

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 1972

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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:—

Order in Council under the State Housing Act 1945–1971.

Regulations under—

The Explosives Acts, 1952 to 1963.

Hospitals Act 1936–1971.

By-laws under the Dental Act 1971.

SUCCESSION AND PROBATE DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Succession and Probate Duties Act 1892–1971 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

AUCTIONEERS AND AGENTS ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971 and the Building Units Titles Act of 1965, each in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

GRADUATES, POLICE ACADEMY

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

(1) How many (a) policewomen and (b) policemen have graduated from the Police Academy this year and when will they commence duty?

(2) What was the failure rate of (a) policewomen and (b) policemen?

(3) How many graduates, (a) policewomen and (b) policemen, resigned prior to being sworn in for police duties?

Answers:—

(1) "Cadets will not graduate from the Police Academy until December 12, 1972."

(2 and 3) "See Answer to (1)."

INVESTIGATION INTO JBL DEVELOPMENTS (QLD.) PTY. LTD.

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

(1) Has he seen an article which appeared in *The Courier-Mail* of November 29 regarding a resolution passed at a meeting of the creditors of JBL Developments (Qld.) Pty. Ltd. held on November 28, in which he was asked to appoint an investigator to inquire into the activities of the company?

(2) Has he received advice of this resolution and what action does he intend to take?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "No. I expect to receive official advice of the resolution. I am unable to indicate what action will be taken. In the meantime, the position has been and is being watched closely."

DISALLOWANCE OF LIFE ASSURANCE AND SUPERANNUATION PREMIUMS AS INCOME TAX DEDUCTIONS

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

(1) Has he seen an advertisement in *The Courier-Mail* of November 29 which was authorised by a private person named Stanley Moore in the public interest?

(2) Has he noted that concern is expressed therein regarding the intention of the Commonwealth Australian Labor Party to disallow life assurance and superannuation payments as tax deductions should they become the Government after December 2?

(3) What effect would this proposal have on the future of insurance business in this State?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Yes."

(3) "Should this concession be abolished, a great deal of the type of insurance presently being written would not be taken out. From the individual's point of view this could leave him and his dependants without adequate cover, while from the National point of view, insurance companies would have less funds to invest in development of national interests, and thus retard progress and reduce employment particularly in the building industry."

SIMPLIFICATION OF ELECTORAL OFFICE OBJECTION FORMS

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

In view of the large number of electors who are not enrolled on the State rolls and the obviously ineffective system of canvassing for the names of those entitled to enrolment, will an endeavour be made to have "Form N," which is used in this canvass, couched in plain, easily-understood language instead of in the present exacerbating, pompous and stilted officialese which prompts the average citizen either to ignore the form or to fail to complete it correctly?

Answer:—

"I agree that official forms of this nature often appear abrupt, impersonal and often offend because of this but as the form seeks to remove a name from a roll it is important that it be couched in terms which comply with the provisions of the Act. This form is forwarded to persons in respect of whom information is received that they have left the addresses for which they are enrolled and who appear not to be entitled to remain on the roll. The relevant section states that any name on a roll may be objected to by objection in writing and that the objection shall be in the prescribed form. Use of the word 'objection' is necessary to challenge any enrolment before action can be taken to erase it. It is used in all such notices issued by the Commonwealth and all other State electoral authorities. The form suggested by the Honourable Member would not be appropriate to the purpose of the section."

SPEED LIMITS UNDER METRIC SYSTEM

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

Has the Australian Transport Advisory Council made any recommendation as to what metric speed limits should apply in traffic regulations in replacement of 35 and 60 m.p.h.? If so, what speeds have been recommended and what relation will they bear to the present speeds?

Answer:—

"Ministers of the Australian Transport Advisory Council at its July 1972 meeting agreed to recommend to their Governments speed limits as follows:—35 m.p.h. to be 60 kilometres per hour; 60 m.p.h. to be 100 kilometres per hour. The precise conversion of 35 m.p.h. is 56.33 km/h and the conversion of 60 m.p.h. is 96.56 km/h."

JAPANESE OWNERSHIP OF LAND,
LIVINGSTONE SHIRE

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

(1) Has he read a report in *The Australian* of November 29 that Mr. Iwasaki has acquired some 16,000 acres of freehold and leasehold land in the Livingstone Shire?

(2) Has this person acquired this area of land?

(3) Is there any limit to foreign ownership of freehold or leasehold lands?

(4) Should restriction be warranted, would it require Commonwealth legislation?

(5) May Australians acquire land in overseas countries?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "I am informed that about 6,000 acres of the area is held under lease under the Land Act; about 2,600 acres is part of an Occupation Licence also under the Land Act and the balance of about 7,800 acres is freehold. My Department has no record of any proposal by the company Iwasaki Sangyo to acquire any of the leases but it is seeking to acquire the Occupation Licence and I am looking closely at that proposal. I understand that the company has purchased some freehold lands also but my Department maintains no record of any freehold transfer dealings."

(3) "My jurisdiction extends to leasehold land only and the requirements of the Land Act governing acquisition of leasehold land apply equally to Australian and foreign interests but, of course, every transfer under the Land Act requires the consent of the Minister for Lands."

(4 and 5) "I suggest that these Questions be directed to my colleague, the Honourable the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General."

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUEENSLAND AND
COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENTS

Mr. HINZE: I ask the Premier: As, under the Commonwealth Constitution, the welfare of Queensland is based on co-operation with the Federal Government, in the event of an A.L.P. Government being elected to office in Canberra, and particularly in view of the arrogant and presumptive manner of Mr. Gough Whitlam in naming his Cabinet long before the wishes of the electorate have become known and his references to preferential voting, will the Premier inform

the House whether this attitude will jeopardise and destroy the good will and co-operative spirit that has been so evident in recent years between the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The relationship between the present Commonwealth Government and the Queensland Government has been excellent. As a result, Queensland has benefited very greatly, to the extent that today this State enjoys the soundest economy in Australia, the lowest unemployment rate, and so on. These are very important issues, and they have meant a great deal to Queensland and all Queenslanders. Whether, in the event of a Labor Government assuming office, it would be possible to continue this relationship is very problematical.

Mr. Sherrington: This is the sort of silly answer we are paying the Premier \$20,000 a year for. He is wasting the time of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member for Salisbury interjects again, I will deal with him under Standing Order 123A.

Mr. B. Wood interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I also warn the honourable member for Barron River under Standing Order 123A.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Honourable members opposite obviously do not like to hear the truth. They know that Mr. Whitlam is a centralist, and I would say that much of A.L.P. policy would be very detrimental to Queensland. The prospects to which the honourable member for South Coast makes reference cause me a great deal of concern.

Regarding the nominating of Mr. Whitlam's suggested Cabinet as outlined in the Press, this, of course, is Mr. Whitlam's own affair. But there are many people who do not like being taken for granted. I do not think the people of Australia appreciate being taken for granted in Mr. Whitlam's assumption that the result of next Saturday's election is a foregone conclusion.

Mr. Houston: Didn't you nominate your Cabinet beforehand?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Cabinet was in existence when I became Premier. We were in Government.

Last night, when the Federal Leader of the Opposition was being questioned on this matter of nominating his Cabinet and, in effect, saying he was "home and hosed"—that was the expression used—he was asked, "Wasn't Sir Charles Court also over-confident? And look what happened to him."

Sir Charles Court of Western Australia was a man who did a great deal for that State. He deserved great credit and had every reason

and justification for his confidence. I thought that Mr. Whitlam was in fact condemning himself—

Mr. HOUSTON: I rise to a point of order. With all due respect, surely the Premier is not in a position, as Premier of this State, to know what is in the mind of any elector in Queensland.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! For the information of the Leader of the Opposition, it is not permissible to debate the reply to a question. He has no valid point of order.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I rise to a point of order. Mr. Speaker, you have repeatedly ruled that questions in this House should not seek an expression of opinion. The question by the honourable member for South Coast sought an expression of opinion, and the Premier has been wasting the time of this House for the last 10 minutes with a "Dorothy Dix" answer. I seek your interpretation on this point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I listened very closely to the honourable member for South Coast, just as I always do when an honourable member asks a question without notice. In my opinion, he did not seek an expression of opinion. Therefore, the question is in order and, as I said before, it is not permissible to debate the reply to a question. Furthermore, it is the right of any Minister to answer a question in any way he thinks fit.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: To conclude my answer, all I want to say is that the welfare of Queensland is indeed my concern, and that of my Government. Queensland has prospered under the present Government, and I do not think the people of Australia can possibly prosper under the fragmented party that today is the A.L.P. What Mr. Whitlam does in relation to nominating his own Cabinet-to-be, therefore, does not matter. The decision whether the people of Australia accept this attitude will still rest with them.

BURGLAR ALARMS IN UNOCCUPIED PREMISES

Mr. BROMLEY: I ask the Minister for Justice: In view of complaints that I have received from elderly and ill persons about faulty burglar-alarm systems, which, because police officers cannot contact the owners of the premises in which the alarms are installed and, furthermore, because security personnel are not issued with keys to enable them to enter the premises and turn off the alarms, often ring all night and sometimes over the week-end, will he introduce legislation making it mandatory for owners of the premises fitted with alarms to notify local police stations of the addresses of persons of authority in their businesses so that they can be contacted readily?

Mr. KNOX: I doubt very much whether this matter is under my jurisdiction. However, it is one that is of some concern. I have received similar complaints. If it is not a matter that is under my jurisdiction, I will refer it to the appropriate Minister.

POLICE STRENGTH DURING CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY PERIOD, GOLD COAST

Mr. HINZE: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Has he taken the necessary steps to increase police strength on the Gold Coast during the holiday period? It looks as if there will be an all-time record population in this area. In addition, as daylight saving in New South Wales has proved a boon to the Coolangatta area, it seems that commerce and industry on the Gold Coast will run at an all-time high during the holiday period.

Mr. HODGES: With the customary efficiency in the administration of the Police Department, and as has happened previously, the South Coast and all other holiday resorts will be catered for by additional police during the Christmas holiday period.

TIME ALLOTTED TO DEBATE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTRICITY ESTIMATES

Mr. MARGINSON: I ask the Minister for Local Government and Electricity: Is it correct that of the 2½ hours allocated for the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Local Government and Electricity, he proposes to take up more than 1½ hours? If so, would he give consideration to reducing the time he has allotted to himself, thus allowing more time for other honourable members to speak on them?

Mr. McKECHNIE: That remains to be seen.

GUIDE DOGS BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice) (11.32 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The objective of the Bill is to remove the limitations that discriminate against a blind person, including a partially blind person, and his guide dog.

When one considers the high degree of training to which guide dogs are subjected before being allocated to blind persons, the prime importance given to cleanliness and hygiene of the dog, and the fact that it is the eyes of its master, one finds that it is difficult to justify restrictions on the complete mobility of a blind person when accompanied by his guide dog. The Bill achieves this objective by giving a blind person and his guide dog the right to enter certain places.

Clause 5 enables a blind person accompanied by a guide dog to enter any public place and any vehicle used for the carriage

of passengers for hire or reward. Under clause 6, a person who fails to permit a blind person accompanied by a guide dog to enter a public place or vehicle, or denies him accommodation, will be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of \$50.

The recognition to be given to the guide dog is dealt with in clause 7, which gives the Governor in Council power to declare an institution that trains guide dogs as an approved institution. This will ensure that only correctly trained dogs receive the benefit of the Bill.

The Governor in Council is also empowered to exclude any places or vehicles from the operation of the Bill. It is anticipated that this power will be used very sparingly. It is included so that such places as acute, chronic and special wards in hospitals can be excluded if deemed necessary.

I am sure that honourable members are in agreement with this humane measure, and I have pleasure in commending it to the House.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (11.34 a.m.): At the introductory stage an indication was given by Opposition members that we supported the Bill. As the Minister said, it is a humane measure, and, realising the plight of blind persons, all members will agree that it is warranted. There are no real reasons behind the restrictions that have applied to the movement of guide dogs, and, as the Bill relates to dogs that have been properly trained, the Opposition must support the proposal. It will bring conditions generally into line with those already applying in areas under the control of other departments. The Minister for Transport, for instance, has given consideration to this matter, and the Railway Department now makes certain allowances for guide dogs to travel on trains. Various Commonwealth departments have also given consideration to allowing guide dogs on aircraft. The Bill merely brings Queensland into line with other States and the Commonwealth, and it has the support of the Opposition.

It is understandable that there has been some public concern that dogs will be allowed to go anywhere. That is not contemplated, and I emphasise that fact because I want to make sure that people understand the true position. As the Minister reiterated in his second-reading speech, the Bill applies only to dogs trained in schools approved as such by the Governor in Council. Other dogs will not be allowed into public places.

I do not think there is any real reason why the specific areas could not have been stated in the Bill. The Bill provides for exclusion of areas by regulations approved by the Governor in Council. I should think there would be very few, which would be a good reason for specifying them in the Bill. The Minister may have some views on this subject, and I shall be pleased to hear them. But it does not seem to me

to be a very onerous task to list a few, such as the special wards that the Minister mentioned briefly, and I cannot see any reason why they could not have been stated. The Governor in Council has power to add to the list of excluded places or remove exclusions at a later date, but I think the legislation would have been more concise had these places been specified.

As I said, the Opposition agrees with the Bill and the debate will be very short. The honourable member for South Brisbane will take up the theme of the definition of a blind person. However, honourable members on this side of the Chamber believe that the measure is warranted. It is only fitting that special and due consideration be given to these handicapped people.

Mr. HUGHES (Kurilpa) (11.37 a.m.): Having been a member of a committee connected with the blind community, and having been associated with the Society of Blind Citizens for the last 17 years, I support this Bill. I know the people concerned; I know their needs.

The Bill is a very humane one and is being adopted by both the Government and the Opposition in a manner that brings credit to the legislators of this State in their acknowledgement of the need for legislative action to meet every-day requirements. Those who are afflicted with blindness are among the most courageous people I know, and they wish to be treated as the equals of other persons in the community. However, they need the assistance of a guide dog in their perambulation to and from employment, in seeking employment, or in going about their business.

When the present Minister for Justice was Minister in charge of railways, I had occasion to make representations to him to allow guide dogs to accompany their owners on trains. My request was acceded to, and that was a real breakthrough. All sorts of questions had been asked about toilet training of the dogs and other facilities for them, but it was found in practice that there were no complaints from either the passengers on the trains or the Railway Department. The owners of the dogs certainly benefited greatly.

Guide dogs are specially trained. However, there are some matters that should be considered carefully when the Bill's intentions are spelt out fully in its clauses, or, perhaps, later by regulation. Firstly—and the Bill envisages this—guide dogs must come from an organisation that has proven ability and experience in training them. Secondly, dogs such as household pet, Fido, of doubtful parentage, will not be allowed to be guide dogs. As I said, guide dogs will have to come from approved training schools.

At the introductory stage, the Minister replied to a question I asked relative to the responsibility of persons involved being spelt out clearly in the Act. In my opinion, guide

dogs should be registered with the Department of Justice, either by name or by number, and the owner should have a registration certificate. Of course, local authorities register dogs, and I presume that guide dogs would also be given a registered number by local authorities. I do not object to that. Having registered the dog, the owner would then be able to use only that dog to accompany him to public places such as butcher shops and cinemas, where, under certain sections of the Act, dogs now have no lawful right to be. I am presuming that there will have to be amendments to other Acts.

Mr. Hanson interjected.

Mr. HUGHES: Because of the blind, limited policy of the A.L.P., I think that party's supporters need a guide dog. I do not believe that the public is so blind and so gullible as to fall for the A.L.P.'s policy.

As I was saying, consequent on the passage of this legislation I should think that a number of other Acts will have to be amended. I hope that the Minister will examine that need, as we do not want anyone to be an innocent victim of something we have brought about as a necessary facility.

Mr. Hanson interjected.

Mr. HUGHES: I suppose we must have a three-ring circus. We already have the dog, and there is no doubt that we have a few clowns about the place.

We would need to be very careful about allowing guide dogs into hospitals. Whether dogs should be permitted on such premises would have to be considered in terms of the Health Act. I doubt that they should be on hospital premises because of hygiene and a consideration for sick patients. In the drafting of the regulations, consideration will have to be given to protection of the community, especially regarding hospitals. The benefit of the blind person should not be the only factor taken into consideration.

The honourable member for Rockhampton rightly raised the position applying to those who are semi-blind. Partially blind persons receive a certain amount by way of pension, but not the full pension. Most of them get about by using a white cane, although some do not even rely on that means. Partially blind people do not tend to rely on guide dogs.

Matters to be taken into consideration are the dogs themselves—their training, experience and registration. Only dogs from certain licensed and approved places should be registered and used as guide dogs. How will "blindness" be defined? What degree of blindness will entitle a person to use a guide dog under the circumstances envisaged by the Bill?

I support the Bill as a measure that will do a tremendous amount of good for blind people in the community.

Mr. BROMLEY (South Brisbane) (11.42 a.m.): As the Minister for Justice and our shadow Minister (Mr. Wright) have pointed out, this is a humane piece of legislation. It may come as a surprise to the Minister and others to learn that the correct term for a dog that guides a blind person is "dog guide".

In clause 3 of the Bill—Interpretation—there is an anachronism or a misnomer in the reference to a person who is partially blind. I realise that during the second-reading debate I am not permitted to deal with the Bill in detail, but I feel that I should bring this to the notice of the Minister now rather than wait for the Committee stage, so that he can give consideration to moving an amendment or accepting an amendment from this side. Clause 3 states—

"'blind person' includes a person who is partially blind".

That may be the common interpretation of a blind person but it is not strictly correct in view of clause 7 of the Bill. The definition should be altered to read "'blind person' includes a person who is legally blind". That is particularly important in view of the percentage of blindness that attracts a pension. Unless that amendment is made, the intention of the Bill will not be completely clear. It is obvious from what people have told me that it will be impossible to police the Bill properly and competently as it stands. This is important. I have checked other State Acts in this respect.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: Why do you say "legally blind"?

Mr. BROMLEY: I mention this for a particular purpose, and I will explain it as I go along. I have in mind pensions for blind persons. The Minister may think I am impertinent or that I do not know too much about it, but I can assure him and others that I know a fair bit about the blind association. As my colleague points out, I have been an official of various organisations. However, I am not as impertinent or as cheeky as the honourable members for Kurilpa and Townsville South, who claimed full credit for the introduction of this measure.

Mr. Hughes: I did not claim credit for it.

Mr. BROMLEY: It is in "Hansard". They both claimed full credit for much of this measure. Government members who spoke at the introductory stage—and I include the honourable member for Townsville South—told of their long association with blind persons in Queensland. Unfortunately, because of commitments with deputations I could not speak at that stage and I was very disappointed at not being able to do so. The honourable member for Kurilpa said that nobody else was interested in this Bill and that he was responsible for it, and, but for the interjection of my friend and

colleague the honourable member for Belmont that I had had a long association with and taken an active interest in organisations concerned with blind people, that fact would not have been recognised.

Mr. Hughes: I recognise that.

Mr. BROMLEY: The honourable member only recognises it now by way of interjection; he did not have the courtesy to mention it earlier. With the exception of the honourable member for Greenslopes, I do not think any Government member would have been courteous enough to acknowledge it. The honourable member for Kurilpa grudgingly said he recognised that the honourable member for South Brisbane has been associated with Narbethong. I still am, and, for the information of the House, so was the honourable member for Kurilpa. In fact, he was a Government appointee to the p. and c. association, but never turned up at meetings, and I can assure honourable members that the p. and c. was very glad to get rid of him. I am actively associated not only with blind persons but with their various organisations.

Mr. HUGHES: I rise to a point of order. The statements made by the honourable member are untrue and I ask that they be withdrawn. It is not true to say that I never went to meetings.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member would speak up, I could hear him. I heard only portion of what he said.

Mr. BROMLEY: I have had quite a long association with these organisations. In fact, quite recently a number of blind people called at my home in a deputation to thank me very much for the great interest I have taken in their affairs. To substantiate this, I refer the House to this brief letter from Kevin O'Mahoney, Secretary of the Blind Workers' Union of Queensland—

"Dear Fred,

"I have been instructed by my Union to express our appreciation for your continual support to the blind workers both in the House and by supplying literature which you feel could be of beneficial value.

"The executive wishes to thank you for your prompt action in supplying the Annual Report of the Q.I.B., and your speech requesting that blind people be included in the increment payment scheme, we are indeed grateful and hope you will be in this position for many years, as we have found you as a sincere and devoted friend to our needs.

"Yours faithfully,
"Kevin O'Mahoney,
"Secretary."

An Opposition Member: Who wrote that?

Mr. BROMLEY: Kevin O'Mahoney, Secretary of the Blind Workers' Union of Queensland, which, incidentally, is registered in the Industrial Court although the Minister for Health often says it is not.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: It has not been registered for long.

Mr. BROMLEY: It has been registered for some considerable time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is wandering a little. Will he please come back to the Bill.

Mr. BROMLEY: I am answering something.

Mr. SPEAKER: Make it brief.

Mr. BROMLEY: As I was about to say, the Minister for Health can confirm that I have led deputations to him of blind persons from all walks of life. By contrast, how many other honourable members even have on their cars stickers drawing attention to the people who use white canes? Of course, I have such a sticker on my motor vehicle.

The Minister for Transport is actively interested in the training and placement centre, which is not far from the Lady Nell "Seeing Eye" Dog School at 521 Ipswich Road, Annerley. I refer to this particularly because I wish to talk about the training of guide dogs, as the Minister for Justice calls them. I point out to the honourable member for Kurilpa that I have attended many meetings at which the training of such dogs was discussed. In fact, only last week I attended two or three such meetings.

I am pleased to see that the Bill provides for the control of training institutions. The honourable member for Kurilpa quite rightly expressed concern on this matter.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: How many training institutions are there in Brisbane?

Mr. BROMLEY: There are some, but they are not registered. They do not provide the right type of training for dogs. One such institution, which is not even acknowledged or authorised, but has a registered business name, charges as much as \$1,000 or \$1,200 for training a dog guide. Such a charge is nothing more than robbery.

A partially-blind person may have, for example, a Labrador dog, which may not be trained properly, and may wish to take it into the places and vehicles referred to in the Bill. I suggest that the provisions of the Bill will be difficult to police and will give rise to argument. Incidentally, it galls me to hear people exclaim, "Gee, what a ludicrous blind dog!" Such a comment is ludicrous, because the dog certainly is not blind.

I conclude by reading this letter from Mrs. Phyllis Graiton, B.A., A.L.C.M., a totally blind person who is President of the Lady Nell "Seeing Eye" Dog School and Rehabilitation Centre in Victoria—

"Dear Mr. Bromley,

"Thank you very much for sending me a copy of the proposed legislation being presented to the Queensland Parliament re dog guides.

"I am sorry I did not have this material earlier so that I could have had more time to comment on it.

"Sorry I could not write my comments to you immediately when I received the copy from you last Friday, but I have been extremely busy with our work at our school.

"I do not like the term 'partially blind' as this is not a recognised medical term in relation to a blind person. A person has to be legally blind to be accepted"—

That relates to what the Minister said.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: I do not agree with that.

Mr. BROMLEY: It does not matter whether the Minister agrees with it or not. With due respect, I believe that this person would know more about the subject than the Minister.

The letter continues—

"A person has to be legally blind to be accepted for training with a dog guide or to be eligible for facilities of any registered charitable organisation for the blind. 'Partially' is far too loose a term and any one with any eyesight deficiency could be termed 'partially blind' whereas in actual fact they would not come into the category of legally blind.

"A legally blind person is one who has less than six-sixtieths of sight and is eligible for the blind person's pension."

Mr. K. W. Hooper: They are eligible for the pension, but they may need an aid. If they use a guide dog or any other form of aid, that is fair enough, and why shouldn't they be accepted?

Mr. BROMLEY: If the Minister will listen to the rest of this letter, it may help to clarify his thoughts.

"I feel also that some protection must be given to the public and to blind persons also in regard to what is regarded as an approved institution for training dogs. There is a man in Queensland by the name of H. Veischer who resides at 8 Mile Plains and has registered a business name of 'Seeing Eye' dog school, and I think this is most misleading to the public. Unless told otherwise, people naturally assume that he is conducting a charitable organisation."

That is so, because the Lions Club was trapped with this person. The situation was very embarrassing because the club wanted

to raise money to assist blind people and the Lady Nell "Seeing Eye" Dog School. The Minister will have to look at this very seriously and quickly.

The letter then states—

"I think it is a great pity and a very dangerous practice that in Queensland a person is permitted to register a business name which in any way resembles the name of a registered charity."

The Lady Nell "Seeing Eye" Dog School is a charity.

The letter continues—

"Mr. Veischer claims that he is a registered 'Seeing Eye' Dog School and I have had phone calls from service clubs who were thinking about raising money for the provision of a 'Seeing Eye' dog to be trained by this man. These clubs naturally were not aware that he conducts a registered business. Mr. Veischer charges one thousand dollars and in some cases the figure of twelve hundred dollars has been quoted to me as payment he requires. As long as he gets paid he does not mind who raises the money for the payment. As long as he gets paid he does not mind to whom he lets a dog go. The dog can be badly trained by this man and fall into the hands of an unsuitable blind person and therefore could be a very bad advertisement to the dog guide movement as a whole. I personally know of one woman, Mrs. Irene Mye of 22 Clarence Street, South Brisbane who got a dog from Mr. Veischer after our organisation had to withdraw a dog from her in the presence of the police and an inspector of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Mrs. Mye is an alcoholic and not fit to be working with a dog. She could be a danger to herself and motorists.

"When we train a person with a dog we are in constant contact with that person for the rest of the dog's life and they are constantly checked and have to return to our organisation report forms.

"There is every possibility that other unscrupulous persons will register business names resembling dog guide schools and see the possibility of cashing in on the sympathy of the public by claiming that they could train dogs for the blind when in actual fact they may only dabble in obedience training.

"I would like therefore the Legislation to apply only to dogs trained at schools registered with the Justice Department as registered charitable organisations.

"Our school provides 'Seeing Eye' dogs and all services to the blind completely free.

"I am enclosing herein a pamphlet which you may be interested to read. I am also enclosing a couple of extra copies of my letter so that you would be able to give other members who may be interested in this legislation my comments on it.

"Thanking you very much and hoping to have further communications from you re this matter.

"I am,

"Yours sincerely,

"Phyllis M. Gratton,

"Executive Director."

It is important that the Minister note the contents of that letter. I understand that when he was Minister for Transport representations were made to him by various organisations and personal friends of mine as well as by the honourable member for Greenslopes about increased safety for blind people. Perhaps he may take all these matters into consideration and confer on them with the present Minister for Transport.

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— SIXTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Lickiss, Mt. Coot-tha, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1972-73

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTRICITY

DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Hon. H. A. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon—Minister for Local Government and Electricity) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

"That \$1,230,767 be granted for 'Department of Local Government'."

The Department of Local Government is divided into two branches, namely—

(a) A branch dealing with the administration of the laws relating to local government; and

(b) A branch dealing with the provision by local authorities of town water supply, sewerage, storm-water and agricultural drainage, and swimming pools.

The administration of the laws relating to local government is, of course, one of the more important aspects of the functions of the department and, with the development taking place in the State, is an ever-growing field.

The department administers the following important Acts:—

- The Local Government Act;
- The City of Brisbane Act;
- The City of Brisbane Town Planning Act;
- The Censorship of Films Act;
- The Clean Waters Act;
- The Litter Act;
- The Local Government Superannuation Act;
- The National Trust of Queensland Act;

The Picture Theatres and Films Act; and

The Sewerage, Water Supply and Gas-fitting Act.

At a later stage of my speech, I propose to devote a little time to a number of developments occurring in the administration of some of these Acts.

As honourable members will realise, local government is intimately concerned with people and, in administering laws of this nature, it is necessary to keep pace with the rapid development occurring in the State. We have endeavoured to do this at all times. This is evidenced by the many Bills brought before this Parliament dealing with amendments of the Local Government Act, and other legislation which involves the administration of local government throughout the State.

I think it is true to say that, in every session of the Parliament, there is at least one Bill introduced dealing with local government. As the time allocated for debate of the department's Estimates is limited, I will not attempt to enumerate the various amendments which have been passed.

An important role of the Department of Local Government is that of supervision over the finances of local authorities. The department acts in an advisory capacity to the Treasury on the financial ability of local authorities to undertake loan-subsidy works submitted in the annual programme of capital works, and recommends payment to local authorities of subsidies granted towards the capital cost of water supply, sewerage, storm-water and agricultural drainage and swimming-pool projects.

Honourable members will appreciate that, in recent times, it has become necessary to exercise caution in the field of local authority loan raisings because of difficulties being experienced by certain local authorities, particularly in the western areas of the State, owing to prolonged drought conditions and depressed wool prices. One of the results of this has been that the department has become aware of the need for greater research into, and the keeping of more detailed information in respect of, the finances of local government. Action is accordingly presently being taken to establish within the Department of Local Government facilities for the compilation and evaluation of information to be obtained from local authorities relating to their financial positions. This will take some time and will involve the computerisation of statistics, but I think it is very necessary for the department to have information available as to the financial position and needs of local authorities.

The Department of Local Government is also responsible for the preparation of proclamations, Orders in Council and other instruments under the Local Government Act, and also for the approval of by-laws made by local authorities. The number of by-laws being submitted for consideration has, in recent times, increased considerably

because of the amount of new activity going on in the various local authority areas, which has brought with it the need for greater by-law control. In fact, during the past 12 months no fewer than 219 by-laws were approved by the Governor in Council.

In an endeavour to speed up the processing of local authority by-laws, it has recently been decided that a local authority, when submitting a by-law for the approval of the Governor in Council, should forward a certificate from its legal adviser that in his opinion the by-law is within the by-law-making powers of the local authority. This will obviate the necessity for having the by-law revised by the Solicitor-General from a legal viewpoint, and should therefore save time in processing the by-law.

I turn now to the matter of town planning, which has also accelerated greatly in recent times and has added considerably to the work of the department. Under the Local Government Act, town planning is a function of local government and the local authority is the town planning authority in Queensland. This is a deliberate act of policy, as town planning is closely allied with functions of local government such as the provision of roads, town water supply, sewerage, drainage, etc. Under the Act, the final decision in respect of new town-planning schemes, revised schemes and amendments of existing schemes rests with the Governor in Council.

Of the 131 local authorities in Queensland (including the City of Brisbane), 52 had statutory town-planning schemes in force as at 1 November 1972. This number comprises 15 schemes for cities (including the City of Brisbane), four for towns and 33 for shires. Analysis of these figures shows that every city in Queensland has a statutory town-planning scheme in force, and all town councils, with the exception of Thursday Island, are similarly placed. Consideration is presently being given to the preparation of a town-planning scheme for Thursday Island.

At present, a further 20 town-planning schemes are in the course of preparation. During the period from 1 November 1971 to 1 November 1972, eight new town-planning schemes were processed by the department and approved by the Governor in Council. These embraced schemes for parts of the shires of Atherton, Belyando, Calliope, Cloncurry, Fitzroy, Livingstone and Taroom. The number of applications for amendment of town-planning schemes dealt with by the department during the same period was 402.

There are seven town-planning schemes currently with the department for final review, and examination of these is currently proceeding prior to their being submitted for the consideration of the Governor in Council. These embrace schemes for the cities of Gold Coast, Ipswich and Redcliffe, the shire of Albert, and parts of the shires of Maroochy, Noosa and Jondaryan. A total of 1,750 objections to these schemes has

been lodged with the local authority concerned, and each of these objections will be the subject of on-site investigations and reports before final decisions are made in respect of these schemes. Two draft schemes are presently with the department for preliminary review prior to their being placed on public exhibition in accordance with the provisions of the Act. These embrace parts of the shires of Proserpine and Redland.

I think the foregoing figures relating to town planning are revealing, and show the extent of the work being performed. In March 1972 a separate town-planning section was created within the department to handle town-planning matters. This comprised a staff of two, namely, a planning officer and a clerk. It soon became evident that the volume of work was such that there was a pressing need to increase the staff of the section, and applications have been invited for another planning officer and a further clerk. With the rapid development taking place in the State, it is inevitable that the staffing position in the town-planning section of the department will need to be further increased in the not-too-distant future.

The Town Water Supply and Sewerage Branch of the department acts as adviser to the Treasury on all matters related to water supply, sewerage, septic tanks, swimming pools, storm-water drainage and agricultural drainage to be constructed by local authorities and financed from guaranteed loans, loans and subsidies, or revenue and subsidies. In addition, it is the technical adviser to all Government departments and institutions for similar work.

The branch exercises control over all local authorities, other than the Brisbane City Council, from commencement to completion of the preceding works. It approves the preliminary proposal, and then reviews working plans, specifications and estimates of cost of the adopted scheme. In addition, it recommends the provision of loan and subsidy funds both for planning and for construction. During construction, the branch exercises supervision to ensure that the work is carried out in accordance with the reviewed plans and specifications, and that the standard of workmanship is satisfactory. It also issues certificates to the Treasury authorising the payment of subsidy upon progress expenditure on these works, the magnitude and importance of which can be gauged by the loan-subsidy allocation of \$26,541,088 (loan) and \$13,292,030 (subsidy) in the 1972-73 programme.

Over recent years, the branch has been involved in the design and preparation of detailed working drawings for some major undertakings. In the town water-supply field these include—

A dam on the North Pine River to augment the water supply for Brisbane;

Raising the height of Awoonga Dam on the Boyne River at Gladstone;

A dam on Freshwater Creek at Copperlode Falls for Cairns City Council;

A weir on the Condamine River at Chinchilla, being a joint irrigation and town water project for the Irrigation Commission;

A proposed dam on the Nerang River at Advancetown for the Gold Coast City Council.

Sewerage schemes which have been designed by the branch include those at Inglewood, Toogoolawah and Lowood. The branch is presently preparing drawings for schemes at Esk and Jandowae. Numerous water supply and sewerage scheme proposals have also been undertaken for various Government institutions.

In addition to undertaking the design of schemes, the branch also, when requested, will assume responsibility for the direct supervision of construction. Works directly supervised by the branch include Gladstone water supply augmentation, Condamine River weir at Chinchilla, and Inglewood, Toogoolawah and Lowood sewerage.

As an indication of the activities of the Town Water Supply and Sewerage Branch, I mention that there were 31 local authority sewerage schemes in existence in 1962, and that in 1972 there were 124 such schemes. The number of cities and towns supplied with town water has increased in the past 10 years from 225 to 420. Both of these figures indicate the scope of development in this section of local government.

The Department of Local Government is also responsible for the administration of certain Boards, commissions, etc., including the Picture Theatres and Films Commission, the Plumbers, Drainers and Gasfitters Examination and Licensing Board, the Local Government Clerks Board, the Board of Examiners for Engineers and Overseers of Works to Local Authorities, and the Water Quality Council of Queensland.

Although the advent of television had an initial effect on the erection of new picture theatres, there has been a considerable upsurge in activity in recent times, particularly in relation to the erection of drive-in picture theatres. Only last night I opened the second section of a twin drive-in picture theatre at Rockhampton, and drive-ins are due for opening in the near future at Oakey and Emerald. During the last 12 months, the Picture Theatres and Films Commission considered 29 applications for new theatres and increases in capacities of existing theatres. Of these 29 applications, 17 were granted, three were refused, four were withdrawn, and five await determination. The granting of the applications mentioned will result in the establishment of 13 new picture theatres, including eight new drive-ins.

Another responsibility of boards coming within my administration is the issue of certificates of competency as local government clerk, local government engineer, and

local government overseer. These boards are set up under regulations made pursuant to the Local Government Act, and are aimed at ensuring that only competent persons hold office as clerk, engineer or overseer of a local authority. The Act provides that only persons holding a certificate of competency can be appointed to these offices.

Following representations by the Local Government Association and the Queensland Division of the Institute of Municipal Administration, action is being taken to have the standard of qualifying examinations for the issue of a clerk's certificate lifted to university level.

The problem of stormwater drainage in Brisbane has been with us for many years, and as development in the various catchment areas around the city is increasing, the problem is showing a similar marked increase. There is in existence an Act entitled "City of Brisbane (Flood Mitigation Works) Approval Act", which is administered by my department and was introduced to cater for flood-mitigation works in certain streams in the Brisbane City Area. This Act is limited in operation, however, and was not designed to deal with the over-all problems facing the city today.

During the abnormal wet seasons recently experienced in Brisbane, the problem of flooding has increased and the Government has set up a committee, on which the Department of Local Government is represented, to examine ways and means of alleviating the problem. One of the suggestions is that the provisions of the City of Brisbane (Flood Mitigation Works) Approval Act might be widened to cope with the problems presently in hand, or it could be that the matter will require special and detailed legislation. In any event, it is hoped to have some finality in this regard in the near future.

It is recognised, of course, that this problem is not only a Brisbane city problem but occurs in other areas of the State also and, for this reason, it may be necessary to introduce State-wide legislation to deal with the question. As I have said, the Government has an expert committee looking into this matter, and it will be guided by the recommendations of that committee.

I propose to refer now to certain other Acts coming within the administration of the Department of Local Government. The first is the Sewerage, Water Supply and Gasfitting Act, which provides for the establishment of a Plumbers, Drainers and Gasfitters Examination and Licensing Board to grant licences to plumbers, drainers and gasfitters. Standard sewerage, water supply and gasfitting by-laws form schedules to the Act, and the Act provides that these by-laws are deemed to be part of the by-laws of all local authorities as regards sewerage and water supply, and of gas companies in respect to town gasfitting. Since the Act was proclaimed in 1950, over

11,800 licences have been issued by the Board, and approximately 650 new licences are granted each year.

Under the standard sewerage by-laws, a joint committee is set up comprising technical officers of the Departments of Local Government and Health and the Brisbane City Council. The function of this committee is to examine the design of all fixtures and fittings intended for use in sewerage and water-supply house-connection work to ensure that they comply with a recognised Australian Standards Association specification, or, if a relevant specification does not exist, that the pipe, fitting or fixture complies with the requirements of the by-laws.

Another important piece of legislation administered by me is the Clean Waters Act 1971. This Act established a Water Quality Council of Queensland, comprising a chairman, a deputy chairman and 13 members representing eight Government departments, the Local Government Association, the Council of Agriculture, the Chamber of Manufactures, the Queensland Institute of Technology and the Brisbane City Council. The recently appointed Director of Water Quality is the chief administration officer and deputy chairman of the council, whilst the chairman is the chief engineer of the Department of Local Government.

The Water Quality Council has been appointed and has met on six occasions. The Act has not yet been proclaimed pending the gazettal of regulations which are in the process of being adopted. It is envisaged that the Act and regulations will become operative early in 1973.

Mr. Marginson: That was put through last December.

Mr. McKECHNIE: The Bill was put through some time ago. A complex set of regulations had to be drawn up to look after water affairs throughout Queensland. Some 600 monitoring stations have been established on various rivers, and considerable investigations are still proceeding. The Council is doing an excellent job and have these matters sorted out for approval early in the new year.

Under the Act, any owner or occupier of premises from which wastes are discharged to any waters, and which wastes are likely to cause pollution, will be required to hold a licence. The Water Quality Council will determine the conditions for licences and notices, which will include effluent standards. It will also be responsible for surveys, investigations and research into the quality of waters, water-quality objectives, plans, criteria and standards, collection and dissemination of information on the quality of waters, surveillance of waste discharges, and advice to other organisations and persons.

It is required to carry out investigations on behalf of the Environmental Control Council, and to provide that council with information on its activities and refer to it matters on which it desires advice or assistance.

Water-quality measurements are being made regularly at some 600 monitoring stations in more than 60 rivers in various parts of the State. The qualities measured depend upon location, and include oxygen demand, colour, sulphides, fluorides, metals, turbidity, solids, nitrogen, phosphorus, chloride, sugars, tannins, phenols, oils, fat, detergent, pesticides, algae and bacteria. Regular analyses are made of the raw water from 55 water supplies. Limited ecological surveys are under way. An advisory service is offered to industries and others on methods of treating wastes and controlling pollution.

Another Act administered by the department is the Litter Act, which was enacted in 1971. This Act makes it an offence for a person to deposit litter on a public place, which is defined as "a road or a place of public resort open to use by the public as of right." Substantial penalties are prescribed by the Act for littering offences. Provision is made for an authorised person detecting a minor breach of the Act to issue an on-the-spot penalty of \$10 to the person committing the offence.

Where a person is convicted of a littering offence, the court may, in addition to imposing a monetary penalty, order the offender to clean up the litter within a time and to the satisfaction of a person appointed by the court. Alternatively, the court may order the offender to pay to the authority having control of the public place on which the offence occurred such sum as the court determines to cover the cost of cleaning up the litter.

I know that a number of local authorities have launched successful prosecutions for breaches of the Act, and I understand that other prosecutions are pending. As my predecessor said when introducing the legislation, the prescription of substantial penalties for littering offences, whilst necessary as a deterrent, is not the complete answer to the problem of littering. Coupled with this, we must have a programme to educate children and the community in general on the protection of the environment and the problems caused by littering.

Another Act coming within the administration of the department is the Local Government Superannuation Act, which was passed in 1964. This Act provides a superannuation scheme for permanent employees of all local authorities other than the Brisbane City Council, which has its own scheme. The scheme applies to all classes of employees—office staff and outside employees. The right of an employee to contribute to the scheme does not cease by reason of his transfer from one local authority to another. This was the case under superannuation schemes established by a number of local authorities prior to the coming into force of the statutory scheme.

The annual report of the Local Government Superannuation Board for the period ended 30 June 1972 discloses that the

scheme is in a very healthy position. At that date there were 8,644 participants in the scheme, comprising 7,312 in the insurance fund and 1,332 in the provident fund. The sum assured under the insurance fund has grown from \$34,000,000 in 1967-68 to \$67,000,000 in 1971-72. In the provident fund, members were credited with some \$1,250,000 as at 30 June 1972, and the rate of interest credited to the accounts of members for 1971-72 was 6 per cent.

The local government superannuation scheme is in a very healthy financial position, and I congratulate the Local Government Superannuation Board for the task it has accomplished. There is no doubt that having an attractive superannuation scheme has aided in the recruitment of staff by local authorities.

Another Act that comes under my administration is the National Trust of Queensland Act, which was passed in 1963. This Act provides for the constitution of a National Trust of Queensland, the objects of the National Trust being the promotion, preservation and maintenance, for the benefit of the public generally, of lands, buildings, furniture, pictures and other chattels of beauty or of national, historic, scientific, artistic or architectural interest. The current president of the National Trust is my ministerial colleague, the Honourable John Herbert, M.L.A., Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services. Mr. Herbert has been actively associated with the National Trust since its inception, and I pay a tribute to the part he and other persons, such as Sir Raphael Cilento, have played in its development. The annual report of the National Trust for the period ended 30 June 1972 was recently tabled in Parliament, and it will be noted therefrom that two of its main projects to date have been the restoration of Wolston House and the James Cook Historical Museum at Cooktown.

In both these projects the National Trust has done excellent work, and I note that it now contemplates the restoration of the Stock Exchange building at Charters Towers. I congratulate the Trust on its activities, and wish it every success in its future endeavours.

I might mention that when I was in Cooktown it was a very great pleasure to look through the museum, which is rich in history and tradition linked with Sir James Cook.

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

I turn now to the Estimates of the Department of Electricity Supply, which occupies a central position in the electricity-supply industry in this State. The Estimates provide for an expenditure of \$29,427,096, made up as follows—Electricity Development Fund, \$179,659; Electricity Trust Fund, \$2,061,019; Gladstone Power Station Construction Fund, \$24,502,854; Electricity Development, \$2,640,000; and Electrical Workers' and Contractors' Board, \$43,564.

All of us are well aware of the role of the electricity supply industry, but I wonder whether, in their every-day acceptance of the benefits of electricity, honourable members and many others really appreciate the true significance of the electricity supply industry. I would like to dwell briefly on this aspect, as I believe it is necessary to bring sharply into focus this Government's achievements and future plans in this sphere. When we think of electricity supply, by and large we tend to regard it as an engineering province, a basically technical function. While this is a valid concept, it goes much further than this. It is an engineering business with heavy commercial and financial overtones demanding special skills in themselves.

This is an industry which directly employs almost 9,000 people, representing a great many vocational callings and a great variety of specialised training. The highest possible standards are demanded because these people are involved in an enterprise which has an annual retail revenue of \$120,000,000 and uses equipment the value of which alone is measured in many hundreds of millions of dollars. Additionally, there is the indirect employment created by the industry.

All parts of the electrical industry—manufacturers, wholesalers and merchants, retailers and contractors—depend in varying degrees on the activities of the electricity supply industry. Their very existence is closely linked to the supply industry's capacity to meet consumer demands at competitive prices, and upon the markets it creates for electrical appliances and equipment and for electrical services. The rise in tariffs over the past eight years has been only 2.4 per cent, whereas in the building industry the rise has been approximately 35 to 37 per cent. The great disparity shows the degree to which technical skills and larger power-houses have helped to keep down the costs to consumers.

The Government is firmly committed to the principle that the rate of increase in electricity usage is to be closely tied to the rate of increase in living standards. The extent to which the Government has advanced the development of electricity supply throughout the State is amply demonstrated by the fact that, whereas in 1957, 82 per cent of the population were supplied, the figure has now risen to over 98 per cent, and every effort is being made to find the means of bringing electricity to the remainder. Over this period from 1957 to the present time, the Government has provided \$610,000,000 for electrical development against a figure of \$210,000,000 up till that time. In other words, since 1957 the expenditure has been three times that incurred in the years prior to 1957.

In this era of rapid growth, the State's generating capacity has increased from 483 MW to the present figure of approximately 1,900 MW, which represents an increase of approximately 300 per cent.

Mr. Marginson: Do you say in your introduction where the next power station will be?

Mr. McKECHNIE: No, and I cannot say where it will be, for the simple reason that I do not know. I assure the honourable member that an investigation of the 16 contracts we have received is proceeding, and it is my intention to take to Cabinet in the very near future a request to have a survey of some of the proposed projects to see that the environment is protected.

Also since 1957, some 35,000 miles of electricity lines have been built, strengthening existing systems, taking more reliable and economic supply to many of the more isolated parts of the State, and generally furthering the regional concept which recognises the mutual interests and interdependence of urban and rural areas and groups them, as far as practicable, into homogeneous units. All this is indicative of this Government's determination that the people of Queensland, whether they live and work in the city or the country, should enjoy the highest standard of living which available resources allow us to sustain. A measure of the success achieved is borne out by the per-capita consumption of electricity throughout the State, which has risen from 1,026 units in 1957 to 2,926 units at the present, a rise of 185 per cent.

The interests and the welfare of the man on the land have always been, and will continue to be, among our primary concerns. The Government has pursued a vigorous policy of rural electrification. The aim has been to provide the same means of increasing the efficiency of primary industry as is available to secondary industry, and to bring to those who live in the far-flung regions of this State the same comforts that electricity gives those in the city.

In Queensland, rural electrification poses a greater problem than in any other State because of the great distances, the decentralised economy and the low population density. Despite this fact our policy of centralising generation in the most economic centres, with progressive closing down of less economic stations, and interconnecting these centres by transmission line to the larger load stations has served two important purposes. First, it has reduced production costs and, secondly, these interconnecting transmission lines have also provided a backbone system for distribution lines to supply rural properties in the area.

Extensive use has been made of single-wire earth-return distribution systems in Western Queensland because of the advantages of up to 30 per cent cheaper initial capital costs than conventional systems, lower maintenance and operating costs and less susceptibility to supply interruptions. The Government has provided to local authorities in areas where interconnection is not economically feasible a generous cash subsidy toward the installation costs of plant. We are proud of the fact that electricity is available to places such as Birdsville, Bedourie and Windorah.

A further measure to maintain the programme of rural electrification is the rural extension deposit scheme whereby the prospective consumer is able to assist the electric authority in providing capital towards the cost of extensions. The funds so lent are repaid to him with interest over a 15-year period. It is worthy of the highest commendation, and a reflection of the efficiency of the electricity supply industry, that this programme of rural electrification has been maintained and the demands of existing consumers and new industries met without the creation of inflationary pressures evident in other sectors of the economy.

Costs in this, as in other industries, are a vital factor. It is the price to the final consumer that ultimately indicates an industry's efficiency or otherwise. In this area the record of the electricity supply industry is outstanding. Over the last ten years the average cost and the average revenue per unit of electricity sold in Queensland have remained relatively stable, while in the same period the consumer price index increased by 40 per cent and the level of wages and salaries by approximately 70 per cent. Actually, electricity charges rose by only 2.4 per cent in eight years. It is a wonderful effort to keep increases in electricity charges to only 2.4 per cent in eight years in the light of an increase of 70 per cent in wages and the cost of coal and other commodities.

Mr. Marginson: The cost of coal decreased in the last 12 years.

Mr. McKECHNIE: That is so in some cases but wages increased by 70 per cent. In spite of that, the State Electricity Commission was able to hold the increase to only 2.4 per cent. That is an excellent achievement.

The very fact that increased demands for electricity have been met is in itself a not inconsiderable feat. Over the last ten years the average annual growth rate for the industry in Queensland has run at approximately 10 per cent, against the growth rate of approximately 5 per cent for the economy as a whole. This has, of course, meant that new generating stations have had to be commissioned on an average of every four years. The capital sums which the Government has had to find for these works is colossal. This has in turn placed a very high premium on our management of resources. In terms of capital funds, this involves the most critical examination of the allocation of funds as well as their cost. In thermal power stations the cost of capital and the cost of coal at the power station represent from 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the total cost of production.

These factors, together with the Government policy of promoting the establishment of export-oriented industries in Queensland led the Government to seek Commonwealth assistance for the construction of the Gladstone Power Station project. Through the

support of this development by the Commonwealth, the State will be relieved of at least part of the burden of finding the estimated \$200,000,000 cost of the project.

The construction of the 1100 megawatt power station at Gladstone and the associated 275kV transmission link with South-east Queensland will mark a new era in this State. The choice of Gladstone as the ideal site was based on its proximity to sources of very cheap coal and its strategic position in relation to the main load centres of the State. Account was also taken of the tremendous potential, now being realised, of this region as the site for major industries with access to excellent deep-water facilities and the rich Central Queensland coalfields. It is expected that the 275kV transmission line will be commissioned within the next few weeks and the first of the four 275 megawatt sets commissioned in the winter of 1975.

I mentioned earlier the economic dependence of other industries upon electricity supply. The Gladstone Power Station provides an excellent example of this. To date contracts to the value of \$37,000,000 have been let for this project to Queensland-based firms. Contracts worth \$76,000,000 have gone to Australian enterprises. This is out of a total of \$100,000,000 worth of contracts and vividly demonstrates the importance of the contribution of the electricity supply industry to our local economy.

I previously referred to coal as constituting one of the major resources used in the industry. Over the past few years much has been said of the alleged squandering of our coal reserves, with the implication that insufficient attention has been paid to the future needs of our own industries such as the electricity supply industry. In order to unequivocally dispel any doubts that might exist, I would point out that the Government has for many years vigorously pursued a policy aimed at measuring proven extractable reserves and taken measures to ensure that all future requirements are adequately catered for.

The electricity supply industry estimates that approximately 150,000,000 tons of coal will be required over the next 20 years to meet foreseeable demands. To date, reserves in excess of 1,500 million tons of steaming coal have been proven in the State, which is more than enough to match the requirements of this industry well into the twenty-second century, and there is much more coal that has not been officially proved.

Availability of coal, of course, only presents half the picture. Cost of coal is just as vital to the electricity supply industry. The Government is confident that its policy of developing our coal resources will, through economies of scale and increased extraction of coal, bring about reductions in cost which can only benefit the electricity supply industry and ultimately, through electricity prices, the people of Queensland. The rapid expansion of the industry generated by the demands of

consumers has also meant that its organisation and structure must be kept constantly under review. Historically, the industry has been fragmented by comparison with other States and there are sound reasons why this has been the case. However, the Government has been steadily working towards a more integrated structure as evidenced by rationalisation in South-east Queensland in 1963 and in North Queensland in 1964, when the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland and the Northern Electric Authority of Queensland were vested with sole responsibility for generation and main transmission in their respective areas.

The Government has accepted the principle that a large and wisely planned interconnected power system under unified control offers the best prospects of producing and transporting energy to bulk-supply points for distribution to final consumers at the lowest cost. Notwithstanding this, it also clearly recognised the cost penalties which could have been incurred by advancing this development ahead of its time.

However, the stage has now been reached when, with the completion of the Gladstone project and the planned conversion of the variable interest stock of the Southern Electric Authority to secured stock in 1975, a central generating authority can be established. The Government envisages the central generating authority as having full public responsibility for generation, main transmission and bulk supply to a number of distributing authorities. A committee has already been set up to make recommendations as to the most practical method of implementation. Certainly, construction of the 275kV interconnecting link between the southern and central grids and the construction of the Gladstone station will establish a single power network in those two areas of the State.

Mr. Marginson: And we will suffer down here.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Not at all. With cheap coal from Central Queensland and the flow of 275kV lines from Gladstone south, increases in wages hopefully should be counter-balanced, which is what the State Electricity Commission is endeavouring to achieve.

It is also expected that within the next decade it will be economically possible to extend the 275kV grid to northern Queensland, and thus incorporate the northern network into one interconnected system of the central generating authority. Anyone who opposes that is against the interests of the people, because it will lead to still cheaper electricity.

One very important matter that I should also like to mention in this debate relates to electrical safety. The industry in Queensland has strenuously promoted safety in the use of electricity by the public, and within the electrical industry, over a number of years.

In 1957, the Queensland Electrical Education Council was established to educate the public in the safe use of electricity. In 1964, the Electrical Industry Safety Advisory Committee was formed to assist the State Electricity Commission in all aspects of safety affecting employees within the electricity industry. These measures, together with inspections under the Acts, licensing of electrical workers, and the scheme for approval of new appliances and equipment prior to sale, place Queensland in a unique position as leader in this field in Australia, as is borne out by a recent report to the New South Wales Parliament—an achievement of which we can well be proud.

At the moment, an extensive campaign is being carried out by the Queensland Electrical Education Council in all secondary schools throughout the State. It is hoped that, by inculcating in high school students the principles to be observed in the safe use of electricity, the present rate of electricity accidents involving the general public will diminish significantly in the future.

I have covered very broadly today, in the available time, some of the Government's achievements in the electrical development of this State. In doing so, I would hope that honourable members have also gained a greater insight into the vital part played by the industry, which serves as a catalyst in the growth of virtually every sector of our economy.

Perhaps I have also left the Committee with some idea of the magnitude of the challenges that confront us in ensuring the orderly and efficient development of the industry in the future. This may be brought home more strikingly by considering that by 1982 the demand for electricity is expected to reach 3,500 megawatts, compared with approximately 1,400 megawatts today—an increase of 150 per cent in only 10 years.

Mr. Harvey: It has almost doubled itself every 10 years in the past.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Up till 1957, not as much had been spent on the provision of electricity as has been spent since that date, and demand is accelerating all the time.

The capital required for this and other essential works is expected to be in excess of \$1,100 million, with a decision needed next March or April as to the location of the next power station costing towards \$300,000,000. About next March or April, it will be a pleasure for me to tell the honourable member for Wolston where it will be built.

DEPARTMENT OF VALUER-GENERAL

The Estimates for the Department of the Valuer-General provide for an expenditure of \$1,782,364, made up as follows:—

Salaries	\$1,447,753
Contingencies ..	\$334,611

Before referring to the salient features of the Estimates, I will tell honourable members something of the history of the department, and its duties and functions.

The department was created by the Valuation of Land Act 1944, which was assented to on 23 November 1944 and proclaimed to come into operation on 1 July 1946. As the preamble of the Act states, its purpose was "to make better provision for determining the valuation of land for rating and taxing purposes and for matters incidental thereto or consequential thereon". Prior to the constitution of the Valuer-General's Department, local authorities arranged for the performance of their own valuations for rating purposes.

The State Land Tax Department also made valuations for land tax purposes, and employed valuers for this purpose. Valuers employed by that department, however, were only concerned with the valuation of freehold land. The position regarding the valuation of local authorities at that time is now somewhat obscure, but some had not made any fresh valuations for many years.

The establishment of the Valuer-General's Department ensured that fresh valuations were made at periodic intervals, and that they were performed, as far as possible, in a co-ordinated manner. The Act as originally proclaimed provided that the interval between valuations should be five years, but this proviso has since been amended to enable valuations to continue, in normal circumstances, for up to eight years. The most recent amendment to the Act provides that, in certain circumstances, this eight-year period can also be extended, and also that a valuation of all lands in an area can, again in special circumstances, be performed at a lesser interval than 5 years.

The first local authority areas to be valued by the Valuer-General's Department were in the Darling Downs district, the first valuations of the shires of Clifton, Drayton and Cambooya having been proclaimed to come into force on 30 June 1948. The department expanded during succeeding years and, as further shires were completed, district offices under the control of a district valuer were established. The department now has district offices at Cairns, Townsville (2), Rockhampton, Maryborough, Roma, Toowoomba, and Warwick. The two offices at Townsville control the Townsville district and the north-western district. The cities of Brisbane, Ipswich, Gold Coast, and Redcliffe, and the local authority areas contained in the district of Moreton, are controlled from head office in Brisbane.

The Valuer-General had completed the valuation of the whole of the State of Queensland by 30 June 1966. At that time the total number of rateable properties in the State was 579,288, with an unimproved value of approximately \$1,193 million. At the present juncture, there are approximately 678,000 rateable properties contained in 131 local authority areas, the total rateable value of the State as at 30 June 1972 being approximately \$2,013 million. In the history of the department, 34 local authority areas

have been valued twice, 51 have been valued three times, 34 have been valued four times, and 12 have been valued five times.

The main function of the department is the valuations performed for land tax and local-authority rating purposes, and on these valuations gross annual revenues exceeding \$74,000,000 are assessed. The Valuer-General is completely independent of these rating and taxing authorities, and I consider that this is as it should be. The independence of the Valuer-General should never be questioned.

Another point I would mention is that although the Valuer-General's valuations are used for the levying of rates, the total amount of rates collected by a local authority is purely a matter for the local authority itself. The Valuer-General has no say whatsoever in the rates to be levied, but his valuation is the means of distributing the total rating burden amongst the landowners in a local authority area. I am sure honourable members realise this, but I wish to emphasise it.

However, the Valuer-General performs another very important function. In terms of section 27 of the Valuation of Land Act, the Valuer-General must, as and when required by any State department or sub-department or Crown instrumentality, make any valuation of rural and/or personal property for such department, subdepartment or instrumentality. This in fact means that the Valuer-General has become the main valuing authority for several other State departments and many local authorities for the resumption or purchase of land.

During the 1971-72 year, the Valuer-General performed 1,518 valuations, aggregating \$13,088,246, for other Government departments, local authorities, and semi-government bodies. Valuations by the Valuer-General have been relied upon for the acquisition of land for such projects as the Moura, Goonyella and Peak Downs railway lines and the various freeways in the city of Brisbane. Several hundred properties on the northern approaches to Brisbane will be affected by the resumptions of the Main Roads Department, and the assessment of the compensation is being made by the Valuer-General. Some of these claims run into very large amounts.

Another major example of the help the Valuer-General gives to the State is in the matter of housing. His services are readily available to both the Queensland Housing Commission and the Aboriginal and Island Affairs Department. In the latter case, it is generally necessary to move very quickly in making assessments of the value of available houses, particularly in certain areas, and the officers of the department are very co-operative in this regard. Valuations are at present being performed in respect of the acquisition of land for the Greenvale railway line, and in prospect is the estimation of the compensation due to the many owners

affected by the Wivenhoe Dam project. The department is trying to expedite these valuations.

Section 27 of the Valuation of Land Act, previously mentioned, also provides that the Valuer-General may make any valuation of property, as and when required by any person other than the authorities previously mentioned. Because of the pressure of his other duties, the Valuer-General is not always able to undertake valuations for private persons, but during the 1971-72 year the department performed 23 such valuations, aggregating \$569,995, requests coming from as far afield as the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. I mention in passing that the Act provides that the Valuer-General should charge fees as prescribed for all valuations performed for other Government departments, local authorities, Crown instrumentalities and any other persons.

Details of the staff of the department have been set out in the Estimates. These indicate that provision has been made for a total staff of 274, as against 264 provided for in the Estimates for 1971-72. The increase of 10 is made up of eight valuers and two clerks. The eight additional valuers are required on the rural side. Excluding district valuers and senior valuers, the department at the present time has a lesser number of registered rural valuers than it had in 1965. Honourable members will readily appreciate, therefore, that the increase in staff numbers is warranted, more particularly as, over recent years, the number of objections and appeals against the Valuer-General's valuations has increased.

Within the last decade or so of its existence, the Valuer-General's Department's valuations, in the main, were made on a rising market and with a prosperous rural economy. This state of affairs has changed considerably in many rural local authority areas, and I believe this has at least contributed to the increased opposition to the Valuer-General's valuations in some local authority areas. By this, I do not mean that the Valuer-General is not prepared to reduce valuations. On the contrary, valuers of his department inspect and analyse sales, and, if the sales indicate values which are lower than those ruling at the time of the previous valuation, the valuations are reduced accordingly. A number of central-western shires were substantially reduced in value last year as a result of catastrophic drops in sale prices following drought conditions and low wool prices, and these decreases were followed this year by reductions of 68.62% and 69.57% respectively in the valuations of Barcaldine and Isisford Shires, which valuations were issued on 2 October 1972 and made as at 31 March 1972.

Mr. Harvey: Don't you consider that, as a fool and his money are easily parted, the rest of the community should not suffer because some people buy land at astronomical prices?

Mr. McKECHNIE: The Act makes it very clear that the Valuer-General must not take into account excessive sales, or forced sales that may tend either way. If there is a general trend, such as in the Pine Rivers Shire, where people are rushing to buy land, there is a tendency for values to become higher than they should. That is created by people buying the land. The Valuer-General breaks down the value to below what these people are prepared to pay for the land, because the true situation is realised.

Mr. Leese: One block went up 1,500 per cent.

Mr. McKECHNIE: The average in the Pine Rivers Shire was about 348 per cent. I notice that the progress association hailed the increased values in the area as indicative of the area's prosperity.

In the same way, we are concerned about low-price sales in areas such as Barcaldine and Isisford, where they have had the opposite effect. We have reduced the total valuation of one of those shires from \$3,000,000 to \$1,000,000, because we are aware of the trend in both directions.

AMENDMENTS TO THE VALUATION OF LAND ACT

The Valuation of Land Act was last amended by the Valuation of Land Act and Another Act Amendment Act 1971, which was assented to on 22 December 1971 and proclaimed to commence on 1 March 1972. Honourable members will recall the various points of the Bill, and these are now being implemented. I have referred to some of them earlier in my speech, and I do not propose to worry honourable members by going through them all. However, I shall mention some of the salient features.

One amendment provided that tenures such as stock grazing permits, occupation licences and special leases over national parks, State forests, and timber reserves should be valued after having regard to and making a proper allowance for any restriction or limitation to which such permit or lease or licence is subject. This provision is a very just one. Other amendments included concessions in valuations for people with a single dwelling-house caught up in an area being developed for more valuable usages, and for landowners engaged in the business of primary production in an area being developed for higher-density usages.

Another important provision in the amending Act was one whereby a new valuation of a local authority area could not become effective until the amount of undetermined objections or appeals was reduced to 10 per cent or less of the total valuation of the local authority area. This amendment is particularly important to local authorities, because they will not now be faced with a large refund of rates, sometimes extending back some years, as a result of successful objections and appeals.

A further amendment of the Act provided that the Minister would have the discretionary power to appoint an independent person to preside over conferences between the Valuer-General and owners in respect of objections against valuations. This amendment was introduced in an endeavour to ensure a full, free and frank exchange of opinion between the owner and the Valuer-General at the conferences. It is expected that "without prejudice" conferences conducted along these lines will result in each party being able to understand the other's point of view. This, in turn, could well result in there being fewer appeals to the Land Court in respect of the Valuer-General's valuations. I am sure that all honourable members will realise, as I do, that these appeals can be costly and are time consuming. I believe that this set-up will avoid much of the present loss of time and expense.

Mr. Marginson: Rates are too high because of an outmoded and outdated method of valuing.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Valuations are established by those who buy and sell land. The Valuer-General endeavours to relate these values to other properties in the same area.

It is in the interests of the landowner, and will certainly assist the administration of the Valuer-General's Department, if these appeals to the Land Court can be kept to a minimum. To date, an independent person has been appointed to preside over conferences in respect of objections lodged against the valuations of nine local authority areas, namely, the shires of Longreach, Ilfracombe, Aramac, Kilcoy, Kilkivan, Broadsound, Dalrymple, McKinlay, and Richmond. The independent person in each case has been Mr. R. B. Chopin, a person experienced in the pastoral industry, and who, I am happy to say, has performed his duties very creditably. I believe the system to be working well, and it has been well accepted, both by landowners and by officers of the Valuer-General's Department.

COMPUTER

I have mentioned previously the expansion of the Valuer-General's Department as a result of the increased number of valuations that the Valuer-General is required to perform. The Government has not been unmindful of means of improving the efficiency of the department. Accordingly, on 10 June 1969, Cabinet approved that an automatic data processing system be implemented in the Valuer-General's Department. This system encompassed—

- (1) Recording of valuations;
- (2) Maintenance of valuation rolls;

(3) Issue of valuation lists and notices; and

(4) Other information as may be required and is available from the information stored in the computer tape files.

Action was taken to implement this decision forthwith, and approval was given for the purchase of the necessary equipment.

The data is actually prepared in the Valuer-General's Department and then transferred to the Treasury computer centre for processing. The operation has proceeded continuously since, and the following local authority areas are at present on magnetic tape records:—

Cities of Brisbane, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Redcliffe, Bundaberg, and Maryborough; Shires of Albert, Boonah, Gatton, Kilcoy, Laidley, Landsborough, Moreton, Pine Rivers, and Redland.

The total number of valuations recorded by the computer is 357,638. During the current year, valuation notices for the revaluation of the cities of Ipswich and Maryborough, and the shires of Gatton, Landsborough and Pine Rivers were issued by the computer. Action is now being taken to convert to the computer record the remaining local authorities in the Moreton district, and operations will then be extended further to district offices.

The operations of the computer are very time saving, and the valuations for the local authority areas I have just mentioned where notices were printed by the computer comprise 54,724 of the 122,611 valuations issued this year.

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

Mr. McKECHNIE: To continue, these 122,611 valuations were made in 19 local authority areas. It would have been well-nigh impossible for the issue of the large number of valuation notices this year without the aid of the computer.

As a further instance of the necessity to continually improve the efficiency of the department by such means as computer operation, I mention that notifications of change of ownership received by the department have increased from 70,486 in the year ended 30 June 1966 to 118,199 in the year ended 30 June 1972.

I emphasise that the computer is being used for record purposes and for the issue of valuation notices. It also serves a valuable function in the checking of valuations, which are actually performed by human beings, namely, the registered valuers in the department, and not by the computer. It is expected that, as staff members become more familiar with its operation, the computer will be increasingly used for research purposes also.

The change from imperial measurements to metric measurements will involve the Valuer-General in hundreds of thousands of conversions, and it is expected that much of this can be carried out with the aid of a

computer. One of the rural industries soon to convert will probably be the sugar industry, and the assignments in gross and net acres of assignment and the farm peaks in tons of cane or sugar will be converted to hectares for area and tonnes for weight. Carrying capacities in grazing lands will also require metric conversion. For example, instead of 1 sheep to 4 acres we may talk of 1 sheep to 1.62 hectares.

Mr. Sherrington: Why are you taking up time by telling us that?

Mr. McKECHNIE: Does the honourable member want me to save as much time as possible?

Mr. Sherrington: I want some members of the Opposition to be able to speak on these Estimates.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I am endeavouring to give them the opportunity of speaking. By interrupting, the honourable member is denying his colleagues that opportunity.

UNIMPROVED VALUE OF LAND

I feel that any remarks regarding the Valuer-General's Department would be incomplete without reference to the basis upon which the valuations for rating and for land tax are made. "Unimproved value of land" is covered by section 12 of the Valuation of Land Act, and I do not propose to repeat it in detail. Rather will I express in language as plain as possible the meaning of the term.

First of all, the Valuer-General is required to ascertain the market value of land. This is done by an examination of the sales of land about the relevant date in the locality of the land being valued. Any person who buys or sells land must furnish the Valuer-General, in form V.G.1, with a notification of the change of ownership. This form includes the sale price, the terms of sale and other details. Officers of the Valuer-General's Department inspect the sale properties and analyse the sale price to the best of their ability. As far as possible, the circumstances of each transaction are also investigated. By this I mean, firstly, whether the sale was a family sale; secondly, whether there was any degree of compulsion or over-anxiousness on the vendor to sell or the purchaser to buy; and thirdly, whether the purchaser was experienced. In fact, the valuer endeavours to ascertain if the sale fulfils the principles laid down by the High Court of Australia in *Spencer v. The Commonwealth* (5. C.L.R., 441.). These principles can be summed up by saying that the consideration in a basic sale would be "an amount that a man desiring to buy the land would have had to pay for it on that day to a vendor willing to sell it for a fair price but not desirous of selling."

In some cases the sales are of unimproved or virtually unimproved land, and the calculation of the unimproved value from these sales does not leave much room for conjecture. In other cases, however, the only

sales available are of improved land, and the unimproved value is ascertained from these sales by deducting the value of the improvements from the improved value. It is provided in the Act that the value of the improvements is the added value which the improvements give to land or their value based on cost less depreciation, whichever amount is the lesser. All factors are considered as at the date of valuation.

One point I must emphasise particularly is that the improvements must be thereon or appertaining to the land being valued. Improvements do not include public services and facilities such as roads, water supply, sewerage, power supply, transport and the like. The valuer must proceed on the basis that the property being valued is in its unimproved state, but that surrounding properties are developed to the extent that they are and that the existing public services and facilities are available. "Unimproved value" as defined by the Act has often been the subject of attack, and I realise that at times it can lead to some anomalies in rating.

Mr. Harvey: Is the zoning of land as residential, industrial, or otherwise, taken into account in making valuations?

Mr. McKECHNIE: Naturally, when an area is zoned the valuation becomes different from when it was not zoned. If an area is injuriously affected, when it is re-zoned, that fact must be taken into account. I am sure the honourable member knows that all such matters are taken into account by the Valuer-General.

To continue, I am also aware that in some States the definition has been amended to provide for "Site value"; in other words, invisible improvements such as clearing, filling and the like are disregarded when assessing the value of the improvements. However, in so far as Queensland is concerned, the definition of "unimproved value" at present contained in the Act has stood the test of time and no satisfactory alternative has yet been presented.

The staff of the Valuer-General's Department have very arduous duties to perform, and I am satisfied the department's officers, despite the fact that their valuations may not always be accepted without protestations, endeavour to perform their duties conscientiously and to the best of their respective abilities. I am also satisfied that they are prepared to look at every factor influencing their valuations fairly and with great regard to the rights of individual landowners. It has been said to me, and I believe it to be correct, that the department makes valuations but its officers do not make values. Rather, values are made by the vendors and purchasers of land. It is the task of the Valuer-General and his officers to interpret these values and, from them, perform valuations.

I take this opportunity of congratulating all officers of the department on the manner in which they are performing their exacting

and worrying task, and I am sure that any person who approaches the subject of the department's valuations in an objective manner will agree with my remarks.

I wish to pay tribute also to the loyalty and efficiency of officers in the Department of Local Government and the State Electricity Commission. In particular I wish to thank Mr. Harold Jacobs, who this year was appointed Director of Local Government, the Commissioner for Electricity Supply (Mr. Doug Murray) and the Valuer-General (Mr. Neville Cook). These are men of high calibre, and it has been my privilege to work well with them since I became Minister for Local Government and Electricity.

In conclusion, I express my pleasure at having this opportunity to present to the Committee my report on the departmental Estimates. I am sorry that time has not permitted me to elaborate on some matters associated with them. I have tried to deal with them as quickly as possible so that other honourable members will have an opportunity to speak.

Mr. Sherrington: You are taking up time.

Mr. McKECHNIE: The honourable member for Salisbury says that I am taking up extra time. He is delaying me, and is thus wasting considerable time. When three major departments and many minor ones have to be dealt with, I do not consider that an hour and seven minutes spent on explaining the ramifications—

Mr. Sherrington: You could have tabled your explanations.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I believe that in such circumstances an hour and seven minutes is all too short. However, I have tried to give honourable members as concise a report as possible on the activities of my various departments. I hope I have not spoken too quickly, but my purpose was to give honourable members on both sides of the Chamber who wish to participate in the debate an opportunity to do so.

Mr. BALDWIN (Redlands) (2.24 p.m.): I will not accuse the Minister of being a victim of hypermania even though I have been forced to listen to him reiterating at length what I have already read in departmental reports. His comments on the electricity facet of his portfolio brought to mind the electric-prodder issue that we have discussed in this Chamber, and I wished I had one handy to keep me awake.

I want to refer particularly to certain aspects of the Minister's remarks that vindicate the submissions made over the years by the Labor Party relative to local government and the problems of financing electricity extensions.

The Minister has perhaps unwittingly touched upon these points, which I shall prove are right in line with the forward-thinking policies of the Australian Labor

Party. If they are put into operation, they will solve many of the problems that local government is now wrestling with and that are causing it to head towards bankruptcy. In offering criticism, I do not want to be misconstrued; I am not criticising public servants. As a matter of fact I compliment them, if for no other reason, on managing to do so well under such restrictive, outdated policies as those that are imposed upon them by the Country Party-dominated Government of this State.

Mr. Sherrington: Do you say, "It's time"?

Mr. BALDWIN: It's time that Labor had a chance to operate in the Federal sphere and solve what the State Government has failed to solve. As all of us here know—and perhaps knew before entering Parliament—the State Government is driving local government to its death.

The cost of administration of the Department of Local Government has increased by more than 5 per cent, compared with 7 per cent in 1971-72. That seems rather strange in itself. There could be reasons for it that I have been unable to find. The 1968-69 Commonwealth Year Book is the latest giving complete figures on local government activities, mainly because of this Government's slowness in providing later figures—and everybody knows as well as I do why that is so. However, according to those figures, the total expenditure of local government in Queensland was \$305,000,000. That amount is double what was spent on education, which is the avenue of highest State expenditure and accounts for 25 per cent of the total State Budget, and is almost half the \$679,000,000 spent by this Government from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

I am setting out to prove that the responsibilities and importance of local government, to use the Minister's own words, are increasing. Judging by what the Government has put forward, even in the short time that I have been a member of Parliament, the Government does not realise that fact. Far from doing its best to help in any way, the Government imposes upon local government a structure that belongs to the horse-and-buggy days of last century.

The summary of all funds shows that the estimated expenditure on Local Government and Electricity is \$32,500,000. By far the greater part of that amount will be spent on the Gladstone Power Station. The Opposition does not object to that; in fact it is terrific. But it does not leave much for the ratepayers in the Gladstone district who are, in their rates, carrying the burden of this vast expansion in their area. This huge scheme is being undertaken for the benefit of a five-party consortium—Comalco—and from the scheme the workers of this State will receive only the nugatory benefit of wages in a structure of high inflation, high taxes and high rates. This, of course, is their share of this vast expenditure at Gladstone.

The importance of the Valuer-General's Department on the general economy of the State cannot be overstressed in these times of financial strain on local authorities and ratepayers, especially household ratepayers. I was very interested to hear the Minister refer to the current methods of valuing. I remind him of Labor policy on differential rating and valuation. I have been intrigued for over 12 months to know what happened to the committee set up in 1970 to report on the principles of rating. I should be interested to know whether it ever presented a report. This matter affects every member of this Parliament and, indeed, every one of our constituents.

The activities of land developers, shire councils, and, most of all, the land "sharks", or speculators, have all combined, in the absence of modern legislation, to create one of the greatest single areas of inflation, at least in the State of Queensland. Approximately 13 per cent of the growth rate of inflation stems from this activity alone. Of course, any attempt to arrest this trend meets a brick wall of opposition erected by the Government. Nevertheless, it is on record that there is great dissatisfaction with the present position, and this has been expressed at the time of every revaluation that has been carried out, particularly the last one, in this State.

The shire councils have risen in rebellion against the present antiquated system. The system even put the State into the position of having to refund excess rates that were paid as a result of valuations that were not wrong in law but were wrong in the eyes of the people and many of the shire councils that are the main defence bastions of the Country Party. The necessity to change the basis of valuation for rateable purposes is now most apparent, but I do not think that the Country Party-dominated Government has the desire or the ability to restructure the principles of valuation for rating purposes.

The Minister's remarks concerning the 1944 Act, and what preceded it, were most interesting. They were also very significant, because after 1944 the shires were left with a considerable backlog of war-caused poverty and neglect. It was understandable that this should follow a time of national emergency, and it is no use blaming a Labor Government for it. Let honourable members opposite blame their friends, the Japanese, whose interests they now espouse, and whom they now clutch to their bosoms. The main problem then facing local authorities was to find a way of getting out of financial difficulties without making themselves unpopular with their ratepayers. They applied heavy pressure on the Labor Government of the day to take over the responsibility of valuing, because farmers, who accounted for 84 per cent of the local authority membership at that time, did not want their ratepayers placing on their shoulders the blame for

revaluations, and, consequently, higher rates. They shifted that responsibility to the State Labor Government of the day.

I am quite aware of what happened in 1970. Many shires objected to valuations, and they were bludgeoned into silence by the threat that the present Government would hand back to them the duty of carrying out valuations. This burden could not be borne by the local authorities. Of course, it was only a bluff, anyway. Had the duty of valuing been returned to shire councils, there would have been very quick changes in many of them, and the Country Party Government would have lost its main prop in the shires.

Great problems are therefore presented by the method of valuing, and by the way in which people themselves influence the values placed on their properties. Despite anything that is put in black and white in legislation, one thing to which I propose to refer now will always happen. Many people are being displaced by such happenings as the growth of industrial areas and the development of freeways, and they are moving into new areas. These people who have been so displaced are, in desperation, having to buy land in high-cost areas. This movement to other areas is taking place today more than ever before, and, because of the cleverly contrived, artificial control of land-selling in the shires, people have to pay high prices for their land. Therefore, the Valuer-General has no alternative but to value on that buy-in price, paid in desperation and because of an artificial shortage. He is not to blame. It is the fault of the Government, which has failed to legislate for the new conditions.

Of course, the shires themselves also experience great trouble because of these explosions of development. As a result, they are at their wits' end to know how to get the money they need. This problem must be considered very carefully.

Honourable members opposite may boast all they like about Queensland, but let us have a look at the 1971 Commonwealth Year Book, giving the 1968-69 figures. Briefly, it shows facts such as these: that Queensland local authorities spent approximately \$32,000,000 on improvements to council properties alone; that they had the second highest absolute loan indebtedness of all the States, being \$422,000,000; and that they had by far the highest debt per head, which at \$234, as against the next highest, New South Wales, with \$162, or \$72 less, is almost 100 per cent above the national average.

That is what Queensland local authorities are carrying as a burden, and the annual interest bill on that is \$23,200,000 a year, or almost 23 per cent of the total revenue acquired by Queensland local authorities from all sources. Loan redemptions, etc., totalled about \$82,000,000. Added to the interest bill, this means that, even including all the subsidies that local authorities receive from the

State through the Commonwealth, plus the amount they receive as loan moneys through the States from the Commonwealth, 33 per cent of the total annual income of Queensland local authorities goes into redemptions, sinking funds, and interest. What a highly inefficient way to work! And the position is getting worse at the rate of about 10.7 per cent per annum.

You can see, Mr. Lickiss, why the Local Authorities Association Conference in Rockhampton earlier this year passed a motion at the behest of Queensland local authorities stating that it would campaign for direct representation on the Australian Loan Council and for Federal grants instead of having local authority money given back to it in loans. Of course, that has been the policy of the Australian Labor Party for the last six years, and it still is its policy. In effect, the Local Government Association is now campaigning on Labor's policy in this respect—and it is about time. The Australian Labor Party will be on the Federal Treasury benches after next Saturday and will be controlling Loan Council policy, and I am sure that local governments, or their representatives, will be invited to put their case direct to the Loan Council.

I referred a little earlier to the effect on the local shires of this vast explosion of development and the deliberately contrived shortage of land. Mr. Lickiss, you have read in the newspapers and heard in this Chamber how some members of local government have tried by roundabout means to lighten the burden on ratepayers and decrease the local authority debt by passing costs through the developers onto the heads of the incoming people, who are not looked upon as ratepayers and residents until they come into the shires. These are the people who will bear the burden into the future, unless something is done about it.

We heard the Minister outline earlier how he is going to improve a centralised service for local government, with computers and so on, here in Brisbane. This points to the very important fact that local governments are handicapped in solving their own problems not only by a lack of finance but also because the Government has failed to update them and provide them with top-quality services and equipment. I remind the Government that, although it says that it is in favour of decentralisation, it proposes to centralise these services in Brisbane.

The only real answer lies in setting up regional councils and reducing the number of local authorities from 131 to a manageable number that will still be sufficiently large to enable the electorate to elect good councillors, pay good staff, and also pay their councillors over a long period, in order to get the best from them. Regional councils should also be made statutory bodies, so that councillors would have protection at council meetings and would be able to reveal any snide practices being perpetrated against the council by

land "sharks", or even by councillors themselves, as honourable members have heard in this Chamber. The only way to achieve that is to let councillors speak under privilege.

The honourable member for Brisbane outlined how an alderman in the Gold Coast City Council was silenced by a writ. The same thing happened to Councillor Venardos of the Maroochy Shire. He was ordered to shut up under threat of writ. It is all bound up with the economic structure of the local shires.

The only way out of it is for somebody to rally enough support for a commission of inquiry or a judicial inquiry where full protection would be given to those who gave evidence. It is too risky for people to step forward and give evidence at the moment. If protection and privilege were given to shire councils, such an inquiry would not be necessary. Councillor Venardos in the Maroochy Shire unearthed a scandal, but he was stopped from airing it by threat of writ. He did not have an opportunity to speak under privilege. If anybody in the Chamber does not think that there is a need for a commission of inquiry or an open judicial inquiry on privilege, I challenge him to read the documents I have here. I table them for the information of everyone in the Chamber.

A Government Member: We don't want to see them.

Mr. BALDWIN: Of course not. He is an ostrich.

Because of the situation that applies to shires now, that kind of thing can happen. I am not pointing my finger so much at the speculators on a legal matter, or at the councillors who are forced to close their eyes to this method of obtaining more money; I am pointing my finger directly at the outmoded Government policy of valuing under the cold local government structure, which must go.

I will not have sufficient time to get through them all, but I will start reading from these documents. I ask those who do not read "Hansard", and those who usually do the ostrich act, not to plug up their ears. The document headed "Frith Deal" states—

"Cr. McLuskie (Real Estate Agent) acquires option for Security Options P/L, tells Frith that it is a Brisbane solicitor who is buying the property, and did not say that Cr. Parker was involved. Security Options P/L takes Option to Purchase on 26th November, 1971, as per Caveat No. E182821. Frith was fooled into applying for rezoning—his application was heard on 11th January, 1972—150 acres were rezoned to Residential A."

(Time expired.)

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (2.43 p.m.): Nobody would want to suggest that this is a minor or inadequate portfolio as it now operates. One would be very foolish to do this, because local government is one of the

most sensitive and important areas of public administration. More than any other portfolio in the Queensland Cabinet, local government now needs considerable upgrading. I think this will inevitably occur because of inexorable pressures during the coming years of urbanisation and the technical sophistication in the growth of city services.

I see a very major role for this department—even more major than it is playing at present. I see it as the pivot for broad concepts of regional planning. It has a role to give advice, to give assistance and to exercise control in terms of town planning throughout the State, including Greater Brisbane.

When I look at the Estimates for this department, I regret to see that, of a total salary bill of nearly \$1,000,000, there is only one planning officer, on a salary of a little over \$10,000 p.a. I am quite sure that in this area there will have to be greatly increased staff and expertise in the fields of town and regional planning.

I wish to pay a very real tribute to the Minister, who came to this office in a particularly difficult time. Soon after taking office, he had the City of Brisbane Act Amendment Bill dumped in his lap. That was rather a hot potato, but he was firm and thoughtful throughout what appeared to be a very difficult controversy. He certainly was not upset by the extraordinary Press campaign, which involved a total reversal of all its previous opinions.

The Minister really had his baptism of fire, and he came through it very well indeed. Judged by the real public feeling which has been evident since, as distinct from the phoney public feeling whipped up by the Press, his judgment was correct. If any honourable gentleman opposite believes that what he did had an adverse affect on the Government's fortunes, although I do not like to predict the result of any election, I will say that, whatever may be the Australian result in the forthcoming Federal election, the result in Queensland for the present Government will be better than the Australian average.

I now want to say something about local government generally in this country. Queensland, like the rest of Australia, had to draw very heavily during the last century on United Kingdom experience, and from all British sources, when local government structures were being provided. Because of that, there seems to be developing over the last few weeks—it might have something to do with the fact that a Federal election is in the offing—a suggestion that we should vastly change the local government structure in Queensland and the rest of Australia. This means that all we would be doing would be something akin to what has been done in Great Britain, namely, providing the same sort of local authorities as exist there. Let us be quite sure on this point. This is a very different country from Great Britain, and for anybody to suggest that we could do

things to local authorities here that would bring them into line with those in the United Kingdom is quite specious and misleading.

Mr. Baldwin: Who suggested that?

Mr. PORTER: The honourable member's good friend, Mr. Whitlam, has suggested it, and I will deal with it in a moment.

"Spann" is the standard textbook on public administration, and, in the section on local government, this point is made—

"It is misleading to assume that the British or some other system of local government is a perfect model which Australia has unfortunately failed to copy.

"Even if local government in Britain or elsewhere seems to have advantages, some of the conditions are unique and not easily reproduced. Local government in Britain is the second, not the third, level of government."

That is very important. We have to remember that in this country local government takes its place—a very necessary and useful place—in a Federal system. It is the third tier of Government, not the second tier. I want to emphasise, too, that when we speak of local government in Australia we are speaking of quite a variety of things and organisations. Local government in Australia refers not to one organisation but to a great number of different organisations, and they vary quite enormously in type and in the problems they have to face.

Each State has a different pattern in its local government system. For instance, in one State, election to chairmanship or mayoralty is by direct vote; in other States, it is not. We have made a start on the process in Queensland, but this is only one State. In some States, certain types of works are kept strictly outside local government ambit. In others, they are put inside. So there is a considerable variety of local government organisations, and any proposal to do something for local government in general ignores these district, regional and local characteristics which, I submit, are very prime parts of successful operation by local government.

Local Government has responsibilities that are very close to the people. It has a number of what one might call housekeeping jobs to do, such as the provision of street lighting, the disposal of garbage, cleaning work, and so on. It also has to perform a number of what one might call protective services. It has to check cleanliness in shops, supervise the handling of food in cafes, and so forth. Moreover, it engages in a number of welfare and cultural activities, such as the provision of libraries and playing fields. Progressively, local government is moving more and more into these fields of responsibility. But, in addition, one major role of local government that has assumed greater importance over the last decade or two is that of town planner. Very properly, responsibility for town planning is associated with local government.

I am sure that, when considering the position of local government in Queensland in the context of what, traditionally, local government does and what more it has to do in terms of change, and when considering the tremendous pressures of change due to urbanisation, the need to rehabilitate existing cities and to provide new urban accommodation, we would have no doubt whatever that the Queensland Local Government Department has a huge task ahead of it. I am sure the Minister will agree with that contention. Because of that, the whole structure of local government in this State needs strengthening at all levels. It must be provided with access to sources of revenue other than those in existence at present.

Those local authorities that have a big developmental job to do in the interests of tourism or other activities should be seen in a different light from those that have only the more traditional role to play.

The role of town planning is perhaps the one that will be most vital to the great majority of people in the years to come. To the Minister and his officers I express the hope that, as we move into planning, we try to avoid the mistakes that are so evident around us in this city of Brisbane. In other words, planning has to be for people, not for the few persons who want to make a profit out of some form of planning and development.

Above all, local government should have no desire to impose uniformity and conformity simply because it is easy to impose those things. For the life of me, I cannot see what is wrong with some narrow streets in which there are houses slightly out of alignment. They have a charm and individuality that is their own. Such things can be seen in many old cities throughout the world. I think we suffer greatly from the belief that "planning" means that everything must be done in much the same way for everybody.

Approximately two months ago Mr. Stretton, who is chairman of the Housing Trust in South Australia, made a very strong plea at a seminar on planning for a withdrawal from this stultifying concept that everything that is planned should be uniform. Such a concept is both foolish and dangerous.

I stress all these points because it is essential that everybody associated with local government affairs—many honourable members on both sides of the Chamber have had considerable association with local government—should take care not to be charmed by the siren song that the A.L.P. is singing for Saturday's Federal election. Labor makes the suggestion that the problems confronting local government are only monetary ones, and that by giving local authorities direct access to the Loan Council as well as to specific grants it will put an end to all those problems and will cure its ills. This is not only foolish; it is also very dangerous.

As I have said before, in Australia we have a Federal system and every test of it in the 70 years of Federalism has shown that, by an overwhelming majority, the people want a Federal system. In this system, local government is the third and personal tier of government. It is, of course, necessarily the creation of various sovereign State governments.

Every power that local government has, every function it discharges and every responsibility it accepts is delegated to it by a State Government. The suggestion that in financial terms local government should assume equality with and compete against State Governments at Loan Council meetings would, if implemented, result in a huge change in the Federal system without altering even one word or one syllable in the Commonwealth Constitution. To local authorities who are beset by a rising tide of budgetary problems this may appear very attractive. But is it? If over 1,000 local authorities in Australia—of that number, only 131 are in Queensland—are all to be permitted to clamour for more finance at the Loan Council, who will determine what proposals should get priority of treatment? Does anyone imagine that true merit will be the criterion of the decisions made? Does any one of us seriously believe that the big States will not use all the muscle they have to ensure that their local authorities get the lion's share of whatever funds are available to municipalities?

This has been the problem in the financial arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States for many years. It is the wildest fancy to imagine that anything will change, except for the worse, with far more centralised government in Canberra—as proposed by the A.L.P.—which would mean reducing the States to mere appendages of the central Government. I simply cannot see under this system how a central financial body can possibly give adequate consideration to, and make proper decisions on, these domestic problems that local authorities are trying to deal with in detail.

Mr. Gunn: It would kill our council.

Mr. PORTER: The whole purpose of it is to make councils dependent—to get them in the net of dependency and then choke them off so that there will be no true States and no true councils—simply a Government in Canberra.

Without doubt, Labor's policy in this election takes us further than we have been since Dr. Evatt's infamous powers referendum of some thirty years ago, which was designed to implement Labor's socialistic and centralistic aims. This sop now being offered to local authorities is a mere berley, cast in the hope of landing the big fish in the net.

The point is that we cannot trust Labour's intention. To be quite plain on this, I have no doubt whatever that the proposal to make local governments directly dependent

on the central Government is a means designed to make them eventually wither on the vine—make them dependent and they wither. In the process, State sovereignty will have been killed and there would then be nothing to stand in the way of totally central, across-the-board decisions.

We must remember that every honourable member opposite—and Mr. Whitlam is included—is pledged to a explicit promise, in these terms—

“I pledge myself to actively support and advocate at all times the Party's objective . . . the socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange.”

The other day I quoted Labor's platform, which sets out the procedures by which a Labor Government would expand its powers to implement the socialist objective. It includes national planning of the economic, social and cultural development of the Commonwealth. If anyone involved in local government believes that the best interests of local bodies will be served by local bodies being smothered in this vast, amorphous, uncaring bureaucracy in Canberra, I suggest that he think again.

Napoleon, in talking of his campaign victories, used to say that God marched on the side of big battalions. I think that exactly the same thing applies in the matter of financial preferment from Canberra. Those who have the power, those who have the numbers and those with the most political weight will undoubtedly get the largest share of the cake.

I cannot imagine that any responsible man or woman involved in local government will be so misled as to believe that his particular concerns and best interests would be better dealt with by a central Government—where Queensland will have only 18 out of 124 members—than by a State Government where all 82 members have to ensure that they get a majority of local approval to be re-elected. Obviously these extremely sensitive, domestic problems will be better coped with by those with more immediate and direct responsibilities to the electors.

Finally, I wish to refer very briefly to the City of Brisbane, which, as everyone knows, I regard as a grotesque parody of local government. I think it is a type of operation that is neither fish, flesh nor fowl and, because of that, it has been able to develop submerged activities that are as difficult to observe as the Loch Ness monster. What this Government has done is to bring the City of Brisbane back into the real field of local government. It is an excellent start, and I personally hope that much more will be done. Quite recently in the Press, the Minister referred to the very pressing problems of city growth. It is very good to see him referring to these great problems. It is essential, when one considers the end result of unbridled growth in our capital city, that this type of consideration should be extended to it.

For many years, Brisbane has been a very sorry victim of non-planning. We have a City of Brisbane plan that is nothing but a series of zoning propositions. It has no more relationship to true planning than—I shall not proceed with the analogy but, without doubt, the City of Brisbane plan is not a plan at all. This has meant that the city has been developed in particular areas for the profit of a favoured few. We have had a kind of pressure-cooker development in new areas, with all costs being passed on by a handful of developers, who are the new wealthy class in our community—and very wealthy they are. So that, increasingly, land prices are artificially inflated. This places a huge burden on all young people who want to own a home.

Of course, this suits the type of council that we have, because on these inflated values it has a source of expanding revenue. Because of the obsession of the present administration for spectacular projects which do nothing but mar the development of the city, it has stumbled from financial crisis to financial crisis. The Treasurer has in recent times explained to Parliament how the Government has been impelled to rescue the council from time to time to preserve the city's financial good name.

And so I say that the Minister and his officers, in view of the tremendous changes which inevitably will occur in the shape, scope, and purpose of local government throughout the State, have a huge job to do. Perhaps the biggest job of all that they will face, in view of what has happened here, is the task of getting the City of Brisbane back onto the rails. As a new Minister, the honourable gentleman has made a splendid and courageous start. I wish him well.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (3.3 p.m.): It would be well-nigh impossible, in the short time available, to deal with all aspects of these very important Estimates. During the Minister's introduction of them, I took copious notes. I realise that I will not be able to use all of my notes, so I have deleted most of them and will now deal only with the most important points. At the outset, I express my appreciation to the staff of the Department of Local Government. They have always been ready, willing, efficient and very co-operative whenever I have sought information and guidance on a particular problem.

For the past 10 years, many requests have been made throughout Queensland for the setting up of a research group to ascertain all the basic data required for a complete review of local government in this State. Local government in Queensland no longer matches the activities of the people generally. As one travels throughout the State and comes into contact with various local authorities, one realises how far Queensland is behind other States, and other parts of the world for that matter, in the administration of local government. Nothing short of a proper study, under the heading of a

survey of all local councils, their functions, organisations and man-power, will provide justice for local authorities, which, at the present time, are experiencing great difficulty and hardship.

While speaking about a review and a survey, I wonder how much longer the Minister will allow the present situation at the Gold Coast to continue. It is a very serious state of affairs. The Gold Coast City Council is not just one of the city councils in Australia; it is a very important council, and it has the eyes of the world on it. While all the current talk and wrangling continues, the Gold Coast suffers in many ways. It is the most important tourist area in Australia, and its prestige in the eyes of the world is suffering from what is going on in the Gold Coast City Council. A complete investigation of the whole ramifications of the council should be made as soon as possible.

I am not being party political in this matter; I am speaking seriously as one who has a close working knowledge of the Gold Coast area. Honourable members move around during parliamentary recesses, and in other parts of Australia we hear comments about the Gold Coast City Council. If one hears these things in this country, goodness knows what is being said outside it, and goodness knows what damage is being done. I ask the Minister to give serious consideration to a full investigation of the activities of the Gold Coast City Council.

Mr. Lane: Tell us about the Sandgate swimming pool.

Mr. DEAN: I wish I could, but it is impossible to deal with everything in the short time available. There are many matters that I could raise if there was no time restriction.

I must make some reference to the Litter Act, which was passed last year. It is one of the worst pieces of legislation ever brought down in this State. Many laws that have been passed over the years have looked all right on paper, but, in their application, they proved to be bad laws. The Litter Act is one piece of legislation that is not working.

Mr. Lane: Can you explain why?

Mr. DEAN: A careful perusal of the Act will show not only the pooriness of the legislation, but also why there has been almost no implementation of it.

Mr. Lane: Why?

Mr. DEAN: I wish I could tell the honourable member why, but I have not sufficient time. I have to skim over this matter very quickly.

The Litter Act is typical of the weak and poorly prepared legislation that has been regularly introduced by the Government on many matters. It is a common criticism of the Government that its legislation is ill-prepared and, in some cases, little short of bad law. One of the worst examples of this is the Litter Act passed in 1971. It was proclaimed, and its commencing date was

1 September of last year. It provides certain authorities to "authorised persons". These include, in respect of any public place, members of the Police Force, and, in a public place under the control of the local authority, persons appointed by that authority and also persons appointed to have authority in other places. I am actually referring now to the legislation.

So far as local authorities are concerned, a council may appoint inspectors as authorised persons under the Act. Once having done so, the deficiency in the Act becomes apparent. Where can these inspectors exercise their authority—in a public place? One then must immediately ask, "What is a public place?"

Mr. Lane: It is defined in many Acts.

Mr. DEAN: I have had considerable discussion with competent legal men on this Act, and I am referring to a few of the points that I noted from those conversations.

Under the Act, a public place is defined as "A road dedicated to public use or open to use by the public whether upon payment of a toll or as of right and a place of public resort open to use by the public as of right."

Mr. Lane: That is the common description of a public place.

Mr. DEAN: The honourable member should go outside this Chamber and try to implement that definition.

"Place of public resort" has been the subject of various legal interpretations. It has been legally defined as "a place to which the public resort, in fact, even though not of right". On the other hand, other legal authorities have said that a public highway is merely a place to which people have a right to go. It is not necessarily a place of public resort. I have been told by people outside this Chamber who are competent in the interpretation of the law that it is very difficult to act on it.

All this is a matter of great legal argument and concerns us only in that it indicates a basic weakness in the use of words in the construction of the Act. It has been pointed out that, even on the widest of definitions, the Act restricts the interpretation of what is a public resort to require it to be one as of right. It is felt that the courts would adopt a wide interpretation, but questions of fact will arise which will make prosecutions extremely difficult. That is why local authorities will not undertake prosecutions.

Mr. Lane: That is absolute rubbish.

Mr. DEAN: The results achieved so far under the Act do not indicate that it is rubbish. It was proclaimed last September—over 12 months ago—and what has happened since?

One example was given to me to try to simplify the provisions of the complicated Act that was passed in this Chamber. Taking

Mt. Coot-tha as an example, do the public resort to the whole area, or only to certain parts of it? Do they go there as of right?

Mr. Lane: They should get some decent inspectors.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order!

Honourable Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I am calling for order on both sides of the Chamber.

Mr. DEAN: Furthermore, half of the area is owned by the Brisbane City Council. If it came to a question of law in a prosecution involving such land, could it be said that the public have an actual right to go there? The Act does not cover that position. A person can litter all he likes and throw rubbish all round the place.

Mr. McKechnie: The Pine Rivers Shire Council has carried it out successfully.

Mr. DEAN: I do recall one action in the Pine Rivers area in which the magistrate was courageous enough—I give him full marks for it—to fine the person concerned \$100.

Mr. Lane: It works, then.

Mr. DEAN: I suppose it worked in that case because the person concerned could not afford to challenge the law on appeal. The easiest way out is to pay up if a charge is laid. Many councils would not take the risk of laying a charge because they do not want to be dragged into court and be faced with the fact that the Act is not quite sound legally and with having to pay costs.

Next, we should examine the extent of the "authorised persons, authorities and powers". If a person throws something onto the roadway—say, a cigarette butt or a match stick—he may be stopped by an inspector or a policeman and asked for his name and address. If he refuses to give it, he may be taken to a police station and detained there until he gives his full name and address. What happens after that? If he does not give his full name and address, nothing can happen.

Mr. Davis: Some members of the Special Branch are doing that now.

Mr. DEAN: I do not know what members of the Special Branch are doing, but I am being guided by people who are far more knowledgeable in the law than I am. I do not claim to be a legal authority; I am only a layman.

The whole idea of the Litter Act was supposed to be simplicity and to provide for some quick action on the litter problem. Provision was made for on-the-spot penalties of \$10, with a ticket similar to a parking ticket, and it is in respect to these important provisions that greatest issue must be taken. Most people who receive a ticket will, of course, pay the fine. If, under the Act,

they refuse to do so, they will be prosecuted and found either guilty or not guilty as the facts determine. On the other hand, as was pointed out by my legal friend, it would be quite wrong if, because of the weakness of the Act, anyone who is prepared to contest the charge has a fair chance of getting off, and this appears to be the situation at present. What a disgrace that is! It is a reflection on the Government, if anything is.

Mr. Lane: Why would they automatically get off?

Mr. DEAN: I cannot go into the details. I am bringing this forward to provoke some thought in the minds of honourable members opposite and get them to do something about this Act, which, in the eyes of people outside this Chamber, is a foolish Act. Everybody is waiting for something to be done about litter in the community, and the problem is becoming bigger day by day. I bring this viewpoint forward with the idea of getting the Act amended as quickly as possible. It ought to be brought back to this place, and we should be guided not only by the Parliamentary Draftsman but also by people outside who say that the Act cannot work.

Instead of providing a simple and easy means of overcoming the litter problem, the Act has caused numerous other problems. It has been summarised as a lot of sound and fury. When the Bill was introduced we made a great song and dance about it, but many of us thought it was a move in the right direction. Now that we find that the Act will not work, why should we sit back and do nothing about it? I ask the Government to have courage enough to own up to its mistake and admit that it is bad legislation. I do not want it to be construed that I am casting any reflection on the Parliamentary Draftsman. He can only do what he is told to do. He must have received advice from Government members and drafted the legislation according to the information given to him. I am not casting reflections on a top public servant like the Parliamentary Draftsman. Indeed, I have the highest regard for him.

Many local authorities throughout Queensland have indicated, for either legal or moral reasons, that they are loath to act under the present circumstances. Surely we have not lost all morality in the community, even though some people would like to drop all morals. Most councils wish to uphold a moral code, and they do not think it is right that they should bring pressure to bear by way of prosecutions under bad legislation. Many councillors have said to me, "We don't like condoning offences but neither do we like using this legislation, knowing that unless an offender takes the line of least resistance and pays up there is little chance of his being convicted." The Act is bad law, and it creates a very undesirable moral situation for those charged with its enforcement.

The Minister mentioned the City of Brisbane Act and referred to the Brisbane City Council. I was reminded of the distressing experience a few weeks ago when legislation was introduced to break up the Brisbane City Council. Again I express my disappointment at the Government's action in bringing down legislation to restructure the Brisbane City Council. That legislation reduced the number of wards from 28 to 21, and altered the system of electing the Lord Mayor from a direct public vote to the aldermen's choice. Brisbane is the only local authority area in Queensland where that applies. Nobody can tell me that it is fair and just legislation.

I have travelled extensively throughout the State since that legislation was passed. People in every city and town have openly and frankly said that it appeared to them that the main purpose of the Bill was to destroy the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Clem Jones. We on this side said that when the Bill was introduced. In all my travels throughout Queensland and Australia, I have found that the name of Clem Jones is held in the highest regard in local government circles.

Compare the Brisbane of today with Brisbane as it was prior to the election of Clem Jones. Every fair-minded person must admit that outstanding development has taken place under his guidance. Many people have said that without doubt he is the most outstanding Lord Mayor and the most competent local government man in Australia at the present time. His record in sewerage reticulation alone would be sufficient to convince anyone of that. Virtually 90 per cent of Brisbane is sewered. Many cities in Australia—in fact, many cities in much older countries in other parts of the world—are sewered to a much less extent than Brisbane. I can instance my own electorate of Sandgate, which is completely sewered. We waited for 40 years for sewerage reticulation in the Sandgate area. During that time there was much talk and numerous plans were drawn up, but no other action was taken to give us this very essential amenity. I repeat, Sandgate today is a completely sewered area. I have been told—not by Alderman Clem Jones—that the sewerage scheme at Sandgate is virtually paid off. I stand to be corrected on that because the information did not come from Alderman Clem Jones; I am simply repeating what I have been told.

This Government's attempt to destroy Lord Mayor Jones must ultimately denigrate the Brisbane city area. This is evident to any thinking person. One only has to look around the city and compare the position now with that existing in years gone by. I was elected to the Brisbane City Council with my good friend and colleague the honourable member for Stafford in 1952, when Mr. Frank Roberts was Lord Mayor, and I am sure the honourable member will support me in saying that at that time the condition of the city was vastly different from what it is today.

(Time expired.)

Hon. H. A. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon—Minister for Local Government and Electricity) (3.22 p.m.): The honourable member for Redlands raised the matter of land costs, particularly in Brisbane.

Mr. Marginson: Aren't you concerned about them?

Mr. McKECHNIE: I am concerned about the cost of land, and there are many factors affecting it. The Brisbane City Council is one of those factors, as the honourable member for Redlands said.

Mr. BALDWIN: I rise to a point of order. I made a general statement. The Minister is putting words into my mouth and I ask that they be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. McKECHNIE: The statement was that costs had gone up, and I agree with the honourable member. I repeat that there are many factors causing this increase. I have not time to go into all of them, but the conditions imposed by the Brisbane City Council constitute one of the reasons for land price rises in this city. That cannot be denied. The conditions placed upon subdividers provide one of the reasons, and this situation does not apply only to Brisbane. Like everybody else in this Chamber, I should like to see the cost of land as low as possible for those who wish to build.

The honourable member also raised the point that the owners of land were bludgeoned into silence by threats from the Valuer-General's Department that the right of objection would be taken away. Actually, we have extended the conditions.

Mr. BALDWIN: I rise to a point of order. Again the Minister is erroneously misquoting me. I said that the State Government—

Mr. Wright interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Rockhampton—

Mr. Wright: Yes, Mr. Lickiss?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Since the honourable member has asked me, I tell him that I am fed up with him interjecting when another member is taking a point of order. I would expect him to have at least enough courtesy to remain silent while a member on his own side of the Chamber was taking a point of order.

Mr. BALDWIN: The Minister said that I accused the State Government of bludgeoning local government authorities—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member has no valid point of order.

Mr. McKECHNIE: As I was saying, the honourable member claimed that this bludgeoning threat was made. Actually, the opposite is the case. In order to help these people, the Valuer-General's Department has extended the time for objection from 42 to 60 days, so there is no question of any bludgeoning.

The honourable member also said that New South Wales costs per capita, per block, or per household, were so much lower than local authority charges in Queensland. I have not investigated his figures, but the task of comparing the per-capita debt of Queensland local authorities with those of other States is complicated by the fact that in other States water supply, sewerage, transport and electricity—particularly in the Sydney metropolitan area—are not functions of the local authority, and, consequently, charges for these services are not added to the debt. If those costs were superimposed upon the New South Wales per-capita debt, it would be much higher than the Queensland figure.

The honourable member for Redlands also claimed that we were working against decentralisation. He introduced this matter from a political angle, but it is Mr. Whitlam, not us, who is opposed to decentralisation.

Mr. Knox: He said he was.

Mr. McKECHNIE: That is so. He is a centralist and is on record as stating quite clearly that he wants to get rid of the States and local authorities and, in their place, establish a provincial system. I challenge the honourable member for Redlands to refute my claim. Because Mr. Whitlam has stated the policy of the Labor Party to centralise everything in Canberra and wipe out the local authorities, I know that the honourable member cannot do so. Mr. Whitlam's idea of setting up a provincial system is completely foreign and adverse to the thinking of Queenslanders.

I thank the honourable member for Toowong for his complimentary remarks. He told the Committee that the people of Brisbane believe that the recent amendments to the City of Brisbane Act were wise and correct ones. The only criticism that I have received since the introduction of the amending Bill was a friendly attack on the Government for not having introduced the legislation five years ago. The Lord Mayor has plunged the city of Brisbane into financial chaos, and the citizens of Brisbane now realise that the Bill should have been introduced a long time ago. Although strong opposition was voiced to the Bill at the time of its introduction, its critics have now realised that it was long overdue.

I agree with the honourable member for Toowoong that more planners are needed. We have received Cabinet approval to appoint another planner and an additional clerk, but even more are needed. A lot of planning needs to be done in both Brisbane and the other local authority areas throughout Queensland.

I thank the honourable member for Sandgate for his complimentary remarks about the staffs of my three departments. I agree wholeheartedly that I am fortunate to have under my control such officers. Between us we will carry on the good work that I am sure the honourable member for Sandgate would concede we are currently doing.

He mentioned a Gold Coast problem without specifically stating it. I am aware of two or three problems confronting the Gold Coast. I have received requests from various people to dissolve certain local authorities, such as the councils of the city of Brisbane, the Pine Rivers Shire, and the city of Gold Coast. I have resisted those requests. In four months' time the local authority elections will be held. In those areas where there is discord, I trust that it will be resolved at the elections. I do not regard the present time as being opportune for drastic moves. I have a job to do in certain departments, and I must do it, but it is the people who will indicate on 31 March where they wish to go.

As to the reference by the honourable member for Sandgate to the Litter Act, local authorities have sufficient power under that Act. In fact, the local authorities in the city of Gold Coast, the Redlands Shire and the Pine Rivers Shire have exercised that power and launched successful prosecutions. They have proved the point that local authority areas can be cleaned up. Of course, I realise that the Lord Mayor of Brisbane does not wish to have the odium associated with the policing of the Litter Act.

Contrary to the claim of the honourable member for Sandgate that we have broken up Brisbane, we have not reduced it in size or taken away any of the council's powers. What we did was put an end to the Lord Mayor's dictatorship and give his aldermen the opportunity of exercising their democratic rights, which, previously, they did not possess.

Mr. Houston: What about the people?

Mr. McKECHNIE: On 31 March the people will have the opportunity to elect their aldermen, who, in turn, will exert some influence on the Lord Mayor. No longer will he be a god above them.

VOTES PASSED UNDER STANDING ORDER No. 307 AND SESSIONAL ORDER

At 3.30 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 25 October, the questions for the following Votes were put by the Chairman and agreed to:—

	\$
Local Government and Electricity—	
Department of Local Government	1,230,767
Balance of Vote, Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account	31,209,460
Executive and Legislative, Balance of Vote	854,358
Premier	4,019,128
The Treasurer	59,065,369
Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs	11,949,900
Mines and Main Roads	3,429,348
Primary Industries	12,013,420
Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services	14,424,456
Transport	1,682,390
Works and Housing	48,027,573
The Auditor-General	891,026
Railways	138,260,000
Trust and Special Funds Estimates, Balance of Estimates	463,563,217
Loan Fund Account Estimates, Balance of Estimates	126,231,000
Supplementary Estimates (Consolidated Revenue), 1971-72	37,717,600.07
Supplementary Estimates (Trust and Special Funds), 1971-72	10,129,988.79
Supplementary Estimates (Loan Fund Account), 1971-72	18,169,421.85
Vote on Account, 1973-74	224,000,000

SEVENTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY—RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions reported and, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, received.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS

The Resolutions being taken as read—

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier): I move—

“That the Resolutions be now agreed to.”

Honourable members indicating a desire to discuss certain Resolutions—

Resolution 1 agreed to.

Resolution 2—Lands and Forestry—

Mr. CORY (Warwick) (3.40 p.m.): I wish to discuss this resolution because I believe that there are many things happening in the

Lands Department at present that relate to policy, and make it very important that there be continuity of administration and advice throughout the department. I think all members will agree that many changes have been made, and that there has been much progress in land administration in recent years. It is therefore particularly important that there be continuity of influence, thought and administration.

I should like to say how very sorry I am that Mr. Cochrane's death cut short his service as a member of the Land Administration Commission. In view of his experience and his approach to land matters, it is very regrettable.

It is particularly pleasing to see Mr. Johnston and Mr. O'Gorman as members of the Land Administration Commission. These officers have had a long and close association with the administration of the Lands Department. They have been associated with the framing of many new policies, in conjunction with the Minister of the day, and it is gratifying that their experience is still available to help bring these new policies to fruition.

The policies that have been developed over the last five or six years are proving to be very beneficial, and they are producing the results envisaged when they were formulated. The broad policy of the Lands Department has changed from a socialistic one to one in which the viability, ownership and security of the land are the prime factors. This policy has been implemented under freehold land tenure. Under the leasehold tenure system, it was impossible to have the same degree of viability, ownership and security. The present policy is based on reward for effort and money spent. This is quite contrary to the socialistic scheme under which in the past it seemed to be a crime to be successful. However, responsibility to maintain the land, and its productivity, remains not only with the Government but with the person who owns it.

Until a person owns land, how is he in a position to accept any responsibility? The freehold system of land tenure introduced by the Government will pay much greater dividends than were expected in the early stages of its implementation. They will be the result of security of tenure and, consequently, pride of ownership. People will be prepared to work the land and pass it on in a condition at least as good as that in which they obtained it. I believe it stimulates people to know they can achieve something and then hand on the benefits of that achievement to their children. That stimulus is lacking when security of ownership is in doubt, and that is what in fact happened under a socialistic system of land tenure, when the future was very uncertain. Not only were the activities of people on the land in jeopardy; the economy of the country and employment in primary industries also suffered.

In my opinion, the principle that a person who owns something should have the right to hand it on must be greatly respected, because that person will then display a much more responsible attitude both to himself and his family and to the community in which he lives. The Minister and his officers have played a very important part in introducing this change of policy—it is in fact a straight-out change of policy—and we are already seeing the benefit of it. As the years pass, Queensland will reap an increasing number of benefits from it. If the Government does not receive the co-operation of the people, it will never fulfil all its aims and retain the value and viability of the land that is our heritage.

The Forestry Department, which also is covered by this Resolution, is indeed a very important department. Mr. Haley, Mr. Molesworth and the other officers controlling the administration of the Forestry Department are doing a very good job, particularly in circumstances when prompt action is necessary, and I stress that point at this stage.

I thank them for their willingness to assist by reappraising a proposed reforestation area in the Emu Vale district. Having found that the proposal put to them was reasonable, they acted quickly and obtained sufficient funds to purchase the area. I have referred to the area in question previously in this House, so I shall not go into detail in this debate. As I said earlier, the area purchased was an ideal launching pad for a continually expanding reforestation project on the Great Dividing Range east of Warwick. It was assessed as being a sound proposition, and the price at which it was purchased makes it a very valuable investment because, as all honourable members know, a stand of timber is a wonderful asset.

The Minister could see this as a good business proposition and he took all necessary steps for the benefit of both the Government and Queensland. It will be of benefit, not only to the Government because of its revenue-earning capacity, but also to Queensland as a whole because the State spends a great deal of money on importing interstate and overseas timber. The more we can do to avoid expenditure on the importation of timber, the sounder will be the State's economy.

A domestic feature of the reforestation project is that it absorbs an available labour force and, as time goes on, it will provide employment for an increased work-force. It materially assists the area in which it is located. In addition, it will play a very important part in the future stability of the milling industry in the area. Timber supplies have to be watched very carefully. In some areas in the past there has been major depletion of timber stocks. As the demand for timber grows, timber stocks in many areas are depleted.

The Forestry Department was very wise in moving so quickly to set in motion what will be a major reforestation project that could encompass an area of more than 11,000 acres. Parts of the area have been depleted by timber suppliers. The new project will rejuvenate the depleted areas. Reforestation is a very intensive operation and therefore large supplies of timber can subsequently be provided from comparatively small areas. We are rejuvenating areas which, in the past, helped the State's economy. At the same time economic areas will be created out of tracts that are presently valueless. It will become an intensive industry providing local employment and general economic advantage.

Another important factor is that the project will benefit the ecology of the area. When trees are a natural part of the environment, their large-scale removal can have an effect on the ecology. The regrowth of trees will mean that climatic and seasonal conditions will remain static. This is very important when we realise that these stands are immediately adjacent to areas of intense farming. If anything changes the climatic conditions of an area, the results can be very serious.

I congratulate and thank the Minister for his actions in bringing about conditions which can only assist Queensland as a whole. I should like to think that, because of the ability of the area to provide fast-growing timbers—this area can grow softwoods in 10 to 20 years whereas many areas take 35 years—some of it could be used for growing some of our harder timbers. I think we are inclined to regard the softer timbers as being the more important. This is very easily understood because softer timbers grow more quickly, thus reaching an economic size and a harvestable state much sooner. But this is purely an economic situation and I should like to see some of this area used for the growing of harder timbers.

If we are not careful we will find our harder timbers in very short supply, because it is the harder timbers that are mainly used in building and they will continue to be used for that purpose in years to come. Harder timbers are slow in growing, so I suggest they be planted without delay.

I should now like to mention a matter about which notice was given this morning, namely, an intended amendment of the marginal dairy farms reconstruction scheme. I hope that these amendments will be of benefit to those who are unable to obtain assistance under the present scheme. The present scheme is very useful to those who qualify for assistance, but it is of no help at all to those who do not. The position requires adjustment and I hope that the intended amendments will assist in overcoming anomalies.

Mr. O'Donnell: Don't you know what the amendments will be?

Mr. CORY: I know what some of them will be. The present scheme is intended to assist persons who wish to get out of the industry, but it is of no assistance to many who wish to stay in it. I hope that these amendments will include one which, on two counts, will assist the person who wants to stay in the industry. One will be to enable him to obtain a further area of land. Under the present scheme, the property being purchased had to be a dairy farm. This provision did not help the dairyman who wished to buy an additional area that was not a dairy farm. He could not be helped. This proved to be an obvious weakness in the scheme, and I believe that the amendments proposed should include provision for the purchase of an additional area, whether or not it happened to be a dairy farm. The scheme was very good as far as it went, but it had this weakness, and I hope that this will be attended to.

The importance of this scheme must be realised. Quite a large percentage of dairy-men have either obtained or are obtaining financial assistance from the Agricultural Bank. However, the bank imposes a limit of \$20,000 on advances made by it, and such a limit restricts reasonable expansion in many areas. At the present time the sum of \$20,000 will not purchase a living area, and an advance of a lesser sum makes it impossible for a landholder to acquire even a property of reasonable size. Once a dairyman has obtained an advance of the limit, he cannot obtain a second one from the Agricultural Bank. The broadening of the scheme will allow a dairyman to obtain finance from a source other than the Agricultural Bank.

Like the dairy amalgamation scheme, this one, too, is being administered and controlled by the Lands Department. This means that the responsibility for the mortgages of land, and so on, will be that of the department and will not affect any original mortgages held by either private banks or the Agricultural Bank. The scheme will certainly make for consolidation in the industry. Not only will it be of benefit to those dairymen who desire to get off their land, but it will also help those who want to stay on their properties.

I contend that some weaknesses exist in the policy laid down for the Rural Reconstruction Board. I am about to mention a number of problems that arise, and I hope that, with a view to solving them, the Minister and the board will take them up with the Federal Government.

I fail to see why one member of a partnership is not entitled to receive financial assistance from the board so that he can buy out his partner, and thereby hold a living area. After all, any owner of a substandard block can receive such assistance. I simply cannot see the difference between an uneconomic partnership and a non-viable property owned by an individual.

Sometimes it is claimed that partnerships are entered into voluntarily and, therefore, should not be eligible for assistance. I point out, however, that the great majority of properties, even those that are considered not to be living areas, are acquired voluntarily. I claim that it does not matter who owns the property; if it is not big enough, it should be eligible for financial assistance from the board. The board should adopt a softer line and make finance available to a member of a partnership who wishes to buy out his partner in order to obtain a viable area. It is important that we keep as many people as possible on the land. We should not force one or more of the partners in a property off the land, and thus make the property available for purchase by another party.

Mr. F. P. Moore: We will end up with doctors and solicitors owning all the land.

Mr. CORY: I do not know about that, but I do not believe that any doctor or solicitor in Queensland has received any assistance from the Rural Reconstruction Board—and I hope that none ever does.

Mr. Wright: Do you think something should be done about making cheaper money available to property owners through the Agricultural Bank?

Mr. CORY: Their greatest need is not only cheaper money, but longer-term loans. Plans are in progress whereby, through the normal financial channels, longer-term finance will be available. If the honourable member had read of the \$65,000,000 to be made available through the trading banks and other financial houses, he would know that long-term finance is to be made available more readily than in the past.

We should be trying to help people on properties. I shall give particulars concerning two partnerships which, as yet, have not been able to gain assistance although, in my opinion, they are entitled to the assistance they would receive if they owned small properties individually. In one instance four people were beneficiaries under an estate. It cannot be said that they were voluntary partners. Two of them run the property. It will adequately support two of them, who wish to remain on it. They presently own three-quarters of the property, but they have not been able to obtain finance to purchase the other quarter. However, an outside third party would be eligible for assistance to do so. In effect, an outside party could gain control of part of the property, which would destroy its viability and force the present owners off it.

In the other case, two partners are on a property which will adequately support one family, but not two. I believe one of the partners should be assisted to buy out the other so that he could have a viable unit. The other partner could then leave the property with some finance, which would help him to become established in another

area in a new venture. If help is not forthcoming, both families will be forced to leave the property. It is ironic that finance could be made available to a third party to buy both partners out.

I hope that the Minister will closely examine the problem and hold discussions with the members of his board to see if something can be done to place partners in exactly the same position as individual property owners. I believe we should be trying to look after every man on the land to ensure that he can make a decent living for his family. I hope that the Minister will be able to do something to alleviate the problems created for partners on properties.

I am glad to have had this opportunity of speaking on this Resolution. I note that quite a large sum of money is involved, and I look to the Minister's wisdom and that of his officers to ensure that it is spent wisely over the next 12 months.

Mr. B. WOOD (Barron River) (4.9 p.m.): I take advantage of the opportunity presented by the debate on this Resolution to raise a matter I have dealt with in an earlier speech, and by way of questions addressed to the Minister, and also in correspondence with him. I refer to the rather dismal prospects of North Queensland acquiring, against its own interests and desires, a wood-chip industry. This is a local issue in North Queensland, but neither I nor the people there regard it as an issue that should be confined only to that area. I now find that a significant number of people in South Queensland are expressing concern about this proposal.

I have been interested in and concerned about this matter for well over a year. In that time I have been trying to obtain from the Minister the available information concerning the damage that may be done to our forests or the benefit that may result to our forests from such an industry. Unfortunately, the information given to me has been very meagre. It is rather difficult to extract information from the Minister.

Mr. Bromley: There was a very good segment on "This Day Tonight."

Mr. B. WOOD: There was, on last night's programme. I regret that I saw only portion of it as it expressed fairly well the natural concern that people generally will have.

To some degree, we are reaching the end of the time when we can exploit our forests without restriction. Forests in Australia, as in other countries, do not go on for ever. We cannot for ever continue to attack them. The forest cover of the earth is decreasing rapidly, particularly in the tropics. At present, about 9,800 million acres of the earth's surface is covered by forests, only about 13 per cent of which is under some form of management and not necessarily is there any rational utilisation.

In evaluating forest resources, one must count much more than simply the timber value. I believe that the Minister tends

to think only of the commercial worth of forests. The total ecological role of forests must be taken into account. Too often, the physical importance of forests as climatic, hydrographic and ecological stabilisers in ecosystems is overlooked, under-estimated, or neglected. These forest roles are essential for environmental health in all regions, especially in the tropics.

The present danger in tropical land use is the exploitation of rain forests for timber and for shifting cultivation. I acknowledge that the Minister has told me, as has a departmental officer, that rain forests are not under threat in this proposal, but we still have some doubts about that. Within a brief span of years, it is possible to see dense forest areas converted into open country which soon deteriorates. When this happens, the soil may suffer a permanent change and the habitat may enter a phase of irreversible destruction. In Asia, Africa and South America, man has declared enormous areas for cultivation, plantation and settlement. This activity, in line with the increase in world population, is increasing. If the present rate of destruction continues, one of the world's most spectacular expressions of natural wonder is doomed.

But it is not just for their sheer magnificence that rain forests should be preserved. They are useful as well, although little is yet known about the usefulness of the vast variety of tree species that we have in rain-forest country. We know the value of timber, but virtually nothing of the biochemical value of many thousands of species. Moreover, the rain forests are the home of a multitude of animals that do not exist in any other environment. This is the case in North Queensland as much as anywhere else. Some of these animals have been found to be extremely useful to man, and many more may yet prove so.

What will be the effect on climate if the rain forests finish? What will be the consequences on soil? As yet, the threat is so great and the knowledge is so relatively sparse that we cannot be sure what the effects will be. There must be very much more research before final decisions are made. The act of a pen in a Government office which authorises some agreement between the Government and a company may signal a result in those forests. That could take hundreds of years to overcome, if it was overcome at all.

At various times I have sought information for the people in the North. I believe that a Government has a duty to carry out the will of the people. I therefore believe that, in respect of such a proposal, reference should be made by the Government to the people in the North, and indeed to the people generally throughout Queensland. The people should have an opportunity to express opinions. Many opinions have been expressed to date, but as yet they have been expressed in the dark. The people would prefer to know all the details, so that their opinions could be formed on a sound basis.

No doubt the Minister is convinced, if he has looked at the proposal closely, that it could be a sound proposition. He may be convinced that it is in the interests of the people in the North, and that it will bring benefits to that area. If that is so, why does he not make details of the proposal public? If this is in fact something to be proud of, surely the Minister should have no hesitation in making clear exactly what he has in mind. So far, precious little information has been made available. I have asked for information, but without any great success.

At the Minister's suggestion, I spoke to the departmental officer who was handling the proposal, and I must say that I was impressed by his sincerity. I was told that the Forestry Department is seeking a great deal more information from the company concerned. I have no doubt that the company will give as little information as it can in order to leave its options as wide as possible. It therefore appears that more information is being sought.

I was surprised to be told some weeks later, in answer to a question that I asked of the Minister, that no-one had yet seen in the southern part of Australia areas similar to those in the North. I am now advised that an officer will visit Eden, in New South Wales, where there is an extensive area under this industry. As a result of my request, it may also be possible for a parliamentary delegation to visit this area. I have indicated that I should like to go there. I think it would be desirable to visit the area as a member of a parliamentary delegation. If I went there as a private citizen, I would probably learn far less than I would as an accredited member of a Parliament.

In answer to another question, the Minister said that no experts other than those in the Forestry Department and the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development are involved in this proposal. I think that is rather unfortunate. This is such an important proposal that it should be referred to all the experts that the Minister can find, whether they be in the C.S.I.R.O., the universities, or private businesses. I believe that all possible expressions of opinion should be sought, mainly because nothing yet is known about the proposal.

I want to give, in more detail than I was able to give previously, some aspects of the wood-chip industry in Tasmania. There are a number of projects of this type in Tasmania, and already people who were not very concerned about them in earlier days are expressing a great deal of worry. Tasmanian Pulp and Forest Holdings is one such firm. It has a contract to take 600,000 tons of timber a year. It has not yet reached that target, but it is fast building up to it. I understand, from a television programme last night, that, in respect of North Queensland, a figure of 250,000 tons a year was given. I do not know how accurate that figure is. Perhaps I may be told.

The area under licence to Tasmanian Pulp and Forest Holdings covers 835,000 acres—a tremendous area. It is expected that only one-third of that area will not be cut over. Within the area, the amount of timber that can be cut per acre is quite variable. It depends on the quality of the timber. Most good forests will cut perhaps 30 to 45 tons an acre; a very good forest will yield up to 150 tons an acre. This is on private land, and the grower can receive 85c a ton if the land is within 20 miles of the factory, 70c a ton if it is within 30 miles, and 50c a ton if it is more than 30 miles away. That is not very much—50c to 85c a ton—bearing in mind that the average cut might be 30 to 45 tons or less, or occasionally more.

When the company sells its product after processing, it receives \$27 per 2,400 lb. dry weight. When the resources that are being given away are taken into account, this seems to me to be very little.

Based on these figures, I estimate that reasonable forest country in North Queensland would produce about \$25 an acre—not to the private landowner in this case; perhaps to the Government—from timber that is fairly well stripped. I will not say that it will be clear felled, because the Minister constantly maintains that it will not. However, I should like to know at some stage what his definition of clear felling is. I have seen some photographs of other work in which there seems to be about one tree left to the acre.

Mr. Bromley: They will put the bulldozers right through it.

Mr. B. WOOD: It is an interesting question. The definition will be very important, I think. One might say that \$25 an acre for timber is not much. It is more than simply logs of wood. It has taken 20, 30 or, in some cases, more years to grow. It is part of the natural forest of this country. In my opinion, it is worth much more than that. It has a value that cannot be expressed in dollars, and I believe that this must be one of the considerations for the Minister to think about very carefully.

Mr. Bromley: The firm talks about reforestation, but it does not realise that it takes up to 40 years to grow a decent tree in the North.

Mr. B. WOOD: It takes a long time, and reforestation is dependent on the soil remaining there.

Mr. Bromley: There is bound to be erosion.

Mr. B. WOOD: The Minister will consider—he must be concerned about this—what benefits an industry of this type can bring to North Queensland, and unquestionably there are benefits. It was said on television that about 300 people will be employed in the industry. I accept that figure, but I would like to see a breakdown of it because, by its very nature, this will be a very heavily mechanised industry. There will, of course,

be sales of heavy machinery, the erection of buildings, and so on. Sales of heavy machinery will not assist the people in the North; it will all be acquired in the South or overseas.

Mr. Wright interjected.

Mr. B. WOOD: I am prepared to accept the figure because the industry involves cutting trees, driving tractors and trucks, and so on. It probably would be the number, because it is a fairly large undertaking.

The Minister has said in answer to a question from me that an industry of this type would result in an improvement in the quality and value of forests by the removal of tree species unacceptable for sawmilling or for the production of veneer. If one is looking at it simply from the point of view of the commercial value of timber, I do not suppose one can dispute that statement. But, as I have said, surely that is not the only factor. Is there some manner by which the Minister can balance the destructive elements of this industry with the productive elements of it? I think that needs to be done.

The forests in North Queensland are not simply to be assessed on their commercial value. They are worth more than that to us. At the beginning of my speech I spent five minutes talking about the value of forests. They are worth more than their commercial value.

Mr. Bromley: We have to think of the ecology, and the fauna and the flora.

Mr. B. WOOD: That is so. I think it was said last night that that is not affected. Although I do not claim to be an expert, I do not agree. I do not know, and I am prepared to say that neither do the Minister and his experts really know.

This industry has to be highly mechanised, so employment will not be as great as could have been expected some years ago without all the benefits of modern machinery. Perhaps there will be benefits by way of foreign exchange. I do not know how much that would help the State Government, although it could be said that it would help the Federal Government. But would it? We are already embarrassed by too much of a surplus trade balance with Japan, which is where the product will be going. There are benefits by way of profit to the landholder—in this case to the Crown. But I do not believe that the profits would be so great as to be an important consideration.

We talk about the benefits of development. "Development" is an "in" word in recent years. I question this sort of development. I do not see it as development at all. I am sure I could find better priorities and better criteria.

I mentioned briefly something about the industry in Tasmania. The industry I hope to see very soon is in Eden, in southern New South Wales. Concern is being caused to people there. It was interesting to see

a photograph in a southern newspaper encompassing apparently some 2,000 or 3,000 acres, with massive areas that have been cleared. I hope to get the original of that photograph and hand it to the Minister. I hope to see the area myself when I go there. People in the Eden district are now complaining, and the local member of Parliament—I do not know whether he is Labor, Liberal, or “what have you”—has been asking questions about it. Of course, it does not matter what his party politics are; the important thing is that he is showing an interest in and concern about an important area. He asked the Minister for Environment in New South Wales a question on the subject, saying that the industry was causing serious pollution. He said, among other things—

“Fears are held in the area that the rivers and creeks that flow from this area will be completely silted, thus adversely affecting the spawning beds for the fish.”

I am quoting from “Fishing News”, which is a paper for fishing enthusiasts. People with that particular interest moving around the area while looking for fish can see what is happening. That is only one aspect of it, but it is important to them, just as it is important to everybody else.

There are many questions I should like to have answered. One question I hope the Minister can answer—he should be able to if he has considered the proposals seriously—is: What is the nature of this company? Is it to be an Australian company or an overseas company?

Mr. Bromley: A Japanese company.

Mr. B. WOOD: I suspect that.

The company's more appropriate name of “Australian Wood Mines” was changed to “Australian Wood Resources”. At my last inquiry it had, I think, paid-up capital of \$3. This, of course, is all that was necessary. It was only undertaking a feasibility survey. It gave no particular indication of what the future company that was to develop this industry would be. It could be that Australian Wood Resources will develop, issue share capital in the normal manner, and be a completely Australian-owned company. I do not know whether, in his approaches to the company, the Minister will ask what will happen in this regard. More than likely, the company will be substantially owned by Japanese interests, as are some of the other wood-chip industries in Australia.

I believe we are justified in asking just what this industry is to be. I have a whole series of questions I wanted to ask, and I intend to ask them now in the hope that I will get an authoritative answer from the Minister. I want to know what export tonnage is predicted over the next five years. I want to know exactly what areas are to be cut over—where they are, and what acreage is involved. I also want to know whether it is all Crown land or whether the State Government can exercise any influence over private land. I understand

that, if the company desires to enter into any agreement with private landowners, there is probably no need for it to make any reference at all to the State Government.

Mr. Bromley: There is a lot of State forest within a 75-mile radius of Cairns.

Mr. B. WOOD: That is so. The other day, as the Minister's time for speaking ran out, he was about to pass some complimentary remarks about my speech in the debate on the Lands and Forestry Estimates, because I suggested that we should very carefully direct what should happen with our land resources. I was thinking about the wood-chip industry and the use of our forests when I said that. The Minister seemed to agree with me then, and I hope he will still agree with me in saying that we should have some influence over what happens on private land. When we consider land usage and what is to happen to the land, it does not really matter whether it is owned by the Crown or by private individuals; the end result is the same.

Before any agreement is signed, it is necessary for the Minister to tell us what price he will get for the timber he might desire to sell. He should tell us before it is sold, not afterwards. We would need to know what price the company will get when it sells in Japan.

I know now where the plant is to be located in Cairns. We have learned this, and it does not mean a great deal; but we do not know what manner of treatment is to be used. I was told that chemicals will not be used. This may be so, but I am also told by people whom I regard as having some authority that modern treatment methods mean that with the use of chemicals a greater variety of timbers can be treated. And, of course, the more concentrated the use of the timber, the more economical it will be for the firm.

Mr. Bromley: And, of course, the concentrated use of chemicals will destroy other things such as animals.

Mr. B. WOOD: That is so.

Talking about pollution, I understand that in Tasmania the bark from all the timber is being used to reclaim an enormous valley. There are not too many valleys around Cairns. Perhaps there are some on the Tableland, but we do not know whether these trees will be debarked on the Tableland or in Cairns. However, I think they are debarked under a high-pressure water-spray, which probably means that it will be done in Cairns. What will happen to the bark? Will it be burnt, and therefore pour out large volumes of smoke, or will it be allowed to float out to the Great Barrier Reef? I want an answer to this very important question. I should also like to know the Minister's definition of “clear felling”. How many trees per acre does he think should remain? I suggest that this is one of the most critical questions of all.

Before the proposed industry is allowed to be established, a survey should be conducted by scientific people who know their business into the various soil types, species of timber and types of country. A survey should be conducted to determine the susceptibility of different types of land, such as flat country, hilly country and undulating country, to erosion. The Government should go further and implement an instant programme of reforestation.

These points I have raised should be spelt out in detail in the contract that the Minister will sign. If they are not clearly defined, we can be quite sure that the company involved will get away with doing as little as it can.

Just as a scientific survey should be made of the soil and timber types, an investigation should also be carried out by scientists into the likely impact of the industry on the environment. Over the past 70 or 80 years, the area involved has been heavily cut over and a tremendous quantity of timber has been removed from it. Whereas in many instances selective felling has been carried out, in other instances large areas of land have been completely cleared for dairying, grazing or cane-growing. Nevertheless, the Government should not go ahead with the proposal until it can state emphatically what will or will not happen.

To come down to a question that can be more easily understood by the ordinary person, I ask what effect the wood-chip industry will have on the local roads. Probably twice a week I drive from Cairns to Mareeba and from Cairns to Mossman. The roads that I travel over are both narrow and winding. If the situation in Tasmania is any criterion, vehicles will pass any given point on the roads in the Cairns area at the rate of one every four minutes. If that is so, it will be virtually impossible for a motorist to drive from Cairns either to Mossman or to Mareeba.

I would have expected the Minister for Lands to seek an opinion on this matter from the Minister for Mines and Main Roads. Numerous questions that I ask about land matters are passed from one department to another so that answers can be given. I have no argument against that; but why is it not done in this instance, too?

Mr. Bromley: The departments don't talk to one another.

Mr. B. WOOD: They should be talking to one another. The Main Roads Department is widening a small section of the Kuranda Range Road, but I do not think it is being done to alleviate traffic problems caused by vehicles engaged in the wood-chip industry. If I am wrong, the road will not be adequate for the traffic that will use it, and it will certainly be destroyed within a very short time.

The Minister for Main Roads has admitted that some of the local roads, particularly the one to Mareeba, are in a very poor state and will not stand up to trucks weighing as much as 20, 30 or 40 tons. A clear statement should be given on the effect of this industry on the roads.

Similarly, an indication should be given as to whether or not the Government, and therefore the taxpayers, will provide the additional harbour facilities required. I understand that bulk-carriers as large as 31,000 tons dead weight are envisaged for the transport of the wood-chips. I think some of the vessels used by the Tasmanian wood-chip industry are 30,000 tons gross weight, even larger than those to be employed in the North Queensland trade. The Cairns Harbour cannot handle such vessels at the moment, and thus a great deal of dredging would have to be undertaken. Who will pay for that? The company that will make the money out of this project, or the poor old taxpayer again? I do not know what the Minister has done about this, but I should be very pleased if he would tell me. I certainly know that the Cairns Harbour Board is looking into it.

Although I am not speaking in support of this proposal, if it comes about I wonder if the use of railway service has been considered. Or is this service still out of favour with the Government? Again, has any survey been made of the impact of this proposal on the tourist industry? Tourist buses are rather slow in climbing some of the ranges, but they will not be able to move as readily if this proposal comes about. In Tasmania, the interests of the tourist industry were closely considered. In one area a company agreed not to clear trees from an area within 50 feet of a road so that the cleared areas could not be seen! What a ridiculous situation!

I again emphasise that I am not an expert in this matter. I should not be the one talking about technical problems. The Minister should be talking to people who know a great deal more about it than I do. He should be holding talks with experts from the university, C.S.I.R.O. and similar bodies to get the best information possible.

Mr. Rae: You may rest assured that I have the top men working on it.

Mr. B. WOOD: I have confidence in the Minister's departmental officers, but they should not be the only people investigating the proposal. So far, the Minister's officers and officers of the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development are the only people looking into it.

If this industry is established I do not know whether sea water or fresh water will be used. If fresh water is used, I suppose the ratepayers in the Mulgrave and Cairns Shires will have to bear the burden. I am one of them, and I am not interested in helping this company to make a profit.

Mr. Ahern: Why don't you wait until you know a little more about it?

Mr. B. WOOD: I intend to deal with that point. I have been talking about this matter for a year, trying to find out a little more about it; but the Minister will not tell me anything more.

Mr. Ahern: How close do you think it is to coming to a head?

Mr. B. WOOD: It is getting closer all the time. An agreement could be six months or a year away. I do not really know; I am trying to find out.

Mr. Sherrington: The crucial point is that not one Government investigation has been carried out. Everything is being done by the company.

Mr. B. WOOD: I am not even sure of that, because the Minister will not tell me.

In answer to the interjection by the honourable member for Landsborough I point out that at one stage I asked the Minister to hold a seminar on this industry in Cairns. I again ask him to hold a seminar at which views can be expressed by conservationists and other experts, as well as the Minister and his supporters. Perhaps I will eventually agree with this proposal, but until I know more about it I cannot say emphatically what opinion I will come to. Why should we be kept in the dark? I hope that the Minister, in reply, will agree to holding a seminar. I am sure the honourable member for Landsborough would agree with that suggestion. It was he who said, "Why don't you wait until you get more information?"

I ask the Minister if, at a public seminar in Cairns, he will give the public more information so that we may know what this scheme is all about; so that we may know, point by point, what is happening. In the past, the Minister has said—and I must accept his word—that he will consider all views expressed. If he does that, surely he must respect the people who want to express their views. Surely he must hear what they have to say, reply to them, and then listen to their further considered submissions.

As I said at the outset, any decision by the Government on this proposal is an important step for it to take. What it allows now will affect the environment, the ecology and the forests in the North for many years to come. What is done now will not be easily remedied if mistakes are made. Therefore, the Government and the Minister and his departmental officers must consider this matter very seriously before going any further. I request that this be done and that the Minister answer some, if not all, of the questions I have asked today.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (4.46 p.m.): At the outset, I compliment the Minister on his administrative ability. I did not have the opportunity to do so earlier, as I was not able to speak on his Estimates. This is a very important department and I pay a tribute to him for the way he has administered it during the short time he has had the

portfolio. I also compliment his departmental officers. They are very capable men. If they failed to do anything but a good job, I would be the first to say that they were not trying. That is my approach.

My second point relates to the point raised by the honourable member for Barron River. He said he was not an expert in the field of forestry. He made specific reference to the wood-chip industry which is presently being established and getting under way in North Queensland. His admission that he is not an expert in this field would, without doubt, be the understatement of the year.

Mr. Sherrington: Where is it being established?

Mr. MULLER: In North Queensland. This information is available to anybody. Channel 2 had a programme on it last night.

Mr. B. Wood: What sort of information is that?

Mr. MULLER: Worth-while, up-to-date information.

A few moments ago the honourable member for Barron River asked what would happen to this locality and whether there would be erosion in this type of country. He knows the area and he knows timbered country. He also knows the type of timber that will be used in this industry. It would be the greatest advantage of all time to have an enterprise such as this move in and do something by way of cleaning up the area. This land has no particular value.

Mr. B. Wood: What land?

Mr. MULLER: The honourable member was talking about it a while ago. He proved that he does not know what he is talking about.

The land in this locality—similar land exists in many other parts of the State—is of very low standard and does not produce millable timber. To have an industry such as this established in that locality, which will remove waste timber and use it to advantage, is desirable. These people should be commended. I also commend the Minister and his officers for encouraging them. The honourable member asked if there would be erosion. All there will be in this locality is regrowth which has to be poisoned or otherwise destroyed before the land can be put to any use.

Within reasonable limits, I am a conservationist. I believe that our land should be used other than for maintaining the mammals that existed here in the earliest ages. Those who preach the ultimate in conservation—despite being criticised occasionally for it, and I would subscribe to some of that criticism—would still have bandicoots and wallabies hopping down Queen Street. They should adopt a sensible approach.

Mr. Sherrington: Yours is an absolutely rat-bag approach.

Mr. MULLER: That is the honourable member's opinion. He is not capable of making a practical assessment of anything. If I wanted his opinion, I would ask for it.

Queensland is such a vast State that the Minister and his officers have a very considerable job in seeing that all of its areas are used to advantage. Much of the State has suffered from drought for almost all of the last four or five years, and this has created difficulties for departmental officers. At times they must have felt frustrated by the approaches of persons living on the land who were trying to find solutions to their problems.

Let us be realistic about the situation. All that people want today is a reasonable return for their efforts, and money could be the solution to their problems. During the last few years the rural reconstruction scheme has been put into effect by the Lands Department. It has been most effective, but the job is by no means complete. Many problems lie ahead for the Rural Reconstruction Board, and its members will require access to vast sums of money before all those who need assistance in the grazing industry have been rehabilitated.

It must be realised that rural lands today produce 45 per cent of this country's export earnings, and that this is accomplished by the efforts of only a small percentage of the population. It will therefore be seen that primary producers form a very vital section of the community. They were born in rural areas; they understand the country; and they should be encouraged to stay there. It will be impossible for them to remain in country areas if sufficient finance is not made available to them. It is revealed in the annual report of the Rural Reconstruction Board that by the end of June 1973 \$25,300,000 will have been made available for the rehabilitation of primary producers. That amount of money will undoubtedly be of very considerable help, but it is insufficient.

The honourable member for Warwick mentioned the scheme under which dairy farms can be amalgamated. Although dairymen have never thought this scheme was the complete answer to their problems, it has nevertheless been of considerable help. It has permitted those who wished to remain in the dairying industry to acquire other properties at a reasonable rate of interest.

One of the problems associated with all primary industries is that the finance required in this modern day and age to establish primary producers, and maintain them on their properties, has not been available. Let us analyse briefly the finance made available by lending authorities. Trading banks had many unfortunate experiences with people whom they attempted to help but who suffered the results of drought and other hazards over which they had no control. Consequently the trading banks tightened up on their lending, and this had severe repercussions. Today, persons engaged in most primary industries

can borrow money only on very short terms. A few weeks ago Mr. Anthony revealed on behalf of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics that there was quite a considerable amount of short-term finance available, but very little long-term money. This has not helped primary producers in the more arid areas of the State to overcome their difficulties. If more money could be made available to them over a longer term, most of their immediate problems would be solved.

If one analyses the situation, one arrives at figures approximating these: Assuming that a sum of money is borrowed on the basis of repayment over five years, in the first year there is a 20 per cent repayment; the interest rate is 8 per cent; rates on properties vary considerably, admittedly, but I can support my statement that in many localities people are now paying annually in rates 5 per cent of the unimproved value of their land (that is applicable to the area in which I reside); freight on livestock would be a minimum of 5 per cent, depending on the locality; operating costs would be a minimum of 10 per cent; and marketing costs would be a minimum of 5 per cent—a total of 53 per cent. Under these terms and conditions, it is quite impossible for people borrowing money to make a success of their business.

I wish to tie this in specifically with the Rural Reconstruction Board. Had the board not adopted the approach of advancing money for longer terms at lower rates of interest, the people to whom I am referring would be wasting their time even attempting to draft a policy for survival. It would not be feasible for them to do so, under the circumstances.

Let us look at the situation from the other point of view. If they could obtain their finance over a longer term—up to 20 years, say—their annual repayment, in round figures, would be 5 per cent. Their interest, freight costs and operating and marketing costs would remain constant. Therefore, the 53 per cent would be reduced by 15 per cent, which is a considerable reduction. The repayment in the first year would still be about 37 or 38 per cent, and that would make things very difficult. One can only assume, therefore, that the people concerned have other assets—obviously, they must have—and other income to enable them to overcome this situation.

In my opinion, someone has to get down to case analysis if effective action is to be taken. People put forward arguments and assume that all types of things are possible. But when one faces the realities of life and puts figures on paper, one discovers the reason why many bankers refuse to lend money to their clients today—the repayments are not satisfactory.

As I said earlier, but for the activities of the Rural Reconstruction Board one could forget the people who have been trained in a certain locality, are familiar with the area, and have a know-how that is not possessed

by people—I include myself—who reside in other areas. I have seen only portions of the vast Outback, but I commend those who continue to reside in those areas in spite of very adverse conditions. They face problems that are quite unknown to people living nearer the coast, and they must be given every encouragement to continue to reside there. It has been proved over a number of years that, with average seasons, people with the specialised knowledge to which I have referred are able to produce in those areas many of the requirements of people who live nearer the coast. In fact, years ago, when prices in the wool industry were very good, it was commonly said and generally accepted that the people of Queensland were riding on the sheep's back.

The citizens of this country have an obligation to stand by primary producers during a period of adversity and do all they can to rehabilitate them. The Minister is on the right track with the promotion of the rural reconstruction scheme. The Commonwealth Government—it will be the same Government next week as it is this week—should be encouraged to pour as much money as possible into rural reconstruction. At all times it should be encouraged by the Minister and Government members to do what it can to assist primary producers.

Somewhere along the line our system of financing has gone haywire. We are constantly concerned about the inflationary trend. I think I have proved that under no circumstances, during neither periods of adversity nor periods of plenty, has primary industry the capacity to make an annual repayment on money invested in the industry at the rate of over 30 per cent. It is perfectly obvious that secondary industry is able to do that. Bankers have any amount of money available for secondary industry, but money is not freely available to primary industry. This has had the effect of increasing the cost of manufactured goods, which has been a major cause of inflation.

In the interests of people engaged in primary industries, we have to get a little off the beaten track occasionally and look at situations that are caused by abnormal circumstances. It is often said that there is a tendency to mistake the eddy for the tide. Before we can overcome the problem of inflation, we have to make an honest attempt to reduce costs. Then and only then will primary producers have a chance of surviving. Unless we do, we will suffer for a long time from many unfortunate and unfavourable consequences.

Mr. O'DONNELL (Belyando) (5.4 p.m.): I enter the debate mainly because of a few remarks I have heard in the Chamber today. I have had a fairly long association with the Lands Department. My association with the Ministers of the day and their departmental officers has been a pleasant one. Over that period I have come to realise the difficulties associated with the administration of land in this vast State. Associated with its administration of land matters, the Lands

Department is also involved to some degree with the various industries that are established in town and country areas. In recent years the department has extended its activities into such fields as rural reconstruction and marginal dairy farm reconstruction.

I suppose the Australian Labor Party, politically, has been somewhat dismayed since 1957 by the gradual but persistent policy of this Government in increasing the quantity of land under freehold tenure. We know very well that this has been systematic. We are also well aware of the remarks of Sir Alan Fletcher who, when he was Minister for Lands, claimed that there were 100,000,000 acres of land in Queensland which could be freeholded and said it was the intention of the Government to see that they were. We who know the present situation are aware that the Government has gone a long way towards achieving this ambition. I think this is regrettable.

The Minister has said that the Lands Department deals principally with leasehold land. Freeholding, of course, has resulted in considerable alienation of the responsibilities of this department, but, strangely enough, its work has not decreased. As a matter of fact, I should say it has increased.

I feel that the value of leasehold tenure in rural industry has been proved by the assistance the Government was able to afford directly to people involved in the drought. The remission of rents and other forms of assistance have been of great value to these people, and this assistance would not have been possible had they been in the privileged class of freeholders. I know that when the Government was selling the idea of freehold—I repeat, it was selling it—it used salesmen's talk, which people believed, that those who accepted freehold were obtaining security of tenure and undoubtedly they believed that this, in turn, meant independence.

Strange to say, it did not work out that way. What security of tenure was there when the drought struck? What security was freehold tenure to people who were obtaining land through purchase lease for freehold-tenure purposes? They could not ask for rental help as the genuine leaseholder was able to do. Through the industry, they had to put a case for assistance before the State and Federal Governments. That is why I feel that the extension of the freeholding policy has not been in the best interests of the man on the land.

As far as I am concerned, and irrespective of the head-shaking by the honourable member for Roma, the only land I know of with security of tenure is tribal land, and that does not appertain in any way to graziers such as the honourable member. Land open to resumption, as freehold land is, has, in itself, no more security of tenure than leasehold land has. I will not believe otherwise. I feel that a mistake has been

made in selling the idea of freehold, and many graziers today are very sad that they ever heard of such a proposal.

As I say, there has been an increase in the responsibilities of the Lands Department, brought about, I suppose we could say, by regrettable conditions in rural industry. Because rural industries depend on the weather and on profitable markets they are, in a sense, a gamble. I do not know whether all city dwellers would agree, but I contend that we should respect the man on the land and realise his importance to our economy. He obtains overseas credits that contribute towards the prosperity of the nation, and I, for one, have a deep admiration for the man on the land.

It is unfortunate that the rural reconstruction scheme needs to be implemented. No-one could claim otherwise. But it is important to ensure that every dollar paid out under the scheme benefits the rural communities. Although I realise that under the appropriate Act the wool-growing industry receives special treatment, I am prompted to speak because the present marginal dairy farms reconstruction scheme, too, benefits only one industry.

The honourable member for Warwick has proposed an extension of that scheme. I do not wish to take anything away from people, but I am concerned that, with the passage of time, the original intent of the scheme may be diverted, and in its diversion the scheme may extend into regions where it was never intended that it should be implemented. In such a diversion, particular persons engaged in the industry but not eligible for assistance under the scheme will not receive any benefit.

The original idea of the scheme was that a person who wished to leave the dairy industry could put his property up for an agreed sale and the purchaser could obtain financial assistance from the board. It is suggested that this scheme be taken outside of a surrendered dairy farm, if I may use that term. That would be fair enough, provided the scheme is not implemented until all dairy farms involved in the depressed state of the industry are surrendered.

I am a little wary of this scheme, because, once adjoining land unconnected with the dairy industry becomes available, ambitious persons will be looking at it with the idea of acquiring a choice block. Perhaps they may want a section of an agricultural area. This, to my mind, would disadvantage people who want to leave the industry because they might find that no-one is prepared to buy their land.

I turn now to the matter of finance. It has been said here that the Agricultural Bank is not a good source of finance for dairy farmers. It has also been said that the maximum loan of \$20,000 is too low and that people who wish to make their properties economic units should therefore be

able to get funds under this scheme. In my view, this is one point on which we need a careful statement by the appropriate Minister, as it has been asserted that insufficient money has been made available to implement the scheme. I realise that insufficient money is available to help primary producers. If we are to formulate bright ideas for a scheme such as this, we have to be very careful where we are going. We must remember that the scheme was not designed by the State Government, but by the Commonwealth Government. This can be said of the rural reconstruction scheme, too. The State Government is implementing conditions laid down by the Federal Government, but whenever anybody gets a good idea it has to be approved in Canberra. We should be very concerned about the future of all our primary industries. We do not want certain people with their own peculiar problems influencing the development of this scheme.

We could easily say that it is an essential part of rural reconstruction in the State to make grants to councils in the West under this scheme, instead of their being made an individual or separate part of the scheme, which the Federal Government has foreshadowed by threatening to withhold funds in the near future. The reconstruction scheme administered by the Lands Department would be seriously set back if that were so, because we are hoping that the rural reconstruction scheme will absorb a number, if not all, of the people who have been accepting relief work with the councils. Relief work is being provided in the hope that the people who are retained in the area will be required to take their place in the various industries that are subject to rural reconstruction.

In recent weeks, various matters relative to land have been raised in this Chamber. Controversy has arisen over the possibility of the Japanese moving into the Yepoon area, and also over the proposed establishment of a wood-chip industry, about which the honourable member for Barron River sought further information today. Perhaps we made a mistake when we granted aliens full citizenship rights in the acquisition of land in Queensland. The history of land acquisition by aliens shows that before World War II we had dummies, and after World War II we had displaced personnel and American allies who had served in this country wanting to settle here in large numbers.

Because a requirement for naturalisation was five years' residence in this country, some relaxation was allowed. Then, in 1965, we really started. We gave an open go to people by amending the Land Act to give full citizenship rights to aliens. The argument was quite simple. We were carried away with the United Nations ideal that there must be no racial discrimination. At that time, nobody seemed to realise that favourable racial discrimination was not

being extended to us in the countries whose people were taking advantage of our generosity. Since the war, Japan has had marked influence in the Pacific region. Make no mistake about it, Japan is on the march commercially. Every country in the Pacific area is being looked at for advantageous situations. We see it in Australia. I am not speaking in opposition to any particular race, but if privileges are extended, conditions should be imposed.

This is where the error was made. We did not say, "We have no personal objection to your acquiring land in this country, but we would prefer it to be leasehold land because we prefer conditional settlement in this country. We know very well that in your country we could not acquire land under the circumstances in which we are offering it to you." I believe we show true racial appreciation in our friendship to people and the assistance we give them. When it comes down to property ownership, we must show some common sense.

After a period, what do we do? We complain because other people own our land. But who is responsible for that? It is we who have permitted this to happen. It is not the fault of the aliens. They have taken advantage of an opportunity which we presented. We have to look at this matter very carefully, because we cannot control investment in this country if we do not control our land.

Mr. AHERN (Landsborough) (5.24 p.m.): I should like to make brief reference to the development of Crown industrial estates, which is dealt with under the heading of "Development" on page 2 of the annual report of the Land Administration Commission. According to the report, a good deal of development has taken place. The paragraph headed "Estate preparation, reclamation, etc.," reads—

"During the year under review \$508,910 was expended on the development of town subdivisions on 44 projects throughout the State. The major projects involved the provision of bitumen sealed roads, kerbing and channelling, stormwater drainage and water reticulation to residential allotments at Blackwater, Emerald, Gladstone, Lucinda, Perpetua Point, Rainbow Beach, Seventeen Seventy, Slade Point and Townsville. In the cases of Emerald, Gladstone and Townsville, sewerage reticulation also was provided."

Development of the Crown estate for this purpose is quite big business, and the land is developed to a high standard as dictated by the by-laws of the relevant local authorities.

In the recent redistribution of electoral boundaries, the area of Bribie Island, Division 5 of the Caboolture Shire, was included in my electorate. Bribie Island is, in itself, a Crown estate, and subdivision of land for residential and light industrial purposes must be made by the Crown. My

main purpose in speaking is to convey the urgent need of the people in the area for more land to be developed for this purpose. The demand for it is very strong, as has been clearly demonstrated by recent auction sales. I believe that there is an unhealthy demand for this land that has resulted in unusually high prices.

I believe that if a large number of allotments were made available, the situation would be eased considerably. Prices are kept at a high level by the decision of the Crown to offer land on terms for this purpose. In urging greater subdivision of Crown land on Bribie Island, I should like to point out that it would be a very profitable enterprise for the Crown, in view of the extremely high prices that are now being paid at auction for land. I know that the Minister is considering representations made by me for greater subdivision of land on the island for residential purposes, particularly on the Woorim and Bongaree side, and I hope that this land will be made available in the near future to ease the situation.

The question of making land available for light industrial use is presently before the Caboolture Shire Council. In my view, it is a basic precept that land for light industrial use be made available regularly and easily. The purpose of making land available for light industries is to attract such development, as is being done by the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development in a number of places throughout the State, particularly in my electorate. Land is offered readily to bona fide industrialists and employers of labour to attract them to these areas. If a person says, "I would like to establish an industry here, and I will employ a certain amount of labour", land is offered to him in this way.

The Department of Commercial and Industrial Development has its hands full at the moment with the development of industrial estates for larger enterprises than are envisaged or needed on Bribie Island at present. The Minister for Lands is making land available for light industrial purposes. I suggest that if the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development sees the ready availability of land as a basic precept in the attracting of industry to an area, the Minister for Lands could perhaps in some way amend the general procedures of his department to make the land available. I suggest to him that it would be very worthwhile to consider making land available more regularly, perhaps on a basis similar to that used by the Department of Industrial Development.

Mr. Davis: Why are you in favour of retaining the toll on the Bribie Island Bridge?

Mr. AHERN: The honourable member for Brisbane is making light of the debate. He certainly receives some spurious advice. I state categorically that before the last State election I gave a clear undertaking that I would work to have the toll removed as early

as possible, and that is on record. I have no idea where the honourable member for Brisbane obtained his information, but it is totally wrong and irrelevant.

I suggest to the Minister that the area is developing so quickly and the demand for land is so great that he should give consideration to releasing a larger area of residential land on the southern end of Bribie Island earlier than it is proposed to release it under the present programme. In the past there have been some problems associated with the provision of water for these sites, but I understand that within the next fortnight, under an augmentation scheme, water will be made available for up to 6,000 houses in that area. Problems of electricity supply that apparently existed in the past have now also been overcome. An early release of residential land would be of wonderful benefit to the island, and it would certainly have the support of the Chamber of Commerce and all the other people on the island to whom I have spoken. I ask the Minister to take the necessary action as early as possible.

The over-all increase in land values in the area has been astronomically high. Recently a relatively small parcel of land just south of the Bribie Island Bridge, on this side of Bribie Passage, sold for more than \$1,000 an acre. Land values such as that are being mirrored right up the coast for land that previously was considered almost worthless. People living there were pioneering types who had to use four-wheel-drive vehicles to get in and out. Entrepreneurs are now moving in and developing that land, and I think that further initiatives by the Crown in the subdivision of the area, providing for well-planned development from the point of view of town-planning, ecology, and so on, would be very useful at this time, and I advocate it.

I should like to hear more about the proposal to build a road up the middle of Bribie Island to connect with a bridge across the northern end of Pumicestone Passage at Caloundra, as I believe that such a road will be needed in the future and will be a very welcome amenity. I know that feasibility surveys have shown that it would be a fairly expensive project, but I should like to have further talks with the Minister about it because I think it would be a worth-while development.

In regard to development of this type generally, I believe that we, as a Government, must now show some caution in the development of estuarine and tidal lands. A tremendous amount of development of estuarine land has taken place recently in canal estates, and so on, in my electorate. From the point of view of conservation, I believe that action must be taken now, because research has shown quite clearly that the microflora and microfauna, which are a very necessary part of the food cycle in a marine environment generally, move in this area. If all such areas in the south-eastern corner of the State are torn to pieces, the effects on fish life will be very adverse. Such development would

react against both the fishing industry and the tourist industry, apart from considerations of conservation of the environment.

I urge the Minister and his officers to give this matter further consideration. Perhaps we should give some lead to the developers who are buying land on the assumption that that type of development will always be approved in the future. This assumption is reflected in land values. Frankly, I do not think that we can afford to give blanket approval to this type of development. Admittedly, it helps in the eradication of sandflies, and that is one of the arguments advanced in support of it, but unless it is the type of development by which the tidal area is sealed, it does not eradicate sandflies but merely provides conditions for a different breed of this pest.

A certain amount of development for residential and recreational purposes is necessary. Much land must be developed for the general expansion of the tourist industry. All I am asking is that there be a sensible balance between the very necessary developmental work for residential purposes, the tourist industry, the needs of the fishing industry—not forgetting the amateur fisherman who is an important part of the tourist industry—and the need to preserve areas in their natural state for the enjoyment of future generations.

I pay tribute to the tremendous contribution of the Forestry Department to the economy of my area and, indeed, every area throughout the State, which I am sure is not generally realised. An enormous number of people are employed directly and indirectly in maintaining and harvesting State forests. As the forests grow older, they are providing more and more employment. In my area forestry in the future is going to be a big, vital, inexhaustible industry, providing employment and development which are essential to a growing nation such as ours. We must provide more and more employment opportunities. In my electorate there would be more than 11,000 acres of pine forest. With the alteration of electoral boundaries under the redistribution, the figure would probably be more than that. I am very happy to have such a big employer of labour in my electorate.

I ask the Minister to consider the points I have raised.

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (5.39 p.m.): When the opportunity presented itself to speak on the Lands and Forestry Estimates it was my initial intention merely to speak for a few minutes about the preservation of the wedge-tailed eagle. But I must confess that, having listened to the remarks of the honourable member for Fassifern, I now feel constrained to take the full 40 minutes and deal with that subject and others as well. I say this because, as is usual with the uninformed and the unenlightened, the honourable member for Fassifern made sneering references to the attitude of conservationists generally. This has become

the pattern over the years for those who either cannot or will not understand the need for conservation. The honourable member said that, if the conservationists had their way, they would have bandicoots, wallabies and so on hopping up and down Queen Street. I should not be resentful of such remarks because, after 10 years of battling in this House, I associate them with those who are completely uninformed and unenlightened.

It was this hillbilly attitude that was responsible for the destruction of all the commercial red cedar in Australia by 1880. It was this unenlightened approach that almost led to the extinction of the koala in this State in 1927. It was this uninformed and unintelligent approach that has now led us to polluted streams, eroded land and to all the other things that have caused a marked deterioration in our environment. It is the unenlightened approach that in other States brands us as a "banana republic", run by cow-cockies who were taught by hillbillies.

It is because of these things that I feel it my bounden duty to deal with some of the aspects of conservation that are not only misunderstood in this State but are causing Queensland, because of the present attitude, to be held up to ridicule not only in the other States but in every enlightened country in the world as well.

Mr. Armstrong: Don't you think you have become a little fanatical?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I cannot remember who the honourable member is, as he makes so few contributions in this Chamber. I am informed that he is the honourable member for Mulgrave. He asks, "Don't you think you have become a little fanatical?" I don't think I am any more a fanatic than the person who wilfully destroys the environment purely for his own pecuniary gain. I am no more a fanatic than the man who takes the easy way and sprays pesticides, weedicides and herbicides willy-nilly instead of clearing land by hand. I am no more a fanatic than the man who will go on wilfully broadcasting fertiliser into the soil until it is no longer viable.

Mr. Armstrong: You seem to overlook that it is done on expert advice.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: If it starts from expert advice, unfortunately the problem arises from the mishandling of that advice. I know of experiments that have been carried out in this State with improved pastures that in some areas make it possible to run 15 sheep to the acre. The scientist who carried out the experiments told me he would not release details to the sheep-cockies because if they were told how to run 15 sheep to the acre, they would run 30 to the acre. It is a matter not of acting on expert advice but of mishandling it.

Mr. R. E. Moore: Thirty sheep to the acre? How stupid!

Mr. SHERRINGTON: The honourable member has been completely shorn, so probably he knows something about sheep.

To recapitulate, in 1970, following an intense and expert survey conducted by the C.S.I.R.O.'s Wild Life Research Division, all States with the exception of Queensland removed the wedge-tailed eagle from the pest fauna list. Of course, that would not have been the first time that Queensland has been the last State to act in such a matter. As a matter of fact, this is the only State that still does not have the fresh-water crocodile protected under the Fauna Conservation Act. Whereas one Minister told me that no concern was felt about the fresh-water crocodile, two months subsequently the Minister for Education said that from his observation only 5 per cent of the species remained in existence.

In 1971 I directed a question to the Minister for Primary Industries about the removal of the wedge-tailed eagle from the pest fauna list, and on that occasion I found that a conflict of opinion existed between the officers of the Department of Primary Industries and of the Lands Department. Possibly this resulted from the policy of the then Minister for Lands. Nevertheless, there was this disagreement over whether or not this bird should be given the protection of the Fauna Conservation Act. Whereas in that Act it was listed as pest fauna, in the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act it was declared to be vermin. Whilst the officers of the Department of Primary Industries were prepared to reclassify the bird, if only to the extent of having an open season declared, those in the Lands Department were opposed to such a reclassification.

In October 1971 I was advised that a further conference would be held with the Fauna Branch of the Lands Department. On 24 October this year, 12 months later, I asked the Minister for Lands what had happened since that conference and what the attitude of the Lands Department was. In answer, the Minister said—

"No further investigations have been carried out by my Department. I would point out that the wedge-tailed eagle is not in any way endangered in Queensland"—

I do not know how the Minister could answer in that vein, because no investigation was carried out.

Mr. R. E. Moore: What would you do if the eagles were eating your lambs?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: If the honourable member for Windsor will remain in the Chamber, he will learn just how stupid his interjection was.

The answer continues—

"or for that matter in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory where it is also not protected. Should it ever become threatened with a serious population decline, it is considered

that it will not be through shooting but through changes in land use or other biological causes."

Although I was given an assurance in 1971 that there would be an investigation, it was never carried out nor, apparently, was there a conference of the parties concerned.

The biology of this bird has been the object of a sustained research programme by the C.S.I.R.O.'s Wildlife Research Division. Some of the findings of this research were drawn to the attention of those concerned in a White Paper issued by the C.S.I.R.O. on "Lamb Predation in Australia in 1970", in these terms—

"Some of the causes of the misconception in regard to this bird were brought about because of its feeding habits."

It was pointed out that there were many predators affecting sheep reproduction. After dealing with the "predation" of dingoes, foxes, wild pigs, etc., the author of the article said—

"However, it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that the mammals dealt with so far in these notes are almost entirely nocturnal in their activities, and are therefore largely unseen by the grazier."

In other words, it would be difficult for the average grazier to establish what had made inroads into his flocks.

Mr. R. E. Moore: They have seen them.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: If the honourable member would just be patient—

Mr. R. E. Moore: You aren't telling the truth.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I am quite sure that even the bald head of the honourable member would be safe from the attack of one of these eagles.

The White Paper pointed out that, because the predators operated at night-time, it would be difficult for the average grazier to establish the number killed by foxes, dingoes, and so on. The paper continues—

"Birds, on the other hand, are active by day (except for a few groups such as owls) and are in consequence more readily seen. In fact, it is probably true to say that at least half of the carcasses located by the average grazier are only found at all because a bird is seen to fly up from them."

Those are the facts.

Mr. Rae: You are not quite right, you know.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: This is the result of six years' research. If the Minister wants to challenge Dr. Frith and other capable scientists, fair enough.

Those comments highlight the unintelligent attitude adopted by some people, particularly the honourable member for Windsor, who is

not even prepared to listen to these submissions which prove that a misconception arises simply because, in most instances, predators are seen leaving a carcass on the ground.

In the Canberra region, the study found that there was approximately one pair of nesting eagles to every 12 square miles. By way of comparison, it was found that, in Scotland, nesting golden eagles occupied about half that area, that is, about one nesting pair to every 6 square miles. In the Canberra area the average stocking rate of sheep is slightly more than one dry sheep per equivalent acre, which would mean one breeding ewe per 2 acres. The better paddocks carry more than that, but rough wooded sections are less productive. With a minimum figure of one ewe per 2 acres, or 320 per square mile, there would be 3,840 ewes within the 12 square miles of the nesting eagles. Based on the frequency of the occurrence of lamb remains in the nest, the average pair of nesting eagles might have taken half a dozen lambs of 4,000 or so born in the 12-square-mile area. The half-dozen lambs would be a negligible drain on the sheep flocks, and it would seem that many of the lambs were already dead.

What proportion of an eagle's diet is the carrion of lamb or sheep? Science has established that the wedge-tailed eagle is a scavenger. Even if we accept that these eagles killed six out of 4,000 live lambs in a 12-square-mile area, it is hardly significant.

In 1964, Dennis estimated that between 25 and 30 per cent of lambs born in Australia failed to live to marketing-time mainly because of starvation, mis-mothering and neo-natal weaknesses. So that, compared with six lambs killed by eagles, at least 1,000 lambs would die in that 12-square-mile area from starvation, mis-mothering and neo-natal weaknesses.

Despite the overwhelming evidence presented by the C.S.I.R.O., we in this State still perpetuate one of the most disgraceful episodes in our history, that is, the wholesale destruction of this bird whose rightful place in the ecology has been established by scientific research conducted over a period of some six years. It is beneficial to the sheep industry because it clears the land of carrion. It is very distressing, when driving along a country road, to see, mile after mile, the carcasses of these beautiful birds that have been shot and "crucified" on barbed-wire fences. They are a monument to our crass stupidity in not understanding the ecology of the world around us.

Mr. Hanson: You can see them out on McKechnie's property.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: That is so.

Mr. McKechnie: We destroyed 3,000 eagles in one year within Waggamba Shire.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: The Minister seems to boast about it.

Mr. McKechnie: And lifted our lambing by 25 per cent.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: That is the sort of thing mentioned in this White Paper. It is an example of the unenlightened thinking of a few years ago, when cattle were dying supposedly because poisonous toads were dying in water troughs. The C.S.I.R.O. discovered that redwater and botulism were killing the cattle.

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

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Before dinner I was dealing with statistics prepared by the C.S.I.R.O. concerning the wedge-tailed eagle. The Minister for Local Government gleefully interjected that he had destroyed 3,000 eagles in one year, and increased lambing by 25 per cent.

Mr. McKechnie: 25 to 30 per cent.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: We all know that the Minister has some peculiar theories. One of his recent theories was that Brisbane needed only 21 aldermen. I am unconvinced by his arguments, because I remember that he once spoke of flying foxes that were colonising a cave and making nightly raids in fruitgrowing areas. All the weight of biological evidence is that that just does not happen.

I shall quote statistics to show that the Minister's contentions are not substantiated by facts, and that it would be impossible to increase lambing by 25 per cent.

Mr. Cory: An eagle will kill two lambs a day.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I wish the honourable member for Warwick would remain in the House and listen to what is being said here, as I do not want to go over it all again. For the honourable member's information, in an area frequented by a nesting pair of eagles, which is approximately 12 square miles, about 4,000 lambs would be born, and the evidence shows that no more than six would be killed as a result of the predatory habits of the wedge-tailed eagle.

Mr. Cory: If you see them do it, don't you believe it?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I should like to read into "Hansard" all the facts contained in this book if I had sufficient time to do so.

Mr. Row: Are you sure you aren't talking about hawks?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I inform honourable members opposite that research has shown that 25 to 30 per cent of lambs do not reach maturity because of starvation and other post-natal problems. The honourable member for Warwick is the only human being who has ever suffered from foot-and-mouth disease—every time he opens his mouth, he

puts his foot in it! I am more interested in placing scientific facts in "Hansard" than arguing with him.

I return to the research carried out by the C.S.I.R.O.

Mr. McKechnie: What is the doctor's name?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Dr. Frith. I hope the Minister will not cast aspersions on the ability of Dr. Frith, as he happens to be the chief of the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Wildlife Research.

Mr. McKechnie: I am going on the more definite information of seeing hawks actually killing lambs.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: The Minister has seen one or two hawks killing lambs, and it is not denied in this White Paper that that happens. What I am saying to the Minister, and what he either cannot, or does not want to, comprehend, is that six years of concentrated study is far more scientifically reliable than a couple of sightings by the Minister.

Mr. McKechnie: And 30 years' practical experience.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Here is the good old bushman who talks about flying foxes living in caves! I prefer to accept the views of Dr. Frith and his helpers than those of a man who poses as an expert bushman and talks in such terms.

As I was saying, the survey in the Canberra area showed that rabbits were the primary food of the nesting eagles, followed in importance by hares. These two lagomorphs constituted about 60 per cent of the diet. Lambs were represented to the extent of six to nine per cent, fox and two species of possums seven to eight per cent, birds collectively 17 to 19 per cent, and lizards three to five per cent. In the arid interior of Australia, where the ecology is somewhat different and rabbits were somewhat less dominant in the diet, they represented 31 per cent and were nearly matched by kangaroos, which represented 26 per cent. As there were no hares in the interior of Australia, lamb made up 7 per cent of the diet, fox and domestic cat 3.5 per cent, birds 15 per cent, and lizards 18 per cent. The report went on to mention the particular type of lizard that was found in the area.

Mr. McKechnie: The eagle doesn't seem to be conservation minded.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: The Minister for Local Government and Electricity is not satisfied to accept that. He is like a lot of other cow-cookies I know, who rubbish the efforts of scientists but rush off to the vet, when they have cattle suffering from grass tetany, or something like that, and have them inoculated against the disease.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Probably the taxi drivers have not told him about wedge-tailed eagles, either.

I do not wish to spend all my time on this subject, but it is a matter of regret to me personally that neither Cabinet nor the Government is prepared to accept the advice of a very highly respected organisation in the scientific field in Australia or to accept the findings of research extending over many years. It would appear that the only reason why they cannot reach a decision on the matter is that they fear they will lose the cow-cocky voters out in the country who now support the Country Party. There is abundant evidence which proves beyond doubt that this bird has a rightful place in the ecology of this State. As in many other spheres, we find that this State, with its unenlightened, uninformed, cow-cocky approach—

Mr. McKechnie: With its feet on the ground.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Yes, with its feet on the ground, of course—is one of the last States in the Commonwealth to do something to protect this bird. As I said earlier in my speech, is it any wonder that Queensland is regarded as a banana republic governed by a lot of hill-billies.

Mr. Cory: You have not denied that they eat two lambs a day.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I have denied it.

Mr. Cory: Well, they do, and you do not know.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I have proved time and time again that it is not possible.

Mr. Cory: If you owned the lambs, you would say they ate them.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I pointed out earlier that they would be responsible for killing only six lambs out of a flock of about 4,000, yet the honourable member says that they kill two a day. He is like the man who wanted to go out and mine Ellison Reef, on the Great Barrier Reef, for coral. When he was in court and was asked what scientific research he had carried out, he said very proudly that he had prodded the reef with a crow-bar. Probably the honourable member for Warwick made his findings with the aid of a forked stick, which he used as a divining rod. That would be typical of the Government's unenlightened approach to this matter.

Mr. Tomkins: A stick makes quite a good divining rod.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I am told that a person who wears a kidney bean around his neck can divine things, too. In Queensland we are still using that method of divining for oil. We do not use instruments like the seismograph because they are all "old hat". Is it any wonder that we are regarded with scorn by people in other States!

Government members provide proof of the old adage that there are none so blind as those who cannot see. Certainly there are

none so deaf as those who cannot hear, and none so silly as those whose heads are full of wood.

I have mentioned the differing pattern of diet in the arid interior. In the northern parts of Australia the eagle adjusts its diet according to its environment. To hear honourable members opposite talk, one would think it was like the honourable member for Warwick—nothing but a mutton-eater. Government members are so stupid and so unenlightened that I do not intend to waste any more time answering their silly interjections. No wonder we are regarded in such poor light by enlightened people in other places.

I turn now to another subject on which I intended to speak in a very affable way until I heard the comments of the honourable member for Landsborough. He suggested that a road or a four-lane highway should be constructed right through the centre of Bribie Island to a concrete bridge across Pumicestone Passage to Caloundra. There is no need for the honourable member to hurry into the Chamber. I assure him that I am going to attack him in a friendly way. I am merely using his argument to lead up to what I want to say. His suggestion was little short of astounding.

Surely there must be some point in the destruction of the environment where we say "No further". Most of us can recall what a beautiful place Bribie Island was a few years ago. I am not denying that there is room for accommodation and preservation on that island, but the way we are heading it will not be long before Bribie Island is nothing but a concrete jungle, and that will have a significant effect on its aquatic environment.

If the Government does not act very shortly to protect the lower end of Moreton Bay by calling a halt to the unrestricted exploitation of the bay islands, we will lose one of the greatest assets of the capital city, the amateur fishing grounds in the southern end of Moreton Bay.

Unfortunately I did not have an opportunity to speak on the Bill the enlightened honourable member for Carnarvon rushed through Parliament because of fears about a couple of "long-hairs" holding a pop concert on Macleay Island. What are the priorities? Because a pop concert was going to be held on that island, legislation was rushed through Parliament, yet the Government stands idly by and allows land developers day by day to change and destroy the ecology of the bay islands. Already Lamb, Macleay and Russell Islands are going under the hands of the get-rich-quick subdividers. Where is it going to end? Will it be Karragarra or Crusoe next? Will it be every little bit of dirt in the Bay out of which somebody can make a "quid"?

Mr. McKechnie: That is why we are moving.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Too little, too late.

Mr. McKechnie: It should have been done in your day.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: That shows the Minister's abysmal ignorance. I was fishing in the Bay long before he came to office and there was hardly a house on any island in the bay. This trend has eventuated because the Government is quite happy to allow the get-rich-quick subdivider to dig in anywhere at all and make a "quid" out of anything he can. It has allowed rotten, filthy canal development on the Gold Coast, and the State will live to rue the day. We have already seen evidence of the flooding problems that occur when these canals are not properly developed. There is more than ample evidence that the initial canal development was allowed on the Gold Coast despite the warnings of an eminent professor at the university that it would create problems in the future. The Government is quite prepared to let these islands go. The Minister said the Government is moving now—when half the bay islands have been denuded of vegetation.

Mr. McKechnie: It should have been done in your day.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: It has all occurred in the time of this Government. Never mind about our day. This Government has been in office for 15 years and by the time the next election comes around it will be 18 years. The Minister tells me it should have been done in Labor's time. When this Government came to office, there was not a house on these islands. Not content with sitting idly by, the Government has actually encouraged these people to get in and destroy the complete ecology of the bay. The way was opened to every land "shark" who wanted to make a "quid" out of it—and the Minister says the Government is moving now. If a halt is not called, pollution problems will be so bad at the southern end of our bay that fishing will disappear entirely.

Mr. McKechnie: Luggage Point has me worried, too.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: It should, too. If I were the Minister, I would be worried that I might be "washed out" by it.

If it is not overcome, pollution will destroy fishing in the lower end of Moreton Bay. If we lose this area as a fishing spot, what will Brisbane have for this form of recreation? The pollution problem has been caused and will be aggravated by over-development—

Mr. R. E. Moore: By the city council sewer.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I am sorry the honourable member was not here earlier to hear me tell another honourable member that he had foot-and-mouth disease. Pollution has probably passed the point of no return. The problems from septic effluent and other

household wastes will accumulate as these areas are built up. This will lead to a marked decline in fishing, and Brisbane will be deprived of a tremendous outlet for the amateur fisherman and the person who wishes to avail himself of these areas as week-end leisure spots.

Mr. Hughes: What degree of pollution do you think presently exists?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I could not tell you. Only proper testing will establish that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Through you, of course, Mr. Speaker. I could not tell the honourable member what degree of pollution exists, but no investigation is going on at the moment. We are not even following the pattern of pollution or keeping an eye on it.

Mr. McKechnie: We have 600 monitoring stations throughout Queensland.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Where?

Mr. McKechnie: We have some in Moreton Bay.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I have the Minister's assurance that the ecology of the Bay is being monitored? I think he is trying to mislead the House.

(Time expired.)

Mr. TOMKINS (Roma) (7.35 p.m.): At the outset, I should like to reply to the comments of the honourable member for Salisbury about wedge-tailed eagles. I have had a great deal of experience with these birds, and know that besides picking up lambs they will also attack calves. I have seen a considerable number of calves that have been clawed over the backbone by wedge-tailed eagles.

It is interesting to hear the claims of Opposition members that the Government is not combating pests. Having read the report of the Land Administration Commission I have nothing but admiration for the Government's introduction of the baiting of dingoes with "1080". These animals posed a marked threat to the grazing industry of Queensland. Unfortunately, though, their almost total eradication has had the effect of making the wedge-tailed eagles even more audacious than they were previously. It seems that after one pest is eradicated, another comes to the fore.

Despite opposition to the use of "1080", it has proved to be a real winner. Some of its critics claim that it kills birdlife. Experience has shown that it does nothing of the sort. In fact, a wedge-tailed eagle that feeds on the carcass of a dingo poisoned by "1080" would suffer no ill effects at all. I regard this as a tragedy, because it would be far better if the bird, too, died.

I pay a tribute to the Co-ordinating Board, and particularly to Mr. Johnson, who was its chairman when I was a member of it. The

board and the then Minister—I think it was Sir Alan Fletcher—are to be commended on their willingness to experiment with “1080”.

Mr. Houston: How long does it stay active?

Mr. TOMKINS: I do not know, but I have never seen any evidence of lethal effects of “1080” on any form of animal life other than dingoes. They are the animals that are most vulnerable to it.

Mr. Houston: If “1080” gets into streams, will it affect human beings?

Mr. TOMKINS: No. It certainly does not have any effect on human beings; nor is it effective against, for example, wild pigs, which are also a nuisance. The Government's policy has been shown to be a very wise one. The Co-ordinating Board will not allow the poison to be mixed by other than its own qualified officers, and they mix it in such a way that it will kill only dingoes.

Mr. Houston: When the meat containing “1080” rots away, the poison could be absorbed by the soil or washed into streams and could build up over a period.

Mr. TOMKINS: As I have said, it is mixed in such a light concentration that it is fatal only to dingoes. Some people claim that it will kill goannas, but their assertions are totally unsubstantiated. In fact, since the decline in dingo numbers, snakes appear to be breeding more profusely than before.

An Honourable Member: What about pigs?

Mr. TOMKINS: I have said that it will not kill pigs.

It is rather interesting to note that in 1968, when this method of eradication commenced, the number of landholders participating in the scheme numbered 700. In 1970 the number had increased to 1,750 and, in 1971, to 1,825. This year the number has decreased to 927. That is certain evidence that this pest is gradually being overcome. In the light of the remarks of the honourable member for Salisbury, I wonder what he would have done under similar circumstances. Would he have been prepared to participate in the scheme? He has accused us of not being broadminded in certain matters.

Mr. Sherrington: If you would give me five minutes, I would tell you what I think of it.

Mr. TOMKINS: The campaign has been outstandingly successful, but strangely enough some sheep men would not participate in it. They said they did not know why a dingo would pick up a “1080” bait rather than a lamb, but many of the primary producers who took part in the campaign suddenly found that they had very few dingoes.

Mr. Houston: What happens to the sheep dogs?

Mr. TOMKINS: They only have to be locked up for a short time. That does not create any problem.

Mr. Houston: But it will kill them.

Mr. TOMKINS: It will if they eat it.

Mr. Houston: That is why those men wouldn't use it.

Mr. TOMKINS: Most of them use it now. They realise the advantages.

I now turn to another success story, although it has not been as successful as the “1080” campaign. I refer to the control of noogoora burr. Two beetles, called Mecas and Nupserha, after a number of years of building up in population seem to be doing a fairly good job in controlling this difficult pest. We need a breakthrough with the control of noogoora burr, as it is a dreadful scourge and is well established throughout Queensland.

I pay tribute to the work done by the Co-ordinating Board, and Mr. Johnston who, I understand, is not well. I wish him a speedy return to good health. I believe him to be one of the most capable officers in the Lands Department. When he returns to duty, I am sure he will continue to carry on his good work.

The Lands Department is changing in character. As the honourable member for Belyando said, it is now carrying out work never previously undertaken. The brigalow lands scheme was carried out by the Land Administration Commission, and the dairy farm amalgamation scheme is also administered by the Land Administration Commission. This morning the Minister foreshadowed the introduction of a Bill to amend this scheme in certain particulars. The department's activities are changing so that it can control problems that arise from time to time, which is as it should be. One of the big undertakings by the Lands Department was the brigalow lands scheme, which was started some years ago and was carried out with Commonwealth money. It has been well developed, and no doubt honourable members know most of the details concerning it.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: The living areas are realistic.

Mr. TOMKINS: That is so. Basically, so far as I can see, the carrying capacity of each block is 600 to 800 breeders. It is a very good scheme in which areas vary from 9,000 to 18,000 acres, with 10,000 acres as the basic area. The scheme was started during conditions of drought, but as time goes on the settlers will overcome their problems.

That leads me to an interesting point in the brigalow scheme. This scheme must be a success. As the Minister for Conservation has said, the settlers have adequate living areas. They have to pay their rates and taxes, and survive. Up to this point of time the scheme has been successful. I know of

nobody who has walked off his property, although one or two have been in trouble. At the end of the 10-year period these settlers could own their blocks the value of which would be approximately \$200,000.

Mr. Hanson: One would need the wealth of Bruce Small before one could apply for a block.

Mr. TOMKINS: I wish the honourable member for Port Curtis would not make such senseless interjections. I do not know why he does. He knows it is a good scheme, and he would like to be on one of these blocks. He cannot convince me that he has not enough money to go in for one. However, I do not want to be diverted, as this is an important matter.

As I have said, a person on one of these blocks with any nous—not someone like the honourable member for Port Curtis—would own his block outright after 10 years. If at that stage he died, leaving a wife and two children, his estate would have to pay heavy probate and succession duty, which is one of the settler's greatest problems. This is another cost which can force the primary producer to go to the Rural Reconstruction Board for assistance.

Mr. McKechnie: It is tied in with rural reconstruction.

Mr. TOMKINS: Yes, because the Rural Reconstruction Board has to assist these people to carry on. The estate of \$200,000 would have to pay \$37,640 in State tax and \$33,968 in Commonwealth tax, a total of \$71,608. Those are undisputed figures, allowing for the present deductions. I should now like to draw a comparison between that man and a departmental store manager or company director living in the city.

Mr. Davis: A silvertail.

Mr. TOMKINS: No, not necessarily. He would be a man who had worked his way up and was still working at the top. I imagine that each of these two men would be earning approximately \$10,000 a year net. Suppose that the man in the city also has a wife and two children.

Mr. Bromley: What if he has three children?

Mr. TOMKINS: I am using an assumption to prove my point. Also assume that each man's son follows in his father's footsteps. The man living in a city or town on the coast, with a home valued at \$50,000 to \$60,000—

Mr. Davis: Not a bad home!

Mr. TOMKINS: It could reach that value, with the high price of land and all the amenities available in the cities, which are not available to the man in the country. What does the city man's estate pay in duty? State tax would be \$3,900 and Federal Tax would be \$3,500, making a total tax of \$7,400.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the honourable member can tie his remarks in with rural reconstruction.

Mr. TOMKINS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for your indulgence.

I make the final point that the man on the land would pay \$71,000 in death duties, and the city man would pay \$7,400. We, as administrators, have to see if we can find some better way of dealing with this situation. It is not a bit of use a person undertaking a rural occupation if after his death his successors have to carry on under such a heavy burden. I think this is quite wrong and inequitable.

There is no doubt that the rural reconstruction scheme has done a fantastic job. Men of the highest calibre have been appointed to the board. Even wool-growers, who were having trouble, are now in a very much better situation. They have been helped by the rises in the price of wool, which were brought about by the Federal Government's reserve price plan. Producers who previously were facing ruin are now getting on extremely well.

Mr. Bromley: The high prices paid by the Japanese at the last wool sale are the greatest confidence trick ever played on Australia.

Mr. TOMKINS: I do not know what the honourable members means by that. All I am saying is that the wool industry is getting itself out of trouble.

I should say that the decisions made by the Rural Reconstruction Board have been 100 per cent correct, in that every person who has been assisted will get out of trouble. All those of whom I have knowledge appear to me to be on the right track. The board, and the Government, have done a very good job. Without the assistance they have received, many producers would by now have been finished and sold up.

Mr. Sullivan: If there had been a Labor Government in the Federal sphere, it wouldn't have done this work in rural reconstruction.

Mr. TOMKINS: The Minister raises an interesting point, and one that concerns me. In the unlikely event of a change in the Federal Government on Saturday, what would be the future of this scheme? I do not know. I cannot see a Federal Labor Government making \$23,000,000 available under the brigalow land development scheme. I would not care to be a State Minister who had to attend conferences in Canberra with Mr. Whitlam.

Mr. Sullivan: Thank God we have not had to do that in the last few years!

Mr. TOMKINS: It is wonderful to think that this Government has had such strong support from the Federal Government. I think the Federal Government's policies

towards Queensland have been vindicated by the results obtained. The brigalow land development scheme will be successful, which means that the Commonwealth will have their funds substantially repaid. The same remarks apply to the rural reconstruction scheme. The State has made money available, and the right people have been appointed to carry out this work. There are no nitwits at the top. Largely for this reason, these schemes have been completely successful.

I congratulate the Minister for Lands and his predecessor, who is in the Chamber, on their work in this field. I hope that it continues. Despite what honourable members opposite may say, unless there is a fairly prosperous rural community, there can be no inland towns. If primary producers are kept on their properties, small businesses are able to continue. Business people have said to me, "You help primary producers, but you don't help us." I say to them, "If we helped you under this scheme, where would we stop?"

I believe that the primary producer is in a unique position and needs assistance along these lines. When he receives it, the inland area develops well.

Mr. Gunn: He does well, and so do the businesses.

Mr. TOMKINS: That is correct. I hate to think what would happen if Governments failed to assist primary producers. After all, they are the people who provide this country's export income. The success of the beef industry, the sugar industry, and the wool industry—it is to be hoped that it gets back to where it was in former years—mean a better life for all Queenslanders and Australians. If these industries are run in a sensible way, the whole country benefits.

One way and another, the Department of Lands has much to take credit for. It has faced problems realistically as they have arisen and has done a good job in solving them. The work of the department has changed considerably in recent years. That is commendable, because it has to keep pace with changes in many fields.

I might refer briefly to one matter relative to the freeholding of land that causes me some little concern.

Mr. Hartwig: It is the best thing that the Government has introduced.

Mr. TOMKINS: There is no doubt about that. The Country-Liberal Government implemented a policy of freeholding land when it came to office, and succeeding Governments have slowly but surely extended it. The stage has now been reached of freeholding on the basis of a living area.

One thing that has surprised me a little is the view of the Department of Lands that a living area on a grazing-selection basis is not a living area on a freehold basis. Consequently, in freeholding, the department has adopted a policy of setting up special leases where it considers that the area exceeds a living area. For example, on a grazing selection of 20,000 acres the department might say, "We will give you freehold tenure over 14,000 acres and a special lease over 6,000 acres." That is in fact happening, and the 6,000 acres special lease is given on the terms of the original lease. Some of these leases will run for 20 or 30 years.

In my view, a special lease is not conducive to sound development, because a person who gets tenure of that type will spend all his money on the freehold area and will tend to neglect the special lease. He has no priority, and he knows that he will lose the land when the lease expires. Consequently, I should like to see the Minister and the Land Administration Commission consider this matter carefully and see whether they can devise a method of overcoming the problem. Many special leases are in existence, and in most instances I do not think the department would get a living area out of them for closer settlement. The areas that are being freeholded now are fairly well scattered, and it would be difficult to get the areas required from special leases that have expired. I think it would be fair to offer them back to the original lessee on a 10-year basis, with development conditions. If the lessee is prepared to negotiate with the department and is prepared to do certain work on the special lease over a period, he should be offered the special lease on, say, a 10-year freeholding basis.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: It would bring another family into the district much more quickly and lead to better land settlement.

Mr. TOMKINS: That is correct. If that were done, I think it would clean up areas that probably will stagnate. It does not happen in every case of conversion to freehold, but it does in many cases.

That is my only criticism of the administration of the Lands Department. I think it does a very good job in other fields, and there is less pressure on the department now than ever there has been. People accept it because they know it has done a good job.

Mr. Cory: Does its programme include eradicating eagles?

Mr. TOMKINS: I am not sure about that; I am more concerned about eradicating dingoes. I do not wish to speak about eagles; the honourable member for Salisbury might jump on me if I did. I shall leave it at that.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (8 p.m.): In recent months a land issue has arisen in the Rockhampton area which has created the greatest conflict that local people have known for about a quarter of a century. I refer to the proposal by Iwasaki Sangyo Coy. (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. to develop a tourist resort in the Yeppoon area. To do so it naturally must buy up large tracts of land. A number of questions have been asked in this Chamber by honourable members on both sides, including the honourable members for Rockhampton North and Callide. I, too, have asked questions. The answers have been very vague.

The matter started some time ago with some brief announcements about this 70-year-old millionaire industrialist planning to come to Australia to initiate and then develop a massive tourist centre. He said in various Press releases that he did not have the final blueprint, but we find many months later that he did not even have the initial blueprint. Nothing is known yet as to what is going to happen. There have been hundreds of letters to the Press, and we have had published statements by members of Parliament, councillors, conservationists and preservation groups, members of chambers of commerce and various local residents. We have even had statements from the Minister for Tourism. Coupled with all that, in recent weeks there has been a death threat to the honourable member for Callide, and now one to the Federal member for Dawson, Dr. Patterson. This is the issue that has arisen, so it cannot be taken lightly. Indeed, it is a very serious matter which I am sure interests every person in the State.

The project has received some criticism and some support. It seems that there are two cases. To my mind the greatest criticism would come not only from local residents but also from the R.S.L. I shall develop that point later on. Those honourable members who know the district would realise that the proposed area of land is right next to Shoalwater Bay, which is an extremely important military area. It is an area in which Army manoeuvres take place, and people are not allowed into it without special Federal Government permits. Residents of the area who once owned the land are still not allowed in. Yet here is a proposal to set up a tourist resort which will be wholly owned, at this point anyway, by a foreign power.

We have had editorials on this matter. We have seen the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce join with various commercial interests in Yeppoon to put forward their views. We have seen people return the fire of those who have criticised the proposals violently and viciously. Today it is a very complicated matter. In fact, it is probably the most complicated one that the people in the central Queensland area generally and in Yeppoon specifically have faced in 25 years.

One Press statement some time ago said that hundreds of millions of dollars would be spent on the project. Other Press statements have referred to the figure of \$10,000,000. An article in "The Sunday Mail" of 23 July 1972 states—

"Japanese in \$10,000,000 Coast Resort Plan"

"A Japanese syndicate plans to build a \$10,000,000 international tourist resort on 2,300 acres it bought at Yeppoon in Central Queensland."

That has now been contradicted by the Minister for Tourism, who said in Toowoomba that it was a \$20,000,000 project. He castigated the people of Central Queensland for not openly supporting the project and welcoming it with open arms.

I point out that there are two aspects to this project. Firstly, there is the resort, and I believe there are many good reasons why we should have it. I will develop that point later. The second aspect is the purchase of freehold land. Nothing really is known about the conditions that will be set by the Government. I have asked questions on this and members of the Chamber of Commerce and various interested groups in the area have sought information, but no-one seems to know. Nothing is known as to who will supply the materials, who will supply the labour force, or whether there will be any Australian equity. We know very little about it.

The project could become a catalyst for tremendous development in the area. I accept that. It is a balanced case. Furthermore, it could attract development in the services field. It could create supplementary tourism. I have been told that it could help in the establishment of a deep-sea fishing industry. I understand that there could be an underwater observatory. It could bring a tremendous financial inflow to the district. It could assist the present commercial interests, and we in Rockhampton naturally realise that we would gain indirectly. I believe also that it would create tremendous governmental expenditure. We would need new roads from Rockhampton, Yeppoon and so on. We could have a better airport and travel facilities. We might even get a tourist-coach system for the area. And, naturally, it would augment the food, maintenance and cleansing services. All this must come.

As has been pointed out by other members, there is also the added attraction of employment. There is the initial employment in construction, service and maintenance and the supplementary employment that arises with ancillary industries. So there is a very strong case for the project, but, equally, there is a very strong case against it.

First of all, there is the problem of overseas takeovers. This is actually what is happening. An industry is coming here that will play a very big part in the tourist

development not only of Central Queensland but, I believe, of the whole of Queensland. I think it is very dangerous for a Government or a Parliament to condone any foreign investment that takes over our profitable industries. I believe it is even more dangerous if we allow any foreign power to take legal control of Australian soil. I also think it is a dangerous attitude to adopt when we give a blank cheque to development, as many people in the Yeppoon and Rockhampton areas have obviously been prepared to do, especially when no real information is available.

One might also raise queries as to whether or not the rights of Australians would be preserved in such a project and whether or not Australians would be able to use these resorts, beaches and the facilities provided. We also raise the need for Australian equity in this venture and we finally come back to the very important military aspect which the R.S.L. has raised. In fact, in "The Australian" of July 1972 a statement appeared under the name of reporter Elizabeth Johnson, who says that returned men at Yeppoon claim that the resort for Japanese tourists will constitute a security risk to the Army training grounds at Shoalwater Bay at the end of the coast range.

Mr. Chinchin: We won't have an army if Labor becomes the Government.

Mr. WRIGHT: That is an inane interjection. The point is that Shoalwater Bay is a very important military training area. So we can understand why R.S.L. members are saying, "Remember Pearl Harbour." Although they realise that we are friends with the Japanese at this moment and at peace with their nation, they are looking ahead and querying whether we dare allow a foreign power to take legal control of our soil right next to an important military establishment. There are dangers in allowing foreign powers here. I do not think we should allow any organisation that is free of all control and supervision to establish an industry alongside any major military installation. The R.S.L. has been outspoken about it, and, while I am too young to remember the Second World War, there are thousands of men in Central Queensland who really understand the significance of the words, "Lest we forget." Top members of the R.S.L. have been outspoken about this danger and I think all returned servicemen would say that they have good reason to do so and that we should take notice of what they say.

In considering land questions and foreign take-overs, there is the other point that there is already too much foreign investment and involvement in our country. Throughout this and recent years we have heard much about it. Only the other day, one newspaper claimed that 52 per cent of our insurance companies are under the control of overseas investors. As well, I read in the "National Times" that our major soft-drink, confectionery and cosmetic groups

are owned by overseas interests, yet Governments, especially the Federal Government in this instance, have been completely apathetic to this. It was not until it realised that the A.L.P. policy on the restricting of foreign investment was gaining support that it decided to do something about it.

There is a real need to halt foreign take-overs, especially of our land. This is most important because it is our natural heritage. It was admitted by the Minister this morning, so the honourable member for Callide told me, that 3,000 acres have already been freeholded and application has been made for something like 3,000 more. Shortly, 6,000 acres of land will be held by a foreign power. While we might say that some of this will be used for the positive proposal of cattle raising, let us not forget that take-overs in other areas have gone further than this. These things might start as something with which we agree, but they go further.

I have read some old newspapers, one of which was "The Sunday Mail" of 13 March 1968, in which it was stated that the Americans purchased 15,000 square miles of Cape York Peninsula. A headline in another newspaper states, "Overseas Grip on Northern Territory Land Criticised". Beneath that headline the article claims that foreign interests then controlled 25 stations containing an aggregate area of nearly 40,000,000 acres. Further, it says—

"Americans were spending more than \$2,250,000 on the development of 20 recently acquired cattle leases in the Cape York Peninsula."

Mr. Bird: Are you for or against this?

Mr. WRIGHT: I'll make my case, thank you.

The article goes on—

"There is a huge demand in Queensland for Queensland land. The Minister (who is now the Minister for Primary Industries) stated that Queensland faced a huge demand by overseas land seekers and investors despite the State's prolonged drought and its serious effect on rural production.

"The Lands Minister (Mr. Sullivan), who told Parliament this yesterday, said that thousands were still grasping at every chance to get a piece of the land."

On 22 September 1968 "Sunday Truth"—which is now known as "Sunday Sun"—reported as follows:—

"Cattle Takeover in the North"

"Foreign-based companies now own 32 cattle stations in the Northern Territory with a total of 64,463 square miles."

That is a tremendous area of Australian freehold to give away to foreign buyers.

Another newspaper articles states—

"Work has started on a \$1,500,000 grazing and tropical agricultural venture to be developed on 12,000 acres north of Mossman."

In reply to a question that I asked on 24 March 1971, the then Minister for Lands (Mr. Sullivan) said that 2,000,000 acres had been converted from leasehold to freehold, and that much of this area was in the hands of foreign investors.

Mr. Chinchén: What is wrong with that?

Mr. WRIGHT: All of us know how anti-nationalistic the honourable member is. It is strange to hear Country Party members express agreement with the foreign ownership of land in this State, because only a few days ago, on 24 November, the Country Party's State President, Mr. R. L. Sparkes, said that the party's lands committee had decided to seek a new law, and that he sought the curbing of foreign ownership of land. Yet Government members interject, "What is wrong with it?" Mr. Sparkes said that the committee took the view that it was undesirable that alien interests should acquire large tracts of land, particularly in one locality. He put up a very good case against the foreign ownership of land. Government members display their hypocrisy.

Records will show that this handing over of land to foreign investors has been going on for years. But at last the Federal Government, the Country Party and Queenslanders generally are very concerned about it. In spite of that, Government members in this Chamber say that there is nothing really wrong with it. I wonder how many would be prepared to stand up and be counted on this issue. This Parliament has an obligation to preserve our land rights.

Mr. Chinchén: The foreigners can't take it away, you know.

Mr. Tucker: Then why the hell did we fight for it in the last war?

Mr. WRIGHT: I, too, would ask the same question. The other day while a Japanese guest was present in this Parliament, I discussed the matter of foreign participation in the ownership of land with him and the honourable member for Rockhampton North. The Japanese guest stressed that he would ensure that there was 50 per cent Australian equity in his proposed venture. He also told me that any foreign investor who seeks to establish himself in Japan is required to approach the Government. He is told where to develop his industry and is given, not freehold land, but only a lease. Moreover, on most occasions, 51 per cent is given to the Japanese Government by the investor.

That could be debated, but it is what he told me. I have sought further information about it and, while I have been told that it is not always so, it seems that it is becoming the trend. The Japanese Government, like the West German Government, and now the American Government, is saying, "No foreign power shall hold any freehold land in our country." If it is good enough for the Japanese to say that, it should be good enough for us. In many

of the major developing countries of the world—those that are investing in Australia—it is virtually impossible for us to buy freehold land. Yet we in this nation do not seem to care, or the present Governments do not seem to care. Thank goodness there is to be an election on Saturday, after which there will be an immediate change in policy.

Australia, Queensland and Central Queensland can gain from a policy of participation and partnership. I accept that, at this point of time, we need some foreign investment. I should be a fool to say otherwise because I have seen the advantages to be gained. But we should not countenance unrestricted development and investment. I hope to see the day when it is not necessary—the day when we do not need it. I hope to see the day when we can go and tell them to burn their money for all it is worth. I hope to see the day when Australians have enough interest and faith in their country to invest in it. I know the problems and I know that it is hard to get Australians to invest in their country. If Australians as individuals are not prepared to do so, I believe that the Governments have an obligation to play their part and enter into partnership with various organisations.

While this is not relevant to the matter we are discussing, I point out that some years ago I was told by a person involved in the Moura coal transactions, that Thiess Bros. made overtures to the Government to participate in that enterprise. A person in a very high place told me that the Government leader at that time (Mr. Nicklin) said, "We are not prepared to take part." A very strong case was presented by this Australian company on why it and the Government should participate in this development, but the offer was not accepted.

I repeat that, at times, we must accept foreign investment. I think all will agree that in the case of a pioneering industry, one in which people could lose their money very easily, we may well say, "Let them come in and spend their money." Dr. Patterson, the Federal member for Dawson, said that, and I think there is some sense in it. If these people are prepared to risk their money in such a venture, fair enough, so long as we do not lose by it.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am sticking up for Australia. I am biased. I do not care about that, and I do not care if I do not have anything to do with foreign investors. The point is that I am an Australian and proud of it.

Regardless of the investment that comes to Australia—and it should be encouraged if it is for a pioneering industry—the main point is that there is still no need to give freehold title to our land. If the Yeppoon development goes ahead, and the resort is

established there, I believe that we should support it and make sure that it helps to develop Central Queensland. But there is no need to give the Japanese freehold title to the land. The honourable member for Callide said that Japanese interests already hold about 2,300 acres. There is no reason to let them have that land. They could have been given a long-term lease rather than freehold title.

"It's time"—time that Government members threw away their politicians' coats and became statesmen; time that they looked to the future. It is all very well to talk now about how the country is developing and how we are balancing the Budget, but what will it be like in a few years' time? What will later generations say when they find that not 52 per cent but 92 per cent of our nation is owned by overseas investors? That could well be the case if the present trend worsens.

I make the point that I am opposed to the Yeppoon proposal not only because it involves freehold land, but also because insufficient information has been given about it. In answer to a question I asked a few months ago, the Premier replied that he did not know who would supply the material or the labour force, or what conditions or prerequisites he, as the Premier of the State, had set for development. Yet the Minister for Tourism castigated people for not supporting a project they knew nothing about. They knew nothing about the conditions or the protection they would be given. We have had no indication of what the Government will require in this instance. We do not know how we will be protected. At the present time all we know is that thousands of acres of Queensland soil are being sold and that we have given the buyer a blank cheque. We are saying, "Do what you like. Take what you like. We don't care." That is not good enough for the Opposition and it is not good enough for the majority of people in Central Queensland.

Because I have come to respect the honourable member for Callide, I regret to say that this matter could be his political Waterloo in a few years' time. I have sympathy with him because threats have been made to him. I castigate anybody who stoops so low. But he must also be having second thoughts about this matter. I do not know whether he gave it an open-cheque blessing, but I know that he supported it, and I wonder now if he has reconsidered and asked himself if he should have supported such a project under which freehold title is being given to a foreign power. No "dinky-die" Australian could possibly accept that that development should be allowed without our first knowing the facts, and this has surely happened. No-one really knows what is being planned. The Japanese may not have won the war, but if what is going on in Central Queensland is any criterion, they have certainly won the peace.

Mr. Chinchin interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: I believe it is the right of every business house to decide who will be its customer. I believe it is the law that it can stop anyone from entering its shop and that it does not have to serve him. If it is good enough for private enterprise, it is good enough for this country and this State.

The other matter I wish to raise is the conversion to freehold title of a camping and water reserve, R463, parish of Faraday, some 15 miles north of Rockhampton. It was previously known as Special Lease No. 30230. I have said that I hold serious views on allowing foreign powers to freehold land. Whilst I concede that it is our right as Australians to freehold land we should always make sure that we consider the public interest before doing so.

I raised this matter with the Minister for Lands and, to his credit, he did inquire into it. He said he would consider it, investigate it, and do everything possible, because he did not know the full circumstances. He contacted a number of sources. I believe that the answer I have received, which is no doubt a departmental one, simply cannot be accepted.

I shall outline the history of this matter. It is a reserve of 157 acres 1 rood, with extensive river frontage. To stress the importance of such an area of land and its value, I point out that the barrage at Rockhampton has been completed and that grazing lands that front the northern bank of the Fitzroy River are becoming extremely valuable because the river is now a stretch of completely fresh water. I am told that the annual rental was \$45 a year. The original purpose of the reserve was its use as a camping and water reserve. The trustees were the Fitzroy Shire Council. It was originally held as Special Lease No. 19356 by Mr. Stephen Connor. On 24 May 1965, under section 203 (b) of the Land Act, it was issued as New Special Lease No. 28719. The term of the lease was 20 years. It was to expire on 31 August 1984, which is a considerable period. The lessee was then Mr. Peter Francis Egan. The conditions of the lease were—

"1. The Lessee shall maintain the land free from noxious plants.

"2. The Lessee shall use the land for grazing purposes only.

"3. The Lessee shall not effect any structure improvements other than boundary fences on the leased land.

"4. The Lessee shall within 2 months, at his own expense, provide erect and maintain in a prominent position on the road frontage of the reserve a notice board to the satisfaction of the Trustees of the reserve stating clearly that the land is a camping and water reserve and that travelling stock and the public have the right to use the land for such purposes."

The last condition is the crux of this matter.

Although in May 1965 Mr. Egan was granted a special lease for grazing purposes for 20 years, it was surrendered as a special

lease barely 12 months later, on 30 June 1966. It then reverted to the trustees, the Fitzroy Shire Council, which is normal procedure.

In December 1970, four years later, an application was made by Mr. Egan to purchase the land involved. I contacted the Minister about this. I do not wish to cast aspersions on Mr. Egan, because he cannot defend himself. I am not saying that he has done anything wrong. But I am questioning his right to have ownership of the land, especially because it was used by the public as a picnic area. It was used for camping and watering purposes. It was a special lease that suited Mr. Egan's purposes. On 22 November 1972, after I had asked, firstly, by telegram, the Premier, secondly, the Lands Minister, and, thirdly, the land commissioner, that any decision on this application be withheld till I had submitted a case, the department agreed to sell. It was stated that the reason was that the Fitzroy local authority was in favour of the sale.

I point out that the applicant is a councillor of the Fitzroy Shire Council. I do not know what this has to do with it, or whether he was present when the matter was raised.

Mr. Chinchin: Are you imputing dishonesty?

Mr. WRIGHT: No, I am not. I stress that. What I am saying is that Mr. Egan did not want it before. He had it on special lease for 20 years and kept it for only 12 months. All of a sudden, it reverted to the trustees. Now he makes application to buy it.

It is one of the very popular picnic grounds used by many Rockhampton people. Unfortunately, the lessee did not meet the conditions of the lease. He did not erect a sign saying that the public had the right to use it as a camping and watering reserve. Instead, an advertisement was inserted in a newspaper virtually telling people not to go near the land. A sign was put up virtually saying, "Keep Out". The conditions of the lease were not in fact complied with.

I believe that, if they had been, people would have used this land. Whilst I admit that people have stopped using it in recent times, they have in fact been hoodwinked and scared off it by the sign placed at the entrance and the newspaper advertisement. I point out also that the local officers of the Lands Department recommended against it. They said, "This should not be allowed." They recommended completely against any conversion for sale. I also have here a photostat copy of a petition signed by hundreds of interested and concerned people who believe that there is no reason for a freehold conversion.

An Opposition Member: Did you say that the Lands Office recommended against it?

Mr. WRIGHT: The local officers recommended against it.

Finally, a compromise was made. A Lands Department officer said, "We will give him part of it", but another officer who took his place said that he should not have it. He was not saying that he should not have it for grazing purposes, but that he should not have it under freehold title.

I do not believe that there is any reason why this land should be converted to freehold. Let him have grazing rights, and let him have them for 20 years or 50 years, but let the people's right to use the land as a camping area be safeguarded. People are now more and more wanting to get out into areas such as this. I have had a look at the place. Even though the council said, according to the Minister, that it is not of much use, it is apparently of great use to Mr. Egan. It is all right for him. I believe that it could also be of considerable use as a picnic area for Rockhampton families who want to go out there to throw in a line and do some fishing. I also believe, as I said before, that it is a very valuable property, and the Government therefore has an obligation not to give it away. Mr. Egan pays only \$45 a year on annual lease. Let him continue to do that.

I therefore raise this matter again. I know that a decision has been made. I have here a letter in which it is said that the lessee has contracted to purchase, and the matter must proceed to finality on that basis. I ask the Minister to reconsider this matter in the interests of the people of this area.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable the Minister for Lands and Forestry.

Mr. BROMLEY: I rose first.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I called the Minister. Will the honourable member please resume his seat? He can speak later.

Hon. W. A. R. RAE (Gregory—Minister for Lands and Forestry) (8.30 p.m.): The debate on this Resolution has been very interesting. To be quite frank, I think more has come out of it than came out of the debate on the Estimates for my department. However, it has produced a few surprises, and I think I can best answer the questions raised by honourable members by taking them in the order in which they spoke.

The honourable member for Warwick spoke about partners and individual landholders, and expressed some concern about partners not being eligible for assistance to buy additional areas. The Rural Reconstruction Board places emphasis on assisting people who are working a property as a family unit, rather than assisting a sleeping partner who is not so actively involved. But if partners are working a property and actually living on it, their problem will be considered with the idea of assisting wherever possible. If people have been denied assistance by the

Rural Reconstruction Board in these circumstances, I suggest that the honourable member make a further application outlining the full story and mentioning any changes that might have occurred as a result of price rises, good rainfall, or things of that nature. The board does not wish to be difficult; on the contrary, it wants to assist people.

In regard to a particular application being refused, this may be reconsidered. However, I should like the honourable member to know that there is no provision for the board to assist one member of a partnership to buy out the other. Under the agreement with the Commonwealth, the board cannot associate itself with action of the type to which the honourable member referred.

Mr. Cory: Perhaps you might take the problem back to Canberra.

Mr. RAE: I shall be talking to the Commonwealth representatives again in February, when I shall be going to Canberra with my officers.

Mr. Tomkins: Mr. Sinclair is very sympathetic.

Mr. RAE: That is very encouraging.

The honourable member for Belyando spoke next. I always listen to his contributions because he has a wide knowledge of land matters. He associated himself with the problems of people living in the area from which I come—the Central West—when he was member for Barcoo, and he has fought many good battles on their behalf.

I was pleased to hear the honourable member say today that the marginal dairy farms reconstruction scheme has done much to assist those who are engaged in the dairy industry. However, he expressed some concern about the fact that much more remains to be done. I quite agree with him, and I am very happy to advise him that a Bill of which I gave notice this morning will enable the Government to assist those who have not received assistance from the existing marginal dairy farms reconstruction scheme as the result of a \$5,500,000 scheme that the Treasurer outlined in the Budget and to which he has already alerted honourable members. It is proposed to assist these people with the upgrading of stock to the extent of \$10,000, and also to allow them to purchase an additional paddock or two near them, which does not have to be an existing dairy farm. It could be any sort of country at all. The amount can go up to \$15,000.

As to the new concept of the product generally, up to \$10,000 is being provided for bulk handling and vats. The scheme covering the vats and the stock make-up operates on the basis of repayment in 10 years. The Government does the lot; it is being carried out by the Land Administration Commission as the corporate body. There is no linkage or tie-up with any national bank. I am sure this proposal will do much to confer a blessing

on the dairy industry. I might add that it has the blessing of the executive of the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation.

I appreciated the remarks of the honourable member for Fassifern. He seemed to meet with rather a rowdy reception which I did not think was quite warranted. He is a very stable man, and certainly has his feet well and truly on the ground. He is very knowledgeable on land problems. At all times heed should be taken of what honourable members are saying. Many good things can come out of a debate. I appreciate what the honourable member said.

I must confess that the honourable member for Barron River had a good story to convey to the House. He asked me to supply the answers to a number of questions. Initially, I say to the honourable member that he is presupposing. He is "jumping the gun" long before we have reached the stage of determination or finality. After all, we are the Government, and these things are fostered by people like the honourable member and others living in the North with some knowledge of that area. The honourable member can rest assured that the objective of the Forestry Department is co-operation and the conveying of a true and honest picture.

The honourable member's first question was whether Crown land is involved in this proposal. At the present time, it is understood to relate only to Crown land. That is how we see it. We cannot say to a landholder, "You will have to sell your land" or, "We intend to take your land." At present, it is Crown land that we are dealing with.

The honourable member's second question was whether the Government can exercise control over private land. The department has no control over logging on private land, and the possibility of unsound harvesting practices on private land could be a matter of some concern. However, any firm with an appreciable investment for long-term operation would find it to its own advantage to operate responsibly on private land.

The honourable member's third question was: what price will the Crown receive? This has not yet been determined. We are a long way from reaching any decision on that point. We are only in the early stages of a very full inquiry. I hasten to assure the honourable member that we will be taking heed of the thinking of the people in the Cairns district before a final decision is made. We do not ride roughshod or in an arrogant manner over anyone's rights and privileges. We go along with what we believe to be fair, honest and proper. The honourable member can rest assured that this will be the Government's attitude.

The honourable member then asked what price the company would receive. Of course, this is not known. Then he asked about the manner of treatment and whether any chemicals would be used. The chipping process does not require the use of chemicals, which

is not referred to in the proposal. That should be some measure of comfort for the honourable member.

He then asked what would happen to the bark. This is not specifically covered in the proposal. His next question was: what is the Minister's definition of "clear felling"? How many trees per acre will be left? Clear felling, which, by the way, is not envisaged, would comprise the felling of all timber on the area. What is envisaged is that, in the case of open forest on Crown land, all stems suitable for milling other than those being cleared for development would be marked for retention. Provision is made to hold seed trees where necessary. Since most of the species coppice freely and develop ligno tubers, when the area is opened up the restocking of such areas should not be difficult. I think honourable members who have endeavoured to clear eucalyptus would be familiar with the way these species persist despite efforts to destroy them.

The honourable member's final question was whether reforestation conditions would be included in the contract. The answer is that responsibility for reforestation has not as yet been determined. However, it is intended that conditions to cover this will be included in the contract.

So that where the honourable member exhibited some concern, I assure him that we are only just commencing very detailed investigations. There is an apparent measure of excitement in the North which seems to be upsetting some people, because there are certain "characters", as I might describe them, who are conveying quite an improper and incorrect story about this proposal. I assure the honourable member that all organisations and people—landholders and people generally—will be considered when we enter into discussions about the wood-chip industry in North Queensland.

Mr. B. Wood: Can you give any indication when it might start?

Mr. RAE: It would be some years.

The honourable member for Landsborough raised a very interesting point about Bribie Island. Only this afternoon he came to my office with a deputation from Bribie. These people were concerned that on the one hand we, as a Government, were not permitting development as it should be progressing and, on the other, there was some easing of control relative to certain organisations. They cited A.P.M. and the fact that this company was able to freehold some 4,800 acres. But that was done a long time ago. I am not against freehold. It is the one way to get positive advancement and development. We must stick with freehold, despite the old A.L.P. bogey. It is a bogey and we must completely divorce our thinking from it.

Getting back to the honourable member for Landsborough and the deputation, concern was expressed that we were not making

enough land available for people to build homes on. In the light of their submission, this could well be so. I have checked this with my officers and discovered that there possibly has been some frustration with respect to planning at Bribie Island. But I hasten to assure the honourable member that we are not altogether the culprits in this case, because neither the officers of my department nor I myself can, willy-nilly, say, "We are going to do this without conference or dialogue with the local authority concerned." We must confer, and this is what we will be doing. As soon as we can arrive at something compatible with the wishes of the people affected and the over-all planned development of Bribie Island, then what is decided will be given effect to.

Mr. Davis interjected.

Mr. RAE: The honourable member for Brisbane goes on, willy-nilly, talking about this and that. Frankly, I sometimes wonder whether the honourable member has a clue as to what goes on, either on Bribie Island or in his own electorate.

The deputation also sought some clarification on industrial development, which I think is something we can go along with. I have asked my officers to look at the position with the objective of complying with the wishes of the people and the general growth and development of Bribie Island.

I come now to the honourable member for Salisbury. I have listened to this honourable member here for many years. I think he came here at about the same time as I did, or a few years after. Like the honourable member for Salisbury, I, too, appreciate the beauty of the wedge-tailed eagle. Nobody could deny that it is a magnificent bird. Nevertheless, it is one of the most destructive birds in existence.

The honourable member quoted the words of Dr. Frith. Let us be sure of our facts. He went to Canberra, of all places, where he saw one bird in every 12 sq. miles, or something like that. It is quite unrealistic to ask honourable members to swallow the type of story told by the honourable member for Salisbury. I would like to take him to my property, where, if the ewes are lambing, there will be hordes of hawks all over the place. I assure the honourable member that there is no shortage of eagle hawks in Queensland. But, of course, he never leaves Brisbane, so how would he know?

If I thought that these birds were on the verge of extinction I would raise my hand to protect them. But they are very destructive birds and still abound in large numbers. I have seen them take lambs. I know that in the Winton-Kynuna-Julia Creek area they have taken thousands of lambs. I would very much like to take the honourable member for Salisbury up there so that he could see these things for himself. It is unwise to become too emotional on a problem such as the wedge-tailed eagle.

A great deal of concern has been expressed about "1080". It will not hurt anybody. It is put into small cubes of boneless meat so that it bleaches out very quickly. It has done more than any other type of poison to control the dingo. Since its use, the calving percentages have risen from 40 to 70 or from 50 to 80, which is a tremendous improvement. The use of the poison is one of the greatest things that the department has been associated with. I assure honourable members that they need have no fears at all about the long-term effect of "1080".

Mr. Sherrington: How do you know?

Mr. RAE: All poisons used are thoroughly tested in various ways, means and measures. It is of great comfort for me to be able to rely on the word of my officers, who are closely associated with these matters.

Mr. Sherrington: You do not have any faith in Dr. Frith.

Mr. RAE: Of course I do. But, dedicated as he may be, his opinion alone will not convince me. Many people make the mistake of paying too much attention to one who makes emotional statements and, because of his academic qualifications, receives wide publicity in the Press.

In reply to the honourable member for Roma—

Mr. Sherrington: You have not said anything about the Moreton Bay islands.

Mr. RAE: I will be visiting them next weekend, as a matter of fact.

I was interested to hear the comments of the honourable member for Rockhampton.

Mr. Davis: You were going to tell us about Mr. Tomkins.

Mr. RAE: I thank the honourable member for Roma for his contribution. He certainly knows a great deal about land matters and land problems. I agree with his submission on succession and probate duties. He has been associated with various boards and organisations for a long time, and has served this State efficiently and well. I would prefer the views of a man with his background and know-how to those of someone who talks simply for the sake of talking. That remark could well apply to the honourable member for Rockhampton. I always appreciate what the honourable member for Roma says about land matters in Queensland.

The honourable member for Rockhampton referred to the Iwasaki Sangyo Co. proposals. As yet, we have no knowledge of what this company has bought. There is no need for the honourable member to jump up or get excited. He is highly emotional at any time, and I ask him to calm down so that I can present him with the facts. I repeat that we have no record of anything. Possibly there is a desire to purchase an occupation licence or a special lease, but

these matters are being very carefully considered. There is at present no concrete proposal from this company before the Lands Department. That information might help the honourable member considerably.

If ever a man had "two bob" each way, it was the honourable member tonight. One minute he was singing the praises of the R.S.L., then he was too young or too old, he would not like to see this but he would like to see that. He said that this project would be a tremendous boon under which the coastal region would be developed, employment would be created and the people would get somewhere. I know the facts. Does the honourable member want this development, or doesn't he? Let him tell me.

Mr. Wright: I will tell you. I don't want any freehold land given to the Japanese.

Mr. RAE: We cannot interfere with this. If the honourable member thinks we are alienating the lands of the State, we will have to get the Commonwealth to come in. This will then cease to be a State problem. If this aim is to be achieved, the Commonwealth will have to come in because it is a Commonwealth problem.

Mr. Wright: We are a sovereign State.

Mr. RAE: I dare say we are.

I might well ask the honourable member what he thinks of our immigration policy. Does he want Italians in, or not? Does he want these people who have done so much good in the North? Let us tidy the whole thing up. I have never heard a man have "two bob" each way like the honourable member for Rockhampton did tonight.

Mr. Sullivan: There is a lot of foreign capital in Lake's Creek meatworks.

Mr. RAE: That is so.

I believe that the honourable member for Rockhampton reads the newspaper and then quotes a little from this and a little from that. He was so confused he could not put his story together. Whenever he made a bold statement he covered up by saying, "Possibly this could be a good thing," or "Possibly it could assist Rockhampton." He put forward the greatest "two-bob-each-way" story I have heard in this House.

To round off his rather intemperate contribution, the honourable member for Rockhampton dealt with a block of land styled R.S. 47, in the Fitzroy Shire. It is true that in respect of this land the honourable member has had words with me and has sent me telegrams registering his strong disapproval. I assure the honourable member that we did all we possibly could to influence the Fitzroy Shire Council to take this area over, but on every occasion it refused to do so. We even sent officers to the council to try to get it to take portion of the area—the actual portion that the honourable member referred to—but the council did not want it. In those circumstances, the land cannot be all that

good. If the council does not want the land, it seems that the honourable member is only toadying to a few friends. We now intend to try to find more land either to the north or to the south of that area to make up for what has been lost.

Mr. Wright: Why give it away? Why not leave it as a special lease?

Mr. RAE: Because we did not want it as a special lease. We wanted to give it back to the Fitzroy Shire Council, but the council did not want it. They said it was inadequate and unattractive, and simply would not have any part of it. The honourable member is pursuing a personal issue that has no justification at all.

Mr. Wright: I don't even know the man.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Rockhampton has had an opportunity to put his case.

Mr. RAE: I do not intend to continue at length.

Mr. Sherrington: You aren't doing too well.

Mr. RAE: I have no worries. When I listened to the honourable member talk about the wedge-tailed eagle, I thought he was going to take off at any time.

Many good ideas have been put forward by honourable members during the debate. I am grateful that I have been able to deal with the Lands and Forestry Estimates for 1972.

Resolution 2—Lands and Forestry—agreed to.

Resolution 3—Development and Industrial Affairs—

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (8.55 p.m.): I am pleased to take part once again in a discussion of these Estimates and to complete what I set out to say when I spoke on them previously. At the conclusion of my time on the previous occasion I was speaking about the marked development and progress we have seen in this State which has been so ably guided and steered by the Honourable F. A. Campbell, who is well known in this city and travels extensively throughout the State, and his very fine officers. This development could only have taken place under a free-enterprise Government which encourages private enterprise to go out into the field and develop industries in the true spirit of decentralisation.

I did not get a chance on the previous occasion to say much about the alumina plant at Gladstone, which was established in 1967. It effectively launched Queensland into the world alumina sphere. The plant is operated by Queensland Alumina Ltd., an international consortium of companies. We on this side of the House welcome this investment of capital here, because we live in such a happy and great country. It is

great to be an Australian and it is great to be a Queenslander. It is wonderful to see all these things going on around us. I must say that it gives me a pain to hear the "knockers" and the whingers, many of whom are on the other side of this House, denigrating this development.

Mr. Sherrington interjected.

Mr. LANE: They are very offensive words. I think the honourable member said, "Loud-mouthed mug". I ask that he withdraw them.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Wharton): Order! I ask the honourable member for Salisbury to withdraw the offensive words.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I take exception to the honourable member for Merthyr—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Salisbury to withdraw the words that are offensive to the honourable member for Merthyr.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: And I take exception to the honourable member for Merthyr referring to us as "knockers" and whingers. When he withdraws that remark, I will be happy to withdraw what I said.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Salisbury to withdraw the words that are offensive to the honourable member for Merthyr. I ask him to do that now.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I withdraw them now, and I am insisting that you also make the honourable member for Merthyr withdraw his reference to members on this side of the House as "knockers" and whingers.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member for Merthyr to withdraw the statement that is offensive to the honourable member for Salisbury.

Mr. LANE: I withdraw anything that I said about the honourable member.

I was saying what a great State this is to live in and what a great country this is to live in. I said how wonderful it is to be an Australian. It is something of which we on this side of the House are very proud. I invite Opposition members to use one of the free air-fare vouchers provided by the Government to travel to Gladstone and see what is going on there. They should see the great development and the benefits that are flowing into this State.

The most recent expansion programme at Gladstone, when completed, will increase the plant's capacity to more than 2,000,000 tons of alumina a year. This will make it the largest plant of its type in the world. When this phase is finished, the total capital investment by Queensland Alumina Ltd. will be more than \$345,000,000. I challenge any socialist combine to match that achievement. Negotiations are at present proceeding

between the State Government and private industry to establish a major aluminium smelter at Gladstone to act in concert with the set-up that is there now.

Also at Gladstone we have the Gladstone Harbour facilities. I know that the honourable member for Port Curtis has played some part in this development. A record tonnage moved through Gladstone port in 1971-72. I mention this to indicate just what is going in and out of the port of Gladstone. Last year the port handled exports of 8,171,831 tons and imports of 4,185,882 tons, a total of 12,357,713 tons. This is indeed a remarkable harbour. It provides considerable employment and technological know-how, and gives Australians the opportunity to participate in this international trade. Total two-way trade last year was 822,000 tons more than in 1970-71. Each year it is going ahead in leaps and bounds. Coal exports, in approximate figures at this stage, reached 6,483,866 tons. Alumina exports totalled 1,384,495 tons.

Mr. Davis interjected.

Mr. LANE: I invite the honourable member for Brisbane to remain silent. I shall get to his specialty of strikes and industrial disturbances a little later. He will have every opportunity to dispute anything that I say.

On the subject of the development of coal resources, on average, 12 coal trains a day arrive at Gladstone. They come from Moura, Blackwater and South Blackwater. Single-headers haul 1,000 to 1,200 tons, double-headers 2,000 to 2,400 tons, and triple-headers 3,000 to 3,600 tons. Single-headers from Moura are 960 feet long, double-headers 1,920 feet long, and triple-headers 2,880 feet long. Never during the time of Labor administration were there such immense trains carrying goods to Queensland ports. During May, the latest month for which figures are available, 41 single-headers, 18 double-headers and 64 triple-headers arrived at Gladstone from the Moura mine alone.

The Minister's department has already done marvellous things in this regard. It has been responsible at Gladstone, as it has been in many other parts of the State, for the establishment of industrial estates. The Clinton Industrial Estate is situated only a couple of miles west of Gladstone. Initial development works are being undertaken on this estate. In 1971 a contract of \$228,074 was let for the construction of the main access road to this estate. The Department of Commercial and Industrial Development and the Gladstone Harbour Board are sharing the construction costs of bund walls to reclaim a large area of low-lying land on the estate. These walls are something for the eye to see. It is possible to drive round the top of them as one would drive on a three-lane highway. One can drive right out to sea, and there look back at Gladstone and the harbour installations. Approximately 1,250,000 tons of earth fill have been carted

from the new power-station site, and the hills and residential development sites around Gladstone, and dumped to form these walls.

By February 1972, \$494,702 had been spent on developmental works on the Clinton Industrial Estate. A section of the estate will accommodate the new 1,100 MW power station. The remainder of the estate will be available for allocation to large-scale manufacturing projects. With the other facilities, including cheap electricity, that will be provided, I feel sure that private enterprise, with its factories and other projects, will flock to Gladstone to take up land on the estate when it is finally completed. Negotiations are under way for the establishment of a number of major industrial undertakings on the estate at the present time.

The Gladstone Power House, of course, must not be overlooked. The establishment of the 1,100 MW power station on the Clinton Industrial Estate at Gladstone will undoubtedly be the key to the creation of a new industrial mushroom in Central Queensland. The power-house, which will comprise four 275 MW sets, will cost about \$200,000,000. The first power is expected to be available in 1974, and even at this stage of its development the power-house is something worth seeing. So far, contracts totalling more than \$110,000,000 have been let for the project.

The South Pine-Gladstone 275 kV transmission line will be completed by December, interconnecting South-east and Central Queensland supply systems. This State is probably one of the best served in the Commonwealth with electric power—something in which we can all take pride.

The portion of the Clinton Industrial Estate not occupied by the power station is being reserved for power-intensive manufacturing operations. In this sphere, negotiations are proceeding between the State Government and private industry for the establishment of a major aluminium smelter at Gladstone.

Mr. Jensen: When did you do your research to get all this information?

Mr. LANE: These are some of the positive things that are being done by the Minister's department. Of course, all this employment must be created and all this industrial development must take place against the background of a very delicate industrial situation, a situation which, in Gladstone alone, has caused 900 stoppages of work by employees of contractors since November last year. On the average, during the last 12 months there have been three stoppages of work a day—a great indictment on some of the irresponsible people who use and misuse the trade union machinery of this State for their own peculiar ends.

I should like to enlarge on the first appearance of a new, weird, strange and totally un-Australian organisation in the field of industrial relations, a militant organisation from overseas.

Mr. Houston: What is it called?

Mr. LANE: It is an organisation that is known by various names, depending on where one sits. To me, it is an organisation that is part of the International Trotskyite Movement.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. LANE: It is very strange that the Leader of the Opposition should speak like that, because I have here a Press clipping in which the Young Labor Movement allegedly—I say allegedly—announced that it was poised to deal with Trotskyite infiltrators in Brisbane.

Mr. Houston: Who was going to deal with it?

Mr. LANE: The Young Labor Movement. The clipping is from the Brisbane "Telegraph".

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. LANE: Another Press article is headed, "A.L.P. to ostracise radicals". I will tell honourable members more about that later.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. LANE: I take it that the Leader of the Opposition does not deny that these people exist. They exist to such an extent that the organisation to which he belongs—the Australian Labor Party—at the June meeting of the Queensland Central Executive, deliberated on this matter, and perhaps—we do not know what goes on inside the Q.C.E.—passed a motion relative to these people. I shall expound later on how sincere the A.L.P. is about this matter, but at the moment I should like to say something about what these people have done in Gladstone.

Mr. Houston: Who? The Trotskyites?

Mr. LANE: Yes, the Trotskyites.

Mr. Houston: The Trotskyites were set up by your crowd through the N.C.C.

Mr. LANE: I will give the Leader of the Opposition a little bit of the history of the Trotskyite movement, if he wishes to listen to it.

Mr. Wright interjected.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Rockhampton and the Leader of the Opposition to restrain themselves.

Mr. WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Merthyr is repeatedly telling untruths in this Chamber. It is well known that the Trotskyites were used by Santamaria and the Movement during the last war and are supported by the N.C.C. today.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have given the honourable member a certain amount of latitude. I heard him bandying about the names "League of Rights" and "Santamaria". There will not be any more of it.

Mr. LANE: These Trotskyites are known in some circles as revolutionary socialists.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Can the honourable member tie this in with the Resolution under debate? If not, I ask him to get back to the Resolution.

Mr. LANE: I am endeavouring to explore the industrial motives of some of the people who harrass the Minister's department and private industry in their efforts to develop this State. I am saying that there is a new organisation in this State which, for some very peculiar motives, would disrupt industry.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. LANE: The Leader of the Opposition is obviously terrified of what I might say later on, and how I will tie it up with the Australian Labor Party. At this stage, I should like to discuss the industrial aspects of this organisation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I should be pleased to hear the honourable member get back to the Resolution.

Mr. LANE: The parent body of the organisation is known as the Fourth International. This is an international group of people with offices throughout the world. The Fourth International played a large part in the revolution in France in 1968. In Australia, the parent organisation is known as the Australian Section of the Fourth International. It has a hand in the industrial situation in this State. It has other groups aligned with it known as the Socialist Workers League and the Socialist Youth Alliance, organisations that are sympathetic to the Fourth International.

A couple of years ago, when Gladstone was starting to get "off the ground", some of the militants of the Collinsville strikes emerged on the scene and began to take over. There is a gentleman in Gladstone now named Alec Simpson who is secretary of the local Trades and Labor Council. He is well known to many Opposition members. He is paid a full salary as secretary-organiser for the Gladstone Trades and Labor Council. He flew into this State from Sydney not very many years ago. Within weeks of arriving in Gladstone, he was the delegate for the construction workers. In some mysterious way he became the only paid union official in Gladstone as the secretary of the Trades and Labor Council there. Over a period of time he has had contacts with some of the radicals from the Queensland University—people like Brian Laver, Mitch Thompson—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have been very tolerant with the honourable member. I should now like to hear something about the Minister's department.

Mr. LANE: Some of these people travel to Gladstone to help this man agitate and prepare his broadsheets and dodgers for distribution around Gladstone in an effort to foment industrial trouble in that great development. These are the people who travel overseas to Algeria, Paris and Bulgaria. They have links with the Fourth International throughout the world. I know that this organisation exists. Many people who study Left-wing activity know that it exists. Members of the Opposition know it exists. They cannot deny it.

Mr. Houston: So what?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to deal with the Resolution under discussion.

Mr. LANE: We saw the same people emerge in the shipyards at Kangaroo Point. At Evans Deakin they formed an action committee. For political reasons, they called the workers out in militant strikes. We saw a short burst of their activity in the construction of the S.G.I.O. building. There are many legitimate strikes that take place in this nation and throughout the world, but not all strikes are legitimate; many of them are political. I am quoting some of the wanton disregard that this organisation has for the real interests of the people of Queensland.

Mr. Newton: No concern for loss of life was shown on the S.G.I.O. job.

Mr. LANE: That is very true; these people have no concern for loss of livelihood of workers on these sites. They are only concerned with some weird ideology of their own. They issued many pamphlets in Gladstone, authorised by the Communist League and directed at causing further strikes and industrial trouble. The "Metal Worker" a broadsheet issued by the Communist League, Box 36, Toowong, Brisbane—

Mr. Davis: Where did you get that from? The Special Branch again?

Mr. LANE: I do not know how much on side with these people the honourable member for Brisbane is. Maybe he will tell us at some time but, until we know where he stands, I suggest that he should not allow the blame to fall on his head by implication because that is the type of thing he will be blamed for shortly.

Mr. Davis: My industrial record is quite clear. How is yours?

Mr. LANE: This organisation, of course, has sought to butt in, probably against the wishes of good Labor people, in recent years. We have seen it enter the Labor Day march. I have stood around that Labor Day march for years and have seen such people as Jack Egerton trying to persuade them to leave the ranks of the march because of the political embarrassment it would cause the Labor Party if they did march. I have seen

some of the more militant unions, such as the Seamen's Union and the wharfies, tell Jack Egerton where to go and to allow these people to march within their ranks. I have seen this going on for years and these are the same people who have caused some of the industrial trouble in Gladstone.

Probably the most blatant instance of involvement by these people with other industrial unions, and particularly with the Australian Labor Party, was the last Labor Day march when this group of people marched under a banner which read, "General strike. Labor to power. Pledge to Socialist aims."

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I find it very hard to relate the honourable member's remarks to the Resolution. As tolerant as I am, I find it hard to do so, and I ask the honourable member to return to the Resolution.

Mr. LANE: With the utmost respect, Mr. Speaker, I wish to explore—

Mr. SPEAKER: If the honourable member has the ability to do so, I ask him to speak to the Resolution.

Mr. LANE: I wish to explore industrial relations and that aspect of the Minister's portfolio which has to do with creating harmonious relationships between employers and employees in this State. If you wish, Mr. Speaker, I am quite prepared to devote part of my speech to some of the employer organisations and their structure.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. LANE: Some honourable members opposite might learn something from it. However, speaking on the industrial relations side of the Minister's portfolio, I wish to say something of the unions who are involved in that field and some of the organisations which make up their numbers and, in some instances, wield an influence on them and, through them, on the Opposition party in this Parliament.

We saw many members of industrial organisations registered with the Industrial Commission in this State and federally—that is, trade unions—march on Labor Day as union bodies. They are registered with the Industrial Commission in this State, which comes under the Minister's jurisdiction. We saw them carrying banners which indicated something of their industrial attitudes. One to which I referred a moment ago read, "Labor to power. Pledge to Socialist aims." That was a group of people interested in the industrial field who took part in the Labor Day march, which was headed, in fact, by the president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Bob Hawke, a man whose activities and responsibilities are very much the concern of the Minister's department.

He was accompanied by the President of the A.L.P. State Branch, Mr. Jack Egerton, as well as by the Leader of the Opposition, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane and Mr. Whitlam. Some of the marchers were persons

involved in union activities and industrial relations. I am sure that the officers in the Minister's Department are concerned at the fact that some of the influences exerted on trade-union groups show complete disloyalty to Australia and Australians.

One of the banners carried by the marchers depicted, on one end a photograph of Karl Marx and, on the other end, a picture of Lenin. Another banner displayed a photograph of Leon Trotsky. The industrial attitude of these marchers is an anarchist one. They do not care about the development of Queensland or whether or not men are out of work at Evans Deakin's shipyards and Gladstone. They are out to achieve their own peculiar ends.

Very recently these people circulated a news sheet that outlines their attitudes to industry in Australia. They make their views on the ownership and development of industry in this country very clear. On the front of this publication appear the words, "Dump the Liberals. Vote Labor." Inside, reference is made to jobs and employment, with which the Minister's officers would be concerned. On the back of the paper there appears the organisation's slogan, namely, "Labor to Power. Fight for Socialist Policies." That is the very same slogan as that carried by the marchers in the Labor Day procession, headed, as I say, by the Leader of the Opposition and the Federal Leader of the Labor Party.

It is interesting to explore the reasons for these persons' interest in union activity. They are known as revolutionary socialists, and their aim is the same as the socialist aim adopted by the Australian Labor Party in 1921.

I will read from a publication entitled "A History of the Australian Labor Movement—a Marxist Interpretation", by E. W. Campbell, Director of the Marxist School. He was speaking about an all-Australian trade-union congress in 1921.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Is that all the honourable member can talk about? I would like him to get back to the Resolution. I do not mind telling him that my patience is almost exhausted.

Mr. R. E. Moore interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I rise to a point of order. The remark of the honourable member for Windsor was a reflection on the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not hear the remark.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: He directed the honourable member for Merthyr to ignore the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Merthyr will address his remarks to the Resolution, otherwise he will resume his seat.

Mr. LANE: Having discovered that industrial relations are not within the portfolio of the Minister for Development and Industrial Affairs, I will leave that subject and speak on some more positive aspects of the Minister's department.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am pleased to hear it.

Mr. LANE: The department has under its control 10,600 acres for the establishment of Crown industrial estates. Thanks to the Government's far-sightedness in looking continually to the development of the State, we have moved from the horse-and-buggy days of A.L.P. Government into an era of secondary industries in which more employment can be provided for good Queenslanders. Of the 10,600 acres set aside for industry, 7,041 acres are held in 29 provincial centres, which demonstrates the Government's policy of decentralisation. At present, 320 industries are operating on Crown industrial estates in Brisbane, providing further employment for our people. I dare not say anything about the industrial relations which exist in these factories. In provincial areas, 39 undertakings have already been established.

The Crown industrial estate scheme was born in Brisbane just after World War II. It is therefore natural that the initial demand for industrial land should be concentrated in the capital city.

It is not without significance that, of the 70 manufacturers involved in land negotiations with the department, 43 are seeking locations in provincial cities. In this way they will provide more employment for the sons and daughters of good Queenslanders in places outside Brisbane—places that are foreign to many A.L.P. members. Many of them would not dare to go north of the old Chermide tram terminus in fear of finding out that the State is progressing in leaps and bounds. This trend will undoubtedly continue in the light of rapid regional development.

Last year, I was indeed pleased to note the introduction of a Bill relative to regional development. This new concept of development, which is hand in glove with the aims of the Minister's department, should really aid decentralisation. It is noteworthy that, since the department took over the administration of Crown estate land in 1966, almost \$9,000,000 has been spent on acquisitions and development work.

Of more recent origin is a major incentive to industrialists, namely, the factory-building scheme for pioneer-type undertakings. At present a further 15 Government-financed factories are either under construction or have been approved. This will give the manufacturers the boost they need to get their industries off the ground. Outside Brisbane, 13 such industries are established. In due course, some of these factories may be built in more remote places such as Julia Creek,

Charters Towers or Hughenden. The department has spent more than \$750,000 on factory buildings.

Mr. Ahern: A good job is being done in my electorate.

Mr. LANE: That is so.

Irrespective of the town or region in the State, young children are growing up, going through high school, waiting to take their place in industry, and willing to play their part in developing the State.

Probably one of the most notable developments has occurred in the field of clay-brick production, which has been increasing in recent years at a tremendous rate. I am sure honourable members will be interested to know that, in four years, clay-brick production increased by 47 per cent.

At 9.30 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 25 October, I shall now put the Resolution under discussion and all other Resolutions not already agreed to by the House.

Resolution 3—Development and Industrial Affairs—agreed to.

Resolutions 4 to 24, both inclusive, agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS

OPENING OF COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Lickiss, Mt. Coot-tha, in the chair)

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Treasurer): I move—

“(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1972-1973, a further sum not exceeding \$365,518,104 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1972-1973, a further sum not exceeding \$444,586,076 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1972-1973, a further sum not exceeding \$93,871,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(d) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the services of the year 1971-1972, a supplementary sum not exceeding \$37,717,600.07 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(e) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1971-1972, a supplementary sum not exceeding \$10,129,988.79 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(f) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1971-1972, a supplementary sum not exceeding \$18,169,421.85 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(g) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1973-1974, a sum not exceeding \$110,000,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(h) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1973-1974, a sum not exceeding \$100,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(i) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1973-1974, a sum not exceeding \$14,000,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.”

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported, received, and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

FIRST READING

A Bill, founded on the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means, was introduced and read a first time.

SECOND READING

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Treasurer) (9.38 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

This is the second, and final, Appropriation Bill for the year 1972-73. Honourable members are no doubt aware that it is normal for the Appropriation Bill brought down at this time to provide not only for the expenditure included in the Budget Estimates for the current financial year, which have been the subject of debate by the Committee of Supply during recent weeks, but also for unforeseen expenditure during the previous financial year, and provision for the first two months of the next financial year to carry the Government over till further Supply in that year can be granted.

The amount provided for 1972-73 is \$1,397,975,180, made up of \$585,518,104 in the Consolidated Revenue Fund, \$670,586,076 in the Trust and Special Funds, and \$141,871,000 in the Loan Fund.

These amounts represent the appropriations for the full financial year, apart from the amount appropriated under special Acts totalling \$93,671,278, as set out in the Estimates. They incorporate the amounts appropriated last year in Appropriation Act (No. 2), which granted supply for the months of July and August of the current financial year, and the further amounts appropriated in the Appropriation Act (No. 1), which was introduced into this House on 29 August last and which provided Supply to enable the Government to carry on until the passing of the present Bill.

Unforeseen expenditure during 1971-72, which has had Executive authority and now requires parliamentary approval, totals \$66,017,711, made up of \$37,717,600 in the Consolidated Revenue Fund, \$10,129,989 in the Trust and Special Funds, and \$18,169,422 in the Loan Fund. Full details of the amounts under the various appropriations are shown in Parts 6, 7 and 8 of the schedule attached to this Bill.

To provide Supply for the first two months of the financial year 1973-74, it is estimated that \$224,000,000 will be required. This allows for a normal escalation over that provided last year, and comprises \$110,000,000 in the Consolidated Revenue Fund, \$100,000,000 in the Trust and Special Funds, and \$14,000,000 in the Loan Fund.

We have debated the Budget generally, and the Estimates in detail, for just on two months. This should have provided all honourable members with ample opportunity to apprise themselves of the financial provisions for the State Government services for the current financial year. I think it is fair to say that the debate has ranged far and wide, and I am sure no honourable member would seriously contend that he has been denied the opportunity to advance his point of view on any and every topic within the State Government's finances.

With specific regard to the Budget of the State, I should like to report to the House that, with five months of the financial year gone, the financial position of the State is very satisfactory. After five months, it does appear that there will be minor variations over-all in our revenue headings and in some of our expenditure headings.

Over-all, it appears that our receipts for the year will increase, despite the comparatively optimistic levels that had been set for them in the Budget. This shows out particularly—I draw the attention of the House to this—in our stamp duty sector, which is an excellent barometer of the economic tempo of the State. When the economy is slow or depressed during periods of heavy drought—this has been demonstrated statistically over the years—or when the industrial and commercial affairs of the State slow down for some reason or other, business generally drops off and, as a consequence, the stamp duty revenue is adversely affected. Conversely,

when the economy is bounding along, as Queensland's is over-all at present, then so does the State's stamp duty revenue.

As an illustration of this, I point to the fact that stamp duty revenues in 1970-71 were \$28,400,000. In 1971-72, as the economy began to pick up, they moved to \$33,900,000, and in this year's Budget they were shown at \$5,600,000 higher—I took what I believed was a conservative estimate, having full knowledge of the improvement in the economy—at \$39,500,000. Present estimates are that this figure should be revised to \$45,000,000 for the whole of the 1972-73 year, an increase of about \$12,000,000 on last year's figures.

Because of the high employment being maintained in this State and the improved wages being paid, it is also expected that payroll tax could exceed the estimate shown in the Budget papers.

Mr. Sherrington: So what?

Sir GORDON CHALK: The honourable member does not have the intelligence to realise just what that means. He does not have the intelligence to realise that, through prosperity, we have been able to have this increase in activities in this State. As an indication of the improved wages now being paid to people in Queensland, payroll tax shows a considerable increase. Payroll figures show the prosperity of Queensland and what is being received in the pay packets of the workers of the State.

On the other hand, there are headings of revenue where at this stage it appears the Budget figure will not be reached, such as rail freights, which will be adversely affected by the less-than-expected harvest of the winter grain crops. Revenue from this source has fallen. This has been brought about by drought and other difficulties experienced by primary industry. However, on present figures, over all it is expected that the estimate for total receipts as shown in the Budget papers will be exceeded.

On the expenditure side of the ledger, it is still a little early to forecast any change from budgeted figures for departmental expenditure generally. With only five months gone, it is also difficult to assess at this stage just what award variations will eventually cost the Budget in the financial year. However, the Government has taken some specific decisions which will affect the expenditure programme for the Budget. One of the most important decisions we have taken in recent days is that we have approved of an additional \$1,000,000 to be provided to our universities during the current financial year to shield them, and those associated with them, from a fee increase that was expected in the 1973 year. This will be divided between the Queensland University and the James Cook University in the ratio of \$830,000 for the Queensland University and \$170,000 for the James Cook University.

University costs are increasing very rapidly, so rapidly in fact that the fee proportion of the total cost is becoming just too burdensome for the average student. The principle of financing for Queensland universities is that the State and the Commonwealth contributions, the total fee contribution, and consequently the total university expenditure programme itself, increase at the same rate. With increasing costs and with increases in academic salaries expected in 1973, the position will arise in the coming year where substantial increases in State, Commonwealth and fees contributions to the programme will be necessary. Whereas the State and Commonwealth share of the cost will be maintained, the lifting of the fee share to meet the required proportion of increased costs would lead again to a very heavy fee increase.

Having set the State's level of contribution, it is the State's policy then to leave the universities autonomous in their decisions as to whether the fees should also be increased to achieve a maximum possible expenditure programme, or whether it would be more equitable that fees be not increased quite so far and a lesser-than-maximum programme be accepted.

The universities have accepted this principle, but, in view of the substantial lift in fees from January 1972, have asked that they be shielded from a further increase in 1973, as now appears necessary. After considerable discussion with the Chancellor (Sir Alan Mansfield), the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Zelman Cowen) and other finance committee members of the Queensland University Senate and of representatives from the James Cook University Council, I have responded to these requests by making the additional \$1,000,000 available for 1973 to enable the University Senates to avoid the increase in fees that would otherwise have been necessary to achieve the maximum expenditure programme for the two universities.

I believe that will not only benefit the universities generally but will also be appreciated by the many students who are attending university to acquire higher education. I know that from time to time there has been condemnation of some of the things that happen at our universities, but this relates only to a very small section. I believe we should do all we can to encourage students to go through the university and to make it as easy as possible for them financially.

It is also expected that another \$1,000,000 will be required before the year is out to pay additional State school-teachers who will be employed above those expected when the Budget was being formulated. In years gone by, there has been a certain trend or pattern of fall-off in teacher numbers as the year progresses. The reasons for this are many. Some young teachers desire to travel overseas. They leave the department altogether or obtain some form of leave. A number marry. Others desire to experiment in other teaching services, and there

has been a pattern down through the years of a falling-off. Consequently, while the Budget provided for a certain number of teachers, due recognition was made in the figures of the fact that the full complement would not be available. It is significant, however, that this year the numbers have not fallen off as much as previously, and, with the full teaching strength being maintained in the schools, an additional financial provision is necessary. It is expected that this additional provision will be \$1,000,000 for this financial year.

Another matter that will be of interest to the House is the fact that, commencing on 11 December and continuing for a week, the Commonwealth Grants Commission will be conducting a hearing in Brisbane into the actual results of the Queensland Government's finances for the year 1971-72.

At this juncture I wish to pay a tribute to the top officers of the various Government departments, who, under the guidance of my Under Treasurer (Mr. Fields) and the Deputy Under Treasurer (Mr. Hielscher), together with a number of my close executive Treasury staff, have spent weeks in the preparation of Queensland's case for presentation to the Grants Commission. It is not a simple issue; it is one that has involved my officers in arduous work until the late hours of the night and even the early hours of the morning. It would be remiss of me if I did not pay tribute to the part they are playing in the interests of this State and its finances.

After these hearings, the Grants Commission will recommend to the Commonwealth Government the final adjustment of the grant for that year. As honourable members are aware, an advance grant of \$9,000,000 has already been received on account of this initial year. If the adjustment is a favourable one, as we expect it will be, it means that Queensland will get an additional grant for 1971-72, although the actual payment will not be made until 1973-74 and will be reflected in that year's Budget.

The hearings, the first to be conducted in this State, are expected to be quite comprehensive. I hope they will provide honourable members, particularly Opposition members, with an enlightenment of the workings of the Grants Commission and will enable members of the Opposition to overcome some of the misconceptions that apparently they are still labouring under.

I have touched earlier, and very briefly, on the fact that Queensland's economy is presently in a very satisfactory position, both over all and relative to all other States of the Commonwealth. It contrasts very starkly with the situation that pertains elsewhere, particularly in the three Labor States of Australia. Look at the financial position in this State and compare it with those in the other States! No honourable member could deny that the economy of Queensland is second to none in Australia.

To prove that contention, I will refer to just a few of the many indexes that bear me out. They cannot be denied; they are factual and indicate quite clearly what the situation is in every State. Let us see how the average Queenslander's way of life is improving in relation to that of his counterpart elsewhere in Australia, particularly in the Labor-controlled States. Over recent weeks, Queensland's economy has been condemned by visiting parliamentarians. To rebut such criticism, I point out that this State has never been better off, and the people of Australia, particularly Queensland, know that only too well.

Firstly, let us look at the Queenslander's employment prospects. We find that the average Queensland's employment prospects are the best in Australia, with only 1.17 per cent of the work force registered as unemployed, compared with 1.46 per cent for the whole of Australia, and 2 per cent, 2.2 per cent and 2.15 per cent respectively for the Labor States of South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. If honourable members compare those figures they will realise the great opportunities and development in Queensland in recent times.

Similarly, the number of wage and salary earners in Queensland in the September quarter of this year was 3.3 per cent greater than that for the same period of last year—far and away the biggest increase in the Commonwealth. The figures for South Australia indicate an increase of only .8 per cent and, for Tasmania, 1.1 per cent, while Western Australia registered a drop of 1.05 per cent.

What is happening to the pay packet of the average Queenslander compared with his counterparts throughout the Commonwealth? Again the Queenslander is at the top of the list. During the last financial year, average weekly earnings in Queensland increased by 10.76 per cent, an increase higher than that in any other State and higher than the Australian average of 8.13 per cent. Where would we expect to find the lowest increase? Again it was in the Labor State of Western Australia, where there was an increase of only 6.59 per cent.

Likewise, the Consumer Price Index, for the last quarter, to September 1972, showed Brisbane with the lowest increase of any capital city over the previous quarter of 0.8 per cent, compared with increases in the Labor States of 1.4 per cent in Perth, 1.2 per cent in Hobart and 1.6 per cent in Adelaide. Every Labor State has had an increase of over 1 per cent. Indeed, one of them exceeded 1.5 per cent.

In Queensland we have the lowest percentage of unemployed, the highest rate of increase in the number of employed, the biggest increase in pay packets and the smallest increase in the Consumer Price Index. The converse is the situation in the Labor-governed States. Surely this is not

simply coincidence; surely it is an indictment of Labor's industrial policies and a real indication of the hypocrisy of Labor's claim that it is concerned about the welfare of the working man.

In recent weeks Labor men from the Federal sphere have travelled throughout the State claiming that they are concerned about our workers. But what they have been doing is damning the workers of Queensland. I have given the facts about what this Government has been able to do and achieve in Queensland under a Country-Liberal Government.

Further indications of the very favourable position of the average Queenslander, and the relative affluence which a non-Labor Government has brought to the State and its people, can be found in retail sales, the index of new motor vehicle registrations and figures relating to the building industry, which in particular, in every phase of its activities, is going ahead in leaps and bounds in Queensland. Look at the change in the Brisbane skyline! Go to Gladstone and to the North and see the changes that are taking place!

Mr. Hanson interjected.

Sir GORDON CHALK: The honourable member for Port Curtis interjects. He should be the last to interject. He is living on the fat of the land from the development that is taking place in Gladstone. His hotel turnover is increasing, and he is paying larger licence fees. That is a clear indication of the wealth of the man who comes into this Chamber and claims that he believes in the worker. Of course he believes in the worker. He believes in the worker putting his money across the bar so that he can grow rich and fat. He demonstrates that with his increased avoirdupois on every occasion when he enters this Chamber.

The number of new houses and flats completed in Queensland in 1971-72 was a staggering 23.13 per cent greater than in 1970-71. Staggering indeed, when compared with South Australia's 7.61 per cent increase, Tasmania's 3.34 per cent increase and Western Australia's decrease of 12.12 per cent. These are facts that must be told to the people. Honourable members must be made to realise the situation.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Sir GORDON CHALK: The honourable member for Bundaberg interjects. He is not even aware of what is happening in his community. He is not aware of the great development that is taking place in Queensland. All he was worried about yesterday was the widow's mite. He was worried about how he could get it and how he could "bludge" on these people and how he could use gambling for his own particular interests. That is the honourable member who raises this issue tonight.

In new motor vehicle registration figures, every other State except Tasmania, which barely broke even with a .77 per cent increase, recorded a fall-off, compared with Queensland's substantial increase of 8.68 per cent. That is again an indication of Queensland's prosperity. It is again an indication of the wise counsel of this Government. It is again an indication of the development and the progress taking place in Queensland.

The Queensland Government's active encouragement of development of the State's resources, natural and otherwise, brought about a 24.7 per cent increase in overseas exports in 1971-72. The only other State to come anywhere near this rate of increase was little Tasmania, which only recently acquired a Labor Government and at 30 June had not had time to register the full impact of that Government's suppressive policies.

The honourable member for Bundaberg winds his hand around in a circle. He has to do that to wake himself up. He is so dead that he has to be wound up.

Mr. JENSEN: I rise to a point of order. I was only trying to wind up the Treasurer. We will not get the loan from the Grants Commission if he keeps this sort of thing up.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is no valid point of order.

Sir GORDON CHALK: The honourable member demonstrated exactly what I said. He wound himself up, and that enabled him to get up. Very rarely does he get up in this House and very rarely does he shut up, but when he does open his mouth nothing intelligent comes out of it.

The figures I have just quoted show quite clearly what happens to the economy of a district or a State when the dead hand of Labor is laid on it. Look at what has happened in Western Australia. Look at what has happened in South Australia and in Tasmania. There are clear indications of what happens when the dead hand of a Labor socialist Government takes over. That is why tonight I want to draw the attention of the House, and the people of Queensland, to the marked prosperity of this State. The basis on which the Budget figures were prepared shows the wisdom of this Government down through the years.

The Government has been able to lift the economy, and consequently the living standards of the people. The welfare of society has been improved. As I have pointed out by making comparisons with other States, these advances can be achieved only under Liberal and Country Party Governments in both the State and Commonwealth spheres. It is necessary to have a Government that is competent, dependable and capable of maintaining the high standards that have been set. It is vital that the Government be stable, economically sound, and recognised throughout the world. Measured by any of the

accepted standards, the economy of Queensland is booming when compared with that of any other State.

I am sure that I can be forgiven if I take this opportunity to urge the electors of Queensland to count their blessings before they go to the polls on Saturday. We do not want to enter a period of stagnation. We do not want in Queensland the situation that has developed in Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania. Opposition members know all this only too well, but they are being whipped up to damn this State rather than to represent it capably. They are prepared to sell out to socialists in the South. They have clear evidence of what has happened in other places, but they are prepared to ruin Queensland for political ends.

Those who have the welfare of Queensland at heart cannot afford to throw away all that has been achieved in this State. Now that we have the ball at our feet in Queensland, we must keep it moving. And there is no doubt that the ball is at our feet. Our record shows great achievements. It shows what can be done, and it shows where we can go in the future. It would be criminal to put all of this at risk by voting for the dead hand of socialism in Canberra. This State has progressed, as I indicated by the marked changes that have taken place in it. We have, through all the things we have been able to achieve, placed Queensland in the position to which I have referred.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba—Leader of the Opposition) (10.14 p.m.): I listened intently to the Treasurer's speech. It is quite obvious that it was his last desperate throw on behalf of his friend, Mr. Billy McMahon. The people of Queensland will not be judging election issues on the history of the Government; they will be judging them on the facts and circumstances in this nation as they see them today. I do not intend to make a political speech with the Federal election in mind, because I know full well that Gough Whitlam and his team are quite capable of managing their own affairs.

Mr. Hughes interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: Just keep quiet and stop flapping your ears. You might learn something if you do.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: As the more intelligent members of this Assembly know, I have plenty of time to debate this matter, so one or two interjections will not worry me.

I think I should reply to the Treasurer's opening statement that every member in this House had an opportunity to debate all aspects of the Budget. It set the pattern for his speech. As all honourable members know, his statement is untrue and

is based on completely false premises. To begin with, the time allotted to the Budget debate this year was no different from that allotted many years ago, when there were far fewer members of this Assembly. Secondly, there is a tendency for Ministers, when introducing their Estimates, to ramble on and tell the Committee about matters that have been known for a long time. In addition, honourable members—both Government and Opposition—have only one hour in which to speak on the Budget.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: It is too long.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is the honourable member's opinion. However, many honourable members like to examine the Budget in detail and are not prepared to accept the Government's attitude, as the honourable member apparently is.

Mr. Hughes interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: Just keep quiet.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not wish to be deliberately unkind to the honourable member, but I shall have to be if he continues to interject.

In introducing the Budget and in replying to the debate, the Treasurer usually takes about two hours. I have no complaint about that, because I think it is appreciated that the Treasurer does not enter the debate each day and reply to the speeches that have been made. He allows the debate to go right through till it is finished and then makes a considered speech in reply. The Opposition does not agree with everything he says, but at least he gives all honourable members an opportunity to have their say.

But what happens in the debate on the Estimates? The Estimates for five departments are debated for three allotted days and those for another department for only one allotted day. Minister after Minister speaks for well over an hour in introducing his Estimates, in many cases restating—in some instances word for word—what is contained in the departmental reports, and then, every time a member upsets him, he rises and takes more time in replying.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: I agree with that.

Mr. HOUSTON: I know, but I do not want the honourable member to continue interjecting. He can make his own speech. I want to follow my argument through because, unfortunately, some of the honourable member's colleagues have not the ability to follow it through themselves.

Today the Government has brought the Resolutions before the House, and it set them down in exactly the same order in which the Estimates were debated. From the way in which Government members called "not formal", it was very obvious that it was the Government's intention that

the House should not debate anything other than the six Estimates it had decided originally to bring on for debate. In my opinion, that is not good for democracy, and I am shocked that those on the Government benches who, during the years I have been here, have cried out against control of Parliament by Cabinet did exactly what they were told. They had an opportunity today to let certain Resolutions pass through and say, "Let us have a look at Cabinet's administration of these other departments". But what did they do? They rose in this Chamber with prepared briefs, for no purpose other than to prevent debate on other resolutions.

Mr. Chinchin: You would not agree to any parliamentary reform on the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member does not know what he is talking about. The fact is that I have asked you, Mr. Speaker, and your predecessor to convene a meeting of the Standing Orders Committee. If I am not mistaken, you either have received or will shortly receive another letter asking for a meeting of the Standing Orders Committee. When the honourable member for Chatsworth asked in this Chamber for an amendment to the Standing Orders, he was brushed off by his own Premier. Honourable members opposite should not argue with me about the Standing Orders Committee.

Let us consider some of the changes that can be made. I hope that Government members will back me and the Opposition on this.

An Honourable Member: Let's get our coats off.

Mr. HOUSTON: I disagree with what the Treasurer said about Parliament being degraded by the non-wearing of coats. Most of the day a member of the Police Force is sitting in the lobby. He has no coat on, but I defy anyone to say that he is not respectably dressed. My stand on that matter is very clear.

I suggest that the Minister introducing Estimates should have his speech printed. The speech is always typed and copies are handed out in the Press gallery. If copies of the Minister's speech can be made available to the Press, what is wrong with having the speech printed days before and handing out copies to members?

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: Two weeks before.

Mr. HOUSTON: Longer than that, if the honourable member likes. Two weeks before, the Minister would not know what he is going to say. Some Ministers change their opinions from day to day, according to how the wind is blowing. However, I believe their speeches should be prepared, printed and handed to all honourable members before the debates commence.

An Honourable Member: And taken as read.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, definitely. Why not? That would permit four or five additional speakers to take part in each of the debates. Certainly it would allow more members an opportunity to discuss various aspects of the Budget in detail, as they are entitled to do.

Only one day was allotted to Local Government and Electricity, which allowed time for only about three speakers. The Estimates of the Department of Local Government last came before the Committee of Supply in 1967. Why was that not the first Resolution so that more honourable members would have had an opportunity to debate Local Government and Electricity? The Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries have not been debated since 1970.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: Are you saying that all Estimates should be debated every year?

Mr. HOUSTON: Let us be practical about it. If the honourable member can persuade his Government to accept a practicable way of getting every Estimate before the Committee, I should be very happy about it. I am trying to do something within the existing structure. I am acting on the assumption that the Standing Orders Committee is not likely to meet and, in any event, we are not likely to get agreement because the Premier and the Treasurer do not want any change.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: All Estimates can be debated and should be debated every year.

Mr. HOUSTON: I have no fight with that at all. I am trying to point out what can be done immediately.

The Estimates for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs have not been debated since 1970. To do the job properly, we should have the Minister's speech printed, delivered to members, taken as read, and the debate should proceed from that point.

I wish to make brief reference to the fact that today this State is virtually isolated from half the news media. It is completely ridiculous that only the printed news media can report matters of political importance, whether they be propaganda or straight politics, right up to election day. The other half, which is an increasing section, namely, radio and television, is not allowed to do so. I repeat that this is completely ridiculous, but the position is even worse than it first appears in that what is said in this Parliament today and tomorrow, irrespective of what the member happens to say or who he happens to be, will not be reported on radio or television. The people of Queensland will have to rely on any newspapers they happen to receive. In country areas newspapers are often not received for two or three days after they have been printed, whereas radio and television disseminates news virtually simultaneously with its happening.

In addition, under the present law, if there happens to be a by-election in New South Wales or Victoria, a blanket is thrown over political news. I think this is completely wrong and I believe that the Treasurer and the Premier of this State would be doing something commendable if they took it up with the Federal Government.

Sir Gordon Chalk: We will take it up with Mr. McMahon on Monday.

Mr. HOUSTON: All Mr. McMahon will be able to do is what I am doing now—advocate it. He will not be in any position to implement it. I am sure Mr. Whitlam will be.

One ridiculous aspect was that Mr. Anthony wanted to deliver his policy speech on a certain day. I believe the people are entitled to hear such a speech. But he was denied the right to do so because a State by-election was being held in New South Wales. How silly can our laws be!

Talking about Mr. Anthony brings to mind law and order about which we hear so much in this State. We hear the Premier criticising Labor leaders and stating that we encourage the breaking of the law, yet Mr. Anthony deliberately broke the law.

Mr. Hinze: What about Whitlam?

Mr. HOUSTON: Mr. Whitlam took no bets. Mr. Anthony took a bet and in doing so broke the law—and he knew he was breaking it.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: Honourable members opposite may think it is smart. It is childish when Mr. Anthony does it, but it is wrong when the Labor Party advocates that some law is a very bad and wicked law! I would have given Mr. Anthony full credit had he said, "Yes, I did it." But he did not; when he was asked by "The Australian", he said, "No comment." We know the report that he took the bet is quite true. Perhaps he does not want to comment now because he knows he is going to lose his money. That may be worrying him most.

Mr. Murray: What about a couple of dollars on the election on Saturday, Jack?

Mr. HOUSTON: As the honourable member is not a gambling man, I would not like to upset his principles.

Mr. Hinze: I'll give you 3 to 1 Labor.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: Today the Treasurer spoke about the high wages that are paid in this State. It is remarkable that around about election-time, whether it be State or Federal, the Treasurer and other Government speakers declare how wonderful it is for workers to get high wages. At every other time of the year they condemn the workers. Every time a worker goes for an increase in wages, Government members condemn him. Never once can I recall—and I am sure the Treasurer cannot come

up with one instance—the Treasurer supporting a wage increase. In fact, in the Federal sphere, the Commonwealth Government even goes into the Arbitration Court and opposes increases in wages.

Mr. Chinchin: What about incremental pay?

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member opposed it. Don't give me that nonsense. Now Government members claim it is wonderful to have high wages.

Although both the Federal and the State Governments, in line with traditional Liberal-Country Party policy, state their opposition to high wages, they welcome them because of the extra revenue they receive by way of taxation. The Country Party candidate for the Federal seat of McPherson, Mr. Richter, even advocates wage reductions.

A person in receipt of a taxable income of \$2,000 pays approximately \$200 in income tax. If his taxable income is increased to \$3,000, his tax rises to \$424, which is an increase of \$224. If his taxable income is increased by a further \$1,000, he pays \$707 in tax, or \$283 more. Until recently, the Federal Government had not made any adjustment to help meet the higher cost of living.

The Treasurer has said that it was good to see an increase in payroll tax, but he relates everything to the average wage. I shall illustrate how this so-called average wage can give a false impression and result. Suppose there are three men—A, B, and C. Let us presume that each week A receives \$60, B receives \$80, and C receives \$100. The average is \$80, which is B's income. If their wages are increased by 10 per cent, they receive respectively \$66, \$88 and \$110. The average is then \$88. However, the man who previously received \$20 less than the average is now paid \$22 less, and the man who, prior to the increase, received \$20 more than the average is now in receipt of \$22 above it. In other words, with percentage increases the workers on the lower wages get further behind. In this State massive wage increases have been granted to workers in the high-income bracket, whereas the average workers have received only low percentage increases. No-one can deny that the average wage has risen; nevertheless, there is a tremendous difference between the "haves" and "have-nots."

Mr. Hughes: You need to know the number in each bracket to get a fair comparison.

Mr. HOUSTON: I know the numbers, but I do not want to complicate the debate by quoting them. Any honourable member who doubts my figures can look at the official statistics to determine how many workers are in the various income brackets.

Many church leaders and other citizens have claimed that Australia is faced with a poverty problem.

Mr. Chinchin: Where is it in Queensland?

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member only has to walk two or three blocks and he will see people lined up waiting for something to eat. If he likes to visit the area represented by the honourable member for Brisbane, he will see many persons who are forced to exist on a meagre income.

Over the years many workers have tried to overcome the loss of purchasing power. To do so, some work extra overtime, others are engaged in two jobs, and many wives go out to work. They all hope to beat the constant increases in the cost of living.

Mr. Davis: They still have not settled the equal pay question.

Mr. HOUSTON: That question is still unresolved. Although the International Labour Organisation agrees to the principle of equal pay, and delegates from the Australian Government have attended that body's conferences, its policies have not been endorsed by our Government. The Prime Minister is now talking about holding an inquiry into women's rights. What a lot of nonsense.

Turning now to what the Treasurer said about unemployment in Queensland, it is quite true that Queensland's figures are the lowest in the Commonwealth. I am sure that every member of this Assembly is very pleased with the situation. However, we should not accept everything else the Treasurer said as right. When the Treasurer spoke of South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, he did not say that the people of these States sacked the Liberal Government. It should not be forgotten that the new Governments have not been in power two years. When the Treasurer was trying to justify his argument about Tasmania, he said it had only recently changed its Government. If the position in Tasmania is bad, it was caused by the former Liberal Government.

Sir Gordon Chalk: I said that was why Tasmania's percentage was so low.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Treasurer did not say that. He will have an opportunity to check exactly what he did say.

Tasmania changed the Government for economic reasons, and next Saturday the people of Australia will change the Federal Government for the same reason.

If Queensland really had something to boast about, the number of unemployed this year would be lower than the number this time last year, but that is not so. In October 1971, there were 7,679 unemployed people in Queensland. In October this year, 8,688 people were unemployed. In other words, 1,009 more people are unemployed in Queensland this year than were unemployed 12 months ago.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: Are you prepared to talk about that in percentage terms?

Mr. HOUSTON: I have not the percentages, but if the honourable member would care to work them out I should be pleased to use them.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: The population of the State has increased in the meantime.

Mr. HOUSTON: The population has not increased by 14 per cent, which is about the increase in the unemployment rate.

The Treasurer went to some trouble to compare unemployment in Queensland with that in South Australia. It is true that there is more unemployment in South Australia, but he should state all the facts. Queensland is controlled by the Country Party. In the South Australian rural section only 184 males are out of work, but in Queensland's rural section 288 males are out of work. Those figures throw some light on the Country Party's attitude.

Mr. F. P. Moore: The Treasurer is as unbalanced as his figures.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is one way of putting it.

The honourable member for Merthyr spoke of Gladstone, the high employment rate, and so on. In the South Australian skilled building and construction field, only 194 people are out of work, but in the same field in Queensland 308 people are unemployed. In South Australia, in the skilled metal and electrical field, 506 employees are out of work, but 647 are out of work in Queensland.

Sir Gordon Chalk: Give us the over-all figures.

Mr. HOUSTON: I shall do that.

Sir Gordon Chalk: At the moment, you are only picking out the eyes.

Mr. HOUSTON: After all, Government members have spoken of development and I am talking about skills.

In the unskilled manual field in South Australia, 3,200 workers are unemployed, while in Queensland only 1,791 are unemployed. I do not deny that that is the position. But we should look at what caused the position in South Australia. Car and electrical factories were closed down.

Sir Gordon Chalk interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: Because the manufacturers closed them down. Who does the Treasurer think closed them down? It certainly would not be the Government.

Sir Gordon Chalk: They are losing industries.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is so, but we, too, are losing industries. What happened to the caravan people? What happened to Pillar Naco? What did the Government do about

Pillar Naco? It let it go to the wall. So it should not start talking about the figures here. That company lost its overseas trade and put people off and the Government knows it.

The same applies to the cost of living. The Treasurer did not mention that it was higher in Queensland than in South Australia. We do not deny that there are far too many unemployed in Australia, but I have every confidence that Gough Whitlam and the Labor Government will make a tremendous difference. I do not know what category Billy McMahon will be put into because I am told that even he will lose his seat.

The Treasurer also boasted about record spending. He did not say that there was also record income in many fields this year. He mentioned an increase in stamp duty and in payroll tax. What he did not point out was that as soon as the States took over payroll tax, the rate was increased by 1 per cent, which made a tremendous difference to revenue. Although the Treasurer has indicated that there will be some reduction in succession and probate duty, he still expects to get \$20,000,000 this year compared with \$19,000,000 last year—an increase of \$1,000,000. All of these things show conclusively that Queensland is not in the buoyant position the Treasurer claims it is in, particularly when we recall that we had to become a claimant State to balance the Budget.

I shall now refer to some of the Treasurer's statements earlier in this session on education. He said that the A.L.P. spent only 25 per cent on education in 1956-57. When I spoke on the Education Estimates I said that anyone could prove a point by comparing two things provided he used only the figures that suited him. I felt it would be interesting to see what the Treasurer said in 1956 when he was in Opposition and spoke in the Budget Debate. Remember that this is when the Labor Government spent 27 per cent of Consolidated Revenue, based on the same formula, on education. He did not criticise education spending at all. He did not advocate that more money be spent on education or that money be taken from something else and given to education. In fact, these words were recorded in his name—

"The Budget and the Estimates presented by the Treasurer clearly indicate that the Government have lived beyond their means."

When the Labor Treasurer presented his Budget, the present Treasurer said that Labor was living beyond its means and was in fact spending too much. He wanted to reduce spending. In his speech, he did not mention education once.

In 1956 he also spoke on the Education Estimates. It is interesting to note what he said. Do not forget that he condemned Labor's education spending and policy. This is what he said—

"I have little ground for complaint in regard to school buildings in my area... The 70 schools in the Lockyer electorate are in reasonably good condition, with one exception."

He said that in 1957. He also said—

"I compliment the Department on the attractive painting of the interior of school buildings."

That, coming from the Treasurer, is really something! Today, of course, there are temporary classrooms in many schools.

Mr. Leese: That you can't paint.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is true. And people inside them sweat.

Mr. Frawley: No, they don't.

Mr. HOUSTON: Don't they? The honourable member should go inside one of them some time. The Treasurer would not need to diet at all if he went into one of them for a while.

The Treasurer said that the State is to provide \$1,000,000 towards the cost of university fees. The Labor Party has no quarrel with that. In fact, it is completely in line with Labor policy. The Federal Labor Government will abolish university fees in 1974, so this \$1,000,000 is virtually no more than a stopgap requirement until Labor policy is put into effect. I suppose the Treasurer would object if I said, "Where is the \$1,000,000 coming from? Which departments will lose it?"

Sir Gordon Chalk: I said I have \$5,000,000 more than I expected.

Mr. HOUSTON: It is pretty poor budgeting if, within five weeks of bringing down the Budget, and before it is really through the House, the Treasurer is able to "cook up" an extra \$5,000,000.

Mr. Sherrington: He was only \$9,000,000 out last year!

Mr. HOUSTON: And this year he has an extra \$5,000,000. I hope some of that money goes to schools and provides some of the things they need. An extra \$1,000,000 could also be spent very easily on housing to ensure that homes are provided for the many who desperately need them. I hope the Treasurer will be able to tell the House in his reply what will be done with the other \$4,000,000.

The point that I make about education is that all young people under 20 years of age have had their entire education under this Government. We know that the last Scholarship examination was held in 1962, and its abolition opened the way to the abolition of the Junior examination. We

also know that this is the last year in which the Senior examination will be held. Those who have been closely associated with schools will know that during this period there have been constant changes in syllabuses and approaches to teaching. I do not know how teachers have been able to cope with the situation and keep up-to-date with what has been required of them. There was no preparation, no foresight and no planning in the changes. Only experience and ability has allowed teachers to get by, and to do as good a job as possible in the circumstances.

The trouble is the effect that this has had on the child who is not in the top academic bracket. I believe that many of today's problems can be traced back to the constant syllabus changes and alterations in teaching methods. The child who cannot cope with the new methods becomes confused. We all know that every human being likes to shine in some activity. Those who are brilliant academically are praised by their parents, friends and all others associated with them. Years ago there was a belief in schools that sport was also a very important part of education, and young people who were not academically gifted but who were good at football, cricket, running or some other sport received their measure of recognition. Today the academic field is all important, and many young people who do not make the grade suffer from an inferiority complex.

Recently a learned judge or someone else in authority said that many young people who go off the beaten track leave school at an early age for—I think this was the expression used—"the high income that is then offering". In other words, they take unskilled or semi-skilled work with high pay. However, when they become adults, they cannot compete for promotion that would normally be due to them with people who had received higher education.

Matters such as that should be considered, and I suggest to the Government, which is talking about establishing committees, that this is one matter that Parliament could well study closely. We should not "kid" ourselves that something is good simply because we introduced it. Let us consider it from the point of view of how it has affected the young people of this State.

Of course, there are those who get up on the stump and blame the parents. Unfortunately, in some cases parents have difficulty in controlling their children, but I do not think all the blame lies with them. If one analyses the position, one finds that a child of school age usually leaves home about 8.30 a.m. to travel to school and does not return home till about 4 p.m. In other words, for 7½ hours the child is under the control of the school and the teachers. Children usually are in bed for seven or eight hours, and by the time they have done their homework and spent some time in recreational activity, they are under the control of their parents for

only a short time each day. Therefore, teachers and schools play a tremendous part in moulding the character of children.

I hope that the children who attend the new pre-school centres will not be there only for the purpose of becoming scholars. In my opinion, a child is sent to kindergarten to develop its personality rather than to learn things that are normally regarded as a part of schooling. The honourable member for Toowomba South has frequently asked what is to happen to the children at pre-school centres when ordinary schools have closed for the day. At existing community-run kindergartens, the children usually are there till fairly late in the afternoon, when a parent or some other adult picks them up. But unless the Government decides to keep teachers at pre-school centres after ordinary school hours, a problem could arise.

Mr. B. Wood: An older child can travel by school bus, but a child attending a Government pre-school centre cannot.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is another problem. In addition, if a parent wished to make sure that his child went to a pre-school centre, he would not be allowed to travel on a school bus.

I do not think the Government is spending enough on sport in schools. I am aware that it has set up a Ministry of Sport, and I was surprised to read in the first policy statement issued by the department that money would be spent on sending sporting teams interstate. It did not say whether they would be adult teams, junior teams, Rugby League teams, tennis teams, or what.

Mr. Davis: The applications have to come from the State bodies, and they have to go to the Minister, not to the Director.

Mr. HOUSTON: This is another example of "anything will do as long as we get it off the ground".

Mr. Sherrington: It is a panic measure.

Mr. HOUSTON: A panic measure, designed to counter the Labor Party's election promises.

Most State schools ask their students to pay \$4 or \$5 in school fees. That is completely apart from money that parents pay to the parents and citizens' association. They are referred to as school fees, or general-purpose fees. I know more than one school that is spending \$1,000 a year from money collected in school fees or general-purpose fees on sporting equipment. Surely we must consider sport as a part of education. Why is it necessary for a school to spend \$1,000 of parents' money to provide sporting equipment?

While on the subject of sporting equipment, let me refer to the answer I received to a question I asked about money that the State received from sporting and other organisations who are endeavouring to do

the job which, unfortunately, the schools are not doing. I refer to the provision of sporting equipment and of training in various sporting activities. I was surprised to learn that every time a charitable organisation or sporting body decides to raise money, the State Government wants its "chop" out of it. As we know, it is not a small "chop". The honourable member for South Coast is aware of youth club problems in his area. In 1971-72 the State Government received \$199,895 from such organisations in permit fees.

An Opposition Member: Those people raised that money out of the goodness of their hearts.

Mr. HOUSTON: There is no doubt about that. I had this information collated to use in my speech but, to cap it all, today I received a letter from the Queensland Police Citizens' Youth Welfare Association. I notice that the Premier is its patron. This organisation is trying to solicit money for its project to help keep young people off the streets and make good citizens out of them. I trust their efforts will be supported. If one of the branches of this organisation, or a similar organisation, wants to raise money through raffles and other activities, the Government steps in and demands nearly \$1,000. How many donations would go to make up that amount? Let the Government be "fair dinkum" when it talks about assisting people. It should not allow people to raise money, only to come in and take it from them in order to fill the State's coffers.

Mr. Hinze: Do you agree with me that fees charged to the Police Youth Club should be waived?

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course. They should be waived for any organisation that is looking after young people.

Let us face facts. We hear talk about the Government subsidising parents and citizens' associations. In fact, it is the parents and citizens' associations that are subsidising the Government. It is the same with all charitable organisations: they are subsidising the Government.

In his Financial Statement the Treasurer spoke about subsidising private institutions that want to build hospitals. But for charitable organisations, we would not have many of today's hospitals. Who is assisting whom?

While dealing with hospitals, let me mention a case that has been brought to my attention. In an earlier debate I spoke about people who have contributed to a medical benefits fund and have not been able to get into a private hospital. Following that speech a lady telephoned me and said, "You are quite right. I went to my doctor and he told me I should go into a private hospital. I couldn't get in; there was not one vacant bed. I went into the public hospital, and when I came out I was told that I should have a couple of weeks in a convalescent home." She said she had tried to get into a convalescent home but was told she would have

to pay in advance before she went in. She was expected to pay in advance at the rate of over \$200 a week.

At 11 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of Standing Order 307, the sitting is further extended to enable the Treasurer to make his speech in reply.

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Treasurer) (11.1 p.m.), in reply: One would have thought that the Leader of the Opposition, realising that he would be the only speaker for the Opposition on this Appropriation Bill, would have occupied the time replying to what I said and the factual statistics I supplied of the very high standard of activity in this State. It would appear from what he has said he had no answer at all to my assertion that Queensland stands out above all other States in employment, in wages, and in wage increases.

For some time the Leader of the Opposition wandered on and dealt with a few matters in general, criticising the fact that his Labor propaganda machine could not use the television or radio media after last night but that newspapers can publish advertisements right up till polling day. What these matters have to do with the finances of this State and its future prosperity, I do not know. It indicates quite clearly that he had no answer whatever to the statistics I mentioned.

The honourable gentleman then referred to the method of presentation of the Resolutions in this House. The same pattern of presentation of the Resolutions has been followed down through the years. It was not set by this Government. One reason why the Labor Party followed the policy that has been adopted and followed by this Government—

Mr. Sherrington interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Sir GORDON CHALK: The honourable member is like a noisy jack-in-the-box.

If the Leader of the Opposition had made some inquiries into the matter, he would have found that there are one or two bases on which the Resolutions can be handled. One system that could be followed would be to take the Resolutions collectively—that is, Resolutions 1 to 23, or whatever the case may be. If that pattern were followed, debate could be held on any particular Resolution but the conduct of the discussions and the whole of the reply on the Resolutions would then be in the hands of the Treasurer, who would have to reply to the Resolutions as a whole.

The practice that has been followed means that, by separating the Resolutions and calling them as they have been called down through the ages, discussion can take place on a particular Resolution and that discussion is, as it were, under the control of the

Minister of the day and he has the right of reply. I believe that is the reason why the Labor Party followed that policy, and I think that it is still a sound policy today. If the honourable member advocates some different pattern, I, for one, am prepared to look at it. This Government is not desirous of avoiding a debate on any particular issue.

The honourable gentleman complained about the Budget. Fifty-five members spoke for an hour each—

Mr. Sherrington: Out of 82 members.

Sir GORDON CHALK: Would the honourable member like the various Ministers to enter the Budget debate? They kept out of it. As I say, 55 honourable members spoke to the Budget debate, each for one hour.

What contribution has the honourable member for Salisbury, who has interjected, made to debates in this Chamber? He harps on one particular issue. He does not even know what is going on in his own electorate relative to schools and police officers. He has made an utter fool of himself. Even his colleagues threw him out of the high position he previously held as a shadow Minister. That is an indication of what they think of his activities. All he has done tonight is interject and yell, as he has done for years. I am sure that if the constituents of Salisbury could have seen him tonight, they would have realised that he is only wind, water and noise. He does nothing more than interject and yell at every other member, and his contributions to debates are so poor that his fellow-members of the Opposition tossed him off the front bench and threw him down the drain.

To return to some of the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition, I thought that tonight he would have touched on financial matters to try to condemn, if he could, the figures I produced. Instead, he talked, for example, about television advertising and skilled labour in South Australia. There is a shortage of skilled labour in that State, only because it is coming to Queensland. He knows that half a dozen South Australian factories have closed down since the Labor Party came into power there, and that the skilled tradesmen who have come to Queensland have been absorbed into our community. This is the reason for the high percentage of unskilled labour in South Australia.

I challenged the honourable gentleman to give us all the figures, and eventually he quoted figures of unskilled labour in South Australia. In the establishment of industry and the development of the State, we have been able to achieve something we are proud of.

The Leader of the Opposition talked of higher wages. Certainly wages have increased by 10 per cent, but in Queensland the cost of living has risen by only six per cent.

Mr. Sherrington: What rot!

Sir GORDON CHALK: Again the honourable member interjects. Let him look at the registration of motor vehicles, which is a fair indication of any State's prosperity. The number of vehicles registered shows quite clearly that the people are receiving incomes higher than the cost of living. It is because members of the community are able to purchase motor-cars and countless other items that there has been an increase in stamp duty, as I said earlier.

The Leader of the Opposition tried to condemn statements I made in 1956 on education. I do not retract anything from my comments on that occasion. The honourable gentleman claimed that I criticised the amount of spending in this State, which I did, and later he said I did not condemn the amount spent on education. That is quite true. I did not condemn the Education Vote in 1956, but I did condemn the rate of spending in this State because it was causing an increase in costs and unemployment.

Mr. Houston: It was not.

Sir GORDON CHALK: The Labor Government fell. Why? Because of a split within the party and because of a threat to the then Premier of the State. When Labor was in power, the worker was not happy and the party was split down the centre.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to housing. I indicated tonight the progress made in housing in Queensland and other great development. The Leader of the Opposition referred to sport. We have appointed a Director of Sport.

Mr. Houston: What else have you done?

Sir GORDON CHALK: We have made \$250,000 available this financial year.

Mr. Houston: Are you going to give anything to the schools?

Sir GORDON CHALK: That has already been provided for. In other words the Leader of the Opposition wants to take some of the \$250,000 provided for the development of sport in the community and divert it to some school activities. We have provided certain sums of money within the school allocation for the betterment of schools and internal training at schools, and we have provided money for national fitness. I believe that the appointment of a Director of Sport was a wise, sound move. The money will be spent in the best interests of young sportsmen, who will be able to go forth and uphold the good name of their State.

Mr. Houston: Who is getting it?

Sir GORDON CHALK: We have clearly indicated the basis on which the money will be distributed.

Mr. Houston: You haven't.

Sir GORDON CHALK: I know for a fact that a statement has been issued by the Director indicating the basis on which the distribution will be made. If need be, young people with ability will be brought to Brisbane for training that will enable them to represent this State in other parts of the Commonwealth. That is the basis on which the money will be spent. The Labor Party is condemning this because it believes that we will be able to get among the young people. Labor would rather have the radicals. When we make a progressive move, when we attempt to bring young people together, when we attempt to guide them, the Leader of the Opposition criticises us. He even criticised a letter that he received seeking a donation for the Police Youth Club.

Mr. Houston: I rise to a point of order. I did not criticise the youth club in any way. I criticised the Government for stealing money from the youth club.

Sir GORDON CHALK: The Leader of the Opposition said that the Government is stealing money from police youth clubs. The Government has not stolen money from any club. It has assisted the police youth clubs and it will continue to do so. It is encouraging this movement because the people behind it are community-minded. Apparently the Leader of the Opposition would prefer people not to attend the club meetings. He received a letter seeking a donation; we will see what support he is prepared to render. We will see whether he is prepared to hide behind a smokescreen by saying what the Government will or will not do.

Mr. Sherrington interjected.

Sir GORDON CHALK: The honourable member for Salisbury has sat in the Chamber and yelled all night. He has not made a worth-while contribution to the debate. He would rather sit and interject, and try to distract the people on the important issues before them.

Mr. Sherrington: I have done more for sport than you have ever done.

Sir GORDON CHALK: I know the only sport he has undertaken; I know the sport he has been associated with in his time. I only have to look at him to realise what it was.

Mr. Sherrington: That is typical of you.

Sir GORDON CHALK: This is an important issue.

Mr. Sherrington: I think you are a rat-bag.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Salisbury will withdraw that remark.

Mr. Sherrington: I will not withdraw it. I think he is a rat-bag.

Mr. SPEAKER: Furthermore, I ask the honourable member to cease interjecting, otherwise I shall deal with him under Standing Order 123A.

Sir GORDON CHALK: The honourable member repeated that I am a rat-bag. You asked him to withdraw the remark. It is offensive to me, and I, too, ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer has asked the honourable member for Salisbury to withdraw the remark that he is a rat-bag.

Mr. Sherrington: How far do you go in this, Mr. Speaker? The Treasurer made a very serious insinuation about the type of sport I was engaged in. I do not intend to withdraw the word "rat-bag" until I receive an apology from him. I think he is a rat-bag.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw that remark.

Mr. Sherrington: I will not.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the honourable member does not withdraw it, I will deal with him under Standing Order 123A.

Mr. Sherrington: I will not withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will leave the Chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Salisbury withdrew from the Chamber.

Sir GORDON CHALK: The debate can now come back to order and we can have a fair and conscientious discussion. However, I believe that, on behalf of the Government, I have already outlined the position. This Bill means that money will be available for the Government to use wisely.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307 I shall now put the question under consideration, after which all questions necessary for the passage of the remaining stages of the Bill will be put without amendment or debate.

Motion (Sir Gordon Chalk) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Lickiss,
Mt. Coot-tha, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 8, both inclusive, schedule and preamble, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, read a third time.

The House adjourned at 11.20 p.m.