Australia. Of course, the action of these radicals is no different from the action of radicals in our universities and cities. They are endeavouring to pull down the Establishment and replace it with chaos.

Mr. Casey: You say that about everybody who fights for a beter deal.

Mr. MILLER: That is not so.

Unfortunately, these radicals could play havoc if they were allowed into the communities, because of the lack of education there. Education is important if we wish eventually to have all Aborigines living in our cities and towns. We want these people trained in a trade or profession so that they can play their part in the development of Queensland. We do not want them trained by radicals in methods of destruction. Any Aborigine who refuses to take the opportunity afforded him to learn a trade or profession, and chooses to live in a community, must be regarded as a person needing guidance and protection, and therefore should be compelled to obey any lawful order given by the manager of the community. I can understand aged and infirm Aborigines wishing to remain in communities, but I cannot tolerate the refusal by an Aborigine, or any other Australian for that matter, to learn an occupation.

The churches are playing a very important role in the field of education. Early this year, I had the pleasure of opening, at Nundah, a hostel for children from the Lutheran church communities at Bloomfield River and Hope Vale. I am impressed by the scheme for this hostel, which will cater for 14 children from those communities while they attend high school. On completion of their schooling, these children will be boarded out in homes in the Nundah area so that they can commence work. So often in the past, children have finished their schooling only to return to the communities and islands and revert to their old ways. This scheme will overcome this problem, and it is deserving of our highest praise.

Mr. B. Wood: What do you mean when you say that they revert to their old ways?

Mr. MILLER: The hon. member has been to the islands and the communities and knows that work opportunities in those areas are limited.

Mr. Bousen: What do you know about it? Have you seen them?

Mr. MILLER: I have had the pleasure——

Mr. Casey: You are trying to set your own standards on these people.

Mr. MILLER: I have had the pleasure of visiting these communities.

It has often been said that Aborigines are discriminated against. I believe that we must be careful to see that there is no discrimination in favour of them, which would undo the work that the department and the churches are endeavouring to do for their assimilation. It is pleasing to see that more than 100 Aboriginal families have been settled in modern, conventional homes erected by the department. However, I remind hon. members that, in renting Housing Commission houses, Aborigines have the same rights as all other Queenslanders. Provided they, like other Queenslanders, have jobs and are prepared to accept the responsibility, there is no reason why Aborigines cannot buy land and have their homes built on it, as many have already done.

The hon. member for Cook referred to Pastor Brady and Mrs. Walker as "professional" or "pseudo" Aborigines.

Mr. B. WOOD: I rise to a point of order. Mention was made in the department's annual report of "professional" and "pseudo" Aborigines, and I queried to whom those references applied. I certainly did not say what the hon. member for Ithaca says I said.

Mr. MILLER: The hon. member will agree that he did mention those two people. He admitted that the Minister did not name anybody, but he himself mentioned Pastor Brady and Mrs. Walker. That is in "Hansard" for all to read. I have no intention of apologising. I am amazed that the hon. member should endeavour to cast aspersions on these people.

Mr. B. WOOD: I do not like pushing this matter, but I must renew my point of order. I did not cast aspersions on anybody, and I ask for a withdrawal of that statement.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Cook has asked that the hon. member for Ithaca withdraw his statement. I ask him please to withdraw it.

Mr. Bousen: Withdraw! Withdraw!

Mr. MILLER: I will withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the hon. member for Toowoomba West that if he interjects any more I shall have to deal with him. I do not want to, but he has been far too persistent with his interjections this evening.

Mr. MILLER: There is no doubt that these people have been misguided in some respect. I do not want to call them "professional" or "pseudo" Aborigines. On his return from overseas, Pastor Brady addressed the Bardon Lions Club. He spoke of the discrimination against Negroes in the United States, and he said how concerned he was whilst he was living there.

Mr. Hinze: Did he say that Queensland treats its natives better than any other place in the world?

Mr. MILLER: He certainly did. He said that he was pleased to come back to Australia, particularly Queensland, a country that was prepared to do so much for Aborigines. But within two months Pastor Brady addressed the Bardon Lions Club in completely opposite vein. There is no doubt in my mind that Pastor Brady had become involved with some radical group.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (7.35 p.m.): The ramifications of the Minister's portfolio are very wide indeed. He has under his control three major departments, but I shall confine my remarks in this debate mainly to matters related to the Department of Harbours and Marine.

First, there is the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. Being a man of the land, the Minister understands the need for irrigation schemes. He has a property in the Theodore district, where there has been considerable irrigation activity for many years.

Secondly, there is the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. As a knowledgeable, dedicated and successful grazier, the Minister probably has employed a considerable number of Aborigines and would, therefore, be conversant with their problems.

Thirdly, there is the Department of Harbours and Marine. I am sure that the work of that department was strange to the Minister when he took over the portfolio. But if one looks at the United States of America and sees the number of boys from the State of Texas who were engaged in rural pursuits and then discovered that they had a liking for the life in the United States Navy, I suppose one can draw an analogy and say that it is only right and proper that, in the activities of the Government of Queensland, a well known pastoralist from Theodore should assume administrative responsibility for the nautical affairs of the Department of Harbours and Marine.

It is worthy of note that, although the department has been upgraded in the past few months, it was removed quite suddenly from the control of the Treasury—I do not know the reason for that; I suppose it will be unfolded one day—and passed to a Minister who had only just assumed office.

Before I bring one or two major matters to the attention of the Minister, I advise him to take cognisance of the many submissions that are made at State conferences of harbour boards and of the recommendations made at conferences of Australian port authorities. They are worthy of consideration because they come from people who are engaged in the day-to-day activities of ports throughout the country and who are well aware of the practical difficulties that they encounter. Those people are familiar with the different systems of navigation and the transportation of the various goods exported and imported by Queensland and Australia.

There is another point that I think I should bring to the attention of members of the Liberal Party in this Parliament, particularly back-bench members, before I pass on to more serious matters. Virtually every day one hears in this Chamber considerable criticism of what was achieved by former Labour administrations in the development of the State. The old catchcry that one hears from the Government benches, particularly those at the rear of the Chamber, is that former A.L.P. Governments did not take full advantage of the trust placed in them to promote industrial development in this State. Recently, as hon. members know, there has been a great upsurge in mineral development throughout the world, and I remind the Committee that it was a former Labour Government that provided the loan money that made possible the building of a conveyor-belt system for the export of coal through the port of Gladstone. Similarly, it was a Labour Government that lent money for the erection of the first sugar terminal in this State at Mackay. It was opened by a Labour Premier in about 1956, towards the end of Labour's term of office in this State.

Let us get a few facts straight. The hon. member for Burdekin, the hon. member for Mulgrave, and many others, constantly stand up here and echo the little pit-a-pat given to them by Ministers or by the councils of their various executives and parties. They do this in order to promote themselves politically in the immediate pre-election period.

While that accusation sinks in, might I refer to the two matters I wish to discuss tonight. They are both very important to harbour board administrations throughout the State. First, it is to the discredit of this

Government that more has not been done in a concrete fashion to solve some of the problems associated with our ports and their development. The first matter to which I wish to refer relates to the different tenures applicable to harbour board lands. This is the greatest shemozzle one has ever witnessed, and amendments to the Harbours Act in this regard are very necessary if we are to progress sensibly.

The other matter that I wish to mention is the rateability of harbour board lands, a matter of considerable anxiety to many ports throughout the State. Various conferences on this matter have been held, and I have previously mentioned in this Chamber the necessity to amend the relevant legislation. However, very little notice has been taken by the administration of suggestions that have been made.

Let me refer first to the tenures applicable to harbour boards. Under section 62B of the Harbours Act, the Governor in Council may sell Crown land vested in a harbour board and designated as industrial land. Section 81 (1) provides that the Governor in Council may grant a perpetual lease or a special lease under the Land Act over any Crown land for the purposes of harbour works. Under section 81 (4), Crown land may be vested in a harbour board. Section 82 applies to foreshore lands above or below high-water mark. These lands may be reserved and set apart, and placed under the management and control of a harbour board. Under sections 94 (1) and 94 (1) (a) a harbour board may be granted one of the following tenures in respect of land reclaimed by it: a perpetual lease under the Land Act, a special lease under the Land Act, vesting, or estate in fee simple.

As I said, the whole thing is a conglomeration of tenures and is one of the greatest shemozzles of all time. Since this Government assumed office various amendments of the Harbours Act have been made, many of them only further confusing the issue and creating complexity and anxiety for people who are daily carrying on the task of administering various ports and harbour trusts in the State.

Mr. Hinze: That is not correct.

Mr. HANSON: The hon. member for South Coast says it is not correct. Only a few minutes ago we witnessed him in the role of the big chief, pointing the bone at Opposition members but not getting very far. As I said this morning, his remarks to me about the veracity of my statement certainly led me to believe that he obviously had a considerable amount of free ice-cream at the bush picnic.

These matters open up a very serious question. If a harbour board is able to sell land on a freehold basis, will it be able to apply some strings to the transaction? As there is an acute shortage of industrial land on our waterfront areas, would a harbour board be able to insert in the conditions of sale a clause under which the land in question could be used for the furtherance of the board's activities? Naturally, this sort of thing causes a good deal of confusion and anxiety.

By way of illustration, I shall cite the situation that has arisen in certain Queensland ports. The hon. member for Cairns would be well aware of the problem. Many years ago the Cairns Harbour Board learned that leases that had been granted by it did not conform to the provisions of either the Harbours Act or the Land Act. The board was advised by the Land Administration Commission that in granting leases the consent of both the Treasurer and the Minister for Lands was required. Further, the board learned that it could lease land that was vested in it, without the consent of the Minister, whereas a lease of land that it held in trust required the signatures of both Ministers. That stipulation wastes a lot of time and ties procedures up in a good deal of red tape.

The hon. member for Mackay will remember that the Mackay Harbour Board faced certain problems associated with the land that surrounds the Mackay bulk-sugar terminal. That area contained both freehold and reserve land. When the lease of the land was to be executed the board found that it was required to draw up two leases in exactly the same terms, one for the freehold land and the other for the reserve.

Further south, the Gladstone Harbour Board reclaimed large areas of land and leased it in small parcels. The lessees were desirous of occupying the land before the formalities associated with vesting were completed. They were anxious to commence business. Associated with the granting of all these leases is the time element and the unnecessary delay involved in the completion of formalities. Firstly, the land must be surveyed; secondly, it must be vested; and thirdly, it is designated. That procedure takes considerable time and causes frustration to many people.

As well, when a board reclaiming land makes application for the vesting of the land it cannot be assured that the Governor in Council will vest. That, in turn, causes a problem in that banks and other money-lending institutions demand a certificate of title as security before they are prepared to lend money to those people who take up the land and wish to erect buildings on it. That situation arose particularly in relation to land leased by the Gladstone Harbour Board.

I do not see why, when an Order in Council is promulgated for the reclaiming of harbour lands, an indication is not given upon application that vesting will be allowed. Such an indication would solve many of the problems that arise at present.

I hope that the Minister will take cognisance of these matters associated with the tenure of harbour board lands. I hope he

will look at the matter very seriously and will consider amending the Harbours Act in the near future to provide that the consent of only one Minister is required when land is to be dealt with, and that leases can be registered in the Titles Office. At present, when a harbour board grants a lease it is registered in the harbour board office. In later years, when a search is required, considerable difficulty can arise because of the fast-developing nature of many of our ports.

I turn now to the vexed question of the rateability of harbour board land. If the Minister has not already attended a harbour boards conference, I am sure it will not be long before he does. No doubt the rateability question has been brought to his notice quite forcibly. The department's understanding of the rateability of harbour board land is that non-rateable land must be used for harbour board purposes, and that land held for future harbour board or industrial purposes is certainly rateable. That is fair enough. If local authorities provide services for certain lands, they are entitled to receive some monetary return to assist them in providing the facilities necessary for developing towns and ports.

Many years ago the Gladstone Harbour Board was involved in considerable litigation relative to the rateability of land. Argument developed in court on whether the harbour board was an instrument of the Crown by virtue of the fact that it was a semi-governmental body with Crown land vested in it. It received a series of different legal opinions, not only from barristers whose opinion was obtained at a very high fee, but also from judges. This matter should be cleared up.

Mr. Lee: Did you ask Col?

Mr. HANSON: Unfortunately, we did not. If we had, I am sure that matters would have come to a much more successful conclusion than if we had sought advice from Liberal-orientated barrister-politicians engaged by the Government who have scant knowledge of the law and who involve the authorities and the Government in considerable expense. I am sure the member for South Brisbane would have carried out his responsibilities to the people who briefed him and we would have gained considerable benefit from his expertise.

In approaching this matter, it is generally conceded that rates are payable on land vested in harbour boards under the Harbour Board Act. The question is whether the local authority desires to make the land rateable. A board could consider divesting itself of certain lands, but harbour board land cannot be divested until a declaration is made that it is no longer required for harbour board purposes. Confusion reigns, and today some authorities pay rates whereas some do not. The port of Cairns has an agreement with the Cairns City Council under which harbour board lands are not rateable. That is because any goods or commodities consigned to the Cairns City Council by ship are not charged harbour board dues by the Cairns Harbour authorities. A sound, sensible plan should be worked out so that we will have a uniform policy for harbour boards and so that people generally will be satisfied and freed of these anxieties.

Under the Local Government Act, freehold land used for public purposes is rateable at the discretion of the local authority. The opportunity is taken by many local authorities to charge harbour boards rates on their land. I fully realise that the matter could get out of hand and that private enterprise might feel justified in demanding some relief from rateability. I do not believe that private enterprise should be entitled to any consideration in this way, as harbour boards are not expected to make excessive profits. They are designed to provide facilities at a certain price, and to make a profit only to the extent that they can finance their operations and fully develop them for the benefit of those who use them.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HEATLEY (Albert) (7.55 p.m.): Speaking to the debate on these Estimates, it is interesting to note the following increases—

Department	Increase $
Irrigation and Water Supply	200,000
Harbours and Marine ..	124,000
Marine Board	6,000
Aboriginal and Island Affairs	146,000

Those increases total roughly $500,000, and I commend the Minister for getting them out of what was left after the cake had been cut up. Of course we can say, generally, that not enough is provided for the various branches of this portfolio. At first glance one wonders how the three branches of this portfolio, namely, Conservation, Marine, and Aboriginal Affairs, are associated, but closer study shows that they are linked. and apparently a good deal of consideration was given to their grouping in one portfolio.

I say at the outset that I am a conservationist, but I am not a radical. I agree that development must go hand in hand with conservation. Water could be the most important aspect of conservation, but let us look at some other aspects of it, for instance, flora, fauna, houses, islands, antiques, and bora gardens, which rather interest me. Many speakers in this debate have claimed to speak with authority, after one social visit to the area, and I wonder how many of them have seen a bora garden or know what it means or implies. They have also spoken about Aborigines and their problems. They should go up there and speak to those who have knowledge of these problems and actually see what is happening. They should visit some of the islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria and see what the Aborigines there are doing for themselves. They would have to spend

a month, a year, or two years up there before they could return and speak with authority—not through their hats or through the tops of their heads, as they are doing now. I do not refer to one side of the Chamber or the other. I am saying that all hon. members should spend two years up there, as I did, and study these problems closely so that they can come back here and speak common sense.

As I said, water is the most important aspect of conservation. I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Landsborough, who said that water conservation should be undertaken only when there is a need for it. When we have a use for it, we should consider where it will be implemented. This matter has been a political football for many years. The cry is, "Conserve water", particularly in Queensland, which is part of the driest continent in the world. But let us decide priorities for water conservation, and determine the use to which the water is to be put. Perhaps better use could be made of land reserved for future development with water conservation. Already this problem is being experienced in Brisbane. The Wolffdene Dam and the dam at Esk are under consideration, but no decision has been made on which one to proceed with. Meanwhile farmers in various areas are wondering what they should do. As at 4 o'clock this afternoon, no decision had been made.

I agree that full consideration must be given to the matter by the various investigating officers, and it must then be submitted to the Department of the Co-ordinator-General. I have no argument with that. What I suggest to the Minister is that the whole process be expedited to the extreme.

Mr. Davis: In other words, get on with the job.

Mr. HEATLEY: Exactly, because so many people are waiting to know what their future holds.

In the case of the Wolffdene Dam, there is an overlapping of the Conservation and Local Government portfolios in the supplying of information to farmers in the area. They want to know which area will go under water, and which area will not. I think the Minister for Conservation has co-operated very closely with the Minister for Local Government in the matter, and I hope that what is to happen will be made known at least before the end of the session.

It was my responsibility only a week after entering politics to take part in a discussion at the Townsville University on the productive results of dams and water conservation. Townsville is in an area in which water is of paramount importance. It is, if anything, more important now than it was previously. Industry has come to Townsville, and the city will develop further industrially as the Greenvale nickel project gets under way. I repeat that in my opinion water conservation schemes should be undertaken only in the order in which they are of benefit. In other words, there is no sense in building a dam just for the sake of saying that we have a dam. The Federal Government has been most helpful with funds for water research work, and we are grateful for that assistance. But let us take the advice of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. That organisation investigated the Snowy Mountains Scheme, and stated what benefits would be obtained from it. It is on call to advise this State also. To my mind, there is no point in conserving water to produce something that cannot be sold either at home or overseas. Much of the same reasoning applies to Mr. Whitlam and Mr. Hawke's suggestion of a 35-hour week.

Mr. Davis: What's wrong with it?

Mr. HEATLEY: I shall tell the Committee quite clearly here and now my opinion of a 35-hour week. If, with its introduction, costs of production could be kept down so that our products remained saleable overseas, I would back it. But if costs cannot be kept down, I do not want a darned thing to do with it. I simply ask, "Where do we sell our products, and at what price?"

Mr. F. P. Moore: What do you pay the dark people who work on your trawler?

Mr. HEATLEY: The hon. member should not try to bring that up. Whatever I have paid anyone to work on my trawler has been well above the award wage. Every dark man who has worked for me has applied year after year to come back and join my trawler. There has not been one exception to that, and I challenge the hon. member to prove that there has. He should not try to make scum out of something of which he knows nothing.

Let me return to the subject of water conservation. I discussed earlier the availability of the services of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and I suggest that to date there has been a partly ad-hoc political approach to what could have been achieved in other ways. In fact, the ad-hoc approach has been such that it appears almost ridiculous. Planning must be on the basis of regional development, as I said.

I wish to bring into the debate one matter that has not yet been referred to, as far as I know. Although I have listened carefully, I have not heard desalination mentioned.

Mr. Davis: Someone referred to it earlier in the debate.

Mr. HEATLEY: I do not know with what authority or knowledge he spoke. I do not intend to denigrate what he said, but I speak from my own knowledge.

Recently an American friend visited me. He has set up desalination plants on the mining fields in Western Australia, and even lawns are now being sprayed with fresh water

in places where previously there was not even enough water to wet the sand. In South Australia he has supplied water by desalination more cheaply than water can be supplied by the South Australian Government. I believe that this is a matter to which we in Queensland must give very careful consideration.

Hon. members have referred in this debate to Thursday Island. To my knowledge, the dam there is porous. At one stage a ship that called there could not take on board sufficient water for its normal use. I stand to be corrected on this, but I think at one stage each ship was allowed 400 gallons. The supply to shipping was restricted simply because there was not sufficient water on the island. The firm to which I have referred could supply through desalination sufficient water to meet the needs of all the industries on the island and all the ships calling at the port.

Mr. Hinze: Bernard Elsey has done a pretty good job with desalination, too.

Mr. HEATLEY: Bernard Elsey has not done the correct thing. The hon. member should not try to correct me on this point. Bernard Elsey is using desalination on his own lines, not on the lines suggested by the company that installed the plant. I do not intend to be side-tracked by mention of Bernard Elsey or anyone else. I am speaking about one of the greatest authorities on desalination in Australia and, in fact, in the world. The firm is now supplying desalination plants for ships and mining fields all over the world. It is a subject that Australia, and particularly Queensland, must keep in mind, and I ask the Minister to keep it very clearly in mind, because I have made representations to his staff and I know that they have studied them in full.

I turn now to a different aspect of conservation, the conservation of land. Recently in my electorate debates and discussions took place about conservation of sandbanks and islands.

Mr. Davis: In the river.

Mr. HEATLEY: Not only in the river; right down the coast. A committee has now been formed to study conservation and the effect that mining will have on the ecology of fishing grounds and other surrounding areas. Replying to the interjection about islands, I say that no-one could have had greater co-operation on Saturdays, Saturday nights, Sundays and Sunday nights than I received from the officers of this department. I should say that only one radical has tried to upset the ship.

A solution to this will be readily found. There is no argument about that. It will be rationally found through the efforts and approach of the Minister's staff. In fact, yesterday the Minister himself sent down an officer to measure the noise problem in this area and to judge the extent of the nuisance to local residents. We are waiting on the outcome of this investigation.

One other matter I should like to mention regarding the Department of Harbours and Marine——

Mr. Sherrington: What is the noise level at the Gold Coast Council meetings?

Mr. HEATLEY: If the hon. member is making a speech, I will listen to him, but I think he has already done so.

Another aspect regarding this area to which I should like to refer is the small craft facilities. I notice in the Estimates that $60,000 has been allowed this year. It is a new item.

Mr. Davis: You don't have to worry about the small craft on the coast.

Mr. HEATLEY: The number of small craft on the coast would amaze the hon. member. It has grown out of all proportion. It would pay the hon. member to come and have a look at these craft. At the moment we have a demand for moorings for 208 boats in the Southport Basin alone. I do not know where the hon. member moors his boat but the fact that 208 boat owners are seeking moorings is a marvellous advertisement for the Gold Coast and particularly for the Southport Basin. We have to find these moorings and I suggest that the appointment of a permanent engineer from the Department of Harbours and Marine might be considered. We have the development of the canals, the demand now for 208 moorings, and the Delft Report introducing the possibility of alteration in the Broadwater in the very near future. I recommend to the Minister that very serious consideration be given to the permanent appointment at Southport of an engineer from his department.

Another aspect of Harbours and Marine to which I will refer relates to skin-diving. I recommend that areas be reserved for skin-divers. It will be found in the very near future, with the Christmas holidays coming on, that many school children who have saved money and bought all the necessary equipment for skin-diving will not be allowed to operate in certain areas. I recommend that consideration be given to allocating certain areas for this purpose. Skin-divers are most important. One can read every day in the Press of the important tasks they undertake. Indeed, one man I recommended is now the top skin-diving adviser in the Royal Navy.

I commend the Minister on the introduction of his Estimates.

Mr. BLAKE (Isis) (8.15 p.m.): I enter this debate because a great number of the desirable and essential developments required in my electorate fall within the Minister's purview. The Minister is responsible for the development of the irrigation potential of the Burnett, Gregory, Isis,

Burrum and Mary Rivers and their tributaries. All those streams possess great potential in the field of water conservation.

The major disadvantage suffered by most primary industries is that they are forced to carry a highly protected cost structure in their production and sell a large percentage of their production on low-cost free world markets. Therefore, for rural industry to continue to make a significant contribution to Australia's balance of overseas payments, they must receive financial assistance. In the light of the ever-diminishing margin of profit in the rural industry, it is evident that continuity of production must be guaranteed, wherever possible, by water conservation. It is possible in the Isis electorate.

I note with satisfaction that $1,250,000 has been allocated by the Commonwealth for the 1970-71 programme in the construction of the Monduran Dam. It is on the Kolan River, but when phase 1 of Stage I of the Bundaberg irrigation scheme is completed, water will be conveyed from it through channels to the Burnett River system.

I shall not dwell on the details of phase 1 of Stage I of the Bundaberg scheme, as they were fully covered in the debate on that proposal. It is sufficient to remind hon. members that the Commonwealth will be allocating $12,800,000 and the State $8,300,000.

All credit is due to the Bundaberg and District Irrigation Committee and the organisations that are represented on it for the part they have played for the past 12 years in bringing the planning and financing of phase 1 of Stage I to fruition. At the risk of repetition, I direct the Minister's attention to the fact that when phase 1 of Stage I is completed and the water storage area is filled, a sufficient quantity of water will be impounded to service not only the areas envisaged by phase 1 but also the needs of the Isis district.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is far too much audible conversation on my right.

Mr. BLAKE: I respectfully direct the Minister's attention to the fact that the surplus water in storage can be brought to the rich, though presently drought-stricken, lands in the Isis district at a cost lower than the accumulated drought losses incurred in the district over the past four drought years.

The importance of these rich lands and the utilisation of surplus water for the lasting benefit of the district and, in turn, the State is self-evident. I am confident that the Minster and the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission are aware of the necessity and natural consequence of utilising this water storage to the best advantage in the area of greatest need, which is, I repeat, the Isis district. I therefore ask the Minister and his Government to seek the allocation of further Commonwealth funds for phase 2 of Stage I of the scheme.

Anyone who has flown over the Mary River system must have been impressed by its water-conservation potential because of its vast watershed, and must have deplored seeing unharnessed water running into the sea in a land which so badly needs water for agriculture and industry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Once again I appeal to the Committee to cease audible conversation. It is very difficult to hear the hon. member because of conversations on both sides of the Chamber. It is completely out of hand. I do not want to have to deal with any hon. member, but it is extremely difficult to hear.

Mr. BLAKE: Local interest is centred on the Isis and Burrum Rivers for badly needed water storages. In the Tinana Creek area—it is a tributory of the Mary River—a local committee bases its hopes on a survey by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission and financial assistance from the Government in the provision of water-conservation facilities to alleviate drought losses suffered by farmers along its banks.

I now come to the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act and the allocation in the Estimates for work to be carried out under it. I notice that in 1969–70 a sum of $1,040,500 was allocated to the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Fund and that $1,355,992 was spent. I do not find fault with that. It is commendable that the fund should be overspent during such an extreme drought. However, it is a pity that the allocation for 1970–71 is only $1,296,000.

I hope that, in my criticism, I am always constructive. I realise that there is a heavy demand on the Treasury for many worthwhile causes, but what worthier cause could there be than farm water supplies? Agriculture is greviously stricken with rising costs, and in many cases the disabilities and overdrafts that people are carrying are attributable to the fact that they cannot utilise sites available on their properties, or adjacent to them, for the storage of water. I implore the Minister and Cabinet as a whole to look closely at future allocations for departments. If they do, I am sure they will realise that the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Fund deserves a greater allocation than it has received this year, bearing in mind that the debt of the rural sector is galloping at a far greater rate than that of any other sector of the economy.

The harbour and waterfront facilities at Hervey Bay are very important to the economy of my area and the State as a whole. Many visitors come to the area and spend money, which helps the State as a whole. Since the export-sugar trade was taken from Urangan—perhaps better known as the port of Maryborough—people tend to underestimate the importance of the port

to the economy of the area. However, I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that Urangan's imports are comparable with those of Bundaberg. The annual report of the Department of Harbours and Marine discloses that Bundaberg handled 56,415 tons of imports, of which petrol comprised 49,521 tons. Urangan's imports totalled 54,448 tons, 53,910 tons of which consisted of petroleum products. In addition, 538 tons of newsprint was imported through Urangan.

It might be opportune at this stage for me to digress and discuss the prospects of the export of newsprint pulp and timber products through Urangan. We have the nucleus of a great timber industry in the Isis electorate and the area surrounding Maryborough, where there are extensive existing hardwood forests and where softwood forests have been developed. The scope for the expansion of reforestation is great. In keeping with the overseas concept of large timber projects—taking the processing industry to the timber instead of taking the timber to the processing industry—this area has wonderful potential. The need for developing timber products cannot be denied, as we import well over $200,000,000 worth of timber products annually. Timber interests are at present investigating the feasibility of a wood-chip industry, and if this eventuates Urangan will be the logical outlet for it.

I notice that the proposal for the new steel-piled concrete mooring dolphin at Urangan has been delayed because of departmental dissatisfaction with the tenders lodged for this project. I hope these difficulties are overcome quickly, as we do not want to have the port disadvantaged or the trade prospects of the area jeopardised in any way.

An article in the Maryborough "Chronicle" of Wednesday, 8 November, reads—

> "State Government departmental officers next week would begin a survey of the resources and future land uses of areas between Fraser Island and the border, the Premier (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) said yesterday.
>
> "The team would take the opportunity of looking at the areas with a view to making recommendations for the classification of those areas considered suitable for national parks and forestry reserves.
>
> " 'The officers will also look at the possibility of future tourist development of islands off the coast and in Moreton Bay,' said Mr. Bjelke-Petersen.
>
> " 'The team to visit Fraser Island next week will comprise representatives of the Co-ordinator-General, Mines, Lands and Forestry Departments.
>
> " 'The survey team will study the situation of ocean beaches on Fraser Island with regard to erosion. Later similar studies will be made of Bribie, Moreton and Stradbroke Islands.
>
> " 'It is the Government's intention that the survey will help in assessing what areas might be set aside for national parks, for forestry purposes or other forms of development.
>
> " 'The Government is mindful that the responsibilities of conservation are just as important as the need for development of these areas,' said the Premier."

This is very commendable and it is a source of satisfaction to me, particularly as I sought recently in this Chamber the co-operation and co-ordination of Government departments in the most efficient development of the potential of the Hervey Bay area. Although the Department of Harbours and Marine is not mentioned in the survey team, I hope it is represented in discussions on the development of the Hervey Bay area, because that department surely ranks very largely in importance in the planned development of the tourist and waterfront area. The Premier mentioned that the Fraser Island survey team will study erosion on ocean beaches on Fraser Island. It is also intended that the survey will help in assessing what areas might be set aside for national parks, forestry purposes and other forms of development.

It is to be hoped that the team will look at these areas in the light of the article in "The Courier-Mail" of 17 November relative to Murphyores Holdings Limited. That issue states—

> "The company sold most of its mining assets in New South Wales to Signal Pacific Company and Dillingham Constructions Pty. Ltd. in April."

It further states—

> "A partnership agreement was being negotiated to carry on mining operation on Fraser Island with milling at Gladstone between Murphyores and Dillingham."

I certainly hope, as the Premier intimated in his statement in the Press, that the natural and tourist development of Fraser Island will be respected, because that potential is very great. I ask that the Government survey team look at this asset with a long-term view, not a destructive, short-term view. This attitude is vitally important to the area, because, without expressing the views of a rabid conservationist, I firmly believe that it can be for a long time an asset to the State under the system presently operating, namely, sensible use of the forestry potential and a continuing development of the tourist potential.

I hope that erosion and conservation will be uppermost in the minds of the survey team, and that the long-term view will prevail. To put it bluntly, I hope they will not go there with the mental attitude of seeing if a "quick dollar" can be made out of Fraser Island.

Mr. Low: What is your attitude to sand mining on Fraser Island?

Mr. BLAKE: My attitude to sand mining anywhere is that if it does no harm to the natural attributes of the area, it should continue. But if it harms an area, it should

not be permitted. The hon. member and I are not the custodians of this generation only; we are the custodians for future generations as well.

Aboriginal Affairs is part of the Minister's portfolio. There are Aborigines at Hervey Bay. I will not speak at length on this subject, because much has been said during the debate about Aborigines and the way they should be treated. I merely wish to say that they are one of the oldest races, if not the oldest, on earth, and they cannot be successfully assimilated with white people in a few years. Anyone who thinks that can be done is being unfair to himself, to the department, and to the Aborigines. However, it is quite obvious that Aborigines are capable of gradual improvement if given the chance.

There are in my area some shocking examples of lack of housing for Aborigines. Anyone who suggested that their present housing is their natural mode of living would be distinctly unfair to them. They are capable of adjusting to better conditions if they are provided for them. Those who condemn the entire Aboriginal race because they know of instances of failure by Aborigines to adjust overnight to the European way of life, to European standards of sanitation, and to European standards of housing, are being distinctly unfair not only to Aborigines but to other races which have not had a chance to evolve to our present standards. It has to be remembered that it has taken us a couple of thousand years from the time when our ancestors crawled out of their caves to evolve to our present standard.

I ask the Government to have regard to the substandard conditions under which many Aborigines live at Hervey Bay, and I ask hon. members and those in authority to look with some kindness and understanding at the efforts of the Aboriginal people to attain the standards that, as I say, we have taken a couple of thousand years to attain.

(Time expired.)

Mr. CORY (Warwick) (8.35 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the energy he has displayed in administering his portfolio, which, as other hon. members have mentioned, is very varied.

There are two facets of the work of the departments under the Ministers' control to which I should like to refer briefly. The first is water conservation. As the Committee knows, there is not sufficient water available to enable Queensland to realise its full potential, and it obviously is the responsibility of those involved in water conservation to ensure that adequate water is available in as many areas as finance will permit. Work towards that end must be continued, year in and year out. Storages have already been established in many parts of the State, from the north to the south, but more are needed. Great prudence must be displayed in the conservation of water, because some storages will provide greater economic returns than others. It is necessary, therefore, to formulate the correct policy both for new conservation projects and for the allocation of water that is already available.

In my opinion, the first principle in allocating water should be to ensure that existing landholders and industries have access to water. Their interests must be safeguarded before provision is made for new industries, and that is not always in the minds of those who are planning water conservation. Many people are inclined to say, "We want a water storage here to serve new industries and new enterprises". The policy should be to provide insurance, and the needs of existing industries and landholders should be satisfied first, before consideration is given to allocations for new types of primary production. As I said earlier, there is not enough water to go round, and it is possible that the water now available will cut out even before we have provided assured supplies for existing enterprises. The Government should forget about establishing irrigation projects based solely on new industries, because they do not create an economic climate in which prices are low and, hence, the products are not particularly easy to sell.

The other item I should like to mention is soil conservation. I realise that it does not come under the Minister's jurisdiction in the same way as water conservation does, but it is conservation in its truest form. Soil conservation leads to fertility conservation, fertility conservation leads to production conservation, and production conservation leads to economic stability. The more we exercise soil conservation, the more stable will be the production from our farming areas.

Land fertility is definitely retained by the soil conservation methods now being used. The provision of contour banks and this type of thing on sloping country slows down the water and eliminates sheet erosion and gullying erosion. Because of this, top-soil is not lost and fertility is retained in the soil. The other advantage, of course, is that because of the slowing-down process, with the water not moving so fast, more opportunity is given for it to penetrate the soil, which therefore retains more water. The result is that greatly improved production is attained. This is a very good and definite answer to the comment that large-scale soil conservation methods can take out of production a large area of the available ground. It is true that in a small farming community certain areas taken for conservation are lost, but the conservation of soil fertility is increased and the production of the overall area is also increased and not reduced, as some people have asserted.

The retention of fertility in the soil is evident by its very texture and colour. I stress that point, because the benefits of this type of conservation are now more

obvious than ever. Admittedly it is a growing practice, but there are still many acres of land in Queensland on which soil conservation methods have not been practised. Where these methods are practised in one area and not in an adjacent area, the benefits are there for anyone to see. I hope every effort is put into expanding this type of conservation, and I commend the department for its enthusiastic recommendation and approval of this type of work.

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (8.44 p.m.): Anyone who has listened, as I have this afternoon and tonight, would quite frankly admit the existence of a small controversy in the Government ranks over the question of water conservation. Whilst I am not going to refer to the defenders of water conservation, I should like to make some observations on the remarks made by both the hon. member for Landsborough and the hon. member for Albert. I am afraid that one would get the impression from both speeches that we do not want water conservation in Queensland and that we have proceeded far enough in that direction for primary production. I am not saying that both of these hon. gentlemen did not speak some truths, but we in this State have to be very careful of what we say in this respect because it took us quite a number of years to impress on Canberra that we did actually need water conservation here. We know also that from our State resources we were unable to allocate to the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission sufficient funds to enable it to carry out its plans and projects.

No-one should deceive himself about water conservation. Certainly the need for water is recognised; however, certain limitations are imposed on water conservation in that dams cannot be erected anywhere at all. They must be constructed in areas that possess certain natural conformations. From the time when I was a boy, the Nathan Gorge has been suggested as an ideal site for a water-conservation scheme, but we know that no water-conservation project is envisaged for the Nathan Gorge. As well, for half of my lifetime I have heard about the Nogoa Gap. A project could not have been undertaken at that site if natural headlands and an extensive valley were not present.

In thinking about water conservation, we must consider the suitability of sites and the best means of conveying water from those sites to the areas that are to be irrigated. Of course, we realise that water conservation alone is not a complete solution to our problems. Many complications are associated with irrigation, and the hon. member for Landsborough has outlined a number of them. They are widely known and accepted by people who are interested. However, in all communities there are certain people who treat matters like water conservation superficially. They take up catchcries like "Conserve water" and "Save the Barrier Reef", without having a great deal of knowledge about those matters.

Water conservation is important to Queensland, and it will remain important as long as there is a State of Queensland. The hon. member for Landsborough has made a point that could be misinterpreted. He has referred to over-production in certain primary industries. That over-production is indicative of the situation not only in Queensland but also in other States as well as overseas. However, it does not disprove the case for water conservation. The hon. member appears to have said that now that Queensland has attained over-production in so many industries there is no further need for water conservation. Of course, this is not so. We do not want people outside the Chamber to place the wrong interpretation on the hon. member's remarks, because this State relies heavily on Canberra for finance to carry out water conservation both for industrial purposes—that is, mining and manufacturing —and for primary industry.

We are very fortunate in having excellent engineers under the leadership of Mr. Fred Haigh. They do the very best they can with limited finance. In the cases presented for the Fairbairn Dam and the Bundaberg proposal they did top-class work, which earned them Australian rating and possibly overseas rating. Nobody could see the work done at Fairbairn Dam without appreciating the worth of the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply.

It is important to consider where we are going with water conservation. The hon. member for Albert made the important point that water conservation tended to be a political football. It has been, it is, and it will continue to be a political football. While cases are presented by each State to the Federal Government, the political climate of the day will determine which projects will be established. It is imperative that we should completely divorce this important matter from political control. Australia is a nation and water conservation is a national question. A commission or some such authority should examine the over-all situation and draw up a list of priorities of sites throughout Australia according to the needs of the areas.

We have had extensive wrangles over every project we have submitted and, no doubt, that is the case with every State. The Fairbairn Dam was our first break-through, and the Bundaberg scheme is the second, but we undoubtedly need more. That is why I say let us not give the impression in Canberra that we do not need any more. We know very well that we do.

Ultimately, we will not only have to provide water storages but we will actually have to pipe water to certain areas for primary production. That realisation is

forced on me by my experiences in the Arcadia Valley, which is adjacent to the Carnarvon Range. Hon. members know very well that, in a sense, that is virtually the home of rivers in Central Queensland, and obviously must be a source of water supply for the future. In itself, the Arcadia Valley is bereft of water. It is difficult to store surface water there and it is practically impossible to find underground water, but there is gold in the hills in the form of water that could be conserved and eventually piped to an area such as this. The Dawson River could also be a source of supply. In the Arcadia Valley it would be possible to stand knee deep in grass even during a drought, because of lack of water for stock.

Reticulation of water from a dam is costly, and it is also costly on properties. One property owner in the brigalow area set out to obtain water. He put down his dams or tanks, anticipating that run-off water would be available to fill them or that he would be lucky enough to find it underground. He failed to obtain adequate surface water, but was lucky enough to strike it in a bore at the far end of his property. These properties are only 9,000 or 10,000 acres, yet the cost of reticulation from the bore to the dams he had put down was $8,000.

Mr. Murray: How many waters did he get from reticulation?

Mr. O'DONNELL: He had only one water supply from which water had to be reticulated to the dams he put down.

Mr. Murray: It would be a pretty sound investment.

Mr. O'DONNELL: That is right, but it cost him $8,000. If every property in the Arcadia Valley had to do this, even at half the cost, imagine the expenditure on property reticulation. Some day, to keep animals alive—I am not talking about crops—it will be necessary to reticulate water into some areas, particularly east of the Great Divide. This is most important.

I am concerned that at no time should we indicate to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics or to the politicians in Canberra that we do not need water conservation in this State. It is the duty of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission to look constantly for sites and to keep abreast of developmental plans for the future. No doubt it is doing that because it has very capable officers. If we become retrogressive in the storage of water, the State will go backwards quickly.

I shall now refer to Aborigines, which is a subject that has been exercising the minds of most hon. members. I am concerned for their future. I do not decry anything that the Government has done in housing or assistance, but I am sincerely perturbed. Although Aborigines today are slowly but surely—according to their own standards, not ours—displaying some leadership and obtaining some success, insufficient opportunities in my view are given to these people. At school, they are the heroes and heroines of the sporting field. When they leave school, they receive a great deal of attention if they make good on the football or cricket fields, or in the boxing ring. Their ambition to do well comes out in these activities, but, when that is all over, they are left to face the hard, cold facts of life.

Mr. Davis: The tumult and the shouting dies.

Mr. O'DONNELL: That is right. Too often they have nowhere to go. We have a great responsibility to see that an opportunity is given to Aborigines to take their place, too, in the sun.

I should like to say that one cannot but be appalled at the conditions under which fringe dwellers live. One is particularly distressed by the effect on the children. The importance of education is very well known today. In my opinion, education has one aim above all others, and that is to bring people from what could be called a state of irresponsibility to a state of responsibility. If it does not do that, it has failed. Is the education system today succeeding in this respect with our indigenous people? I doubt it. No matter what progress is made within the four walls of a school, or within its grounds, it is virtually ruined by the fact that Aboriginal children have to go home to the most disgraceful conditions of living that one can possibly imagine. That in itself takes from them the opportunity of the ordinary white child to pursue his studies and develop ambitions in life. Bearing in mind the environment in which many Aboriginal children live, what can one expect?

As I conceded before, some Aborigines are stepping out of their former environment, but they are far too few. When one sees the conditions under which Aborigines live in many areas, and realises how they are affected by loss of incentive, one cannot but help feel sorry for Aboriginal wives who know very well that the only outlet for their husbands is the local hotel. I know very well what a hard struggle the wives have to make ends meet in endeavouring to maintain their children in at least a reasonable standard. When one sees young Aboriginal men and women growing up and performing on the sporting fields, one gets the impression that they will endeavour to present a good image to the public.

(Time expired.)

Mr. KAUS (Hawthorne) (9.4 p.m.): It is a pleasure to take part in the debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs, and I should like at the outset to congratulate the Minister on the work he is doing in the three branches of his portfolio. I should also like to congratulate the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs on the

wonderful work that he and his department are doing. Aboriginal and island affairs has been the main theme of the debate, but I have no fears about the way in which the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs is being administered.

I do not intend to keep the Committee long, but I wish to say at the outset that never in the history of the world have so few words—pollution, conservation, and environment—meant so much to so many. I congratulate the Government on the article that appeared in "The Sunday Mail" on 8 November, 1970, under the heading "Government to developers: Hands off Bay". It sets out what the Government and the two local authorities concerned propose doing to maintain in its natural state the area from North Stradbroke Island to Southport. From the point of view of the tourist industry, that is a wonderful idea. As the Minister said—

> "This area has great tourist potential and our aim is to ensure there is no unreasonable disruption of the natural environment."

I have spoken in this Chamber before about the need to set aside areas for fishing and boating, and I am very pleased to see that a committee has been formed and is going ahead with the project. Mr. Peel, the Director of the Department of Harbours and Marine, said in his report to Cabinet that the tidal fringes of islands and sandbanks between Jumpinpin and Southport were unstable and subject to change by cyclones and flooding. For that reason, it was thought that the area should be developed for recreation purposes and that developers should be discouraged. He said also that the area was an ideal fishing ground. I only hope that the Department of Harbours and Marine ensures that the net fishermen keep their hands off it.

I should like to see many more similar areas set aside along the coast of Queensland and more attention given to the illegal netting of fish that should be left for the line fishermen. Boating and amateur fishing are big business today, and good fishing will assist in building up the tourist industry.

There is one question that I wish to ask the Minister. I noticed a report in a newspaper recently that amateur fishermen at Bundaberg had asked the Department of Harbours and Marine to stop net fishermen operating in Baffle Creek. As that is a tourist area, I would be interested to hear why net fishermen are permitted to operate there.

Mr. Bennett: Do you want to put these fishermen out of business? It is their only means of livelihood.

Mr. KAUS: No, I do not wish to put them out of business.

Let me refer now to an article in the "Australian Fisheries Journal" of October, 1970, entitled, "Pollution Problems in Marine Environment". It is by Dr. Alistair J. Gilmour, and the first sentence is, "Pollution is the catch phrase of every environmental evangelist worth his salt."

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. KAUS: I will answer one of the conservationists on the other side of the Chamber, the hon. member for Salisbury, Mr. Sherrington. If he is sincere in his views on conservation in certain areas, why does he not try to save the parks in Brisbane?

Mr. Sherrington: You will hear about that.

Mr. KAUS: I hope I shall. I hope the hon. member will do something about it. He should start a "Save the Parks" campaign in Brisbane. Anyway, that is beside the point.

I do not agree in its entirety with the statement I have just read, and in my humble opinion, which is backed by multitudes of expert professional and amateur fishermen with almost a lifetime of practical experience devoid of theories and suppositions, whilst we are aware of the fact that pollution can denude a river or bay of marine life, it is also a fact that many of our coastal streams and bays are already virtually denuded of marine life. About 20 years ago fish abounded in these rivers. Some of them have not yet been polluted to the extent that marine life is affected, but many of them have been grossly affected by over-fishing. These areas have mainly been destroyed by net fishermen.

Mr. Sherrington: What about the damage this crazy Raby Bay scheme would have done to fishing in the bay?

Mr. KAUS: I suppose, to a conservationist, it could have done quite a bit. I must admit it could cut down fish numbers in the area.

Getting back to what I was saying, the taking of fish by illegal fishermen should be controlled by the department. I hope that something is done about this matter, because these people do over-fish, mainly at the time the fish are coming up-river to spawn. A good farmer or grazier who looks after his assets will never send his breeding stock to market except in time of drought, but the fishermen catching these fish when they are on their way up to spawning grounds are doing exactly that. This is the point at which we we should impose controls. Similar remarks apply to crabs, which can be seriously depleted by netting operations. I have just mentioned the grazier or farmer conserving his breeding stock. In effect, he practices good husbandry, and that is what we have to do with our marine life. This can be done by giving a percentage of them security from the deprivations of man.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: (Mr. Wharton): Order! The hon. member is discussing mainly fishing, which comes under the control of the Department of Primary Industries. It has some connection with the Department of Harbours and Marine, but I ask him not to devote his speech entirely to it.

Mr. KAUS: I will get on to another subject and speak about pollution of the sea. When I speak of pollution, I mean oil pollution, about which we will undoubtedly hear something in the near future. I really have not the time to deal with this subject at length, but I mention briefly that fish feed on tar lumps, which is how crude oil finds its way onto the dinner table. "The Christian Science Monitor" warns that the next time we eat fish, we should think of the tar we are eating. This is because lumps of tar float on the sea and are part of the daily menu of of small fish, which often become dinner for tuna. Fish that are eaten by other fish that, in turn, are eaten by man, take tar into their stomachs, with the result that humans may be eating some of this residue without any idea of the quantity. This fact was discovered by Dr. Backus, chairman of the Department of Biology at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts.

Mr. BALDWIN (Logan) (9.16 p.m.): With the curtailment of time that has necessarily resulted, I am forced to delete from my speech the compliments that I had intended to pay the Minister. I am sure that all hon. members were pleased by the increases in the estimated expenditure for the Minister's very important portfolio. Approximately $5,375,000 is required for dredging and surveying work in the port of Brisbane, and nearly $500,000 is required for small-craft facilities. As the Logan electorate has a great length of indented coastline that offers a haven for dozens of small-craft clubs and thousands of boats, I am very interested in the expenditure of that sum. The demand for facilities is greater than the supply, but I am sure that all boat-owners will admit that better facilities have been provided. I appeal to the Minister to look at the many localities in my electorate where people try to launch their boats, and to alleviate their problems.

The increase in expenditure required to maintain and develop the port of Brisbane is of particular interest to me. Since 1968-69, expenditure on dredging has increased by 10 per cent., whereas the quantity of spoil dredged has increased by only .5 per cent. Obviously costs are rising faster than results. It is significant to note that the tonnage of cargo handled rose by 20 per cent. No doubt that is the result of the accumulated benefit derived from the installation of modern port facilities.

I suggest that the Government is not looking in the proper direction in the development of the port of Brisbane. Brisbane must compete with Sydney and Melbourne if it is to retain its fair share of trade. There is no need to remind hon. members that the large quantity of trade that bypasses Brisbane and other Queensland ports is causing concern. Even the port of Launceston is advocating the expenditure of many millions of dollars on harbour improvements, and the port of Fremantle will be spending $100,000,000 on creating deep-water terminals.

The growth of population in South-east Queensland is one of the main reasons why the Government should look carefully at the development of the port of Brisbane. It has been estimated that by the year 2000 the Moreton region will contain a population of in excess of 2,000,000. The city must expand to the south, and that vast population will have to be fed and supplied with the every-day necessaries. It has been estimated that by that time the trade through the port of Brisbane will have doubled.

With that forecast in view, I ask the Minister: how can the port of Brisbane expand sufficiently on its present basis and structure to meet future requirements? No doubt he will say it can, but I doubt it. Every other port in the Commonwealth has a single port authority, whereas the port of Brisbane is controlled by three authorities, namely, the Department of Harbours and Marine, the Brisbane City Council, and, in the lower reaches, a hotchpotch of private companies that have obtained land on perpetual lease on terms that I am not aware of. Most of those companies are registered either overseas or in the South. That is certainly the case with the largest and most important of them.

In the second half of the 1920's, the Labour Government sought a commission to inquire into the running of the port of Brisbane. The ensuing Moore Tory Government soon put an end to that. Depression, World War II, and post-war reconstruction seem to have wiped it right from the map, but it is well within Labour's view now to inquire into this very important aspect of developing the port of Brisbane and therefore the whole economy of the South-east Queensland region.

It has always been my contention that the foreign and southern companies do not want to see the port of Brisbane develop into a terminal port. While it remains a third-rate feeder port limited by restriction of road and rail services, with miles of mud banks and shallow water, the whole of South-east Queensland will be economically choked and retarded, operating on a higher than Australia-wide average charge per ton for port handling.

With the northward trend in trade rising by more than 14 per cent. in the last few years, Brisbane should be the first capital-city port to restructure as a deep-water terminal port. Instead, under the present policy, it looks as though it could be the last.

All members on this side of the Chamber know of the dreadful inefficiency of double handling, yet this Government is fostering such inefficiency by its perverse desire to dig mud channels and build mud islands on the excuse that this kind of development is sufficient for the next 30 years. It is not even 90 per cent. sufficient or efficient now. We have only to look at the topping-up of the half-loaded grain cargoes, which we have to pay for,

going to overseas areas. The grain-export ships are now so large that it is impossible for many of them to leave the grain wharves much more than half loaded. They have to top up in Sydney and Melbourne, and we pay the price. As I have said in this Chamber before, the more wheat we grow for export under those circumstances, the more we will pay for our bread. While the port of Brisbane remains forcibly repressed to serve the southern and foreign shipping companies, Queensland's export costs will remain as a choke valve on our ability to compete with the southern States and will be a bonanza to the export agents and shipping companies.

The Government says that it has a 15-year plan to develop Bishop Island and neighbouring bay islands. It is the considered opinion of some experts who have submitted their plans to the Government over the years that Bishop Island is insufficient and 15 years is too long a period. We have not got 15 years. Bishop Island and Fisherman Island are too far out in the middle of the mud to become deep-water bulk terminal ports.

My opposition to the Government's plans is not totally condemnatory. The port of Brisbane still has high potential and, for years to come, as a passenger port it will be of great worth to the tourist trade and, of course, for the intrastate and interstate freight trade.

Since I first mentioned in September last year the impending choke-off date of the port of Brisbane, we have seen this port being bypassed, and we will see more of it as Sydney develops.

The hon. member for Port Curtis mentioned the ill effects of harbour-board land tenure. I agree with him. The whole uncoordinated process is such that, under industrial development, firms engaged in other than shipping and transport activities are allowed to take up valuable wharf-side space. There is only one way to solve this problem and that is by setting up a single, integrated harbour authority that will guard well the prime purpose of harbour land, which is port development. Even one private body under charter from the Government would be better than the tripartite arrangement which affects us in three ways.

An industrial development company which has just completed a survey of the economic desirability and feasibility of commencing the construction of a deep-water terminal port at Wellington Point has shown clearly that it understands the necessity to keep harbour areas for shipping, transhipping and tranport use. It is high time that this Government turned its attention to the establishment of a deep-water terminal port outside the expensive channelling of the river mud. It is absolutely necessary for the prosperity of South-east Queensland and will be reflected throughout the State as a whole. If coal and bauxite had been found in the Redland Shire for giving away to overseas grabbers, this Government would have fallen over itself to build a deep-water terminal port there in no time.

I turn now to another very interesting aspect of the Minister's portfolio over which many people in this Chamber have fulminated and wept crocodile tears for 50 years. We do not see a very great percentage increase in the number of Islanders or Aborigines taking their places in the white man's society. In the days of pasture expansion, it is estimated that in the mid 19th century the employment rate of Aborigines rose to nearly 10 per cent. in Queensland. At that time, their population was decreasing rapidly. A survey five years ago put the percentage of those who had won through towards the white man's society——

A Government Member: Who made the survey?

Mr. BALDWIN: The hon. member can read the books himself. This survey put the percentage of those who had won through towards the white man's society at almost 6 per cent., but this is at a time when the population of Aborigines is rising.

It has been reported that, owing to better food and medical services, the birth-rate amongst the Aborigines in some reserves and of many Islanders is rising, and that it is now higher than that of the white population. I have also read that the illegitimacy rate is greater than that of the white population.

These comparisons have a great deal of significance to me, especially in the light of the Federal Aid, Housing, Health and Education Act of 1968, from which more than $3,000,000 is to be spent in Queensland this year. This, together with the $4,000,000 being offered by the Government from State funds, gives a very generous figure of more than $7,250,000 to be spent on about 30,000 people on reserves. Even if this were to include health and education figures, it is generous, at about $240 per head, man, woman and child. This figure does not include all those sums raised by charity but, even so, it does not appear to be enough when the panorama of the last century is viewed.

Fortunately, we can look around and see for ourselves many cases of our dark-skinned fellows who have become part of the white man's society. Some have been assimilated, or swallowed up, as one Government member chose to put it. Others have become "acculturalised" and some "deculturalised", between two worlds, and there are some—far too many—roaming the streets of our towns, and even the city of Brisbane, with ready-made meal tickets in one hand and a bottle of "plonk" in the other. These far-too-numerous unfortunates have worse than no culture—they have become anti-cultural.

We are assured by the Minister that new methods of bringing Aborigines into the white society have been devised. I hope so,

and I hope we all think so. I also hope that these methods will be more successful than those used in the past.

My hope must be contained in the statement of policy given on page 2 of the Minister's report, where he says, amongst other things—

> "Any special measures taken are regarded as temporary measures, not based on race, but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their social, economic and political advancement.
>
> . . . . .
>
> "Implementation of the policy, therefore, is directed towards assimilation of the majority without their individual loss of identity."

He goes on to say how this will depend to a large extent on Aborigines having to leave the land because of lack of employment opportunities there. To me, this is the most significant part of that portion of the report.

We have only to look at our own case, where we take white men from the land and try to place them in industry. This is difficult enough. But here we are going to take from the land people whose whole past and present is rooted in the land and give them certain education services and then, perforce, put them into houses in provincial towns and cities. It is mandatory under the Federal Act that a certain percentage of them must be settled in provincial towns.

Mr. Chinchen: What percentage?

Mr. BALDWIN: Read it for yourself.

My main focus of interest now must centre on this special educating service that we hear so much about, and that I hope very soon, with the Minister's hospitality, to view at first hand. I hope he will allow me to do it. I notice from his report that these Aborigines stay in the reserves by freedom of choice, and I hope I will be able to enter them by freedom of choice.

Mr. Chinchen: It wouldn't help them.

Mr. BALDWIN: It would help you all right, because I would not be here.

I addressed a conference in Canberra two years ago on this very matter of special education, so I had reason to make a study of educational methods applied to Aborigines. I can well see why, over the past half century, fewer than 6 per cent. of them have won through to a position in the white man's society. I hope that the special education services that are now boasted of are better than those of the past, and that they will have more success than those of the past.

I also hope to be able to give my assessment of them later.

Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT (Mackenzie—Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs) (9.30 p.m.): There have been a number of speakers since I last spoke. On that occasion, I replied to only half the comments made by the hon. member for Tablelands. He dealt with two main problems, the first relating to irrigation and the other to the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. The hon. member is one who has over the years given a great amount of time to the Aboriginal people of this State, both through the church and through his office as a member of Parliament. I am always prepared to listen to somebody who is able to speak from practical experience. Far be it from me to want to speak of the hon. member in a derogatory manner.

The hon. member mentioned councillors. Torres Strait Island councillors are all elected by the people. Aboriginal councils are, as he mentioned, part elected by Aborigines on the reserves, the other members being appointed. The Aboriginal councillors are having a conference late this year or early next year and, if they feel that it would be better for all councillors to be elected by the people on reserves, the Committee can be assured that I, as Minister, will be only too willing to go along with their ideas.

The hon. member also mentioned that the report from Western Australia was a much brighter document than ours. Now that I have seen it, I readily admit that. Nevertheless, I feel sure that hon. members, especially those who have been to Western Australia, will agree that Queensland is equal to, if not better than, any other State in the administration of Aboriginal affairs. However, if the hon. member feels that Queensland should have a brighter report, we are always ready to listen to constructive criticism and prepared to do something about it.

The hon. member also mentioned the need to get out among the people. I think I can expect to go down in history as one Minister in charge of Aboriginal affairs who has had a lifetime of experience with Aboriginal people. Right from my boyhood, my parents employed Aboriginal people, and, after a period approaching 50 years in the Dawson Valley, where many Aboriginal people live, I think I can say that anyone who cares to talk to people in that area will find that my family always endeavoured to do something constructive for the Aborigines. That is one reason why, wherever possible, I want to accede to constructive suggestions that are put forward.

It must be realised that, because of the isolation of Aboriginal people in Queensland, their administration presents a tremendous problem. Consider, for a moment, the location of Aboriginal Communities in Queensland, and the difficulties in getting to them. Queensland has problems unknown in Victoria and New South Wales. Western

Australia would have Queensland's problems, and no doubt the Northern Territory has similar problems. However, we have made considerable progress in Aboriginal affairs. I shall deal further with Aborigines later.

The hon. member for Cooroora spoke about the improvements under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act. This very good scheme was introduced by the Government in 1958, when the late Alf. Muller was Minister for Lands. I pay a tribute to him, and also to the present Minister for Works and Housing, who was one of those who played a leading part in bringing the scheme to fruition. It has been of great benefit to many people.

The hon. member also raised the need for the development of Noosa. We are conscious of that need. However, the number of developmental projects that can be implemented is governed by the finance available. The hon. member also mentioned Mr. Midgley and the work he has done in breeding fish. The Irrigation and Water Supply Commission has contributed financially to that venture, and many of the barramundi used have come from the Dawson River, which is in my electorate.

The hon. member for Mirani referred to the Eton scheme, and I hope that something can be done to bring that to fruition.

Many matters relating to Aborigines were mentioned by the hon. member for Ithaca, Mr. Miller.

The hon. member for Port Curtis, Mr. Hanson, referred to my being a grazier and said that, although I know something about Aborigines and irrigation, he did not think I would be very interested in the Department of Harbours and Marine. One worth-while thing that I have done since taking over this portfolio has been to have that department upgraded and given full departmental status. I was quick to realise the very important part that it plays in the affairs of this State, and I am sure that all hon. members agree with me when I say that I believe it will play an even greater part in the years to come.

The hon. member referred particularly to Gladstone, which has fared very well in the over-all development that has taken place. In my electorate, I have the two new coal-mining towns of Blackwater and Moura. I am aware that one of the mines was in the electorate of the hon. member for Barcoo, but it is now in the Duaringa Shire. The development at Gladstone has gone hand in hand with the development of those two mines, and I am pleased that both electorates have shared in it.

While I am speaking of Gladstone, I think it is fitting for me to pay a tribute to a man who has done a wonderful job for that city over the years. In the very near future he is to celebrate his 80th birthday. I received an invitation to attend the celebrations, but unfortunately I will not be able to because I will be in the Torres Strait area at the time. I wish Bill Golding good health in the future. If anyone has contributed to Gladstone's progress, he has.

The hon. member for Cairns spoke about the need for a boat harbour at Cairns. The Department of Harbours and Marine is fully conscious of the need for a boat harbour there, but it wishes to ensure that, when a boat harbour is established, it will be in keeping with that great northern city. When Alan Hinchy from the department was overseas, he investigated several boat harbours on the other side of the world. When I was in America recently, I made it my business to visit San Diego and see the development of the boat harbour and island shelter there. I had Cairns in mind when I made that visit, because I think that eventually it will take its rightful place as one of the State's greatest tourist attractions.

The hon. member for Barcoo spoke about water problems in the brigalow area. I probably had more to do with the brigalow scheme being brought to fruition than did any other hon. member. I make no apology for saying that, because when the scheme was being introduced and others were saying that suckers would be the main problem, I was the first man in this Assembly to say—I well remember saying it—that water would be the main problem in the brigalow area. I have not had any reason to change my mind. Recently the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission spent about $36,000 on investigations in the electorate of the hon. member for Barcoo, but unfortunately they were to no avail. We are now looking at the feasibility of having water reticulated. Maybe one day that will be the only solution. I am fully conscious of that, as the hon. member for Barcoo apparently is.

He also referred to fringe dwellers in various parts of the State and the problems that are caused by them. Let me say that no-one is more conscious of this matter than this Government and I. It is a tremendous task. The last thing I wish to do is to hark back to days gone by, but 12 years ago the total expenditure on Aboriginal people in the State of Queensland was $1,800,000.

Mr. Bennett: The cost of living was a lot lower then.

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: The hon. member should listen for a while; he jumps in where angels fear to tread. This year we are spending some $6,600,000 plus $2,500,000 that we are getting from the Commonwealth, giving us in excess of $9,000,000. We have already shown our desire to build homes for Aborigines and have built a considerable number.

I can go back to when I was in Eidsvold where there was a Pastor Frost who, with many businessmen in the area including myself, was interested in having homes erected. We agreed to supervise them and in other ways assist, but our request for

finance to house some of these people was turned down. I am pleased to say that for 14 years I have given one of these families a home rent free. All they have to pay is the sanitary rate, so at least I have played my part in some small way. I am conscious of the needs, and shall do as much as possible as quickly as possible, but it is a major problem as all hon. members will realise.

The hon. member for Albert spoke about an early decision on the Wolffdene and Brisbane River dams. This matter is being examined by a special committee under the chairmanship of the Co-ordinator-General, who will report to the Premier. He also spoke of economic examination of irrigation schemes. All schemes are subjected to detailed studies of market prospects and farm and project economics. He also raised the matter of desalination. Earlier in the day, the hon. member for Landsborough also spoke along these lines and I pointed out to him that at the present time there is a plant on Heron Island and that the cost is over $5 per 1,000 gallons. From that he will see that it is certainly a costly business.

The hon. member for Isis mentioned the Bundaberg scheme. This is one of our major irrigation projects, along with the Emerald scheme. Let me inform him that we have before the Commonwealth Government a request for extra finance. I think it might have been the hon. member for Barcoo, or someone who spoke earlier in the day, who suggested pressing the Commonwealth for more money. At the present time we have requests before the Commonwealth for some $64,000,000 for irrigation projects in this State.

He also spoke about the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act and the fact that the allocation of money this year is not sufficient. I feel that it possibly may be because, with the overtaxing of our water supplies on the Darling Downs, the Callide Valley, Bundaberg and other areas and, with the restrictions that have had to be imposed on further use for irrigation purposes, possibly we will find that we have enough money on this occasion. The hon. member for Burke referred to the situation that arose in the Camooweal district. I have already replied to him, but I omitted to mention the co-operation existing between the State and Federal Governments in this matter. Recently, in answer to a question I said that I would consult with the Commonwealth Government on it, and it is still my intention to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mr. Bennett: Now say what you said you would about the hon. member for Port Curtis.

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: The hon. member for Port Curtis knows I would not say anything too bad about him. In fact, I have a pleasant surprise for him. I agree with him that the land-tenure provisions of the Harbours Act need streamlining. My department is working on it.

The hon. member for Cairns has said that John Burke Limited's vessel "Alagna" is to be taken off the Brisbane-Cairns service. If that is so, it is only because the ship can no longer compete economically with land transport. Very high labour costs are involved in running Australian ships. How can we expect ships to run competitively when seamen are provided with 20 weeks' leave each year? I understand that the labour costs involved in running the "Alagna" have risen by 60 per cent. in the past five months, and that a very high increase in costs has forced the ship off the run.

I have already replied to the hon. member's comments about the boat harbour at Cairns, and there is no need for me to elaborate on that matter any further.

The housing of Aborigines was referred to by the hon. member for Isis. I point out that my department has purchased three homes in the Hervey Bay area, and naturally housing for Aborigines will be kept continually under review.

I do not suppose that any of my departments has been the subject of more debate in the presentation of this year's Estimates than has the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. In the northernmost part of Queensland the department certainly has a problem on its hands in housing Aborigines, especially on Thursday Island. It is doing everything possible to develop Bamaga so that that place can take some of the overflow from Thursday Island and other places where it is impossible to cater sufficiently for Aborigines. The week-end after next I will be visiting Bamaga to open a new hospital and a new school. Electricity is supplied to the reserve, and a new wharf has been constructed. As well, a 12-mile pipeline brings water from the Jardine River, so that Bamaga is assured of an unlimited water supply.

All these benefits will enable Bamaga to make tremendous progress and to accommodate those people who cannot be housed on Thursday Island, which simply cannot cater for a large increase in population. Its facilities are already overtaxed. The Government must look seriously at the situation and make an early decision about the future of the island. It is a pressing problem. I know it full well and it is recognised by the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Works and Housing, the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities and the Minister for Health. They are all involved in some way.

One way in which Bamaga will help is that we intend to establish a high school there, and eventually an agricultural course will be provided. As a person who has been associated with the Aborigines for a very long time, I believe that an agricultural

course at Bamaga could go a long way in training many Aboriginal and Islander boys to the stage where they can become very useful.

It is disheartening to hear so many people criticising the department from time to time and saying that we are not doing our best. This is not a new problem—it existed a long time ago—but we will not solve it by playing politics. We will solve it only if we all pull together. I intend to read to the Committee a statement by a man whom I regard as a wonderful Queenslander. Many years ago, talking about finance, he said—

> "These societies for the protection of aboriginals continually make statements to the Press and write letters in an endeavour to convey the impression that that money is taken from the aboriginals. On the contrary, it is being safeguarded for them, and hon. members will agree that we are doing right in pursuing that policy. If an aboriginal is given a pocketful of money today he will not have a penny tomorrow, nor anything to show for it. The world is full of people who feel sure they can make good use of an aboriginal's money if they can get it out of him. There is no secret about what is being done with the fund. The report shows the amounts to its credit. We have little trouble in Queensland in administering it. Persons in the North of Queensland who were exploiting the aboriginal and have been prevented, have growled about our policy, but 90 per cent. of the complaints about our treatment of the aboriginals come from people who have never seen them. Queensland is doing something for the aboriginals, and we have no reason to fear criticism from any of the Southern States."

That is an extract from a speech made by a former Premier of this State, the Honourable E. M. Hanlon. It was a problem then, and it is still a problem that we have to face up to.

It has been good having this debate. I have enjoyed it and have taken a note of the suggestions made about the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act. Like everybody else, I want to see the Act amended, but it must be done in such a way that it is for the betterment of the Aboriginal people. I am not prepared to give a licence to somebody to rob these people, who are my first concern.

I pay a tribute to the various officers in the three rather difficult departments that I control. They are made more difficult because they are separate departments. I have received wonderful co-operation from all my officers. We have worked as a team, and the only way to get the best out of anything is to work as a team in complete harmony. I have enjoyed working with each and every one of them.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 15 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for the Department of Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

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Department of Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs—	
Department of Irrigation and Water Supply ..	2,045,043
Balance of Department, Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account	50,302,347

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.