

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 31 OCTOBER 1972

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PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT (LICENSING)
BILL

INITIATION

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. W. H. Lonergan, Flinders) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Queensland Adult Probation and Parole Service, for the year 1971–72.

Minister for Education and Cultural Activities, for the year 1971.

Comptroller-General of Prisons, for the year 1971–72.

Department of Forestry, for the year 1971–72.

Rural Reconstruction Board, during the year 1971–72.

Commissioner for Transport, for the year 1971–72.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

The Harbours Acts, 1955 to 1968.

The State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1965.

By-laws under the Queensland Art Gallery Act of 1959.

Statute under the James Cook University of North Queensland Act 1970.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY; MINISTER FOR
MINES AND MAIN ROADS

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Treasurer) (11.4 a.m.): I desire to inform the House that in connection with the visit overseas of the Minister for Mines and Main Roads, His Excellency the Governor has, by virtue of the provisions of the Officials in Parliament Act 1896-1971, authorised and empowered the Honourable Sir Alan Fletcher, Minister for Education and Cultural Activities, to perform and exercise all or any of the duties, powers, and authorities imposed or conferred upon the Honourable the Minister for Mines and Main Roads by any Act, rule, practice or ordinance on and from 30 October 1972 and until the return to Queensland of the Honourable Ronald Ernest Camm.

I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the Queensland Government Gazette notification of 28 October 1972 to this effect.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the Government Gazette upon the table.

Hon. H. A. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon—Minister for Local Government and Electricity): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to regulate the provision of public entertainment in places that are not within an area of a local authority.”

Motion agreed to.

PRIVILEGE

PRESS CRITICISM OF PROCEEDINGS OF
PARLIAMENT

Mr. PORTER (Toowong): I rise on a matter of privilege. I think we are all concerned to preserve the integrity of this House, and we recognise that privilege is not just our concern as members of Parliament; it is a matter that we endeavour to preserve because we serve the interests of every citizen in the State.

We cannot expect the Press to divest itself totally of partisan, party attitudes in its reporting of the affairs of this House, but when partisan reporting includes denigration of the Chair—of either you, Mr. Speaker, or the Chairman of Committees—I say that it goes much too far, and this House cannot, and must not, allow such an action to pass unnoticed. I propose to read to the House very briefly a statement that appeared in the column “This week in Parliament” published in yesterday’s “Australian”.

Opposition Members interjected

Mr. PORTER: Honourable members would do well, in view of the situation they have created, to listen to this in silence instead of aggravating the situation.

The journalist concerned writes—

“Labor MP’s have every right to be bitter about the suspension of four of their number.

“They were indeed treated unfairly.”

Another paragraph goes on to say—

“It is unfortunate too, that the Premier, Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, bought into the argument.

“His statements that he will take severe action again could lead to the belief that the Premier and not the Speaker, Mr. Lonergan, is in charge of the House.”

Anybody who is endeavouring in any sense to be impartial knows that those statements are wrong in fact, but it is quite irrelevant whether they are true or false. What is relevant is the impudence of this type of reporting in terms of the operations of this House.

Mr. Sherrington: They are very accurate.
Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PORTER: It is a great pity that honourable members opposite do not realise what they are doing to themselves, as well as to this House. What is relevant here is the relationship of the Chair to the proceedings of the House.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I will not tolerate rowdiness. I ask the honourable member for Toowong to proceed.

Mr. PORTER: The relationship of the Chair to the proceedings of the House is something that has evolved over centuries, and it is entirely up to the House, and only the House, what members do about electing a Speaker, disagreeing with his rulings, and so on. It is not the role of the Press to denigrate the Speaker or the Chair.

The third comment of this journalist makes this point—

“Parliament becomes a farce when one side abuses its power to such an extent that rules go out the window. And the rules in the present case seem only to apply to the A.L.P.”

I believe that journalism does itself no service at all when it is partisan to this degree.

I say again that these statements are untrue on the basis of fact, and they are highly insulting both to the Chair and to Parliament. I deeply regret that we have no committee of privileges to which this matter could be referred immediately for such action as it might recommend that Parliament should take. I say that this type of writing is very bad for journalism. It is grossly impertinent to the House, to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Acting Chairman of Committees.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! What is the honourable gentleman's point of order?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: As my name was mentioned in the Press article referred to, I think it only right that I should mention—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This matter was raised on a question of privilege.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: And I am taking a point of order on it because the honourable member for Toowong—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PORTER: His name was mentioned, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: The honourable member for Toowong has indicated—

Mr. Knox: There is no point of order.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: You mind your own business.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I intend to rule against the honourable member for Salisbury on the ground that this is a matter for Parliament as a whole. Whether or not we agree wholeheartedly with the honourable member for Toowong, I think we should commend him for having the courage to rise in this Chamber and say what he thinks. Whether members of the Opposition disagree with what happened last Thursday night is beside the point. I do not think the honourable member for Salisbury has a valid point of order.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Mr. Speaker, let me say in explanation that, if it comes to this, I will direct my remarks by way of question during question time.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

“NO-FAULT” MOTOR VEHICLE PERSONAL INJURY INSURANCE

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

(1) Is he aware of recent reports, together with papers entitled “Review of Insurance in relation to Road Safety”, prepared by Professor Atiyeh and relating to “no-fault” insurance, which were sent to the Commonwealth Department of Shipping and Transport?

(2) Is he aware that the New South Wales Government is taking positive action concerning “no-fault” motor vehicle personal-injury insurance and are any comparable moves contemplated by him or his Department?

Answers:—

(1) “Yes.”

(2) “I am aware that the matter is being examined in New South Wales. Preliminary consideration is being given to Queensland’s position.”

COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATION ON TAKE-OVER OF AUSTRALIAN COMPANIES BY FOREIGN INTERESTS

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

(1) Is he aware of a Bill which was recently introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament to control the take-over of Australian companies by foreign interests through the sale of shares?

(2) Whilst the Prime Minister constantly advances the idea of co-operative federalism, is this Bill a move to scuttle the concept of a uniform Companies Act?

(3) As the legislation provides for the Commonwealth to make application to the State's Supreme Court and seek certain orders, was he consulted prior to its introduction?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "No."

(3) "There is no obligation on the Commonwealth to consult with me in regard to legislation introduced but, in this instance, I propose to examine the matter closely when a copy of the Bill is received."

OIL SPILLAGE NEAR NEWSTEAD WHARF, BRISBANE RIVER

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

(1) Did a considerable amount of oil enter the Brisbane River on Thursday, or another day of last week, in the vicinity of Newstead Wharf?

(2) Was an A.N.L. ship berthed at the wharf at the time?

(3) Was the portmaster called and did he or another person order the use of a dispersant to combat the oil pollution?

(4) Did the oil emerge from the A.N.L. ship or did it enter the river from a public drain?

(5) Did other waste matter also enter the river at that time?

(6) Did an investigation into the source of the pollution take place? If so, was the source located and, if so, what action was taken?

(7) Did the circumstances suggest that the oil was discharged in such a manner as to make it appear to have been discharged by the A.N.L. ship?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Yes."

(3) "The Assistant Harbour Master investigated the matter, and he ordered the use of dispersant."

(4) "The Assistant Harbour Master interviewed witnesses on Newstead Wharf. These witnesses stated that they had seen oil emerging from a public drain. The Assistant Harbour Master himself observed what he described in his report as black oily waste emerging from the drain."

(5) "The Assistant Harbour Master did not report any matter other than the oily waste."

(6) "As it appeared that the oily waste came from an industrial source the matter was immediately reported to the Department of Local Government with a request for investigation and report. Any further action will depend upon the outcome of these investigations."

(7) "No."

OIL AND DETERGENT POLLUTION, GREAT BARRIER REEF

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

(1) With further reference to his Answer to my Question on October 25 concerning pollution by oil spillage and the use of dispersants on the Great Barrier Reef, has the Government, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, reached agreement on steps to be undertaken to prevent and/or combat future oil spillages in reef waters?

(2) If so, is it proposed to (a) legislate to introduce and/or increase substantially fines for oil-spill damage and (b) compel ship-owners and oil companies to take out massive insurance coverage against oil-pollution damage in Great Barrier Reef waters?

(3) As these matters are of grave concern to North Queenslanders, what further proposals are mooted in an approach to this problem and when is it expected that such provisions will be enacted?

Answers:—

(1) "Agreement has been reached between the State and Commonwealth Governments that stockpiles of dispersants and associated equipment will be set up by the Commonwealth Government at Brisbane and Cairns. The material will be available for use by State authorities if required. A decision as to whether or not to use the dispersants is made by Commonwealth/State co-ordination involving my Department of Harbours and Marine, the Department of Primary Industries and the Commonwealth Department of Shipping and Transport."

(2) "(a) Yes. (b) Compulsory insurance against liability for oil pollution damage is provided for in an International Convention agreed in Brussels in 1969. However this convention is not yet in force and there are no immediate plans to introduce such legislation."

(3) "Legislation dealing with oil pollution generally in Queensland is being reviewed and the Government's proposals will be made known when all aspects have been fully considered. Every endeavour will be made to introduce appropriate legislation during the next Session of Parliament."

PHYSICAL EDUCATION COURSES,
TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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

(1) At which tertiary institutions are diploma and degree courses in physical education provided?

(2) What is the length of the course in each case?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "There are no degree or diploma courses in physical education as such offered at tertiary institutions in Queensland. A three-year course operates at the Kelvin Grove Teachers' College which produces teachers who teach health and physical education and an academic subject at high schools. They receive a diploma in teaching from the college. Three units of physical education may be taken at the University of Queensland as part of an education or arts degree."

LEGAL AID BUREAU

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

(1) What was the total number of applications for legal aid in 1970-71 and 1971-72?

(2) How many people received legal aid in 1970-71 and 1971-72?

(3) What is the total staff of the Legal Aid Bureau and what are their occupations?

Answers:—

(1) "(a) 6,319. (b) 7,113."

(2) "Legal aid and legal advice was given to 5,410 applicants in 1970-71 and to 5,804 applicants in 1971-72."

(3) "A secretary and a part-time assistant secretary, each of whom are solicitors, a bookkeeper and six stenographers."

BOAT CONTRACTING FIRM, MONARCH
PRODUCTS

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

(1) Was an advertisement headed "Boat Contractors", which appeared in the business-investment columns of *The Courier-Mail* of October 25, made on behalf of a company or firm called Monarch Products?

(2) How many complaints has the Consumer Affairs Bureau received in relation to this firm or company?

(3) Is any action planned by the Bureau in relation to the company?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "I am advised that it does not appear that persons who respond to advertisements of this nature offering employment opportunities are consumers for the purposes of the Consumer Affairs Act."

OFFENSIVE ODOUR FROM HEMMANT
TANNERY

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

As the Minister for Local Government stated, in Answer to my Question on October 27, that odours complained of recently have been shown to be caused by the disposal of tannery wastes on land, what action has been taken to ensure that residents of the Hemmant-Tingalpa-Murarrie area are not subjected to foul odours from this tannery, which are endangering their health and polluting their homes?

Answer:—

"Odour from the tannery at Hemmant has been investigated by the Division of Air Pollution Control. Discussions have been held with the company and a new water treatment system is to be installed. Detailed proposals for the scheme are being prepared by the company and will be examined by the division to ensure that suitable odour control methods are incorporated."

EDUCATION PROGRAMME, "BREAK-
THROUGH TO LITERACY"

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

(1) How many primary schools are using the "Breakthrough to Literacy" programme for language skills?

(2) To what extent will this programme be extended next year?

(3) What evaluation has his Department made of it?

Answers:—

(1) "Sixty primary schools have been provided with the 'Breakthrough to Literacy' materials. These have been distributed to schools in all inspectorial districts throughout the State."

(2 and 3) "An evaluation of the programme is being carried out at the present time. Any extension of the scheme will depend upon the outcome of this evaluation."

FARM MACHINERY MANUFACTURERS
AND ENGINEERING ESTABLISHMENTS,
RURAL AREAS

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

(1) How many farm-machinery manufacturers and machinery distributors have

withdrawn from Queensland rural areas in the last three years?

(2) Has any estimate been made of the service-engineering establishments which have been forced to close in country towns because of the cut-back in demand during the same period?

(3) Is he aware of the difficulties in some towns of obtaining service tradesmen?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "These are not matters which come within my administrative responsibilities."

USE OF HORMONE D.E.S. IN LOT-FEEDING OF CATTLE

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

(1) Has the hormone D.E.S. been used in lot-feeding in Queensland and has this hormone been banned in any overseas countries?

(2) Has this stimulant been proven to produce more rapid beef with less feed?

(3) Has this synthetic implant been known to produce or is it suspected of producing cancer in living tissues and, if so, is cancer transmissible to humans who consume D.E.S.-contaminated meats?

Answers:—

(1) "D.E.S. (diethylstilboestrol) has not been used in lot-feeding in Queensland. A limited amount of related oestrogens, hexoestrol and oestradiol benzoate and progesterone were used before oestrogens were declared prohibited substances under the Agricultural Standards Acts on April 28, 1962. Oestrogens have been banned in a number of European countries and a ban on D.E.S. is to come into force in the U.S.A. shortly."

(2) "D.E.S. treatment of lot-fed steers increases liveweight gain by 12-18 per cent. depending on method of treatment, dose rate and plane of nutrition and it also increases efficiency of conversion of feed."

(3) "Oestrogens have been suspected of causing cancer but there is no proof of this."

MEMBERSHIP, RURAL YOUTH CLUBS

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

What is the number of Junior Farmers' Association members in Queensland and how many (a) originate from the land, (b) work on farms and (c) are urban-based?

Answer:—

"Rural Youth Club membership up to September 30, 1972, was approximately 2,403. Of these 52 per cent. were males and 48 per cent. females. (a) Members do not indicate on their enrolment cards if they originated from the land but from surveys conducted in previous years it could be expected that up to 75 per cent. of members other than student members would have spent their childhood in rural homes. (b) 463 male members or 20.5 per cent. of the total membership and 110 female members or 5.1 per cent. work on farms. (c) 259 male members or 11.5 per cent. of the total membership and 326 female members or 14.5 per cent. are in non-rural occupations. 227 male members or 10.1 per cent. of the total membership and 353 female members or 15.7 per cent. are students at high schools or tertiary institutions. Of the remaining 9.6 per cent. males and 13.0 per cent. females, some work in semi-rural occupations. Others failed to indicate their occupation classification on their enrolment card."

PURCHASE OF LAND BY FOREIGN COMPANIES; LANDHOLDING, SYZGY PTY. LTD.

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

Further to the Answer by the Minister for Justice to my Question on October 26—

(1) Where is Syzgy Pty. Ltd. holding land in Queensland and what area is involved?

(2) What is the duration and what are the terms of its permit?

(3) What are the details of the certificate of incorporation?

(4) For what purpose is the land being used?

Answers:—

(1) "My Department has no record of Syzgy Pty. Ltd., holding any leasehold land in Queensland. It does not maintain any record of freehold land ownership."

(2 to 4) "I am unable to answer these Questions which should be directed to my colleague, the Honourable the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General."

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR NEW JETTY, KEPPEL ISLAND

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

(1) Has consideration been given to making available State Government financial assistance to enable a landing jetty to be constructed at the tourist resort known as Keppel Island?

(2) If so, (a) what is the amount of the assistance contemplated, (b) under what conditions will it be given, (c) what contribution will be required from the owners of the island and (d) when is it intended that any such assistance will be available?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "(a) 75 per cent. from State sources and 25 per cent. from either the resort owner, or the local authority by arrangement with the resort owner. (b) That accommodation of acceptable island resort tourist standard be available to cater for 60 persons. (c) The preliminary estimate of cost is \$120,000, which means the estimated contribution on behalf of the resort owner would be \$30,000. (d) No provision has been made in the 1972-73 Budget for this development. The matter will be reviewed when the Budget for 1973-74 is being prepared."

TEACHERS' COLLEGE, CAPRICORNIA INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

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

In view of his Answers to my previous Questions in 1971 to the effect that the Education-Teachers' College section of the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education would be ready for operation at the commencement of the 1972 academic year, and as education students are still using temporary facilities ten months after the commencement of their course, when is it now anticipated that the teachers'-college section of the institute will be completed?

Answer:—

"The latest anticipated date of completion of the teacher education facilities at the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education is December 18, 1972."

WEIGHT LOADINGS, BOAT RAMPS

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

Is it the responsibility of the Department of Harbours and Marine or of the local authority to determine any increase in weight loadings permitted on boat ramps within a local authority area?

Answer:—

"It is the responsibility of the Department of Harbours and Marine to determine any increase in weight loadings permitted on boat ramps."

MAIZE DISEASE, AMERICAN SOUTHERN BLIGHT

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

(1) Has there been any spread in North Queensland of the incidence of the wind-blown maize disease, American Southern Blight, which was reported last year?

(2) Are precautionary measures against the spread of this disease being taken and, if so, is the emphasis on resistant varieties or on quarantine control?

Answers:—

(1) "The disease was surveyed by the Department last season and found present in most major maize growing districts, including south-eastern Queensland. It also occurs in New South Wales and the Northern Territory."

(2) "In view of the wide-spread occurrence of the disease, control by quarantine measures would be impracticable. Emphasis has been placed on the use of resistant hybrids, i.e. those produced without using the Texas male sterility factor, which governs susceptibility to this disease. Seed producing companies have been advised that the strain of the fungus present in Queensland is highly pathogenic on susceptible hybrids, and these companies are taking appropriate action. The Department also has produced an advisory leaflet for farmers, explaining the disease and control measures necessary."

FATALITIES AND INJURIES IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS, ROCKHAMPTON DISTRICT

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

How many persons have been (a) killed and (b) injured in (i) the city of Rockhampton and (ii) the Rockhampton Police District, during each of the last three years?

Answer:—

"Statistics concerning total number of persons injured by local authority area or persons seriously injured by police district are not readily available. However, the following information is supplied:—

ROCKHAMPTON POLICE DISTRICT

Year Ended	Persons Killed	Total Persons Injured
June 30, 1970 ..	49	945
June 30, 1971 ..	59	1,002
June 30, 1972 ..	45	961

ROCKHAMPTON LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA

Year Ended	Persons Killed	Persons Seriously Injured
June 30, 1970 ..	12	250
June 30, 1971 ..	18	298
June 30, 1972 ..	6	301 "

TRAINING OF ABORIGINES AND ISLANDERS ON GOVERNMENT PRAWN TRAWLER

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

(1) How many Islanders and/or Aborigines have been trained on the Government-owned prawn trawler?

(2) What is the normal time taken to train a crewman?

(3) Have crewmen been able to obtain employment after completion of their training and, if so, how many have been engaged?

Answers:—

(1) "Twelve Torres Strait Islanders and five Aborigines have received some training while a further four Torres Strait Islanders and one Aborigine are in training."

(2) "Crew members, 12 months; skipper, minimum two years dependent upon experience during and prior to training course."

(3) "Yes. All trainees have obtained employment but not necessarily within the prawning industry. This is a matter of individual choice."

STAFF RESIGNATIONS, ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

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

(1) In view of the shortage of staff members on many Aboriginal communities and, in particular, Edward River, has he ascertained the reason for the many resignations and, if so, has he made any effort to overcome the reason and thus retain staff?

(2) If not, will he in future contact people on communities who have problems which could result in resignations?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "As resignations from the Public Service are matters of personal volition, it is not obligatory to impart

reasons prompting such decision. However, senior officers of the Department regularly visit all centres, during which time opportunity is taken to assess staff stability and relationships on an individual basis through personal discussion and thus we are aware of the complexity of the many problems which culminate in such decisions and, of course, wherever possible, remedial action is taken."

MEDICAL STAFF, BUNDABERG HOSPITAL

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

(1) How many doctors are employed at the Bundaberg General Hospital?

(2) Is this number sufficient for the needs of the community and, if not, what is the number required?

Answers:—

(1) "Seven full-time and seven part-time. The full-time medical officers consist of the superintendent, two registrars, and four resident medical officers. A full establishment is presently employed."

(2) "Over a ten-year period the total number of public general admissions to the Bundaberg Hospital has fallen from 2,772 to 2,277. The daily average of public general inpatients has decreased from 112.7 in 1962-63 to 84.5 in 1971-72. Public maternity admissions have increased from 426 in 1962-63 to 483 in 1971-72, whilst the daily average of public maternity inpatients has decreased from 12.3 to 9.13 for the same period. The drop in daily average, despite an increase in the number of admissions, is due to the fact that the average length of stay of maternity patients over this ten-year period decreased considerably from 10.54 days to 6.9 days. Length of stay in hospital is, of course, determined by the medical staff of the hospital, consistent with the patient's medical condition. The daily average number of outpatient visits has increased from 127.9 to 144.91. The medical staff establishment in this period has increased by one senior resident medical officer. There has been some difficulty on past occasions in recruiting the full establishment but in a letter to the Director-General on January 13, 1972, the medical superintendent stated that due to efforts of the Department the hospital was 'fully staffed for the first time since many many years'. I would add that the Department is willing to examine any suggestions put forward by the Bundaberg Hospitals Board regarding staffing."

FEASIBILITY STUDY, INCLUSION OF
MORETON BAY ISLANDS IN
REDLAND SHIRE

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

With reference to the 1971-72 budget item which indicated that \$1,500 would be made available to the Redland Shire Council for a survey to be conducted into the feasibility of including some bay-island enclaves into the shire—

(1) To which bay islands did the survey apply?

(2) When was the survey commenced and/or completed?

(3) Were any limits placed on the extent of the survey, especially in relation to the wishes of the residents of the islands concerned?

(4) If the survey has been completed, will he make copies of the report available to Honourable Members on request?

Answers:—

(1) "I am advised that the feasibility study, which was commissioned by the Redland Shire Council and undertaken by the council's consulting engineers, covered Russell, Karragarra, Lamb, and Macleay Islands. I am advised, however, that, in dealing with the report furnished by the consultants, the council will consider the feasibility of including in the shire other islands adjacent thereto, which are also outside local authority jurisdiction."

(2) "The feasibility study has been completed and I am advised that it will be considered by the council at a meeting to be held on November 9, 1972."

(3) "Whilst the scope of the feasibility study was arranged by the council, I am advised that it covered matters generally related to the provision of Local Government services on the islands in question. I am further advised that, for the purpose of the study, a public meeting was held in April, 1972, to which representatives of the islands concerned were invited."

(4) "As previously mentioned, the feasibility study was commissioned by the council and accordingly the making available copies of the report thereon to Members of Parliament would be a matter for the council. As the Honourable Member has been advised in Answer to a previous Question, consideration is being given to the inclusion in local authority areas of all parts of Queensland which are not presently so included, and in furtherance of this proposal, I visited Macleay Island yesterday relative to another matter expected to come before the House in the near future."

DELAYS AND STAFF, OUTPATIENTS'
DEPARTMENT, PRINCESS ALEXANDRA
HOSPITAL

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

As I have received several complaints concerning crowding and delay at the outpatients' waiting room, Princess Alexandra Hospital—

(1) How many patients collapsed and how many died while waiting for treatment during 1971-72?

(2) Do waiting patients have to stand for long periods on some days of the week?

(3) What has been the increase or decrease in (a) medical, (b) prescription-dispensing and (c) nursing staff since last year?

(4) Are patients, who are waiting long hours for prescriptions, giving up and leaving their free prescriptions behind?

(5) If any of the complaints are factual, will he take the necessary steps to remedy the situation?

Answers:—

(1) "No incidents of this nature are known to the staff of the outpatients' department of Princess Alexandra Hospital."

(2) "Seats are provided in the waiting area and seating is moved from other areas of the outpatients' department to meet any shortages which may occur. There is no necessity for waiting patients to stand for long periods."

(3) "There has been no change in the medical, dispensing or nursing staff establishments since the end of 1971."

(4) "I am informed by the South Brisbane Hospitals Board that the Board does not keep any official records of the time patients may have to wait to collect their medicine from the dispensary. The waiting time must fluctuate in accordance with the numbers who present for treatment and whilst on occasions the waiting period for some may be somewhat lengthy others may have to wait for as little as ten minutes only. A number of people do leave their prescription books and pick up their medicine later in the day or during the next day. It would seem that in most instances patients do this to suit their own convenience."

(5) The South Brisbane Hospitals Board will remedy any situation within its control and if additional staff are considered necessary for the outpatients' department no doubt the Board will make a submission to my Department."

PROTECTION OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY
BY POLICE DOGS

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

With reference to the front-page report in *The Courier-Mail* of October 26 concerning the use of police dogs to protect Government property, will he assure the House and parents in Queensland that, when such canine protectors are used on school property, children and/or parents who come to the schools early or late will not be savaged by these German shepherd dogs and that specially-trained personnel alone will take care of the dogs?

Answer:—

“Yes. In seeking my assurances in this matter, which can only be replied to in the affirmative, surely the Honourable Member is not attempting to cast reflection on the intelligence and integrity of the members of the Queensland Police Force who will be in charge of the animals and to suggest that the police dogs would be handled with wanton abandon.”

ALLOCATIONS FOR REPLACEMENT AND
MAINTENANCE, TREASURY COMPUTER

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

With reference to \$750,000 which was set aside in 1971-72 from Consolidated Revenue to a Computer Replacement Fund—

(1) What is the anticipated cost of replacing the Treasury computer and when will it be replaced?

(2) Will there be a regular allocation of this nature in the interim and consequent to the installation of the new computer or only when he is embarrassed by the inability to spend funds available to him in a financial year?

(3) As the Treasury computer is only one of many major Governmental items which require replacement from time to time, what other allocations of this nature are made?

(4) In view of his voluntary cut-back of \$5 million from revenue expenditure at Mr. Gorton's request in 1970-71, how does he reconcile that no expenditure was made from the deferred Maintenance Account in 1971-72, the balance of just over \$1 million in that fund and an allocation of \$174,000 last year to that fund?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) “The decision to replace the Treasury computer was taken early in 1972. The anticipated cost was \$1.5 million, and the intention was that the replacement be effected in 1972-73. To avoid such a large charge against the 1972-73 budget, it was decided to spread the

impact over the two years, and a first charge was thus made against 1971-72. Subsequent to this, and before the 1972-73 budget was drawn up, it was found that the equipment presently used by the State Government Insurance Office and soon to be replaced by a new Twin Cyber 72 computer, would be ideally suited to the Treasury needs. It is in excellent condition and could be obtained at a price much less than that for a new computer. It is anticipated that the \$750,000 provision made in 1971-72 will cover the cost of purchase and installation of the S.G.I.O. computer and other ancillary equipment. The arrangement is a very satisfactory one to both the Treasury and S.G.I.O. The S.G.I.O., whose work load has outstripped the capacity of the computer, will receive market value for this equipment, while the acquisition by the Treasury will result in the securing of first-class equipment at a saving of at least \$750,000 in this year's budget.”

(3) “None. The Treasury computer replacement represented a possible outlay out of Consolidated Revenue Fund of \$1.5 million. No other item of this magnitude is due for replacement.”

(4) “Maintenance expenditure from Consolidated Revenue Fund in 1971-72 was \$5,362,000 or \$1,716,000 more than in 1970-71. This was an increase of 47 per cent. in one year in the value of maintenance work undertaken and was financed without recourse to the Deferred Maintenance Reserve which remains intact for use in future years when stresses on the Consolidated Revenue Fund might have otherwise precluded a full maintenance programme. The \$174,000 represents special unemployment relief allocations committed but unspent at June 30.”

HEALTH DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES,
HOSPITALS BOARDS

Mr. D'Arcy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

What are the specific responsibilities of his Department in relation to the operation of hospitals boards?

Answer:—

“The attention of the Honourable Member is directed to the *Hospitals Act* 1936-1971 where the responsibilities of hospitals boards and their relationship with the Department of Health are clearly defined.”

ADDITIONAL STAFF AND ACCOMMODATION,
SOUTHPORT HOSPITALS BOARD

Mr. D'Arcy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

What requests regarding extra staff and accommodation has his Department received from the Southport Hospitals Board during the last 12 months?

Answer:—

"During the past twelve months the Gold Coast Hospitals Board has submitted requests for the following additional staff:—one senior resident medical officer; one junior resident medical officer; three medical officers for the Xmas-New Year period 1971-72; one nurse educator; one charge sister; four trained nurses; five Grade II trained nurses; thirteen student nurses; one physiotherapist; one orthopaedic technician; one medical laboratory technician; one laboratory assistant; one dietitian; two wardsmen; and one clerk typist. Most of the applications that have been examined to date have been approved. In addition, the Board sought approval to increase the number of sessions conducted by visiting specialists in orthopaedics, paediatrics, obstetrics, urology, psychiatry, anaesthetics, ENT Surgery, dermatology, pathology and general surgery. The applications were recently discussed by the Director-General of Health and Medical Services with the newly appointed medical superintendent of the Southport Hospital and the Board is being advised of the additional positions approved. The employment of student nurses who attended the Preliminary Nursing Training School as supernumerary to the approved nursing staff establishment was requested by the Board and subsequently approved. The Board has submitted a request for the provision of 30 additional beds for general patients within the existing hospital complex. The submission has been investigated and a decision will shortly be made. Extra accommodation which has been occupied or approved during the past twelve months, all as a result of submissions from the Board, include Ward 4 which contains 31 beds for private and intermediate patients, extensions to the dental clinic, the provision of a new nurses tutorial unit and the establishment of a pathology laboratory within an existing structure. In addition, the planning of a new multi-storied ward and services block to be constructed fronting Little High Street has been commenced and preliminary conferences have determined the general concept and staging of this multi-million dollar proposal."

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

FUNCTION IN ASSEMBLY HALL, CAVENDISH ROAD STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. NEWTON: I ask the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities: Further to my question of Friday last relative to the use of the Cavendish Road State High School Assembly Hall for political purposes and the raising of funds for a sitting Liberal

Federal member of Parliament, has he investigated the position, and is he of the opinion that a closed meeting on this issue comes within the ambit of cultural activities?

Sir ALAN FLETCHER: I suspect that there is an undercurrent of provocation in the honourable gentleman's question. I have been in touch with all those concerned in this matter, and I think that a report in this morning's newspaper quite accurately conveyed what I said to the various people involved.

There was a suggestion that this happening could be construed as political favouritism, but I drew the attention of those concerned to the fact that no parties are precluded from using State schools or State school buildings. It is a matter of their taking full responsibility for looking after the buildings concerned. I had reason to intervene only about three weeks ago, when one of the department's headmasters had said "No" to a local A.L.P. branch. I pointed out to him that I thought that that was something which was quite in order and he reversed his decision.

With respect to the further suggestion that drink was going to be consumed at this dinner, I inquired and, as a result of finding out the whole circumstances, I suggested to the principal and to the parents and citizens' association that they view the matter, although it was theirs to decide—

Mr. Wright: Is it?

Sir ALAN FLETCHER: In respect of the immediate decision, I think it is. Drink is a matter on which the department lays down rules, but if the honourable member listens he will understand my point of view. My point of view is that they could very well—and they would be supported by me in doing this—consider the prohibition on drink to mean drink other than table wine; that they could say that table wine is so much a usual thing at a dinner that, as long as there was not any other drink either before or after the dinner, they could reasonably take that view. I said, "If you do, I will support you, because I think this is reasonable common sense." As far as I know, that is the way it has been decided, and I again say that that is, I think, a reasonable, common-sense exposition of the whole situation.

Mr. NEWTON: I ask this supplementary question: What are the terms and the financial conditions by way of charge for the letting of the assembly hall, does such remuneration cover the cost of the cleaning of the hall, who receives the payment for the hire of the hall, and what fund is it paid into?

Sir ALAN FLETCHER: As far as I know, it is paid into school funds, and the funds so received are used solely and entirely for the purposes of furthering the interests of the school concerned.

Mr. Houston: How much did they pay?

Sir ALAN FLETCHER: I did not inquire as to how much would be paid. It can be taken for granted that there is a profit in it for those schools that have that sort of building paid off. Good luck to them. The money is used to the advantage of the schools and to the benefit of their students.

INJURIES TO BABIES, SOUTHPORT GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr. HINZE: I ask the Minister for Health: As there is great concern on the Gold Coast about recent happenings at the Southport General Hospital, has he paid a visit to that hospital recently? In the interests of the nursing staff, particularly the nursing sister or nurse who was involved, would he make a full statement to the House either now or at some time later in the week? Pregnant women who will have to enter the hospital are very concerned, as are also the members of the nursing staff. In the circumstances, it is essential that a full and clear statement be made to the House.

Mr. TOOTH: The matters to which the honourable member refers are currently under investigation by the police and under consideration by the hospitals board at Southport. It is the responsibility of the police to investigate and to decide whether anything has occurred which requires further action on their part. It is the responsibility of the board to inquire and to determine whether any further action is required on its part. Neither of those authorities has sought the assistance of the Department of Health in this matter, although the department is being kept informed. It would be not only inappropriate but also improper for me, in this House, to make any statements which would influence, or which could be interpreted as influencing, either the course of the investigation by the police or the activities of the board in carrying out its responsibilities. As I indicated in reply to questions that were asked last week, at this stage I do not propose to make any statement on the matter.

PRESS REPORT OF PARLIAMENTARY A.L.P. MEETING

Mr. HINZE: I ask the Treasurer and Deputy Premier: Has his attention been drawn to a statement in today's "Courier-Mail" headed, "Attempt to report Labor man fails"? Apparently some responsible members of the A.L.P. are concerned about events in the House, and one member in particular is reported to have told the party, in effect, that he found certain conduct in the Chamber deplorable and hoped it would never happen again. He is understood to have expressed concern that the public must not be given the impression that the Opposition is a rabble. In the absence of the Premier, perhaps the Deputy Leader of the Government may wish to comment on this matter.

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Sir GORDON CHALK: I did notice the article in "The Courier-Mail" that the honourable member has referred to.

Mr. Sherrington: You just happened to read it.

Sir GORDON CHALK: Yes, I did happen to read it. It was written by Peter Trundle, whom I regard as a parliamentary roundsman who usually obtains fairly accurate information.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I rise to a point of order. Last week, Mr. Speaker, you ruled that you would not tolerate facetious questions and answers. I seek your ruling on this question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I remind the honourable member that a short time ago he gave a notice of a question—

Mr. SHERRINGTON: And it was a very important question.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter of opinion. However, the honourable member was heard in silence, and I now ask him to listen to the reply of the Treasurer to this question in silence.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I have asked for your ruling. Last week you said that you would not allow facetious questions. I am now asking you to indicate whether, in your opinion, this is such a question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I am simply extending to the honourable member for South Coast treatment similar to that accorded to the honourable member for Salisbury when he was giving notice of a question a short time ago.

Sir GORDON CHALK: I have already said that I read the article referred to and that it was written by Peter Trundle, whom I regard as one who usually obtains fairly accurate information. The article was a clear indication to me that a number of Right-wing members of the Labor Party are endeavouring to clean out some of the radicals within their party. And I compliment them for it.

It is true that, over recent weeks, the dignity of this House has deteriorated. This has been brought about by the introduction into the Chamber of a number of radicals who are attempting to take over control of the House.

Mr. HOUSTON: I rise to a point of order. You, Mr. Speaker, and your predecessors have ruled over many years that opinions cannot be sought or expressed by way of questions. What the Treasurer has said is not only untrue, but it is also his opinion only, and I ask you to rule accordingly.

Mr. SPEAKER: In the framing of a question, it is not permissible to seek an opinion.

Mr. MARGINSON: I rise to a point of order. The very last words of the question, as you will find on the record, were to the effect, "Would the Deputy Premier like to comment on this matter?"

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member for South Coast said that, I certainly did not hear him.

Sir GORDON CHALK: I will make the remainder of my reply very brief. I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that he was not in the Chamber when this unruly conduct took place. As I was pointing out, during recent weeks the dignity of this House has deteriorated.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I rise to a point of order. The tenor of the Treasurer's answer would indicate that the interruptions to the proceedings in this Chamber are being caused by members of the Opposition. The honourable member for Merthyr, for one, has been the worst offender in this respect, yet he has never even been warned, let alone suspended.

Mr. LANE: I rise to a point of order. The remarks of the honourable member for Salisbury are untrue and offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This incident has blown up out of all proportion. Although, in the past, I have warned the honourable member for Merthyr, I have not warned him under Standing Order 123A. However, he has been very close to receiving such a warning, and I feel quite sure that if, in future, he transgresses he will be on the way out. I hope that the Treasurer will come to the point of his answer.

Sir GORDON CHALK: As you have said, Mr. Speaker, the matter has received sufficient airing. I will conclude by saying that those honourable members who were in this Parliament during last year's session will realise that, for some reason, there has been a change in the conduct of the House. All honourable members know that the Government endeavours to uphold the dignity of Parliament; unfortunately, the Opposition has upset it.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Once again I warn honourable members that, in future, questions of this nature will not be allowed. I will not permit honourable members on one side of the Chamber to endeavour to score off those on the other side. Such conduct serves no useful purpose. Although some members may derive satisfaction from it, it certainly does nothing for this Parliament. I repeat, in future I will not tolerate it.

INJURIES TO BABIES, SOUTHPORT GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr. MELLOY: I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Health, and, in doing so, remind him of a question that I asked him last Friday relative to a statement published in the "Gold Coast Bulletin". Is he now in a position to reply to the question that I asked him on Friday?

Mr. TOOTH: I must confess that I cannot recall the precise terms of the question to which the honourable member has referred. Will he elaborate on it?

Mr. MELLOY: Last Friday the Minister answered that he would have a look at the article and advise me subsequently. I assume that he would have had the opportunity of reading the article between last Friday and today.

Mr. TOOTH: I think I recall the question. It contained a reference to an assertion published in the newspaper to the effect that parents were instructed by somebody or other not to communicate with anybody regarding the matters that were concerning them. Was that the problem?

Mr. MELLOY: Yes. Actually, Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister whether or not his attention had been drawn to the statement and to the fact that parents had been refused information by the hospital staff, and, as well, had been told not to raise the matter any further.

Mr. TOOTH: Now that the honourable member has refreshed my memory, I can tell him that, subsequent to his question, I have seen the article and I have also made inquiries into the matter. My advice is that the statements are without foundation.

USE OF SCHOOL HALLS FOR POLITICAL MEETINGS

Mr. R. E. MOORE: I ask the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities: In view of the concern expressed by the Australian Labor Party over the use of a school hall by the Liberal Party, and at the payment of fees therefor, is the Minister aware whether the A.L.P. pays either parents and citizens' associations or the Education Department for the use of the various school premises that it uses regularly for party-political meetings?

Mr. Newton: We do.

Mr. R. E. MOORE: Does the A.L.P. pay any fee?

Sir ALAN FLETCHER: So far as I know—there may be exceptions to this that I wot not of—there are no charges for meetings of branches of any political party.

Mr. Wright: We give donations.

Mr. Newton: We make donations.

Sir ALAN FLETCHER: If in the goodness of their hearts party members make donations, they are gratefully accepted and I admire them very much for it.

CONTROL OF PROFESSIONAL BOXING

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: I have a question for the Minister for Health. By way of preface I advise the honourable gentleman that a booklet entitled "Stop the Fight. An Indictment of the Boxing Game" has been widely distributed. On page 10 of this booklet reference is made to the fact that an Aborigine from Cairns who had had numerous fights in the South was subsequently diagnosed as suffering from brain damage, that his eyesight could be imperilled and that he was strongly advised not to fight again. We are then told that records of subsequent boxing contests in Queensland show that the boy is still fighting in the North. Could the Minister establish the veracity of this statement and, as a natural corollary, would he give sympathetic consideration to a tighter control of professional boxing in Queensland?

Mr. TOOTH: I shall do my best to investigate the matter and see what I can ascertain for the information of the honourable member. With respect to the control of boxing, I am not too certain that this is a matter that would come within my jurisdiction. I think it would be a matter for the Minister for Sport. At any rate, we will investigate that point also.

At 12 noon,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES— FIRST AND SECOND ALLOTTED DAYS

(The Acting Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1972-73

LANDS AND FORESTRY

CHIEF OFFICE

Hon. W. A. R. RAE (Gregory—Minister for Lands and Forestry) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

"That \$2,962,727 be granted for 'Department of Lands—Chief Office'."

Each year sees the need to appropriate increasing amounts for the requirements of my department and, in the main, this reflects the increasing escalation in costs facing most sections of the economy. It tends to emphasise, too, the problems of the man on the land in trying to cope with that and other difficult situations at a time when income is either falling or non-existent and it is the man on the land who is the fundamental concern of me and every officer of my department.

I do not have to remind honourable members of the problems which have faced primary industry in this State over the past decade. They are all only too well aware of them, and although I have held this portfolio for a relatively short period—since June last—I have acknowledged for a long time the efforts of the Government to maintain the rural economy and the viability not only of the rural sector but of the whole State. The wool industry has been hardest hit by both market recession and drought, and while the situation looks a little more promising, there is still a long way to go and a tremendous backlog to make up.

The annual report of my department has already been tabled in the House and I will not repeat in detail the whole of that report, but there are many aspects which should be brought to the notice of honourable members to emphasise the positive actions of the Government, through my department, to bring relief to those who require it. The record shows quite clearly that this Government has made a tremendous contribution to assisting those in our rural community who have been beset by drought, market recessions and fluctuations and, in some areas, plagues of mice or insects. This is quite apart from financial assistance given by the Commonwealth.

Drought is no stranger to the average Queenslander. Both country and city dwellers are aware of the regular occurrence of dry periods of various length, but I state without qualification that the 1960's have been devastating. Droughts are tragic, but drought allied with a market collapse such as occurred in the wool industry, and to some degree in the grain and dairying industries, spells disaster.

To assist wool-growers, the Government introduced the wool industry assistance scheme of 1970 with a view to decreasing the rents payable on leasehold sheep properties to a level more consistent with the real state of the industry. It is the function of the Land Court to determine the rent of grazing selections and pastoral holdings, having regard to various factors, including the state of the particular industry and the like. While the industry position resulted in lower determinations of sheep property rentals and while the Crown sought lower rental standards, it was considered that those lessees whose properties were not due for rent reappraisal for some years were at quite some disadvantage.

Under the wool industry assistance scheme, Cabinet approved a 30 per cent remission of rent to the lessees of those holdings that were used predominantly for wool production and had been drought-stricken for a period of at least two years from 1 January 1965. The remission applied to grazing selections as from 1 April 1970, and to pastoral holdings from 1 July 1970. Again, this concession applied to individuals—not companies. As the wool industry position worsened, the situation was reviewed and resulted in

Cabinet's approving even further remissions by increasing the existing 30 per cent remission applicable to certain districts to a total of from 35 per cent in the Goondiwindi, Dalby and Roma districts through to 50 per cent in the "heartbreak" districts of Longreach (which is in my own area), Jundah, Winton, Hughenden, Cloncurry and Boulia, as from 1 January 1972. Some remained at 30 per cent, but it is significant that there was a marked reduction, which was well received and lauded by the people who live in that part of Queensland.

The concession on each holding remains operative till the rent is next determined by the Land Court, unless the remission is sooner revoked by the Governor in Council. Up till 30 June 1972, total rents of almost \$1,775,000 had been remitted covering 1,718 holdings. Again, this is an example of practical help to a hard-pressed sector of the community—a sector on which the very well-being of the State depends. I am certain that no honourable member would deny that.

As is also well known, there have been problems in the grain-growing industry, particularly in the Jimbour and Cecil Plains areas, which were badly affected by drought, and where blocks were held mainly under perpetual lease selection. Considering all the circumstances, Cabinet decided to extend the principle of 30 per cent rent remission also to perpetual lease selections used for grain production in drought-affected areas in respect of rents due on 31 March 1970. This has been progressively extended to take in the years 1971 and 1972. So far, a total of \$120,588 has been remitted on 382 perpetual lease selections, mainly on the Jimbour and Cecil Plains repurchased estates. This is not a large amount in total, but it is significant to the individual farmer.

While the measures I have mentioned afforded quite some relief to a large sector of our lessees, a considerable number over the years took advantage of the Government's policy to allow conversion of their selections to freeholding tenure. These people were paying not an annual rent in the true sense of the word, but an annual instalment against the purchase price of the land they were buying under the freeholding provisions.

It was obvious that they, too, required some form of relief, and examination of the problem of those settlers culminated in the Land Act amendment and the Primary Producers' Assistance Act being introduced in 1971. Under that Act, a lessee with freeholding tenure could have the term of his lease extended by 10 years with the balance of purchase money, plus any arrears of instalments, being recalculated over the extended period. In the more deserving cases, the need to pay one instalment was postponed and included in the recalculated liability structure.

Of course, this scheme did not remit any amounts—after all, the land was being purchased, not rented—but it immediately extinguished existing instalment debts and projected that debt into a future liability at a somewhat reduced figure. It lightened the financial load, and gave those lessees some breathing space. More than 2,100 lessees took advantage of the scheme, and arrears of instalments compounded totalled almost \$300,000.

While the 1971 Act provided valuable assistance to the freeholder, it also provided some further assistance to grazing selection and pastoral lease lessees by allowing those who so desired, and who met certain requirements, and whose leases had been current for at least five years, to extend the term of the lease by 10 years. More than 200 such applications were approved.

That Act also provided machinery for further relief to those with term leases by way of remission of rent or lesser relief as deemed appropriate, but these provisions were operated with full regard to the over-all rehabilitation and reconstruction measures available under the rural reconstruction scheme. However, in a number of cases it was approved to fund arrears of rent and allow up to seven years for payment of those arrears, without the addition of penalty. This amounted to a short-term interest-free loan—again, a real benefit to the settlers concerned.

Cabinet also gave approval to the reversion of freeholding tenures to the original grazing tenures where any such lessees desired to do so. The advantage here is that the rents payable under the original tenure are less than the freeholding instalments. So far, eight such cases have been completed, and about 20 more are under consideration. It has also been the practice for a long time not to insist on payment of penalty on arrears of rent where it is recognised that the non-payment is due to circumstances outside the ordinary control of the settler.

The measures I have outlined illustrate the Government's fundamental concern for the man on the land, and its endeavours not only to help him over a particularly severe time but to give him some measure of encouragement for the future.

I am pleased to head a department that I am sure can be looked on as a good type of landlord. Not only has the department been prepared to wait for its rents and repayments; it has actually foregone its claim to substantial amounts and also deferred other claims for long periods. I acknowledge also that the Government has given extensive and valuable assistance to primary producers other than through my department.

In a wide range of activities connected with the land, not the least is the provision of land for new settlement. For many years the only land for new settlement was that

which reverted to the Crown from expired leases or through the exercise of Crown rights of resumption from the larger holdings. This is a continuing process, and improved seasonal conditions in many parts of the State would normally have led to the opening of blocks for new settlement.

However, the problems in the wool industry have necessarily required rethinking in regard to living-area standards, and I am very pleased to report to the Committee that the department has become very active in this field and has taken appropriate action. As a result it has been decided that most of the available land in the wool-producing areas should be used for additional-area purposes to assist as far as possible with the revival and rehabilitation of the industry and to permit of a degree of diversification to cattle, particularly in the more marginal areas. A measure of diversification can assist with financial viability and lends more safety to the enterprise.

So far this year, 17 additional areas aggregating 160,390 acres have been allotted, and additional-area inquiries have been completed in respect of a further 923,150 acres out of which blocks are expected to be allotted shortly. Inquiries for the grant of additional areas from a further 250,000 acres are yet to be held and should be completed by early next year.

The allocation of these further areas will be a great help to existing landholders. Of course, the Land Act stipulates certain prerequisites for eligibility for the grant of an additional area, but the claims of all those who consider they have a case for the grant of an additional area are fully investigated. From my association with the department, I can assure honourable members that that is true. The whole assessment is carried out in an honest and correct manner, and I compliment the officers of my department on their work in this field.

Apart from subdivision of leases resulting from term expiries, there have also been quite a number of subdivisions initiated by individual settlers with a view to adjusting between themselves their land holdings in the interest of the better economic operation of the blocks concerned.

The Government's land policy allows for flexibility in this regard, but the over-all situation is regulated by the provisions of the Land Act. The policy of allowing private subdivision of the leasehold and freehold tenures is complementary to the policy of granting additional areas instead of giving preference to making new settlement blocks and to the policy of encouraging farm build-up under rural reconstruction during the period of re-organisation that is going on within the agricultural and grazing industries.

Because of drought and falling prices, many properties ceased operations on an unstocked basis and were without income-earning capacity. A trip through the Winton and

Julia Creek areas, and also many other areas of Queensland, would prove the truth of that statement. The woolgrowers concerned were forced to get work where they could keep body and soul together. Rent, rates and high-interest bills continued to mount, giving rise to impossible debt situations incapable of being serviced with a wool price of 27c or 28c a pound. Property values dropped alarmingly to a stage where the landholder lost equity in his enterprise. Insolvency and despair faced many people.

The problem became one of sheer survival, and scores of families in the pastoral areas faced a grim future. The usual sources of day-to-day carry-on finance eroded to mere sustenance levels, and in a good number of cases dried up altogether. To keep many western towns going, the Government injected as much finance as was available into road and ancillary works involving a high labour content.

Wool is now selling for something closer to its worth, and a substantial part of the pastoral zone experienced a better winter than during previous years. Liquidity is returning to the day-to-day financing of properties and confidence is returning to the stock and property markets. One swallow does not make a summer, but at least there are signs that these areas are on the way back. The recent wool sales gave tremendous relief to many, but there is a desperate need for seasons and prices to continue on this more favourable basis in order to reduce the level of debt carried by the farming and grazing sectors of the economy. I should say that it would take three years of current wool prices and three years of good seasons to enable the all-round average of something like \$45,000 to be erased. It cannot be done in five minutes, but if we have three good seasons and a continuation of present prices many people in the grazing industry will be out of strife.

It is impossible for Parliaments to write off farm debt. It is likewise impossible for the State Treasury to take over the tremendous debt burden in the rural sector. Governments can assist and encourage as we have done to the limit of our resources. However, only seasons and markets can solve the tremendous problems faced by people on the land.

Terrible hardship brought savage economies in the management of properties, particularly in the wool industry. Man and wife toiled side by side; family educational involvements were cut to the limit; station and casual labour were dispensed with. In my own case, whereas we used to employ three, four or five persons, we do not employ any today, except the occasional casual. The neighbours all help each other with shearing, crutching and various other aspects of station management.

Mr. Bousen: Why don't you get out there now?

Mr. RAE: I will get out there at the right time.

Efficiency and economy of management are now the order of the day, but the road back to financial stability is arduous. The people of the West are still going through a "crucible of fire", and Parliament will endorse every encouragement and concession extended by the Government in the form of rent remissions, drought relief, freight rebates, educational allowances (for which I again compliment the Minister for Education), disaster fund contribution or funds under the heading of reconstruction. However, I must reiterate that the final reprieve lies in a run of good seasons and favourable prices.

There is a limit to the availability of public funds for the alleviation of disaster and distress. We have had one of the worst disasters, seasonally, in our history, and the Government has performed a Herculean task in mitigating its effects. My department has done much to assist. Our performance on rural reconstruction compares more than favourably with that of the other States, and we have led Australia in our handling of the marginal dairy farms reconstruction scheme.

Queensland was the only State which supplemented reconstruction with State funds to the extent of \$10,000,000. Rental concessions in excess of \$3,000,000 have been granted to distressed landholders, and all of our policies have been designed to give a helping hand to those who can demonstrate need and merit.

Here I should like to make reference to the former chairman of the Land Administration Commission, Mr. Gordon McDowell, who was recently elevated to the Land Court. In his four and a half years with the commission Mr. McDowell set a standard of ethics which greatly enhanced the reputation of the Lands Department with all Queenslanders. His conduct and his sense of fair play were emulated by other members of the Land Administration Commission, and it gave me great personal satisfaction to see the present chairman of the commission, Mr. Brian Heffernan, succeed his former chief. They are two very worthy men. I know that the former Minister for Lands has expressed similar praise at various gatherings. They are really great men and the State has a lot to thank them for.

My department is fortunate in having men of such knowledge and wisdom directing its affairs, and I should like to place on record my appreciation of their dedication to the job in hand and for the sound advice they have given me since I took over the portfolio.

Accordingly, I now refer to the activities of the Rural Reconstruction Board, which is responsible, within the framework of conditions determined by the Commonwealth after consultation with all States, for the allocation of special funds to aid primary producers who are not able to be assisted further by other financial institutions.

As the rural indebtedness in Queensland approximates \$600,000,000, it is obvious that the board is not in a position to become a major lender for all primary producers in this State. This situation was recognised in the agreement which states that—

"The general principle to be applied is to distribute the available resources as widely as practicable, but the over-riding objective is to help restore to economic viability those farms and farmers with the capacity to maintain viability once achieved."

Funds available for commitment by the board since inauguration of the scheme in 1971 to the end of the current financial year amount to \$25,900,000 under the rural reconstruction scheme.

This figure is made up of \$1,500,000 from the Federal Aid Rehabilitation Fund, \$16,000,000 as Queensland's share of the \$100,000,000 allocation, with an additional allocation of \$2,400,000 and a special allocation for this State of \$3,000,000, which was matched by \$3,000,000 from State funds. The additional and special allocation of \$5,400,000 will be available in 1973-74 but can be committed this financial year.

Under the woolgrowers assistance scheme this Government further provided for allocation by the board a total of \$7,000,000 towards the financing of woolgrowers in what has been termed the disaster area. Advances made under this scheme are at an interest rate of 2 per cent and are spread over a long term which includes an initial interest-only period of five years. The unexpended balance from the woolgrowers assistance fund is available for allocation in the current financial year.

To date the board has approved advances in excess of \$20,000,000 under the rural reconstruction scheme and slightly more than \$5,000,000 under the woolgrowers assistance scheme. More than \$19,000,000 has actually been advanced, negotiation with creditors and documentation accounting for the variation between approval and advance.

Applications lodged with the board to the date of its last meeting totalled 2,370 and of these 1,007 were approved for assistance. Some 1,238 have been declined or withdrawn and the balance are under various stages of investigation. In addition, there were five approvals under the rehabilitation provisions of the scheme. This is the statistical record of a scheme devised initially with the circumstances of the sheep and sheep-wheat industries primarily in mind but extended to include every agricultural industry. It applied generally to those landholders who, through causes not related to management, have reached a stage where finance is not otherwise available to continue operations, but who have the prospects, after their financial affairs are restructured, of meeting all their commitments.

The task of the Rural Reconstruction Board, chaired by Mr. Jack Barton, in determining eligibility for assistance of individual

applicants under the conditions laid down in the agreement has been, and remains, an onerous one. Every member of the board has worked under extreme pressure in examining and assessing, in his own time prior to board meetings, the merits of each individual application and submission. This work-load has been in addition to the full job responsibilities already held by each board member.

I think we should all recognise that these men, who are committed to most demanding and exacting duties, still find time to freely and voluntarily give their services to the administration of a tremendous organisation established by this Government, and I personally compliment Mr. Barton, Mr. Hefferman and other members of the board. One board member, Mr. Noel Kefford, resigned during the year and I extend my sincere thanks to him, and, I repeat, to the chairman and other members of the board for their untiring efforts to achieve the objectives of the scheme.

The board has now reached the stage in time where annual reviews of progress made by borrowers are also being conducted. Under the agreement it is an essential part of the scheme that adequate supervision of property management and the financial affairs of the assisted farmer is maintained.

As to the future of rural reconstruction, I will be attending a Ministerial conference to review the scheme about February next when negotiations will proceed in respect of the scheme's extension.

Mr. Hanlon: Does that Board publish a report, like your own commission?

Mr. RAE: Yes. I tabled it this morning.

The effect of the recent rises in wool prices, if sustained, will have an important bearing on these negotiations.

I would mention briefly that a fruit-growing reconstruction scheme, under which compensation may be paid for the removal of trees where the fruit comprises canning peaches and pears as well as fresh apples and pears, has been negotiated, and enabling legislation is in the course of preparation by the Commonwealth. Subsequent State legislation will necessarily follow. This scheme is also being administered by the Rural Reconstruction Board.

Another important scheme is the marginal dairy farm reconstruction scheme, which is a Commonwealth-State project implemented through my department. The scheme is designed to provide assistance by way of repayable loans for the rehabilitation of dairy farms supplying the manufacturing sector of the industry and to enable economically viable units to be established by way of amalgamation with other properties.

Queensland has been very much to the fore in the administration of the scheme, and I think can rightly point to the efficiency

of my department in its handling of the work involved. Of a total of \$10,147,700 advanced to all States by the Commonwealth, \$8,270,000 was advanced to Queensland. By the expiration of the present agreement on 27 July 1974, it is expected that from 400 to 420 farms will have been purchased in this State, at a total cost of up to \$11,000,000. It will be appreciated that the scheme has been of far-reaching benefit to the small farmer.

I am pleased to say that the Government has announced the introduction of a scheme supplementary to that provided in the State-Commonwealth agreement. During the next three years, the State will find \$5,500,000 to further assist the dairy industry to meet modern-day situations. The main principles of the scheme are that advances will be made on long terms to finance the conversion of dairy farms in order that the farmers may participate in the modern trend of supplying milk in bulk, rather than cream, to the factory.

As honourable members will appreciate, factories are engaging more and more in the exploitation of the milk solids, permitting of the payment of a higher price per gallon for the farm product. However, the farmer faces a financial commitment in upgrading dairy premises to enable him to participate in whole-milk delivery. For example, many dairies will need to be rebuilt closer to the all-weather access roads that are used by the tankers. Some existing dairies will need to be upgraded to meet present-day hygiene standards, and there is the question of the installation of the bulk vat together with the adjustment of machinery to give maximum efficiency in this new set-up.

The new supplementary scheme will finance this conversion on terms that can be met by the industry. I might add that, recently, members of the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation called on me, and they agree to the latest steps we have taken in an endeavour to meet the dairy farmer in this matter of bulk supply. It will make a big difference to them.

The Agricultural Bank already provides assistance for the purchase and installation of bulk-milk vats, and farmers who wish only to install a vat on their present premises will continue to be financed by that bank. A farmer who needs a vat plus substantial improvements to his dairy premises or milking plant may make application under these proposals for a loan covering the total proposed outlay. The maximum loan under all headings, that is, vat, buildings and machines, is expected to be in the vicinity of \$7,500. However, in special circumstances, that maximum may be exceeded.

The applicant must be able to demonstrate that his farm will be a viable unit, having regard to his present financial position, and that finance is not available

elsewhere on satisfactory terms. Loans will be available over a maximum period of 10 years, on the basis of 10 per cent deposit with interest calculated at the current long-term bond rate, which is presently 6½ per cent.

Generally, the corporation will require the farmer to repay the balance plus interest by way of assignment of portion of his monthly factory return. The scheme will also provide assistance to owners of small dairy farms to buy additional land.

Another major project in land development has been the Fitzroy Basin brigalow development scheme, which was implemented in 1962. Despite bad seasons and some financial problems, over all this has been a success. The scheme, a Commonwealth-State project, embraces an area of approximately 11,200,000 acres in Central Queensland, of which about 5,000,000 acres are in what is termed priority Areas I and II and about 6,200,000 acres in priority Area III. The initial development in Areas I and II is now complete and the main emphasis is on the opening and development of Area III. So far, in that latest area, 75 blocks have been made available by ballot and by auction, all under free-holding tenure. It is expected that up to a further 35 blocks will be obtained within Area III, most of which should be allotted within the current financial year.

Generally, the settlers in Areas I and II are now well established with adequate stock numbers. But in Area III most settlers are still in the process of development of their blocks. This is proceeding very satisfactorily and the stocking rate of the blocks has been very good. Given reasonable seasons, the selectors should experience no difficulty in meeting their future financial responsibilities.

The brigalow scheme area generally, like other parts of the State, has suffered from drought, and in Areas I and II, in the earlier years of the scheme, it was found necessary to give some financial assistance to settlers to help them over difficult periods. The scheme is financed within the Brigalow Development Trust Fund and no actual remissions could be made to the selectors, but valuable assistance was given them by way of increasing the periods of interest-only payments, extending repayment terms and minimising the impact of interest-rate increases as far as possible. In respect of those blocks sold by auction, arrears and interest were capitalised, and instalments recalculated over an extended period. This, too, was of considerable benefit to those purchasers.

The total expenditure so far in the area of the scheme has been almost \$15,500,000, and the total cost of the scheme is expected to be in the vicinity of \$23,000,000. By the conclusion of the scheme, it is anticipated that 249 blocks will have been made available by ballot or auction—139 in Areas

I and II and 110 in Area III. The whole scheme represents a tremendous injection of capital and effort into Central Queensland and into the cattle industry, which, throughout the State, is in a strong position.

Action is being taken to create environmental parks throughout Queensland. Queensland is singularly fortunate in that it is endowed with so many variations of soil types and timber cover. Scattered throughout the State are countless areas of natural beauty. These might take the form of a watercourse or a lake, or may be attractive scrub or forest country. We have areas of wild flowers, beautiful pockets of belah oaks and brigalow scrubs, and areas of softwoods that are found in association.

Many of these areas do not lend themselves to preservation and conservation under the national-park concept. For one reason or another, many of these beauty spots do not measure up to the basic criteria involved in selecting national parks. However, by the same token, it is apparent that special action will be needed to conserve these areas—these places of beauty and value—for our people. This State can expect to face a tremendous era of development, and, whilst development is a good thing, special action must be taken to strike a balance between production on the one hand and the satisfaction of the recreational and environmental needs of our people on the other.

While speaking of environmental problems, I must instance the situations where vermin and noxious weeds and plants, mainly introduced at various times, have become established and spread to the detriment of the environment. The resultant need is not so much a matter of protection as one of rehabilitation of the environment. A classic example of this was prickly-pear—that menace of previous years—for which, fortunately, a spectacular answer was found in the cactoblastis. However, we still have many similar problems, one of which—*Harrisia cactus*—has been causing considerable concern for many years.

The main area of infestation has been the Collinsville area where the department has maintained clearing gangs for many years. Every effort has been, and is being, made to control the pest through my department's own biological section, namely, the Alan Fletcher Research Station, where our scientists are constantly researching and improving the chemicals and techniques required for the treatment of cactus. The cost has been high to both my department and the landholders, but the cost to the State, had the control work not been undertaken, would have been tremendous. The Commonwealth Institute of Biological Control is investigating on our behalf in Argentine and Paraguay the possibility of biological control of *Harrisia cactus* and I am hopeful that some such control may eventuate.

RURAL FIRES BOARD

During the past financial year one particularly significant milestone was passed in Queensland's rural fires operations in the form of a compensation scheme for those whose private equipment has been subject to destruction or damage while operating as members of a registered bush fire brigade. It can be said that nowhere in the world does the volunteer fire-fighter contribute more to the protection of the country than he does in Australia, and Queensland is no exception. There are now operating in the State more than 1,100 volunteer brigades with a membership of over 20,000 persons, all in an honorary capacity.

In their personal service in the brigades these men have had a free cover of workers' compensation since 1950. But, in addition to their physical service, many also provided private equipment of considerable value. Indeed, in the western parts of the State and during the years of high fire danger such as 1951 and 1957, more than 90 per cent of the equipment used by brigades was privately owned.

It was, of course, at high risk during fire-fighting, and until 1971 all of this risk was borne by the owner of the equipment, but from that date provision has been made for some compensation to be made available to bush fire brigade members whose equipment is damaged at fires. Certain limitations have of necessity been imposed, and policing is not an easy task, but it is considered that a considerable step has been taken along the road to a reasonable protection for the private equipment of these persons.

It should be realised, too, that a change has come over the rural fire scene since the last time there was any widespread risk in the sheep-raising section of the State. Whereas formerly the industry had man-power, equipment and finance to provide a protection system against inevitable fires (lightning started 88 per cent of 1951's disastrous fires) by the provision of mechanical and burnt firebreaks, the present situation is that many properties either have been completely deserted or operate with reduced staff. Frequently, the owner controls the property single handed.

Properties, therefore, with a minimum of firelines are faced with the prospect of fires approaching through a completely deserted adjoining area and on a front and with an intensity which minimises the protection a fireline can offer. I well remember the words of the honourable member for Windsor on this subject during his Budget speech. It is quite true that there would be a very high possibility of fire in the West and the Central West at this particular time.

It is therefore pleasing to record the co-operation of many local authorities, which have made equipment available for the establishment of firebreaks at a very reduced hire rate, sometimes even at cost. Bush fire brigades in these districts have shown an

appreciation of the situation and, despite depleted membership and lack of equipment, have reorganised themselves, some after long periods of inactivity. It is worthy of note that, in addition to the reorganisation of these brigades, the Rural Fires Board registered 43 additional bush fire brigades during 1971-72 and 18 have been added since 1 July 1972.

It would be appropriate also here to mention the work of the fire wardens, whose honorary efforts in the pre-fire part of the organisation are directed to the issue of permits to burn. It is their responsibility to see that burning-off operations are carried out in accordance with conditions, to ensure that the objective of the burn is achieved within a reasonable measure of safety. No statistics can give evidence of their worth, since a fire contained does not make the records, but it is obvious that their work has been in a large measure responsible for the relatively few major fires recorded in recent years. The State will be relying heavily on the services of these men in the next few months.

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

I assumed responsibility for the Department of Forestry only last June, at a time when the winter planting of a record area was in progress. This is a large and important department with a wages staff of 1,800 Queenslanders carrying out works of great value to the State both at the present time and for the future.

Despite the impact of other materials on some of the markets traditional to timber, new uses are being found for the products of the forests, and the per-capita consumption of timber and wood-based products has increased in developed countries the world over. This, together with rising populations, places a demand on our forests which is far beyond their capacity to sustain.

Imports of timber and wood-based products, chiefly pulp and paper, now cost the Commonwealth some \$250,000,000 a year, and they are still increasing. In addition to its share of these imports from overseas, Queensland draws from northern New South Wales a substantial part of the hardwood used in Brisbane and South-east Queensland. The magnitude of this drain on overseas credits is a real concern for the Government, and the position is aggravated by the fact that the demands of countries such as Japan, with its programme of industrial development, can well interfere with our ability to continue to procure our needs from current sources of supply. The main activities of the Department of Forestry are therefore directed towards making this State and Australia self-sufficient in forest products by the end of this century.

The plantations of both hoop and exotic pines are already playing a major role in providing timber for industry. For the three months June to August 1972, the cut of

plantation timbers was at the rate of nearly 65,000,000 super feet per annum. This is providing stable employment in country areas, and for this reason it is necessary to maintain planting programmes in these centres and so sustain existing industry. In all, there are some 21 mills, from Passchendaele in the Granite Belt to Mareeba in North Queensland, which rely on plantation timbers. The needs of mills operating on the native forests of this State are being provided for by the husbanding of these valuable stands.

State forests of hardwoods, cypress pine and northern scrubwoods are all managed on a principle of sustained yield, with tree marking to ensure full utilisation of millable stems and with retention of growing stock of the best available stems and species. In addition, silvicultural treatment aimed at promotion of the growth of the growing stock retained is afforded to these forests. Last year an area of 28,709 acres was treated. This represented an increase of 7,337 acres over that treated in the previous year, and brought the total area treated to 888,714 acres. It is planned further to increase this work during the present year as a result of additional funds made available for the relief of unemployment.

For the first time in Queensland, the use of aerial-burning was introduced in the winter of 1971, when 16,000 acres of native forest in the Maryborough district was covered at a cost of \$700, or 5c an acre. This technique was pioneered in the karri and jarrah forests of Western Australia following the disastrous fires that destroyed much of the township of Dwellingup, and over the past few years has been adopted by other States, including New South Wales, with conditions similar to ours. Results from the 1971 winter burns so conducted in Queensland were excellent, and encouraged their extension to cover an area of 267,140 acres in the current year.

By their nature, and the fact that only about half the area is covered by these fires, the damage to native fauna has been shown to be slight in other States, and observations here confirm this. In so far as the forest crop is concerned, small fires, when conditions are not severe, do no real damage, and, if they prevent conflagration in the heat of the fire season, they will prove their value to fauna and flora alike.

In addition to these direct expenditures on fire-fighting and patrol, \$698,139 was spent on the construction and maintenance of fire-breaks and other items necessary for the protection of forests. Roads so constructed serve for logging access, and for administrative uses as well as protection.

I am pleased to be able to report that all sections of the timber industry in Queensland have enjoyed a period of buoyant trading, which still persists. The timber industry is of great importance to the economy of the State. In forest, mill and factory it provides direct employment to some 16,500 Queenslanders, whilst the department has about 2,200 salaried and

wages staff. Last year 451 mills operated 390,000,000 super feet of logs grown in Queensland forests, both Crown and private. The value of the final product of timber processed in the State would substantially exceed \$100,000,000 a year. The health of this industry is, therefore, a matter of great importance to the Government and to me, and I am pleased to report to honourable members on the success of two actions taken in the past three years that were aimed at assisting its stability and helping it to meet the challenge of other materials.

I refer first to the establishment of the Timber Research and Development Advisory Councils of North and South Queensland. These councils are functioning satisfactorily and filling a long-felt need within the industry.

My attendance at the recent Australian Timber Industry Seminar in Maryborough, which I had the privilege of opening, gave me further insight into the depth of the industry. It was there that I had an opportunity of seeing over two timber mills of considerable size—those of Lambert Hyne and Wilson Hart & Co. Ltd.—and I must confess that until a person in my position is actually escorted round and shown the workings of mills of the size of those two, he has difficulty in forming an accurate idea of the contribution they make to Queensland's economy. They are extremely well run and do a very good job.

I was very impressed at that conference by the apparent willingness of the various sections of the industry to join together and tackle their problems with a minimum of Government assistance. T.R.A.D.A.C. is one of the few examples of the industry's seeking Government assistance to achieve its desired ends.

As many honourable members probably know, T.R.A.D.A.C. has as its chairman a former Conservator of Forests, Mr. Alan Trist, and he is supported by the Executive Director, Mr. David Bubb. Between them, these two men are doing a very good job for the timber industry in this State.

T.R.A.D.A.C. was formed initially because of the inability of the industry to obtain sufficient funds on a voluntary basis, and, as I said, the Government came to its assistance. The onus is on the industry to back up the work done by T.R.A.D.A.C., as well as to apply the knowledge that the council disseminates.

The Forestry Department is the vehicle for collection of T.R.A.D.A.C.'s funds. It also assists by making senior officers available for membership on councils and committees. As finances are collected by a State Government department, the funds need to be expended within the charter given by the Government to ensure that there is no conflict with advice the Government may receive from any of its existing instrumentalities. To assist in the financial operation of the council, the Forestry Department

provides accounting services to the council. At this stage the council is not incorporated, but discussions are being held to transfer the legal liability from the individual members of the council to the Crown by incorporating the council.

This occasion presents me with an opportunity to express my appreciation, and that of the industry at large, for the expertise and the untiring efforts of the people who are members of the Timber Research and Development Advisory Council and its working committees. Many of these people travel long distances, at their own expense in time and money, to meet and guide the council and myself on various decisions. The Government is aware of the major contribution by the timber industry to the development of this State.

The second action taken to assist the industry was the modification of the policy in respect to sawmill amalgamations, introduced some three years ago. This was necessary to permit the building up, through amalgamation, of milling units of a size to warrant installation of costly modern machinery essential to full efficiency. The industry has made good use of the new policy, and is continuing to do so. In the past three years the number of mills taking part in amalgamations was 120, with 42 in the last year.

In my short time as Minister responsible for forestry, I have had the opportunity of meeting with representatives from most sectors of the timber industry, and, from their attitude and comments, I can say that relations between the Government, through the department, and the industry as a whole are excellent. This is in no small measure due to the actions I have just referred to.

To keep up supplies of timber to the mills, and to ensure correct and orderly logging of the forests, the department faces increasing expenditure on the construction of new access roads and the maintenance of existing roads. It is also necessary to carry out assessment surveys to permit sound control of sale quantities, to mark trees in accordance with correct forestry principles and to measure the resultant logs.

Another avenue of expense is on haulage contracts, where timber is sold not at the stump but delivered to mill as on railway trucks. Last year the expenditure under these heads was—

Roads	\$746,519
Harvesting and marketing	\$1,435,823

In addition, an amount of \$587,239 was spent on hardwood supplies, mainly to the Department of Railways.

The Forest Resources Section of the department, which is responsible for forest inventory and the calculation of sustained yields, has also handled a massive programme associated with the valuation of timber on Crown lands the subject of freeholding.

Honourable members will appreciate the care needed in these exercises and be impressed by the area of selections so far covered in the field since the 1958 amendment to the Lands Act, which totals nearly 22,000,000 acres. During the past year 134 applications involving 839,000 acres were referred to the department, whilst the area covered by field work was 1,438,000 acres, in 190 selections. At 30 June, 82 areas with 868,000 acres remained to be assessed. It is indeed gratifying to know that the number of complaints received concerning excessive valuations of timber in these cases has been very small, which is a tribute to the officers responsible.

From these activities the department has gained a far better knowledge of availability of mill timber, particularly in the cypress-pine belt, where a great deal of freeholding has occurred. This knowledge has been of great assistance in considerations relating to the Sawmills Licensing Act. As a result, it has been possible to increase licensed mill capacities restricted to private timbers only in a number of centres. In this regard, it has been accepted as a guiding principle that as the Act provides for payment for the timber by a freeholder over a period of 10 years, there should be in a sawmill licensed capacity adequate to mill this timber within a 10-year period.

A valuable service is provided to industry and to the timber-using public by the Forest Products Research Section, whose part in the development of the high-temperature drying of plantation softwoods I have already mentioned. As well as conducting research on wood utilisation, seasoning and preservation, this section provides advice on these matters. It has laboratory facilities available to trade and public alike for determination of moisture content and chemical treatment of timber. The number of individual samples submitted to it for test last year was 7,725. In addition, this section is responsible for the enforcement of the provisions of the Timber Users' Protection Act, and in many cases is effective in having corrective action taken without recourse to litigation.

Over the years, the Department of Forestry has devoted considerable attention to research in both the utilisation and the growing of timber, and its silvicultural procedures are based on the results of this work. In the important field of tree-breeding, it continues to hold a high place among the nations of the world. Its officers have been sought for positions on world organisations, and at present the officer in charge of its tree-breeding programme has an assignment with F.A.O. in Malaysia.

As a result of this research work, all slash-pine plantings in Queensland are being made with plants raised from high-quality seed collected from the department's seed orchards in the Beerburum district.

Progeny studies have shown that improved stem straightness, with volume production lifted by up to 30 per cent, can

be achieved with orchard stock. Seed of this source surplus to the department's needs is eagerly sought by Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd. and other private planters of slash pine in Australia and abroad.

Honourable members are well aware of the increasing accent that is being placed on the quality of the environment and on the provision of outdoor recreation under natural conditions for a public which is becoming more and more urbanised. In this regard State forests within easy reach of centres of population can play an important role, and last year, for the first time, special provision was made of \$25,000 for the provision of amenities on such areas. This year the amount has been raised to \$30,000, and I hope to be able to open the first area close to Brisbane within the next few weeks. At the same time, areas near Gympie and Maryborough are being prepared. It is certain that these areas will be well used by an appreciative public and will ease the pressure that is being felt on national park picnic spots in the near-city areas. Through the correct use of these areas I feel sure that the public will gain a better knowledge of the work of the department and of the things of nature, and I can see great use being made of them by schools and other education establishments.

Finally, I come to the subject of national parks, which is so topical at the present time and which many would regard as the most important phase of Government activity entrusted to the Department of Forestry. This has been brought about largely by an examination of the influence of man on his environment and the harmful effects that have stemmed from it.

In this regard, the words of Lyndon B. Johnson are very much to the point. He said—

"If future generations are to remember us more with gratitude than sorrow, we must achieve more than just the miracles of technology, we must also leave them a glimpse of the world as God really made it; not just as it looked when we got through with it."

This Government and I, as the responsible Minister, recognise fully the need to preserve in their natural state adequate representative areas of each of the major ecological types and habitats of the State. Steady progress is being made towards this goal and, whilst some are impatient at the rate at which reservations are proceeding, it must be realised that Queensland is a vast State and that it is the responsibility of the Government to weigh the needs of conservation against the proper requirements of a young and growing community. Therefore, the very permanence and finality of national-park status supplies the reason for calm and careful consideration of each proposal.

During the year 1971-72 the area of national parks was increased by 90,731 acres, with the main new park being that of 61,000 acres on Fraser Island. Action is in hand to add a further 22,000 acres which have been released from an authority to prospect, and it is intended to establish a park area of at least 100,000 acres in the north of the island. This park takes in areas of historic, scientific and scenic significance, and has been designed to include areas representative of all the major ecological types found on the island.

When speaking of new areas of national park, it is with great pleasure that I refer to the generous gift by two worthy pioneers of the Bunya Mountains—Mr. and Mrs. Allan Stirling—who donated an area of 40 acres for addition to the famous park there.

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

Mr. RAE: The area to which I referred before lunch includes some fine rain forest, and also a selection of natural grassland adjoining the old picnic area on the park proper. This section has permitted the establishment of a first-rate camping area, which was opened last April by the Premier. At the same time, a plaque commemorating the gift, and the reason for it, was unveiled by the then Minister for Lands (Mr. Sullivan).

The plaque reads—

"This camping ground is part of an area of 40 acres generously donated to the people of Queensland by Mr. and Mrs. Allan Stirling for addition to the Bunya Mountains National Park and in appreciation of the service rendered to the State by the Honourable J. Bjelke-Petersen, M.L.A., as Premier of Queensland."

Since then, the department has had a number of offers of scenic areas in the Tamborine area from landholders who have preserved them over the years and want to ensure that, in future, they have the protection conferred by a national park.

At 30 June last, the total area of national park reservations in the State was 2,563,225 acres, and proposals under consideration involve more than 1,000,000 acres.

To deal with the expanding park estate and to speed up the investigation of new areas, the staff of the National Parks Section has been increased by the appointment of an additional clerk, a zoologist and a botanist, as well as by the seconding of another trained forester. This brings the strength of the university-trained staff up to seven, and there is provision in this year's Estimates for the appointment of a further two.

Honourable members will note the provision in the Estimates for an increase of \$130,000, from \$250,000 to \$380,000, in the loan allocation to national parks. Whilst this is a substantial increase, I would point out that, by reason of the facilities provided by the department's other activities, the

parks have to meet only essential direct overheads and so get full work value for the funds allocated.

In addition, two years ago the work was reorganised to bring it under the direct control of the district forester in each of the 10 forestry divisions of the State. In this way the national parks section is able to draw on the assistance of university-trained officers with valuable experience and a sound knowledge of their areas.

The Department of Forestry has continued with its policy of providing facilities to permit the public to enjoy the scenic and other values of the parks, always bearing in mind the overriding claims of protection and preservation.

The main work in this field consists of the construction, on easy grades, of walking tracks which take in special features and places of interest, so that people of all ages may enjoy in a free and intimate way the beauty of the parks. In addition, picnic and camping grounds with necessary amenities have been developed with the use of materials and designs that harmonise with the natural surroundings. Public appreciation of the parks continues to increase, and last year it was estimated that they attracted more than 2,500,000 visitors, which represents an increase of some 10 per cent over the previous year's figure. It is pleasing to report that, when compared with the level of vandalism in the parks in other States, the level in Queensland is surprisingly low. This is a great tribute to the type of people who frequent the parks, and indicates the regard they have for what is being done.

Following last year's amendment to the Forestry Act, which made provision for the setting-aside of off-shore areas as marine national parks, preliminary action has been initiated towards the investigation of a number of suitable areas. The expected appointment this year of two more graduate staff to work in the marine-park field, and the imminent delivery of three boats that the department has on order for off-shore and island-national-park work, will enable activities in this field to be speeded up.

I am particularly pleased to be able to advise honourable members that the Government has just completed the purchase of a private pine forest near the township of Emu Vale for \$180,000. This property, of 1,400 acres, is known as the Gambubal Tree Farm and formed part of the estate of Hancock & Gore Ltd. The former owners had planted about 650 acres with radiata pine and other softwood species. These range in age from 11 to 17 years, and show exceptionally good rates of growth.

This valuable asset, under Crown ownership, will have a beneficial long-term effect on the local timber industry, as the area acquired could form the nucleus of a future softwood-plantation development, using suitable planting land on State forests in the vicinity. Considerable credit for this very

good investment by the Government goes to the Glengallan Shire Council and the honourable member for Warwick (Mr. D. W. Cory), who has displayed a very active interest in this area and was unceasing in his efforts to bring about a satisfactory settlement between the Government and the vendors in this transaction. I am very happy to say that we have acquired this area as another adjunct to the ramifications of the Forestry Department. The Conservator of Forests, Mr. Haley, is very happy with the outcome of the negotiations, and the acquisition of this land represents a positive step in the right direction for the Forestry Department.

To conclude, I again express my appreciation to the members of the Land Administration Commission, namely, Messrs. Brian Heffernan, Mel Johnston and Paul O'Gorman. Many people talk about how the Land Administration Commission is run, and how it should be run. As a practical man, I believe that Queensland is very fortunate to have in its service these three men, who are as able in land administration matters as any I could name. They are trained for the job, and are dedicated and extremely knowledgeable. I have always found them confident, with a desire to achieve worthwhile benefits for the State.

Mr. Newton: They were trained at the right time.

Mr. RAE: I have no doubt that is true. I assure the honourable member that most Queenslanders, as well as myself, value the Land Administration Commission as it is presently constituted.

I should also like to record my appreciation of the work done by Mr. Haley, the Conservator of Forests, and Mr. Bryan, the Deputy Conservator, both of whom have played an excellent part in this field. We estimate that it will not be until the turn of this century that the sterling work undertaken by these men will begin to pay off. We are hoping that by about the year 2000 we will be able to draw sufficient material from our own plantings to cope with the timber requirements of this State. Many other outstanding officers also deserve recognition, and I am sure this is accepted by all members of the Assembly.

I feel that honourable members will agree that I have sufficiently outlined the Estimates for Lands and Forestry.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I desire to inform honourable members that, on the Chief Office Vote, I propose to allow a full discussion on the whole of the ramifications of a department (Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds, and Loan Fund Account) and then to confine the discussion to each particular Vote.

For the information of honourable members, I point out that the administrative acts of the department are open to debate, but

the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply.

Mr. BOUSEN (Toowoomba North) (2.25 p.m.): Before replying to the Minister's comments, I express my personal thanks and appreciation to officers in the various sections of the Department of Lands, all of whom, as the Minister said, do a very good job and are dedicated to their tasks. I refer particularly to the appointment of Mr. Heffernan as Chairman of the Land Administration Commission and of Mr. O'Gorman as a member of that commission. They have certainly earned their appointments and I am sure that they will in future, as they have done in the past, pay great regard to the interests of the people.

The Minister has painted a very rosy picture and would have us believe that the people on the land have had a very good time during the past 12 months. Only a few months ago, when I was in the drought-stricken area of Western Queensland, my notice was drawn to the fact that the Government has failed to assist these people in a time of need. I refer particularly to those in the wool industry. I say, without fear of contradiction, that it is only since the recent increase in the price of wool that the Government has got off its backside and given assistance to graziers.

The Minister said that money had been spent in certain country towns to boost their economy. Yet people are still leaving them to go to the provincial cities or the capital city. If the Government had done as much as the Minister would have us believe, there would be no empty shops in the towns I visited. I do not want to reiterate what I said on that occasion, but I point out that a number of people have left the area because of hard times and the failure of the Government to give them assistance.

I shall now comment on the Minister's introductory remarks. The figures on land and dwellings that the Government has erected are a facade of illusion. There is so much hire-purchase and mortgage debt in the so-called ownership structure that only a minor percentage of dwellers and hopeful dwellers can be said to own their properties. Inflated prices and extortionate interest rates are escalating at such a rate that, very soon, periods of repayment will again have to be extended or an even smaller number of couples will be able to purchase a building allotment and house.

Far too many young couples who want to marry and establish families take more than five years to pay for a block of land they can use as a deposit on a house. That period, together with the period under a house-repayment scheme of 20 years or more, will run into the time of secondary education for their children, and total expenses of these couples will condemn them to bankruptcy or their children to a

long period of motherless-hours every day while both parents are at work endeavouring to pay off their debts. All that a number of young people really own today is a debt, and the Government is totally incapable, and not desirous, of improving this dangerous debt situation. Figures released by the Bureau of Census and Statistics reveal that the level of total indebtedness of the community at large is reaching such gigantic proportions that it is close to becoming unbearable, as it was in the United States in the 1950's.

If any one factor in costs rises is greater than others, it is the rising cost of land under this coalition Government. Like every other anti-worker coalition in the Commonwealth, it has deliberately adopted land policies that exploit every working-class family man who wishes to own his own home. In Queensland during the last decade the area of land that passed from the Crown to freehold tenure—that is, land alienated from the Crown—more than doubled. By 1961, 28,000,000 acres had been alienated, and by 1970 that area had increased to 57,500,000 acres. That is stated in the 1971 Commonwealth Year Book, and it is a shameful example of "selling off the farm".

During the same decade, land in Queensland reserved for public purposes increased by only 1.6 per cent from 18,300,000 acres to 18,700,000 acres. This was the lowest rate of increase in the Commonwealth. The area held under leases decreased by 7 per cent. This was a total of almost 17 per cent of the value of all land held under leases. This is another example of "selling off the farm".

Where did all the money from those alienations go? Unlike the Treasurer, who can measure a stick by its own length, I use the valid principle of comparing the position in Queensland with that in other States. To give meaning to the figures, which is more than the Treasurer did, I shall quote from the 1970 Year Book. Those figures show that not only does Queensland now have the highest percentage of land area alienated from the Crown, but it has the highest absolute acreage alienated. It holds the lowest percentage of Crown land. As I said before, Queensland also has the lowest percentage of area reserved for public purposes, which, in absolute area, puts it a very bad last.

Despite the recent frantic and belated efforts to provide irrigation, Queensland now stands third in percentage of area under irrigation, and it has suffered the lowest rate of increase of irrigated area in the Commonwealth during the same decade.

With Queensland's restrictive grain-growing policies, coupled with the figures given, it is understandable that this State should stand lowest in percentage of area under grain. But this State does have the highest percentage of all States in land under grazing and sown leases, and there is no doubt

that this percentage will increase as more and more foreigners move in to take over the beef and cattle industry. It is apparent from the figures contained in the Estimates that a very high percentage, almost 70 per cent, of all moneys from State and Commonwealth sources for land development will go into capital investment, lending for payment of debts, farm agglomeration, and marginal dairy farm reconstruction finance.

Following figures in the break-up of the Estimates indicate that much of the 70 per cent—more than half—will go to meet indebtedness. There will not be as much benefit to the economy of the State as the huge sums would lead us to think. Although the population of Queensland has increased by 21 per cent in the 1961-70 decade, the number of workers in primary industries has increased by only 3.4 per cent, and the actual number engaged as owner-farmers decreased by 11 per cent. It is evident, therefore, that more and more money is being spent on fewer and fewer persons, and that progress is generally in keeping with the Country-Liberal Government's usual performances.

The comparative figures, taken from the same source, for forestry development in the Commonwealth reveal a similarly unfavourable position in this State. Queensland has the second lowest area under productive forestry, Western Australia being the lowest. However, I am pleased to see that, as some form of compensation, Queensland stands in the middle, and is not the lowest, in the rate of increased area being brought into production. There is also some indication of potential in the fact that this State has the highest percentage of non-productive area reserved for forestry in the future. In log-timber output measured in cubic feet, Queensland stands third in quantity but fifth in value.

Briefly, then, the situation for Queensland in forestry is not nearly as good as it ought to be, and the new Minister for Lands (Honourable W. A. R. Rae) will have a tough time making up the leeway left by his predecessor.

Mr. Rae: I think that is a very foolish statement, with all due respect to the honourable member. It is a quite improper and very wrong thing to say.

Mr. BOUSEN: This is the situation as I see it, and I shall say what I want to say in this Chamber.

Mr. Rae: You wouldn't have a clue what has gone on. You are reading away there—

Mr. BOUSEN: It is all in the Budget. One does not have to go beyond that.

Mr. Rae: It has all been prepared for you by Jack Aiken.

Mr. BOUSEN: You had better ask him whether he prepared it.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BOUSEN: Figures taken from the 1972 Queensland Year Book show that land set aside for public purposes actually decreased from 19,400,000 acres in 1956 to 18,700,000 acres in 1970—a reduction of almost 4 per cent. I therefore appeal to the Minister to halt this decline and reverse the situation in the interests of the children of Queensland. It is evident that the Government must be transferring land held for public purposes to other uses, or alienating it, and this is happening at a time when the State's population has increased by 11 per cent over the same period. The Government must stand condemned for such gross neglect.

In developing a land policy for the State of Queensland, the Minister and the Government appear to have no basic philosophy or plan, and in the past their policy has been one of "ad hockery". With a view to seeing that the best possible use is made of the State's land in the interests of all concerned, I suggest the Government should—

1. preserve the land resources for existing and future generations of Queenslanders;
2. ensure that land resources are efficiently allocated and utilised;
3. encourage stability in land prices in order that they do not add to production costs and that they are kept at a reasonable level in order to ensure adequate standards for Queenslanders, particularly in urban areas;
4. prevent foreign control over the State's rural and urban lands; and
5. conserve Queensland's land resources, recognising that growth in itself must not become a predominant objective if it destroys the State's natural resources.

When one looks at each of those points one can see the problems of Government policy. If our land resources are to be preserved, we must avoid such actions as the overstocking that occurred in South-west Queensland and the division of land into uneconomic blocks by the Government.

The brigalow land development scheme is an example of how the Government has given little attention to climatic and geographical features when making its selections. It is little consolation to the people who have taken up blocks for the Minister to voice platitudes about them. The Government will have to look more closely at its selection policies in the future, as well as take immediate steps to rectify the problems associated with the brigalow scheme. To date little has been done in that direction.

If we want effective land utilisation in rural areas, I ask why in these Estimates there has been a reduction in the actual expenditure on forestry, particularly at a time when wages and salaries have been increased. One must agree with the Minister when he states that the production of native forests is limited and cannot be increased in the near future. This is a surprising admission by the Minister as it

indicates that the Government has paid little attention to replanting programmes that are necessary to ensure an adequate supply of timber for future generations.

Without a greater amount of reforestation, there can only be one result. The price of timber will continually increase, which will make greater the inflationary tendencies in the home-building and associated industries.

One could speak at length about the marginal dairy farm reconstruction scheme and question the details of it.

Stability in land prices must be encouraged. The Crown is the largest estate developer in Queensland, but it has failed to set an example in this field. The Minister admits that the prices being realised under the Government's public-auction system are far in excess of the minimum prices asked. He relates this to a supply-and-demand situation and therefore argues that price increases are inevitable. It could be suggested that if he increased the supply of land available, particularly in urban areas, the situation might rectify itself. Better still, what is wrong with introducing some form of price control on land? The problem of land prices will be accentuated by the Federal Government's intention to enter the field of selective decentralisation.

The Prime Minister recently introduced a Bill to establish a national urban and regional development authority. Unless this Government embarks on a vigorous and responsible programme of urban and regional development, problems of congestion, pollution and population imbalance will arise, particularly as, on current trends, Australia's population will reach approximately 22,000,000 by the turn of the century.

It is of interest to note that the Country Party has printed and circulated 10,000 circulars supporting the Government's proposals. Significantly the circular makes no mention of urban development, but merely regional development. In the past, the Commonwealth Liberal Government has assumed that it is a role of State government to look at this problem and involve itself directly in the planning of Australia's urban settlements.

(Time expired.)

Mr. TOMKINS (Roma) (2.45 p.m.): Some of the remarks of the honourable member for Toowoomba North are extremely hard to follow, particularly when he says that the Government has failed to appreciate the problems of people on the land.

Mr. Bousen interjected.

Mr. TOMKINS: As I go along, I will explain the economics of this to the honourable member. It takes a little experience to explain this sort of thing, but the tenor of the honourable member's remarks was that this Government has done a poor job for the man on the land.

Mr. Houston: That is why we almost defeated the Minister at the last election.

Mr. TOMKINS: He came through, all right.

Mr. Rae: I got 53 per cent of the vote.

Mr. TOMKINS: Fortunately for Queensland, the Minister was not defeated. He sits here today as Minister for Lands.

Mr. Houston: You will admit that the previous Minister was a failure.

Mr. TOMKINS: I will not. We have not had any failures as Lands Ministers. Mr. Sullivan, the former Minister, did an extremely good job. He went out to see at first-hand what was going on, and his predecessor, Sir Alan Fletcher, who is known as the father of the brigalow lands scheme—

Mr. Houston: The late Mr. Muller, the former member for Fassifern, claimed credit for that scheme.

Mr. TOMKINS: At any rate, I know who administered it. It amazes me that the honourable member for Toowoomba North should say that the brigalow lands scheme has not worked out well. Much of the brigalow country—the Arcadia Valley section—is in my electorate, and one of the reasons why it has worked out so well is that officers of the department, from the Minister down, have gone out to see at first-hand what is going on.

The Minister is very fortunate in having officers of the calibre of Mr. Heffernan, Mr. Johnston, and Mr. O'Gorman as members of the Land Administration Commission and, on the Forestry Department side, Mr. Haley, Mr. Bryan and their officers. If, later on, I have some criticism of the Forestry Department it is not because of what these men do but simply that in some cases one does not necessarily agree with all that they do.

One peculiar feature of life on the land is that things happen in cycles, which the honourable member for Toowoomba North probably would not appreciate. In one cycle there might be a prosperous wool industry and a not-so-prosperous cattle industry, and in the next cycle things will be exactly the reverse. During the time that Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Rae have been Ministers for Lands, the wool industry has been going through a very difficult period, and it amazes me that anyone should stand up here and say that the Government has not done enough for these unfortunate people.

The Minister has mentioned what has been done by the Government in the way of rent remissions. At one stage the remission was 30 per cent, and it later rose, in some cases, to 55 per cent. If that is not fairly good treatment, I do not know what is. Apart from that, the Government instituted the rural reconstruction scheme, which was originally intended for woolgrowers but was

later extended to other primary producers who were experiencing bad times and were in real strife.

The figures quoted by the Minister show clearly what has been done. I thought the figures he cited relative to rural reconstruction were significant, and I repeat that it amazed me to hear it said that the Government does not worry about people on the land, including those in the Minister's own electorate.

Mr. F. P. Moore: Did you receive any aid through the rural reconstruction scheme?

Mr. TOMKINS: No. I did not apply for any aid.

The Minister pointed out that the funds made available under this scheme totalled \$25,900,000, comprising \$1,500,000 from the Federal Aid Rehabilitation Fund, \$16,000,000 as Queensland's share of the \$100,000,000 allocation, \$2,400,000 additional grant from the Federal Government and \$3,000,000 matching grant from each of the State and Federal Governments. So far, \$20,000,000 of the total \$25,900,000 has been advanced. I am sure that both the shadow Minister for Lands (Mr. Bousen) and the honourable member for Warrego are aware that many people who, figuratively, were knocked out were, with the financial aid given to them, able to regain their feet.

An aspect of my parliamentary career that gives me great satisfaction is the way I have been able to help many applicants to the Rural Reconstruction Board for assistance. There is not the slightest shadow of a doubt that, if it were not for the rural reconstruction scheme, a great number of these people would have been forced off the land. I will admit that some people have left the land, in many instances before the scheme really got going and in others because they were in a hopeless position. In my electorate, however, only one or two persons have failed to meet the board's requirements. Of course, it does not mind unsuccessful applicants coming back to it and reapplying for assistance. Contrary to the assertions of the honourable member for Toowoomba North, country towns pick up if the local producers are again made viable. Many western towns are now able to breathe more freely because, owing to an increase in the price of wool, a large number of primary producers have regained their feet.

There is no way in the world that the Government can control commodity prices in primary industry; it is purely a matter of supply and demand. Rises and falls in commodity prices have a great bearing on the department under review. Over the years, the Government has been aware of the problems confronting the man on the land. Instead of claiming that the Government does not study those problems, Opposition members who have knowledge of land matters should agree that it is doing a marvellous job in the inland areas of the State. This

is exemplified by the Government's change in policy relative to additional areas. It has recognised that many landholders are on areas that are far too small, and has not thrown open any land for new settlement in wool-growing areas. In one district, as many as nine additional areas were made available. This shows an appreciation by the Government of the need to build up people who are on uneconomic areas.

In the past, successive Governments and the Lands Department have been inclined to cut up land into very small areas. In my electorate, for example, upon the completion of the Roma-Injune railway line in the 1920's, land adjacent to the line was cut up into areas of as small as 320 acres for dairy farms and of 1,280 acres for grazing selections. These blocks were made available to World War I ex-servicemen.

Mr. Sherrington: It would not be good dairying country, would it?

Mr. TOMKINS: In those years it was considered to be satisfactory, and, despite the fact that they faced great hardship, numerous people who took up land in that area carried on for many years. More recently the tendency has been for those settlers to leave the land, with the result that today there has been an amalgamation of areas and landholders who have acquired two, three or four areas, as permitted under the Act, are able to carry on.

Mr. Sherrington: Could this area have been opened up with improved pastures?

Mr. TOMKINS: No. Even though the landholders could cultivate buffalo grass or green panic, for example, they could not make a living. No-one in the Roma area could live on 1,000 acres. Perhaps on the Darling Downs the situation is different, but, owing to costs and erratic rainfall, it is impossible to earn a living on a small block farther west.

My point here is that problems are developing in this area as a result of action taken by the Forestry Department. I am greatly concerned because some of these smaller holdings, even after amalgamation, are still marginal. In many instances when leases are expiring, Forestry Department officers hold the view that if cypress pine is involved they can say to the landholder, "We want to retain this country under a special lease for forestry purposes." A property may comprise 6,000 or 7,000 acres, and the department may wish to retain 3,000 or 4,000 acres. In one case a property comprised 11,000 acres and the department wanted 9,000 acres of it. In such circumstances, the area changes from a grazing selection to a purely forestry area.

Rightly or wrongly, the banks, which have a big say in the matter, do not take kindly to this type of forestry country. I have been told that bank managers have informed

landholders that if their area is changed their limit will also be changed. It is not in their interests to have their limit reduced.

As I have lived in this area for such a long time, I have been able to study the position at first hand. On nice soft, sandy loam, good cypress pine can be grown. I do not blame the Forestry Department for wanting to acquire this country so long as the area is of reasonable size, but the Lands Department is concerned about living areas. There is a real conflict of interest. As successive Governments have placed people on small areas either we should say to the landholders, "We want this land for forestry purposes, therefore we will buy you out" (which I do not advocate), or we should say, "We will give you the right to freehold this country. You will buy the pine and do with it as you see fit." I believe this is the better approach. A person with freehold country knows where he is going; he knows that it is his property. The excision of any area of land from some of these properties makes them completely uneconomic.

In other cases, even with the smaller areas, at times the value of the pine is too high for the owner to purchase. But the answer is simple: the land should be given back to him under the same tenure. I cannot see how the Forestry Department would lose if it issued a new lease for a grazing selection. The tenure would be the same and, when the Forestry Department wanted the timber, it could get it. Surely that is fair. The difference between the two policies is that the Forestry Department believes it must retain all the timber for the use of future generations. As a result of this policy, sometimes a few trees are left growing on fairly hard country which is not typical pine country.

Although the honourable member for Balonne is not in the Chamber, I point out that the Forestry Department is presently assessing the value of timber in the Dunkeld area, which is another pine growing area growing quite ordinary pine. I do not know how the assessment is going, but I should be very pleased to hear about it when it is finished. When an area is not particularly good for timber-growing, the landholder should be helped as much as possible by being allowed to retain as much land as possible. Many graziers on small properties are in real strife. One problem is that the cypress-pine suckers continue to grow in much of this country and the land thus becomes poorer as grazing country.

I have informed the Minister of the situation as best I can. I can only hope that, in due course, he will thoroughly investigate the position to see if the Forestry Department can withdraw altogether from areas that do not greatly exceed a living area. I have no quarrel with the department acquiring land in properties of substantial size. I know that a forestry reserve can be excised from a property without causing

any trouble if it is larger than a living area. However, it affects small areas greatly. These are some of the problems that must be studied.

I cannot understand the honourable member's claim that the Government's policy tends to exploit workers in country areas, because people on the land all over Queensland provide their workers with cottages, which are connected with electricity where it is available.

Mr. Sullivan: That is not what the workers think.

Mr. TOMKINS: Many of them vote for the Country Party.

The only landholders who do not provide these amenities are those with small areas. They cannot afford to keep going and in many instances have had to pay their workers off. This is one of the tragedies of the long drought and the low wool prices. The Department of Lands must take a long-term view of these matters.

Nobody would deny that the cattle industry is prosperous today. But history shows that Governments should support an industry that is confronted with difficulties because, when that industry can, it will pay its way. I forecast that, in three years' time, all the money that has been put into the wool industry will be repaid. In the 1930's nobody would go into the "Cinderella" cattle industry. In those days a fat bullock brought only \$12 or \$16, whereas today it will bring \$200 to \$220. That industry is now in a good position mainly because the Government did not murder it with excessive rentals. The Government should study the plight of all primary producers in times of adversity and assist them. Then, when the tide turns, it will be amply repaid by them.

The Department of Lands could not possibly have done more for people on the land than it has done recently. It has assisted people in all walks of life who have been in trouble. It has offered assistance by way of rental reductions, advances under the rural reconstruction scheme and rate rebates to shire councils. Such assistance is given only by a Government that is sympathetic towards the man on the land.

Fortunately, the time is near when these people will recover and again contribute to the State's economy. If good seasons return—and there are signs that they are doing so—we will enjoy a period of reasonable prosperity within the next few years. City dwellers will also be far better off when that happens, because city affluence results from a reasonable degree of prosperity in country areas.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Wharton): Order! The honourable member for Bundaberg is interjecting far too often.

Mr. TOMKINS: It is pleasing that the Government is able to keep these areas viable when the going is tough. I congratulate the Minister and his officers on the excellent work they have done. They have their hearts in the right place.

Mr. O'DONNELL (Belyando) (3.5 p.m.): I am disappointed that the two previous Lands Ministers have left the Chamber; I thought I would have had the "Three Musketeers" listening to me, so that I could recall for them some of their past sins, as well as give them a little praise now and then.

I convey to the present Minister my appreciation of the efforts of the officers of the Lands Department. In 11 years of experience with that department, I have never had any reason to complain of the treatment that I have received. I have, in fact, been privileged to receive very good service from them. They render it not so much to me personally as to my constituents—those in my old electorate of Barcoo as well as the primary producers of my present electorate of Belyando.

I should like to convey my congratulations to the officers who have recently been promoted. All of them are very well known to me, and I can say that those who made the promotions were very good judges because the officers promoted will certainly live up to their new responsibilities.

Time is rather limited in this debate. I regret the reduction in the time of speeches from 25 minutes to 20 minutes, as the extra five minutes allowed members more opportunity to spread themselves on matters involving the people of Queensland and their problems.

I suppose that fundamentally land means nothing till it is occupied by people who endeavour to produce from it the commodities that have, down through the years, been of great benefit not only to Queensland but to Australia. I think it is wisely said that it is not the land that is our heritage but its productivity. I should like to pay a tribute to the primary producers who have, throughout the history of this nation, stood up to the vicissitudes of floods and droughts, and the tribulations of depression and poor prices, and so stuck to their task of developing the State that it can now fairly safely be said that there is very little of Queensland that is not now under some form of primary production. I think a quick estimate would show that there are approximately 54,000 primary-producing properties in this State. I think that that in itself is a real monument to Queenslanders and their fortitude.

There have been rewards, too. I know that many primary producers have attained considerable wealth, but in so doing they have helped considerably to decentralise this State. They have given their support to country towns, and have helped to set up

better community centres than are to be found at mere "whistle stops" on a railway line.

Primary producers have unfortunately been smitten by drought in recent years, and there has been a certain degree of recession in many towns that at one time were booming. I recall Blackall in the early days of my representation of Barcoo. The investment and growth in that area in those days seemed to indicate that the sky was the limit. Then came the drought, and the town was plunged into a serious recession, and there were empty houses and empty business premises. But there is now a bright light in the far distance; with rising wool prices, there is the possibility of a return of some prosperity.

I stress the importance of all people in the rural areas of Queensland—not only the primary producers, but also townspeople who serve the primary producers. No matter what calling they follow, they, too, in co-operation with the man on the land, are developing the State, and it is important to realise that. Without having a direct interest, they are contributing to the increased production of the State. We are very proud of the people living in rural areas, and, of course, anyone who lives in the country becomes very closely associated with each individual in the area and comes to appreciate the good qualities of all sections of the community.

Down through the years mention has been made in this Chamber of the contrast between the policy of the Australian Labor Party and that of the Government, which has been one of fostering freeholding. To my mind, there is not a great deal of difference between freehold tenure and leasehold tenure, because ultimately, if it came to the "crunch", land under both types of tenure would come under Crown control, because land held under either freehold or leasehold tenure could be resumed. However, I believe that leasehold tenure has proved its value during the trying years that Queensland has gone through, because under that form of tenure primary producers who have been hard-hit by drought have been able to have reductions made in their rent, and that is a very important factor. It has also been possible to adjust the size of properties to meet the existing economic circumstances by granting additional areas. It has been far easier to do that when land has been held under leasehold tenure. These are important points that have become evident from the experience that has been gained in this State, and I think that in many ways they vindicate the support of the A.L.P. for leasehold tenure.

There is one thing that I regret about the Country-Liberal Government's desire to expedite freeholding—its interference with perpetual lease, particularly as it relates to town allotments. Honourable members are well aware that increasing valuations made the 3 per cent charged as rent a considerable burden to a number of people

on limited incomes such as pensions or superannuation. The Government's policy in that respect did not appeal to me, and no-one in the Government realised, apparently, that percentages can be adjusted to reduce rents to a fair level. The Government tried to induce people to get rid of perpetual lease properties by allowing them to convert to freehold over a period of years. I thought that that was reasonably fair. However, the Government also offered a substantial discount—almost up to 50 per cent of the valuation—for cash.

I say that that is wrong because, after all, it is Crown land that is being dealt with. Whilst I am all in favour of assisting people by the wise use of Crown land, I still do not think that it should be given away. I am very critical of this policy and I could cite many examples of land that it could be said has been given away, to the advantage of those who freeholded it.

I do not know where we are headed under the Government's land policy. There has been considerable criticism about the rising price of land. No matter what Government is in power, when leasehold country or freehold country is released, the benefits are obtained only by the first holders of that land. From then on the properties go onto the market and ride on the inflationary spiral. How can the second or third holder be helped? He cannot be helped unless some action can be taken to keep down the price of land in fairness to all. Black-market operations enter the picture when controls are imposed. We saw that during World War II. That is the real reason why the prices of town allotments and properties are spiralling. The only people who get the benefits are the original receivers of the land from the Crown.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: That would not be true in all areas at the present time.

Mr. O'DONNELL: I know that there are recessions. I realise that the law of supply and demand comes into it. I know that no bid was received recently for a property outside Emerald that was up for sale. People generally are complaining about the rising price of land, whether it is for domestic use, certain types of farming or grazing. In particular, it is affecting young people who wish to get married and build their own homes. The extent of the increases is disgraceful, but I cannot see the solution of the problem. I regret that there is no way in which the Government can come in at some stage and say, "This land has to be transferred at \$X." Of course, as I said earlier, there is always a blackmarket. I do not know how the problem can be resolved, but it is becoming a tremendous one. I own 22 perches of land which, in 1961, was worth \$300. Today those 22 perches are supposed to be worth \$1,900, but I assure the Committee that I could get \$3,000 for them. How is that sort of thing going to affect our future? The problem must keep on growing to the detriment of our young people.

Mr. Chinchin: If a willing buyer and a willing seller—

Mr. O'DONNELL: That is a lot of bunkum. There is no such thing as a willing buyer. The buyer always wants to haggle. The purchaser always wants to beat down the seller's price. I do not accept that willing-buyer business. The only time I see a willing buyer is when there is a bargain to be obtained.

I wish to refer briefly to something else that is worrying people throughout the length and breadth of the State. No doubt it worries people in the cities, but it is even more worrying to people on the land. I refer to probate and succession duties and their importance in land matters. They constitute a succession of ownership problems. I want some thought to be given to this, so I will put it very simply. We have two forms of what I shall call "gift taxes". One is imposed on what is inherited as a gift and the other on what is actually handed over as a gift. Why do we have to discriminate between these two forms of gifts? Why can the Government not consider these two aspects and see if they can be brought together as identical operations for taxation purposes? There should be a streamlining of our tax processes on gifts, whether they be passed on by the dead or the living. That would be an intelligent approach. There is no doubt that this is a recognised form of taxation, and I do not think one could in any way justify its total abolition because, after all, a gift is income; however, I wished to make that point.

I now turn to the Rural Reconstruction Board. The Minister knows that I have had success with some cases and failure with others, and that decisions on applications for such assistance pose great difficulties. Some people feel aggrieved but, when we relate the rural way of life to the "city" form of life, I suppose we must admit that people on the land are receiving something that is not available to the city businessman. However, my main worry concerns anomalous situations that have arisen. As my time is short, I will only give one example. I recently received a complaint that a person who had received assistance from the Rural Reconstruction Board was placed in an invidious position in that when paying his rates he had to meet a penalty for previous non-payment. This is pretty hard on him. The person who is able to meet his rate commitment when it falls due gets the benefit of a discount if a discount operates, or, at least, no penalty for late payment. The processing of applications to the Rural Reconstruction Board takes some time, and a man in financial stress who is unable to fulfil his commitments finds himself in an invidious position in that a penalty is added for late payment of rates. This amounts to an additional tax because he is in necessitous circumstances.

Mr. Tomkins: Would that not depend on the local authority concerned? Some councils would charge and some would not.

Mr. O'DONNELL: It is not a case of some councils charging and others not. The whole point is that, if justice is to be meted out, this charge should not be imposed at all. I realise that one has to take into consideration the viewpoint of a person who usually pays his rates on time. He could complain that, if he was late in paying, a penalty would be imposed, whereas the person receiving assistance from the Rural Reconstruction Board was not penalised. I know what is involved, but we cannot lay the responsibility on any one council. This matter has to be general; we cannot have a system of bits and pieces.

The last point I raise concerns section 16 of the Land Act, which was repealed in 1965. This amendment, of course, has given aliens the right to be treated in the same way as Australian citizens in the acquisition of land. All sorts of ideals and aims have been expressed over the years about acquisition of land by aliens. Anyone who can remember the pre-war years will recall that even Japanese were able to acquire land. They did so either by dummying through a British subject or a British company or by forming a company of their own.

(Time expired.)

Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumba) (3.25 p.m.): For 20 minutes the Committee was forced to listen to the Opposition's shadow Minister for Lands (Mr. Bousen), who, in the whole of that time, did not put forward even one constructive suggestion. Of course, this is typical of many members of the A.L.P., who do nothing but criticise this Government. If the constituents represented by certain members of the Opposition could listen to some of the rot and rubbish that emanates from the other side of the Chamber, they would realise that those members won their votes by false pretences.

It is easy for members of the Opposition to criticise the Government. But, unlike those members, I remember the time when, under the A.L.P., the Lands Department engaged in some rather doubtful practices. Unlike the honourable member for Belyando, I am happy with the reduction in the time allotted to each member in this debate from 25 to 20 minutes. As a result, we do not have to listen to so much tripe emanating from the Opposition benches.

Mr. O'Donnell: Are you suggesting that I spoke tripe?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I do not suggest anything of the sort; I do not include the honourable member for Belyando among those Opposition members to whom I make reference.

This year the sum of money required for the administration of this important portfolio is greater than the amount spent last year. The increase is necessary as a result of higher costs. It must be remembered that during the recent drought the administration of this State's land laws was beset by many difficulties and problems. One result of that is that by the end of this year the Government will have forgone in excess of \$3,000,000 by way of rent remissions since 1967.

The Government's policy on forestry management has improved the commercial status of the timber and sawmilling industry. The regulations governing the licensing of sawmills have been amended to permit the site transfer of sawmills for amalgamation within certain zones, thereby giving the industry the opportunity of building up larger and more economic units than before. The sawmills that process log timber, whether from private or Crown land, are required to be licensed under the Sawmills Licensing Act, which is administered by the Department of Forestry with the object of stabilising the log-processing industry of Queensland. The department attempts to achieve this by equating the licensed sawmill capacity to the yield capacity of the forests.

This State has continued in its role as the leader in Australia in the planting of softwoods, and, in the present financial year, Queensland's planting programme has been maintained at a record level. The increased availability of softwoods in the Gympie-Maryborough district is leading to the establishment of two particle-board factories and a pulp mill. The Australian Forestry Council, which administers the Softwood Forestry Agreement between the States and the Commonwealth, promotes the welfare and development of the Australian forestry industry.

During the debate in the Senate last August of the Softwood Forestry Agreements Bill, Senator Keeffe (who was well known in Queensland as an advocate for the rights of the Aborigines until it was proposed to build an Aboriginal home next door to his residence), true to his form of "knocking" the Queensland Government, called upon his very limited experience and claimed that under this State Government the Forestry Commission was a haphazard organisation. As usual, Senator Keeffe displayed his appalling lack of knowledge of the state of the softwood forests in Queensland.

The Forestry Department is a very important department, with many responsibilities. Its main concern is to make Queensland self-sufficient in the supply of timber. Employment is provided in country areas, mainly in hoop-pine plantations, which play a major role in providing timber for the industry. However, in order to meet the demand for timber, it is necessary to continue plantings in all areas.

It is interesting to note that each year A.P.M. Forests Pty. Ltd., which is a subsidiary of Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd., spends \$380,000 in the Caboolture area, in my electorate. It provides direct, full-time employment for 27 men, and each winter another 20 men are employed temporarily. Through its regular contractors, an additional 30 men are employed. It makes no small contribution to employment within that shire.

Mr. Davis: What about telling the Committee how A.P.M. got started?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I will do that at a later date.

A.P.M. Forests, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Australian Paper Manufacturers, was formed in 1951 to carry out forestry and wood-procurement programmes for the parent company. In Queensland, the company has established 34,000 acres of pine plantations. With additional annual plantings, it is expanding the renewable resources from which the industry will draw its raw material for the future. At present the company is drawing raw material for its Petrie mill—that is, pine wood chips—from State forests. It also has a research programme that makes a very valuable contribution to technical knowledge in forestry, including work specifically applicable to Queensland conditions. It employs methods in its forestry operations designed to assist in maintaining and improving the environment.

The company's most important contribution to the industry, of course, is in fire prevention and suppression. As a result, the immense destruction by fire of large areas of forest, together with its wildlife and vegetation, is now less likely to occur. The establishment of forestry roads and the maintenance of water supplies and modern fire-fighting equipment are all assisting in reducing the incidence of loss by fire. It should be realised that A.P.M. Forests is making a valuable contribution to Queensland forestry, thanks, of course, to encouragement given by this Government to its operations.

I should now like to refer to the annual report of the Land Administration Commission relative to the sale of herbicides. These products are made available to landholders at cost price and railed free of charge to the nearest railhead for the treatment of noxious plants and valueless timbers. I completely agree with this practice, but I believe that the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act should be amended to ensure that inexperienced operators are not allowed access to those herbicides known as 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T because recently, in the electorate of Murrumba, much destruction resulted from their indiscriminate use.

The sum of \$21,000 allocated for the eradication of groundsel bush is, of course, only a drop in the ocean. Those of us who are familiar with groundsel know that it

would require millions of dollars to completely eradicate it in Queensland. When it is realised that a sum in excess of \$500,000 is spent annually in Queensland by local authorities and landholders to contain the weed within its present limits and reduce existing infestations, it becomes apparent that the groundsel bush will be with us for some time yet. In fact, the Lands Department spent \$3,900 in the Greater Brisbane area alone on the eradication of groundsel bush on Crown land. The plant can be killed quite easily with the application of hormone herbicides such as 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, but the cost of attempting extermination throughout Queensland would be considerable, whether carried out by aircraft spraying or ground application.

The groundsel bush, incidentally, is a native of North and Central America. It was introduced into Australia as an ornamental shrub, and was grown mainly in Brisbane gardens. It escaped from garden culture and has become a weed problem in pastures and forest plantations on coastal lands both north and south of Brisbane. In 1951 it was declared a noxious weed under the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act. Its noxiousness is due partly to the threat it poses to the grazing industry on the South-east Queensland coast, and partly to the potential threat of its spread to tropical North Queensland. In the United States of America it thrives under tropical conditions similar to those of North Queensland. It has a rapid and aggressive growth rate, which produces dense thickets that shade out other plants. Although not toxic to stock, its nutritional value is very limited, and stock existing solely on it usually suffer from malnutrition. It also produces large numbers of seeds that are wind borne. A bush about eight feet high can produce 500,000 seeds. It can be readily understood that to eradicate this weed by conventional methods would be almost impossible.

An amount of \$20,000 is also set aside in the Estimates for the biological control of groundsel bush. This is a very important and necessary expenditure. Research into the control of weeds which are declared noxious under both the Lands Act and the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act is being conducted at the Alan Fletcher Research Station. The biological control of groundsel bush, depending on the insects used, could certainly overcome the problem of cost. Introducing the natural enemies of this weed will restore the balance of nature, which has been upset by the introduction of this foreign plant free of its enemies. The aim is to reduce the infestation of the weed to a low level, although where it is still present it ceases to be a problem. An example of this is the effect of the moth *cactoblastis* on prickly-pear, with scattered plants maintaining the moths while at the same time they prevent the prickly-pear from again becoming a major problem.

The Commonwealth Institute of Biological Control conducted an official survey in North and South America, and scientists from the Biological Section of the Department of Lands visited Florida to test and consign selected groundsel-bush-feeding insects to Australia. These investigations occupied the three years from 1967 to 1969. The insects were tested for host specificity by starvation testing. That is a test to ensure that the insects will starve rather than feed on any plant other than groundsel bush.

Finally, six of these insects were selected for importation into Australia. They were imported into the quarantine insectary of the Alan Fletcher Research Station in 1969. They were a foliage-feeding beetle, a foliage-feeding moth, a stem-boring moth, a tip-feeding moth and two types of gall-forming fly. Three of these—the two types of gall-forming fly and the tip-feeding moth—proved unsuitable, and colonies of these insects died out soon after their introduction into Queensland because they breed mainly in mid-summer in Florida and the cooler temperature in South-east Queensland appears to pre-empt any chance of their being a success in the eradication of groundsel.

The groundsel-eating beetle, *trirhabda baccharidis*, appears to be suited to the climatic conditions in Queensland, and a colony of these beetles is thriving in the Deception Bay area of Murrumbidgee. I cannot reveal the exact location as I have taken an oath of secrecy. I was taken there by officers of the Alan Fletcher Research Station and was shown these beetles. The fear is that, if the location is divulged, other shires might poach the beetles. It is simple to catch about 500 an hour at night-time.

I can assure honourable members that these beetles will be the answer to the groundsel problem. As more of them become available, they will be released in other areas. Each beetle is between 7 and 12 mm. in length. The honourable member for Brisbane recently expressed great interest in the metric system and, in deference to him, I have decided to give all measurements in metrics.

Mr. F. P. Moore interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: The honourable member for Mourilyan, who was a school-teacher, may be able to work these out, but I doubt that he can.

The beetle is dark grey-green, with yellow markings above and yellow beneath. It emerges in the spring from chambers in the soil, and lives from two to three months. The beetles feed on foliage and, under crowded conditions, will completely defoliate a plant. However, in the field, the result is not nearly so severe. The female lays small, soft yellow eggs, usually in batches of 50 or more, in cracks or crevices and also on the leaves and stems. The eggs are coated with an adhesive cement by the female to protect and bind them together. The larvae hatch in autumn and feed on the leaves and stems of the groundsel bush

prior to and during the seeding period. After feeding for one to two months, the mature larvae move to the soil and lie in a dormant stage until pupating and emerging as adults in spring. This beetle has the potential to be an outstanding biological control agent.

Mr. Davis: No notice was taken of me when I said this two years ago.

Mr. FRAWLEY: The honourable member would not know what a groundsel beetle looks like.

The beetle has only one generation a year, but the defoliation produced is so timed that a maximum amount of damage is inflicted. The total effect of the mass feeding is spectacular. Apart from all foliage being eaten, with stem die-back of more than a foot, severe reduction in the production of viable seed by any remaining buds occurs on heavily damaged plants. However, this beetle spreads very slowly preferring to allow its numbers to build up considerably before searching for fresh groundsel bush.

Mr. Gunn: Is there any evidence that it will attack other vegetable crops in the area?

Mr. FRAWLEY: Testing of host specificity by the scientists at the Alan Fletcher Research Station has proved beyond doubt that these beetles will starve rather than feed on anything but the groundsel plant.

The adult beetles emerge in spring, and this coincides with young regrowth from plants that have survived the previous autumn attack by the larvae. The adult beetles reduce still further the plant's ability to compete with grasses and other plants growing amongst it.

The foliage-feeding moth is approximately 15 mm. in length, and is grey with white markings. The adult lives for only one to two weeks. The female lays up to 50 eggs at a time, and they hatch within one week and produce larvae that feed on the groundsel-bush leaves. The mature larva is bright green, about 30 mm. in length. Since this moth is capable of reproducing several generations a year, its capacity for increase is great. However in the field its rapid rate of spread has not so far allowed a sufficiently high density of its members to build up and become any real threat to groundsel.

The stem-boring moth is light brown, with white and dark-brown markings. This is the third insect that has been proved by the research station to be worthy of consideration in the control of groundsel bush. Adults do not feed at all, and only live for one week. The female lays from 50 to 100 eggs, which hatch within two weeks, and the young larvae tunnel into the leaves for several days. They then move into the stem of the plant. Mature larvae are 15 mm. in length, and are white with red markings. In the laboratory, two generations a year have been reared, but, in the field, so far there has been only one.

Mr. Davis: Most of your Country Party colleagues would not understand this.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I am certain there are not too many on the Opposition side who do, either.

The stem borer certainly weakens large groundsel plants sufficiently to allow grasses and other plants to compete with it. It can readily be seen that much more money is needed by the Department of Lands to provide for the further breeding of groundsel-eating moths and beetles, and that the \$20,000 allocated for the control of groundsel bush by biological means is money well spent.

Mr. Murray: You could get Ken Tomkins to supply them with sheep.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I am afraid that groundsel has little nutritional value for sheep, so they would probably die from malnutrition if that happened.

Dairy farmers are certainly receiving the consideration that is their due, as the State is providing \$5,500,000 to assist them to meet changing conditions. This is something that certainly would not have happened under an A.L.P. Government, whose policy is, "No aid to primary producers." Long-term finance to enable farmers to convert to bulk-milk supply would be much appreciated by them.

To upgrade a dairy farm to supply whole milk, a farmer must make a substantial outlay of money, as many dairies will have to be rebuilt in positions accessible in all weather conditions to enable tankers to collect the milk. Honourable members opposite, especially the honourable member for Brisbane, should listen to this. Bulk-milk vats will have to be installed to keep milk in all weather conditions under hygienic conditions. However, the maximum loan of \$7,500 needs to be increased to about \$12,000 if a farmer has to build new bails and install milking machines and a bulk vat. The interest rate of 6.25 per cent at present is not excessive, but it would need to be maintained at this rate to enable farmers to meet their commitments. Queensland now has great difficulty in meeting its own requirements of dairy products, and dairy farmers must be encouraged to remain on the land.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AIKEN (Warrego) (3.45 p.m.): This Banana-Republic-type Government is apparently bent on alienating Queenslander from Queenslander, as improved living conditions fall to the urban dweller and cause resentment and disillusionment to the rural dweller, who is grossly underpaid, underprivileged, and bound by debt in chains that make it impossible for him even to act as a free man. I say that a successful society is one in which there is at least some equality and in which people are able to live at comparatively similar levels. Today the variation between city and country living is odious.

It is impossible to reconcile the basic wage with the average income earned in this State, because the rural producer, as a result of

the policy adopted by the Government, has been reduced to a pauper-peasant and rural industry remains unstable and unwanted as an avenue of investment. Consequently, landowners today are unable to pay their debts and unable to sell their properties. Those who are able to sell must do so at unrealistic prices.

The Budget introduced recently by the Treasurer has not done anything to stimulate rural demand and, in fact, is notable for its failure to follow up the \$10,000,000 that was given last year, in a doubtful pre-election period, to what the Government termed the "disaster area". It is a Budget of many words and little substance. The best that can be said of it is that it is a compromise—it always is with a Government such as the one in office today—and scant regard is given in it to the people of the Inland.

Mr. Rae interjected.

Mr. AIKEN: No-one knows that better than the Minister. Can he tell me whether, in the next few days, the Federal Government is likely to extend rate and rent remissions in the western areas of the State? Is that likely?

Mr. Rae: It might help you up in the Territory on that \$500,000 or \$750,000 purchase of yours.

Mr. AIKEN: We continually hear the Premier, the Treasurer, the Minister for Lands and Forestry and the Minister for Primary Industries making use of the word "boom". I suggest that "gloom" would be a more appropriate word to use. I know that, in reply, the Minister will flood my words with loud verbosity and political sniping. But is it not time that he and the Government of which he is a member did something about flooding the inland areas of this State with confidence and the prosperity that he knew so well when he first became a member of this Assembly? Whatever the demand on an industry, it should never be forgotten that, without a suitable profit margin, it is useless and must collapse. Is not that the exact situation that exists in the State's primary industries today? Is it possible that, by shameful Government neglect, the farmer is being robbed of his opportunity to cash in on the world demand for an unprecedented boom in agricultural goods today? Of course he is being robbed by the neglect of the Country-Liberal Government, which has not done anything to stabilise industry.

Mr. Rae: By whom is he being robbed?

Mr. AIKEN: By the Government. It has not given the farmer the opportunity of benefiting from that boom.

I ask the Committee to remember how the Australian Labor Party fought against the production controls that have resulted lately in shortages in both dairy products

and grain. I ask honourable members to remember, too, the stirring battle that the Labor Party put up for greater recognition of the need for survival of the man on the land and the industries and employment dependent on him. Now, when wool, beef, grain and oilseed sales are booming, is not Labor proved right? Without selling one grain of wheat to China, record sales of wheat have been made, and Queensland cannot keep up with the demand.

As a matter of fact, I am extremely doubtful whether the much-publicised 1,000,000 tons of grain sold to China for next year can be aggregated by this country. Wheat supplies and reserves of wheat have been reduced to a dangerously low level. That situation is not new; it has occurred before. Only last year Queensland had to import wheat from New South Wales. On previous occasions we have imported it from abroad. Is not this a short-sighted policy? Was not Labor's thinking correct when it fought against restrictions and quotas? Government members should not evade the issue or forget Labor's accusations. Over the last six to 10 years Labor has maintained that this Government has neglected the man on the land. The result has been the present-day shortages. The evidence is available to prove that primary producers were abandoned and short-circuited by this Government. When help was needed most the agriculturist was brutally ignored by men like the Minister for Lands.

The Government says that it is working towards the salvation of the people of the Inland. Government economic policies must be phoney. There must be something wrong with them because more and more people are being forced from the Inland as vested interests and big business continue to fatten in the cities. How can the Government's policies be right? They have to be phoney. What is the cost to big business of its financial support of this Government? Vested interests cling strongly and desperately to a lopsided economy that favours one section of the people to the detriment of another.

The running of the State is the State's biggest business. The biggest industry in the State is the primary industry. What a nice mess the Government has made of it! What a shoddy way the Government has handled that business when people with huge capital investments in the Inland find it beneficial to sell out—if they can—and reinvest in city ventures! They are deserting areas that were once very profitable. The Government is always crying about what it costs to support the man on the land. What does it cost the man on the land to support the Government? If the Minister is not careful, the Inland will soon revert to the Ned Kelly days and a future Burke and Wills will have to rediscover all the treasures of that part of the State. The sands of the desert and the scrub will combine with the Government's policies to force everybody out of the industry.

With the world competing for our grain, oilseeds, wool and beef, why is the producer of these essentials held in contempt and reduced to serfdom by this Government?

Government Members interjected.

Mr. AIKEN: That is true. I know plenty of graziers in the West who come to town every alternate week to get unemployment relief. What sort of a Government have we when it can ignore those wonderful people who, in spite of all sorts of adversities, including bad government, have bounced back to demonstrate their flexibility and viability! I implore this Government to stop procrastinating—if honourable members opposite know what the word means—and move toward the re-establishment of these valuable and necessary people, the most important commodity we have in the Inland.

Those people are daily leaving the West. They do not want to go, but they are being forced out by a "don't care" Government. They do not want to be dispossessed, nor do they want to quit; they are not bred that way. Nor do townspeople want to leave. Although rural production is close to a record this year, and although there is a revival in primary industry, people are still leaving the Inland, despite the Government's much-publicised rural reconstruction scheme and drought relief assistance. Why? Because they are disillusioned, browned-off and heartily sick of this Government. The new-look wool market that has emerged from the trough certainly has a ring of confidence, and, if debt alleviation was made possible by this Government, wool-growers could revitalise and rebuild the neglected West.

I say that rural reconstruction lacks two essentials. One is the lack of finance and the other the lack of earnestness on the part of this Government. I believe that rural reconstruction has been merely an expedient by which the Government tries to con people into believing that it is going to do something for them. Far too many people are being denied assistance under the scheme. If the Government was sincere—which is always open to question—and the now insolvent farmer was granted the assistance he requires, rural reconstruction would be marvellous. But every day in this Chamber we hear questions asked by Opposition members concerning rural reconstruction and the number of farmers who are receiving assistance, and it is evident that those being given it are in the minority.

To date, all schemes of farmer assistance have been far too restricted, giving only minor value to a large and suffering industry. The fact is that we have very little wool in Queensland. Sheep numbers have been reduced from 24,000,000 to about 12,000,000 and only a few growers have benefited from the recent price boom.

Rural industry is today engaged in a struggle to the death to protect its profit margin against constantly rising costs. We

are well aware that these crippling costs are beyond the control of the grower. I claim they are a direct result of bad government. If we have inflation in this country, the Government is responsible for it; the Government inaugurated it, so let it do something about it. Inflation is a white-anting and eroding destroyer of our primary industries in particular, and what appears to be gain in the shape of higher returns or higher wages or profits is merely illusory, and leads only to higher charges, higher costs and higher rates of taxation. That is inflation and it is surely time that common sense, which, of course, is always lacking in this Government, should dictate that saving action from the Government is needed to stimulate the return to the land of farmers who have left it, but whose return is so necessary to our economy.

Surely the pessimistic warnings being issued by the experts in industry should not be ignored. The Government is continually receiving representations from growers' organisations wishing to find out what the Government intends to do. The writing is on the wall. Most people in country industries can see that primary industries are probably only the first to fall. In the motor industry at the present time there is a rumbling that is growing to a cascade, and I feel sure that other urban industries face a gloomy future.

There is no easy solution to inflation, but why has the Government not spelt out to the very valuable inhabitants of the Inland a definite policy of recovery? Why do we allow the drift from the country to the city, and the serious loss to our economy of the many farmers who have been driven from the land? Why do we tolerate it? The people in the Outback are becoming very intolerant, and this is the reason why certain Government members are finding it difficult to retain their seats.

For many years Labor's policy has been one of price control, but, of course, this Government has rejected that policy. So, I ask: where is its alternative solution to this problem, which, on its admission, exists?

By now it must be appreciated that the industry that is most stifled by costs and hardest hit is the biggest industry in Queensland, namely, the primary industry. Does this hotchpotch Government, which is dominated by the Country Party, the Liberal Party, the D.L.P. and other pressure groups, have any great knowledge of what needs to be done to help this industry? If it does possess that knowledge, it has kept it to itself.

A previous speaker claimed that productivity is the keynote to production. In the past 20 years production per person in Queensland has risen by more than 50 per cent. The industry that deserves the most credit for this astronomical rise is the primary industry. This increased production is the main reason for our higher standard of living

and our affluence. Exactly what this State owes to the man on the land is impossible to determine.

Owing to droughts and market recessions, the rural industries have declined, and, unless some urgent action is taken by the Government, they will die. Over the next few months, as a result of a continuation of one of the worst droughts ever to grip the West, they will decline at a faster rate than before. Unless the Government comes up with a sensible approach to this problem, towns such as Cunnamulla, St. George, Bollon, Dirranbandi, Charleville, Quilpie and Thargomindah will die. The standard of living of the people in the West is being threatened. Under the Government's present policy, with the loss of rural production, the only means of increasing our export earnings is by the further development of our mining industry. But what will happen if that industry, too, suffers a setback? I strongly maintain that, at any cost, our rural industries should be saved. Whatever the cost, it will be less than that experienced in years to come if the advice of those experts who dictate to the Government that the Outback should be abandoned is heeded.

Mr. Rae: I think you should buy the country.

Mr. AIKEN: I will if I am given the chance; I will keep the Japanese out.

Australia is an exporting nation and offers the finest primary products in the world. This country's real worth lies in its farming ability. In spite of this, the Government of Queensland allows the primary industry to wither and almost die. If it is to survive, it must receive greater support from both the State and Federal Governments. I only hope that within the next two or three days this Government will allow rent and rate remissions to the necessitous people in the West. These days the farmer is battling rising costs, heavily subsidised overseas products, low prices, high tariffs on international markets, and synthetic materials. He has to face these barriers as well as those of flood, drought, fire and agricultural and pastoral diseases.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WHARTON (Burnett) (4.5 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I take part in this very important debate on the Lands Department Estimates, which is one of the most important debates in this Assembly.

I listened with a deal of interest to Opposition speakers, including the "big noise" from the West and the "quiet whisper" from Toowoomba North. There was a marked contrast in their delivery, but I wondered if their contributions were at all relevant to the Estimates that we are supposed to be discussing. The honourable member for Warrego presented a doleful, depressing outlook on the position in the West. Judging by his comments, it must be a very dismal place. I can well understand why he intends buying more land. It

would seem that he wants values depressed further so that land will be cheaper for him to buy. Doubtless he knows that the Government will straighten out the mess for him.

Mr. Davis: He wants to keep the foreigners out.

Mr. WHARTON: If the honourable member for Brisbane does not listen, the foreigners will get him.

The honourable member for Warrego said that virtually everything in the West was bad. He referred to the effects of drought, inflation and so on. I readily agree that drought affects our primary industries and the man on the land.

Mr. Rae: It was a patchy speech. There was nothing in it at all.

Mr. WHARTON: The honourable member said nothing that was worthwhile. He outlined certain of his policies, one of which related to price control. But he did not say anything about wage control. Let us put some of these troubles right where they belong.

Mr. Sherrington: He referred to price stabilisation.

Mr. WHARTON: The honourable member for Salisbury was not in the Chamber. He would not know what was said.

The honourable member for Warrego referred to what he called the "great problems of the West", but forgot to mention—I do not blame him for doing so—that the A.L.P. has caused many of these problems as a result of its attitude to inflation. It has inflicted high cost development, high cost of goods, high cost of transport and high cost of everything else affecting the man on the land. The great majority of Australian Labor Party members have contributed to these things, and the people of Queensland are paying the penalty for A.L.P. agitation.

Mr. Sherrington: You made a million under a Labor Government.

Mr. WHARTON: I have not made a million in my life. In the depression years, I could not get a job under Labor. The honourable member should know that. I do not want to go back to those days. I know what happened under Labor.

Mr. Sherrington: I was five years without work following the election of the Moore Government.

Mr. WHARTON: My view is that the honourable member would be unemployed under almost any Government.

I congratulate the Minister on being given responsibility for the Lands portfolio. I have known him for a long time, and he deserves his position in the Ministry. I believe that in this new field he will excel himself.

In the 12 years that I have been in Parliament, Queensland has been blessed with very good Lands Ministers. I can refer only to the late Mr. Muller, Sir Alan Fletcher, Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Rae. All honourable members must admit that there has been wonderful progress in land development under this Government.

If we keep an ear to the ground we do not hear the people making the same complaints as they did prior to 1957. Many of the problems confronting them in those days have been resolved—and they continue to be resolved. We certainly still have to face the problems of drought and other problems that have to be faced up to by people in every walk of life, but this Government has always been very generous in helping those in distress.

Mr. Sherrington: It has not.

Mr. WHARTON: Of course it has; and it will continue to be very generous.

I do not decry what previous Governments have done, but we have shown that we can look after the man on the land. This Government has done much for these people, and the present Minister is certainly carrying on the good work of overcoming their problems. They are the basis of our economy. They are the salt of the earth. I hope that they will enjoy good seasons, orderly marketing of their products and continued assistance from the Government to keep them viable.

I pay a tribute to the staff of this department. I notice that Mr. Lawrence is sitting in the lobby. At one time he was in Gayndah. I congratulate him on his appointment to his present position. I know the staff well, and the part they have played.

Mr. Sherrington interjected.

Mr. WHARTON: The only time the honourable member works is at Christmas. He works only once a year, whereas these men work throughout the year, including a good deal of overtime. They are realistic in their approach to their duties, and their judgment is sound. I pay them a compliment. They are a good team, and teamwork is the criterion in land-administration matters. The Department of Lands has a good team of helpers, all of whom are doing something, with the Minister, to assist land development in this State.

I am pleased that the Government has been able to help the grazier. At the Federal level, the Wool Industry Commission has helped to bring sanity into the price structure of wool, and that industry now has some hope of rehabilitation. It is important that all primary producers are made viable. It is no use having a rich beef-producer when we have a poor grain-producer and a pig-producer struggling along earning only a crust. They must all be viable.

Mr. Sherrington: What about the orange farmer?

Mr. WHARTON: He needs to be viable, too. It is no use having distress areas in parts of Queensland and rich areas in other parts. Anybody with an area of land should be able to use it to the best possible advantage.

Mr. Sherrington: Why mislead people by dyeing the skin of oranges?

Mr. WHARTON: I have never misled the public. I resent that interjection. Oranges are not coloured.

Mr. Sherrington: They are.

Mr. WHARTON: They are not. They are treated with gas to give them a uniform colour. They are no riper whether they have had treatment or not. The honourable member would not know that.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: He would certainly know that that subject is irrelevant to these Estimates.

Mr. WHARTON: Thank you, Mr. Hewitt. I did not want to digress. I give a great deal of praise to the Minister and his staff—and to you, Mr. Hewitt.

While the viability of the wool-grower is being maintained, something is being done for other industries. There has been a tendency to turn to cattle production. While this cannot be done in every case, if those who have the land are encouraged to grow cattle, the beef market will be flooded and the problem that faced the wool industry will then face the beef industry. It is a grand thing that the wool industry has been kept viable so that it can regain the prosperity it enjoyed some years ago, because there is still a future in wool production.

In addition, mutton and lamb production has good prospects. These products are needed for both the home market and the export market. I know, from the companies with which I am associated, that high prices are being paid for both lamb and mutton. Because of the shortage of sheep, mutton prices have doubled in the past 12 months. It is imperative that we keep this form of production viable so that it can play its part in the State's economy.

I compliment the Government on its rural reconstruction scheme. It is unfortunate that it is necessary to have such a scheme, under which properties are amalgamated. This results in a fewer number of people having larger areas. This is not always good for the State's development, because people are our greatest asset. The greatest need in rural areas is for people to share in the development of the State and the amenities it provides. Loss of population is one aspect of amalgamation that gives me some concern. The rural reconstruction scheme is playing its part in helping to make viable some primary producers who are in difficulties, but it is my hope that the State and Federal Governments jointly can do something about inflation so that unnecessary amalgamation of properties does not take place.

I should now like to make some comments on the marginal dairy farms reconstruction scheme, which was introduced with the object of helping dairy farmers. A good many dairy farmers were eased out of the industry. I know quite well that at that time there was a surplus of butter for export, but Queensland at present is short of butter. Only about 19,000 tons are produced a year, and about 26,000 tons are needed. There has been a drift of some of the smaller dairy farmers from the industry. A new scheme, of which I am very proud, has now been introduced under which smaller dairy farmers are able to buy land adjoining their properties, and thus become viable once more. Although that action was belated, I think it is a splendid scheme.

I, too, am concerned about overproduction, and another great problem of the dairying industry is the absence of a two-price plan. Under such a plan there would be one price for the home market and another for the export market. There is a place for the dairy farmer in Queensland, and I want to see that it is maintained because the dairy farmer is one of the best citizens of the State. He is similar to a man in receipt of wages; he receives his returns regularly each month, and the money that he spends accordingly goes round in the community. He has a vital place in the economy, and the more men of his type there are on the land, the better it will be for country towns. I know that there is quite a lot in what I am saying that does not come under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Lands and Forestry, but in the long term I hope we can assist him to keep as many men as possible in a viable state on the land and in the country towns.

I commend the Minister on what he has done in his department.

Mr. Sherrington: He has only been there five minutes.

Mr. WHARTON: He has been there long enough, and he has done whatever has had to be done.

Mr. Sherrington: You can't give him credit for something he has not done. He has only been there for five minutes.

Mr. WHARTON: I am speaking generally about his department.

The Minister has appointed an agronomist to the Biggenden area to work on the problem presented by the rubber vine. This is a very real problem. Rubber vine is particularly hard to kill. It takes possession of large areas quickly. It gets into creeks and gullies, and it climbs trees. It spreads very easily. I compliment the Minister on his appreciation of the necessity to take some action to combat it before it gets away and it is too late. We do not want another "prickly-pear" State, or "creeping-lantana" State.

Mr. Sherrington: What has he done about the wedge-tailed eagle?

Mr. WHARTON: I suppose he has done what is necessary. I wonder how the honourable member for Salisbury would behave as a member of a select committee on conservation? He would want to talk constantly not on broader aspects of conservation but on the little things that he continually tries to put over here by interjections.

The other matter that I wish to mention is the success that has been achieved in controlling creeping lantana with a new herbicide known as DP60. I raised the question of control of creeping lantana when Sir Alan Fletcher was Minister for Lands. We travelled quite extensively throughout the State studying the problem, and eventually an officer of the department was sent to America. After he came back, I, as a landowner, thought that nothing would happen. However, something has happened, and I give the department credit for the action it has taken. Creeping lantana is taking over good land in this State, and it is up to all of us to look after that land and control the pest that is taking it over. It is difficult for individual landowners to find a means of controlling it and then carry out an eradication programme, and I am very pleased that the department has undertaken the necessary research and provided a means of eradication in this instance.

I notice that the report of the Land Administration Commission refers to the problem of controlling siratro in bean crops, and so on. The people in my area do not want to control it; they regard it as a wonderful legume. I could show the Minister how to control it. It is quite easy to kill with a hormone spray that is used to kill other weeds. Although it may be necessary to find means of controlling it where it has become a nuisance in other crops, it has been of great benefit not only in coastal areas but also in the dry areas of the State. In my electorate, people have always contended that lucerne is the best crop to grow. I suggest with respect that siratro is even better. It has better seeding and germinating properties and is longer lasting, and I think that, in conjunction with both natural and artificial grasses, it provides a balanced pasture.

Mr. Sherrington: What are you going to do about the turtle rookery?

Mr. WHARTON: I am coming to that. I should hate to disappoint the honourable member for Salisbury. He loves to talk about conservation, and in fact much of what he says on that subject is sensible. I agree with him that national parks are desirable, and one is established at Mon Repos, with a turtle rookery. I believe that things should be preserved in balance.

Mr. Sherrington: When?

Mr. WHARTON: It will be done in due course, as the honourable member knows.

Mr. Sherrington: When? In six years?

Mr. WHARTON: Perhaps in six years. Labor Governments were in office for over 30 years and did nothing for anybody.

Mr. B. Wood: What nonsense!

Mr. WHARTON: I am talking about a turtle rookery. The honourable member knows nothing about turtles. Approval has been sought for the provision of additional land at Mon Repos, and I think it will be given.

I should like to see a small national park established in the Goodnight Scrub, which is, of course, the largest self-generating pine forest in the world. Honourable members opposite might smile when I say "in the world", but it is true, and the area is in my electorate.

Mr. Sherrington: It also is where I was born.

Mr. WHARTON: We always get a touch of humour in the debate, Mr. Hewitt, and I think it is good to have it.

Mr. Sherrington: I know as much about the Goodnight Scrub as the honourable member does.

Mr. WHARTON: Representations will be made to the Minister through the local Apex Club, which would like to have a small area declared a national park. Although it may be only a small area, the suggestion has merit because, as I said earlier, the pines regenerate of their own accord. When the application is made, I ask the Minister to give it favourable consideration.

Mr. Rae: Where is it?

Mr. WHARTON: The Goodnight Scrub is between Gin Gin and Mt. Perry.

Mr. Sherrington: It is not far from Booyal.

Mr. WHARTON: That is true. I think it is something that should be considered, and I am sure there would be no regrets if a national park was established there.

Mr. Sherrington: I support the honourable member in his request.

Mr. WHARTON: I now wish to touch very briefly on the Rural Fires Board. Its activities are very important; in fact, I think Queensland would be lost without the Rural Fires Board.

I listened with great interest to the Minister introducing his Estimates, and I think he has engendered a very good spirit by the attitude he adopted. He showed very clearly that he desires to look after the landowners of Queensland. If he and his officers continue along those lines, this great State will continue to progress.

Mr. F. P. MOORE (Mourilyan) (4.25 p.m.): When the honourable member for Warrego presented a sincere case for the western and inland parts of Queensland, he was castigated by the Minister and the honourable member for Burnett. Since the honourable member for Warrego first entered Parliament he has been able to improve on his vote. I see that the Minister is leaving the Chamber. He had to depend on "Z" votes after being behind in the primary vote. We all know the problems associated with the "Z" votes. As we all know, the Minister connived at getting around the grazing properties to get himself back into Parliament. Of course, since then his portfolio has been changed.

I join with other honourable members in congratulating the new chairman of the Land Administration Commission on his appointment and Mr. Paul O'Gorman on his promotion to the commission from the position of secretary. I am sure that they feel very honoured in their new positions. They have risen through the ranks and I am sure they will assist people below them who, as yet, are not well known to me.

I refer now to page 6 of the report of the Land Administration Commission referring to roads and resumptions. It states—

"Dealing with the opening and closing of roads in the State and the resumption from leasehold and freehold lands for various purposes for and on behalf of Governments, semi-Governmental bodies and Local Authorities, other than the Brisbane City Council, is another very important activity carried out by the Commission."

Throughout the length and breadth of Queensland resumptions are being made for various Government and semi-governmental bodies for roads, etc. The honourable member for Mulgrave will substantiate my remarks about what occurred in his electorate, which is adjacent to mine. By litigation and delaying tactics, a person did nothing about removing his house from the path of a proposed main road. He felt that he was justified in his stand and, in due course, the Main Roads Department had to curve the road around the house.

I will deal with resumptions in my area and refer particularly to two cases with which I have been associated. Firstly, I refer to the Riordan family who own cane-farming and grazing land situated approximately two miles south of Innisfail along the Bruce Highway. The grazing property is owned by Patrick James Riordan and Mrs. Isabel Riordan (his wife) and the cane-farm is owned by Patrick James Riordan, Mary Isabel Riordan and their two children, Patricia Riordan and James Robert Riordan. Those lands were affected by the realignment of the Bruce Highway in that vicinity and certain resumptions have occurred. Three separate areas of

land have been resumed—two involving the cane farm and the other area involving the grazing property.

Claims for resumption were made and, in due course, referred to the Land Court for its determination. The cases came on before Mr. Tennant of the Land Court at Innisfail on 13 September. The first two cases to be dealt with by the Land Court involved the resumption which affected the cane farm. Those cases were heard over 13, 14 and 15 September. The court reserved its decision.

The other case involving the grazing property could not be dealt with at the Innisfail sittings and was adjourned to Brisbane by consent. This case was heard by Mr. Tennant at the Land Court at Brisbane on 12 and 13 October this year. The main point at issue in this case involves the interpretation of certain provisions of the Main Roads Act. It is of particular significance in relation to the resumption of the grazing property, and of some significance in connection with one of the areas resumed from the cane farm. However, for convenience I will confine my remarks to the grazing property.

It is common ground between the constructing authority and the claimants that the area of land resumed from the grazing property was ripe for subdivision. The claimants wish to be compensated on the basis that, as at the date of resumption, the value of the land resumed should be determined on the basis that this land was capable of subdivision. The constructing authority says in effect that, by reason of certain steps that have been taken by the constructing authority and/or the Governor in Council, the subject land had entirely lost its subdivisional potential and its subdivisional value as at the date of resumption.

This is occurring frequently not only in North Queensland but, as I said before, throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. The constructing authority adopted the same approach in a resumption case heard earlier this year before Mr. Tennant, in the matter of J. M. Jury and others. I made representations in that case and Mr. and Mrs. Jury did receive consideration, but I feel that the end result is beyond doubt detrimental to them.

The land in the case I am speaking about was resumed by proclamation dated 14 June 1969. Section 11A (1) (d) of the Main Roads Act provides that the Commissioner for Main Roads may, in relation to any land which it is proposed to take for road purposes, recommend to the Governor in Council that access to any road made on that land be limited. Section 11A (3) provides that upon being satisfied that access should be limited the Governor in Council may by proclamation publish and confirm the recommendation. This is known as the first proclamation.

This first proclamation involving limited access in the instant case was published on some date in January 1969 (I think it was 25 January 1969). However the important point is that the first proclamation was published some months prior to the actual date of the resumption. It should be noted at this point that the recommendation relating to limited access provided for in section 11A (1) (d) need not be made by the commissioner at the same time that he satisfies the Governor in Council that the particular land is required for road purposes. It may be made at a later time. In the instant case, however, it was made more or less at the same time.

In the instant case the constructing authority argued to the Land Court that, as a result of the publication of the first proclamation, any subdivisional potential which the land had was thereby extinguished and, as this subdivisional potential was lost prior to the actual resumption date, then, at the actual resumption date, compensation could not be based upon a loss of subdivisional potential.

In the Jury case the constructing authority had, in putting forward this argument, relied specifically upon the provisions of section 11A (11) of the Main Roads Act. The section provides that before a local authority shall consent to a plan of subdivision of land abutting upon land in respect of which a recommendation about limited access has been made, it should seek the consent of the Commissioner for Main Roads. It was sought to be proved in the Jury case that the consent of the commissioner would not be forthcoming. In the Riordan case, as far as I can understand, the constructing authority did not pursue this argument under section 11A (11), but based its submission on the general proposition that, from a practical point of view, once a recommendation about limited access had been made, no-one in his or her right mind would acquire the land for subdivisional purposes.

It is submitted that, if this is really the case, it gives rise to substantial injustice and brings about a result that Parliament could not have intended. The injustice of the situation is highlighted further by the fact that, if the recommendation contemplated by section 11A (1) (d) had been made contemporaneously with or subsequent to actual resumption, the claimants would have been entitled to compensation on the basis that the land had subdivisional potential. Because it was made prior to actual resumption, it is suggested that the claimants cannot pursue a claim on this basis.

In the proceedings before the Land Court, Mr. Riordan's legal representatives put forward quite a number of submissions with a view to having the Land Court take a different view of the claimant's entitlement from that put forward by the constructing authority. On more than one occasion during the hearing Mr. Tennant of the Land Court

said that he would find for the claimant, if he could, on the legal question as he thought that the argument advanced by the constructing authority led to unjust results. However, as a matter of law, Mr. Tennant had upheld the constructing authority's argument in the Jury case, and it is anticipated that he will have some difficulty in not upholding the constructing authority's argument in the present case.

From discussions that I had with Mr. Riordan's legal advisers during the course of the hearings I learned that, even if Mr. Tennant finds in the claimants' favour on the legal point, the constructing authority proposes to appeal to the Land Appeal Court. In other words, it will go to the end of the road.

On the other hand, the claimants would also have to appeal if the point is found against them, because the amount of money involved is substantial. However, both the claimants and their legal advisers take the view that it would be unfortunate for either side to take this matter on appeal, because the only long-term effect of any such appeal would be to obtain a superior court's definitive interpretation of legislation, which is, at best, on this particular point, ambiguous. In any event, in the interests of justice, a reasonable Government, having once been made aware of its implications, would wish to amend the legislation, and it would also seem that the amendments required would be very simple ones.

Mr. Riordan's legal representatives specifically asked Mr. Tennant that, if he felt compelled to find against the claimants on the legal point, he should nevertheless make an assessment of what compensation he would have awarded to the claimants if he had been able to proceed on the basis that, on the date of the resumption, the subdivisional potential of the land had not been affected. I think that there is a fair chance that Mr. Tennant will do this.

The claimants now propose that the Government consider this matter prior to the announcement of the Land Court's decision. It is felt that, at this time, the Government can at least decide whether or not the result contended for by the constructing authority is one that commends itself to the Government. If it is not such a result, and, if the claimants succeed before Mr. Tennant on the legal point, I suggest that no appeal against that decision should be instituted on the particular legal point, and that, if any uncertainty exists, this uncertainty should be remedied by amending the legislation. Alternatively, if the claimant fails on the legal point, I suggest that the Government could consider making an ex-gratia payment of an additional amount, which would probably be the sum that the Land Court indicates it would have awarded had the claimant succeeded on the legal point.

Again the question of any uncertainty could be resolved by amending the legislation. I suggest that the resolution of the

matter by the Government along the lines I have suggested could save thousands of dollars in legal costs and achieve a just and proper result in the circumstances.

Time and time again in resumption matters people complain to members of Parliament about poor results from resumption returns. If the Government were to amend the legislation in the manner suggested, I feel that litigation costs would be reduced. In the Jury case two barristers, a Queen's counsel and solicitors acted for the Government. In my opinion that was a further example of waste of money, because the money could have been paid direct to the Jurys without causing undue concern. I should say it cost the Government thousands of dollars over and above what was paid to the Jurys for the resumption of their land. Even now they have no access from the Bruce Highway to the caravan park, which formerly was tremendously valuable, at the new South Johnstone bridge. Without doubt the same situation will prevail relative to the Riordans. I selected these two cases particularly, but I am sure that other honourable members could also raise similar points concerning resumptions.

The Minister referred to great advances in our national-park system in this area. I point out that possibly one of the best national parks in Queensland is the great Palmerston National Park. It has everything that tourists like to view, but we cannot get any co-operation from the Minister for Lands. I know that he is new in his portfolio, having been moved from that of Local Government and Electricity. I trust that the western people, who have been deprived by lack of local government finance, may be better off with the Minister now holding the Lands portfolio.

My main point concerns the lack of co-operation and help in attracting tourists to the Palmerston National Park. My contention is substantiated by an article that appeared last week in the Innisfail "Evening Advocate". It originated at a Country Party meeting at Millaa Millaa, when the Country Party candidate for the Federal seat of Leichhardt said that the Palmerston Highway, in its terrible state of disrepair, was a shocking indictment of the Government. This Federal Country Party candidate, Mr. Schulz, castigated the Queensland Country Party-controlled Government. Even after the Treasurer's announcement that 15 miles of this highway was to be renovated and widened, Mr. Schulz stated openly in Tuesday's edition of the "Evening Advocate" that not 15 miles but the whole of it should be attended to. I am sure that he was only trying to get onto the band wagon that I have pushed ever since coming to this Assembly. As the people are very irate, I am sure they will support the Labor member Mr. Fulton, who, no doubt, will be returned with a big majority.

Mr. Low interjected.

Mr. F. P. MOORE: If the honourable member is going to be disrespectful to a member of the Labor Party in the Federal sphere, I point out that he does get off his bottom and say something in Parliament, which is a little more than the honourable member for Cooroorra does.

The honourable member for Roma referred to the amalgamation of dairy farms. In theory this may be a good scheme, but people without any experience on the land are buying these properties. If people without experience go on the land, they must lose money. For various, devious reasons—as a taxation dodge, and so on—professional people are buying farms when the owners go to the wall, and amalgamating them with other farms. This is happening to the detriment of our rural areas. This is a big problem that the present Minister for Lands, the former Minister, and Primary Industries Ministers of Queensland over the last 15 years have not been attending to. In the last 15 years under this Government, there has been a tremendous deterioration in country areas.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HINZE (South Coast) (4.45 p.m.): It is with a great sense of pride that I rise to make my contribution to this debate. This Government inherited a very run-down, brow-beaten and broken-hearted Department of Lands, and within the short period of 15 years it has satisfied virtually all of the requirements of the man on the land and everybody else who has any interest in land matters.

I commend the Ministers who have administered the Lands and Forestry Departments. I refer first to the father of my colleague, the honourable member for Fassifern. The late Alf Muller was truly a great Queenslander. He was a member of the Country Party for many years, and was its first Minister for Lands after this Government assumed office in 1957. He was succeeded by Sir Alan Fletcher for a short period. The next Minister was the present Minister for Primary Industries. The Honourable W. A. R. Rae is now following in the footsteps of those very capable Ministers, who controlled one of our most important departments.

I also congratulate the departmental administrative officers. No matter how good a Government is—and every Queenslander appreciates this Government and its Ministers—administrative officers play a very important role. I refer particularly to Mr. Gordon McDowell, who was chairman of the Land Administration Commission and has since accepted another very responsible position, Mr. Brian Heffernan, who, in my opinion, is one of Queensland's most able and capable administrators—

Mr. Sherrington: Don't you know it is the Acting Chairman's birthday today? Why don't you include him?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! That has nothing to do with the Estimates under discussion.

Mr. HINZE: If it is the Acting Chairman's birthday, I wish him many happy returns. I would sing "Happy Birthday" if somebody could provide the music.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member is very kind, but I ask him to return to the Estimates.

Mr. HINZE: I am in the early stages of an oratorical gem.

On behalf of the people of Queensland, I have congratulated a succession of very capable Lands Ministers and their officers. I am sure that both the Government and the Minister have recognised Mr. Heffernan's ability by appointing him as chairman of the Land Administration Commission. The same remarks apply to Mr. Paul O'Gorman. They and Mr. Johnston form a very capable administrative team, which is necessary to administer such an important department.

In the olden days, this department was concerned mainly with living areas and ring-barking, whereas today it administers the farm amalgamation scheme, the rural reconstruction scheme and the latest proposal to give further assistance to the dairy industry. This department performs a multitude of duties very efficiently. I shall prove this statement during the next 15 minutes.

When I entered Parliament, landholders in the Gold Coast area were experiencing many problems in converting to freehold. At the moment I receive only about two letters a week dealing with this subject because the Government has achieved what it set out to do. The owners of what was formerly leasehold property at Broadbeach, Main Beach and Tugun have been given the right to freehold their land on reasonable terms and conditions, and the people in my electorate are appreciative of the Government's action in this regard. This was something that was promised. I spoke on it when I first entered Parliament. The proposal was accepted in the joint party room, and I am proud and pleased to be able to say that it now presents very few problems, either in my electorate or in the area now represented by my colleague the honourable member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr. Sherrington: Why doesn't he stay in his own area without poking his nose into the Albert Shire?

Mr. HINZE: As the honourable member for Salisbury knows, the honourable member for Surfers Paradise is quite capable of looking after his own council. All I am saying is that in the Main Beach-Surfers Paradise-Broadbeach area there would now be many freehold properties, and I am sure that, like me, the honourable member for Surfers Paradise would commend the Government on the action it took in that matter,

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and would also commend the officers of the Lands Department on their administration of this legislation.

I should like to say a special word for those who are in receipt of pensions. By generosity and benevolence, the Government has assisted these people to overcome any problems they have faced in the payment of rates. As the Committee knows, local authority rates on the Gold Coast are very high.

Mr. Bruce Small: We have 7,000 pensioners there.

Mr. HINZE: The honourable member for Surfers Paradise tells me that there are 7,000 pensioners on the Gold Coast. Some of them would have had leasehold properties, and they now have the benefit of rent remissions. For that concession, the thanks must go to this benevolent Government.

Years ago our forefathers had the wisdom and foresight to see that it was necessary to acquire and set aside land for public purposes.

Land so set aside is gradually being taken up, and for good reasons. It was thought that reserve R. 68 would have been retained for use as parks and gardens. However, land was needed in the Palm Beach-Currumbin area for a high school. A high school is very necessary in an area of rapid development, so 20 acres was taken from that reserve for that purpose. This is typical of what has happened in a number of other areas on the Gold Coast, and now the position has been reached where there are very few areas of Crown land remaining. Two that come immediately to mind are The Spit and Stradbroke Island. Everybody has an eye on those areas. Not a day passes without requests coming to my colleague the honourable member for Surfers Paradise and to me for land on the Spit and Stradbroke Island. They are the only two parcels of Crown land in this area that come quickly to mind.

I should like to see the Government give consideration to acquiring land up to 10 miles inland on the Gold Coast and, as our forefathers did, putting aside 200 or 300 acres for the use of future generations. Almost all available Crown land has now been taken up for necessary amenities such as schools and hospitals. The same situation will apply in years to come, and there will then be no Crown land. Honourable members know the position on the Gold Coast, and they realize the value of land in that area. It has reached astronomic heights, because people throughout Australia see the Gold Coast as one of the best places in Australia in which to invest. The building industry on the Gold Coast and in the Albert Shire is running at a level of \$7,000,000 a month, and land is being used up at a fast rate. I make a plea to the Minister to acquire land for future Crown purposes.

Mr. B. Wood: I know one good spot on the Nerang River that the Government could take over.

Mr. HINZE: Where?

Mr. B. Wood: Your property.

Mr. HINZE: The honourable member is being facetious. Like the rest of the young rabble group on his side, he has a lot to learn.

I now wish to devote a few minutes of my speech to the dairy farm amalgamation scheme. This has been well and truly administered, and it has been a wonderful success. The Commonwealth Government has set aside \$25,000,000 to be expended for this purpose throughout Australia over a period of five years. In the first three years, out of a total of \$11,000,000 allocated by the Commonwealth, Queensland has received about \$9,000,000, which has been made available to people wishing to amalgamate properties. About 365 properties have been purchased with that amount. Therefore, I think it can reasonably be claimed that the Queensland Department of Lands and the administrators of the scheme for the amalgamation of dairy farms have been successful in their efforts. Dairy farmers have availed themselves of the funds, and the State of Queensland has received by far the greatest share of the \$11,000,000 allocated by the Commonwealth Government to date.

Because of the benevolence of the Government to the dairy industry in this State, not one dairy farmer can say that the Government has not tried to assist him. In addition to the assistance provided under the scheme for the amalgamation of dairy farms, the Government has now come forward with a proposal to provide \$5,500,000 for the purchase of dairy buildings and equipment. This also is a very good idea, because if farmers were not able to get funds for that purpose on a long-term, low-interest basis, they would have to go to the ordinary money market and pay higher interest rates to get them. It is a very desirable provision for farmers who have amalgamated their properties.

I think that the Honourable Vic Sullivan was Minister for Lands when the scheme for the amalgamation of dairy farms was introduced in this State. Originally, some concern was expressed about whether or not the States would agree to co-operate with the Commonwealth, and Queensland was the first State to indicate its agreement. As I said earlier, it has participated in this scheme to a greater extent than any other State.

The \$5,500,000 that is to be made available to farmers is to be used entirely, I believe, for dairy buildings. A dairy building today costs about \$8,000 or \$10,000, if it is built in Besser brick. In most instances, bails now being used are of the herringbone type. A new bail that is well and truly established in New Zealand is a mini-rotor-type machine. It is possible, using that machine, for one man to milk

60 head of cows an hour, and equipment of that type is coming onto the market in Queensland for about \$3,000 to \$4,000.

Mr. Sherrington: Is that a mini Roto-lactor?

Mr. HINZE: Yes. If the honourable member knows what the Rotolactor at Camden in New South Wales is like, he will know what I am talking about. The Mini Lactor is a similar type of machine for use on small dairy farms. Dairy farmers can acquire one for about \$3,000 or \$4,000, and that is the way I see the money provided by the Government in this instance being used. It adds to the efficiency of the farm and makes for better milking conditions, and I commend the Government for allocating further funds for that purpose.

Other funds are available through the Agricultural Bank for bulk vats. One can now buy a bulk vat for \$4,000 to \$5,000, repayable over seven years. When the repayments are taken out of dairy cheques, a person hardly notices paying \$4,000 to \$5,000 over seven years for a bulk vat.

All in all, with the Dairy Pasture Subsidy Fund that the Government introduced, the amalgamation scheme, and now this \$5,500,000 for dairy sheds and equipment, it must be admitted, even by honourable members opposite, that the Government has done everything possible to put the dairying industry in Queensland on its feet. In addition, of course, there is the rural reconstruction scheme.

In his introductory speech the Minister referred at length—and rightly so—to the wool industry, which has suffered a long period of drought. Several honourable members have mentioned the effect of drought on this industry. It is a bad thing for the State when country towns begin to lose their population; certainly no-one wants to see that happening in Queensland. In the early days, our forefathers pioneered the State. We want to ensure that our children and their children's children are able to participate in the further development of the State.

Mr. Hanson interjected.

Mr. HINZE: The honourable member for Port Curtis is referring to the fact that the dairy farmer in Queensland is entitled to a guarantee of 40c a lb. for butter fat. Port Curtis is a reasonably big dairying area, so I am sure that he has had representations made to him in that regard.

Mr. Hanson: It is the biggest dairy co-operative area in Queensland.

Mr. HINZE: The honourable member would certainly know something about the Port Curtis dairy factory. As he says, it is one of the biggest dairy co-operative areas in the State. That is something to be proud of. With the generous assistance of the Government, the Port Curtis dairy factory

will probably increase rather than decrease in size. We once had 20,000 dairy farmers in the State, but we are now down to something like 6,000 or 7,000. From now on, I think the figures will increase because the dairy industry is one in which people will want to stay.

We are all very pleased that, for the first time for many years, the wool industry is now getting a reasonable price for its product. I am sure it is the wish of everybody that these prices will continue. I point out, however, that as soon as the price of any commodity goes up, everybody seems to think that the industry concerned is out of trouble. The same thing happened a few years ago with the sugar industry. All primary industries are like the pendulum of a clock—they first swing one way and then the other. It can be taken for granted that those who have had the guts and foresight to stay in the wool industry in the West will become viable again with the assistance of this Government. They know that the Government is doing everything possible for them through the Lands Department and through the Minister, who has had practical experience in the industry.

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. HINZE: The old claptrap is here again. Three thousand words a minute!

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. HINZE: Why doesn't he do what the honourable member for Surfers Paradise does? If he is so proud of his electorate, why doesn't he give his salary back to his constituents? Fancy him calling me a capitalist! He would come at raw prawns.

I have risen in my place today to commend the Minister and his predecessors, as well as the members of his administrative staff.

Mr. Sherrington interjected.

Mr. HINZE: I do not have to scratch anybody's back. I am not like the honourable member. He must give Jack Egerton an awful rip down the back when he starts scratching his back. I should like to have a look at it some time.

I am proud to have made my contribution to this debate. The Department of Lands is playing a magnificent part in the development of Queensland. I am glad to have had a few minutes to refer to matters that affect my electorate—the conversion from leasehold tenure to freehold, the fact that I want more Crown land made available for future generations, my commendation of the Government for its dairy farm amalgamation scheme, the new scheme on which \$5,500,000 will be spent, and the rural reconstruction scheme. Everybody in Queensland must admit that if ever a Government has tried vigorously to do what people in rural areas are entitled to expect, this is it. I have not

yet heard any worth-while contribution from honourable members opposite to refute that claim.

Mr. Aiken interjected.

Mr. HINZE: "Deafy" has come back into the Chamber. Where has he been? I can never make him hear. The next time he is speaking, let him accept an interjection from me for a change. I do not know who writes his speeches. He is the capitalist from Warrego.

I shall conclude my magnificent contribution—my oratorical gem—by referring very briefly to the forestry section of the Minister's portfolio. I commend the Minister for taking such an interest in reforestation, which is very necessary. We have set aside in the Albert Shire what is known as a "green belt" area wherein subdivisional development is forbidden. I ask the Minister to give consideration to the planting of pine forests in such areas in co-operation with the local authorities concerned. If green belts are to be established, let us give consideration to planting pine forests in them.

(Time expired.)

Mr. B. WOOD (Barron River) (5.5 p.m.): I was interested to hear the Minister say that he proposes some action to create environmental parks. I was all the more interested because I recall that in a similar debate two years ago I raised the need for what I termed "mini" national parks. I said then that there was need to incorporate and protect relatively small areas, and also to encompass some form of national-park development, but in a much smaller concept. I was interested to hear the Minister's remarks today. He said that there are many areas of special interest that do not lend themselves to protection under the national-park concept and that he proposes some special action to preserve them.

Mr. Leese: It is a good idea.

Mr. B. WOOD: I certainly agree with it. However, I did not hear the Minister say what sort of action he contemplates or what sort of additional measures to those at present in operation he proposes to take in dealing with this sort of problem. I have in mind that there should be much greater thought and care for not only the type of area mentioned by the Minister, but all relatively undeveloped areas remaining in the State of Queensland. We should not only preserve the areas the Minister mentioned, but should also control development over much of the State that still awaits large-scale development.

The pressures on land use now demand such an attitude. The pressures on rural development, to produce more and more crops, and in particular the pressures on urban development, demand that a much closer watch be kept on the way in which land is utilised. I should hope that the Minister has in mind some sort of over-all

plan, gradually encompassing the whole State, under which developers of residential land and primary producers developing rural land may receive guidance from the Government on the manner in which land is to be used. I am sure that landowners would be quite prepared to work under such a comprehensive scheme.

I believe that, especially in relation to very valuable areas, usage must be determined after scientific study. Before large-scale or very intensive development is undertaken in small areas, we must understand the capacity of the land and the needs of the community. I firmly believe that, in the past, there has been a good deal of emotional talk by the conservationists—I certainly regard myself as a conservationist—who are anxious to express a point of view, but they are not sure that their attitudes are considered sympathetically at government level. I think that, in the future, there is good ground to take decisions on the development of land out of the realm of political and emotional argument. I believe that we should leave decisions on land usage to qualified people. Of necessity, these persons would take note of submissions that are made to them.

A scientific assessment should always precede the use of land, and, in some measure, both the Lands and Forestry Departments have been following this practice for a number of years. The Fitzroy Basin brigalow scheme is an example of careful examination prior to determination of land use. However, in the future, there will be an even greater need for intense scientific study of land, not only for the development of, say, cattle-fattening properties but also in the ascertainment of the total impact of large-scale or intense development on the whole area. As the demands increase, the need for very careful scientific study of all aspects of development assumes greater importance.

I can see that in the very near future there will need to be a rapid expansion in the roles played by the various Government departments in these fields. As yet, we have not reached a desirable state. In fact, I have been trying to learn what controls, if any, are exercised by the Lands Department on the use to which land is put. It exercises only limited controls.

For example, under section 34 of the State Planning and Development, Public Works Organisation, and Environmental Control Act there is authority for certain committees to be set up. One such committee is the Land Use Committee, which, in due course, and at various times, will report to the Environmental Control Council. That body, in turn, is empowered to advise the Government on matters concerned with the control of the environment. How great a control this will have in the end on land usage remains to be seen. On my reading of the Act I am not sure that it will be anywhere near sufficient. In matters under the direct control of the Lands Department I do not see any desirable control.

I have read the Victorian Land Conservation Act of 1970. In that State the Minister claimed that it was the most advanced Act in the Commonwealth in the determination of land use. Certainly it seems to be far ahead of similar Queensland legislation; however, to me it seems to relate only to public land. I know it must be very difficult for a Government to exercise control over private land, that is, freehold land, and perhaps over leasehold land. Nevertheless, the time has come when such control needs to be exercised.

In urban areas many proper restrictions are imposed on the activities of industries and businesses. In this Chamber frequent questions are asked about pollution and other problems associated with urbanisation, so there is no reason why, in the same manner, control should not be exercised over rural development.

The Victorian Land Conservation Act empowers the authority constituted under it to make investigations and recommendations about public lands in order to provide for the balanced use of land. I hope that Queensland follows the example set by Victoria. Perhaps the Minister already has such a step in mind.

As I come from the North, I contend that very little control can be exercised over large areas of rain forest in the hands of private people. However, before such areas are developed for grazing or other purposes, surely, through the Government, the people of the State have the right to some say on the best manner in which such land could be used.

I wish to list four examples of the way in which I believe the Government, through the Department of Lands, should exercise greater control. In my Address-in-Reply speech I referred to the worry created by foreign ownership of land. It would seem from the answer given then, and from answers given subsequently to questions, that I know more about the level of foreign control of Queensland than does the Minister. I am sure that that is not the case, but neither the Minister nor the Premier has given any indication, that the Lands Department or the Government is very concerned about the level of foreign ownership.

I asked that a survey be undertaken. I cannot accept the fact that the Lands Department is unaware of the amount of land, both freehold and leasehold, that is controlled by overseas interests. I am sure the department must have this information. If it does not, it is a very serious oversight on the part of the Minister. At the same time, I refer to the amount of land being accumulated in the North and, no doubt, in other parts of the State, by individuals. Land is now a scarce commodity; perhaps in a sense it should be rationed. Under our land policy, individuals should not be able to acquire great areas of land simply because with their wealth they can afford to buy it.

Another area in which I believe more control should be exercised concerns a present proposal to establish a wood-chip industry in the far north of the State. I do not intend to go into detail about this matter, because I have done so previously and I intend to make submissions to the Forestry Department. This is an area of decision in which, I believe, all people of the North should have an opportunity to express their opinion. Aspects other than simply the commercial use of forests must be considered.

Another example of the need for more control is the proposed development of the Weymouth holding on Cape York Peninsula. This matter was raised in the Federal Parliament, and I raised it with the present Minister for Lands and his predecessor. The Weymouth holding is in the north of the peninsula, on the eastern coast. The owners propose to develop it, but I believe that some of the information disseminated by them verges on the fraudulent. The former Minister should have taken stronger steps than he did to counter it, because he was really the person to challenge the remarks made by people representing the Weymouth holding. I have here a copy of a letter—it was not sent to me—from Alfriston Estates Pty. Ltd. to a potential investor. The first two paragraphs state—

“Please find enclosed Brochure on Weymouth, which I consider to be one of the most exciting properties we have had listed for many years.

“Although at present leasehold, the Government has assured us that should a Company or person wish to develop it they would give their utmost support. This would mean that converting it to freehold would be a relatively simple matter.”

I do not know what took place between the Government and these people, but I do not believe that the Government would give any such undertaking. I thank the Minister for his nod of affirmation. The letter, therefore, is quite false. To my knowledge, the only statement rebutting what was contained in this letter and brochures, which were distributed throughout Australia and overseas, was a Press statement by the former Minister setting out the situation quite clearly. I do not know which newspapers it appeared in. For all I know it could have appeared in some Queensland newspapers. Overseas investment was sought and I do not know—perhaps even the Minister does not know—how many people in all good faith came in on this proposal.

I shall comment briefly on one or two items mentioned in the brochure. It states that approximately 60,000 acres of the whole area is either flat or undulating and is suitable for agricultural development. This is just not correct. I have flown over this area and I know that much of it is not suitable for agricultural development.

Mr. Rae: Around Iron Range?

Mr. B. WOOD: Yes.

Mr. Rae: Very rough.

Mr. B. WOOD: It is. The area contains some good country and certainly some good rain-forest country. But to say that the whole area is suitable for agricultural development is simply untrue.

The brochure also claims that the 60,000 acres which is suitable for agriculture can be used for many purposes other than beef-growing and beef-fattening. Soya-bean growing is given as an example. I have grave doubts whether it or the other grains mentioned could be grown there.

It mentions that Portland Roads, which is not far away, has a protected jetty and a fortnightly boat service to and from Cairns. The honourable member for Cook and I know the condition of that jetty. It is to be pulled down.

The brochure mentions the boat-launching ramp at the Lockhart River Mission site at Quintell Beach. The honourable member for Cook and I know that the ramp is quite unsatisfactory and has yet to be used.

While I criticise the Government for the poor communications in this area, the brochure is simply inaccurate, and the only refutation of what it claims appeared in a Central Press statement. The Government should have contacted these people and told them, in no uncertain terms, that what was happening was being viewed with some concern and that, on pain of forfeiting their lease or pastoral holding, they had better stop what they were doing and, if they intended to present any proposition, to inform the people fully of the facts.

Mr. Low: Do you think the whole thing is a big racket?

Mr. B. WOOD: It seems to be, yet I know some of the people behind Weymouth, and they are reputable people. Frankly, I find it very difficult to understand. This is another area in which the Government should have taken stronger action.

In the time remaining, I shall deal with local issues and matters that the Lands Department should consider. I have, on many occasions, extolled the beauties of my area. The Minister has been there and I am sure he will agree with what I have said. He will acknowledge that a greater demand exists these days for access to and through national parks. The department should construct a roughly made track, for example, from Mossman to Mount Carbine, a distance of 20 miles as the crow flies. I would not hazard a guess how far it would be walking up and down the hills. Many people would delight in walking through the forest and scrub country between Mossman and Mount Carbine. In overseas countries, such as Switzerland, there are ski runs with huts along the way in which people following

the runs can rest. We do not have snow in North Queensland, but there is no reason why such a walking track could not be provided. I do not suggest that huts be provided, but the climate is such that people could camp overnight.

I have given one example. Another is the old road up over the range behind Port Douglas. That would be a shorter walk. I know that in the past the honourable member for Cairns has mentioned the walk through the rain-forest country almost in the middle of Cairns at Edge Hill, and up Lumley Hill, as I think it is called, to a lookout that could be built at the top. I believe the construction of such paths is eminently desirable, because people these days are much more active than they were once. They realise the need to get out, and they have begun to appreciate the pleasures associated with walking through such areas. I commend this to the Minister as an activity in which the department could take a much greater interest.

Mr. R. E. MOORE (Windsor) (5.26 p.m.): In rising to speak on these Estimates today,—

Mr. Davis: Congratulate the Minister.

Mr. R. E. MOORE: Yes, I will congratulate the Minister. Most Ministers when taking over a new portfolio are given about 100 days to find their feet. I commend the Minister on the way he has taken over the smooth functioning of a well-oiled machine, and has continued in the manner of his predecessor. I have nothing but commendation for the way he conducts his departments.

Approximately three or four weeks ago I was fortunate to visit the North and the North-west. I mentioned this trip previously.

Mr. B. Wood: Tell us how you went.

Mr. R. E. MOORE: I went well. How did you go?

Mr. B. Wood: In what way did you travel?

Mr. R. E. MOORE: I do not mind interjections if sensible questions are asked. When foolish questions are asked, I do not answer them. If the honourable member cares to ask a specific question, I shall answer it.

Mr. B. Wood: In what manner did you travel?

Mr. R. E. MOORE: By bullock dray. Under the bullock dray there was a crate of fowls, and there was a nanny-goat dragging behind. When the dray was bogged and things got tough, we lived on goat's milk, corned beef and damper. Things were tough, but we managed.

I had a look round that territory. If the good open-downs country received adequate rainfall, it would be worth \$300 an acre. Unfortunately, because of present wool prices, it is now worth only about \$2.60 an acre. The Government has given drought-relief assistance and has provided for rural reconstruction, but somewhere along the way more money has to be found for this type of reconstruction. Now that wool prices have risen, a person who wants to restock a property finds that sheep are costly. But, even if producers could find the money, they are not game to restock because they are not certain that the increase in wool prices will last.

Somewhere along the line the Government has to take a gamble. This hinterland cannot be closed down. What would happen in that area if it did not run sheep? It is not cattle country, and it has water-supply problems. Some graziers are converting to beef production, and the beef cattle that I saw in the Kynuna and McKinlay areas were second to none. There is an inadequate supply of grass along stock routes, which could have been caused by landholders running their sheep on the stock routes and letting them eat the grass there before putting them on their own grass. Of course, I do not know whether they actually do run their flocks on the stock routes, but I noticed that the stock routes were rather bare and that quite a number of properties had good Mitchell and Flinders grass on them.

Perhaps it may seem a little ridiculous for me to suggest that Mitchell and Flinders grass could be harvested, but in this day and age, with hay-balers and other equipment available, it may be possible. Those grasses provide good feed whether they are green or dry, and if they are left on the land a fire might go through them—in fact, I suspect that this will happen. Perhaps they could be harvested and a firebreak built around them to preserve them for hard times.

Mr. Rae: Many attempts have been made to harvest both Mitchell and Flinders grasses and bag them, but they have never worked out. They quickly lose their food value. Perhaps they could be made into silage by mixing them with molasses, for example.

Mr. R. E. MOORE: I thank the Minister for his comment.

Some of the properties that I saw are carrying very heavy debts. With only three or four good seasons the property-owners would be on top of the world, but they cannot get anywhere unless they have flocks of sheep. Sheep numbers recover from drought much sooner than cattle, and it is possible to get two lambs from a ewe in one year. Recovery is slower on properties where cattle are being run.

Mr. Rae: It is hard on the poor old ewe.

Mr. R. E. MOORE: Yes, admittedly it is, but that can be done with sheep. It cannot be done with cattle.

The sheep herds are only about one-third as large as they should be. I certainly do not believe that wool is finished as a commodity. When blended with terylene or nylon, it makes a fabric that is ideal for men's suits, and I believe that it will be used in that way for many years to come. It would be a shame if South Africa and other countries took over the world wool market from Australia. No-one wants to see country towns in Queensland go to the wall and western areas of the State become uninhabited.

I was informed that some of the properties that I visited were about 30,000 or 40,000 acres in area. The question crossed my mind as to whether they were really living areas or whether they would be better lumped together. However, I was not in the area long enough to make an adequate survey of the situation. It did appear to me that a number of the properties running sheep were short of grass and that other properties with no sheep on them had plenty of grass. A good growth of grass can be expected only once a year in a good season such as we had last year, and it appeared to me that some people were overstocking their properties. In my quick look round the area, I wondered whether the area of some properties should be doubled to carry the same number of sheep, thus enabling the owner to go through dry periods without undue losses.

Mr. Rae: In many instances, if we gave a man 50,000 acres he would overstock; if we gave him 100,000 acres he would still overstock.

Mr. R. E. MOORE: Yes, but a statutory limit could be fixed. The Irrigation and Water Supply Commission will not allow a person to put down a bore wherever he wishes; the Forestry Department will not permit a person to chop down pine trees of certain types. There is no reason why a limit could not be placed on the number of sheep to be run on a certain area.

An Opposition Member: How would you do it?

Mr. R. E. MOORE: With a stroke of the pen.

Country towns like Mundubbera, Gayndah and Murgon have previously relied upon the dairy industry. It has always been my worry that, with the decline of the dairy industry, they might die. Such country towns offer delightful living. There is no rush or bustle about them, and they would be an admirable place for aged people to retire to. It might be a good idea for the Housing Commission to build flats or houses for retired people in small country towns and away from the cities. In such places they would not have to worry about being run down by motor-cars. It would help to maintain the population of those areas.

Very many elderly people in the cities have a rural background and have been living in the cities under sufferance. I have spoken to many people in my electorate whose hearts are in the country. They are of good pioneering stock but conditions are such that they are now living in the city. Their fondest memories are of the country areas in which they lived as children. No-one would be forcing them back; they would love to go.

Mr. Low interjected.

Mr. R. E. MOORE: In the days of the horse and buggy many country towns were a day's drive apart, but now they are only an hour's drive apart.

I now turn to the subject of forestry. No doubt the department is planting many exotic trees of the pine variety. Perhaps we should be paying more attention to some of the indigenous types. One that comes to mind is the red cedar. It is a slow grower, but it provides excellent cabinet-making timber.

Mr. Marginson: We have a great need of it here.

Mr. R. E. MOORE: The only cabinet the honourable member will be getting is a regular polygon, but he will be inside it.

More attention should be paid to growing red cedar. I am reminded of the story in my school reader about the man who was planting a fig tree. Somebody said to him, "You'll never live to eat of the fruit." He replied, "I will plant it, and perhaps my son will eat of the fruit." It may take 50 or 100 years for a red cedar to mature. I do not know the life of a good millable red cedar tree. That variety grows in rain forest but not in vine scrub. It occurred to me that we should endeavour to establish red-cedar plantations in the various national parks or rain forest areas. Some say that trees cannot be felled in those areas, but it seems to me that if a person can plant a seed in an area for a specific purpose he should be able to harvest it. I do not know whether it would be practicable to grow cedar forests as such.

Queensland is unique in its possession of timbers suitable for the production of veneers for cabinet-making purposes. To name but a few, we have maple, bean, silky oak and walnut, and it would be a shame to see some of these North Queensland timbers disappear. During the war years I saw packing cases being made from silky oak. It was a shocking waste of good timber, and various members of my squadron from the southern States thought it was scandalous. We were making packing cases with timber of the type that they would use for making furniture. With new processes, very thin veneers are produced and we can thus make our limited supplies of these timbers go much further. However, we should also undertake

some project for planting the cabinet and furniture-making timbers that will be so necessary in the future.

On occasions our pine forests have been classed as near-deserts so far as wildlife is concerned. It is sometimes claimed that the birds, wallabies and virtually all other forms of wildlife have disappeared. I do not know how true this is, but the thought went through my mind that, since it is necessary to plant pine forests, it might not be a bad idea to plant hardwood timbers in the centre of these areas so that, where water is available, various forms of wildlife would have a sanctuary. I think that would be an ideal situation.

Another point I should like to mention in connection with conservation is the policy of eradicating dingoes with "1080" baits. A friend of mine with a property in the South Burnett district told me that although the whole area surrounding his property had been baited with "1080" it had not resulted in any diminution of the number of ground birds and other forms of wildlife. He claims that quail and virtually every ground bird imaginable abounds because the "1080" baiting killed not only dingoes but also foxes and domestic cats that had gone wild and were the greatest predators of ground birds and small animals. As a result, these now exist in profusion. In fact, this man is now faced with another problem. He has 1,200 acres of improved pastures and has had to fence it with wire-netting to keep out the wallabies, which are now there in their thousands. The dingoes have been eradicated and are not now making any inroads on the wallaby flocks, so that wallaby numbers have increased to pest proportions.

Another result of the "1080" baiting of dingoes—this does not apply to the Burnett area—is that there is now no predator of young wild pigs, and wild-pig numbers have increased to the extent that they are attacking young lambs and calves. The problem is reaching the stage where some means of eradicating wild pigs will have to be found.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BLAKE (Isis) (5.45 p.m.): I wish to pay a tribute to those members of the Opposition who have preceded me in this debate, but before doing so I should like to take the honourable member for Burnett to task. He claimed that the Australian Labor Party is contributing to the inflationary trend, which is killing off, so to speak, the primary producer. I inform him that inflation is not peculiar to this State but is spread throughout the Commonwealth. I think most people agree that anti-inflationary measures can succeed only if instituted on a Commonwealth-wide scale. I draw the attention of honourable members to the fact that under an A.L.P. Government the people of this nation did not suffer inflation at its present high rate.

Many primary producers hold the view that the justification of price that is applied to some of their products should also be applied to the prices of the components used by them in their production processes. The A.L.P. completely dissociates itself from the contention that a fair price for anything is as much as one can get. If that argument were valid, surely it could be applied equally to labourers or employees, and be claimed that they should get as much as they can for their labour without being subject to arbitration. The Labor Party believes that there should be both wage and price justification, and that neither can succeed without the other. I do not accept the contention that the present inflationary spiral was also evident under a Labor Government, and I certainly refute the suggestion that under a future A.L.P. Government it will continue and will kill the primary producer.

This debate is a prime example of the value of a strong and knowledgeable Opposition. Naturally, the Minister has presented the operations of his department in a favourable light. Members of the Opposition, however, have put forward statistics and arguments to prove that, in many instances, comparisons with other States show Queensland up in a poor light. This is particularly so in respect of land set aside for public purposes, in which Queensland has the lowest percentage, and the alienation of land from the Crown, in which this State has the highest percentage.

The present galloping residential land values are of concern to everyone, except, of course, the investor and the speculator. They are of particular concern to young couples, who find that virtually years are bitten out of their earning capacity if they want to buy a residential allotment on which to build a home. The inflated costs of home sites would be the most grievous example of the present inflation. Such inflation in the price of home sites could be retarded by intelligent Government action, taken through the Lands Department. In fact, the Minister for Development and Industrial Affairs has claimed that the acquisition by the Government of industrial estates has done a good deal towards controlling the escalating costs of industrial land. If such a claim is valid in relation to industrial land, surely it is equally valid in relation to the acquisition by the Government of land for housing development. Such acquisition would serve the additional purpose of assisting decentralisation by directing settlement away from the metropolitan maze to selected areas.

I have here an extract from "The Courier-Mail" of Wednesday, 27 September, headlined, "Price freeze on 'mushroom' city sites urged". It reads—

"An expert task force recommended yesterday that State Governments immediately freeze land prices for areas where new cities might be built.

"It said land for new cities should be acquired publicly at prices not affected by 'speculative inflation', and placed under the administration of new city authorities.

"It also suggested that businesses could be encouraged to move to new cities by incentives such as freight assistance, lower telephone charges, and concessions on payroll tax and land tax.

"The task force said of the establishment of new cities: 'The time is now.' . . .

". . . the 'second barrel' of its plan was the establishment of regional cities in country areas."

A member of this task force, appointed by the Australian Institute of Urban Studies, is Professor R. C. Gates, Professor of Economics at the Queensland University. I am quite certain that the Government will pay some attention to what he said, because it has engaged him to pilot a local authority study in the Burrum Shire and contiguous areas. I hope the Government heeds his advice, and particularly his views on Government acquisition of land for the purpose of providing cheaper home sites and assisting decentralised settlement.

Inflation in rural values is another matter. Inflated values are not caused by the prosperity of rural industry or by demands of bona fide primary producers. Inflated values in rural holdings—and I might mention that, under our system of valuation and rating, inflated values, if they are completely unrealistic, kick back heavily on primary producers—are caused by speculation on the part of Pitt Street, George Street and Swanston Street farmers in search of tax evasion. Perhaps I should not say "tax evasion".

Mr. Davis: Tax lurks.

Mr. BLAKE: "Tax avoidance" would be a better term. They are seeking methods of tax avoidance by the acquisition of capital gains.

In this matter I am not attempting to lay the fault at the door of either the Minister for Lands or the State Government. This is a matter of national concern and, like the matter of the justification of prices, to be most effective it would have to be tackled at national level.

The time is fast approaching when this facet must be looked at very closely, because in certain areas it is inducing completely unrealistic values in relation to the profitability of the land concerned. It could well happen that a so-called Pitt Street farmer could invest \$50,000 and, in the long term, if he came out with a return of \$45,000 he could still be better off by virtue of capital gains. How can any bona fide farmer operate in that situation? Yet he is the person who, in many cases, has to carry the indirect burdens which are brought about by high valuations within his community.

Mr. Sullivan: Many people buy farms and go in for cattle. The Minister mentioned that over 400 farms have been sold under the marginal dairy farm reconstruction scheme. And they are farmers living in the locality, not Pitt Street or George Street farmers.

Mr. BLAKE: I am pleased that the Minister for Primary Industries raised that point. It has been alleged that some of these so-called Pitt Street farmers have obtained the benefit of cheap interest rates under the rural reconstruction scheme. I hope this is not so. Is the Minister confirming that?

Mr. Sullivan: I give you my assurance that it is not correct. I am sure that the Minister will have something to say about it when he sums up the debate.

Mr. BLAKE: I thank the honourable gentleman. I thought he was implying that farmers who were not entitled to make this type of investment were doing so under the rural reconstruction scheme.

Mr. Sullivan: I did not say that at all. I have said quite clearly that the Rural Reconstruction Board assists bona fide farmers.

Mr. BLAKE: That is its proper function. I hope the scheme is not so worthless that bona fide farmers cannot invest and become bigger, as opposed to people who are not bona fide farmers making such an investment. As I said, if it were not for the possibility of capital gain, they would not be the slightest bit interested as the actual farming operations would often be run at a loss.

Much has been said by honourable members on both sides of the Chamber about the value or non-value of land-rent remissions and the rural reconstruction scheme. Because of seasonal vagaries and fluctuating prices, particularly on export markets, primary industries need to be supported from time to time. Government support has always been essential during periods of recession. The resurgence of industries such as the wool industry, the sugar industry and the wheat industry, which I should not include because of the present season but can include because of its market potential, indicates that Government support is not only required but is also perfectly justified in our present society.

Opposition members do not complain about such help being given. Our complaint concerns the belated timing of the assistance, the stringency of the conditions of qualification for assistance and, in many cases, the high interest rates. All honourable members know that a large proportion of Queensland's sheep numbers flowed from South and South-west Queensland into southern States while the State and Commonwealth Governments argued and accused each other of procrastination in providing assistance. The Commonwealth Government also claimed that the Queensland Government had not made a request for assistance.

A large number of primary producers lost their eligibility for assistance between the making of the decisions and the implementation of the assistance schemes. In saying that, I do not denigrate the departmental officers concerned. They did a wonderful job in ironing out the difficulties and the details in the short time available to them. My criticism is levelled at the lack of agreement, not the lack of liaison, between the State and Federal Governments and the short time allowed for departmental officers to implement these aid schemes which, in many cases, were evolved too late.

While the benefit of assistance given to marginal dairy farmers is well recognised, all aspects of the dairy industry, as a whole, should be looked at. Look at the decrease in the number of dairy farmers, and in production, during the past decade! Dairy farmers themselves have in many cases referred to the scheme as the dairy farmers "elimination" scheme. This might be a desirable thing in certain economic circumstances.

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

Mr. BLAKE: Before the dinner recess I was about to refer to the high cost of interest repayments on some of the rehabilitation loans on offer to primary producers. This high cost is illustrated in the interest rates under the terms of loans to assist dairy farmers to enter the whole-milk industry. A maximum loan of \$7,500, other than in exceptional circumstances at 6½ per cent interest, was mentioned. By no stretch of the imagination is that rate of interest a great concession. Pity help any person who has to depend on this "concession" for his viability in dairying!

Because of the present development, and the vast scope for expanding development, in the Isis electorate, I am particularly interested in the Minister's remarks concerning the operations of the Forestry Department, and the importance of the timber industry to the State and national economy. Its importance is obvious when it is realised that \$250,000,000 is lost annually in the balance of payments on imports of timber and timber products. With a growing population and growing demand, timber would appear to be one of the State's most assured cash crops. With a work-force of 1,800 employees, it is obviously a vital employer also.

Reference has been made to aerial burning and, at 5c an acre, its cheapness. I have no fault to find with this technique, which was recently introduced to Queensland by the Forestry Department. It is my observation that this method of aerial burning is kind to the environment. It does not usually develop a wall of flame such as is produced by lighting on a front which sometimes kills off timber, as well as flora and fauna. I recall a bush fire getting into a forestry reserve at Woodgate, where there had not

been a fire for many years, and the heat intensity was such that it completely ruined that forest in one fell swoop. Of course, it was devastating to the flora and fauna in that area. That does not happen with aerial burning.

I have heard protests and arguments about this style of burning, but I agree that it is indeed a vast improvement on burning on a front and allowing a fire to get going properly. It is a fact that it effects a saving in costs, and also a saving in man-power. I ask the Minister to reinvest the savings effected by this method of burning in the acceleration of forestry development, thus maintaining the demand for labour in what is considered to be a rather labour-intensive industry.

The Maryborough-Bundaberg area is an important timber region, with tremendous potential for development of both hardwoods and softwoods. The Minister referred to the development of the industry, and also to the advanced state of timber-milling and manufacturing in this area. When speaking of the expansion of this industry, it is wise to look at the practical and proven avenues of development, both primary and secondary, in the area. In the Maryborough-Bundaberg area, timber industries, both primary and secondary, have been proven, and the scope for development there also has been proven.

(Time expired.)

Mr. ALISON (Maryborough) (7.20 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister for Lands and Forestry and his departmental officers on the work they are doing for this State. In particular, I congratulate the Minister, who has recently taken over this portfolio, for the down-to-earth approach he brings to the problems facing the Lands Department and the Forestry Department.

I thank the officers of both the Lands Department and the Forestry Department for the assistance they have given me, as member for Maryborough, and I refer particularly to the officers of the Forestry Department in Maryborough, who have given me their full co-operation and assistance, in my attempts to learn what is going on in these departments as it affects my electorate. I assure them that I appreciate it greatly.

Of course, timber is very important to my electorate of Maryborough. In the city of Maryborough there are two of the largest timber mills in the eastern part of Australia, and several hundred sawmill workers, timber cutters, timber hauliers and Forestry Department employees actually live in the city, in addition to those living outside the city boundaries. The timber industry is worth millions of dollars to the economy of the city and the district.

Yesterday, with the forest ranger, I inspected the three experimental forestry plots on the Maryborough-Howard road and viewed the growth that has taken place in those plots, which I understand were planted in

1933. Several species are growing there, and they received the standard treatment when they were planted—that is, the ground was roughly cleared, the seedlings were planted, and that was that. I understand that about seven years later—about 1940—they were fertilised. The growth rate on the plots has been as good as that expected in the Tuan-Toolara forestry area, south of Maryborough, where plantings received similar treatment.

In correspondence that I have had with the Forestry Department in Brisbane, reference was made to the markedly inferior growth on these experimental plots in comparison with the growth of the same species at Tuan and Toolara. The point I wish to make is that in looking at what went on in the three experimental plots to which I have referred when the seedlings were planted, and comparing it with what goes on at Tuan now, it should be borne in mind that the Forestry Department has improved its techniques over the years and that seedlings planted now—in fact, for some years past—have received much better treatment than the seedlings that were planted on the experimental plots. From what I have seen and heard, there is no doubt in my mind that, if plantings received similar treatment in suitable areas north of Maryborough, the growth rate could be expected to be exactly similar to that in the Tuan-Toolara forest. The rainfall is much the same as that received south of Maryborough—perhaps an inch or two less.

I understand that at present a land-use survey is being carried out jointly by the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Lands in the areas around Maryborough, in particular, and I stress the need to have land reserved for forestry. I understand that the parishes of Ferguson and Warrah, north of Maryborough, would make good forestry reserves. I understand also that the area north of Maryborough is about as far north as it is possible to plant slash pine and as far south as it is possible to plant the Caribbean species.

I urge the Minister to see that the land-use survey is completed as quickly as possible and that recommendations are made in the very near future, because a great deal of land is tied up awaiting the conclusion of the survey. I understand that some areas are good for grazing and that others are suitable for forestry plantations. No doubt, others again should be declared State forests and national parks.

In the early 1980's a wood-pulping plant is to be constructed at a near forest site, and Maryborough has a good case for the construction of this plant. We have plenty of water; we are on the main railway line north and south; we have a good deep water port at Urangan; and we have workshops to handle any repairs that might be necessary to the plant.

On my calculations, the Estimates for Lands and Forestry, all funds, total \$59,100,000. The actual expenditure for 1971-72 was \$56,400,000, the Estimates for that year, all funds, totalling \$62,100,000. Actual salaries paid in 1971-72 out of Consolidated Revenue amounted to \$6,700,000, and it is estimated that this payment out of Consolidated Revenue in 1972-73 will be about \$7,500,000.

There have been increases in staff in various sections of the Lands and Forestry Departments and, no doubt, these account for a fair proportion of the increase of \$800,000 in wages and salaries. However, it does concern me that, generally speaking, salaries paid to the lower and middle ranks of the Public Service are usually higher than those paid to employees in private enterprise doing similar work and having similar responsibilities—as far as it is possible to compare one with the other. I refer particularly to clerical workers. Clerks in the Public Service are paid higher salaries than clerks in private enterprise. I realise, of course, that many employees—particularly females—consider that working conditions are just as important as rates of pay, but this disparity in rates of pay does sometimes create problems for private enterprise in attracting staff. While on that subject I mention also the Local Authorities Award, under which a similar problem arises because of disparity in salaries.

I should like to refer to the Estimates of the Rural Reconstruction Board. On my figuring it seems that \$230,000 is provided out of Consolidated Revenue for the administrative expenses. In addition, provision is made for expenditure of \$144,663 from Trust and Special Funds for salaries, with an additional \$84,328 for rent, travelling expenses and incidentals. That is a total allocation of \$459,000 to the Rural Reconstruction Board for 1972-73 to cover the administration expenses on estimated advances to borrowers of \$12,500,000.

That seems to me to be rather a high figure. I wonder whether it would have been better to use the existing banking structure to handle the funds for rural reconstruction. I make it quite clear that I am not “knocking” the idea of rural reconstruction, but merely expressing some doubts as to the method of administering the funds. I am always concerned when a new Government department is suggested or there is a move afoot to establish one. I believe it is part and parcel of good government to maintain an efficient Public Service to provide the services required by the people of the State, but, at the same time, to keep the costs of the Public Service commensurate with the service given.

It is estimated that a staff of 28 will be engaged on the administration of the Rural Reconstruction Fund. Would it not have been feasible for the Government to lay down clear guide-lines and conditions under

which funds could be lent from the Rural Reconstruction Fund through the existing bank structure? Even under those circumstances it would seem that a board or a committee would have to be set up by the Government to decide on each application, but why not have the existing banks handle the applications, for a fee, and properly present them to the board or committee? Would not this method be just as efficient as that of the Rural Reconstruction Board and would it not cost less than the estimated expenditure of this body?

There is a somewhat similar situation with the Commonwealth Development Bank. From what I understand of it, the Commonwealth Bank and the other banks handle the applications and submit them to the Commonwealth Development Bank for approval or otherwise. The conditions on which it will accept applications have been clearly set out.

I should like to refer to the Estimates of the Survey Office from which it will be seen that 90 temporary officers were employed in 1971-72. It is estimated that 91 will be employed in the current year. An amount of \$215,000 was spent on salaries of temporary officers last year, and it is estimated that \$309,000 will be spent this year. On the face of it, it seems that this one extra officer is costing nearly \$100,000. I do not believe that this is the case, but taking the Estimates at face value, it would appear to be so. I think this illustration highlights the necessity for notations throughout the Estimates and the Financial Statement showing, briefly, the reasons for any big differences between Estimates and actual expenditures last year and this year.

I have no complaint about the general structure of the Financial Statement. It is certainly complex, but I think the broad outline is quite satisfactory. I reiterate my previous statement that it could provide the answers to many queries if it contained notations explaining big differences and perhaps a little more information on big items of expenditure or a dissection of them. I believe that members have a right to this assistance in considering and preparing submissions on the Estimates.

I have heard the honourable member for Chatsworth speak in favour of a public accounts committee. I fully support the idea and an extension of it, so that we could have a closer look at the State's accounts and Estimates.

On page 56 of the Estimates there is a particular vote for the *Cryptotermes Brevis* Investigation which, in my language, is the West Indies borer. I draw attention to the estimated expenditure of \$20,000 compared with an actual expenditure last year of \$1,476. We have had problems with this particular borer or termite in Maryborough. Within the last few months 14 houses have had to be fumigated by the Forestry Department to beat this termite.

I should like to refer to the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Fund. This scheme introduced by this Government has been an excellent one, although so far as I can see the work of the fund is far from finished. Instead of paying subsidies to prop up primary producers or secondary industries, the Government by direct action should assist producers whose properties are not viable by putting them on properties from which they can get an adequate return. I believe that subsidies should be paid by the Government only to keep primary industries, or secondary industries for that matter, going until such times as they are able to move into a more viable position or perhaps get a better return for their product. Problems such as droughts, floods and other catastrophes occur, of course, and over these neither the farmer nor anybody else has any control.

I should not like to be misunderstood; I am all for assisting these people, whatever industry they might be in, over these times of catastrophe but I do not agree with subsidies as a long-standing proposition. I think a subsidy should be only to help an industry over a transitional period.

Over the years this State Government has introduced some very excellent advisory services, mainly through the Primary Industries Department, to assist people on the land. In my view, the expenditure on these services represents money well spent. I know that some people, mainly old-time farmers, will not be told, but these people are gradually dying out or moving out and we are seeing a more enlightened approach to farming. I think farming or any primary production should be approached as a business and run on businesslike lines. The days are past when mum, dad and the kids could provide for themselves and their families on a few acres of land without putting too much effort into it or without farming the land in such a way as to get the best out of it. Today, the enlightened farmer has to make sure he is getting the best use out of his plant, his land, and, for that matter, his labour.

With particular reference to the Reforestation Trust Fund, the estimated receipts of this fund for 1972-73 are \$8,010,000 of which the sum of \$6,090,000 comes from loan funds. This leaves \$1,920,000 of Commonwealth funds, which, I understand, represents payments of about \$900,000 we have not yet received from the Commonwealth for last year and about \$1,000,000 for this year. It seems that the Softwoods Agreement Bill was held up in the Senate, and the Commonwealth "Hansard" report of this debate makes very interesting reading. That applies particularly to the speech by Senator Keeffe. Senators are elected to represent and speak on behalf of their States; however, the comments of Senator Keeffe lead one to the belief that he is the greatest "knocker" this State has in the Senate.

I should like to deal now with T.R.A.D.A.C., which stands for Timber Research and Development Advisory Councils. There are two such councils, namely the northern council and the council covering Central and South Queensland. They are financed by a levy on log timber that comes through the Forestry and Lumbering Fund. I refer honourable members to the estimate of \$159,000 for expenses of the Timber Research and Development Advisory Councils.

These councils have been in operation for only the last one or two years, and their work is a wonderful example of co-operation between Government and private enterprise for the good of a particular industry and the State in general. The council for Central and South Queensland is made up of Mr. Trist, who is the chairman, Mr. W. Bryan, who is the Deputy Conservator of Forests, as well as other representatives from both the Forestry Department and the sawmilling and timber interests.

An indication of the work carried out by these councils can be seen from the highlights in last year's reports, which include—

(1) promotion of flooring, framing, cladding, panelling and the high-set housing concept;

(2) improved communication with the industry and between industry and timber specifiers and users;

(3) conducting of education and training seminars for management, specifiers and students;

(4) commencement of the grader training programme;

(5) work in relation to locally grown hardwood and softwood research and product development;

(6) extensive activity relating to the adoption of the light timber framing code.

Any honourable member who has heard my remarks, read the councils' annual reports and, as well, perhaps attended one or two of their functions could not fail to be convinced that the funds poured into the Timber and Research Development Advisory Councils are not merely going to pay public servants who occupy cushy jobs, but will be used by a very necessary organisation comprising representatives from the timber industry and from the Government department that is associated with the industry in the promotion of research as well as the training of people in the interests of the continuation of that industry.

As recently as March this year the council for Central and South Queensland held a meeting at Maryborough. Those who attended were given the opportunity of discussing with members the activities of T.R.A.D.A.C. I might mention that among T.R.A.D.A.C.'s membership are Mr. Lambert Hyne of Hyne Sawmills at Maryborough and Mr. Jock McBryde, who is the general manager of Wilson Hart and Company.

T.R.A.D.A.C. is a very real example of this Government's practical approach to the development and assistance as well as the welfare of an industry.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (7.39 p.m.): I have much pleasure in participating in this debate, as both departments involved play an important role in the function of government. Previous speakers have praised the fine work of those officers in the upper echelon of the two departments under debate, and I heartily concur with the laudatory remarks that have been passed.

Over the years, I have enjoyed a friendly association with a number of the high-ranking officers of the Lands Department, particularly Mr. Heffernan, Mr. Cook and Mr. O'Gorman, together with Mr. McDowell, who, quite recently, was elevated to the Land Court bench. Those gentlemen have worked for many years in the department and have given wonderful service to the State. I also pay a tribute to the officers of the Forestry Department. Today I met in this building a very affluent sawmiller who told me that despite the differences he has had on occasions with officers of the Forestry Department, he believes that they are trying to do a very good job.

It is significant that since the recent election there has been a change in the Ministry, as a result of which the former Minister for Local Government has taken over the Lands portfolio. At one stage the former Minister for Lands seemed to be ascending the political heights through the introduction in this Chamber of the rural reconstruction scheme legislation and the dairy amalgamation scheme legislation, as well as the considerable publicity he received through the news media as a result of the third stage of the brigalow lands development scheme and various other matters related to the Lands Department. If the various forecasts had proved correct, he was likely to ascend further in his political career.

It is not to the Premier's credit that he demoted the present Minister for Primary Industries and handed the important portfolio of Lands and Forestry to one of the Cabinet heavyweights. Doubtless the change could be likened to what happened on the memorable night of long knives when, virtually, a sword was brandished, ready to be plunged into the Premier's back.

We should also recall subsequent questions that were asked at a Country Party branch meeting at Kumbia, when the present Minister for Primary Industries was asked about his conduct in the events of that night of nights, which were comparable indeed to the heinous deeds at Glamis Castle many centuries ago. At last the Premier has "got square".

The former Minister for Lands, who was a bright star in the political sphere and introduced important legislation which has had, and will continue to have, a profound bearing

on Queensland's rural industries, is now looking after the hens, the poultry and the various fruit flies associated with the Primary Industries Department. I do not know what he thinks about his demotion, but if he is any sort of an Australian he should have a very long memory. He should not forget that the Premier cast him into the political shadows, completely disregarding his seemingly high standard of performance in the Lands Department. Of course, we do not know the full story. He could have been incompetent, but I have presented the facts as I know them. I certainly wish the present holder of the Lands portfolio at least reasonable success in that office.

I have submissions to make about several matters that I believe to be very pertinent and, in doing so, I hope that I may be of considerable assistance to the Lands Department. Many people throughout the State are under the erroneous impression that the Land Court is a branch or an arm of the Land Administration Commission. It is regrettable that members of the Land Court, who occupy very high, distinguished and respected positions, should find that some people are considerably confused about their position. I hope that, in the future, our education system is so geared that, at a very early age, our people can unravel some of the more confused facets of government that have been created by the incompetence that has developed within the present administration. A considerable amount of controversy has resulted because of the very disastrous policies of this administration.

I throw into the ring the suggestion that a start should be made in the classroom to acquaint people of the true meaning of government and, subsequently, to explain to the people in general, through the mass media or by advertisement, the true facts so that they will not be confused about the independent function of members of the Land Court and will divorce their function from that of members of the Land Administration Commission.

I also throw into the ring the dire necessity to remove the confusion that presently exists, and to have some form of common sense written into the Acts that define the various methods of land valuation. I refer particularly to the various definitions of "unimproved value". Some form of uniformity should be achieved, because at present they vary. The Minister for Lands and Forestry is not responsible for the Valuation of Land Act, but the definition of "unimproved value" in that Act is at variance with the definition contained in sections 141 and 243 of the Land Act. The Valuation of Land Act makes no reference to the fact that the price that a prudent or experienced buyer would pay should be taken into consideration in establishing unimproved value, whereas the section of the Land Act that deals with the determination of rents payable for certain Crown lands

requires the Land Court to consider this and any other matter that may affect the valuation.

I should like the Minister and his officers to look at the points I have raised. Uniformity would improve the position considerably. The public would not then be confused in their own minds about these two bodies and would not be subjected to enormous expense in seeking legal advice on problems associated with land resumption and land valuation.

It is regrettable that, since this administration took office, the public estate has been plundered to such a great extent. A regrettable state of affairs exists in this country.

Mr. R. E. Moore: Can you prove that?

Mr. HANSON: If the honourable member for Merthyr would keep quiet I would appreciate it. It was obvious that his speech was written by the Minister, and that he was helping out his colleague.

Mr. Lane: Why don't you adjust your sights?

Mr. HANSON: I do not want to take notice of the lout from Merthyr. I am sorry, Mr. Dean. I should refer to him as the honourable member for Merthyr.

The proceeds from the sale of leasehold land in this State since this Government assumed office have reached enormous proportions. In 1957 they amounted to \$114,294. A progressive increase has taken place, because many Government members have looked after their friends and have tried to get away from the so-called rude old days of the Labor Party when the people of this State had absolute and almost positive ownership of the public estate. Some Government members want to grasp the chicken by the neck and squeeze every drop of blood out of it. This is a shocking state of affairs.

The proceeds from these sales have increased progressively. According to the Auditor-General's report for the year ended June 1971, not 100,000 acres but an area of well over 1,000,000 acres of the public estate was freeholded. In 1969-70 the figure was 2,384,000 acres, and, in 1970-71, 1,827,000 acres. The area of land alienated as at 30 June 1972 totalled 27,557,000 acres.

The total revenue from the sale of that land was \$50,000,000. What a wonderful state of affairs! Poor old Khrushchev has gone now, but, under our present land laws, whoever is the leader in the U.S.S.R. today could obtain land in this State. The Chinese Communists could obtain land. The Japanese, and anyone else, could obtain it.

The fact is that young Queenslanders are being denied the right to obtain a little block of dirt on which to build a home. The Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs can well remember the

day when the Labor Party initiated a scheme in the Biloela area under which, for the first year's rent plus one-fifth of the survey fee, on £5 down, the Labor Party opened up for closer settlement many of the areas then owned by a few graziers. Today there are in that area very many farmers, and the flourishing town of Biloela. It was a wonderful scheme indeed, and it has the approbation of many Government members.

But what is the position today? One has to be the Aga Khan or the honourable member for Callide, or someone similar, before one has sufficient money to put down a mere deposit on a block of land. The Labor Party had a land policy under which young people were able to settle on blocks of land and develop the country. The Labor Party did not want the land left in the hands of a few, each with an enormous number of cattle to sell each year. The Labor Party showed the way with a positive policy of land development in the Monto and Biloela areas, where the honourable member for Callide has a cattle property. They are very fine areas. As a matter of fact, many members on the opposite side of the Chamber have been—and were pleased to be—Crown tenants under Labor administration.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. HANSON: There are several of them, and the day will come when there will be a marked trend back to the leasehold policy.

No-one can convince me that the ordinary "wage plug", the person who wants to buy a block of land, is happy with the present situation. Has it not created an inflationary spiral? Of course it has. Unfortunately, land today is definitely too dear. What with surveying, engineering and legal costs, and the costs of roads, drainage, water supply and advertising, together with high interest rates paid to the money lenders, land today is far too expensive. High interest charges, in particular, are stopping many young people from purchasing the land of their choice on which to build a home. Many young people wishing to build a home have approached me. They are very anxious indeed, because they know full well that under the free-holding policy of the Government they will be denied the right to obtain land on which to build a home.

Mr. Miller: Are you in favour of leasehold land?

Mr. HANSON: Most definitely I am. I have said so before in this Chamber. It is part and parcel of the spirit of the Labor Party. Let us consider the position in many country towns as far back as the days of the depression. The honourable member for Mackay would be as conversant with the position in Mackay as I am with the position in Gladstone. But for the wise administration of the Labor Party, and the

Workers' Homes Town Perpetual Lease scheme, very few people would have been able to obtain blocks of land.

What has the Government done today in the case of leasehold land? It has increased rentals and caused anxiety and mental distress to widows, pensioners and many other similar types of people. Government members ought to be ashamed of themselves. They sit back and laugh their stomachs out. I shall get on the hustings around Port Curtis and tell the people what the Government is doing. It is not generally understood that under the current terms of home purchase, the cash outlay on perpetual lease is several times less than on freehold. Savings are effected in interest charges on the lower mortgage that attends perpetual leasehold.

This lower mortgage has several benefits. With the same monthly payments as under freehold, the home or other building can be paid off many years sooner under perpetual lease. For a mortgage of the same amount, the monthly repayments under leasehold are much lower than they are under freehold.

I say simply that land should be made available to those who need it, without delay and at a price no greater than is justified by true scarcity and the cost of development. Several committees now being set up realise the tremendous number of problems that have to be faced. In my own home town recently—and the members of the Land Administration Commission in the lobby would be aware of this—portion 18 created a great blast and furor, and rightly so. The Lands Department indulged in a form of piracy—I say "piracy" because it was out to make tremendous profits—and placed upset prices on freehold blocks that would bring it into competition with the most avaricious subdivider. So much so, in fact, that the people gave the sale the "raspberry" and not one block was sold.

Gladstone is a developing town and the Government talks about what it wants to do for the town in helping to settle its people. On this occasion the Lands Department said it had a clear, concise responsibility to the public to see that the Government made considerable profits. That is very wrong, because hundreds of people in Gladstone were extremely keen to obtain a block of land on which they could build the home of their choice. I do not believe that people, particularly young working people and others just starting out on their married life, could afford to pay the prices of \$2,700, \$3,000 and \$4,000 that were placed on these blocks of land. It was absolutely ridiculous, and the department certainly received from the public the treatment it deserved.

I was not in favour of the department's action, and forces were abroad, the news media co-operating with other political parties, trying to snub and insult the honourable member for Port Curtis. The results of

the recent State election certainly did not justify their confidence, and their actions did not worry me very much.

I believe that there should be some form of demarcation between the person known as a speculator and a land developer. There are quite a number of people who, in the ordinary course of events, undertake definite responsibilities when they are developing and subdividing land. The speculators, on the other hand, withhold land so that they can eventually cash in and make enormous profits when the time is propitious.

Mr. Jensen: A capital-gains tax would fix that.

Mr. HANSON: That is true. Unfortunately, as I said earlier, there are also people associated with the development of land who have had inculcated into them the worship of Mammon.

(Time expired.)

Mr. ROW (Hinchinbrook) (7.59 p.m.): Out of deference to members of the Opposition, I intended to refrain from complimenting the Minister for Lands in the usual manner. Instead, I intended saying that I commended him for the quality of his speech and the pleasing aspects of his report to the Committee. In the past, I have been accused of being a back-scratcher, and I thought that on this occasion I should compliment the Minister on having a big back to scratch. Perhaps I will get away with that.

The Government's concern for the welfare of the rural population, as indicated in the Minister's speech, is to be applauded. Considering the recent adverse conditions to which the primary industries have been subjected—Opposition members must agree that they were not the fault of this Government but, in most instances, were the result of drought and climatic conditions outside the control of the Government—the Minister's report and his Estimates are very refreshing.

Reference to the purpose and the effect of the Rural Reconstruction Board proves that its establishment was a very wise move by the Government. It is regrettable that that action was necessary. It is most regrettable that rural reconstruction in any form has to occur in a country that has the affluence of some sectors in this country, particularly Queensland. This State is probably one of the best off financially, except that its rural producers are suffering very adverse effects.

Whilst the Rural Reconstruction Board has enabled reconstruction through amalgamation of rural properties, in many respects this is not a very good thing socially or for the economics of the rural areas of the State, particularly the small towns and rural communities that are dependent on population. In the long term, rural reconstruction that actually removes people from areas is not the best thing that can happen to the State. Fortunately, the current buoyancy in mining

and other developmental industries has somewhat offset the drop in employment opportunities in the rural sector.

It is interesting to note that of the land proposed for new settlement as mentioned by the Minister, much will be required to build up existing selections. Whilst this trend is disquietening, perhaps there is a moral in the story of land settlement. A few moments ago the honourable member for Port Curtis referred to the desirability of a form of land settlement different from that undertaken in Queensland over the past 30 years or so. What he said might reveal a need for frequent revision of the scope of land subdivision. It is most obvious that, when land subdivision on a grand scale, with all the good social intentions in the world, results in loss of viability through growing economic pressures, the whole exercise of rural subdivision into small areas with larger population probably defeats itself. I do not think honourable members opposite can really blame the Government for the present position. It is the result of inflationary pressures mainly in the wage structure, which are beyond the capacity of those with small rural holdings.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. ROW: Honourable members opposite know as well as I do that, if a small rural holding has to face up to inflationary pressures on the wage structure of affluent industries, it goes by the board. It is no use their talking about land reform if they are not prepared to study the economic situation that goes with it.

Unless ready money is available to intensify the development of land, the trend towards loss of population will continue. Unless adequate decentralisation is promoted in the rural areas, this also results in the drift of population to centralised areas.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Has the Country Party a policy of decentralisation?

Mr. ROW: Yes.

This is a State of great contrasts geographically. Therefore, what applies to what we might call, in general terms, land settlement in the arid regions of the State—which are probably the largest—does not apply in areas that are not affected as much by adverse conditions. In saying that, I am referring particularly to coastal development in the tropics. In coastal grazing development especially, the activities of the Lands Department are very commendable. It has been proved that land is redeemable in these coastal areas, even with their climatic conditions, and the Land Administration Commission should be commended for opening up Crown land for public development.

Urban area development through the availability of Crown land is also something over which I think the Government has to keep a close watch, and the development of

new industrial estates in growing provincial towns should also receive urgent consideration. I can speak with authority of a situation in my own shire, which for some time now has had a town plan incorporating a fairly large industrial site. I know that several rather desirable complexes were unable to establish in the area because the development of this industrial estate was not sufficiently advanced. I urge the Lands Department and the Land Administration Commission to pay very close attention to the development of these industrial estates in areas with potential for the establishment of industry, which will mean retention of local population and, in fact, the return of young local people.

The activities of the State Housing Commission are also vital to urban and town growth and, in expanding areas, the commission needs maximum co-operation, particularly from the Lands Department, so that young people will have an opportunity to obtain their own homes. In this respect I agree with the honourable member for Port Curtis when he says that in many cases the competition puts the price of land far beyond the means of many young people starting off in married life. I believe there should be many more ballots and similar land arrangements so that young people do not have to compete with speculators in their genuine efforts to obtain a home. I strongly urge the Lands Department to give serious consideration to these methods rather than adopt the mercenary attitude of obtaining the best price possible through auction.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Do you think that land developers should be licensed and that a ceiling should be put on the price of land?

Mr. ROW: I do not think that a ceiling should be put on the price of land, because I think the old maxim of supply and demand usually balances the price of most commodities. This is, to some extent, a control. I do not think ceilings on prices are possible. What happens when the ceiling is taken off? Prices would probably escalate to a greater extent.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You don't take them off.

Mr. ROW: If it is not taken off, there will be either a black market or stagnation. I think this proposition has been looked at before, and has been proved to be not as attractive as honourable members opposite would have us believe.

Another very important aspect of land tenure that arises in many of the expanding towns and rural areas is town planning which incorporates land currently used for agricultural purposes in subdivisional proposals. I am pleased to say that in its previous term of office the Government did make some concession to people who were adversely affected by increases in valuations

and rates on land which was zoned as urban land but was still being used for rural purposes. As this consideration is limited in its application to land designated for urban subdivision, it should be extended.

In my electorate for a great number of years a certain charitable organisation has conducted a rodeo entirely for charity. It is now faced with the inclusion of the land on which it has run its rodeo stock in a town plan, with the result that the valuation is so high that the organisation cannot afford to pay the greatly increased rates. To the detriment of the community, it will no longer be able to conduct these rodeos. Concessions as to the use and valuation of land, regardless of its present designation, should be extended beyond the scope of town plans.

In the rural areas along the coastal belt many local authorities are confronted by the problem of stock straying onto the highways. Owing to improved grazing techniques and other factors, many holdings along the coast are carrying greater cattle numbers than previously. The legislation that controls the straying of stock is not stringent enough, so I urge the Land Administration Commission to examine the terms of tenure of these pastoral holdings with a view to making it mandatory for them to provide adequate fencing to prevent stock from straying.

I am aware of the fact that the provision of fencing gives rise to litigation and that many amendments have been made to the appropriate legislation; nevertheless, in the public interest, such legislation should be strengthened. Several serious accidents have resulted from the straying of stock onto roads.

The Minister referred to rural fires boards. I join in the praise offered by previous speakers of them as being a worthy asset to this State in the control of fires in rural areas. Although they do an excellent job, the time is fast approaching, particularly in North Queensland where, during the summer months, there are large areas of dry grass, when the methods adopted in clearing land should be altered. At present the most common method used is burning off. This is particularly so in the control of vegetation on land adjacent to railway lines. I do not wish to give rise to a clash of interests between the Minister who has introduced these Estimates and the Minister for Transport; however, I urge the introduction of new methods of vegetation control on railway land that traverses private property.

The use of fire to eradicate vegetation gives rise to disputes over the origin of fires that penetrate private land. Frequently the Railway Department is blamed, and investigations at great public cost have to be carried out. Quite recently in the Kennedy-Tully area an extensive fire burnt out valuable grazing land on private property. The Railway Department was blamed, but, as it has denied responsibility, this matter will remain a matter of public contention. Such matters

should be dealt with more expeditiously. The public should be urged to adopt methods other than burning when it is necessary to control vegetation. Today, chemical controls are available. Their uses should be examined by the Department of Lands in conjunction with any other Government department that may be involved.

I was very interested in the Minister's comments on forestry, but I was a little disappointed about the present inadequacies of the reforestation programme. The small amount allocated for forestry will not cater for a bigger reforestation programme in the North. On this occasion I will be parochial and refer to my own electorate. Several years ago a proposal designed to implement adequate reforestation was submitted to the Government by an independent research authority established in my electorate. In 1969, the Ingham Research and Development Bureau extensively examined reforestation possibilities in the Tully, Cardwell, Kennedy and Ingham districts and submitted its proposals to the Government. They were more or less accepted at State level until the Federal Government formulated a five-year forestry agreement. It was rather disappointing that the final five-year allocation by the Federal Government provided insufficient funds to carry out the scheme envisaged by this body.

As this area has vast potential for forestry development, I believe that this plan should be closely examined. An area of 190,000 acres was reserved by the State Government. After the local survey it was suggested that probably 68,000 acres was suitable for planting softwoods, the balance of the area probably being more suitable for rain-forest development and some grazing, with the provision of adequate protection for timber stands. The benefit of forestation to land protection was examined.

(Time expired.)

MR. R. JONES (Cairns) (8.18 p.m.): I think it is three years since these Estimates were last discussed. Those honourable members who have been here during the intervening period are aware that three different Ministers have controlled this department, that is, the present incumbent, the present Minister for Education and the present Minister for Primary Industries. I believe that, on a former occasion, one of the present Minister's portfolios included the Forestry Department.

MR. R. E. MOORE: You haven't got a clue.

MR. R. JONES: I point out for the benefit of new members that at one stage the Minister for Local Government controlled the Forestry Department.

MR. R. E. MOORE: You said that was the case in the last three years.

MR. R. JONES: If I am wrong I stand to be corrected, but I do not think I will be corrected by the honourable member for

Windsor. I have not yet been corrected by him, and I do not think I ever will be.

I draw the Committee's attention to the fact that the branch of the Lands Department in the city of Cairns has moved into new premises. This space was previously occupied by the Public Curator Office, which has recently been converted for use by the Lands Office.

It is time for a reassessment of the Lands Department in my area. In the time that I have been a member of Parliament, four district land commissioners in Cairns, namely, Mr. Staunton, Mr. Kimber, Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Gibb, have been saddled with the difficulty of inadequate accommodation. Admittedly, more floor space has been made available. However, because of the North Queensland climate, ceiling fans rather than wall fans should have been provided. No doubt other amenities, which from time to time have been mentioned departmentally, should also be provided.

I believe that the staff strength in the Cairns office is the same today as it was when I was an alderman before being elected to Parliament and when my brother was deputy district valuer in Cairns. Rangers or valuers are facing an increasing volume of work. This applies also in the Titles Office and every other office dealing with land transactions. These valuers work in the field and then return to the office, where there is inadequate staff. This aspect of land administration must be investigated.

I do not want to be misunderstood in what I am saying. We are fortunate indeed to have had such good Chief Commissioners of Lands and I pay a tribute to the present Chief Commissioner, Mr. Brian Heffernan and the other members of the Land Administration Commission, Mr. Paul O'Gorman and Mr. Mel Johnston. Land is very important to both the small landholder and the big landholder. It is our heritage. It is one of our basic inheritances and one of the most important aspects of our stewardship.

My colleague the honourable member for Barron River has again suggested the provision of walking tracks through our rain forests, scrub country and jungle areas. The Minister said that the basic criterion in the selection of national parks, in the era of development that he foreshadowed, was the preservation of a part of our environment in its natural state. In this regard, I suggest that nothing excels the rain forests of North Queensland. I hope that portion of the \$30,000 allocated for State forests this year will be used to establish walking tracks in those areas. I learnt recently from a television programme that walks are being established in the Mt. Kosciusko area and that they would eventually extend from South Australia, across the Great Dividing Range, and through to North Queensland. Perhaps we could make a start in the North and work down. I feel that we should

encourage our children to go on bush walks and hikes, and to learn to appreciate the environment by visiting such places.

The Minister might also give some consideration to reforestation. I particularly refer to the area immediately south of Cape Grafton, which is the Yarrabah reserve for Aborigines. The lives of these people are closely associated with rain forests, and this country lends itself admirably to reforestation. There is a high degree of unemployment at that community, and I feel that if the Forestry Department could move into the area and start a reforestation scheme for the people of Yarrabah, it would be of great advantage to them and to North Queensland. They have a sawmill, and they know the area. They also have a knowledge of timber, and I feel that this is something constructive that they are capable of doing, with supervision from Forestry Department officers.

I feel that such a scheme would have a long-term effect on these people. It would be something that they could grow into and embrace as a feature of their area. They have a very large area of land, some parts of which are more arable than others, and I feel that it lends itself to this type of development.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: The Aborigines provide all the staff for the Danbulla and Kuranda forestry areas at present.

Mr. R. JONES: That is correct. I have been considering this matter since Yarrabah was included in my electorate. I know the people there, and I hope I am beginning to learn and appreciate their attitude to various things. I hope the scheme that I suggest will be given consideration by the Forestry Department, in conjunction with the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. I am certain that it would be a viable scheme. I am sure we are all endeavouring to find a solution to the problem of integrating Aborigines with our community, and such a scheme would encourage integration at a faster rate than at present.

I now want to deal briefly with some other matters. As the length of speeches in these debates has been reduced to 20 minutes, it is difficult to find time to mention all the things that one would like to. I wish first to comment on the appointment of a rural fires officer to Cairns. This appointment was a suggestion that I made through the suggestion of the Cairns Fire Prevention League, which is now associated with the Cairns Wildlife Society. Since this appointment was made, evidence of its value can be seen. Initially it was a morale booster to local people who were trying to save our forests. Now, as a result of the expertise of this officer, there is an outstanding preventive programme and remarkable performance in fire prevention. This is greatly appreciated by the people of North Queensland, and there has been a reduced incidence

of cane fires and railway fires. The appointment of a rural fires officer to Cairns was certainly a very constructive move.

I should now like to comment on the wood-chip industry, which is a project that the honourable member for Barron River has been following in this Chamber with great vigour and enthusiasm. I bring to the attention of the Committee the fact that estimates and surveys have been made of the extent of the demand for Australian wood chips by Japanese paper manufacturers over the next 10 or 20 years. The Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry has taken a period that coincides approximately with the next 10 or 20 years and indicated that demands of the paper-manufacturing industry for pulp wood will exceed the supply of indigenous wood by 27,600,000 cubic metres in 1980 and by 55,440,000 cubic metres in 1990. That relates, of course, to the limited area that we have in mind when considering the feasibility of wood-chip export projects and the development of a wood-chip export industry based on the existing forests, which consist substantially of trees that are suitable for pulp manufacture but not for sawn-log production within Australia.

In my opinion, when we are investigating this matter and before embarking on such a project, notice should be taken of what has happened in Tasmania and in northern New South Wales, where whole areas have been devastated. If that is the type of development of a wood-chip industry that is proposed in North Queensland, I am not in favour of it. I leave my options open. I believe in development, and I do not wish to be considered a "knocker"; but when such figures are mentioned, I believe that a very extensive survey should be undertaken before this State agrees to the establishment of such an industry in Far North Queensland.

Mr. B. Wood: We think we are entitled to know something about the proposals.

Mr. R. JONES: The information supplied has been rather meagre. If the Government does not provide information relative to the requirements of such an industry, people will only become confused. All North Queenslanders have a stubborn streak in them and, like all good Australians, if they are not put in the picture the hair on the back of their necks stands up and they will not co-operate. If the Government convinces the people of North Queensland that the proposal is viable and that a wood-chip industry will be for their benefit they will certainly listen to the proposal. In my opinion, North Queenslanders should have some say in what is going on in their own territory.

I shall revert again to the subject of national parks. As I have said in earlier debates, a national park should be declared in the area surrounding the new Copperlode Falls Dam, which will augment the Cairns water supply. It has been mentioned in the Governor's Opening Speech; it has been mentioned a couple of times in Budget speeches.

It is in fact a long-range scheme, and it is situated in a State forest. That may be all right as far as it goes; but if the area is to be developed as it ought to be, it should be declared a national park and people should have ready access to it and be able to enjoy it properly. I believe that the Minister should consider the matter from that point of view.

I did not hear any reference in the Minister's introduction of his Estimates to any precautions that have been taken against the fungal diseases that are occurring in the forests of Tasmania and Victoria, and also against particular diseases in the forests of Western Australia. Perhaps he could elaborate on that subject a little in his reply.

I congratulate the Queensland Place Names Committee and the Queensland Place Names Board, particularly for the way further information is being sought about names for suburbs of the city of Cairns. Proposals were submitted for names such as Westgate and Portsmith. It may be presumptuous of me—I do not wish to interfere in local government affairs—but I think we have a right as citizens to have our say on such matters. Those are two names which, to me, indicate a lack of colour and imagination. I hope that the Queensland Place Names Board will look a little deeper into the matter. "Westgate" immediately reminds us of the West Gate Bridge tragedy in Victoria. Apart from the aspect of name duplication, it has about it an aura of tragedy and disaster.

I now wish to comment on Commonwealth aid for reforestation. I believe that a Bill was recently introduced in the Federal House to provide about \$21,000,000 for new State Government forest plantings. None of us want to hold that work up for very long. I believe that Senator Cotton went "over the barrel" because of his and his family's associations with the forests on the Boyd Plateau. We should be looking very carefully at the way we can use our share of that money. No doubt that has already been done. Mr. Courtney Ferguson of T.R.A.D.A.C. is quite conversant with the situation in North Queensland. He has made himself conversant with the situation as the executive director for North Queensland.

Of course, we also have some very efficient Forestry Department officers in the North. Some of that money should be diverted to Far North Queensland so that we can enter the reforestation picture. I hope the Minister will look at the matter in the same light as I have put it forward, particularly in relation to the development of the areas mentioned. I hope that the money will not be wasted, as some moneys have been wasted in Far North Queensland on other land development. I cannot go on with that story at the moment, but I am wondering what will happen about the Foyster development at Lakeland Downs now that the Cape

York Pastoral Company is in financial difficulty. I do not know of course, whether any Government money was involved.

(Time expired.)

Mr. GUNN (Somerset) (8.39 p.m.): It is with the greatest of pleasure that I submit a few observations on these Estimates. I should like to compliment the Minister and the various officers of the Lands Department on what appears to have been a very successful year, and I look forward to another successful year in spite of the fact that this department must encounter numerous problems associated with drought, and so on.

As a shire chairman, I had a lot to do with the Lands Department prior to entering Parliament. I pay tribute to the personnel of the department for their courtesy and promptness in dealing with matters pertaining to local government. As a member of this Parliament I look forward to a close and happy relationship with the Minister and the members of his staff. One of the greatest problems encountered has been in the wool industry, which has been through one of the most trying times in its history. It is pleasing to note that some recovery has been made on the wool market, but it is unfortunate that the recent increase in wool prices has received such publicity that it would lead the public to believe that the industry has now recovered and is prosperous. That is not so.

Anyone who has had experience in land matters—I know very few honourable members opposite have—will know that it takes several years to recover from droughts and market recessions. The recession in this industry has been such that I personally think it would take about five years of good prices and equally good seasons to put these people back into the position they rightly deserve to be in.

I pay tribute to the Wool Industry Commission for the assistance it rendered at a time when the industry had reached its lowest ebb. I believe that the action of the commission in purchasing wool, together with the assistance rendered by this Government and the Commonwealth in general, has averted the collapse of this vital industry. The allocation of further areas to assist the revival and rehabilitation of the industry and at the same time permit a degree of diversification into cattle, which would apply mainly to the marginal areas of the State, has been well received in those areas.

As the drought in these areas worsens and the value of the commodities they produce declines, it necessarily follows that the purchasing power of those in the industry is restricted. As a result, the various businessmen in the towns—the butcher, the baker, etc.—are placed under a severe financial strain, even to the point of bankruptcy. Therefore, it is very pleasing to see the infusion of finance into these towns by the Government. This money has been a

godsend to local councils. Not only has it given people affected by the drought a job with a weekly wage; it has also enabled the councils to do some important roadworks within the shires.

In spite of the fact that much can be done—indeed, this Government has done a great deal—there is no doubt that even Governments are limited in the extent to which they can finance a drought that afflicts the whole of the State. As I said before, it takes several good seasons with reasonable returns to enable farmers and graziers to reduce their debts and again make their properties viable propositions.

It is pleasing to see the continued expansion in the forestry section of this industry. Not only is forestry modernising its machinery in various mills throughout the State and thus maintaining efficiency in this important industry; at the same time it is also employing quite a number of men in country areas. I have quite a number of forestry projects in my electorate, and I can assure the Committee that I am interested in the expansion of these areas. As I said previously, they are serving the two-fold purpose of providing the State with much-needed timber and at the same time assisting towns such as Linville, Moore, Blackbutt, Yarraman and Crow's Nest, which I have the privilege of representing here. I believe that timber will play a very important part in our future. I think the demand, both for hardwoods and for softwoods, will continue over the next decade as the State continues to expand its building programme.

I hope the Minister will give consideration to reforestation in the Mount Mistake area, in my shire, in the next financial year, as he has indicated in recent correspondence with my council. This area has some problems related to steepness, but there are some very fertile areas that lend themselves to the plantings of more trees. I feel sure that some thought will be given to my observations in this direction.

I was pleased to hear a reference to the donation of some 40 acres of land by Mr. and Mrs. Allan Stirling as part of the Bunya Mountains National Park. This area is one of the most beautiful in the State. It is on the border of my electorate, and I commend it to the people of Queensland as an area of great beauty and a wonderful picnic spot. I congratulate the Minister and his department on the many amenities that have been provided, not only in this park but in untold numbers of other parks and forestry reserves scattered throughout the State.

I should now like to make some reference to the reconstruction scheme undertaken by the Rural Reconstruction Board. Whilst I realise that quite a number of farmers are disappointed with the board, at the same time I consider that many of its functions have been misinterpreted. As was intimated by the Minister, it would be impossible for

the board to satisfy the needs of all primary producers in the State. After all, it was set up to restore economic viability to those farmers who are likely to remain viable with assistance from the board.

It is pleasing to note the introduction of a supplementary scheme to further assist the dairy industry.

Mr. Hinze: This is a very benevolent Government.

Mr. GUNN: I agree with the honourable member. In addition, it introduced a pasture subsidy scheme, with which the honourable member would be quite conversant.

Mr. Hinze: It is a very successful scheme.

Mr. GUNN: It is. The Government has provided a total of \$3,000,000 under this scheme. In my electorate it has proved to be a great boon to the irrigation areas.

Mr. Davis: What about the A.L.P.'s schemes?

Mr. GUNN: The A.L.P. did not have any schemes at all. I was dairying when it was in power. I admit I made a "quid"—but it was only a "quid"; there was no more than that. We were selling butter for 11d. a lb. For years our district was the milking cow for Brisbane.

Mr. Hinze: Tom Burns wouldn't know what butter tastes like.

Mr. GUNN: He was reared on lard.

The tendency is towards the supply of bulk milk, rather than cream, to the factory, and finance will be made available to enable dairy farmers to install bulk-milk vats and also to upgrade their premises to the improved standard that is laid down by the department. It is important that this high standard of hygiene should be maintained.

The assistance of the Government given to owners of small farms to buy additional land is to be applauded. A great number of the dairying areas in my electorate are far too small to enable a breeding programme to upgrade herds to be carried out. The landholders on those areas are forced to buy replacement stock on the open market. This is a suspect way of restocking and is fraught with an element of risk. I hope that many small dairy farmers will take advantage of the opportunity offered by this latest form of Government assistance and will purchase parcels of land for breeding purposes. Artificial insemination can be of great assistance in this direction.

The stock routes section of the Lands Department has done an excellent job in the control of noxious plants, which cause havoc in the agricultural and grazing areas of Queensland. I well remember the damage that was done in my district by prickly-pear, and I can clearly recall my father distributing cactoblastis among the dense growth of prickly-pear, which rendered paddocks almost

useless. As a result of that pest's destruction by the cactoblastis, this country was turned into excellent agricultural land and at the present time is covered with maize and lucerne. Hormone sprays have assisted the man on the land in the control of weeds. He is able to receive expert advice from the department on the range of hormones that are available and their effect on the various noxious plants.

One of the worst pests in my electorate is a plant named green cestrum. It is a very attractive little bush that grows along creek banks, but it is very hard to control.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Is it edible?

Mr. GUNN: I should like members of the Opposition to try it. It contains a very deadly alkaloid for which there is no antidote.

The Rural Fires Board continues to be of the utmost importance to the man on the land. Seasons in South-east Queensland such as we have experienced in the past year are conducive to fires in the hot spring weather. But for the rains that have fallen over the past few weeks, this season would have been one of the worst bush-fire seasons on record. I know how highly people in country areas value the rural fire-fighters, who carry out their task in an honorary capacity. Anyone who has done any fire-fighting knows just how hard this work is.

In my area we make quite a lot of equipment available to the rural fire-fighting brigades, and the local fire brigade comes to their assistance whenever necessary. As chairman of the shire, I make council equipment available to farmers to establish firebreaks. This has been a very successful venture. The equipment is made available at half the usual cost of plant hire.

In my area we have found it necessary to pay a bonus on hares, foxes and other vermin that damage crops. It may not be generally realised that hares cause terrific damage to pumpkin crops. It is not unusual to see tons of pumpkins marked by hares, and thus rendered unsaleable. Foxes are also prevalent, and the shire pays a bonus on them. The "1080" campaign has killed most of the dingoes in the area, and they are no longer the menace they were in the past. Strangely enough, the biggest worry are the deer that menace crops in the Blackbutt area. Up to 46 head of deer have been counted in a field of barley at Taromeo, near Blackbutt. As these animals are protected, they have become a problem to local farmers.

Whilst wild pigs are not yet a problem, I am concerned about the practice of shooters who go to western areas and bring back numbers of small pigs and release them in the Kilcoy area. I have had complaints from farmers in the Mt. Kilcoy area who are having trouble with pigs that are raiding crops. I hope something can be done to stop this practice of bringing small

pigs to the area and releasing them, otherwise they could eventually become a terrible menace in the area.

Lantana continues to be a potential danger to stock in coastal areas. It is interesting to note that the leaf-mining beetles are now giving every indication of becoming a significant controlling factor in areas where the rainfall exceeds 35 inches a year. In areas where the insects have been established for more than three years, severe damage to lantana has occurred. It is therefore reasonable to presume that these beetles should be successful in coastal regions, but the same amount of success cannot be expected in the drier areas of the State. For many years lantana has been poisoning cattle, especially in coastal areas where they are short of green feed and are inclined to eat the green shoots of the lantana bush. The cattle suffer from photosensitisation. Quite a lot of skin damage is associated with this disease. Death is a frequent consequence of lantana poisoning, as no antidote is known for this type of livestock poisoning.

I am extremely pleased with the co-operation received from the officers of the Lands Department, not only in my area but also in the seven shires in the electorate of Somerset. I have found them to be extremely courteous at all times, and I tender them my sincere thanks.

I would like to see hardwood timber removed from the roadside in the various shires in my electorate. It is a pity to see timber going to waste on Crown land. I consider that the time will come when hardwood becomes scarce, but at the present time millions of super feet of good-quality hardwood is going to waste on Crown land in South-east Queensland.

Mr. Hanson: The Main Roads Department will burn it.

Mr. GUNN: That is a sad fact. I hope the Minister will consider the sale of this timber before bush fires and mistletoe render it useless—the men on the land refer to it as "dosey". I have seen mill logs containing up to 1,500 super feet of timber become hollow and useless. Eventually this timber becomes a liability to the local council, which has to fell it to prevent it from becoming a traffic hazard.

It is interesting to note that Federal A.L.P. policy favours perpetual lease as opposed to freehold, which people in this State enjoy. It is also interesting to note that the Lord Mayor of Brisbane would sell every square foot of land he could get. There is no earthly doubt that it is the ambition of all farmers to freehold their land and hand it down to their families. There is a certain amount of pride in owning land, and the people in my electorate are proud that they own their farms. They would not put the same amount

of effort into their land if they held it under lease. I can assure honourable members of that, because I would do it myself.

Mr. Casey: Are you saying that leaseholders are lazy?

Mr. GUNN: I am not saying they are lazy. I am saying that anybody who has the pleasure and pride of owning his land puts more into it than if he holds it under lease. It is a fact of life.

Mr. Sherrington interjected.

Mr. GUNN: Many of these people are putting a good deal into this land. They are great spenders, and undertake a terrific amount of development in the area. They employ many local people. I do not believe they will make anything out of it.

Mr. Davis interjected.

Mr. GUNN: They will not. I know the land. They will not make anything out of it. They are rendering a wonderful service. If Labor was in power, it would welcome them, too. Opposition members have to find fault. I congratulate the Minister and his department.

Mr. Sherrington: He is not listening to you.

Mr. GUNN: He is listening. In any case, he always reads my speeches in "Hansard". I give praise to the department and congratulate Mr. Heffernan on his appointment.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Cook) (8.58 p.m.): The honourable member for Somerset is proud to own his own land. The way that land values are increasing his children and his grandchildren will need to be born not with silver spoons in their mouth, but with platinum spoons with diamond-studded handles. He does not realise the reason for the A.L.P. policy of leasehold, and I do not intend to try to tell him because he has a one-track mind.

As many honourable members have said, land should be given No. 1 priority. I have said on many occasions that education, works or housing can be argued constructively at a convention, but once land matters are raised the convention becomes bogged down. As the honourable member for Cairns said, land is important because it is our heritage. It remains constant and is the basis of our existence. Land can be preserved and controlled or ruined and lost. During my speech I shall touch on those matters to indicate the importance of the Lands Department officers and the good job they do. I pay a tribute to previous Lands Department and Forestry Department officers. They have always been very courteous to me, not so much in Brisbane as in my previous electorate of Tablelands and now in Cook. They are all very fine officers.

Land utilisation and conservation go hand in hand. In saying that, I am not being a conservation fanatic. I merely want to consider both aspects. I do not think conservationists can be blamed for becoming fanatical.

They have been hoodwinked, on occasions, so they go to extremes to try to change the Government's policy of allowing land to get into the hands of people who will despoil it. That is what the conservationists are striving to avoid.

I am pleased that the honourable member for Barron River drew attention to the Weymouth area, which is in my electorate. It was in his former electorate. I agreed entirely with what he said about it. The then Minister for Lands gave what he thought was the factual position, but I do not think that the position has been solved yet. I think a waiting game is being played. Cape York Peninsula, particularly the Gulf of Carpentaria, is, as the Minister said in his Press statement at the time, high on the list of areas being examined for national parks. He said that on 10 February 1972.

Now, 10 months later, in answer to a question of mine in which he was asked if he would consider a national park, five miles wide, on the Gulf side, not embracing privately owned land or any leased land, but embracing land under the administration of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, his answer was that the position was still being considered on the east coast and therefore the area that I mentioned could not be considered at the present time. These are very flimsy excuses, because they are allowing infiltration of the unprotected parts of the Queensland coastline by undesirable people who are not only pilfering the country in that area, but are ruining it. Bush fires, for instance, could easily be started in this way, and could cause quite a lot of trouble. "The Sunday Mail" of 29 October, just two days ago, contained a photograph of one of two boats that are being supplied to the Forestry Department for the very purpose of policing national parks on the coastline.

I hope the Minister will see fit to attempt to convince Cabinet that this area on the Gulf of Carpentaria coastline should be declared a national park. I mentioned an area five miles wide, but I would not be against an area five miles wide, or whatever the department decided, extending from Weipa to the end of the Kowanyama Reserve. The Minister said that an area of 100 sq. miles around Weipa was being considered. But an area of 100 sq. miles could be one block, and I envisage a belt from the north to the south embracing quite a number of areas, including the mouths of rivers and streams some of which rise very close to the east coast of Cape York Peninsula.

I think the time has come for the Minister and his department to consider the very frequent issue of maps to schools and other organisations showing all national parks, and their areas in sq. miles rather than acres. We must see that children have a better understanding of national parks, and their location and extent, than do adults. Honourable members may remember the argument

that I advanced for a national park at what is known as the Forty Mile Scrub, an area of scrub country in the open forest country on the other side of Mr. Garnet in which scrub turkeys abound, and which is now a national park. Because it was a wonderful hunting ground for people from the coast, they did not want others to know about it, and it was many months before the public generally realised that this area was a national park. I do not think that too much can be done in advertising the locations and areas of national parks in Queensland. The district land commissioners in various parts of this State do an excellent job. They are expected to travel long distances and cover large areas, and they are often away from their main office for days, and sometimes weeks, at a time. Unfortunately, some people travel many miles to see the district commissioners, only to find that they are a long way away. I suggest to the Minister that he consider some form of relief for district commissioners. Perhaps additional staff could be provided, because I notice that the number of employees of the department has increased by only about 40 or 50 in the past 12 months.

I turn now to a matter that is causing many misgivings and quite a lot of concern in the minds of the people, particularly the Aboriginal people, of this State. I refer to the land now known as the Comalco land, the land round Weipa.

The original agreement was made with the Premier of this State on 12 October 1957, and later the Minister for Mines made further agreements with the same company. The initial term of the agreement was 84 years. Recently a question was asked in this Chamber relative to areas of land relinquished and to be relinquished under these agreements. The answer given was that there were 16 areas, comprising 785 sq. miles, at Weipa and two areas, comprising 12.2 sq. miles, at Aurukun. The answer also referred the questioner to clauses 6 and 13 of the agreement in the Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Limited Agreement Act of 1957. Clause 13 says that at 31 December 1967 the area held by Comalco must be no more than 1,750 sq. miles, and that at 31 December 1972 the area has to be no more than 1,250 sq. miles, which means that 500 sq. miles are to be relinquished at 31 December this year.

The land in question was an Aboriginal reserve when the agreement was made with the Premier, and I earnestly hope that the Minister for Lands, the Premier and the Minister for Mines can see fit to return it to the Aborigines. I spoke to Mr. Peter McLeod about the land and was told that I could rest assured that there is no bauxite on it. However, the areas to which I am referring are surrounded by others over which other companies have authority to prospect, and I expect that applications will be made immediately by these companies to have them added to their own. That was never

intended when the first lease was given to Comalco, and I once again ask the Government to return the land to the Aboriginal reserves and to recognise in a practical way the land rights of Aboriginal people.

The other point that I ask the Minister to consider relates to the failure to tie up with a local authority all land sold. If any Government sells land for residential purposes, I believe that the land should at least then be under the control of some local authority. Land on Prince of Wales Island and Horn Island is being sold to Islanders, Aborigines and Europeans for residential purposes, but it is not under the control of any local authority. I ask the Minister to hasten the introduction of a provision to cover the situation, because complications could arise very easily if he does not do so. It is no good the Government saying later, "We didn't think this would happen." In a tropical climate disease can break out and other problems can arise very quickly, and I ask the Minister to ensure that, when land is sold, a local authority will have control over it and look after the people who build there.

I now wish to speak briefly about reforestation. The honourable member for Cairns spoke about an area south of Cape Grafton. Large tracts of country are being denuded of millable timber in and around Bamaga for the Bamaga sawmill. I want to see a forestry team sent there to control logging operations and to supervise a reforestation programme. We do not want to get to the extreme stage of completely denuding the land of trees, and, with no other suitable timber available nearby, have to close down the mill. That is not good land utilisation. It is another example of the way land use must be controlled.

Just before his time expired the honourable member for Cairns was beginning to speak about an area of land not being controlled once the people who took it over in the first place completed their job. I refer to Lakeland Downs, which was hailed by the Government as a wonderful undertaking. We on this side also hailed it as such. Now we have the unsavoury prospect of the company being in financial difficulties and having to appear in the Supreme Court and other courts. What will happen to that area? It has been denuded of trees. It will be ravaged by heavy rains during the wet season. Unless a move is made quickly to re-establish it as a working farm, serious trouble will result. I remember asking a question of the Minister for Conservation as to whether all the dams had been built according to plan.

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

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: The Minister's answer was not very reassuring. Because of the huge water conservation areas and the fact that the farm is not now being

worked, there is added danger. Let us hope that the Minister is able to provide a stopgap in that wonderful area bounded by the Cooktown and Laura roads. It is possible to drive through it for about 20 miles. Previously it supported cattle, sunflower, sorghum and maize. Almost anything at all will grow on Lakeland Downs. It was almost a thriving town in itself, but now because of bad management somewhere along the line it is to "go to the wall". It contains too much land to be allowed to go to ruin, and it is the Government's job to see that that does not happen. I end on the note that Lakeland Downs should be rescued from any deterioration that might result from natural causes. Seeing that it cannot be rescued from financial chaos, the Government should take steps to prevent any further erosion or destruction of soil, which is so badly needed in Queensland.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (9.14 p.m.): I have listened to the debate with some interest. I should like to congratulate the Minister and members of the Land Administration Commission for the administration of land matters in this State since 1957. I speak with some authority, because it was in 1888 that my grandfather first set foot in Central Queensland on the banks of the Burnett River, and ever since then my family has been associated with the land.

Whenever Opposition members refer to the increase in land values, they say that land is too dear. They say that landholders are getting too much for their land. The honourable member for Port Curtis said that prices are too high, but let us take a look at the risks associated with the utilisation and development of land. Any one who is in agriculture knows that today it is common for a farmer in Central Queensland to plough or cultivate areas in excess of 1,000 acres. He might work the ground two or three times, plant his seed and hope that it will rain. Often in recent years rain has not been forthcoming, and thus that man forfeits his entire labour together with the costs associated with the development of his crop. Compare him with the 40-hours-a-week man who starts work on a job on Monday morning and at lunch-time kicks his toe and has to visit the doctor.

Mr. Davis: Rot!

Mr. HARTWIG: It is true. The honourable member does not like hearing the facts. The worker is immediately placed on compensation equal to his weekly wage, but what compensation does the man on the land get? Where does he get his compensation from?

Mr. Davis: You got yours from your father.

Mr. HARTWIG: The honourable member would not know; he has never been on the land.

Land is one of the best assets any person can wish to own, and my advice to any young person today is—

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Go west, young man.

Mr. HARTWIG: I agree with that advice. All the good things of nature originate on the land, and I can assure the Committee that since assuming office in 1957 this Government has introduced legislation on many major issues to improve the lot of the man on the land. One of the most important of these was the legislation granting the right to freehold land held under leasehold tenure.

I have just said that I am a third-generation landholder. In the early 1950's I held a grazing homestead lease, which had eight years to run. That was my only security. I had a young son who I expected would follow me, and I hoped that I would be able to own the land entirely. I trusted that the Land Administration Commission would grant me a new lease. But this Country-Liberal coalition introduced legislation permitting the conversion of leasehold land to freehold.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: And now you are a millionaire.

Mr. HARTWIG: Why shouldn't a man own what he has worked for? Give me one argument why a man is not entitled to individual freedom and security for his family.

I am very pleased that this Country-Liberal Government was responsible for the introduction of freehold tenure. I inform members of the Opposition that some 19,000-odd applications have been dealt with for conversion of leasehold land to freehold tenure. Southern buyers would not look at land unless it was freehold, but freehold was unheard of in the dark, dim days of the A.L.P. Government, when only something like 6 per cent of land in Queensland was freehold. I once spoke on radio station 3UZ in Melbourne and gave a commentary on land. When I told the people of Victoria that 90 per cent of our land was leasehold, they were amazed; they would not buy leasehold land. But since we have converted to freehold, interstate people have shown a growing interest in our land.

Let us look at what the Labor Party did. In 1927 they introduced their Burnett-Callide Valley land settlement scheme, with 180-acre blocks. They expected a man to go onto a 180-acre block with his wife and family and carve out a living. It was nothing but a starvation area. Today Labor members have criticised the dairy industry marginal reconstruction scheme, which is the only hope many landholders have of becoming big. It is not a case of "get big or get out"; rather it is a case of "get big or starve". This Government has introduced this wonderful scheme of reconstruction.

Recently I spoke to a landholder who has 480 acres, and I asked him, "How are you going?" He replied, "If I could buy

the block next door I would have a living area." I said, "Why don't you buy it? You only have the one block." He answered, "I have six 80-acre blocks." That was the Labor Party's policy. Fancy expecting people to carve out a living on a block of that area!

Opposition Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Wharton): Order! I think the honourable member for Callide is making a rather provocative speech; nevertheless, he is entitled to be heard.

Mr. HARTWIG: I should like to pay a tribute to the Land Administration Commission for the implementation of the brigalow lands scheme. In the Fitzroy Basin, an area of approximately 11,000,000 acres has been developed, and the huge sum of \$23,000,000 of Commonwealth and State money has been poured into that scheme. A total of 177 blocks have been made available by either ballot or auction, and 122 allotments have been reclaimed for private use. Yet, all day, members of the Opposition have claimed that this Government has done nothing to help people acquire land.

The time has come for improved liaison between the State and Federal Governments in the provision of electricity and telephones to new blocks that are developed. It is not right to expect a man and his family to take up an undeveloped area of land and to improve it and live there without being provided with the amenity of a telephone.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. HARTWIG: The Labor Party did not develop one acre of brigalow land. By comparison, this Government has developed 11,000,000 acres.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I can hardly hear the honourable member for Callide. When the Committee comes to order I will ask him to continue his speech.

Mr. HARTWIG: When the Commonwealth and State Governments embark upon a scheme such as the development of the brigalow lands in the Fitzroy Basin, they should provide the necessary amenities to the landholders.

Since 1957 a total of 26,000 allotments and properties have been offered for sale throughout Queensland. In all, 607 blocks, comprising 19,057,000 acres, have been made available at public competition for pastoral, grazing and other purposes.

Wonderful development has occurred on the wallum lands as a result of progressive action taken by this Government. In that area, 23 blocks totalling 86,000 acres have been developed. That is not a bad effort for a Government which Opposition members have claimed all day has done nothing to help people acquire land.

The prickly-pear menace was mastered, but today a serious contender for the position it once held is a weed called *salvinia auriculata*. It is spreading rapidly in the Livingstone Shire and is taking over water-courses and dams. I ask the Minister to spearhead an extensive investigation by the Land Administration Commission into this noxious weed. As spraying has not achieved the necessary result, I appeal to the Minister to seriously examine methods of combating this noxious weed, which is very evident in the Livingstone Shire.

Today I heard an Opposition member say how poorly we were husbanding our timber resources. When leasehold land is acquired by a man, he is interested mainly in grass and water. He therefore ringbarks or tordons timber, and sometimes trees on the borderline are cut out or poisoned. If a landholder converts to freehold, he becomes the owner of the timber and therefore has the right either to sell or save it. I say without hesitation that today, thanks to conversion to freehold, much hardwood timber is being saved. An owner looks at a tree and decides it is worth something, and therefore does not destroy it.

Mr. F. P. Moore: Mr. Hartwig, why would you—

Mr. HARTWIG: I am the member for Callide, not "Mr. Hartwig".

The average property-owner retains hardwood timber, and in this way is conserving a great timber potential in this State.

Pasture development has been implemented throughout Australia. This is closely associated with the land, and water development often follows closely in its wake. A property-owner who wants a good block of land has to introduce improved pastures, which are very costly. I note that the Government, through the dairy pasture subsidy scheme, has encouraged landholders to sow many thousands of acres to pasture. This has greatly benefited many small farmers throughout the State. Development and management can be implemented through subdivision. In this way tick control is handled much more efficiently, and people are not so prone to burn pastures. Rather do they tend to implement controlled grazing.

Let there be no mistake that one of the big problems facing the landholder in the pastoral industry is the 40-hour week—and the proposed 35-hour week. In the long, hot summer days stock cannot be handled in the middle of the day. Graziers can work stock only for a few hours after sunrise and a few hours before sundown.

Mr. F. P. Moore: What's the value of your land?

Mr. HARTWIG: You come and have a look at the work I have done on it while you have been sleeping. Then you will appreciate what is being done. I work seven days a week. Don't point your finger at me.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Wharton): Order! The honourable member for Callide will address the Chair, and honourable members will discontinue their consistent interjections.

Mr. HARTWIG: Thank you, Mr. Wharton. He was "having a go" at me, so I retaliated.

A committee should be set up to offset the effects of drought. Only today, the Minister for Primary Industries declared my shire drought stricken. It is absolutely destitute.

Mr. Davis interjected.

Mr. HARTWIG: These people are working around the clock. They do not enjoy a 35-hour week. They are working to save their cattle and to improve the economy of this State. We must fight recurrent droughts, which follow good years just as night follows day. A committee must be formed to stockpile fodder at strategic places to offset some of the severity of drought.

I believe that some land valuations are excessive. It is beyond my understanding why the Crown insists on improved value rather than unimproved value. A landholder made representations to me a couple of days ago because his 12,000-acre block of land, with one permanent watering point, had been valued at \$3.50 an acre. In my opinion this is an excessive valuation, and the Minister should look into it.

There has been much talk about land and big finance. A property cannot be developed today without a large amount of finance. The limit on Agricultural Bank loans should be increased to \$30,000 to provide working capital to people who have suffered 14 years of hardship.

Mr. Wright: Mr. Hartwig,——

Mr. HARTWIG: I am the member for Callide. If the honourable member for Rockhampton addresses me as such, I will answer his question.

Mention has been made of an increase in land values. I would like to hear of anything that has not increased in price. Why shouldn't land prices increase? If a man works seven days a week with the assistance of his wife and family to improve his asset, why shouldn't its value increase? He gets no other reward. He could break his leg and go to hospital for six months and receive no compensation. A man who works 35 hours a week would.

(Time expired.)

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (9.34 p.m.): During the term of office of this Government, Queensland has suffered an influx of investors in coal-mining, sand-mining and bauxite-mining. At the present moment, the Minister for Mines is trying to get his hot little hands on the oil on the Great Barrier Reef. I am tempted to speak tonight because of a new threat that is

looming on the horizon. I refer to the possible establishment of a wood-chip industry in this State. I believe that Queensland cannot afford the luxury of such an industry.

As recently as 23 October—only last week—an article in "The Courier-Mail" said it had been announced in Sydney that Canadian and American investors regarded Australia as a great, newly discovered storage house of natural resources. Of course they do, and why not when they can come here and offer half a dozen jellybeans for a ton of coal, or half a bottle of cheap Scotch for a ton of rutile, or a packet of Camels as royalty on ilmenite and various other materials?

It is because of these things that I see the movements now proceeding for the development of a wood-chip industry in Queensland as another avenue for the exploitation of Queensland's natural resources. It concerns me that at present feasibility studies are being carried out throughout the entire length of this State into the areas of natural scrub that can be used to provide the basic material for a wood-chip industry. As recently as a couple of months ago, I was advised in an answer to a question to the Minister that at least three firms were then undertaking feasibility studies into the wood-chip industry. The latest information is that a fourth company is interested in establishing an industry of this type in South-east Queensland.

I want to place some of the facts concerning a wood-chip industry before the Committee before, in a desperate desire to obtain investment in this State, the Government permits the destruction of irreplaceable scrub, and before Queensland faces the possibility of having much of its natural vegetation replaced by huge plantations of imported softwoods throughout the length and breadth of the State.

In terms of the total area of Australia, Queensland has limited areas of production for crops, such as timber, that require wetter conditions, and they are for the most part found in the 40-inch rainfall belt. A check with the weather bureau will reveal that the 40-inch rainfall belt in Queensland falls between the Great Dividing Range and the coast, and extends to the Atherton Tableland in the north. There are therefore very limited areas in Queensland for the production of wetter-area crops such as timber, which is the basis of a wood-chip industry.

When one learns some of the facts concerning this industry and realises that one machine alone can use 438,000 cubic feet of timber a year, one begins to realise the magnitude of the demands that such an industry would make on standing crops. When one realises, as the Australian Conservation Foundation quite clearly states in one of its booklets, that one factory will

use 20,000 to 30,000 acres of scrub a year, one must be alarmed at the demands that this would make on the very limited timber resources of this State.

I am very concerned that the Government will be prepared to go back to the attitude of older days to timber. I wish to read a brief extract from an article entitled "The Queensland Timber Industry" by E. S. Hancock, delivered on 27 August 1970. The author stated—

"Many instances of forest being cut down and burnt could be told of almost every district. The Atherton Tableland is the biggest scandal of them all."

He went on to say—

"The control of the forests was always under the Lands Department and, politically, the farmers and graziers were too strong."

One gets the impression that in the early days of Australia's history it became top priority to clear the land of its timber in order to convert it to pastures and crops.

Possibly the most pertinent reference to the attitude of the pioneers is to be found in an address that was delivered by a very good friend of mine, Judith Wright, who is a member of the Wildlife Preservation Society. It is entitled "Grab Now—Pay Later", and although I do not wish to read all of it to the Committee, I draw attention to a paragraph in which she said that her forbears who came to this country cleared the land and converted it to crops, and so on. On one occasion she was bemoaning the fate of a beautiful patch of scrub, and she spoke of the tragedy of the wholesale destruction of the environment. She said—

"I mourned the fate of that patch to a neighbour who had spent his life in the district.

"Trees!" he said. 'I hate the bastards. Spent my life fighting them. I love to see that smoke go up.'"

That is typical of the attitude that resulted in the destruction of the red cedar forests and led to red cedar becoming extinct by the year 1880. All commercial stands had then been lost to the nation.

In my opinion, if the Government permits the introduction of this wood-chip industry it will hasten the day when desirable scrub timbers will disappear and, in their place, areas of exotic pine will be planted. I have before me an article about the world's largest wood-chip export project, which is in Tasmania. This statement at the opening of the project will give some idea of the demand that wood-chip makes on the environment—

"The entire Tamar mill output, initially, will go to Japanese pulp and paper companies. It is expected to handle up to

900,000 tons of green timber a year—drawn largely from Crown Forest concessions held by the Company, the balance coming from sawmill waste and private land."

The article said later—

"The nation has not been endowed with a great area of forest land. Only about 94 million acres or roughly five per cent of our continent's 1,899 million acres can be classified as natural forest, of which 35-40 million acres has potential to be utilised commercially."

One can see there the parallel between the situation in Tasmania and that in Queensland. Neither of these States has been richly endowed with commercial timbers, and certainly Queensland cannot afford the possibility that the hungry jaws of the wood-chip machines will bite into forests that exist today and that a wood-chip industry will be based on the State's valuable rain-forest areas. That is emphasised in the urgent appeal made by Dr. Budowski, on behalf of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, at the science congress in Australia that each and every nation should be attempting to preserve the remnants of its rain-forest areas.

I say that to allow such an industry to be based on the use of existing scrub would be little short of madness, and it is for that reason that I speak on the proposed wood-chip industry in this debate. It is not merely a question of the destruction of the environment or the demands that such an industry makes on the environment. It must be realised that the rate of regeneration would have to be such that usable timber would be available about 10 years after the timber was cut originally.

Assuming that a mill will make a demand of 20,000 acres or 30,000 acres a year on this scrub, one finds that in 10 years about 300,000 acres of natural scrub will be lost to this State. Consequently, we must act very warily when considering whether we can afford the loss of the environment to such an industry. I recently directed a question to the Minister because in the publication "The Resources of Queensland" prepared by the Minister for Industrial Development, or whatever name he goes under these days, it is proudly announced that a feasibility study was being conducted in North Queensland for a wood-chip industry based on rain-forest areas.

Mr. Rae: And you can rest assured that it will be very carefully evaluated.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I am not going to be fobbed off by the Minister saying that it will be carefully evaluated. That is like the old story about giving a person a fair trial, and then taking him out in the morning and

hanging him. I want to know, and I believe the Minister should know—I am sure he does not—what impact that industry will have on the environment of the State. I asked the Minister a question on 17 October about the feasibility studies that were being undertaken into the establishment of a wood-chip industry, and this is his reply—

“Current feasibility studies into the economics of establishment of wood-chip plants within the State and the scope of these studies are in the hands of the several firms interested.”

I also asked the Minister whether he or his department had made any impact survey on the establishment of a wood-chip industry, and he very unhesitatingly said, “No.” I believe that the Minister is shirking his responsibility to the future citizens of the State if he is prepared to let the exploiters come in here and dictate their own terms and carry out their own feasibility studies.

Mr. Rae interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I do not trust the Minister at all. If I were to believe in him, he would have declared Cooloolool a national park long ago. He would have done something about declaring the area around the Endeavour River where Captain Cook landed. We had the sorry spectacle of the British Museum of Natural History having to remind us in Queensland that we should be doing something about that area. Has the Minister's Government done anything to protect that area? I raised that matter in the Chamber 18 months ago, and my questions about Cooloolool go back to 1962. I do not trust the Minister at all.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I am not going to be fobbed off by interjections because I have too much to say.

Mr. Kaus interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: If the honourable member would only listen, he would hear something of the tragedy of the wood-chip industry in Tasmania. The wood-chip industry down there is dependent on the whole of the northern area of Tasmania. And it was an accomplished fact long before the Labor Government attained office there.

Let us look at this whole question. The exploiters will come here and tell us that there is a world demand for wood-chip and paper products. What does this world demand consist of? It consists of a demand that has been generated by the self-same exploiters. It is a false demand caused by multiple packaging of articles, non-returnable containers and disposable paper products. The very exploiters who want to come in and use our forests and leave our country denuded and bare, with nothing left

for our children, have created this false demand by using the type of package I have spoken of and then saying that the consumer has caused a demand for paper products.

I believe that the various phases of marketing show no clearer example of the squandering of natural resources and, if it is allowed to go unchecked, it will be the cause of great regret for future generations. We have seen feasibility studies by Government departments. I am not critical of Government departments because I have a great admiration for them; I am talking of Government policy. We have seen feasibility studies on the estimated cost of production and on how much these people can milk out of this country. We do not see the feasibility studies balanced against environmental damage by disturbing very valuable botanical communities and increasing the litter problem day by day as a result of the false demand of which I have spoken. We sit idly by and allow people coming into this country to squander our resources because we are as mesmerised by the dollar as are those who would exploit our environment. Many of these forests will be destroyed and, in future, their place will be taken by large areas of exotic timbers.

I have tried to get across to the Minister that the areas containing the shrubs that will provide the chips for this industry possess great economic value in timber and water conservation, as well as great potential for the preservation of flora and fauna and the provision of recreation facilities. A wood-chip industry would make a very doubtful contribution to improving the living standards of future Queenslanders. Most of the propaganda about the industry and the feasibility studies that have been conducted have been designed to mask the real intention of the exploiter by claiming that there is a world demand and that the consumer wants huge extra quantities of paper. What absolute piffle!

By the use of pulp-wood, we have created a monster in packaging, and we have reached the stage where, at a time when we are sending rockets to the moon, we are standing knee-deep in our own garbage. The whole point is that the consumer has no choice; rather is he the victim of the exploiter. In the same way, this State will be the victim of the exploiters if we allow the introduction of this industry, which will be disastrous to Queensland's environment. With all the sincerity at my command, I say that it is useless to try to assure me that all the possibilities will be carefully investigated. I want this industry kept out of the State to ensure the retention of our natural resources.

(Time expired.)

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.