

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 28 OCTOBER 1975**

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## TUESDAY, 28 OCTOBER 1975

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. E. H. Houghton, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

### PAPERS

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

#### Reports—

Queensland Health Education Council, for the year 1974-75.

Land Administration Commission, including reports of the Superintendent of Stock Routes and the Rural Fires Board, for the year 1974-75.

Department of Forestry, for the year 1974-75.

Rural Reconstruction Board, for the year 1974-75.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

#### Proclamations under—

The Survey Co-ordination Act of 1952.

Forestry Act 1959-1975.

#### Orders in Council under—

The Supreme Court Act of 1921.

District Courts Act 1967-1972.

Water Act 1926-1975.

Harbours Act 1955-1972.

Forestry Act 1959-1975.

#### Regulations under—

Elections Act 1915-1973.

Water Act 1926-1975.

Co-operative Housing Societies Act 1958-1974.

Building Societies Act 1886-1974.

Report of the Perpetual Trustees Australia Limited for the year 1974-75.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### REVOCATION OF GOVERNOR'S DORMANT COMMISSION

**Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier) (11.4 a.m.): There has come to my notice evidence which shows that many Queenslanders are aggrieved and perturbed by the abrupt and unheralded revocation of the Dormant Commission held by His Excellency the Governor (Air Marshall Sir Colin Hannah).

As the name implies, the commission is a "sleeping" commission until such time as an occasion arises that calls for it to be invoked, whereupon the holder of that commission, when duly requested, is authorised to administer the Government of Australia. Such an occasion could arise on the death, incapacity, removal or absence out of Australia of the Governor-General.

I want to make it quite clear to this House and to the people of Queensland that this revocation of Sir Colin's Dormant Commission has no bearing on his position as Governor of Queensland.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** What a pity!

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The honourable member for Archerfield says it is a pity. We will keep that in mind.

It should be clearly understood that appointments to the position of Governor of Queensland are made by Her Majesty on the recommendation of the Government of Queensland, and that the issue of the Dormant Commission by Her Majesty is made on the recommendation of the Government of the Commonwealth.

Constitutional practice is that Her Majesty acts on the advice of her appropriate Ministers of State, so that this revocation cannot be interpreted as any expression of her personal views concerning Sir Colin as Governor of Queensland. The recommendation of such revocation, coming as it does from the Commonwealth Government, expresses the Prime Minister's public disapproval of Sir Colin's comments at this particular time of political controversy.

**Mr. Burns:** It's a treasonable attack on the Queen.

Honourable Members interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I have asked before that honourable members on both my left and right refrain from persistent interjections whilst any Minister is on his feet. If honourable members do not obey the rules of the House, I shall have to deal with them under Standing Orders.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition shows his ignorance by talking about a treasonable act against Her Majesty.

The action taken by the Commonwealth Government does not remove Sir Colin from his office as Governor of Queensland. Let me emphasise that my Government has the utmost confidence in Sir Colin, who is discharging the responsibilities of his office in accordance with the high standards of loyalty and dedication that have marked his entire career—a career of distinction in the service of Sovereign and country extending over some 40 years.

As Governor of Queensland, Sir Colin has now served more than 3½ years of his term of office and, as a matter of course, the time is approaching when my Government will be required to give consideration to the situation which will arise at the expiration of Sir Colin's present term of office. I indicate now that such is my Government's confidence in Sir Colin that we intend initiating the appropriate action to have the question of an extension of his term submitted to the Queen for Her Majesty's approval.

It is unfortunate that, at this time of political controversy, the Prime Minister has seen fit to take such a step as might serve to satisfy his sense of power but results in merely exposing his chagrin at the impact of an honest statement.

ALLEGED ATTENDANCE OF MINISTERS AT MEETING OF NATIONAL ABORIGINAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**Hon. L. R. EDWARDS** (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (11.7 a.m.): I desire to inform the House that yesterday the agenda for the inaugural meeting of the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee, which is to be held on Tuesday, November 18, was brought to my notice. I noted in that agenda that I, or my appointed representative, is listed to address the meeting at 2.30 p.m. The receipt of this photostatted agenda was the first approach to me by any person concerning this meeting. I note that my colleague the Honourable Claude Wharton has also been listed on the agenda, and he also has never been approached, nor has he consented, to appear or speak at this meeting.

I am most disturbed to think that a group of people claiming to represent the Aboriginal people has stooped to these depths to indicate, no doubt as some form of publicity about their meeting, that two Queensland Cabinet Ministers have agreed to support this meeting by attending and delivering addresses. Besides showing the height of ill manners, the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee is falsely advertising that its inaugural meeting has overwhelming State Government support. I wish to dissociate myself from all aspects of this committee and its inaugural meeting, and to indicate to the House that people in this community, for the purpose of focusing attention on their questionable activities, are attempting to make a mockery of Parliament by using the high offices of Ministers of the Government without their knowledge or consent.

I deplore the attitude of the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee in this particular matter, and dissociate myself from their activities. I table for the information of honourable members a copy of the agenda I received yesterday.

*Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the document on the table.*

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. MUNITIONS UNEARTHED IN CAIRNS AREA

**Mr. Jones**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) Has he any knowledge of a cache of small arms and a quantity of ammunition recently unearthed by a bulldozer in the Cairns area?

(2) If so, what are the details of the location, number, description and condition of the arms, were they in good order and working condition and what action was subsequently taken?

*Answers:—*

(1) No. It could be that the honourable member is referring to two metal ammunition boxes which were uncovered by a bulldozer operator in the Cairns area.

(2) During the construction of a road on a hillside approximately 1 km inland from the beach at Cape Tribulation on 16 October 1975, two metal ammunition boxes were uncovered. One of the ammunition boxes contained a .455 calibre six-shot Colt revolver. This revolver is considered to be of First World War vintage American issue and, although old, is considered operable. The other box contained a newspaper dated 12 February 1973 and also a small quantity of drugs. Inquiries have been made and are continuing with a view to establishing the identity of the person or persons responsible for burying the ammunition boxes at the site in question.

2. POWERS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY POUND-MEN

**Mr. Frawley**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) Are pound-men employed by local authorities authorised to shoot dogs in the street? If so, will he instruct local authorities to have their pound-men cease this dangerous practice?

(2) Are local authority pound-men allowed to carry rifles or pistols whilst carrying out their duties in suburban areas?

*Answers:—*

(1) As local authorities come under the jurisdiction of my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads, I suggest that the question be directed to him.

(2) See answer supplied to part (1) of this question. The control of concealable firearms is a matter coming under my jurisdiction. The possession of concealable firearms by persons not in possession of an appropriate licence or permit or otherwise exempted under the Firearms Act (whether they be employed by a local authority or otherwise) is an offence. When information of such an offence comes to the notice of police, appropriate action will be taken.

3. NOMINATION FOR STATE ELECTION UNDER ASSUMED NAME

**Mr. Ahern**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

May a person nominate for a State election in Queensland under an assumed name not formalised by deed poll, provided that he is enrolled under that name and known in the district under such name? If not, does any candidate who does so contravene the Elections Act?

*Answer:—*

A name is a means of identification. A person may choose to be known by any name he likes, provided that in the use of such name there is no intention to defraud. A deed poll is merely a formal notification of a change of name and is not essential to achieve that purpose. Consequently, a person who is enrolled in a certain name and is known under that name may nominate for a State election in that name even if the name is not the one by which he was originally known.

#### 4. AUSTRALIAN COAST GUARD SERVICE

**Mr. Ahern for Mr. Row**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

Has the Commonwealth Government ceased to provide finance to enable State authorities to continue to support the Australian Coast Guard Service and, if so, what plans does his department have in order to continue to support Queensland units of the Coast Guard Service?

*Answer:—*

No funds are received by my department from the Commonwealth Government to provide financial assistance to the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association. To my knowledge no other State department receives funds from the Commonwealth for this purpose. However, my department subsidises at the rate of 75 cents for every \$ of annual endowable collections by voluntary, non-profit rescue organisations operating in Queensland including the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association's flotillas. Funds are available in this department's 1975-76 Estimates for continuation of payment of this subsidy.

#### 5. AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE PLAN

**Mr. Ahern for Mr. Row**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport—

(1) What are the implications arising from the recent High Court decision upholding the validity of the Australian Assistance Plan?

(2) Will Commonwealth funds now become available to his Department of Welfare for distribution for charitable purposes throughout Queensland?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) It would appear that the implications from the High Court decision upholding the validity of the Australian Assistance Plan are that as long as the present Government is in power, the plan, which is now in the experimental stage, will be supported by legislation, and a network of regional councils for social development will be established throughout Australia. At one stage it was proposed in

Victoria that funding for the plan would be made through the Victorian State Treasury. This would have enabled proper integration of all welfare services, funding and planning. However, this plan is so shrouded in mystery that probably not even its academic architects know how it will work. Funding is at present made by the Commonwealth direct to regional councils and it could therefore be presumed that, following the High Court decision, this pattern of funding would be continued. This would mean that virtually self-appointed groups would decide how considerable sums of public moneys are to be spent. Under these circumstances, the result could well be a wasteful use of money without regard for a co-ordinated plan, however well intentioned members of these local administration groups may be. It could also mean that the thickly populated areas of the State, where voices are the loudest and the votes more numerous, would be in a position of great advantage compared to other areas. It is a disturbing fact to realise that, if financial resources are to be distributed direct to groups which could be set up without any real expertise in the general field of social welfare and thus have little concept of what is required, money could be dissipated with very little return in value towards improving the quality of life of the community—money desperately needed immediately for dependent children, children in conflict with the law and a wide range of family services. We will be deprived of funds to expand and develop every aspect of our welfare services. Typical of the "quicksand foundation" of so many plans emanating from the dreamy eyed Canberra socialists, the A.A.P. was born in the belief that this type of scheme can be operated by community groups while at the same time retaining a central base which will be able to meddle and monitor. Hailed as it was in the beginning as some sort of sensational political comet, the Australian Assistance Plan has not yet got off the ground despite several returns to the drawing board. The initial excitement has deteriorated into disenchantment, and from all over Queensland come reports of frustrations and only a trickle of money. Comment from Ipswich is typical of the opposition to the way in which the A.A.P., or the name by which it is now known, the "Addled Assistance Plan", is muddling along. A spokesman for a committee formed to get the plan off the ground in this region was reported in the "Queensland Times" to have said—

"Things have come to a frustrating standstill. We keep getting reams of stuff from the Government, and then we are told to take no notice of it. The last thing we were told was we could go ahead on a voluntary basis initiating community welfare projects, raising the funds for them ourselves and administering them. These things were all originally supposed to be funded by the Federal

Government, and it would be impossible to do them by voluntary work. We are all very frustrated about the whole thing. We were appointed to do a job for the public, but what has been the point of it all, or the point in going further with it if the plan has no future?"

Always long on talk but short on action, the Federal Government so far has given this committee the munificent amount of \$2,000, which hardly covers preliminary administrative costs, when it promised instant affluence for all. The tragedy of this confused situation is that Queensland already has the machinery for the implementation of any practical programme for social welfare, and conditions laid down by the Commonwealth introduce a redundancy in the proposed services and a duplication of expenditure in administering them. The simple approach would have been to assign money to the Queensland Government and let it do the job unfettered by any Commonwealth requirements. Many members of regional councils were already actively engaged in social welfare work, so provisions of the Commonwealth's plan could not be said to have widened community interest in welfare matters. Indeed, the tedious delays in obtaining anything concrete from the Commonwealth could well result in desertions by volunteers who see nothing short of an absolute shambles ahead.

6. COMPENSATION TO VICTIMS OF  
CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

Mr. K. J. Hooper for Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) How many orders for compensation to victims of criminal violence have been made in Queensland courts since 1968 and what was the total compensation involved?

(2) How many applications for compensation to be met by the Crown have been approved by the Governor in Council?

(3) What is the total sum awarded by the Governor in Council to date?

(4) How many applications for compensation are at present being considered?

(5) Will he give immediate consideration to increasing the maximum quantum allowable to \$10,000, to be more in line with compensation judgments in civil actions?

(6) Will he act to alleviate delays in obtaining ex-gratia compensation payments and simplify the procedure?

Answers:—

(1) Statistics of this nature are not kept centrally but in the respective court registries.

(2) 26.

(3) \$25,100.00.

(4) 9.

(5) No. The maximum amount of compensation was recently increased to \$5,000 in respect of offences committed on or after 1 July 1975.

(6) Claims are processed promptly after all material information is obtained. It is proposed to examine the procedures with a view to expediting the settlement of claims.

7. SCHOOL SITING AWAY FROM  
MAIN ROADS

Mr. K. J. Hooper for Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

(1) Are there any statistics to show that children who attend schools which are built close to main roads have a higher lead content in their blood?

(2) If so, has the Education Department or Works Department any policy of building classrooms well back from main roads to prevent this undesirable situation?

Answers:—

(1) I know of no local statistics that have been compiled on this subject.

(2) No complaints regarding lead content in blood or its effect on urine have been received to cause a specific policy to be formulated on this matter, but schools are built as far back as possible from heavy traffic routes to eliminate noise nuisance. It must be borne in mind, however, that over the years traffic patterns change.

8. PREPACKED PERISHABLE GOODS

Mr. K. J. Hooper for Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs—

(1) What power has he to ensure that prepacked perishable goods are of an acceptable standard at the time of sale?

(2) In view of the growing number of complaints about such goods, will he use his office to ensure that consumers are sold only high-quality goods?

(3) What action can be taken against a firm that blatantly sells prepacked perishable goods that are obviously unfit for human consumption?

Answer:—

This is a matter which the honourable member should direct to my colleague the Minister for Health.

9. FILLING OF CASUAL SENATE VACANCIES

Mr. Moore, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Is he aware of any instance when a Commonwealth Government has deliberately sought to breach traditional

and constitutional arrangements relating to the filling of casual Senate vacancies by State Parliaments? If so, when did this occur?

(2) What were the circumstances of the particular case or cases?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) Yes, the Constitution and convention practice whereby State Parliaments fill casual Senate vacancies was attempted to be subverted by the present Federal Government in April last year. The Prime Minister (Mr. Whitlam) deliberately sought to prevent the Queensland Parliament from exercising its constitutional and conventional responsibility by the resignation of Senator V. C. Gair as a Senator from Queensland and the issuing of writs for a half-Senate election. The intention of this manoeuvre was to ensure that Senator Gair would not be replaced by a Democratic Labor Party nominee. It is now a matter of history that the Prime Minister's shabby attempt to subvert the Constitution was thwarted by the Queensland Government. However, the recollection of this event only serves to further illustrate the total hypocrisy of the Prime Minister's claims that his Government will always abide by the Constitution and by convention. Clearly, the Whitlam Government clings to the Constitution and to so-called convention only when and if it is to its own political advantage.

#### 10. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ISSUING WRITS FOR SENATE ELECTION

**Mr. Gygar**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

In view of claims made by the Prime Minister on 23 October concerning the issuing of writs for a Senate election, who is responsible for the issuing of the writs and is that responsibility the result of a convention, an Act of Parliament or a section of the Australian Constitution?

*Answer:—*

The Senate Elections Act of 1960 (of Queensland) provides—

“For the purpose of the elections of Senators for this State to the Senate of the Commonwealth, the Governor in Council by Proclamation published in the Gazette may fix the dates—

(i) For the issue of the writ;

(ii) On or before which candidates may be nominated (herein called ‘the day of nomination’);

(iii) For the polling; and

(iv) On or before which the writ shall be returned, respectively,

and may also, by Proclamation published as aforesaid, appoint a place for the nomination of candidates.”

#### 11. BOAT PASSAGE AT MOUTH OF BRISBANE RIVER

**Mr. Lamond**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Tourism and Marine Services—

(1) Has he recently familiarised himself with my many submissions to him and his department concerning the closure of the Boat Passage at the mouth of the Brisbane River?

(2) Is he prepared, at this time, to advise the House of his intentions in regard to the keeping open of this very necessary passage for the safety of boating in Moreton Bay?

(3) If he is not prepared to give a progress report on this matter, will he give his assurance to the House that every consideration will be given to the keeping open of this passage?

*Answers:—*

(1) Yes, and the contents of the submissions have been passed on to the consultants preparing the master plan for the port of Brisbane.

(2) The honourable member will be aware that the development of any structure, such as the one to which he refers, which will interfere with navigation, requires the approval of an Act of Parliament. When I present the necessary Bill it will be a matter for this House to decide as to what form the structure should take.

(3) I give my assurance that present planning of the crossing of the boat passage takes into consideration the needs of small boat owners who use the passage at present.

#### 12. COVER NOTES FOR COMPREHENSIVE VEHICLE INSURANCE

**Mr. Hanson**, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

(1) May persons obtain, through the State Government Insurance Office, cover notes for vehicles pending payment of comprehensive car premiums for their vehicles?

(2) As many insurers and general policy-holders with lifelong support of the office are desirous of paying for cover notes which they seek owing to absence from areas and the State by virtue of their avocations, is he aware that in Central Queensland the S.G.I.O., Rockhampton, refuses to issue any cover notes?

(3) As I am sure that it is not the desire of the S.G.I.O. to refuse good customers and supporters this service, is he prepared, through the very able and capable General Manager, to see that the public and good customers are no longer inconvenienced or aggrieved?

*Answers:—*

(1) Yes, subject to certain conditions.

(2) If the question means "Does this policy apply in the Rockhampton Branch?"—and I can only presume this because the question is so vague—then the answer is that it does. Cover notes are issued where the need is demonstrated and the office is reasonably satisfied that the application will proceed and the premium will be paid. However, restrictions are imposed on the issue of cover notes without payment because experience has proved that many applicants receive a cover note, which gives immediate protection on issue, and fail to complete the application or, alternatively, pay any premium.

(3) The General Manager is not aware that any inconvenience is being caused in Central Queensland by this policy or that any good customers have been aggrieved. No complaints have been received, but if any are received they will be fully investigated.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS OF INQUIRY INTO STATUS OF WOMEN

**Mr. Ahern** for **Mrs. Kippin**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

As the Government has acted on two of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the Status of Women and as International Women's Year draws to a close, does he intend to act on any of the other recommendations of the report?

*Answer:—*

A number of recommendations contained in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Status of Women in Queensland come under the control of other Ministers. The commission of inquiry recommended the establishment of a Council of Queensland Women. This has been done. The council's function is to advise and make recommendations to the Government on matters affecting the status of women in Queensland. Advice has been received from the council on many of the commission's recommendations, and action will be taken by the Government in the light of that advice wherever possible. The Description of Women (Reference to Condition in Life) Act has been passed by this Parliament. The Jury Act is to be amended so that women will be eligible for jury service until the age of 65. It has been adopted as a policy that, in the reconstitution of boards appointed by the Government, consideration will be given to the appointment of women who are qualified and competent and are prepared to serve on boards. The Government has endorsed the recommendation of the commission of inquiry that the Public Service Board should

encourage women to qualify for appointment as clerks of the court and as stipendiary magistrates. Other recommendations of the commission of inquiry are still receiving consideration.

14. BEENLEIGH HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY

**Mr. Gibbs**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

Are there any plans to build a new library or expand the existing library facilities at the Beenleigh High School? If so, when will construction commence?

*Answer:—*

There is no provision in the current programme for the commencement of such works.

15. ADDITIONAL HOUSING AT GORDONVALE

**Mr. Ahern** for **Mr. Armstrong**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

In view of the acute shortage of housing accommodation at Gordonvale and the difficulty being experienced in obtaining satisfactory tenders for the building of houses, when is construction of additional housing likely to commence?

*Answer:—*

In view of the honourable member's strong representations for more houses at Gordonvale, I am pleased to say that I anticipate that a tender for two houses will be accepted this week by the Queensland Housing Commission.

16. MARKET SQUARE REAL ESTATE AGENCY, SUNNYBANK

**Mr. K. J. Hooper**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

Did Market Square Real Estate Agency of Market Square, Sunnybank, recently change ownership? If so, will he provide details of the owner and the name of the licensed real estate agent conducting the business?

*Answer:—*

The public records held in the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs do not disclose a recent change in ownership of the business name Market Square Real Estate, the proprietor of which is shown as Graeland Enterprises Pty. Ltd.

17. FIRM, INVESTMENT CENTRE OF AUSTRALIA

**Mr. K. J. Hooper**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

Who were the directors and shareholders of Investment Centres of Australia from the date of incorporation to 20 October 1975?

*Answer:—*

Unless the member for Archerfield can demonstrate that this is a matter of public interest, I am assuming it is a private inquiry and in these circumstances the correct procedure is for a search of the public records held in the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs to be undertaken at the prescribed fee.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** I think you're protecting crooks.

**Mr. KNOX:** I am doing nothing of the sort. If the honourable member wishes to have the information he can obtain it in the same way as any other citizen. If, however, he can show me that it concerns a matter of public interest—

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Fair enough.

**Mr. KNOX:** I will disclose the information to the House.

18. FINANCE AND COMMERCE  
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper,** pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Is Finance and Commerce Co-operative Society Ltd., a society registered under the Co-operative Societies Act with a paid-up capital of \$3 million, a very minor finance organisation?

(2) Will he authorise the staff of the Corporate Affairs Office to obtain urgently from this society's records, full details of borrowers and when loans were made to any corporate bodies in excess of \$7,000 between 11 August 1971 and 22 October 1975?

(3) What interest rate is offered to investors by the society from on-call and various fixed deposits?

(4) What was the amount of borrowings from the public and the amount advanced to borrowers as at 30 September and what was the profit or loss of this society for the year ended 30 June?

*Answers:—*

(1) This is a matter on which the honourable member should form his own opinion. It might be noted that only a small proportion of the \$3,000,000 quoted is, in fact, paid-up capital.

(2) If the honourable member feels there are any grounds for his suggestion he should supply me with the details, and do so confidentially.

(3) Rates quoted by the society are as follows:—10½ per cent per annum—no fixed term; 3–6 months—11½ per cent per annum; 6–9 months—11¾ per cent per annum; 9–12 months—12 per cent per annum; 1–2 years—12¼ per cent per annum; 2–5 years—12½ per cent per annum; 6 years and over—13½ per cent per annum.

(4) See answer to (2).

19 and 20. CONDITIONS AT BRISBANE  
EAST STATE SCHOOL

**Mr. Lamont,** pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

(1) Whilst noting that the staff of the Brisbane East State School has never threatened industrial action, far less a strike, as reported in some parts of the media, is he aware of the high feeling of disapproval amongst staff members regarding the physical conditions at the school?

(2) Does he acknowledge that the staff members are highly responsible professional people whose concern is for the pupils of the school and the adverse effect that poor physical conditions can have on the quality of education which can be provided?

(3) Will he give any firm assurance that conditions will improve in the very near future?

(4) Will he give this problem his urgent personal attention?

*Answers:—*

(1) Yes. I have noted that the teachers of the Brisbane East State School did not threaten industrial action as was reported in a local newspaper on 22 October. It would appear that the newspaper was furnished with information that did not have the support of teachers at Brisbane East, and it was supplied some days prior to publication. The intent of the information was mischievous, and it would appear that the comments were made by an industrial officer of the Queensland Teachers Union. I would point out that the accepted procedure whereby such matters are brought to my notice or to the notice of my department through union channels is by an approach by the president or the general secretary of the union to the Director-General of Education. My department is accountable to the State of Queensland in the matter of expenditure of public money and, in a responsible manner, assesses the needs of individual schools according to priority and the availability of funds on a State-wide basis. Attempts at coercion will not alter my priorities.

(2) I believe that all my teachers are responsible professional people who desire the best possible conditions for their pupils.

(3) The Department of Works has prepared a scheme for rearrangements of classes which involves the provision of additional accommodation. This is designed to relieve the classes most severely affected by traffic noise. This will be implemented as soon as funds permit.

(4) Yes. The matter is already under consideration.



**Mr. Lamont**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) Is he aware of the standard of physical conditions obtaining at the Brisbane East State School?

(2) Can he assure the House that, within the parameter of Works Department responsibility, he is giving the problem of the school his personal attention with a view to improving teaching conditions as soon as possible?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) My Department of Works has a considerable amount of deferred works for want of finance. As a result of my visit to the Brisbane East State School at the request of the honourable member, initiatives have already been taken by me to have some of the deferred work approved. I am appalled that the Teachers Union sees fit to take advantage of our visit when it is known by the union that action is in train to improve the facilities at this school. The union should be fully aware of the Canberra socialist policies, which have placed the building industry in a critical financial position because of record inflation and unemployment.

## 21. PERCENTAGE WAGE INCREASES

**Mr. Lamont**, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

What was the percentage wage increase for 1974-75 in respect of (a) average adult earnings, (b) Queensland State school teachers, (c) metal workers, (d) police officers, (e) Queensland members of Parliament, (f) Brisbane City Council aldermen and (g) Queensland State public servants.

*Answer:—*

(a) Average weekly earnings (including overtime etc.) for adult males in Queensland rose by 20.86 per cent in 1974-75, while the average minimum weekly award wage rate rose by 19.58 per cent. (b) Queensland State school-teachers received increases ranging from 13 per cent to 22.8 per cent in September 1974 and basic wage increases of \$10 per week during the financial year. The percentage represented by the basic wage increases varies according to the salary level to which they are applied. (c) Metal workers received increases ranging from 13 per cent for tradesmen to 17 per cent for labourers during the year inclusive of basic wage increases. (d) Policemen received an increase of 20 per cent in July 1974 and basic wage increases of \$10 during the financial year. (e) The increase in parliamentary salaries awarded during 1974-75 to operate from 1 July 1974 was 28.246 per cent. This was, as required, based on the increase in average award wages in the preceding financial year. (f) I am

informed that the salaries of Brisbane City Council aldermen were increased to give the same annual increase as received by State members of Parliament. (g) Public servants received increases ranging from 15 per cent to 20 per cent in July 1974 and basic wage increases of \$10 per week during the financial year.

## 22. EFFECT OF FEDERAL LEGISLATION ON HOME-BUILDING

**Mr. Powell**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) Has he viewed the article in "The Courier-Mail" of 24 October with regard to legislation introduced into the House of Representatives by the present Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Mr. T. Uren?

(2) Will the proposed legislation, if passed by both Commonwealth Houses, assist in any way young Queenslanders who, at the moment, because of the Commonwealth Government's regressive policies, are finding it almost impossible to build their own homes?

*Answers:—*

(1) Yes. This is a housing matter and I would have expected it to be administered by the Commonwealth Minister for Housing and Construction. Perhaps he has joined the ranks of so many other Ministers who have been downgraded by the Prime Minister. This dual responsibility can only be detrimental to Commonwealth-State relations in housing.

(2) The Press statement is another case of promises, promises and still more promises from the socialist Commonwealth Government, which are not matched by performance. Certainly the low-income and middle-income groups need help if such families are to own their own homes. Because of the Commonwealth Government's action in forcing interest rates to their present record levels, they cannot obtain loans from permanent building societies. It is said that this new scheme will help thousands of families to obtain homes. But when? The \$20,000,000 to be provided in 1975-76 would finance 1,111 homes with loans of \$18,000 each. With galloping inflation, the same amount next year could provide only 1,000 homes. At that rate it is possible that young couples may become eligible for age pensioner units before they receive a loan under this scheme. If the Commonwealth Government shows the same discrimination against Queensland in this new scheme as it has done when allocating housing agreement money for 1975-76, this State will receive only \$1,700,000 out of the \$20,000,000. This would finance only 94 Queensland homes, which is a mere drop

in the bucket. The Commonwealth Minister for Urban and Regional Development says, and I quote—

“Welfare housing provisions make housing available to those earning up to 95 per cent of average weekly earnings.”

This is pure theory. What sort of welfare provision for those people did the Commonwealth make when it cut the housing agreement allocation to this State for 1975-76 to approximately 30 per cent below 1974-75? In any case the 95 per cent applies only to societies obtaining housing agreement money. The Queensland Housing Commission is restricted to 85 per cent of earnings. If Queensland had received the same housing agreement allocation—\$43,800,000—as it received in 1974-75 then our housing societies would have received an additional \$3,600,000—sufficient for 200 homes. The new scheme is nothing but political window-dressing by a scared socialist Government. Over the past three years that Government has, as I have said previously, wasted its assets on “Blue Poles”, Germaine Greer and other non-essentials and has failed to encourage home-ownership. It is a remarkable coincidence that the \$20,000,000 to finance the new scheme in 1975-76 is almost identical with the \$20,800,000 cut from the housing agreement allocations—Queensland \$12,800,000, Western Australia \$4,000,000 and Tasmania \$4,000,000. The Commonwealth has now let its cat out of the bag: it is robbing Peter to pay Paul. This shows clearly that the Commonwealth Government is prepared to sacrifice the really low-income earners in order to obtain some cheap party-political publicity. Since the first assisted house loans were granted by the then Queensland Government in 1909, we have built up a wealth of experience in home-ownership in Queensland, particularly in our State Workers’ Dwelling Scheme. This has been recognised for very many years by honourable members on both sides of this House. I have had no approach from the Commonwealth Government for discussions concerning this new scheme. This is typical of a Commonwealth Government which acts as though all wisdom and experience reside in Canberra.

#### 23. EDUCATION PROGRAMME TO COMBAT DROWNING OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

**Mr. Lindsay**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

As deaths from drowning of pre-school children greatly exceed the total of those from burns, falls, accidental poisoning and exposure, will he give consideration to a swimming-education programme for pre-school children, combined with some form of life-saving education and training for

interested parents of pre-schoolers, remembering that treatment at the scene of the accident often could save the life of a drowning pre-schooler?

*Answer:—*

A number of State pre-school centres have organised swimming instruction for children attending the centres. These programmes have been organised with the consent of parents and with the co-operation of principals of the associated primary schools. My department has commended this development, but its provision depends upon a number of local conditions and it is not feasible to make such instruction a regular feature of pre-school education. These factors include the availability of a suitable pool at suitable times and the availability of a qualified instructor as well as close co-operation by parents. It should also be noted that drownings occur frequently among children younger than those attending pre-school so that this matter calls for much wider consideration than just attention at the pre-school level. On the question of life-saving education for interested parents, I will undertake to have this matter brought to the attention of pre-school teachers. This could lead to the development of appropriate parent education programmes.

#### 24. STATE AID TO CHURCH CHILD-CARE HOMES

**Mr. Warner**, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

Will he consider an amendment to the Budget allocation for church homes looking after children, from the increase of \$6 per week payment to \$12 per week, which was the conclusion of church homes after a very searching assessment?

*Answer:—*

The honourable member is obviously appreciative, as I am, of the sterling work done by these homes for the children entrusted to them and of the value of their services to the State and the community generally. It is because of the outstanding merit of their services that the State Government subsidies to these homes have advanced at a far greater rate than costs generally have moved. The \$6 per week increase approved in the Budget represents a 30 per cent increase. In mid-1972 the State payment was \$8.50 per child per week and is now \$26 per child per week, an increase of just over 200 per cent, while costs generally have increased by 42 per cent. Unless costs in these homes have risen much higher than the average, they should be in a substantially improved position compared with that of about three years ago. In answer to the honourable member’s question, I can say that I have already advised a representative of these church homes that I would be happy to look at the State grant

again early in 1976 to see how cost increases from June to December have affected the homes.

25. FIRE STATION SITE, FERGUSON ROAD,  
CAMP HILL

Mr. Byrne, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) In relation to the fire station presently being constructed at Ferguson Road, Camp Hill, what was the zoning of the land prior to its designation as a fire station site?

(2) In whose title and/or trust did the land reside prior to such designation?

(3) Was this site at any time designated for recreational purposes?

Answers:—

(1) The Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board initiated action to have the site reserved for fire brigade purposes before the first Brisbane Town Plan came into force. The Brisbane City Council indicated its agreement and a plan of survey for the site was registered on 6 November 1964. Actual gazettal of the reserve for fire brigade purposes (under control of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board as trustee) took place on 7 April 1966. In the meantime the town plan which came into force on 21 December 1965, zoned the land as "existing open space".

(2) The Brisbane City Council as trustee under the Land Act.

(3) Prior to the gazettal of part of the land as R2141 "Reserve for Fire Brigade Purposes" with area of approximately 1 rood 14 perches on 7 April 1966, the whole of the land was designated as R1350 "Reserve for Recreation Purposes". The balance area of 5 acres 1 rood 9.2 perches is still a reserve for recreation under the control of the Brisbane City Council.

26. REGISTRATION AND INSURANCE OF  
LOW-POWERED MOTOR-CYCLES

Mr. Byrne, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

As there has been a marked increase in the proportion of vehicles over 100 c.c. since the determination of the regulations and the average lower-powered cycle or scooter now made exceeds 100 c.c., will he consider rationalising the present anomaly in relation to the registration and provision of third-party insurance?

Answer:—

I have undertaken to give sympathetic consideration to a review of the classifications for motor-cycles on the lines suggested by the honourable member in so far as compulsory third-party motor vehicles insurance is concerned, when insurance premiums are next reviewed. The

matter of registration fees is the responsibility of the Honourable the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads, to whom that part of the question should be referred.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

WORKERS' COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

Mr. BURNS: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Is he aware of the hardship suffered by workers who, as the result of an accident at work, have a period off work longer than six months, and who revert to the old compensation rate after six months? Is he also aware of the statement made in a letter in the Press by Dr. Paul Gerber that the Act no longer takes into account the problems that a worker experiences through inflation? Is there anything that the Government can do about the very pressing problem that confronts a worker as the result of a long illness that is not of his making?

Sir GORDON CHALK: The question of workers' compensation is not exercising only the mind of this Government, as it has also been raised at Federal Government level and in other States. The workers' compensation fund was established for the purpose of assisting workers through periods of illness, and I believe that we all agree that full assistance should be given during the whole period of incapacity. On the other hand, one of the difficulties facing the workers' compensation administration today arises from the fact that, as a result of a decision given by the Industrial Commission, an injured person can now receive his full earnings during the period of illness up to—

Mr. Burns: It is only make-up pay.

Sir GORDON CHALK: Well, make-up pay. He is placed in such a position that he receives his normal award wage for a certain period of time. When that period is exceeded, his case is reviewed, and unfortunately a reduction is made in his payments. Those concerned with the administration of workers' compensation are alarmed at the increases that have occurred in the length of periods of incapacity since the decision referred to was brought down by the Industrial Commission. In other words, people are staying longer on workers' compensation. I do not want to reflect on anybody in particular, but there is an indication that there is not the desire to return to work that there was when a worker was receiving, we will say, only 80 per cent of the normal full wage. I sympathise with the arguments put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. At the moment we are looking at any additional benefits that can be provided through workers' compensation by the State Government Insurance Office, but the rate of claims at the moment is forcing an increase in premiums because the S.G.I.O. makes no profit from workers' compensation. In other States, workers' compensation is covered by

a number of insurance companies and the honourable member will find that the premium being paid here in Queensland under the single administration of the S.G.I.O. is less than that in any other State, and in the majority of cases the benefits paid are greater, so there is no reflection on the State's administration. The question the honourable member raised is one I have been looking at with the idea of trying to provide protection for the individual from the time illness occurs until he or she returns to work. On the other hand, I am afraid that, with the payment of the full normal award wage, there is not the same desire to return to work as there was previously.

DECLARATION OF FRASER ISLAND AS A  
NATIONAL PARK

**Mr. ALISON:** I ask the Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service: Is he aware of the ridiculous statement attributed yesterday to Mr. John Gorton that Fraser Island should be declared a national park? Would the Minister agree that Mr. Gorton obviously does not know what he is talking about, and that there is no need to declare the whole of Fraser Island a national park? Would the Minister also agree that we can retain the island in all its natural beauty and also have the benefits of timber-logging, sand-mining and tourism subject to strict Government control without any permanent damage?

**Mr. TOMKINS:** Yes, I am aware of the totally irresponsible statement made by the former Prime Minister, Mr. Gorton. It shows the reason why he is where he is today. At one stage of his life he was top man in Australia. I should say that very soon he will be bottom man. His statement was completely ridiculous.

It is a fact that regard must be had to all types of land use on Fraser Island. For example, 20 per cent of Fraser Island is now a national park and my officers and I have plans to declare up to about 100,000 acres of the island as a national park because we believe that that is the best use to which the land can be put. On the other hand, Fraser Island is also an area in which a considerable amount of forestry work is being carried out. It has been going on for 110 years, and I say quite openly that it is a tribute to the Forestry Department that it has cared for it so well that conservationist John Gorton now wants the whole island declared a national park. I reiterate that the statement is irresponsible.

As to the matter that Mr. Gorton raised at the launching of a book or a similar function—I say for his benefit that less than 8 per cent of Fraser Island is available to Dillingham Murphoyres for mining purposes and that less than 1 per cent is being mined.

One way or another, Mr. Gorton's suggestion is quite ridiculous, and I am astonished that a man of his experience would talk such nonsense.

PREMIER'S VISIT TO TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS;  
ALLEGATIONS BY MR. GEORGE MYE

**Mr. DEERAL:** I ask the Premier—

(1) Is the Premier aware of claims by Mr. George Mye, chairman of the Eastern Islands Group in the Torres Strait, that the people of Yorke Island had been embarrassed by the so-called insults by the Premier and members of his party during their recent visit to the Torres Strait?

(2) Is he also aware of denials by Mr. Mye and by the Federal Director of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Worthy, of the Premier's statement that tractors had been delivered to the wrong Islands, including islands in Mr. Mye's own group?

(3) In view of these claims by Mr. Mye, has there been any reaction by the other Islander leaders?

(4) Is it a fact that, of the \$1,000,000 advanced by the Federal Government to the Torres Strait Islands, just under half went directly to the co-operative led by the same Mr. Mye who is making the allegations against the Premier?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The honourable member's question refers to the allegations made by Mr. Mye about a week ago against me and my party. They are, of course, completely wrong. He should be the last person to complain, and he and the few people—the three or four of them—who supported him should realise that the Government of Queensland has saved them from being given away to New Guinea. The honourable member for Bulimba laughs. Evidently he was prepared to give them away.

**Mr. Houston** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** To show how irresponsible Mr. Mye is and how he is regarded in the area, and also to show how irresponsible the honourable member for Bulimba is, I will read two telegrams that came into my office. The first one is from Joseph Mosby, chairman of Yorke Island, the one to which the honourable member for Cook referred. It said—

"I am puzzled by Press reports regarding your recent visit. As Chairman of Yorke Island I deny that any complaints have been made or apologies demanded. We are upset that you our guest have been subjected to this embarrassment. We look forward to your next visit. I emphasise there is no ill-feeling and my people are very upset to read these things which we have never said."

The other one was from Henry Stephen, chairman of Stephen Island, in the area in which Mr. George Mye lives. It said—

“We ask you to support us in our fight to retain our islands.”

**Mr. Houston:** Do you want a stirrer up there?

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I have already brought to the attention of the House that honourable members are not to interject when Ministers are on their feet. I ask the honourable member for Bulimba and other honourable members to obey my ruling, or I shall deal with them under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I would hate to see what would happen to the Torres Strait Islands if Labor ever came to power in this State—even in 100 years' time.

The telegram continued—

“Does it matter which wrong island our tractor was left? Our worry is that it was not on Stephen Island and we now find it needs many parts for repairs.”

As I said, that was sent by Henry Stephen, chairman of Stephen Island. That shows that Mr. Worthy of the Federal department and George Mye, a one-time leader in the area, are entirely off the rails. They are completely wrong.

#### INTRODUCTION OF DAYLIGHT SAVING IN SOUTHERN STATES

**Mr. MELLOY:** I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Is he aware of the concern expressed by the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce following the introduction of daylight saving in southern States because of the adverse effect it is having on businesses, particularly the airlines and the securities industry, which have interstate dealings? Is there any action the Queensland Government can take to offset the effects of the new time changes?

**Sir GORDON CHALK:** The introduction of daylight saving in Queensland was carefully examined by this Government. We believe that it is not essential or necessary for the general administration of the State, and therefore we are not a party to daylight saving.

Its introduction in New South Wales and Victoria can cause one or two difficulties with the stock exchange and the short-term money market—two avenues which, to some degree, are directly associated with administration and the Treasury Department. However, we are able to overcome those difficulties by a slight rearrangement of our personal staff. Therefore Queensland is not suffering from the introduction of daylight saving in other States.

As to transport movements—it is true that some inconvenience can be caused by the very early morning services leaving Brisbane, but I do not believe that that

inconvenience is as great as the inconvenience that could be caused if we introduced daylight saving. I am not unmindful of the tropical conditions in Queensland. I am not unmindful of the conditions that would apply in North Queensland and Central Western Queensland if we adopted daylight saving. The difficulties mentioned by the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce in the Press this morning are factual, but, on the other hand, I believe that the policy we have adopted is the correct one.

#### PETITION PRAYING REMOVAL FROM OFFICE OF GOVERNOR, SIR COLIN HANNAH

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** In directing a question to the Premier, I draw his attention to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition is organising the presentation of a petition to the Queen requesting the removal of Sir Colin Hannah from the post of Governor of Queensland. I now ask: As the Governor is a returned serviceman, having fought for Australia as an airman in the R.A.A.F., does not the Premier view this petition as being one sponsored by Left-wingers and the Communist bosses of the A.L.P. in an attempt to remove from office a man whose boots they and the Leader of the Opposition are not fit to lick?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** This morning I made a ministerial statement on this matter, and I think it adequately covers the whole position that has arisen. I am sure all of us regret that the Leader of the Opposition, together with the Prime Minister, sought to score politically on this issue against a man of such high standing and principles as Sir Colin Hannah.

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 —THIRD AND FOURTH ALLOTTED DAYS

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

##### ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1975-76 PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

“That \$23,799,668 be granted for ‘Primary Industries.’”

The department has also made provision for an expenditure of \$53,972,937 under Trust and Special Funds, which includes \$31,317,934 for the operations of the Agricultural Bank and \$7,530,948 for the Stock Fund.

\$2,716,579 is also provided under payments authorised by special Acts—subsidies and grants.

## CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND

The sum of \$23,799,668 is sought to meet the salaries and contingency expenditure of the department, the amounts being \$14,945,783 and \$8,853,885 respectively. In the contingency provision, which is increased by \$2,287,024 over expenditure in 1974-75, there is an amount of \$2,589,022 provided as a supplementary grant to the Stock Fund, and an additional grant of \$100,000 to the Sugar Experiment Stations Board.

PAYMENTS AUTHORISED BY SPECIAL ACTS—  
SUBSIDIES AND GRANTS

The sum of \$2,682,412, which is included in the total provision of \$2,716,579, is provided to meet the Government endowment on stock assessment received in 1974-75 under the Stock Act 1951-1973.

At the outset I should like to assure honourable members that Queensland's rural industries are basically sound, despite the serious pressures being inflicted by inflation and escalating costs. I shall have more to say on that problem later, but at this stage I would stress that we should not be pessimistic about the long-term future of our agriculture, on which the State's economy so heavily depends.

True, we continue to be faced with a very serious situation in the beef industry—it has, thank God, improved—and also to some extent in wool. It would be foolish to allow these present problems to cloud our judgment to the extent where the basic structure of these industries is eroded and the research and extension services upon which they rely are allowed to decline.

Markets have collapsed before and will do so again in the future, but they inevitably revive and we must be sure that our great rural industries are in a position to service those markets when they do recover. To do otherwise would be very short-sighted. It would deprive the State's economy of future income and retard our growth. It would also result in higher food costs to the consumer when demand recovers, if our productive resources were allowed to decline. Because of this it is essential not only that our farmers and graziers are kept viable but that the research, extension and marketing services provided by the Department of Primary Industries are maintained and, where necessary, expanded.

Looking at the rural situation over all—the picture is not one of gloom. The gross value of rural production in 1974-75 is estimated at a record \$1,203 million, an increase of \$130,000,000 on 1973-74. Beef, sheep and wool, of course, showed a marked decline in value compared with last year, but the increase in sugar-cane production associated with higher prices more than balanced this downturn. Wheat, barley and fruit also showed increases. The volume of production increased by 3 per cent, but the total value of production increased by 12 per cent. However, with sugar prices now at levels well

below that of a year ago and little prospect of any major upturn in beef prices before 1976, it seems likely that the value of Queensland's rural produce may slip back at least marginally during 1975-76. At the same time, there continues to be uncertainty with regard to future world economic policies and trade.

The major developed countries have been faced with inflation and economic recession of sufficient magnitude to threaten their economic stability. An important contributing factor in this situation has been the shift in monetary reserves as a result of the sharp increase in the price of oil. This in turn has led to successive exchange rate movements. This situation is expected to continue to have an adverse effect on international trade, particularly in rural produce upon which Queensland so heavily depends.

Despite the over-all increase in the gross value of rural produce last year, farmers' net incomes were seriously eroded by inflation and spiralling costs of farm inputs. Whilst those industries favoured by reasonably high prices were able to cope to some extent, others such as beef, wool and dairying, with depressed markets, were placed in an even more critical position.

Farm costs in the last 12 months have risen by more than 20 per cent and they are still rising. If this continues during the rest of 1975-76, when over-all gross returns for rural products are expected to fall, then the net farm income position this year will be even more serious. Investment will decline and future productivity will be prejudiced.

Regardless of his efficiency—and it is very high—no man on the land can be expected to continue in business if the present ridiculously high rate of inflation continues. I might add that there are people in other Governments who have responsibilities in this field. Market returns will simply not be enough to cover his production costs unless the consumer is forced to pay greatly increased prices.

The solution to the problem lies squarely in the lap of the Commonwealth Government which created the problem in the first place. Unless the position is corrected—and corrected soon—all the people of Australia will suffer as a result.

I would now like to deal specifically with some of our major industries—firstly, the beef situation. The sharp downturn in the volume and value of beef exports has overshadowed virtually all other industry problems and unquestionably the industry is in serious difficulty. The decline in market prices, which began in 1973-74, continued during 1974-75 with prices falling to new low levels. Fat-stock prices during February 1975 fell to levels around 20c to 30c per kg (dressed weight). Prices for some classes were considerably lower than that. These were the lowest fat-stock prices for more than 20 years.

Ironically, the cattle themselves were in good to excellent condition through most of the season and entered the winter in good state. This was indeed fortunate because of the high stocking rates resulting from surplus slaughter cattle. Slaughterings increased as the year progressed, with producers being forced to dispose of cattle, regardless of price, because of their overstocked position. As a result, abattoir through-put during 1974-75 exceeded that of the previous year by 14 per cent, and production of beef and veal in 1974-75 increased by 20 per cent over the previous year to 418,737 tonnes.

The value of cattle slaughtered, however, slumped from a record \$279,000,000 in 1973-74 to \$136,000,000 in 1974-75, as a direct result of the decline in export outlets and its effect on domestic prices. Significant efforts were made by industry and Government bodies to seek out new overseas markets. I led a general trade mission to the Middle East, Asia and Japan in the early part of 1975 and beef was the principal commodity we discussed with the countries visited.

Export markets remain the key to the recovery of the beef industry. It is difficult to predict when these markets will recover to more normal levels, as much will depend upon the recovery of the general world economy. However, I am hopeful that there will be a significant recovery next year. There have been some recent encouraging signs. If I had the time I would speak for an hour on the discussions I had with three senior Ministers in Japan.

**Mr. Jensen:** Tell us all about it.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** Some honourable members might be interested in this. If the honourable member for Bundaberg is not, he should slip outside.

**Mr. Jensen:** I am interested.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** The three Ministers were the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Trade and the Minister for Agriculture. It was a very interesting discussion. I think it had real effect and played a very major part in opening the door for the importation of beef into Japan. I am confident that, by the end of this fiscal year, something like 50,000 tonnes of Australian beef will go into Japan. We are hopeful that the situation will improve from then on.

**Mr. Burns:** Is this continuing? Is it in the long term?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** That is the very point I made. We need long-term contracts to be negotiated from time to time.

**Mr. Burns:** If this keeps going up and down—if they import something from us this year and nothing next year—it is no good.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** That is right; I could not agree more. The signs are that we will have exported 50,000 tonnes to Japan by the

end of the fiscal year. I am hopeful that we will then have a quota of 70,000 tonnes, which was the quota before the cut-off in 1973-74. Of course, it was lifted to 119,280 tonnes.

The U.S.A. market, which has been virtually the only major market open to Australian exports during recent times, has announced an increase in the quantity of beef which Australia may ship to the U.S. in 1975 following shortfalls from other suppliers.

The Japanese market, which had been closed to Australia for almost 18 months, announced a new quota in June, but this is relatively small compared with the peak quotas in 1973.

Other smaller markets in Asia and the Middle East have also shown significant improvement and are absorbing increasing quantities of Australian beef.

Prices, however, have been low.

I have had meat exporters go to the Middle East to discuss the situation with people whom we contacted. It appears that there is a market there for beef—perhaps up to 25,000 tonnes within the next two years. The exporters have to quote on certain matters. Teys Brothers from Beenleigh have done just that.

The beef industry is of major significance to the Queensland economy. In normal times the gross value of beef cattle production represents between 25 and 30 per cent of the total rural income of the State. In relation to the Queensland economy as a whole, the net value of beef-cattle production normally accounts for from 8 to 12 per cent of total recorded production of the State.

In terms of overseas export income, the industry contributed 26.5 per cent of the total value of all exports during 1973-74, but this fell sharply to 8.9 per cent in 1974-75 reflecting the drop in value and volume of beef exports. This decline in value of beef exports seriously affected the beef industry because normally up to 80 per cent of this State's beef production is exported. As a result most producers are faced with very low incomes while a large proportion are receiving negative incomes.

The industry is heading into a state of disrepair as producers are forced to curtail heavily their normal expenditure on essential items such as wages, property maintenance, disease and pest control, herd management, and further development. It is estimated that over half of the normal work-force on beef properties has been retrenched. Demand for beef world-wide is still relatively weak, and there is a substantial surplus of about 1,000,000 slaughter cattle in Queensland alone.

Recovery is expected to be gradual and cattle producers will be faced with very difficult circumstances for some time into

the future. Thank God for the good rains during the past week over a big area of our cattle country.

Turning now to the wool industry, which is also being adversely affected by world markets—in 1974-75 good seasonal conditions for wool-growing resulted in a 6 per cent increase in production to approximately 62,000,000 kg, but declining prices caused a 23 per cent drop in gross value for wool to \$78,000,000.

A major rescue operation in the Australian wool market has been mounted over the past year. This follows the collapse of overseas demand in the early part of 1974-75. The Australian Wool Corporation initially attempted to maintain a floor price based on 300-c per kg for clean 21 micron wool. The corporation was purchasing between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of sale offerings and almost exhausted its finance.

However, in August 1974 the Federal Government agreed to underwrite a reserve price at a lower level of 250c per kg for clean 21 micron wool. By November, 1974, the Federal Government had committed some \$350,000,000 to the scheme and the corporation was the major purchaser of wool at most sales. The weakness in demand from buyers reflected the depressed economic circumstances in most wool-consuming countries, especially Japan, where demand for woollen goods had fallen appreciably.

However, towards the latter part of 1974-75, demand began to improve gradually, and in April 1975, for the first time since September 1974, the 21 micron market indicator moved above the 250c per kg floor price. The market continued to rise until May 1975, when Federal Cabinet attempted to lower the reserve price. These attempts failed and an assurance was given that the 250c per kg reserve price would be continued for the 1975-76 season. Nevertheless, market confidence had been undermined and the market indicator in June fell back to around the 250c per kg level after reaching 275c per kg in May.

The 1975-76 selling season commenced in the latter part of August with opening values fully firm on those of the 1974-75 close. The normal hesitancy evident at the opening of most seasons was experienced but there appeared to be firm underlying demand.

Although the outlook for wool is not clear, it would appear that there will be a continued gradual improvement in demand and prices. Of course, much will depend on developments in overseas economies. In any case, producers should be assured of at least the floor price, which is to be maintained for the remainder of the current season.

The dismal performance of the wool market so far this year has prompted the corporation to cut back offerings by 20 per cent. Since the devaluation of the Australian dollar last year, wool exports have been dearer for the U.K. but slightly cheaper

for the U.S. and Japan and significantly cheaper for France and Germany. The Australian Wool Corporation stockpile presently stands at about 1,700,000 bales and there seems little prospect of the corporation's being able to run this down to any extent in the short term.

A brighter picture is provided by the sugar industry, which leaped to the pre-eminent position among the State's rural industries with new records in volume and value. There are at present problems with harvesting caused by continued wet weather. Sugar-cane production in the 1974 season broke all previous records for quantity of cane crushed and sugar manufactured. The total of 19,420,000 tonnes of cane crushed was 1,300,000 tonnes higher than the 1971 record crop, while the total of 2,730,000 tonnes of 94 n.t. sugar exceeded the 1972 record by 56,000 tonnes.

With regard to the current season, adverse weather conditions and a lowering of world market prices so far will mean a reduced industry income in comparison with the record level for 1974. Gross industry income from the 1974 season totalled \$708,000,000 compared with \$313,000,000 in 1973. The main reason for this remarkable increase was the high prices prevailing on the world free market. These arose as a result of a very tight world supply and demand situation and, in the absence of an international sugar agreement, Australia was able to take advantage of this situation. The No. 1 pool price was \$252.66 per tonne, while the excess sugar price was \$301.10 per tonne 94 n.t. The corresponding figures for the 1973 season were \$129.85 and \$134.95 per tonne respectively.

Total exports of sugar during 1974 reached 1,710,000 tonnes, a fall of 270,000 tonnes from the previous year's exports. This reduction was related to a decline in over-all economic activity in our major markets and some consumer reaction to the very high sugar prices.

The negotiation of long-term contracts for sugar has introduced an important element of stability into a significant portion of the export market, at least until 1980. The new contract with Malaysia extends to 1980. Under the agreement, Malaysia will take a minimum of 1,650,000 tonnes of raw sugar, with the provision for possible increases in the annual quantities and for extension of the agreement beyond 1980. A revised contract with Singapore extends over the same period and provides for a shipment of 500,000 tonnes.

New Zealand has agreed to a quantity of 300,000 tonnes from 1975 to 1978. A five-year agreement concluding in 1979 has been negotiated with South Korea, which provides for a minimum total of 1,000,000 tonnes over this period. The largest contract, however, is with Japan. Under this agreement, Australia will provide Japan with 3,048,000 tonnes of raw sugar over the



period 1975 to 1979. There is also provision for possible additional sales during the period.

It gives me no pleasure to have to report that the dairying industry continued in its steady decline during the year, with the numbers of farmers falling from 5,310 in 1973-74 to about 4,800 by the end of the last financial year. The continuing decline in butter production has forced Queensland to become a substantial net importer of butter. The situation is critical for many factories, which are finding difficulty in maintaining sufficient through-put to remain viable. The Marketing Services Branch of my department is now providing a financial and managerial accounting service which should prove beneficial to the dairy co-operatives.

Prospects are not very bright for the disposal of skim milk powder stocks at favourable prices. Stocks are still held in Australia from the 1974-75 production. These will be added to from the 1975-76 production. Considerable quantities of powder are also held by overseas producers. The overall effect will be further downward pressures on prices for powder in the near future. Casein is experiencing similar problems. I understand that the export market for casein is also oversupplied and is becoming increasingly competitive.

The market outlook situation for the grain industry has improved considerably in recent months, despite reports of record crops to be harvested in the United States. This has been mainly due to the estimated demand of 40,000,000 tonnes of grain by the Soviet Union as a result of crop failures in that country.

One of the most pleasing aspects in the Queensland grain scene is the record barley crop estimated at 500,000 tonnes. Of course, we still have to get the grain in the bins. This compares with production in 1974 of 260,000 tonnes.

Rice production in 1975 is expected to approximate last season's level of 9,000 tonnes. The bulk of the crop will be disposed of on the local market at satisfactory prices.

The long-term market situation for oilseeds remains bright, although prices for most oilseeds are expected to ease during 1975. This is particularly the case for safflower and linseed, with prices expected to fall by \$100 per tonne to \$140 per tonne delivered processors' plants.

The Queensland peanut crop will be insufficient to supply Australian demand this year owing to a number of production problems. Prices paid to growers are satisfactory. I am confident that, given reasonable seasonal conditions, production will be up next year and advantage will be taken of very profitable export markets established by the Peanut Marketing Board.

The Navy Bean Marketing Board recently concluded successful price negotiations with Australian canners which resulted in a price

rise of 8c per kg for next season. Growers should expect to receive a record 46c per kg provided a reasonable crop is harvested.

Tobacco growers were generally satisfied with sales results in 1975 in view of the increase of 48c per kg in the minimum average price for tobacco leaf. Growers strongly support the Queensland Government's decision not to follow the example of other States in introducing a State tobacco tax which would have had a serious impact on the industry.

Although the outlook for cotton early in 1975 appeared glum, with a world-wide recession in the textile industry, returns to growers are expected to be similar to those for the previous season. The board is presently installing the most modern gin in Australia at St. George. This gin will be ready in time to handle the 1976 season crop.

The gross value of fruit and vegetable production in Queensland has increased steadily over the past five years. Movements in prices have, as usual, been variable although there is some evidence of slackening in this trend over recent months. Offsetting this have been the very high increases in the cost of production, particularly labour, which have severely squeezed growers' returns.

Apple production in the 1975 season was well up on the previous year's crop. However, for the greater part of 1975 returns have been depressed. Record quantities of apples remain in cool stores.

Queensland's banana production for 1974-75 declined from the previous season's level and, despite fluctuations in banana supplies to various markets, prices remained buoyant.

Pineapple production has been fairly stable in the past few years. Returns to growers from processing averaged a record \$104.11 per tonne for No. 1 pool intake in 1974.

Queensland's main citrus export crop is mandarins, the volume of which over recent years has increased substantially. The gap between fresh-market returns and processing prices for oranges has closed with the upsurge in processing.

Potato prices slumped midway through 1974-75 in response to the over-supply situation caused by the record quantities of imports into Australia of frozen processed potato products. I take a very serious view of this matter, and my department is taking all possible steps to alleviate the problem. The Federal Government should measure up to its responsibilities relative to permitting the importation of products to the detriment of Australian growers.

Over the past twelve months, hen quota controls have been fully instituted in the egg industry to attempt to match supply and demand and so overcome surplus egg production. This has been the perennial problem of the industry in recent years.

Earlier this year, the Hen Quotas Act was amended to give authorities stronger power in dealing with over-quota hens. Despite flock reductions, surplus egg production has not decreased appreciably, owing to a number of factors such as more efficient management practices with present reduced flocks, better farm technology, a mild winter and sluggish demand for eggs.

The broiler industry has faced severe disposal problems following strong price competition from competing meats as a result of the beef price collapse. While returns have dropped sharply, production costs have continued to rise and producers are experiencing a severe cost squeeze. Departmental officers are currently investigating measures by which this depressed situation can be alleviated.

Relatively stable, though cautious, conditions continue to apply in the pig industry. A situation of tight pig supply has operated over the last eighteen months and this has maintained reasonably attractive prices. Because of fears that depressed beef prices may have an impact on the price of pigmeats, producers have been cautious about expanding production. Farm input costs, particularly for grains, have risen, but large supplies of protein meals at lower prices have helped alleviate the problem.

Because of the importance of rural industry to the Queensland economy, it is axiomatic that the Department of Primary Industries must play a major part in servicing the rural sector. This servicing covers the whole gamut, from basic research through to extension at the farm level and marketing and distribution of the produce.

The cost of running the department last year was \$20,900,000. When one looks at this expenditure against a background of the contribution the department makes to rural industries, whose output last year was valued at \$1,203 million, it will be appreciated that the cost is minimal.

With the increased sophistication of the domestic market, the more stringent controls exercised in our traditional markets, and the demands being made by new markets, the department is obliged to research and act on problems before they arise. For example, a co-ordinated programme to eradicate brucellosis is currently under way to meet possible beef import requirements to be instituted by the U.S.A. by 1983. This date coincides with the time when it is expected that that country will be declared provisionally free from brucellosis. Such a programme can only be conducted by Government.

In order to assess changes on the domestic market and endeavour to assess future requirements, consumer-demand studies are proving increasingly necessary. In recent years, consumer-demand studies have been conducted into beef and veal, pigmeat and fruit.

In the development of new markets overseas it is essential that production, packaging and distribution of the product is in accord with the requirements of the country concerned. Export beef provides a classical example of this. Requirements differ widely among the various importing countries. This applies not only to the type of beef demanded, but also to manner of packaging and methods and hygiene at the point of slaughter.

With increasing sophistication and greater diversity of markets, the demand by producers for adequate marketing intelligence has increased tremendously. Particularly under present variable trading conditions, it is essential that the producer and his organisations be kept full informed of market developments and price changes on a continuing basis.

The current inflationary situation, coupled with changes in the returns for various commodities, has made the provision of extensive farm management advice increasingly necessary. For example, many graziers for whom the beef crisis has created acute liquidity problems are seeking advice on cash flow budgeting. The department now has agricultural economists stationed in 15 country centres. These officers are making a significant contribution to departmental extension services through being actively involved in district extension programmes.

Agricultural economists in all regions have made extensive use of the mass media, particularly the rural press and radio. A farm costs and returns supplement was prepared during the year for "Queensland Country Life", and it is hoped that this will become an annual feature. Extension publications were prepared on topics such as taxation, leasing of farm machinery, rural credit, share-farming agreements, wool futures and labour adjustment in agriculture. Considerable emphasis was placed this year on farmer training in business management.

Since October 1974, a successful series of property secretary courses has been conducted in southern and central Queensland, mainly in association with the Queensland Country Women's Association. Attendance has reached almost 700 country women, and plans are under way for schools in another 20 country centres. Topics covered included organisation of the property office, financial and physical records, cash flow budgeting, taxation, rural credit, insurance and estate planning.

**Mr. Burns:** Is that the one that was sent out conjointly by your department and the National Party on the Downs? It is run by the party branches as well as by the department for the women?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** Yes.

This year's application of soil conservation measures showed a welcome 30 per cent improvement over that of last year. The statutory soil conservation programmes initiated early in 1973 by the declaration of five Darling Downs shires, have been

expanded to cover 11 Darling Downs shires as well as the Isis and Gin Gin areas. Subsidy payments made to farmers for approved soil conservation works up to the end of September 1975 totalled \$88,000. The State programme also received stimulus during the year by the allocation of \$160,000 from the Commonwealth Government, and a further \$700,000 has been provided for 1975-76. Staff and facilities have been increased to enable an expanded soil conservation effort throughout the State.

The machinery evaluation programme has gained momentum with the purchase of additional machinery for evaluation and demonstration and the setting up of three area committees on the Darling Downs and in the South Burnett. The committees comprise landholders as well as departmental officers. Some 20,000 hectares of land has been programmed under provisional project plans, permitting landholders to claim subsidy payments on completed works without waiting for final project plan approval. In my opinion this is very important work. The farmer, the State and the Commonwealth all have the responsibility to future generations of keeping our land at least as good as it is today, and improving it if possible.

The Burdekin Basin investigation was one of the most important interdepartmental projects requiring support during the year and was undertaken under the control of a Commonwealth-State Project Committee. The studies will provide a basis for assessing the potential of the Burdekin Basin for agriculture, hydro-electricity generation, flood mitigation and industrial, mining and urban use.

A field survey of structural changes in the pig industry has also been completed. Preliminary results indicate that there are no significant economies of size operating over the piggeries studied, ranging from 70 to 260 sows.

An initial economic assessment of a mechanical tobacco harvester, undertaken in co-operation with the North Queensland Tobacco Growers' Co-operative Association and Southedge Tobacco Research Station, has indicated that mechanical harvesting will be feasible in the tobacco industry.

The Fourth Edition of the Farm Management Handbook, released this year, has been in great demand from primary producers, teaching institutions, accountants and bankers as a technical and financial reference manual. About 2,000 copies have already been distributed.

The \$13,800,000 sought for the national tuberculosis and brucellosis eradication programme for 1975-76 has, regrettably, been reduced by the Commonwealth to \$8,400,000, of which the original Queensland allocation of \$2,900,000 has been reduced by \$1,100,000 to \$1,800,000. This grant has been made on the understanding that each State increases its contribution towards the expenditure for the campaign by 10 per cent annually. The State contribution for

1975-76 is \$809,700, of which \$524,700 provides for salary and wages and \$285,000 for operating expenses. This is an increase over the 1974-75 contribution.

A further allocation of \$200,000 will be sought from Consolidated Revenue to meet the State's contribution to the proposed compensation scheme for tuberculosis and brucella reactors, which is intended to be introduced early in 1976.

The Industries Assistance Commission recommended that in the case of tuberculosis reactors the Commonwealth and State share the cost equally on the basis of market value, but that, in the case of brucella reactors, the basis be a Commonwealth contribution of 75 per cent with a State paying 25 per cent of the market value.

Tuberculosis testing of infected herds will continue. As extensive areas of the State have been surveyed, it is proposed to recommend that all of the State east of the dingo barrier fence, that is, the Channel Country, be declared provisionally free. This will allow unrestricted movement to similar areas of the State. West of the dingo barrier fence almost all of the larger properties have a tuberculosis problem, which presents both financial and physical difficulties. It is also proposed to commence the eradication of brucellosis, as soon as compensation arrangements have been finalised, by adopting the test and slaughter policy in areas of low prevalence of the disease.

As the result of area surveys for brucellosis of both beef and dairy cattle begun in 1973, it is known that a large area in North Queensland can qualify for provisionally free status, that is, less than 0.2 per cent prevalence, as soon as eradication measures can be adopted. The declaration of this northern area as provisionally free will be of benefit to graziers in the Far North, where there is a strong demand for Brahman-type breeding cattle for stocking of newly developed properties in the provisionally free area of the Northern Territory. As funds become available, eradication measures will be extended to other areas of low prevalence revealed by current surveying.

**Mr. Burns:** If we say such an area is completely free, will the United States accept it in the 1978 programme?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** We have not got this as yet, but I should imagine that the United States would want the whole country to be totally free.

**Mr. Burns:** But if Queensland's areas are free, will they accept our exports?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** We would hope so, but it is a bit difficult to predict. We must work towards making the country completely free.

Approximately 500,000 breeding cattle are being surveyed annually in coastal areas. Dairy herds are under regular screening,

using the milk ring test. The prevalence of infected herds on an area basis varies from 15 per cent to 80 per cent.

To handle the estimated 2,000,000 blood samples to be collected annually in the brucellosis eradication programme, a new laboratory has been completed at the Animal Research Institute, Yeerongpilly, for \$500,000; another is nearing completion at Townsville; and plans have been approved for a laboratory costing \$760,000 at Rockhampton. Mobile laboratories will also be required for the far-western areas, where transporting of samples to coastal laboratories is unpractical. The general progress of the eradication programme is good.

The expenditure proposed to be appropriated from the Agricultural Bank Fund in 1975-76 is \$29,242,267, compared with \$27,956,259 expended in 1974-75. This is a revolving fund, which is largely dependent upon repayments by borrowers for funds to re-advance to clients. Owing mainly to the beef cattle industry crisis, borrowers' repayments in 1974-75 fell far short of the estimated amount.

Despite an additional allocation of \$4,000,000 from Loan Funds, it was necessary for the bank to impose restrictions on lending. This resulted in the amount advanced to borrowers in 1974-75 being less than appropriated. The bank is fully aware of the desperate situation in which many of its beef-producing clients now are placed through no fault of their own. It has, with Cabinet approval, relaxed its normal recovery action in respect of dues payable by graziers who rely substantially upon beef cattle for their income.

The proposed expenditure in the Drought Relief Fund of \$2,066,667 in 1975-76 comprises only the repayment to the Commonwealth Government on account of advances made to the State during the financial years from 1965-66 to 1971-72. It also includes the final repayment in respect of the financial years 1965-66 and 1966-67.

I have given a brief summary of what is taking place and what is proposed in the Department of Primary Industries. As the figures indicate, the department's responsibilities cover a very wide and important field. I look forward with interest to the points of view to be raised by honourable members and to criticism, which I hope will be constructive. If it is constructive it may well be acted on. If honourable members know of things that have not been dealt with to their satisfaction, this debate offers them an opportunity to express their complaints.

I conclude by thanking my departmental officers for the energy they have displayed over the year, for their assistance and co-operation with me and for the way in which they are serving our primary industries in Queensland.

**Mr. HANSON** (Port Curtis) (12.43 p.m.): In speaking to the Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries, I feel compelled

to deal strongly with a very personal matter. Unfortunately in recent times reference has been made to the health of the Minister (the Honourable V. B. Sullivan). Opposition members very much regret the statements that appeared in the media and the concern felt by the Minister personally and those honourable members amongst us whom, I hope, he regards as personal friends. After taking a survey of members of the Opposition—indeed, I interrogated them at quite considerable length—I can assure the Minister that at no time did these statements originate with Opposition members. As responsible members of Parliament, we deplore the machinations and the very devious intent of the people who leaked or supplied this information to the media. It was absolutely disgusting and Opposition members would certainly not participate in it. We are very pleased to see that the Minister enjoys good health and we sincerely hope that he will continue to enjoy it for a long time. He might even enjoy it in the Opposition benches after the next election.

Let me next refer to the passing of Mr. Jack Jones, who was a wonderful servant of the Department of Primary Industries. He gave devoted service to the rural producers of Queensland and exercised considerable influence on rural policy. He was a very courteous, kindly man. I wish to associate myself in this debate with a tribute to the wonderful service he gave to the State. I very much regret his passing.

The almost \$24,000,000 that the Minister specified as coming from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for 1975-76 will barely meet the basic expenses in that year. Very little money, if any, will be left for planning and extension. We have a profound respect for the people who go into the rural areas of this State and produce the food by which we are sustained. Naturally, primary production needs a considerable amount of stimulus, continuing and increased research and proper planning.

In the post-war years, millions of dollars were provided by both the private and the public sectors for the extension and development of large tracts of land and also for the opening of new areas. All of this allowed productivity to develop and removed some of the disabilities associated with transport and communication. To hasten this extension, irrigation was given considerable impetus, although the Opposition claims it was not enough.

Logic and tradition make the Department of Primary Industries responsible for guiding the destiny of the rural sector of Queensland. If we are to have research, investigation and advisory services, it is necessary that this department be not starved for funds; but, since this coalition Government took office in 1957, it has been considerably starved for funds. As the Minister mentioned, we must have money to pursue the goals, aims

and ideals of providing protective services that will lead to the eradication of many of the exotic diseases in livestock.

If Government members regard their recent Budget as a political public relations exercise, all I can say is that to the rural sector it is a complete flop. It contains very little to support the enthusiasm the coalition Government sought to generate in the halcyon days prior to the election in December 1974 and since then. With angelic fervour, both the Premier and the Treasurer have spoken of the great zeal and benefit that would accrue to the rural people of this State.

The ultimate crunch came in the Budget. The rural people, the primary producers of this State, who, for many years, have been adversely affected by drought and recessionary commodity prices, are now faced with the savage impost of a 40 per cent increase in freight rates. This factor has been mentioned many times in debates in this Chamber. Fancy having to pay an extra 40 per cent freight on empty wool packs from Brisbane and then having to pay the extra 40 per cent when they are returned to Brisbane containing wool for shipment. Net farm incomes will be substantially reduced by this very savage impost, which will affect the cost of food, fuel, machinery and fencing wire.

I see the Minister for Works and Housing sitting on the ministerial bench. As a person who has an investment in the cattle industry, he knows only too well the savageness of the Government in inflicting this very severe impost on the rural people of Queensland. Is it possible that the former Country Party changed its name only a few months ago to rid itself of the word "Country", which signified allegiance to rural areas? It changed its name and in recent times it has involved itself in urban electorates. One member of the National Party represents an urban electorate, and it is going to contest Brisbane City Council elections. Is it going to lose its political character and flavour and reject those in isolated areas, who have usually supported it year in and year out?

**Mr. Sullivan:** You will agree that our record shows that if an industry is in trouble we will assist it. That is shown by the fact that Cabinet accepted my recommendation to rebate 88 per cent of the 40 per cent freight increase. We are a pretty good Government really.

**Mr. HANSON:** That is a very clever little exercise. In the months ahead, the Opposition will disprove many of the Government's claims and reveal the shenanigans that have gone on. If members of the National Party, which I might refer to as the major party in the coalition, are thinking of concerning themselves with the metropolitan area—which has been the centre of the activities of their former opponents who have ground the rural man into the dust over the years—and forsaking their traditional power base, they will find themselves in a very sad state

politically. After all, the Country Party had its origin in rural areas and it always concerned itself with rural policies. If by change of name this party is going to leave country people in the lurch, all I can say is that its policies will not receive much approbation and it will be politically disadvantaged.

Where is the much-discussed plan for the meat industry stabilisation scheme that was promised some considerable time ago? Have National Party members forgotten, too, the rosy picture that they painted of rural reconstruction? Why has no provision been made for eagerly sought finance from the Agricultural Bank? For those who are experiencing debt problems in the beef and wool industries, all advances could have been converted into one long-term loan, possibly at 2 per cent interest, with a stay of interest for a considerable time. That would have enabled battlers to get back on their feet and given them a chance to fight again.

The current prices and lack of demand are principally the results of political pressures from overseas. Domestic consumption of meat is now over 50 per cent of production, and there is still 45 per cent that is regarded as excess of requirement for the export market. Any restraint of production is therefore not in the best interests of the industry as a whole. Stabilisation and equalisation schemes and up-to-the-minute and readily available market information are very necessary for all primary producers. But what has happened over a long time? Year in and year out the Government has made promises about the establishment of trade centres overseas. Unfortunately those promises have been as hollow as many hundreds of others made by this Government.

There are today many problems with which the Government should associate itself. Instead, the sole political tack that it is on at present is condemnation of the Whitlam Government—nothing else. Does that help the primary producer? Does it help him with his debts? Does it help him with marketing problems in the meat industry? Does it help the beef producer, who has been raped and robbed—

**Mr. Newbery:** By the Commonwealth Government.

**Mr. HANSON:** . . . who has been raped and robbed over a long period?

The Minister who is sitting behind the Minister for Primary Industries should not interject. He has sent enough cattle to the meatworks to know this. The Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries would be in the same position. Are they paid for the hides, the livers, the hearts, the kidneys, the tails and all those other items? No. They are the preserve of the processor, who has fleeced and robbed the graziers of this State over a long period. What has this Government done about it? It has been convicted by its silence of a complete and obvious disregard for the people it is supposed to represent. The proposed

increase in freight rates is a real kick in the stomach to the man who has been knocked off his feet and is struggling to get up. These policies are a shocking indictment of the Government.

Allow me, Mr. Hewitt, to mention some matters relating to the Agricultural Bank, the institution that is supposed to help these people when they are in trouble. When we refer to the yearly reports of the Agricultural Bank, we find that in the report of the director for 1970-71 there was mention of the examination of the bank's securities. Although an officer of the Solicitor-General's Department was appointed to do something about the rationalising and regularising of the bank's security documents, this has still not been done four years later. We see an inept Government unconcerned with proper finance and accounting procedures and the Public Service Board rejecting the entreaties of the director of the Agricultural Bank. What do we find? The examination of the bank's securities is still proceeding four years later. It is a scandal that needs the serious attention of the responsible Minister.

The Minister spoke of the many, many, hours that he could spend dealing with the meat industry. There are people in the Opposition who would like more than 20 minutes to deal with these Estimates. Unfortunately, I, too, am short of time and have to hurry.

It is regrettable indeed that the Government has been disgracefully lax in dealing with the problems of the papaw industry of this State. Three diseases—yellow crinkle, mosaic and dieback—have besieged the industry over a long period, but we have seen as much activity from the department in dealing with them as one would see from a pregnant ant. I have led deputations to the Minister about these problems and received promises that something would be done. Whilst the industry is in a very favourable position indeed at the moment, absolutely nothing in this regard has been attempted on behalf of the growers who provide a wonderful service and earn a considerable export income for the State.

In the brief time that is left to me I would like to mention certain matters that I raised in a question upon notice not so long ago concerning the Artificial Insemination Centre at Wacol. Several charges have been levelled at this centre, and important among them are the charges that under its policies the centre—and the Minister would be well aware of this—is keeping imported semen prices up, is giving an unreliable service, maintaining poor techniques and promoting the interests of interstate companies to the detriment of Queensland companies. These allegations require investigation and an answer from the Minister. They are not my charges, but they indicate the considerable disquiet existing throughout the industry. In the interests of all Queenslanders answers must be given and it is up to the administration to provide them.

There have been charges that the Government accepts the advice of different committees from the Department of Primary Industries, but it is obvious that these committees are purely rubber stamps for the Minister. There are charges that beef producers and dairymen are frightened to stand up because of the regulatory powers that can be exercised by the department against some of them. Among the charges that have been made against the Artificial Insemination Centre at Wacol is one that semen is going out incorrectly labelled. There are reports of Friesian calves from Poll Hereford semen and wrong sires being shown for Santa Gertrudis semen. Of course, many members of the Government parties would be well aware of that, particularly those who have rural interests and investments.

Charges have also been made that semen has been handled incorrectly. There have been reports—again they have been ignored by the centre at Wacol—of semen producing nil fertility because of mishandling at the centre. There are also reports about liquid nitrogen units and semen stocks being incorrectly maintained. Naturally, these cause considerable concern.

A semen custom collection service is provided, using sub-optimum techniques. Statistics are available showing that the Wacol service produces a 20 per cent failure rate in custom semen processing, with a fertility rate in processed semen of 63 per cent, whereas commercial services throughout the State have a failure rate of 0.1 per cent and a fertility rate of 76 per cent.

Strong charges have been levelled at the Artificial Insemination Centre about deficiencies in technical training in the field of artificial insemination and the freezing techniques that are available at Wacol. In addition, it has been suggested that many officers of the department are inexperienced.

These are all matters that require the attention of the Minister. I hope that, in his reply, he will be able to answer some of the questions I have raised and promise some form of investigation in the interests of the primary producers of this State.

(Time expired.)

[Sitting suspended from 1.3 p.m. to 2.15 p.m.]

**Mr. MULLER** (Fassifern) (2.15 p.m.): I enter the debate for two reasons, Mr. Hewitt: firstly, to support the comments made by the Minister and, secondly, because of the fumbling ineptitude shown by the honourable member for Port Curtis—a member of the once-great Australian Labor Party—who referred specifically to things that had occurred within the Department of Primary Industries.

I realise, of course, that this is a very wide field and that the Minister has a tremendously heavy responsibility. All honourable members are aware that primary

industry is decentralised in Queensland—from Cape York Peninsula to Coolangatta, from Brisbane to Boulia, and at all points in between.

In the Minister's introductory remarks, he mentioned that a number of primary industries are in a reasonably favourable situation at the moment. However, others are not so favourably situated, and it is basically those with which I intend to deal. As you realise, Mr. Hewitt, if honourable members had both the time and the opportunity to discuss all aspects of primary industries, this debate could go on for a fortnight because the field is so wide. However, in the limited time available to me, I shall make some comments in support of the Minister's submissions and refer specifically to those industries that are now in trouble.

Of course, the grazing industry is perhaps in most trouble at the moment. The wool industry is hanging in the balance, and has been for a number of years; but those associated with the beef industry have really had a difficult time in the last 18 months. In making some comments in defence of the Minister, I point out to the Committee that I am doing so not simply because he has assisted me and I know him well but also because it is in the interests of people who are concerned for the future to know what the Government is doing.

The honourable member for Port Curtis spoke of a lack of interest in rural matters shown by members of the National Party since the party changed its name from the Country Party. He suggested that we had relinquished our association with persons interested in primary production. Nothing is further from the truth, and in the few minutes that I have available to me in this debate I think I can convince any fair-minded person that members of the National Party are attempting to do something worth while and in the best interests of primary producers.

Less than three months ago, when it was first realised that the beef industry was on its knees, the Government was really concerned about what action might be taken to improve the situation. It was suggested by some persons that a delegation should be sent overseas to explore additional markets for beef. These, of course, are essential. For the benefit of honourable members who do not know it already, I point out that in the average season 80 per cent of Queensland's production is exported, the other 20 per cent being used on the local market. Consequently, the situation is influenced greatly by the number of export outlets that are available. I think it would be fair to say that, during the past 12 months, the majority of markets for Queensland beef had virtually dried up. As a result, it was suggested that the Minister lead a team of capable people to make an assessment of potential markets in countries overseas. That

team included my friend the honourable member for Warwick, whom I have always assessed as being reasonably capable, and also the honourable member for Maryborough, who represented the Liberal Party, and a number of others representing the industry, who were capable of making an accurate assessment.

The delegation went first to the Arab countries. I understand that the Minister has reason to feel confident that at some time in the not-very-distant future a worth-while market may develop there.

They went from there to Japan and other Asian countries. Evidence is now available that those markets appear to be opening, but only gradually. In the meantime we have had an enormous surplus of meat in Queensland.

The honourable member for Port Curtis suggested that we needed a stabilisation scheme. Of course we do, but there is not a brain that can formulate a policy that is acceptable. That is where we floundered as members of a beef industry committee that was formed and chaired by the Minister for Primary Industries. Over 70 submissions were put before that committee by persons engaged in the grazing industry. Some of them contained a number of good ideas. They were food for thought. The committee dealt with those submissions for 6½ days. It might be thought that we were not fully occupied for all that time, but anyone who saw the nature of the submissions could well understand the lengthy deliberations of the committee.

As a result of those deliberations we decided that there were two things to be done. The first was to try to rescue the industry in the short term. Thousands of people in the industry are financially embarrassed and it is necessary to give them some relief. The second approach was to try to do what was suggested by the honourable member for Port Curtis—to stabilise the industry by imposing a levy. Of course, that is not possible. If a levy is to be imposed, it must be done on a Commonwealth-wide basis.

Equalisation is an essential factor or, when the price is lifted within Queensland, it would be an encouragement to producers to market all their product in Queensland. We felt that it was necessary that an equalisation policy be accepted. In all fairness I cannot really say that I would blame those in other States for their attitude when those submissions were made to them. Earlier I said that 80 per cent of Queensland's product was exported and 20 per cent consumed locally. On the southern market the figures are reversed. By no stretch of the imagination could one expect people in the southern States to be prepared to equalise with Queensland. The representatives of an industry who were working in the interests of producers in that industry would

probably not be representing those producers very long if they agreed to such a submission. Consequently the scheme foundered.

We looked at the short-term and long-term aspects of the problem. For the benefit of those who have the false impression that the Government has not done anything to assist, I will detail the findings of the committee chaired by the Minister. We came up with 11 proposals and, with your indulgence, Mr. Hewitt, I will list them. If I make a submission on a sensitive subject which is recorded in "Hansard", it must be completely accurate. The first one was—

"That an approach be made to the Commonwealth Government seeking to have the levy of 1c per lb currently imposed on all meat for export to cover costs of Commonwealth meat inspection suspended."

That has been with us for a number of years. The Commonwealth Government imposed that levy when the industry was buoyant. It has been with us until very recently. Without fear of contradiction I say that it was not until after that submission came forward from the committee that that 1c levy was removed. It may not sound a great deal of money to some people, but 1c per lb. amounts to \$1 per 100 lb. To carry a simple exercise to its logical conclusion, I point out that the removal of the 1c per lb. would increase by \$6 the price to the producer for a beast that dressed 600 lb. That may not appear to be of great significance, either, but the fact is that producers in areas far removed from meatworks and markets were greatly affected by the levy. Without a doubt, its suspension enabled the industry to stay on its feet.

The findings went on—

"2. That the Commonwealth Government be requested to provide finance to enable emergency assistance grants up to the equivalent of unemployment benefits to be paid to specialist beef producers who qualify under certain income eligibility criteria to be determined in consultation between State and Federal Governments.

"3. That an approach be made to Commonwealth Government requesting that the Commonwealth subsidise the payment of wages of essential employees on specialist beef properties up to the level of unemployment benefits.

"4. That an approach be made to the Commonwealth Government requesting that education assistance grants be paid in relation to children of beef producers and their employees who must of necessity attend boarding schools, remote from the property location."

This, of course, has been attended to in the Budget.

"5. That an approach be made to the Commonwealth Government requesting that interest rates on loan and overdraft finance for specialist beef producers be

subsidised to the extent necessary to reduce the effective rate to 4 per cent regardless of the source of such finance.

"6. That an approach be made to the Commonwealth Government seeking a devaluation of the Australian dollar to restore the trading position enjoyed by export industries prior to December 1971."

Of course, there is glaring evidence that this adversely affected our export markets. We can no longer compete against those countries where devaluation has been accepted.

"7. That rates payable by specialist beef producers be subsidised to the extent of 50 per cent of amounts due for 1975-76 and that the State Government consider meeting 25 per cent of the cost of the subsidy and the Commonwealth Government be requested to meet the balance of 75 per cent."

That foundered, of course, as the result of lack of co-operation from the Federal Government.

"8. That consideration be given to the imposition of a consumer tax on beef and sheep meats at a rate of 5 per cent of retail sale price; such tax to be imposed either by the Commonwealth Government on an Australia-wide basis or by the Queensland Government on a State basis and the returns from the tax to be used for the benefit of the beef industry."

I referred briefly to that a short time ago. We know what happened there. It involved stabilisation, equalisation and the like, which were not acceptable to the southern States. I suppose we must be realistic about it; we can see why the southern States would not accept them.

"9. That a 50 per cent subsidy be paid on the cost of transporting beef cattle whether by road, rail or sea."

Honourable members know the outcome of that.

"10. That consideration be given to the subsidisation of costs of acaricides used for tick control in the beef industry, to the extent of the savings in cost to producers which would be achieved by bulk purchase and distribution."

That has been attended to by the departmental officers, and, as I understand it, this programme is under way and the benefits are flowing to the producers.

"11. That the Queensland Government grant land tax concessions to specialised beef producers on a similar basis to that already operating in respect of crown rents."

Those were the submissions put forward by the beef industry committee. The reason I have outlined them is that I wish to put the facts in their correct perspective. The honourable member for Port Curtis, the Opposition spokesman on primary industries, had the gall to rise in this Chamber and deliberately create the wrong impression. He uttered a



number of untruths, and I am sure he realises that his statements were untrue. In referring to the Wacol Artificial Insemination Centre, he proved once more that a little knowledge can be very dangerous. I suggest that he knows more about running his own type of business than he does about the Artificial Insemination Centre.

I have had dealings with this centre for a number of years and have used semen from it on my livestock with very satisfactory results. I therefore spring to the immediate defence of the officers in control of the centre. Prior to using the service I had the pleasure of meeting a number of them when seeking advice. I found that it was tremendously helpful. I have had very satisfactory results. I know that there is a tremendous variation in the price, just as there is a variation in the prices of Scotch whisky and Corio.

**Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt:** He would know more about Scotch whisky.

**Mr. MULLER:** He would.

The price of a product depends entirely on its quality. I should think that even the kindergarten kids would know that. The suggestion that, because there is a variation, somebody is exploiting someone is completely wrong. Having spent my money in this industry, I would be the first to put a case before the Minister—and he knows it. If I had spent money without receiving value, I would not leave it to the honourable member for Port Curtis to tell the Minister the story. I would have worked on the Minister and his departmental officers and had the matter sorted out.

I shall deal now with another aspect of the work undertaken at Wacol, namely, research into serum to inoculate cattle against one of the most common and devastating diseases affecting the livestock industry—tick fever or red water. A great deal of work has been undertaken in this field. I am sure that the officers in charge of this project provide a very good service. I do not know whether the Minister has very much to do with this and no doubt he has enough to do without becoming involved. I suggest that in addition to the present research into control by insecticide of the tick responsible for the spread of this disease, which has been reasonably effective although tremendously expensive, another avenue should be investigated, that is, the diet of the animals.

Some years ago I had experience on my own property with ticks that could be controlled when the cattle drank water from a certain source of supply. A number of people had this matter investigated, but the results were not entirely satisfactory. It seems to be impossible to detect a chemical in any product without knowing exactly what is being looked for—the reaction is not forthcoming. As a result, the officers did not find a satisfactory answer.

I felt that my success in dealing with this parasite was attributable to the water the animals were drinking. The cattle continued to drink this water for a number of years, with satisfactory results. However, at a later stage both the bore and pumping equipment packed up. Because it was not a big source of supply, I did not bother to replace them. The animals went onto another supply and, within three months, I was dipping regularly.

I am inclined to believe that this matter would stand further investigation. I appeal to the Minister to give it some consideration. I know it would not be the be-all and end-all of the problem but, at some time in the future, a practical approach to this problem might be possible. It is impossible to treat the source of water supply if cattle are drinking from a water-course, but perhaps there is some merit in this suggestion where the water supply is limited, as it is on a small property.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. CORY** (Warwick) (2.35 p.m.): For various reasons I rise to speak to the Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries. The first is to support the Minister. He has a very difficult task in administering his department because of the complexity and multitude of Acts under his control. Because of this, it is impossible also for an honourable member to cover all aspects of his portfolio.

As I am speaking immediately after the honourable member for Fassifern, I take the opportunity to support his remarks about the beef industry committee under the chairmanship of the Minister. It is not my purpose to suggest what that committee might or might not decide in the future. The honourable member for Fassifern outlined what it has decided in the short-term interests of the beef industry to this point of time. It is certain that some problems do exist in the long term.

I should now like to mention some of the problems confronting the beef industry. I thank the Minister and the Government for affording me the opportunity earlier this year to travel with the Queensland trade mission through the Arab countries as well as the Far East. Having travelled with that mission and having been to many of those places previously, I formed certain conclusions. One is that the markets we must look for in the long term are those that obviously can pay a reasonable price relative to our costs of production. The three markets that come to mind readily are America and Canada, Japan, and, potentially, I believe, the Arab countries. Many people might wonder why I consider that the Arab countries are a potential market. At the moment their consumption of beef is very low, but it must be remembered that their consumption more or less started at nothing and reached a considerable amount within two years. This has happened because of the present economic

strength of those countries. More and more of their people are travelling the world and becoming accustomed to western habits and western diet. And they now have the money. These are the countries that need to be watched.

Some markets to which we send beef will be available only provided we can send a reasonably cheap product. The whole matter hinges on the world price and when it increases to what we in this country consider to be economic, some of those markets might not be available. The markets we must concentrate on are those that can afford to pay what we consider to be a reasonable price. The markets that I have mentioned are in that category.

One of the problems I see in our overseas marketing structure is that the Australian Meat Board has no teeth or is not using its teeth to control some of the exporters sufficiently. Some Australian exporters win contracts or are successful in tendering, and for a while they supply beef that meets the specification of the purchaser. Then, after sending a couple of satisfactory consignments, they tend to reduce the quality of their product and send an article that is inferior. This practice gives not only the exporter but Australian beef a bad name. It is certainly against the interests of the whole industry.

I believe that the Australian Meat Board has a responsibility to keep watch on this situation. If some exporters are giving the Australian product a bad name by supplying meat that is below specification, the board should step in and, if necessary, cancel their licences. Only with the assurance of this type of protection will producers have confidence to go ahead and invest more capital in the beef industry. The future of the industry is good, but it is up to us to see that it is controlled. If that is done, few problems will arise.

I do not propose to go into the whys and wherefores of various marketing schemes. That is a matter to be argued in another place. However, the national body in charge of the industry also has the responsibility of working out a system under which long-term contracts can be arranged. It is necessary to be very cautious at this point of time, because when prices are at rock bottom, as they are now, it is not a good time for working out long-term agreements. What is needed is machinery by means of which it will be possible to go into action quickly as soon as world prices improve.

I do not think there is any doubt that they will improve, and I think they will improve much faster than many of us would be game enough to suggest. When that improvement comes, we must be ready to arrive at long-term agreements with meat-importing countries. The long-term agreements in the sugar and wheat industries appear to be ideal. Agreements entered into must include rise-and-fall clauses, and they must remain in

force for a long time. Only if there is long-term stability will those in an industry feel sufficiently confident to continue to invest in it, and only then will an industry expand and provide products of the required quality. Without stability, no-one will provide the capital required to keep his industry viable.

Two things are necessary to bring about this situation: exporters have to be policed to see that they provide the product that the purchaser requires, and machinery has to be provided under which long-term agreements with importing countries can be worked out the moment world prices become payable.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Les Newton on his promotion to Director of the Division of Animal Industry and wish him well in that post. While doing that, I would like to put on record my appreciation of the work of Mr. Arthur Clay, whom I have got to know over the past 12 years. I suppose I would be the first and he would be the second to suggest that we did not always agree. We agreed to differ on a very practical sort of basis, but we have remained good friends. I remember Mr. Clay's activities when the Queensland Meat Authority was initially set up. There were certainly various aspects of that on which we did not agree, but we respected each other's opinions and, as I say, we had a lot of common ground on which to work. From that early beginning of the meat authority has come a lot of good and at the present time the main benefit is to the consumer. I wish Mr. Clay a happy retirement and every happiness in the future.

One aspect of the activities of the Department of Primary Industries which is coming in for quite a bit of criticism at the present time is the stock return levy. I think we appreciate the necessity for this levy and the use to which it is put. It is in effect providing funds for the Division of Animal Industry, to which I have just referred. Let us look at the funding of this division over the past 10 years. Initially, if my memory serves me correctly, the Government subsidy to the Stock Fund was 16s. in the £. With the droughts that occurred in 1964-65, it was found impossible to keep the fund solvent at that level of subsidy. There was a deficit in that year and the Treasury came to the rescue and made up the deficit in that and succeeding years. It was later agreed that the subsidy be increased and it was fixed at a \$ for \$ basis. Again there was a deficit and again the Treasury came to the rescue and made up the deficit. The subsidy was later increased—I believe I am correct in saying this—to a rate of \$2 to \$1 but still the costs of the Division of Animal Industry were such that there was a deficit. This year the payment from Treasury has been increased to a rate of approximately \$5 to \$2 collected. I believe that the annual expenditure of this division is in excess of \$7,500,000. I think the Treasury contribution is in excess of \$5,000,000 which means that our stock

assessments are bringing in approximately \$2,000,000. The fact that the subsidy has increased from 16s. in the £ to \$5 to \$2 in a little over 10 years speaks volumes for the policies and the thinking of the Government.

I believe the present procedure is a good one, but at the same time I want to stress that we have problems, particularly in the beef industry, and that certain sections of the beef industry are not in a position to pay this levy. As I say, I think the Government has done a wonderful job in increasing its support of this levy because of the importance of the animal industry in Queensland. However, the problem at present is that individual beef producers are finding it impossible to make stock-return levy payments. No-one denies, Mr. Hewitt, the valuable assistance given by the Division of Animal Industry; but people cannot pay what they have not got, and some beef producers have no money at present.

I refer also to inspection fees at abattoirs, of which much mention has been made already. In the July-August 1975 edition of the "Queensland Agricultural Journal", a news item released in the name of the Minister for Primary Industries said—

"The new fees are necessary to ensure that basic standards of meat inspection and hygiene can be met so that clean and healthy meat is always available to the public."

I think that is a fairly clear statement and one which can be justified. But the question I ask is: where are we going on the whole matter of hygiene, and how far are we going to be carried with it? My comment is that the further we go, the dearer meat becomes to the public. Each time an additional restriction or an additional inspection fee is imposed, up goes the cost of meat.

Improvements in hygiene are good in principle—there is no doubt about that—and when the consuming public see that export meatworks have to comply with certain standards, they believe that they should be entitled to similar standards. However, if consumers demand these standards, it is only reasonable that they should expect to pay for them. They are not paying at present. The producer is paying for the cost of improving hygiene, and I shall tell the Committee briefly what I believe that cost is.

The new regulations are increasing killing costs at both service and other abattoirs from approximately \$12 to \$25 a beast—in other words, more than doubling them. On a 500 lb. carcass the additional cost of \$13 because of the new regulations represents an increase of 2.6c per lb. Of course, an increase of 2.6c per lb. will mean an even greater increase in price to the consumer because other charges have to be added. However, I suggest that such an increase could be absorbed fairly easily by the consuming public.

Let me turn now to what it means to the producer. I remind honourable members

that 2.6c per lb is \$2.60 per 100 lb. Until about two months ago, that was about a quarter of the price that the producer was receiving for his beast. If he was receiving \$10 or \$11 per 100 lb. for his beast, \$2.60 per 100 to comply with the hygiene regulations was a big percentage. Honourable members can work out for themselves what a difference it would make in the over-all price. If producers receive \$20 per 100 lb., as they are receiving in many instances now, the effect is halved, but it is still a high percentage of the over-all price that they receive.

All I can say, Mr. Hewitt, is that if the consumers want these standards—and we are told that they do, that there is pressure for them—let the consumers foot the bill. The producer cannot afford to have that percentage taken out of his income.

**Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (2.55 p.m.):** I am pleased to enter the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries because I represent the city of Bundaberg, a very prominent city on the Queensland coast with a good background of primary industries. I believe that the primary industries are the backbone of this country, and I have always supported them.

Unfortunately this debate will get very dreary as the night goes on because in the National Party we have so many cattle and sheep barons and all they will speak about will be the beef and sheep industries. There are a few more cattle and sheep barons on the Treasury benches. They will expect us to sit here and listen to their squealing and whingeing. They represent sheep and cattle, and that is what the boundaries are made of. If Government members represented sticks of sugar cane, we would have more members from the coast of Queensland than from the back blocks. We have no sugar barons in here, but we have many wealthy men in the National Party who are in this Chamber merely for prestige. They cry about the beef industry. Did anybody cry about the sugar industry in 1965 when the price was £13 a ton—the lowest in the history of the industry and even below that in 1913? Prices in the beef industry are the lowest for about 20 years. What did the people in the sugar industry do in their time of low prices? They borrowed \$22,000,000 from the Government and paid it back \$30,000,000. They didn't squeal to the Government for money. They borrowed that money and are still paying it back.

Everybody is sympathetic towards the beef industry and to any other primary industry that is down. There is no primary industry that does not hit the wall at some time. Sheep, cattle, sugar, wheat, small grains, and even minerals—prices of all are down at times. Who cares about the small primary industries such as the small-crop industries the Minister mentioned? Who cared when the passionfruit industry was nearly wiped out? Who cares when the bean-growing industry is almost wiped out in a flood? Those growers don't run and squeal, but we hear squeals

from the big industries all the time. It is the little person who is getting hurt—the man who came in on grain feed. The big cattle barons are not hurt. It was published in the newspapers recently that one of the big cattle barons had said that he could outride the present problems easily. Of course they can.

The honourable member for Yeronga paid \$900 for a bull the other day. He has a property.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr. JENSEN:** I can't hear everybody at once.

It is the small people who are wiped out. Many small cane farmers were wiped out in 1965-66. They could not pay their debts and were taken over by bigger cane farmers. The small men came in with the redistribution in 1963 when the price was up. Some of them had to borrow money to purchase their land and equipment. Many have since had to get out. Because of drought, fire and flood, it has been that way all along with primary industries. They are the hazards in primary industry.

This morning the Minister gave a very concise and comprehensive run-down on almost every facet of his portfolio. He has done a fairly good job. Some of his activities make interesting reading.

Government members whinge and whine week after week about the beef industry, an industry that did not care two hoots for the consumer who bought beef last year or the year before. The price was rising to \$2 a lb, but what did the industry care? The beef producers said, "The higher the better." What a contrast this is to the sugar industry. If the consumers were paying world market prices for sugar, they would be paying about 40c a lb instead of the current price of 13c a lb.

**Mr. Hartwig:** Tell me where you pay \$2 a lb for steak?

**Mr. JENSEN:** I said the price was going up to \$2 a lb and the producers were laughing. The price was as high as \$1.80 a lb. This beef baron from Callide sold his cattle property for about half a million dollars, yet he still screams about the beef industry. He is typical of the wealthy beef and sheep barons, yet he professes to represent the people.

**Mr. Casey:** These days the member for Callide is concentrating more on health matters than on beef.

**Mr. JENSEN:** He is certainly worried about his health.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. JENSEN:** I don't want to be side-tracked, Mr. Hewitt. As I was saying, if householders were buying sugar at world market prices, they would be paying as much as 30c or 40c a lb. As soon as meat prices start to rise, the beef producers do their best

to avoid stabilisation. On the one hand they squeal when they are in trouble and on the other they don't care about others when things are going well.

The beef industry should take a leaf out of the sugar industry's book and establish long-term markets. In years gone by the sugar industry was quick to see the likelihood of difficulties ahead and established long-term markets, mainly with England. These days the industry has long-term markets all over the world. It also has stabilisation within the industry and a sugar price for Australia.

For years the beef industry has done nothing to help itself. Recently the member for Flinders appeared on TV suggesting that the industry take steps to help itself, and I congratulated him on his comments. I said to him, "It's the most sensible thing you've ever said." The beef industry should give the people of Australia a fair go. We are sick and tired of those beef producers who squeal about the fall-off in overseas markets and the drop in prices. We have seen similar fall-offs in overseas markets for minerals, wool, wheat, barley and other commodities. This is one of the hazards confronting primary industries, and they are to be expected. Yet in bad seasons the beef producers squeal continually. In good seasons they drive around in Mercedes Benz limousines and fly around in their aeroplanes.

**Mr. McKechnie:** That is a typical Labor Party concept of the rural people.

**Mr. JENSEN:** It's nothing of the sort. Throughout its term of office the Labor Party supported the primary industries. For years the Labor Party represented the people of the Outback and looked after the primary industries.

**Mr. Sullivan:** Do you think the Labor Government in Canberra is doing that fairly well at the moment?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. JENSEN:** There's so much noise, I cannot hear the Minister.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I suggest that the honourable member proceed with his speech and that other honourable members give him a fair go.

**Mr. Sullivan:** I acknowledge that Labor Governments in Queensland over years gone by have done a pretty good job; but what do you think of the fellows in Canberra? Do you think they are doing a good job?

**Mr. JENSEN:** The Federal Government is supporting the Queensland Government. It has given the primary producers \$10,000,000 just as the Queensland Government tried to do. The Queensland Government could not get rid of the money, in spite of the fact that it offered low interest rates. The sugar industry went out and borrowed \$30,000,000 and it did not ask for special consideration by way of low interest rates.

As I say, the Queensland Government could not get rid of its \$10,000,000 and the Commonwealth Government came in and made a further \$10,000,000 available.

**Mr. Hartwig:** They gave nothing—11 per cent interest.

**Mr. JENSEN:** Don't give us that. All the honourable member does is complain about the beef industry. Why don't you talk sense now and again.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I suggest that the honourable member for Bundaberg direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr. JENSEN:** I referred earlier to the very important small-crop industry. The Bundaberg area grows half of the beans consumed in Australia. When the bean crop is washed out by a flood, who comes to the growers' help? Some time ago an honourable member said that the passionfruit industry was almost wiped out. I have seen entire crops of cabbages and cauliflowers wiped out over night. Who cares about the small-crops grower? We often hear it said that the consumer has to pay but no-one cares about the poor worker when he cannot pay his debts. The men in the big primary industries want freight concessions and any other concessions that the Government can hand out when they are in trouble. Why don't they put money away in good times and establish a stabilisation scheme to cover themselves when prices drop? They won't do that! They want the good but not the bad. In this life we have to accept the good and the bad.

The cattle industry, like every other primary industry, used always to take the good with the bad, but doctors, dentists and people like the Minister for Works and Housing have had to feed cattle on grain. That is what has broken some of them.

The decent cattleman in the West can carry on just as the good cane-grower carried on during the two years and more of bad times, when the price of sugar was the lowest ever. Cane was cut at a loss to get it out of the fields.

In other years when sugar could not be sold overseas, the cane had to be ploughed in. The Minister knows that. In fact, he said that the major developed countries have been faced with inflation and economic recession of sufficient magnitude to threaten their economic stability. We have been threatened in the same way.

The Minister blamed the Federal Government for inflation, yet he said that the major countries buying our beef, wool, wheat and sugar are in the same plight. Recently Japan had to stop sugar imports from various countries because its storage sheds were full. The Japanese people stopped buying sugar when the world price rose so high and they stopped buying beef for the same reason. Did the beef producers squeal when the prices were so high? No! They laughed

and said, "Let the price go up." When the price collapsed overnight, they squealed for help. The small primary producer can be wiped out overnight but nobody cares about him.

**Mr. Byrne:** Don't you believe that any small beef producers have been affected?

**Mr. JENSEN:** I said that they were wiped out in the same way as the small cane growers were wiped out in 1965. Small men who have been wiped out are unemployed today. Plenty of men in small factories and shops have been wiped out. There are hundreds of thousands of them but Government members squeal about the few hundred in the beef industry. Why don't they stand up for the hundreds of thousands who are in trouble? All the members of the National Party, with the exception of one or two—I see the honourable member for Landsborough and the Minister for Police, who are probably exceptions, although the Minister may have some cattle properties I have not heard of—are beef or sheep barons who are in this Assembly to talk on behalf of the big primary producers. They are in it for self-aggrandisement. They do it so that they can walk around and say, "We are parliamentarians." They do not care two hoots about the small man who has been wiped out. I have referred to the small growers, such as the men growing cauliflowers, cabbages and beans in Bundaberg. Does the Government care about them or about the small shopkeepers?

**Mr. Hartwig:** What about the fertiliser they use?

**Mr. JENSEN:** Yes, the fertiliser they use.

**Mr. Hartwig:** What did Gough do about that?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member for Callide will cease interjecting.

**Mr. JENSEN:** Just look at the people who were receiving the fertiliser bonus. Mr. Fraser, the Liberal leader, was one the big people who were copping dough out of it. It amounted to about \$50,000 a year. Just look at the figures that were given out in Parliament on who was getting the fertiliser bonus.

We have doctors and dentists clearing land and claiming the cost as a taxation deduction because they are supposed to be doing something for the land. Later on, they want to sell it or subdivide it. They have no interest in primary industry. They are only interested in making a quick quid and robbing the Government of tax by developing land. The Minister does not have to support them. He is here to support the honest primary producer. I have all the sympathy in the world for the primary producers, but I am not going to enter this Chamber and cry on their behalf. They know the risk involved and they know it is a good proposition in good seasons. I will not be told anything else.

I will sit in this Chamber today and hear this crying from one, two, three, four or five country members. It is the same old squeal. The debate from this side of the Chamber will be of a different type. We will show a little interest in the debate. One or two of the Liberals who live in Brisbane might join in the debate because they are developing something in the West. They might enter the debate and tell us something about it. How many small dairymen have gone out of business? The Minister said that hundreds of them have. But who is caring about the small dairy farmers? Who cares about them? It is shocking that the Government does not care about them.

The Government should stabilise the price of beef and give the working man a fair go. The working man does not mind paying a fair price for beef. I heard the honourable member for Callide squealing the other day that the broiler chicken industry was taking money from the beef industry. Because the broiler chicken industry, which is a primary industry, was putting beef off the market, he did not want it to get going. This sort of rubbish is being trotted out all the time. We do not protect farmers who are producing grain for the production of margarine, and they are primary producers; but we have the same old fight between the beef barons and the small primary producers.

**Mr. Hartwig:** Tell us about the poultry from Red China.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I will not warn the honourable member for Callide again.

**Honourable Members interjected.**

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I am competent in my own right. I do not want any gratuitous advice.

**Mr. JENSEN:** I was pleased to hear the Minister say that the value of our rural production was estimated at a record \$1,203 million, an increase of \$130,000,000 over the production for last year. That is our rural production, which we live by. I support our rural industries all the time because we live by them. We cannot eat motor-cars. No honourable member should think that Sydney and Melbourne run this country because they produce motor-cars. We have lived without motor-cars, radio and television. I did not have them in my young days, nor did I have them during some of my adult life. We have coal and minerals but we cannot eat them. But we do eat most of our primary products, so we must support primary industry. However, we must not continue to squeal when the big industries get into a little bit of trouble. Let us get the facts straight. Let them show that they are doing something for the people of Australia, who buy half the beef production of this country. It is not good enough for them to squeal when the price goes down and laugh when it is at world-record figures. There are world-record prices at times in all industries, even

the metal industries. Anyone who has shares in mining companies can see them rise and fall from week to week.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumba) (3.15 p.m.):** The honourable member for Bundaberg spoke about fertiliser. If he had kept speaking for much longer, a bulldozer would have been needed to shift all the fertiliser spouted into the Chamber by him. It is just as well that he had only 20 minutes in which to speak.

**Mr. Byrne:** Are you a beef baron?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** A beef baron? I care for everybody. I represent my electorate. I represent those in the beef industry, those in secondary industries, small-crop farmers—the lot. And I shall be here much longer than some A.L.P. members. They have tried to shift me, but they have as much chance as a snowball in hell. Every time they come to my area, I belt hell out of them. I warn the Leader of the Opposition now that if he puts up any of his rotten signs in my area, I'll knock them down.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member will not even remain in the Chamber for 20 minutes if he does not direct his remarks to the Estimates.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I am sorry, Mr. Hewitt. I have the utmost confidence in you as Chairman. I should like to go on record now as saying that you are one of the best chairmen that I have had the privilege to address. I sincerely trust that you give me a lot of protection against A.L.P. members, who will take every opportunity to try to disrupt my speech.

So far as I am concerned, the Labor Party may at some time have shown some concern for primary producers in Australia, but since this rotten mob gained power down South they have done nothing but strangle primary producers not only in Queensland, but throughout the whole of Australia. The increase of 5c a gallon in the tax on petrol was aimed at the primary producer. Members of the Federal Government simply do not give a hoot about primary production. They think that they can get all their supplies from overseas. Only recently, at a women's conference in Canberra when some women were telling Mrs. Whitlam about the lack of facilities in country areas, she said, "Good heavens! City women have just as many problems." What a lot of rot! She then went on to say of that horrible foul-mouthed harridan Flo Kennedy, "Isn't she so nice?" But I am getting off the track again, Mr. Hewitt. I can see that you are about to get stuck into me.

The Minister for Primary Industries has certainly a very hard portfolio to administer. In the past I have been one of those who flogged him occasionally, and before I finish this afternoon I might give him another little touch-up about some of the

things going on in the Department of Primary Industries that I do not agree with. But, on the whole, the Minister has not done a bad job for primary industries in this State. To see the truth of that statement, one has only to consider money lent by the Agricultural Bank to primary producers and the money made available for rural reconstruction.

In my electorate, which includes the towns of Woodford, Dayboro, Mt. Mee, Mt. Pleasant, Samford, and other milk-producing areas, many farmers have received much assistance from the Government. I also have in my electorate the Caboolture Butter Factory, which is one of the main factories in the State manufacturing dairy products. I also have many fruit growers around the little townships of Wamuran, Burpengary, Morayfield and Narangba, and even in Redcliffe there are still many fruit and vegetable farmers. They, too, have had a hard time under this rotten crowd down South, who have done nothing but harass all who have anything to do with primary production.

I must admit that many of the problems that I have in my electorate are concerned with the Department of Primary Industries. They are not caused by the Minister personally, but by some of the requirements of the department from time to time. Slaughterhouse regulations, for example, did not affect me very much; there is only one slaughterhouse in my electorate—at Caboolture—and the owner complied with most requirements. But trouble is caused by some of the things required in butcher shops. I have no end of trouble with butchers' complaints about some of the inspectors of butcher shops who simply do not have a clue on how to handle the public. They come to my electorate and try to stand over people.

I am telling the Minister now that if in the future any inspectors from the Department of Primary Industries come to my electorate and try to stand over any of my constituents, I will give them a hell of a rubbishing from the floor of this Chamber, because I am sick of it. Half of my problems are caused by inspectors who do not have a clue when it comes to handling the public. They try to lay down the law and stand over people. This has to stop, and I am going to see that it stops whilst I am a member of this Assembly.

I believe that some of the latest regulations have been introduced without any reference to some members. I am not going to lay the blame at the Minister's door. How could he be expected to read every piddling regulation that comes out? I do not read them all myself, so I would be as much to blame as anybody else. But I think we have to look carefully at some of these regulations and the impositions they place on people. Nobody seems to care very much about it. I know the latest one is not the Minister's fault, but trying to pull

a \$100 licence fee for the Brisbane Market Trust is just too much. This fee is a poultice the industry can do without.

**Mr. Burns:** That's right.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I do not need the help of the Leader of the Opposition on this. He stole my thunder when he rose to speak about it. He got the idea from me. I was going to rise and speak about it. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition gets first crack during question time and he has the right to ask the first three questions. I disagree with that. He should ask only one and then take his chances with the rest of us in asking the other two.

As far as I am concerned this \$100 licence fee is just a bit too much for these small retail shopkeepers. I received a deputation from them in my electorate. There are plenty of these shops in Murrumba, especially around Caboolture, and they have come to me to complain that this \$100 fee is just a bit too hot. They do not mind paying \$50. They realise there has to be some fee and they are quite happy to contribute towards the wages of the extra men who are going to be put on to police these regulations. I have asked the Minister to give some consideration to a reduction in this fee from \$100 to \$50.

The honourable member for Bundaberg rose and carried on, as did the honourable member for Port Curtis, who cried a lot of crocodile tears about how this Government does not care much for the primary producers of this State. What about the one-third reduction in road transport fees? Surely that has been a big help to the primary producer? It must have been, and the fee is going to be gradually phased out.

As I said before, my electorate includes many dairying and small-crop areas. At D'Aguiar, which is between Woodford and Mt. Mee, we have the I.C.I. experimental station, which provides a very good service to cattlemen. We also have an artificial insemination centre in that area. I have recently had complaints about artificial insemination licences being given out willy-nilly to too many people. I think it is about time that we looked into this problem and made sure that artificial insemination carried on in any area is strictly regulated. Licences should not be handed out willy-nilly to persons who want to set up in this business.

Some of these people have been working for artificial insemination interests, especially in my area around Dayboro, and what do they do? While they are working for a particular group, they thieve some of its customers and then start up on their own with a ready-made clientele. That is wrong and something should be done about it. We should certainly look into that problem.

I will not speak much longer; everybody here wants an opportunity to say something on these Estimates and we are restricted to 20 minutes. I shall not take my full time,

but I do want to say that whenever I have approached the Minister he has always given me a reasonably sympathetic hearing and I sincerely hope that he will take into consideration some of the small points on which I have spoken today. I try not to be too hard on him. I try not to take too many deputations to him or get stuck into him too often, but I do trust that he will take some notice of the things I have said.

I know he recently met a deputation from the milkmen of Redcliffe and I hope he is giving sympathetic consideration to their problems, which are unique. Milk deliveries in Redcliffe are always made at night; we have no-one delivering milk during the day. I will not labour the point. The Minister knows what I am talking about and I trust some consideration will be given to their problems.

I am glad the honourable member for Bundaberg is still here. He also rose and cried a few crocodile tears about what has not been done for the primary producer in this State. What about the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Scheme? We have given plenty of money for that. There is a subsidy for dairy pasture improvement, something that has been required in this State for a long time—

**Mr. Hartwig:** They've never heard of it.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** The Labor Party would not be even bothered with it. As I said before, A.L.P. members do not give a hoot about the primary producer. All they do is stand up in this Chamber and make speeches for political purposes. They are not interested at all in the people. They speak with tongue in cheek and fingers crossed behind their backs. There are many rural people in the electorate of the honourable member for Bundaberg and he feels that he has to rise and say something about primary producers.

By way of conclusion, I say once again that the Minister has shown some interest in primary producers and I hope that he carries on with the good work. I sincerely trust that he will give earnest consideration to all of the matters I have mentioned.

**Mr. MOORE (Windsor) (3.25 p.m.):** In speaking to these Estimates, I should like to say first that I found the annual report of the department very interesting. The language in which it is written makes it easy to read and it contains sufficient photographs to reinforce the written information in it. Anyone reading it cannot fail to realise the magnitude of primary industries in Queensland.

I wish to mention also the "Queensland Agricultural Journal". When I read it as a child, it was in a blue cover and was somewhat similar in appearance and shape to the present pamphlet copies of "Hansard". The information it contained in those days was very interesting, and the high standard

has been maintained. It was issued monthly then and I think it is issued bi-monthly or quarterly now, but it is still a good journal. In days gone by, each copy of the journal included market prices for various types of produce. Perhaps I have missed them, but those prices do not seem to be included now. When my people were farming, they tended to look at the prices in the journal and try to use them as a kind of barometer showing what to plant and what not to plant. If something was good last year, they would plant something that was not so good last year in the hope of getting a market for it. The "Queensland Agricultural Journal" provided a pretty good guide in those days. As a journal to educate the farmer, it goes into sufficient detail and illustrates new techniques by photographs, sketches, and so on. It assumes that the persons who read it already have a very good basic knowledge and it attempts only to improve their methods. All in all, it is a very worth-while journal. I mention that because, if it appears that way to me, it must also appear that way to the people engaged in primary industries who read it.

One cannot speak on these Estimates, Mr. Hewitt, without making some reference to the plight of cattlemen at present. When the man in the street sees the display of steak at the Brisbane Exhibition, he imagines that beef producers are wealthy. When he sees some of them driving round in very big cars, he believes that is the norm for all graziers. That has never been so. There have always been some on particularly good properties or properties abundantly endowed by mother nature, but not all properties are similarly endowed. Even those that are reasonably well endowed are now suffering the pangs of trying to produce beef for export to depressed overseas markets. These, in turn, have simply been brought about by the excessive drain that petro-dollars are making on the various economies.

**Mr. Hartwig:** Whitlam revalued the dollar.

**Mr. MOORE:** That played a major part, too, because it made the Australian dollar higher in value and Australian beef dearer to purchase.

One now sees the wives of the so-called beef barons making soap, letting out dresses, making their own bread, and economising in every way, even taking their children away from boarding school. They are not doing that simply to demonstrate how difficult things are for them. They are doing it because they are in dire need. From time to time the Government does think about their plight and attempt to assist them, and I emphasise that we cannot afford to let this section of our primary industries go out of existence as the dairying industry virtually has done. I shall have more to say about that shortly.

The plight of primary industries that are now in difficulties would not be as great if they did not rely almost solely on export



markets for their prosperity. When commodities are sold on the local market, prices to the producer are more reliable because retail and wholesale prices are related.

I read the other day that the Cooroy butter factory has either gone out of business or is about to go out of business because of the lack of dairy farmers to supply cream to that establishment.

**A Government Member** interjected.

**Mr. MOORE:** The butter subsidy is still paid, but Victoria has been the State to gain most from that even though it was the State that needed it the least. A Commonwealth subsidy to an industry cannot be applied solely to Queensland. That would not be the right thing to do. It is very disturbing to think that Queensland could lose the dairy industry. That would mean the loss of the various breeds that have been bred up over generations by culling, stock improvement, the importation of better bulls—all with the aim of getting a better milk yield and better butterfat production. Stocks have been improved by A.I. breeding methods and modern technology. One would have thought that that, together with farm amalgamation, would have made the dairy farms more viable. It appears that amalgamation has not improved the size of dairy farms but made small cattle properties. They are only good if they can run far more stock per acre. Usually they are in a higher-rain-fall belt where, by the use of improved pastures, legumes and fertilisers, far more beasts can be run to the acre. But they are still not viable propositions when beef prices are low. Those who can keep their heads above water are those who are not buying on any market. They breed their own stock and retain them until they are sent to the meat-works. In that way no middle-man is involved and everything that is required by them is produced on their properties. They can manage.

I hate to feel that Queensland is going out of the dairy industry. We are now importing butter. We should be doing something to encourage the dairy industry to continue.

**Mr. Hartwig:** Whitlam took away the free milk for children.

**Mr. MOORE:** There are several views about that. I do not think the taxpayer should have had to pay that bill. I do not think anybody is so poor in Australia today that he cannot supply milk to his children. As a matter of fact, it was common practice for a carton to be dropped and jumped on by the boys when a young girl was walking past so that she would get splashed with milk. That scheme was somewhat wasteful. It would be about the only thing that was sensibly cut out under Labor's socialist policy. Labor Ministers have had a bad dream one night and decided for some reason to cut out that scheme.

Associated with the dairy industry is the pig industry.

**An Honourable Member** interjected.

**Mr. MOORE:** I know the honourable member is worried about swill-feeding of pigs. I am only sorry that the logic that he has brought forward has only been partially accepted. Separated milk is very good food for pigs, particularly with a pumpkin, grain or maize supplement. Pigs that are fed on feed such as that produce hams and bacon of excellent quality.

If the dairying industry were forced out of existence, the pig industry would face tremendous problems. Pig breeders would have to buy other types of pig feed, such as meat and fish meal, and we do not want such a situation to arise.

One of the problems confronting the dairying industry, whether a person engaged in it produces milk or cream, is that it is a seven-day-a-week industry. In days gone by, dairying was a fairly leisurely way of life and Mum, Dad and the kids all played their part. Today, however, with agricultural science and business management the industry is totally different.

The honourable member for Warwick has referred to slaughter-houses and the claims published in agricultural journals to the effect that they are now completely hygienic and that, as a result, the community receives clean meat. In my younger days I went through a large number of country slaughter-houses with battened walls that allowed the air to circulate through them, a windlass inside and cement floors that could easily be hosed down. In those days I never heard of anyone suffering a belly-ache from germs in bad meat. In those days, too, the butcher shops had sawdust on the floor, big wooden chopping blocks, meat hanging on hooks on public display, and very small refrigeration chambers. People lived to 100 years of age in those days just as they do now, so perhaps we are going overboard and setting too high a standard, necessitating a higher mark-up on the price of the product. I do not believe that all our modern techniques have brought about cheaper or cleaner meat on the table, nor do I consider the meat sold in the old days to have been germ-laden in any way.

The butcher's wooden block has given way to a plastic substitute which is nowhere near as satisfactory. I wonder where our so-called technology in this field is leading us. We are starting to go overboard; I hope we don't go too far.

The honourable member for Murrumba spoke about the Brisbane Market Trust and higher fees. It would appear to me that by preventing the public from purchasing fruit and vegetables in single-case lots we are imposing undue restrictions.

**Mr. Burns:** It was a free market when it was originally set up.

**Mr. MOORE:** So it should be. In some ways it is a shame that the markets have been removed from Roma Street. They

added character to the city. There is not one fruit barrow left in Brisbane. If ever a city had a dead heart, it is Brisbane. The markets and the fruit barrows gave some soul to the place.

On top of that, people who used to come into the city markets to buy fruit and vegetables by the case now are forced to drive through heavy traffic 6 or 7 miles to the markets to buy produce. It's a shame that there is not still a market in the city to supplement those at Rocklea.

Primary industry is not like some other industries that have production lines and process workers. Primary industry relies heavily on individual effort and initiative. To realise this one has only to look at cane harvesters, cane planters and other farm implements that have originated on farms. The average Australian farmer is very inventive; it is marvellous how he can improvise. If an implement is needed for a specific job and it is not on the market, farmers will make it for themselves. I do not know if that is the case in other countries. When the average Australian farmer has a problem, it is not long before he solves it and a neighbour improves upon what he did. That is how machines like the chopper cane harvesters, which we are selling to Cuba and other places, were invented.

The Minister's department has many facets, one of which relates to soil technology. While it may be said that soil is only the vehicle, and that crops can be grown in pure sand or water provided the nutriments are supplied, I am sure that soil will never be only the vehicle. Most soils are lacking in one or two elements such as phosphate, potassium or molybdenum. Queensland farmers can avail themselves of the excellent soil-testing facilities of the Department of Primary Industries, which does a very good job in this field.

The department also offers an excellent service for soil conservation, contour levels and so on, which ensures that the best advantage is gained from the rainfall and that erosion is minimised. Some of the Downs country is basaltic overflow. When looking from some of the higher areas to the flats, one can see that fences have been built on top of fences to keep pace with soil erosion. Excellent soil to a depth of 30 ft. is quite common, but the land has been under the plough for only about 100 years. Erosion of that order cannot be permitted to continue as it has been. Mankind will be on this earth for a very long time.

**Mr. Hartwig** interjected.

**Mr. MOORE:** I agree with the honourable member that primary industries should be given every encouragement. In this way we will get dividends in the short term and in the long term.

The departmental report outlines how production is improved by the introduction of new species, such as hybrids. At the same time, we must look for new wild strains and do not become wholly dependent on hybrids. We must improve some of the basic types of grain rather than rely on hybrid after hybrid for better production.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. CASEY** (Mackay) (3.45 p.m.): So far during this debate we have heard a good deal about the beef industry and its problems not only in Queensland and Australia but throughout the world. The marketing of beef is a world-wide problem.

I was very interested to hear the comments of the honourable members for Warwick and Fassifern. I have great respect for those two back-bench members of the Government. I believe that they have far greater capacity and ability than the Premier has acknowledged. They would make very satisfactory and suitable members of the Cabinet of this State.

All of the comment that we have had on the beef industry today—in fact for some time—is absolutely useless unless something is done to overcome the long-term problems confronting this industry. Some suggestions have been proposed, but I do not believe that the over-all answer to our long-term problems concerns our export markets, although they certainly play a very large part. I do not believe it has anything to do with sending delegations hither, thither and yon to obtain introductions to various people or trying to encourage the Arabs to eat beef rather than camel meat. I do not believe the answer lies in the establishment of Government party committees. These have been formed and have raced around the countryside, getting their photographs in the paper and making great play in country electorates in an attempt to convince their supporters that something is being done by the Government to overcome this problem. I do not believe the answer is to be found in the many other suggestions that have been discussed in this Chamber and in other places at other times.

The solution of the long-term problems of the beef industry can be found only on the floor of this Assembly. We will start to overcome those problems as soon as we have a Government with the guts and determination to set up a statutory authority that is truly representative of the beef producers of Queensland. That is where we must start in solving the long-term problems of the beef industry.

The Minister, in his opening remarks, indicated that at various times the beef industry has been responsible for upwards of 30 per cent of the total rural income of the State. That is a tremendous proportion, considering that we have such great industries as wool, sugar, wheat and grain, and even

dairying, which produces a respectable proportion of the over-all State production, although certainly not of Commonwealth production.

An industry that is capable of producing up to 30 per cent of our rural income is entitled to have a statutory marketing organisation or group representative of all beef producers in Queensland. Its establishment is long overdue. With due respect to every member of the National Party or every member of the Government, I guarantee that not one of them is game to state unequivocally that the United Graziers' Association of Queensland fulfils that role. As a body representing beef producers, it certainly does not go as far as that. The lack of a strong and effective producer organisation has been to the detriment not only of the producer but of the industry as a whole. It has allowed the industry to come under the control of various other organisations and influences within the community.

All of us must admit that, once a grazier musters his cattle and puts them into his pens, he has lost complete control of what happens to them. In most cases, a primary producers' organisation, a marketing organisation or a primary producers' agency arranges the collection of his stock and their transportation to an auction sale. The current auction system is subject to pressures from other areas, too. From then on, the manufacture, distribution, local sale and export sale are right out of the hands of the grazier. He no longer has any say in his own industry.

Compare this with the situation in the sugar industry, to which the honourable member for Bundaberg referred. By means of statutory organisations set up by legislation of this Parliament, sugar growers have complete control of their industry from growing, through milling, marketing and distribution, to export of the product. They have their own elected representatives on boards at all levels. They have their mill suppliers' committees in mill areas. They have their cane-growers' executives in the various districts, which combine to form the State organisation.

It has been said before, by me and by others, that the sugar industry is a model of marketing and a model of organisation in primary industry. This situation has been brought about only as a result of legislation brought down by this Parliament to overcome problems that arose when the industry was controlled by other organisations and subject to pressures and influences from other groups that were interested in making money rather than establishing a satisfying way of life for growers, field workers, cane cutters, harvester operators, mill workers, owners and even mill shareholders. What has been provided is an equitable sharing in the industry by those involved in it at all levels.

Such organisation is needed in the grazing industry today, and it can begin only with the setting up of a statutory body and

representative bodies for the producers themselves. In actual fact, the beef industry today is not in the hands of the producers; it is in the hands of pastoral houses and meatworks owners.

**Mr. Hanson:** They have been riding the grazier for years.

**Mr. CASEY:** That is true. During periods of drought we saw graziers going to the wall, but never the pastoral houses. Their business is down now because commission figures are perhaps not quite as high as they have been. But they have combined to restrict competition and to ensure more than anything else that they retain their tight hold of the industry. If there were a statutory organisation of beef producers, they would have representation at all levels, including marketing. I could speak for my entire 20 minutes about the problems associated with marketing by the Australian Meat Board. Suffice it to say that any organisation headed by a so-called Australian who in this day and age runs around the world referring to himself as "Colonel" must be out of touch somewhere along the line.

Anyone who looks through the Statute Book of this State will see that the Government has set up various marketing boards. There are, for example, such boards for barley, maize, navy beans, butter, and even broom millet, all of which in terms of productivity are small compared with beef. In the list of boards, however, there are two commodities conspicuous by their absence, namely, meat and wool. In those industries there is no protective over-all organisation controlled in Queensland by Queensland producers. The meat industry is not the prerogative of the United Graziers' Association, no matter how hard that organisation tries to make it seem to be. Nor is it the prerogative of firms such as Dalgetys, Primaries or any other pastoral house, or of Walkers, Vestey's, Borthwick's, or any other meat processor established in Queensland. Nor is it solely the prerogative of the beef producer.

The beef producer has a responsibility to make sure that the manufacturer, the distributor (whether wholesale or retail), the workers employed within the industry (those at the meatworks level and the butcher shop level, and the ringer on the station) and the consumers are all properly looked after. His responsibility is to ensure that a quality product is made available for both the home market and the export market at a price that represents a reasonable return to everyone within the industry. It cannot be said today that there is a reasonable return to everyone in the industry. That's for sure!

There have been great fluctuations in the pricing structure over a period—so much so that the beef industry can no longer take not only the present low prices but the high prices such as those experienced in 1973 when buyer resistance was felt throughout the length and breadth of the nation. We

pride ourselves on being one of the most forward nations in the world, yet we were pricing our own product off the table. This did not do the grazier any good at all. I know many, many people very closely connected with the industry—and I have been closely connected with it all my life—but during the high of the 1973 period the general run-of-the-mill Australians adopted the attitude that the grazier was a man with a big head, a big hat and a big wallet, running around the countryside with money flowing out of his ears. Now that he has trouble on his hands, they regard him as a whinger.

Most of the beef producers of this State—indeed, of the Commonwealth—certainly do not want to be put in either of those two categories, but the only way they can avoid it is by setting up a proper statutory organisation representative of all beef producers in the State. We have seen a bit of movement in that regard. I believe this Government could do it straight away if it wanted to but, unfortunately, it has been subjected to pressures from wealthy interests which control the graziers' associations and many aspects of the industry.

There are some within the industry who have realised the need for a statutory organisation to cover all beef producers and they have commenced moves in this direction. I give full credit to the Central Coastal Graziers' Association for the lead it showed in the moves it made to get something started in this industry. Mr. Graham McCamley, the president of that organisation, played a leading role in getting it moving and tried to find out from beef producers throughout the industry their needs and requirements. And what happened? Because of the weight of support that was coming for Mr. McCamley and the Central Coastal Graziers' Association, the United Graziers' Association was forced to throw in its heavyweights to fight a rearguard action to preserve what it felt was its domain. The U.G.A. cattle committee rejected the McCamley plan for the marketing of beef in Australia and overseas. The committee members rejected it out of hand. And what did they say? They claimed it was a socialist plan. This was the cry they raised in order to inject a political flavour into the plan being put forward.

**Mr. Hartwig:** It was drawn up by a socialist.

**Mr. CASEY:** The honourable member for Callide says that it was drawn up by a socialist, but I want to tell him here and now that he could not get a more socialised industry anywhere in the world than the sugar industry. He could not get a more socialist set-up from top to bottom in any industry. But that has been the reason for its success.

So what did the committee members do? They put out the same cry about McCamley; they said he was a socialist. They said the McCamley plan was something the socialists were trying to put forward. That was the

way they tried to browbeat a man and his supporters who were endeavouring to do something for the beef producers of this State. I ask you this question, Mr. Miller: Has the United Graziers' Association of Queensland produced any beef-marketing plan of its own? Certainly not. It has sat back and been prepared to criticise those who have made moves to try to get things going. It even subjected some members of the Central Queensland Graziers' Association to such strong pressure that they, too, have gone to water under the weight of it. At a recent meeting of the local branch in Mackay, the chairman and many other leading figures resigned from their positions because they were not receiving the weight of support that they had received initially. They were being undermined by certain people who were trying to pull the skids out from under them as a result of pressure coming from other directions.

That is my main plea for the beef industry today. It should have its own organisation to give it strength that it has never had before and assist it to move itself into a better position in this State.

I could speak about other matters, such as the decentralisation of the manufacturing or processing side of the industry. The report of the Commissioner for Railways indicates that it was necessary to run special livestock trains to bring cattle from Mt. Isa, Cloncurry, Julia Creek, Winton, Cramsie, which is near Longreach, and Blackall. Where to? To meatworks on the coast as close as possible to the areas from which the cattle were coming so that freight rates would be lower, particularly having in mind the increased freight rates that are about to come into force? Certainly not! Special trains brought the cattle to Beaudesert, Murarrie, Wacol, Dinmore and Cannon Hill. That shows what is happening. There should be a restructuring of the processing industry in this State. I believe that is one of the things which will follow the establishment of a proper statutory organisation that is truly representative of all beef producers in the State of Queensland.

There is one other point that I wish to deal with quickly before concluding my comments. Recently I raised in this Chamber a matter that I had raised as far back as March. The Treasurer, of course, attempted to indicate that I had only just found out about it. I refer to the allocation of \$50,000,000 by the Sugar Board towards the development of the port of Bundaberg and the port of Lucinda. I have no objection to the construction of additional sugar storage in the Bundaberg area, but I made some criticism of the amount of money that was being spent on the extension of the port of Lucinda. The Minister's response to that criticism was to say that I was trying to knock the industry again, and so on—the usual rot that he goes on with when one hits a tender spot in regard to the sugar industry.

Because the situation in the sugar industry is favourable at present, that is no reason for complacency. A very close examination must be made of the organisation of the industry for the future. I am happy to see in the Chamber the Minister for Mines and Energy, who represents the electorate of Whitsunday, because he would know that in the restructuring of the sugar industry when bulk terminals came into being, an additional burden was placed on the Proserpine cane growers with the requirement that sugar be exported through the port of Mackay instead of through the port of Bowen, as it had been previously. I think that a certain amount of the Burdekin sugar also went through Bowen at that time. However, I will take Proserpine as an example because it is a greater distance from Mackay harbour than, say, Ingham is from Townsville harbour.

In my opinion, that \$50,000,000 could be better spent in other areas in the sugar industry at present. If restructuring has to be carried out, this could actually be wasted money for the industry. Only one group stands to gain by this expenditure. I refer to C.S.R. Limited, the company that is responsible for the manufacture of all sugar in the Herbert River area. The \$45,000,000 that is going to be spent in that area is to be virtually a direct subsidy for C.S.R. Limited in its operations in the Herbert River area, and it is to be provided and paid for by the sugar growers in every other area of Queensland. What should in fact be happening is further rationalisation of the sugar ports that are handling bigger cargoes and need facilities for bigger ships. In my opinion, the time has come when sugar from the Herbert River area should be exported through the port of Townsville.

If the Sugar Board has \$45,000,000 on its hands and wants to know what to do with it, I suggest that it should use it to establish a sugar stabilisation scheme. Although the industry is prospering at present, the investment of a considerable amount of capital such as that would assist to overcome problems if the industry experienced another low. I think that the Minister for Mines and Energy would agree that, as surely as there are highs in the sugar industry, the time will again come when there are lows. The time will come when we will need that extra capital to overcome the lows.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. ALISON** (Maryborough) (4.5 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to take part in the debate on these Estimates. I sincerely congratulate the Minister (Mr. Vic Sullivan) for the very fine job he is doing and has done over the past few years in the Primary Industries portfolio. He has a very responsible position. It is interesting to note that among Government departments, on the basis of the number of people on the pay-roll, the Department of Primary Industries ranks seventh, with 1,643 persons employed, and

in volume of Estimates for expenditure in the current year, with a total Vote of \$23,800,000 it ranks eighth.

Over the years I have been the State member for Maryborough, I have had quite a bit to do with the Minister. At all times he has received me well. I have not always got the answer I wanted, but at least I knew the Minister did his best, and did understand the particular problem which confronted me and my constituents at the time. The fact that the Minister has been a primary producer for many years must assist him to understand the many problems that confront primary producers from time to time. Many of the problems confronting them are beyond their control—problems such as drought and too much rain. The Federal Government over the last few years has been a bit beyond their control, too—until they get back to the ballot-box, when I am sure that will do the right thing and help us to get a Federal Government with a better understanding of what primary production is all about and what primary production still means to this wonderful country of ours.

I should like to refer briefly to the trade mission to the Arab countries and some of the Asian countries I had the honour to visit in February/March this year in company with the Minister, the honourable member for Warwick (Mr. Cory), the Minister's secretary (Mr. Eric White) and Mr. Elton Burns, one of the senior advisory officers in the department. It was a tremendous experience for me to travel those strange and wonderful lands that have a different government set-up from ours. I am sure we can always learn something from others. The trip was of great benefit to me in understanding the problems that some of our primary producers, the organisations and boards representing them and the tradespeople themselves have in selling our products to various countries. I refer to such problems as freight, price structure and competition from other areas. I endeavoured to learn from that trade mission, and I believe I did. I trust it will make me a more useful member in this Chamber, not only to put cases forward on behalf of my electorate but also as a member who is trying to understand problems confronting Queensland. I have already thanked the Minister personally but I thank him in this Chamber for the manner in which he led the mission. He did a tremendous job. He worked like a drover's dog, and did not expect anybody on the trade mission—whether a Government member or one of the members of the trades—to do anything he was not prepared to do himself. It was a tremendous experience, and I was assisted greatly by the Minister in understanding matters as we went along.

I should like to refer to two projects in areas just outside my electorate which are of major importance to my electorate. The Department of Primary Industries has been playing, and it will continue to play, a big

part in each of those projects. The first is the coastal lowlands study, which has been going on for some years. It covers an area of land from just south of the Elliott River, which is just south of Bundaberg, down to Boonooroo Point, which is south-east of Maryborough. The second project is the study being carried out at the present time on the area of land bounded by the Mary River and Tinana Creek with a view to providing an irrigation system there. Both projects are of tremendous importance to the district and, in particular, to Maryborough.

I refer to the department's annual report, which gives details of the first project I mentioned. The Maryborough-Elliott River Land Use Study encompasses an area of 203,000 hectares between Boonooroo Point, south-east of Maryborough, and the Elliott River, south of Bundaberg.

As appears in the Annual Report of the Department of Primary Industries—

"The study area is 19 000 ha of State Forest Reserve, 10 000 ha of National Park and 17 special wallum development leases with an original aggregate area of about 27 000 ha. The study area also covers 76 000 ha of vacant Crown land. This is the largest aggregation of such land in the over 1 000 mm rainfall category close to population centres in Queensland."

The crunch is that the study area also covers 76,000 ha of vacant Crown land. The inter-departmental committee conducting the study comprises officers from the Departments of Primary Industries, Forestry and Lands, and from discussions with them I have no doubt that some areas of the vacant Crown land would be suitable for softwood plantations and others would be ideal for dry cane farms, grazing and the cultivation of crops.

I am not clear on when the decision was arrived at to conduct the study, but I think it was made six years ago. It is a matter of concern both inside and outside my electorate that a delay has occurred in completing the study. The position is that the 76,000 ha of vacant Crown land is frozen until such time as the study is completed and the committee furnishes its report.

On 23 April this year, in answer to a question, the Minister advised me as follows—

"All field activities associated with the Coastal Lowlands Study have been completed. Editing of the draft report and printing of maps are in progress, and the committee expects that a report on the study will be ready for publication in July."

Earlier we had been advised that the Government hoped to have the study completed by July of this year. However, as recently as 4 September, in answer to a further question, the Minister stated—

"The Coastal Lowlands Study is proceeding but, in view of the importance of relevant information likely to emerge from

other studies not yet completed, it would be unwise to foreshadow a completion date for the report or to force an expedited incomplete version."

Fair enough! The people in my electorate are, however, gravely concerned at what I might term this additional delay.

I can well understand the desire of the departmental officers to avail themselves of reports on similar land use studies carried out elsewhere in Australia, but there has to be a dead-line. The completion date cannot be put off continually for the reason—I will not say "on the excuse"—that departmental officers wish to delay the publication of their report until they have the benefit of a report on yet another similar study. So I make a strong plea to the Minister to set a dead-line for the completion of this study. And I am thinking in terms not of years but of months.

The Maryborough district is anxious to develop further and is looking to the coastal lowlands as an area possessing tremendous potential. I do not suggest that the vacant Crown land should be subdivided as soon as the report is furnished—far from it. I want to see the wisest use made of the land. I have no doubt that a lot of it could be put to immediate use and other areas set aside for long-term projects. Last year a timber mill consortium showed keen interest in 5,000 acres of land just north of Maryborough as a site suitable for a softwood plantation. It looked upon such a project as an investment for the future. I do not know whether this timber mill is still interested—I hope that it is—but it was wiped because the land is frozen. This vacant Crown land will not be released until the committee makes its report and recommendations. Hopefully, the study will be completed very shortly. The Minister, through his department, can then reapproach the timber consortium to see whether it is still interested in this very worth-while project.

The second project to which I wish to refer is the proposed irrigation scheme in the Mary River-Tinana Creek area. In the past three years this area has been investigated by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission and the Department of Primary Industries. The study is to be completed early next year and the committee concerned will then make its recommendation. I understand that the feasibility study is developing quite nicely. It is interesting to note that virtually unlimited water is available thanks to the Borumba Dam on the Mary River, south of Gympie. I have no doubt that its very large water-storage capacity is aiding the thinking of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission on the feasibility of the suggested irrigation scheme for the Mary River-Tinana Creek area.

Several months ago, when the Minister for Water Resources visited Maryborough, I obtained certain figures from his officers

which showed that a total area of 6,170 ha can be irrigated. That is quite a large area of land. The 6,170 ha contains a total of 2,500 ha of assigned cane land. Of the 2,500 ha of assigned land 770 ha are unsuitable for various reasons. I understand that some of the land has too much slope. Hopefully, the assignments may be transferred to land with less slope. When the 2,500 ha are subtracted from the 6,170 ha that appear to be available when the scheme gets off the ground, about 4,000 ha remain for additional development. As I see it, even if the unsuitable assigned land in the Pialba area—some of the land has more slope than is desirable—were to be transferred to this area, it would take up about 2,347 ha. That would leave about 1,300 ha for other crops. As I understand it the available water and land in the Bundaberg area are committed to sugar—and jolly good luck to the growers. Most areas of available land on the North Coast of Queensland are virtually committed to sugar. I am hoping that, when this irrigation scheme gets off the ground, we will be able to diversify with other crops. I realise that crops not only have to be grown; they also have to be sold. I feel sure that this is what the Department of Primary Industries is looking into for this irrigable land.

Sugar is a very important factor in the economic life of my district. In the 1974 season, 416,000 tonnes of cane were crushed, with a gross value of \$9,600,000. The gross value of sugar produced was \$14,700,000. So it is very important to the economic life-blood of the city and district. In 1975, the mill peak had increased to 47,000 tonnes of sugar.

I earnestly entreat the Minister to keep moving on the second project, which is of such great importance to my city. That project is developing quite well and looks good on the drawing-board. I hope that the feasibility study will be concluded early next year so that Cabinet can make a decision and so that we can use some of the water that is presently flowing down the Mary River.

In conclusion I thank the Minister for his many kindnesses to me personally and as a member of Parliament. I look forward to working with him in the future.

**Mr. BURNS** (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (4.22 p.m.): Our shadow Minister referred to the late Mr. Jack Jones and his service to primary industry in this State. I, too, should like to pay tribute to him. We will miss him and so will the industry. He was kindly disposed to everybody and listened to their problems. He worked very hard for people engaged in the agricultural services and in many primary industries throughout the State. Therefore I join with the honourable member for Port Curtis in paying respect to him and saying a last word of thanks to him.

The honourable member for Port Curtis has reminded me of the rabbit warren in which the officers of this department work. I hope that, as almost \$24,000,000 is being appropriated for this year and as we have, for reasons good or bad, knocked back new industries, including the rabbit industry, the Minister might do something about the rabbit warren in which his employees work, because working conditions are very bad there.

**Mr. Sullivan:** I thank you for your support, but we are a jump ahead of you.

**Mr. BURNS:** That is good. I hope that the Minister is a jump ahead next year and that his officers will have better working conditions.

I should now like to deal with the predictions and promotion of primary industry and marketing. The research officers and extension officers in this department have spent a good deal of time in improving production, but over the years very little money has been spent on marketing. We need improved production and we need extension services and research services to improve production, but most certainly we urgently need to do more to promote markets and sales.

In 1968 I attended a U.S. Democratic Party Convention in Chicago. I sat next to an American who was able to tell me more about the weather in my own country than I knew because I had been away for five or six weeks. He was connected with an international grain organisation which had predicting services and contacts throughout the world. He was able to keep in touch with weather conditions and grain-growing conditions in Central Queensland and on the Darling Downs. This American, who had never visited Australia, talked about some of the small towns on the Darling Downs that I remember as an A.L.P. organiser. Many of the places he spoke about would be unknown to the average Queenslander. He was well aware of them. His organisation was able to say that there was a flood in one country and that it would have problems with grain production. He knew, for instance, that there was a famine in Russia, or that there was a shortage of grain in South America. From that information he was able to predict the need for grain in certain countries and was even able to form some idea of the future price of grain. In fact, more than anything else he was a salesman who was buying and selling grain on the international market.

It is not so long ago that some of our officers were moving around Queensland telling people that they should continue to invest in the beef industry because it had many good years ahead of it. At that time beef prices were starting to drop. Five months ago, I met graziers in Clermont and other places who said that 10 months before that time—that would be 14 or 15 months ago—they were being told by members of our Government organisations that things still looked fairly rosy. Not long

before that, people were saying that they intended to get out of the wool industry and into the beef industry. Some of our own officers were promoting this idea. With any sort of predicting service at all, we should have been able to foresee some of the problems. Now, according to primary industry newsletters, and also the information that is flowing in from the Industries Assistance Commission and various other bodies that are interested in the beef industry, it is obvious that some of the problems that occurred on the international scene should have been foretold and our graziers and their workers warned in advance.

Leaving predictions for the moment, let us think of promotion. Whenever I drive through my electorate, in which the two major meatworks in this city are situated, I become concerned at the lack of promotion of beef to our own housewives. Until things got tough in the beef industry, the local butcher shops carried only one meat board production. It was a picture of a plate of beef with a knife and fork and the words, "Eat more Beef". People had to enter the shop before they met any promotion from the meat board.

The first time I travelled overseas by Air New Zealand, I noticed the strong promotion of New Zealand lamb. All the way it was, "Try New Zealand Lamb". The piece of butter on the tray was marked, "New Zealand Butter". Then think of the menu on Qantas flights—at least before Rex Patterson started to stir them up. I recall sitting with him on a Qantas flight and he asked for a rum. The steward said, "You can have Captain Morgan or Bacardi." When asked for Bundaberg, he said, "What's that?" He did not even know of it. Why not promote Australian products on an Australian airline that travels the world? Rex Patterson and Jack Egerton fixed the Qantas rum situation, but we should do more.

The New Zealanders have outpromoted us through the years. At Expo in Japan, New Zealand girls cooked mutton and lamb and handed it out to the Japanese people to let them sample a new style of cooking of a New Zealand product. Australia had Bobby Limb and The Seekers and rock-and-roll bands. We have done nothing at all about the promotion of first-class Australian rural products at international level.

In the major hotels in London one will see, "Prime New Zealand lamb", with the words "New Zealand" underlined. New Zealand is proud of its lamb and so are the gourmets; it is promoted as a first-class product. The only time I have ever seen Australia referred to in respect of steak was in a steak-house in Chicago, and that steak was so tough that my fingers took a month to recover from the effort of cutting it. Obviously it was not prime quality, and it should never have been promoted in Australia's name.

Australian products should be given increased promotion locally. I do not think that enough promotion is being carried out for the benefit of Australian housewives. This year at the Exhibition, where cattlemen congregate, the fishing industry was being promoted by the Fish Board. Incidentally, potatoes from southern States were being used to make the chips that were sold with the fish. The Tasmanian Potato Board was also carrying out its usual promotion. The Colonel Sanders organisation was selling cooked chicken, and the American Pizza Parlour—or Mexican Pizza Parlour or some such name—was selling some other American line. But there was no great promotion of Queensland or Australian beef.

What did the beef industry promote at the Show? There were butchers showing how to cut meat, and there was a competition to guess the weight of a bullock. There was no promotion of beef. If "Colonel McArthur" wants to do something for the beef industry, he could do what Colonel Sanders has done for the poultry industry. Never have so many chickens been sold as are now sold as a result of promotion by the Colonel Sanders chain.

More and more, we in this country are tending to following the American pattern. There was a time when I did not believe that fruit and vegetables would be prepacked in plastic packs and boxes in this country. I always thought that the promotion would be more in terms of fresh fruit grown in our glorious, sunny climate. Never did I think that they would be packed as they are now. Current trends are towards more and more packaging. Mashed potatoes are now prepacked. I think we live in the past if we still think in terms of peeling and mashing potatoes.

Sometimes I think our marketing men still think of pies and peas, and spuds and gravy, when things have changed. In America the prepacking of mashed potatoes increased the percentage of the American potato crop sold on the domestic market from two in 1940 to 50 in 1970. In 30 years, the concept of prepackaging produced an extraordinary increase in sales of potatoes alone.

More and more, people are turning to frozen vegetables and prepacked meals. It is in the interests of our own rural industries that we similarly promote them. The stage has been reached where more and more vegetables, even peas and beans, are being imported to this country each year. Perhaps we have not given sufficient attention to the way market-garden areas of the past have been sold for housing, which means that some of the market gardens of the city have gone.

It is time that we started to look ahead and realise that we have to plan, for new markets, new promotion—new ideas. We have to test consumer reaction, watch the market ahead and make preparations for that market. Moves have to be initiated



to ensure that farms produce the goods that will be needed. I referred to the "pie and peas" mental attitude. Times have changed. It was not so very long ago, when I was a lad, that one never heard of zucchinis or baby carrots or things like that. They were not the sort of things my mother ever put on my plate when I was a lad.

Now we see bean shoots being marketed. I have a friend who is growing bean shoots for the Chinese cafe market here. I do not think that, in the days when my dad was a farmer, he or any of the older farmers or their sons here thought that growing bean shoots would ever be considered an industry or something to earn a living from.

We have to start to look at this type of forward marketing and planning. Sweet corn is another example. When we grew corn, the idea was that you grew corn and pumpkins. I am not certain but I think the corn went up to the produce market in town to be sold as cracked corn. In the days when I was on the farm, corn was rarely picked for someone to eat, but today that is a major market. I am told that in the United States broccoli and lima beans are two of the biggest sellers in the prepacked frozen vegetable field. In Britain, I am told, it is broad beans and Brussels sprouts. Ask yourself: What are the two major prepacked frozen vegetables sold here? Do you know? We have to assist in the promotion and sale of these products to ensure that our own markets are not being taken over by overseas people. I have heard honourable members ask questions about vegetables being brought in from overseas, but quite a lot of it is our own fault. We have failed to plan to fill a consumer need from our local farms.

**Mr. Lester:** Do you think prepackaging has anything to do with the increased incidence of heart disease in the United States?

**Mr. BURNS:** I wouldn't know. But I do know that we have to accept that people are not going to go to the trouble of carrying home bags of spuds, packed in the old way and full of dirt so that when they peel the spuds they dirty themselves and the kitchen, when someone will now provide them in an acceptable and clean form which is generally cheap and economical. Many housewives shop on a dollar basis. Many do not want the waste associated with the dirty spud or the cabbage with the extra leaves they are forced to throw out. Working women are looking for dollar value, for convenience and for food that is properly marketed and packed.

Have any honourable members ever stood around in a supermarket? It is a good exercise for any of us who believe we know all about marketing to stand in a supermarket and see the type of food that is sold and the way it is sold. Honourable members will notice that things have changed from the day of the old corner store. Even the corner store has changed. Some of the ideas

about marketing that we thought were acceptable to the people are well and truly out of date.

The point I want to make is that, if we spend \$20,000,000 a year on production, we ought to set aside an additional \$20,000,000 for promotion, for salesmanship. We were talking years ago about setting up Asian trade offices. This Government promised in 1969 that we would have trade offices around Asia and that we would be looking for new markets. I can remember the days when Bill Rowling, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, was the national president of the New Zealand Labor Party and I was the national president of the Australian Labor Party. We were in Britain together at a British Labor Party conference. He spent all of his time talking to members of that party about markets and what was going to happen to New Zealand primary products when Britain went into the Common Market. He was in opposition in those days, but as soon as he could get someone's ear, he talked about New Zealand primary products. The New Zealand Government sent officers over with him so he could talk to members of the British Labor Party, who were about to enter government or looked as if they were about to enter government, because they could see that there was an opportunity there to make a connection.

It is too late to send the Minister and a few other members of Parliament over there when the industry is on its knees or we are in trouble—not that I reject the idea of sending them around. Everybody knows that this year we will produce more cattle than we did last year. The honourable member for Bundaberg said to me earlier that he could not understand why this happened. Perhaps our own system of accounting is wrong. As he said, in 1974 after the great floods we were concerned about the future growth of the cattle industry because so many head had been wiped out. We wondered what stock we would have left. Yet this year our cattle population exploded again; it went further ahead.

We have to do something about selling the goods that we produce. We can produce first-class rural produce, but it is no good just sending more and more people out to help people to produce if we do not do something about selling the product. Every shopkeeper and businessman who works on the basis of putting more stock on his shelves without doing something about getting more customers in the door goes broke. We find that when the Japanese or the Americans decide they are not buying for a while, or the Meat Board has made a mistake in its assessment of the American quota, all of a sudden the price drops and many of our rural producers go broke.

I think there ought to be a full inquiry into the beef industry. I live in an area in which beef is processed and it worries me

that cattle drop in price from \$120 a head to \$26 or \$30 a head and yet the price of beef hardly varies.

**Mr. Byrne:** It all goes in labour and overheads.

**Mr. BURNS:** That might be so. Let us find out whether it is. It is like the fighter in the boxing ring who kept coming back knocked about and who was told that no-one was hitting him. He said, "Well, keep an eye on the ref. Someone in there is giving me a hiding." I think that the Government ought to keep an eye on the ref. in the beef industry. Someone is making a dollar. The farmer very obviously is not. If the price drops as low as that, one can see that he is not. But someone is, because the price of beef to the housewife is not dropping as it should be. Everybody has an excuse; everybody says he is not making any money. I believe that money is being made, and it is time that a full-scale inquiry was held into the beef industry, and particularly into the marketing section of the industry.

**Mr. Byrne:** Is the meatworker well paid now?

**Mr. BURNS:** The meatworker will never be well paid. I have never argued that a man is getting more than he should get. In speaking about the meatworker, the honourable member for Belmont has brought me onto a subject that is dear to my heart—brucellosis. I do not think that people generally realise the dangers that meatworkers have to live with.

**Dr. Scott-Young:** What about surgeons?

**Mr. BURNS:** Well, surgeons, too, I suppose; but the honourable member will be buried in a gold casket, whereas the meatworkers in my electorate will go down in a plain pine box.

Meatworkers have to live with diseases such as Q-fever and brucellosis. Merely from being splashed with blood from a beast that is diseased, they can lose their will to live. Brucellosis causes contagious abortions in animals. It also causes problems for many fine young men. I know of one very fine young man from Morningside, for example, who blew his brains out because of the problems he suffered as a result of becoming infected with brucellosis.

The honourable member for Townsville would understand the problems associated with taking blood tests and following them up in such a way that the readings prove that a man is entitled to compensation or to some further treatment. In many instances, men are knocked back and sent away.

Honourable members have heard talk about a cut-back. I do not believe that any Government—a Federal Labor Government or a National-Liberal Government—should be cutting back expenditure on eradication schemes of that type. Firstly, the health

of the workers on the job is affected; secondly, future marketing prospects are affected. The United States of America and other countries have already said that they will not take our product after a certain time from an area that shows positive reactions to tests for brucellosis. Action must be taken. It is very important to the industry.

I wish finally to spend a couple of minutes dealing with the milk scheme in Brisbane. In my opinion, it is at present in the hands of a monopoly that is bleeding dairy farmers, milk vendors and the people of Brisbane. The Minister has allowed them to get a stranglehold on the industry in this city, even though in 1968 a committee set up by a National-Liberal Government made recommendations that dairy farmers outside Brisbane, through their pasteurising plants, should have access to the Brisbane milk area. That was a recommendation made in the Ivers and Hamilton report in July 1968, which is in the Parliamentary Library.

Since that time I have asked a few questions of the Minister. You would remember, Mr. Dean, the story of the Albert Co-operative Dairy Association, which asked for a licence to install and operate a milk pasteurisation plant at Beaudesert. You will also remember that that application was made to the Director of Marketing. He said that the recommendation was approved as economic, and he recommended to the Minister that a licence be granted. From there on the position becomes very hazy, because finally Q.U.F., through its South Coast subsidiary, was given a major share of the licence. I believe that the Albert Co-operative Dairy Association should have been given the licence.

In my opinion, the Government should move in very quickly on Queensland United Foods. What that company does to milk vendors in this city has to be seen to be believed—the sort of forms that it makes a milk vendor fill out to get one day's or one week's credit; the way it treated milk vendors during the 1974 flood, when it made them carry cash, not cheques, and bring it to the depot. If the vendor did not bring the cash and pay it over the counter, he did not get any milk. During the flood, Q.U.F. made farmers from the Gold Coast and outside the Brisbane area send their milk to factories outside Brisbane—to the Gold Coast and to Caboolture—and paid them the manufacturing rate, then sold the milk in this city at retail rates. It was making an extra quid out of the farmers. None of that went to the farmers; it went into the pocket of Q.U.F. The Opposition has had report after report from people interested in the industry. Let Government members talk to the small dairy farmer outside of Brisbane and tell him that those co-operatives at Caboolture, the Gold Coast and Beaudesert should not be entitled to sell on this market. Honourable members opposite talk about competition; they talk about keeping prices down; they talk about the ideal of

free enterprise. Here is a good opportunity for them to put their money where their mouth is. Here is a chance to bring a little competition into this market and give the milk vendor and others a go. The milk vendor in this city has been bludged on by Q.U.F. I could show the Committee some forms, but I haven't got time now.

**Mr. Hanson:** Hinze and Hollingdale are big shareholders.

**Mr. BURNS:** I am not going to go into who are big shareholders. If a person talks to any small milk vendor, he will find that he is flat out making the sort of wage a meat-worker gets for working a 40-hour week. The milk vendor has to own his own van and buy his own gear, but he is treated like dirt by Q.U.F. If he gets out of line, they will help other people to deliver in his area. There is not even a protective zoning system. It is a cut-throat game. I put up the same argument I put up about the small fruit vendor. We ought to be organising for people to take these primary products to the door. The Premier made that statement to the Q.D.O. conference. He was reported in the newspapers under the headline "Joh: Make housewives dairy target." I cannot remember just which group he was addressing at the time. In my area I have a milk vendor who is prepared to deliver in the afternoon with a refrigerated truck. He is prepared to deliver all sorts of other products. He wanted to use a P.A. system. He was put out of business by this Government because it said, "No P.A." We tested him out on noise. People wanted his service, but Joh said no.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (4.42 p.m.):** I take the opportunity to refute some of the erroneous statements that have been made, particularly by the honourable member for Bundaberg. It is good to see both the honourable member for Port Curtis and the honourable member for Bundaberg in the Chamber. I can deal with them simultaneously. The honourable member for Port Curtis constantly brings out the old chestnut, "Who killed the dairy farmers?" Unfortunately he forgot to do that today so he raced around and gave a brief to the honourable member for Bundaberg. Let me pinpoint quite clearly once and for all who did the dairy farmers over. In 1972 Labor candidates were running around currying favour in the dairy industry. One Brendan Hansen promised farmers 40c a lb. for butterfat. What was the performance when that illustrious Government obtained office in 1972? It promised to wipe \$27,000,000 in subsidies, \$9,000,000 at a time over three years! That \$27,000,000 is now all gone, so do not let us have the honourable member for Bundaberg or the honourable member for Port Curtis getting up in this Chamber and talking absolute rot.

Coming as I do from one of the most highly mechanised and highly fertile agricultural areas in Queensland, I should like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Minister and his department on the work that is being done in my area. The department has a major role to play, and it plays it very well. I particularly commend it for its very practical extension services. I have had a lot to do with extension officers over the last eight of nine years and I have come to know many of them well. I respect them for the work they do. Men like Neville Douglas, the extension officer in Toowoomba, not only do trial work and work on various projects but they carry out a very practical purpose in filtering back to the farming community what the more progressive farmers are doing.

Some primary producers are fortunate enough to be able to visit America or other countries to study farming trends. They return with sound ideas and put them into effect on their farms. If it were not for the extension officers and the field days conducted by them, such ideas and trends would not filter through to those farmers who are not as fortunate or, in some instances, not as progressive as others. The extension officers are able to disseminate such information throughout the farming community. One of the results of their activities is increased production, so they play a major role.

Extension officers also play a tremendously important part in relation to the breeding of plant varieties. The development of the new variety of wheat known as Oxley is the result of liaison between the Queensland University and the Department of Primary Industries. I pay tribute to Dr. Jim Syme, a plant breeder at the University of Queensland, who has made a tremendous breakthrough in breeding the Oxley variety. It has tremendous yield potential, and, although its resistance to rust may be only short lived, it is nevertheless a most impressive variety. Unfortunately, the resistance of many new varieties to certain races of rust is short lived. However, thanks to the efforts of people like Jim Syme and the field officers of both the Queensland Wheat Research Institute and the Department of Primary Industries, the different varieties of wheat can be evaluated accurately. So, too, can varieties of sorghum be evaluated to assess their lodging resistance and yield potential. The work of the field officers is essential to future high productivity and a continuance of Queensland exports of wheat and other grain to the world's markets.

We are in keen competition particularly with North America, where tremendously high production is attained by very efficient methods. Up to three years ago we were able successfully to compete with North America. Now, however, as the result of escalation of costs, we are in a less advantageous position than we were at that time. But we still have the ability to produce, and

we should not forget this; nor should we forget the role played by the Department of Primary Industries.

I turn now to the extension work done in soil conservation. Unfortunately, people such as the honourable member for Lytton hop on the conservation band wagon and push those issues that tend to be fashionable. All they do is seek to gain publicity in the Press and kudos. They forget about the practical issues that mean so much to the people of Australia.

It is necessary to give back to landholders the incentive taken from them by the Commonwealth Government by way of its taxation measures. What hypocrisy for a Federal Government that was elected to office on its so-called conservation programme! Immediately it came to power it wiped off the slate all the incentive to people to invest in soil conservation.

**Mr. Gunn:** A tragedy!

**Mr. ELLIOTT:** It is a tragedy not only for the farmers of Queensland but for the people of Australia as a whole. The sooner the Federal Government realises what it has done, the better.

If we go to the wall because of erosion and problems associated with production, the people of Australia will certainly feel the effects. The two causes cannot be isolated. If the productivity of the land is destroyed by erosion, the cost of food to the consumer must obviously increase. Too little significance is placed on this fact. Unfortunately, as I said, Opposition members—

**Mr. Hanson:** The Government does not encourage it.

**Mr. ELLIOTT:** The honourable member for Port Curtis should not talk such rot.

In areas of declared soil erosion hazard, a system has been implemented by the Queensland Government, not by the Federal Government. I would have the honourable member for Port Curtis know that.

**Mr. Hanson:** Under what Act?

**Mr. ELLIOTT:** The Soil Conservation Act of 1965.

In the soil erosion areas a subsidy of \$1,000 per farm enterprise is payable; every \$1,000 spent by farmers in these declared areas will be matched by the Government. I believe that we should increase that amount.

I commend the provision under which payment is made towards modification of machinery. Farmers have available \$500 to modify machinery in order to implement the stubble-mulching programme which is essential in the over-all programme of soil erosion control on the Darling Downs. It is essential that work in this area be continued. If it is not, the life-blood of our nation—its soil; its most valuable resource—will be washed into the rivers whenever storm rains

fall. We must realise this and continue to push ahead in soil conservation, or we will suffer a national disaster.

**Mr. Casey:** Do you think that bad farming practices are helping to cause this problem?

**Mr. ELLIOTT:** That is a difficult question to answer in the short time available to me.

Penalties may be invoked in certain instances. Unfortunately a minority of people, through bad practice, and possibly through lack of knowledge or a misunderstanding of farming practices, have added to their problems. The problem is worse in the uplands area of the Darling Downs. Some people have the mistaken concept that the Darling Downs is as flat as this floor. Much of the Downs is undulating country and the slope varies tremendously. Much of it has been contour-banked. In the last financial year tremendous work has been done, but much remains to be done.

I urge the State Government to put pressure on the Federal Government at every opportunity to reinstate taxation incentives and so encourage people to continue with this work. Unfortunately, with everything else in the business community, all incentive to do something for oneself seems to have been withdrawn. This has had a pernicious effect on the farmers in my area. They have adopted a different attitude from that which prevailed when they were given a degree of help. This mental attitude must be overcome if we are to control the problem.

The honourable member for Port Curtis asked what incentives were available. In the last financial year about \$480,000, of a total of \$1,145,000, was spent in the declared soil erosion hazard areas of my electorate. I extracted interesting figures which show that landholders on the Darling Downs spent \$220,000 (including the subsidy payments) in the last financial year on soil conservation measures. They constructed 1,000,000 metres of contour banks, so it is no good claiming that they are doing nothing. Of course, much more needs to be done.

Many other honourable members wish to speak in this debate, so I will not monopolise the time. Many of the matters I would have liked to speak about have been covered. However, I reiterate a few of the points that have been made because I believe that they are very important.

The pasture subsidy scheme has been very beneficial. This is another role that the department has played very well in establishing suitable pastures. However, we need to develop urgently a pasture that will give somewhere near the yield of fodder crops, such as oats and some of the summer crops, for use on the steeper slopes where the greatest erosion hazards exist. If such a pasture could be developed for the beef-cattle industry and the dairy industry, we

would overcome many of our erosion problems. I also endorse the comments that have been made about the brucellosis eradication scheme.

**Mr. McKECHNIE** (Carnarvon) (4.57 p.m.): I should like to associate myself with the remarks of the honourable members for Cunningham, Warwick and Fassifern. They have taken a very worth-while part in this debate. It is obvious to me that they have a good understanding of the problems confronting rural industry. I do not plan to repeat a lot of what they said. However, I contrast their remarks with the attitude adopted in the main by the honourable members for Port Curtis and Bundaberg and the Leader of the Opposition.

The honourable member for Port Curtis, who is the Opposition shadow Minister for Primary Industries, spoke in glowing terms of the respect that he has for the people of the bush and the need for transport and communication in country areas. His Federal colleagues have caused untold hardship for the people of the bush and have done everything possible to ruin transport and communication in country areas. In these circumstances it is beyond my comprehension that any A.L.P. member can stand in this Chamber and, even with tongue in cheek, speak about the respect that the A.L.P. has for the people of the bush or the need for transport and communication in those areas.

The honourable member for Port Curtis also referred to the 40 per cent increase in freight rates. We did not like to increase them, but owing to the inflationary pressures in this country brought about by the Federal Government, which have resulted in the costs of the Railway Department rising astronomically, this Government has also had to ensure that the suburban passenger pays more of his fair share of the cost of running the Railway Department. The honourable member did not mention that at all. He is on the side of the suburban passenger. That is where he stands and that is why he ignored that matter.

The honourable member for Bundaberg displays a lot of good common sense in many debates, and I have complimented him on it in the past. But he did go astray in his speech today. He referred to large numbers of people who fly in aeroplanes and own Mercedes cars. Members of Parliament who talk in those terms are doing the people of the bush a grave injustice.

**Mr. Turner:** Do you think the fact that he comes from the Bundaberg rum country might have something to do with it?

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** He does come from the Bundaberg rum country but he was sober and, unfortunately, meant every word he said. That is typical of A.L.P. members. They like to spread the propaganda that people in the bush drive Mercedes and fly aeroplanes. This gives a completely wrong impression. We have to get through to city

people that only a very small minority of country people are very wealthy, and their number decreases every year. For the most part, the people of the bush have a much lower standard of living than city people. The honourable member for Bundaberg has done a very grave disservice to the people of the West by trying to spread this rot about their being rich people who get too much help from the Government.

**Mr. Jensen:** Will you answer one question?

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** I am busy making a speech, and I do not want to be troubled by people of limited intelligence.

The Leader of the Opposition said that it is time that the Minister did something about what he termed the rabbit warren in which officers of the Department of Primary Industries work. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that working conditions in that building are not good. This gives the Minister a wonderful opportunity to do something about decentralisation. It is time that sections of the department were decentralised in various areas of Queensland.

A few years ago there were 13,000 dairy farms in Queensland. There are now fewer than 5,000, but in that same period the number of officers in the Division of Dairying has increased by about 100. This is a problem that the Minister has to come to grips with. Somewhere along the line higher priorities have to be placed on certain areas of Government expenditure. When an industry loses a considerable number of people, as the dairying industry has, surely the service over all could be improved by holding the number of officers employed in that section and perhaps allocating a few more to other areas. I offer that suggestion to the Minister. I am not being critical of officers of the Department of Primary Industries. The ones I have met have always been very helpful, particularly those in my electorate, whom I know better than others in Brisbane. They are certainly very dedicated people.

I think that quite a few officers of the Department of Primary Industries, along with officers of other departments, have some feelings of frustration. They feel that they are out in the bush, and somewhat removed from the place where decisions are made. I am pleased that the Minister is in the Chamber, because I should like to repeat that I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the offices of the Department of Primary Industries are too crowded, and everything possible must be done to decentralise the department's activities.

The Leader of the Opposition said that not long ago, when there were floods in North Queensland, beef producers were told by the Government that prospects in the industry were rosy. It was impossible for anyone to predict the fall in prices in the beef industry; nor was the oil crisis something that could have been foreseen. In

addition, nobody could have predicted the vindictiveness of the Federal Government in its treatment of primary producers. The devaluation of the Australian dollar, the oil crisis and the imposition by the Federal Government of an additional tax on the export of beef were things that no economist, or any sensible layman, could have predicted. I do not blame the Minister or his officers one little bit for not being able to predict the slump in the beef industry. It was brought about by a combination of events, but the Federal Government must take its share of the blame; that's for sure.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the need to promote primary industries. I agree with him, but I hope the Minister looks to somebody else for advice—somebody who really knows something about promotion. I hope he does not go to the Leader of the Opposition and say, "Look, tell me about these ideas of yours on promotion." Although the Leader of the Opposition was very effective in promoting the Labor Party and helping to get it into office in Canberra, the result was short lived. The Federal Government is now thoroughly discredited and the State Opposition is down to 11. That is not the sort of promotion that I want for primary industries. I want good, honest promotion that will increase the consumption of primary products and retain good will, not the sort of promotion that the Labor Party has indulged in. It hoodwinked the people of Australia and therefore lost all credibility 12 months later. That is not the sort of promotional scheme we want for primary industries.

The honourable member for Bundaberg said a lot about cattle barons on this side of the Committee. I want him to know that my electorate contains many areas of primary production, including deciduous fruits, vineyards, beef and sheep, and a lot of tobacco and other products. I want to compliment the Minister on his accessibility to producers of products such as apples, pears and other associated products. On Friday of this week the leader of the Deciduous Sectional Group Committee is coming down to see the Minister about a problem. Although many Government members are associated with cattle and sheep, the Government has a very great interest in the little men also, especially those who grow small crops. It was very mischievous of the honourable member for Bundaberg to try to mislead the people of Queensland.

The only apple industry in Queensland is located on the Granite Belt. It is in very serious difficulties. One of the problems of these smaller sections of primary industry is that they do not have the same voice as the beef industry or the wool industry; but, by the same token, I again compliment the Minister on how often he listens to my representations on behalf of the smaller industries in my electorate.

At the moment the cattle industry is the one most affected by the economic squeeze. Opposition speakers made some sense when they called for stabilisation. The time has come when a man should not take what he is given for his produce. He has to put a fair value on it and he has to receive that value. But a lot of problems are involved in bringing stabilisation into the apple industry or the beef industry. Fruit and beef are perishable commodities and therefore are not in the same category as sugar. Many Government members are working very hard to try to bring about stabilisation of primary industries.

I compliment the Minister and his committee on what they have tried to do for the beef industry; but, unless New South Wales and Victoria come into such a scheme, whatever we do here is useless. It is quite obvious that at the moment Victoria, anyhow, is not planning to co-operate.

The Brisbane Market Trust has seen fit to impose a \$100 licence fee on small shopkeepers and hawkers in Brisbane. I have mixed feelings about it. I have talked the matter over with some of the fruit and vegetable growers in the Granite Belt, and their attitude is much the same as that of the Minister—"At the moment, we will go along with what the Brisbane Market Trust says. We will wait and see whether this is a good idea or a bad idea before we criticise it, because there are many things in its favour and also many things against it. It was a value judgment taken by the Trust. We will give it a trial." If within a few months it has not had more good effects than bad, I will be as vocal as anyone else in my condemnation of it. On the other hand, I hope that those who now condemn it will be big enough to praise it if it proves to be a worth-while venture of assistance to the fruit and vegetable industry in Queensland.

Tobacco growing is another important industry in my electorate. I hope that the Minister will continue to press the Federal Government—I am sure he will—to increase the content of Australian tobacco in cigarettes sold in this country. It is necessary to look after Australian industries before beginning to worry very much about overseas companies.

The wheat industry and other grain industries are enjoying fairly good markets at the moment. But I ask the Minister to again get in touch with oil industry leaders—I know that he has done so already—and point out to them how serious the fuel situation is at present. This morning I spoke to owners of fuel depots in my electorate. They are worried sick that not enough fuel will be available for the harvesting of the current wheat crop. I am sure the Minister will do what I suggest.

**Mr. Sullivan:** A similar situation existed last year. We had the crushing of the cane, followed closely by rain and the planting of

summer crops, and then the wheat harvest. In fact the situation was perhaps a little more precarious than it is now. We received very close co-operation from the oil companies, and I assure the honourable member that this matter is being watched just as closely now. He has my assurance that the Government is very well aware of the current situation.

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** I thank the Minister. I knew that I would receive that assurance and that he would have taken action without my mentioning the need for it. However, I wanted to have recorded in "Hansard" how much he is doing to ensure that the record wheat crop is harvested. Perhaps the situation is a little worse because a record crop is expected.

There has been talk for quite a while about the need for legislation to try to control foot and mouth disease if the virus should be introduced into this country. In my opinion, the Minister has acted very commendably in bringing to the attention of the Committee problems associated with feeding swill to pigs. In my opinion, honourable members have behaved in a very responsible manner. When the Minister brought the matter before the joint Government parties, members said, "No, we don't agree with it. We are not convinced." By the same token, I am sure that the Minister is still considering the matter and that Government members, including me, will continue to consider it. If new evidence proves that such a venture is worth while, I am sure that the Minister will eventually have the satisfaction of seeing legislation passed, though perhaps in an amended form.

Unlike the present Federal Government, we on this side do not bend to pressures. An enormous amount of pressure has been put on us by various industries about the pig-swill proposals. As yet they have not convinced some of us. As time goes on and perhaps as the Minister's attitude bends a little (and perhaps the attitude of some members will bend a little to accommodate him), no doubt a compromise will be worked out so that in the long term, after due consideration, we will end up with better regulations than we might have had if we had rushed in willy-nilly as some of the leaders of industry wanted us to do. There are many problems. I am proud to be associated with a Government that is prepared to look at everything and weigh things up properly.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. DOUMANY (Kurilpa)** (5.17 p.m.): I rise to support the Minister in the presentation of his Estimates and commend him on a very fine speech.

In this debate we are confronted with the very basis of the economy of the State and indeed the very basis of the economy of the nation. There can be no doubt that the Minister holds an area of responsibility

in Cabinet that is critical to the welfare of all citizens not only of Queensland but also of Australia. I firmly believe in the very strong interrelationship and interdependence between the farm sector and the non-farm sector of the economy. That is why I rise to speak in this debate.

The D.P.I. is not just a department for farmers, graziers and landholders; it is an economic service department that operates for the benefit of the whole community. When we look at Queensland's volume of exports and its contribution to the national balance of payments, there can be no doubt that this State holds more than a proportionate place in the wealth and prosperity of the nation. Therefore we must appreciate that the Department of Primary Industries is vital to the well-being of every Australian.

I should like to comment briefly on my own history. This is the first time I have spoken in a debate on the Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries. I look back with much sentiment and a great deal of appreciation to the several years I spent in the Department of Primary Industries in the early 1960s. I was the first appointee to a country posting for an agricultural economist. At that time the Economics Research Branch was a pioneering area.

**Mr. Sullivan:** I did hear very good reports of your performance in the department.

**Mr. DOUMANY:** I thank the Minister very much.

The department has moved a long way along the road towards gearing itself to modern technology and modern management techniques over the last decade or two. Enormous progress has been made. Despite all the criticism forthcoming from many quarters, there can be no doubt that D.P.I. has contributed an enormous amount to the progress of individual landholders, the rural economy and the economy in general. It is important to appreciate that when looking at the role of D.P.I. On the one hand it is geared to maximising economic performance on an individual basis and on the other it is geared to a consideration of the total effect on industry and on the State. It has a responsibility in both areas, and there are times when what I might term these conflicting responsibilities become a very heavy burden on the Minister and his officers.

It is not always that the individual interest coincides exactly with that of the industry as a whole. This is seen very clearly, for example, in organised marketing when certain persons in a particular industry choose to move outside the framework that has been set up and to maximise their own interests to the detriment of their fellow producers, whose performance is weakened. As I am sure the Minister would agree, this poses a great problem in areas where he is looking for a voluntary contribution or a co-operative stance on the part of primary producers.

Over the past 10 or 20 years, the greatest advances made by the department have been in the area of economic performance. There is no questioning the fact that its efforts have impinged firstly on management (I would always regard this as the most basic area—that of decision-making, choice and good business practice) and secondly on the development and adoption of technology. It is useless having a multitude of research workers engaged on producing new technology if no-one adopts and uses it. Management and technology are the spearhead of the department's efforts in attaining an ever-increasing level of productivity. Without such effort on the part of the department as well as the response by individual producers and industries, many of our agricultural sectors would not continue to be viable.

In the face of inflation and continually rising costs and in the face of fluctuation in seasons and markets, the only sure method of attack is the most sound management of resources, land, equipment, money and skill and the lowest possible unit cost of output. Only by minimising unit cost can we meet the challenge of inflation and the problems of depressed markets.

The farmers and other landholders of Queensland have responded to this challenge extremely well, and I am sure they would agree that they owe much of their success to the wonderful efforts of those dedicated, energetic and forward-thinking officers of the department.

A perusal of the annual report of the department shows that within its various sections and divisions are officers who, as a mass, would possess more qualifications than those held by any other branch of the State Public Service. In professional terms, the Department of Primary Industries is a very powerful one. No wonder the Minister seeks such high appropriations. It is necessary to spend big money on primary industries—the largest single contributor to the economy of our State. It is the best investment we can make.

In Queensland the Department of Primary Industries faces one of the most complex agricultural pictures in the world. It is a known fact that in this State we have the greatest number of different crops and activities to be found in any area governed by a single Legislature. While we have an enormous variety of crops, we also have an enormous variety of situations that call for a different approach in each case.

The sugar industry has probably one of the most refined systems of agriculture we could wish for. When cane fields are irrigated, the industry is virtually at its ultimate in terms of technological and economic performance. The use of fertilisers, the development of varieties, the agricultural methods used and so on are all pushed to the hilt. But we go to the other extreme with our extensive grazing industries under dry-land conditions. These industries are

faced with enormous fluctuations in both seasonal and marketing conditions. At the same time, they have a fairly rough type of husbandry. Even in this situation there has been scope for the considerable adoption of new technology, particularly as it relates to animal performance—that is, the performance per breeding animal. This enormous challenge has been taken up so well that in the past five years we have seen a very substantial build-up in stock numbers. That was achieved by very good husbandry not merely by the response to very favourable market trends. There was a collective adoption of many new techniques in animal husbandry, such as better nutrition through supplementation. All these things demonstrated the ability of our more extensive grazing industry to adopt a technological and good management approach to running a business. I am sure that sort of development will be renewed with vigour when the prospects and fortunes of the beef industry again become favourable, which we all know will be the case very shortly.

In approaching its task the Department of Primary Industries must always relate its priorities, in terms of the resources it is to employ and how they are to be directed—here I am talking particularly about manpower resources—to market realities within the limits imposed by social and political realities. When an industry is in a temporary period of decline it certainly should not be dumped. It is equally certain that, when an industry is on an inexorable slippery-dip downwards, we must in the long run look at how it attracts resources and effort compared to an industry that is coming up and which has excellent prospects in the long run.

**Mr. Jensen:** Get onto something interesting like pig swill.

**Mr. DOUMANY:** I am sure that the honourable member for Bundaberg would like me to lighten this discussion but I view these Estimates with a great deal of gravity. This is not a time for flippant discussion or levity. This is a very serious subject and I am treating it in that way.

The department is moving very strongly in the marketing sphere. More and more emphasis in the departmental report is being placed on market intelligence. This is a tremendous area of opportunity. Obviously no-one can be Elijah in rural commodities but he can certainly do a lot better than putting his thumb in his mouth and raising it to the wind. The better the predictive system, the greater will be the impact of the Department of Primary Industries on better decision-making by our landholders.

I am sure that the Minister would agree that he has had a very difficult time over the past two or three years. It has been exacerbated by a Federal Government that is thoroughly obstinate and thoroughly perverse when it comes to basic industries. It has no respect for them whatsoever. It



believes that they should stand and rot if necessary. Even when they have been in the midst of a very dreadful era, such as the beef industry has been through, it stands back and says, "You get yourselves out of trouble. Look at all the good times you have had in the past. Live on your fat." It forgets that the last two years or so of a propitious period are usually accompanied by crushing taxation which siphons off all the wealth and resource liquidity. It also forgets that, by the time the bad time comes, nothing is left on the bones to move the arms around.

**Mr. Lester:** They have taken away all incentive.

**Mr. DOUMANY:** That is right. The Federal Government does not believe in realities. It does not believe in the private-enterprise system. It believes that anybody who has any assets is, of necessity, imbued with an evil design.

**Mr. Hartwig:** They think every time you sell a bullock that you are wealthy.

**Mr. DOUMANY:** That is right. They drive along the road and look at the herds in the paddocks and say, "Look how wealthy and bloated those people are."

In Queensland, we have an exciting future in our dry-land pasture development. It will not be long before the beef industry turns its nose upwards. What we want to see in the several million acres of spear grass—an area bigger than Victoria—is technological progress of the same sort as was made in the temperate pasture regions of Australia. We want to see our graziers given the opportunity to use superphosphate to the hilt—and at a reasonable price! I say that a reasonable price is somewhere round \$25 to \$30 a tonne ex works and no more. We should learn from the lesson in New Zealand. It did not let the price of superphosphate rise to excessive levels. It introduced a flexible bounty so that a maximum price was set.

**Mr. Hartwig:** That is a different type of Government.

**Mr. DOUMANY:** It is an old-fashioned Labor Government. There was some wisdom in the old days. I can see the smiles on the faces of A.L.P. members, particularly the honourable member for Port Curtis, who has a good deal of regard for private enterprise.

**Mr. Byrne:** Do you think he'll be Leader of the Opposition?

**Mr. DOUMANY:** I don't think that's very relevant to this debate.

We want Queensland to be given the early opportunity to incorporate fertiliser phosphorus into its agricultural economy on a large scale because it will need to start. We do not want superphosphate at \$60 or \$70 a tonne ex works. That is a disgraceful price, not in terms of the fertiliser industry itself—because it has to survive—but in terms of the priorities that have been set

by the Federal Government, which should be resource oriented in its planning and should be looking at the next 25 years, not the next year or two.

One of the key roles in the Department of Primary Industries is the extension service. I hope that a large proportion of the best people coming into that department will go into the extension service. In the past, unfortunately, research was the superior or senior service and attracted a high proportion of the best brains that came into the department. That applied right throughout the country. I hope—and I think it is happening now—that an increasing number of the best officers will be given the incentive to go into extension work. There is an enormous bank of technology available, far more than has as yet been implemented, and what is needed is an acceleration in the rate of its adoption by landholders. Instead of it taking 10 years for a practice to be adopted, I should like to see it taken up in three to five years. This will happen only if the best officers are directed to the area of communication and extension. I hope that there is a deliberate, concerted effort by the department towards this goal in the future.

I hope also to see a similar effort devoted to farmer education. There can be no doubt that the performance of the rural economy depends, in the final analysis, upon the people who run the various business units within it. Their performance is very much geared to their knowledge and skill as managers, and to their implementation of new technology.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (5.37 p.m.):** At the outset, I wish to refer to the remarks of the honourable member for Cunningham about soil conservation as practised by graziers, other primary producers and the Government. He spoke of the tremendous amount of work that had been done in soil conservation. This is a very important aspect of the preservation of pastoral industries, and I should like to quote to the honourable member from the annual report of Mr. Strutton, the general manager of the Agricultural Bank. He said that under the Soil Conservation Act of 1965, which came into operation in July 1965, loans of up to 90 per cent of the cost of the work could be made to owners of farmland to enable them to carry out soil conservation measures approved by the bank and generally recognised as being necessary. Mr. Strutton then said—

"Little if any interest is being shown by primary producers in this scheme—the total amount approved for the financial year being \$758."

**Mr. Elliott:** Would you like to clarify that statement a little?

**Mr. MELLOY:** I shall read it again—

"Little if any interest is being shown by primary producers in this scheme."

**Mr. Elliott:** Which scheme are you talking about?

**Mr. MELLOY:** The scheme under the Soil Conservation Act of 1965, under which the Agricultural Bank was constituted the lending authority.

**Mr. Elliott:** You are saying in effect that that is the amount of money coming from the Agricultural Bank in loans for this work. That is the only figure you are quoting?

**Mr. MELLOY:** Yes. This is very important. Apparently the Agricultural Bank is prepared to provide 90 per cent of the cost of soil conservation works, but the general manager of the Agricultural Bank has pointed out that no interest is being shown by primary producers in this scheme.

**Mr. Elliott:** I quoted the figures.

**Mr. MELLOY:** I think I can make my speech along the lines that I have indicated.

**Mr. Elliott:** That's a lot of rubbish.

**Mr. MELLOY:** It is not a lot of rubbish. What I have quoted are not my words or the words of an Opposition member; they are the words of the general manager of the Agricultural Bank. He is quite definite in his statement that little if any interest is being shown by primary producers in the finance that is available from the Agricultural Bank for soil conservation, as only \$758 was approved under the scheme in 1974-75. I shall have more to say about primary industries, but I wanted to make that point.

It has been very interesting to listen to the beef and wool barons in this Committee during the progress of the debate. One could almost weep when one hears their stories to the Committee about how bad things are. One would think that there had not been one good year in the past 50 years. One would think that there had not been any year when the primary producers, the graziers and the pastoralists were buying a couple of Jaguars, houses down at the Gold Coast and blocks of flats in Brisbane—in fact, living in Brisbane as Queen Street graziers. One would think there had never been any good times. If there were good times (and there certainly were), surely to goodness they should have been able enough to provide for the lean years that came later. But apparently not. They spent their money as they got it. They bought their Jaguars, their homes on the Gold Coast and their blocks of flats in Brisbane. We do not see many graziers or pastoralists dying broke. One has only to look at the probate notices in the Press from time to time. We see where Joe Blow, a grazier, has a realty of \$400,000 and a personalty of \$200,000. Again and again and again we see this.

**Mr. Hartwig:** What about how many hours a week he worked? There was no 40-hour week for them.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Gunn): Order! There is far too much cross-fire in the Chamber.

**Mr. MELLOY:** The honourable member for Callide is hedging now. He is not denying that they have left that money. He cannot deny that he sold his property for \$500,000.

**Mr. Hartwig:** You are only guessing; it was \$502,000.

**Mr. MELLOY:** That is what we are trying to establish. He said, "We didn't work a 40-hour week." Perhaps he did work long hours, but certainly he got the returns when days were good. These people, with no regard for the future, spent the money when days were good. Besides looking at the probate notices to find out how many graziers were poverty-stricken when they died, we can look at the list published regularly of those people who have defrauded the Taxation Commissioner. We see grazier after grazier named as understating income over a period of five years by \$20,000, \$50,000—

**Mr. Hartwig:** They don't go on strike.

**Mr. MELLOY:** I notice the honourable member is not denying what I am saying. He might talk about strikes but he is still not denying what I am saying. We find the graziers and pastoralists understating—

**Mr. Hartwig:** We don't go on strike. Cop that!

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member for Callide will refrain from interjecting.

**Mr. MELLOY:** They understate their income by \$20,000 and \$50,000 a year before eventually being caught by the Taxation Commissioner. After all, we—

**Mr. Hartwig:** Alien—not Australian—Labor Party!

**Mr. MELLOY:** I've really got you on the run, mate.

**Mr. Hartwig:** Look at them, a mob of—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. MELLOY:** What do we see now? National Party members come into the Chamber and tell their tales of woe. And what effect does it have on the Treasurer, for instance? He believes them to the extent that he increases rail freights by 40 per cent! If the Treasurer thought that primary producers were in such a bad way, he would show them much more consideration in the field of rail freights. What else has the Government done for primary producers? What is it doing now? It is closing hospitals and schools in country areas. Where is it showing concern for primary producers?

Basically, Australia is a primary-producing country, and I believe that the primary producers of this State must be shown every possible consideration. In my opinion, the

future of this State lies in primary-producing industries. The State's mineral resources will not last indefinitely; they must eventually be worked out. The same cannot be said of primary industries. In fact, Queensland could eventually become the food bowl for many countries throughout the world in which industrial development has taken place at the expense of primary production. Australia will eventually have to face up to the task of supplying most of the food, grain and other primary products for a large part of the world. If primary producers are driven off the land now, this country will not be in a position to meet that demand.

Many people who are leaving the land today will not return—I think that is obvious—and it is the responsibility of both State and Federal Governments to ensure that people remain on the land. Not only is it in the best interests of Queensland and Australia; it is necessary for the maintenance of the economy generally. Many young people are leaving country areas and coming to the major cities, thus adding to unemployment problems. It should be possible to implement a scheme of payments that will keep farmers on the land so that Governments will not have the task later of trying to induce them to return. Some sort of unemployment relief scheme could well be implemented. Instead of having hippies and spivs round the country doing nothing, the money spent on unemployment benefits to them could well be spent in farming areas of Queensland to keep men on the land. It would be cheaper to keep them there now than to try to induce them to return later when they are needed.

Another matter with which I wish to deal is the appointment of trade commissioners. When eventually the pendulum swings back—and there is no doubt that it will—and this country is looking for markets, it may well miss out. Markets in European and South-East Asian countries will be captured by primary-producing countries that are now establishing trade commissions in those areas. When Australia is in a position to supply their needs, the markets will no longer be available and a very serious situation could then develop.

**Mr. Lester:** How are we going to fix it?

**Mr. MELLOY:** How are we going to establish markets? We should be sending trade commissions to all those countries now, and counteracting the efforts of other countries.

We should be able to produce enough food in this nation to satisfy Australia's needs. Every year we are importing more and more canned vegetables, fruit and mushrooms from overseas—from places like Taiwan. That should not be happening. How we are to stop it, I don't know.

I have previously raised the important matter of soil conservation. We are losing a lot of soil purely because of the inability

of the primary producer to cope with what is happening to his land. The Minister mentioned mobile laboratories. They are essential.

**Mr. Elliott** interjected.

**Mr. MELLOY:** Mr. Gunn, my time is being eroded by the honourable member for Cunningham.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Gunn): Order! The honourable member does not have to take interjections.

**Mr. MELLOY:** The Minister mentioned the demand by producers for adequate marketing intelligence. That is one of the basic needs of the man on the land. He has to know what markets are available and how much the markets can absorb. He needs that information for his future planning so that he will be able to produce enough to meet market demands, and, at the same time, avoid overproduction. Unless he knows what is happening on the world markets, he cannot plan properly. Trade commissioners should be able to anticipate to some degree the needs of overseas countries. Of course, they could not be expected to anticipate shortfalls in various products in those countries.

The primary producer should be sufficiently advised so that he does not approach his development on a haphazard basis. He needs the advice of experts who are able to assess market needs, say, five or 10 years ahead. That underlines the importance of the work being carried out by the State's agricultural economists. They are fulfilling a very important role in the economy of the primary producer. It all has to be done on a more or less scientific basis. I know that it means a lot of hard work, but that hard work could go to waste if the development is not carried out along scientific lines.

Great praise must be given to the department for the work done in the development of the pastoral and agricultural industries. The advisers who travel the State assisting primary producers are of the utmost importance to the agricultural industry.

Before I conclude I wish to deal briefly with the cultivation of small crops in the metropolitan area. Fertile lands that, in the past, provided vegetables for the people of Brisbane have been taken up for residential and industrial development. This has occurred particularly in the Pinkenba-Nudgee area and in Redlands. The outcome is that vegetables are grown now mainly on the outskirts of the city, and the additional cartage involved means that vegetable prices are more expensive than they would be if farm land had not been taken up for development. Finally, I congratulate the Minister and more so his departmental officers on the work they are doing.

**Mr. LESTER** (Belyando) (5.56 p.m.): I preface my remarks by paying a tribute to the Minister. From time to time he is the

subject of a good deal of criticism, mainly from people who perhaps do not realise that he has a very difficult portfolio to administer. Added to that, our primary industries, particularly the beef cattle industry, are going through very bad times. Nevertheless, the Minister has two things in his favour. Firstly, he attended Downlands College, which is one of the greatest schools in the nation, and secondly, he has a head of blond hair. That will help him overcome many difficulties, just as my blond hair helps me overcome them.

I would also pay a tribute to the Primary Industries Department officials and staff who are stationed in the Belyando electorate. In addition to carrying out their official duties, they spend a great deal of their spare time assisting primary producers in times of crisis. For example, they were of tremendous help to beef producers and other landholders in the recent grasshopper plague. Their efforts have to be seen to be believed. For all these extra duties, they did not claim overtime and their work is deeply appreciated by all people in my area.

Belyando is a diversified electorate, containing primary industries among which are beef, grain, safflower, cotton and sheep. As well, in the Emerald Irrigation Area, experiments are being made with the cultivation of peas. Very recently I inspected a magnificent crop of peas cultivated with the use of water from the Fairbairn Dam. In addition to those primary industries that I have mentioned, the area has secondary industries, such as coal-mining, safflower mills, an explosives factory, a brick-making plant and the gemfields at Sapphire and Rubyvale. Primary industries form only one small part of the over-all activity of the Belyando electorate.

Before getting down to the nitty-gritty, I wish to comment on some of the remarks made by the honourable member for Nudgee, who painted a very poor picture of cattle people in Queensland. He claimed that many of them are high on the list of tax evaders, that they go for holidays to plush places and that they drive around in flash motor vehicles. He spoke of them in derogatory terms. I would ask him: in good seasons is there anything wrong with people on the land going on holidays; is there anything wrong with buying a stylish new motor-car; is there anything wrong with buying a home on the Gold Coast? Certainly there isn't. I would remind the honourable member that not all seasons are good ones. There are many bad times. A large number of cattle producers had to endure a long succession of bad years before they enjoyed a good one. Surely they are entitled in good times to spend money and get something out of life in return for the years of hard work that they have put into their properties. I am not having a go at the honourable

member; I think he is a pretty decent type of gentleman, and I do not want to be accused of getting nasty about this.

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

**Mr. LESTER:** In continuing my contribution, I shall deal further with the critical attack made by the honourable member for Nudgee on graziers in Queensland—the big people, the hobnobs and so on as he described them. A few matters should be brought to the attention of honourable members. All graziers are not bad people. Most of them are jolly good people. If they should decide, when times are good, to buy a nice motor-car or another house or to send their children away to school or to patronise the shops, some other people will get money in their pockets. The country business people who get more money in their pockets will be able to employ more staff in country towns. More jobs will be made available for the workers.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper** interjected.

**Mr. LESTER:** I point out to the honourable member for Archerfield that I am concerned about the worker. If we help our graziers and ensure that they are making a profit, the money will come back to the working person. You and I will then be happy.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Kaus): Order! I remind the honourable member that he must address the Chair.

**Mr. LESTER:** Thank you, Mr. Kaus. I thought that you were trying to give me some protection against the rude interjections.

In commenting on a few of the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition, I point out that I am not doing so in the nasty way in which the honourable member for Archerfield is carrying on. The Leader of the Opposition is a reasonable gentleman—sometimes. He said that we have to get modern, prepackage all our food and keep up with modern trends in society. I am not being critical of him but it seems a little unfortunate to me that so much of our world today has to be geared to the modern packaging trend, that everything has to be so modern. We will be a lot better off when we return to the style of olden days and eat beef and potato pie, buy an ordinary piece of meat in a butcher shop and enjoy home-made products. In our modern society it is not easy to do these things. We are faced with all sorts of problems that are causing many people to suffer heart attacks and so on. Much of this trouble stems from the modern, quick, get-on-with-the-job type of life.

**Mr. Burns:** You sold sliced bread.

**Mr. LESTER:** I sold it. The Leader of the Opposition will recall that I did not attack him personally. I merely used what

he said to make a point. The honourable member has directed his comment to me and in reply I make the point that I had to join in the modern trend of slicing bread. I do not agree with it. It is very unfortunate that these things happen. I qualify that, it is part of our world. But I did a few things to overcome the trend. Often on a Sunday morning in my bakery I bake unsliced bread, Vienna loaves, bread-rolls and buns for the schools. All these things help to get back to conditions as they used to be—when people could go to any bakery and buy buns, an ordinary loaf of bread, hot bread-rolls and so on. I did a little more than that. I was not a baker who wanted to try to put all the dough into his pocket. I at least tried to give some money away.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Miller): Order! I ask the honourable member to come back to the Estimates. We are not discussing bakeries.

**Mr. LESTER:** Mr. Miller, I was dealing with the grain industry and the flour that goes into my bread. A good deal of the bread and many of the buns I baked of a Sunday were donated to the schools, and the school-children made some money out of them. I am sure that we all benefited.

I have been very concerned at the number of beef cattle people in my area who have been hit severely. Only today I read in the paper that one-fifth of the people in the cattle industry are earning less than \$2,000 a year. This is a modern world, yet many of these people who have heavy overdrafts are facing all sorts of difficulties in trying to make ends meet—despite the long hours they work. They are the true pioneers of our country. They are the people who are trying to do something to make life better for all of us who are in Brisbane at this time. So let us not be too critical of our graziers. They play a very important part in our community. In fact, all country people have important parts to play in the community. Until we recognise their importance and until we recognise the extent to which the country people depend on the city people and the city people depend on the country people, we will never get anywhere. Until we recognise each other's value, we are not going to get as far as we would like to.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Do you think that the city people and the country people should be bred?

**Mr. LESTER:** The point that I was trying to make—

**Mr. Sullivan:** The answer to the honourable member for Archibald is this: if I were you, I would make a very good friend of him and invite him out to your electorate during the next election campaign, and you could win thousands of votes.

**Mr. HANSON:** I rise to a point of order. The Minister referred to the honourable member for Archerfield as the honourable member for Archibald.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Kaus): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr. LESTER:** Further to the interjection from the Minister, I point out that things in the Belyando electorate were going very badly for me during the last campaign. Then the honourable member for Archerfield arrived on the scene and things went extremely well. I won by a majority of some 10 per cent. Further to that again, my wife and one of his friends ended up in one hell of a brawl that was written up in "The Courier-Mail." I know that the honourable member for Archerfield was in this boots and all. He was not nasty to my wife; I am not alleging that. He was in this brawl. There was the honourable member, a fellow by the name of Broad, another fellow by the name of Turner, and my wife. She took them all on and beat the lot of them.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Mrs. Lester, where's your broom?

**Mr. LESTER:** Talk about brooms! She swept him out the door and he hasn't been game enough to step back inside again.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! Would the honourable member please address the Chair.

**Mr. LESTER:** I don't know why they're trying to be funny tonight.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! Would the honourable member please return to the Estimates instead of engaging in cross-fire with other honourable members.

**Mr. LESTER:** Grain is grown in the Kilcummin, Emerald and the Capella areas. A person who is presently sitting in the public gallery of this Chamber grows grain in the Central Highlands area near where I live. He has come here to see how Parliament works. Here am I trying to fight for a better deal for the country people and I am being hindered by members of the A.L.P. Look at the great smiles on the faces of the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy. I wonder how serious they are about these adverse effects on the primary producers.

I am, however, a little concerned about the future of the grain industry. Many in my area who previously raised cattle have had to diversify into grain-growing in an attempt to make ends meet. The cattle industry has not been doing very well, and those in it have looked for other ways of making a living. Country people are always prepared to give something else a go when things are tough. They looked for other means of making money, and, as a result, many more are now growing safflower and

various types of sorghum. It is the increase in the number of growers that is causing me a little concern.

Years ago when things started to go wrong in the wool industry, pastoralists turned to cattle. Now we have a problem with too many cattle in this country. Those who were raising cattle have now turned to growing grain. I only hope that the time will not arrive when too many are growing grain and not making very much out of it. Grain growers have problems that cannot be readily overcome. They are completely at the mercy of the weather. They can never be sure for how long there will be no rain, or when it will rain. I know of a person who planted grain and was ready to harvest it last week. The rain came and shot all the crop, and now it has nowhere near the value that it should have had.

I might add that the advent of grain-growing has given the Central Highlands a considerable boost. More machinery for harvesting is being sold. More people have to be employed to help sow and harvest. Grain-growing needs smaller areas than cattle-raising, which means closer settlement. There are therefore many more people in the area, and country towns in general are better off from the change to grain-growing. I therefore hope that it is possible to ensure that grain growers do not suffer in the future because too many have entered the field. The sooner the cattle industry gets on its feet again, the better off everyone will be.

Although I realise that this is not the sole responsibility of this Parliament, I must express my concern at the discontinuance of the free-milk scheme for school-children. I should like the Minister to investigate the possibility of reintroducing the issue of free milk to some schools. In my electorate there is a school at Anakie, which is in the centre of the Central Queensland gem-fields. Electricity is not readily available, and living conditions are a little primitive. Statistics will not convince me that the children at that school would not be better off if they had a daily issue of free milk. The children at the school at Jericho also could do with free milk. The people in these areas do not have the luxuries of life, such as television, that people enjoy in the cities, and it would be a great help if free milk could be provided at those schools. I am not advocating free milk for all children, but I think it could be provided in schools in remote areas such as Anakie and Jericho. Any other Government help that could be given to them would be much appreciated. It concerns me very much that the Federal Government has taken free milk from school children in such areas.

I should also like to make a few comments on the Fairbairn Dam at Emerald. Thirteen farms are virtually under full irrigation, and many more are to be irrigated. The dam has been a wonderful acquisition to the community in general in that it has brought

about a diversification in farming. People are now trying to grow cotton and peas and they are experimenting with other irrigation crops.

**Mr. Hartwig:** Whitlam has not given them any encouragement.

**Mr. LESTER:** He has done nothing to keep them going. It is the State Government that is keeping people in work there.

**Mr. Jensen** interjected.

**Mr. LESTER:** The honourable member is in no position to talk. He got a fair bit for his area because he is a Labor man. Whitlam gave a little bit of money to the honourable member's area. I read about it in the Federal "Hansard", so don't worry about it.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Just ignore the interjections. You're making a very sensible contribution.

**Mr. LESTER:** I thank the honourable member for Archerfield. I am very pleased we have finally recognised each other's profound ability. Having taken that interjection from the honourable member for Archerfield, I would just like to get back to the subject.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. SIMPSON (Cooroora) (7.31 p.m.):** I would like to congratulate the Minister on carrying out his duties in a most essential portfolio. The industries his department administers are critical to our well-being. Some industries are necessary, but primary industries are essential. They not only provide food to maintain our very existence but earn export income which enables us to obtain a higher standard of living. However, there are a few problems associated with primary industry apart from those caused by bad seasons. Primary industries are productive, as distinct from an extractive industry such as mining. There is a small element of extraction in primary industry in that in certain places we are removing nutrients from the soil which have to be replaced with fertiliser. The grain industry and other mechanised industries use fuel which has to be provided from what we can find in Australia or import. It is in this area that I think we need to be careful so that in the future we are in fact capable of continuing production in a sensible way relative to our resources. In this regard we might have to take another look at animals that were thought not to be efficient food converters, ruminants such as cattle and sheep, because on the basis of total input and output they are highly efficient in that they can handle low-grade materials and convert them into productive fibres or food, in contrast with creatures having comparatively simple alimentary canals, such as pigs and poultry, where the inputs have to be high-grade materials which are very expensive. Sometimes it is necessary to import other inputs to add to those available here. I just wanted to

point that out to honourable members to indicate that we have to look to our future preferences.

Primary producers have always had to face numerous problems, especially where they have had to contend with droughts, fires and floods. In some cases, usually on the coast, they have had to contend with cyclones. We are not providing enough incentives for primary producers to help them through their times of need. This is especially so in the Federal sphere. The sort of thing I refer to is encouragement to put something away in the good years to tide them over a rainy day. This sort of encouragement should also be given to people living in cyclone areas. They should be encouraged to insure their own homes. There would then be no need for Governments to make big hand-outs to cover damage.

The problem of supply and demand has always bugged the primary producer. He has been faced with the problem of a good season and a surplus of his product, or perhaps a surplus in some other part of the world has placed him at a great disadvantage in obtaining a fair return for his product.

One answer to the problem may be the control of the industry. Earlier in the debate reference was made to the sugar industry being a socialised industry. I have never heard such a stupid suggestion. People seem to forget that today socialism means control of the product by Government from the beginning to the end, with the primary producer having no ownership and no incentive to produce under a free-enterprise system. The cane grower retains both those things. There are, of course, other industries that operate quite satisfactorily without that structure. The industry itself and the marketing of its product are controlled by those who are involved in it. For example, the ginger industry in my area is set up quite differently, but operates in a similar way.

However, these controls are not sufficient. Although there are controls in the dairy industry, a butter factory in my electorate is closing. Controls in themselves are not a guarantee. Other factors have to be considered in the marketing of products. One does not find G.M.H. saying, "What do you offer me for a Holden motor-car today?", just because it happens to have turned out too many motor-cars this week. It has a set price that allows the company to make a profit. That is the sort of thing that I think we should be looking for in the field of primary production.

Difficulties arise when a perishable commodity is involved. One cannot put it on the shelf or store it in a yard, as G.M.H. does with its motor-cars, and expect to be able to utilise it in the future. Resources must be such as to enable production to be controlled in such a way that needs will be met and the supply of goods will not be too short when prices are very high. When

there is a shortage of supplies, the problems of substitutes and synthetics arise. People turn to alternatives, quite apart from synthetics and substitutes. One sees an example in the wool industry of what happens when synthetics are introduced, and additives in sausages and similar products are an example of substitutes used in place of meat.

The answer to the problem of supply and demand is product promotion and stimulation of demand, but one cannot expect market expansion to be without limit. If it were, there would not be any problem, but that is wishful thinking with production as it is in the world today. If the market for one's product is a world market, one should study the latest information that may provide assistance, and I think it would be very helpful if information on the trends that are occurring could be given to the primary producer more quickly than they are at present. Some industries do that very well, but in others up-to-date information is sadly lacking. A news bulletin that came out more regularly and in a more readable form would assist primary producers in that direction.

I am aware that there are many problems associated with my suggestion and an industry with many problems does not pull out of a slump very easily. That brings me to the beef industry and the return to the beef producer. Recently he was receiving only 10c a lb. for his product. He is receiving a little more than that now. The housewife was paying an average of 80c a lb. in the shops, so the difference was 70c a lb. I am not going into who was getting the rake-off, but by now everyone should know that the primary producer was producing at a great loss. He was probably the only one in the system taking a loss; the others were still getting their mark-up.

I put this suggestion because I have seen so much reference to what is going to happen when beef prices come back, and what those prices might be. If the primary producer got double the return for his beef, that is, 20c a lb., the price in the shops need only be 90c plus 10 per cent of the differential, making a shop price of 97c. If the return were to go to three times that 10c a lb., which would put it somewhere near the cost of production at 30c a lb., the price in the shops would need to be only 20 per cent on the differential of the doubling of the price, which would take it up to 114c a lb.

If the primary producer got three times his return, the price in the shops would not be three times the present price of 80c a lb. The price would not go up to \$2.40 a lb., but only to \$1.14 a lb. Yet we have the export price determining the home consumption price. It was mentioned today that the export price was not all that important. It is very important in that it does in fact control the price paid throughout Australia for the product.

I should like to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that the housewife, who is the end user of the product, is the one with whom we should promote unity. I am grieved to think that a butter factory in my district has closed down. Primary producers have been struggling on small properties to supply a factory with a small through-put. The reason it closed is partly an internal one, in that the co-operative had two butter factories and for its own reasons of increased wages and fuel costs it closed one of them down. The point I make is that the housewife goes into a shop and buys butter for about 70c a lb. The primary producers are getting 32c a lb. for that product. Many people think that the primary producers are getting a far better return than that. Farmers in my area have shown me figures which indicate that they have to milk two cows to buy one postage stamp. I might say that the cows are not high producers. Those farmers were only making 9c a milking out of their cows.

There is a need to safeguard the future of the dairy industry in South-east Queensland. It is something we need to look at very hard if we are to ensure that those who produce the same product of the same quality, wherever they may be, will get the same return. That is not happening at the moment. We need to work towards that end so that there will not be great disruption of the industry. To ensure that there are farmers to turn out these essential products in the future, we must do nothing to kill the incentive of those who are struggling at the moment. To bring this about we need more assistance by a continuation of the pasture subsidy scheme. This needs to be looked at from the point of view of farm viability rather than the position across the board. The services set up by the Minister to provide assistance for small businesses so that they can better handle their resources are essential. This should be fostered in a businesslike manner throughout the State.

Agricultural economists are faced with a difficult task. In most instances they are dealing with primary producers who, although not viable, are quite prepared to carry on with their present way of life. They simply will not change. This situation poses a lot of problems. Should we impose on people a way of life that is not of their choosing simply because in economic terms we have calculated that they would be better off if they do change their way of life? Alternatively, in this free-enterprise system should we only advise them and let them have the final say? I think all we can do is give them such advice.

Foot and mouth disease has been referred to. It is, of course, a threat to our beef and dairying industries. They could be wiped out if an outbreak of the disease were to assume major proportions. Recently we have heard arguments for and against the

feeding of swill to pigs, and it is time that headlines carried the message in a responsible manner. The feeding of imported meats to pigs is only one means by which foot and mouth disease could possibly be transmitted to animals in Australia. There are many other ways in which the disease could be introduced from overseas. We should tackle the problem from all angles instead of concentrating, for example, on the feeding of swill to pigs. This, in itself, poses a problem. What is to be done with food scraps if they are not fed to pigs?

Without doubt, the greatest problem confronting the primary producer is inflation. It is also the problem that, because of present marketing systems, he is least able to do anything about. For this reason it is imperative that inflation be brought to a halt. Unfortunately the Federal Government is obsessed with the idea of keeping inflation going to collect more and more taxes to pay for its extravagant socialist schemes. I cannot help thinking that the Federal Government fully realises that a heavier tax burden and inflation will ruin the primary producer. What will the Federal Government do then? I suggest it will go out and try to socialise the whole countryside. That was tried in Russia, and it just did not work. The Federal Labor Government must be removed from office and replaced with a Government that is aware of the necessity to promote primary production and to curb inflation so that people can be given value for their labour.

I have dealt with the local scene. In other parts of the world people are starving, and we should be very mindful of the need to produce to the maximum so that we can feed other people in the world. This cannot be done by the farmers alone; co-operative effort on the part of everyone in Australia is called for. All members of the community, whether they are city dwellers or farmers on the tip of the Cape York Peninsula, must realise that they are dependent on one another and together are essential to the well-being of the community. I am sure that with such unity we will go ahead.

I conclude by commending the Minister and his staff on the work they are doing in our essential primary industries. May they continue to be innovative in outlook and have sufficient foresight to nurture and develop our primary industries so that they will no longer be mere pawns in a game or disadvantaged as they are now.

**Mr. GLASSON** (Gregory) (7.50 p.m.): Before speaking to the Primary Industries Estimates, I wish to refer to comments made by certain Opposition members. I was more than shocked to hear the honourable members for Bundaberg and Nudgee slate the industry which, over many years, virtually carried this country. Firstly, the honourable members showed complete ignorance about what is happening in the industry and, secondly, they showed complete disregard



for the industry and the people working within it. Unfortunately I was not present to hear the shadow Minister for Primary Industries, the honourable member for Port Curtis, speak to the Estimates. At the time, I was in my office trying to make an appointment with the Rural Reconstruction Board for a man who has been in the industry all his life—a man who has reared 11 children on some of the toughest country in our State. Every one of his children has worked as part of the family unit to try to build up security for the future. His efforts were to no avail, because only last week the bank said it would no longer carry them. The man then came to Brisbane to seek finance from the Rural Reconstruction Board.

I shall present a few facts and figures about the wool barons and cattle kings of Western Queensland to destroy the theory advanced by the Opposition members. The 1974 Year Book statistics reveal that in December of that year—the 1975 figures are not available—the indebtedness of the pastoral industry in Queensland was \$600,000,000, and that of the 25,785 cattle producers in Queensland, 21,666 ran fewer than 500 head of cattle. So much for the great barons of the Outback! I am speaking of the men who live in the Outback, the salt of this earth. Neither of the two Opposition members is here to listen to me. Both ducked out when a few accurate figures were to be presented. Neither of them should put his foot in the electorate of Gregory during the forthcoming election campaign. If they do, I will make sure that I bring to the attention of the people who are in the depths of a depressed industry just what little consideration they have for them. I was really shocked by their statements and I am sure that anyone else with any sincerity in him must have been shocked, too.

The most hypocritical comment of all was made by the honourable member for Nudgee, who, at the end of his speech said, "We cannot afford to let primary industry go to the wall." About five or six weeks ago I was very pleased to hear the Leader of the Opposition say that in years to come, when the minerals that are probably contributing immensely to the State's income have eventually been worked out, we will still have the primary industries to fall back on. The honourable member for Nudgee reiterated those words. What hypocrisy in the light of his slating of the industry!

I am the first to admit that, during the wool boom, when prices were £1 a lb (that lasted for exactly two sales in 1950. I was in the industry then, but there is no way in the world that I got anything like £1 a lb) there were lairs and mugs in the industry. They made complete idiots of themselves. They bought big, flash cars and holiday homes. But are they in the industry now? They have long since gone. They came in after

drawing a block when many properties were cut up and said, "The world is at our feet."

Thank heavens the sugar industry is very prosperous at the moment. Let us pray that it stays that way. However, at the present cost there is no way in the world that there will not be a substitute for sugar. Even the Queensland Agent-General has sent word from London that a sweetener for confectionery is being extracted from corn. That sweetener is being used because of the high cost of sugar. In addition, every primary industry will have a fluctuating economy because of the changing seasons.

The other night it was lovely to hear the honourable member for Mansfield say that one thing has been forgotten—the seven-letter word, "drought". Thank heavens that over the past three years the economy of this country has not been affected by drought. I shudder to think what would have happened if it had been. We have had enough trouble trying to balance our budgets. Not many of them would have been balanced last year. I issue the stern warning that, in the pastoral industry, very few budgets will be balanced this financial year. If that fact is coupled with any possibility of drought, the industry will fold up.

Queensland has 5,404 sheep properties and of them 3,583 run fewer than 5,000 sheep. Any property in the 16 in. rainfall area that runs fewer than 5,000 sheep is an uneconomic unit, taking into account the prevailing costs in the industry such as rent, rates, running costs, shearing and transport. That does not take into account the servicing of debts, and approximately 80 per cent of the people on the land today have debts that must be serviced. Any property in the below 16 in. rainfall area with fewer than 500 head of cattle could not be an economic proposition.

An honourable member who is at the moment absent from the Chamber referred to headlines following the floods in the North last year claiming that entire herds were swept to sea. He said, "How is it that in only two years those graziers have more cattle than they ever had before in their lives?" That once again indicates the complete ignorance of the person who uttered that statement. One of two things is wrong. Possibly it was the headline. Definitely herds were swept to sea, but the person who has more cattle than he ever had in his life before did not have his stock swept out to sea two years ago. A person would not need to have much between his ears to work that out.

Probably the slowest production unit in the pastoral industry—or in any primary industry—would be cattle. From the day a grazier starts his enterprise by buying his production unit, which, of course, is the cow, it takes a minimum of five years to get any turnover. It is much easier to go to a banker or another lending institution and borrow money on a sheep enterprise,

because of its short-term factor, than to borrow money on a property in an area where a man is obliged to enter the cattle industry.

Between 1973-74 and 1974-75 the number of cattle killed fell by 100 per cent. An inflation rate over that period of not less than 20 per cent—and I am being particularly fair in using that figure—gives a fair indication of the predicament that the beef industry is in.

We have Opposition members talking of sheep barons and cattle kings and claiming that they joined Parliament to gain prestige. Let it be known that I am one who did not enter Parliament for prestige. I entered Parliament to back a fellow named Joh Bjelke-Petersen in fighting socialism in this State and to represent the people who live in the Outback. That is the only reason I entered Parliament. I would be much better off financially if I were at home looking after my own affairs and probably the greatest friend I will have in life—my wife. I have spent 28 nights in my bed at home since I entered Parliament. I did not enter Parliament for prestige purposes, believe you me!

Let us now look at some of the work of the Department of Primary Industries and what it is doing for the State. I make special comment on the research stations that have been established for the purpose of contributing to primary industry and giving expert advice to those in it. I was fortunate enough to accompany the Minister on a recent visit to the most northerly wool research station, established at Toorak. It is under the supervision and guidance of one of the most dedicated and capable men to be associated with this industry in Queensland in the last decade. I could name one equally as good probably 10 years ago. I refer to Dr. Hopkins. He and his staff, who are all young men, are injected with an enthusiasm that can come only from a leader such as Dr. Hopkins. I know that over the years the industry has had nothing but good to say of Toorak.

But nothing flourishes in a short time. It is the long-term application and dedication of the owner or producer and the adviser that eventually produces the fruit. At that field day we saw two breakthroughs in the industry that in the long term could well save millions of dollars. Probably one of the most ridiculously simple breakthroughs was the Mules painting. In other words, a certain area of the sheep is painted with a chemical that we have all used virtually all our lives—phenyle. It is amazing that this method was not discovered before. The degree of perfection that Dr. Hopkins and his team have achieved in this work is incredible to see. This method will eliminate what is probably the greatest drudgery in the wool industry, namely, the ringing of wethers. This is now an unnecessary operation. If a person has any pride at all in

his wool, the crutching of ewes is an essential part of his sheep husbandry. No matter how well a sheep is Mulesed, there will always be stains without crutching. With crutching goes wiggung, which is also part of sheep husbandry. Making that operation so simple is worth all that has gone into Toorak.

Probably the up-and-coming innovation is chemical shearing. This is still in its infancy, but it has reached the stage at which it is an economic operation. I refer to the chemical shearing of rams. The most difficult thing in the industry today is to get someone to go out and shear 150 or 200 rams when he can get a pen down the road for crutching. For anyone in the shearing industry, the last game in the world is shearing rams. If it is possible to pluck 150 to 180 rams, I see chemical shearing overcoming a considerable problem. In the near future I do not think entire flocks will be chemically shorn, but chemical shearing could well have application for small flocks in mixed farming on the Downs. Certainly I cannot see it being used on the larger areas in the West.

The original concept of this research station was to increase in some way the lambing percentages in particularly hot, open country, especially with the fluctuating food value in the pastures that prevail in those areas. I was probably one of those who were a little doubtful in the earlier days of Toorak, but it is very warming to see how valuable a contribution it is making.

This afternoon I heard the honourable member for Warwick speak about a Vote in the Estimates which has provoked a fair bit of dissatisfaction within the industry, and that is the stock levy. But as I said in the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Transport, we all want everything but no-one wants to pay for it. I see the honourable member for Bundaberg has just come back into the Chamber.

**Mr. Jensen:** I heard you had a go at me.

**Mr. GLASSON:** What I said was dead right.

**Mr. Jensen:** Say it again.

**Mr. GLASSON:** The honourable member can read it in "Hansard". I believe the stock levy is a sectional levy. In return for the levy it pays to the department, the industry gets tremendous value by way of the services provided such as the sheep and wool advisers and the veterinary surgeons stationed throughout the State. They provide a terrific service to the industry. But we must remember that some sections of industry in no way contribute to the fund and this is why it has to be considered as a sectional imposition. Now that the honourable member for Bundaberg has returned I will give full marks to him for trying to give some—

**Mr. Jensen:** Be fair.

**Mr. GLASSON:** I am being particularly fair. He asked that some sort of consideration be given to the small fruit grower and the small-crop farmer, the man who produces on an acre of country. Any man who makes a living from the soil of this country is the salt of the earth.

**Mr. Jensen:** That's right.

**Mr. GLASSON:** But at the same time the honourable member should be fair. He should accept that everybody else on the land deserves to make a living. If he had any common sense he would not refer to people as wool barons or vegetable barons or something else. A certain Commonwealth department takes care of any man who has too much money. If everybody were making plenty of money today and had an incentive to work and if taxation were levied on a fair and equitable basis, we would be flourishing instead of being one of the countries most deprived of incentive in the world. There is no incentive today to put one's shoulder to the wheel and work one's guts out for 60 hours a week when a hippie can live down the coast and receive social security benefits for doing nothing.

I want to return to the cattle industry. We heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about the eradication of brucellosis and other pests in the cattle industry. We had a pilot scheme running in central-western Queensland to try to keep these men on the properties instead of allowing them to become unemployed. But the honourable member for Nudgee talked about the country workers being forced to come to the city. Of course they were forced to come to the city, but if the Commonwealth Government had had the foresight to pay out a few more dollars, we would have been able to keep those men in their homes with their families—they were happy there—and, while keeping them in the industry, we would, at the same time have been eliminating the T.B. and brucellosis that are flourishing in the country. A while ago I was downstairs with a cattleman from the West trying to get him an appointment with the Minister. I heard a reference to one of the meatworkers out here who blew his brains out after getting on his skin a spot of blood from a beast that had brucellosis. Why not take some action to try to prevent hardship of the type to which the honourable gentleman referred?

(Time expired.)

**Mr. GOLEBY** (Redlands) (8.10 p.m.): I compliment the Minister and his departmental officers on the job they are doing for the man on the land and for primary industries generally in this State. All honourable members in the Chamber will agree, I am sure, that no Minister has a more arduous and diversified task than the Minister for Primary Industries. On checking through the various items under his control, I find that he is responsible for no fewer than 40

facets of primary production and that the department of which he is head administers about 50 Acts.

**Mr. Jensen** interjected.

**Mr. GOLEBY:** If the honourable member has any queries about the health of the Minister, he had better come to the 'Gabba and see him in action in the cricket match tomorrow.

The area that I represent was once looked upon as being the leading rural area for the production of small crops and was known as "The Salad Bowl". Because of the expansion that has taken place in the area recently, there are now no more than 1000 rural voters left in the electorate of Redlands out of a total of 25,000 voters. The rural area is confined to a very small section of the electorate and, speaking generally, it lies between Cleveland and the Logan River. However, in that area one sees some of the most highly productive farms to be found anywhere in Australia, and for many years the Redlands district has been known as a supplier of fruit and vegetables not only to Brisbane but also to southern capital cities.

**Mr. Jensen:** The Bundaberg area has superseded it.

**Mr. GOLEBY:** Because of its remoteness the Bundaberg area cannot compete. The honourable member for Bundaberg can say what he likes, but the products of the Bundaberg area cannot compete with those from the Redlands area.

Ten years ago these small holdings, which averaged 10 acres in size, were highly productive areas farmed by family units. However, because of present-day inflation, many of them have had to be sold or amalgamated with adjoining farms to make them viable units.

**Mr. Jensen:** You can't buy strawberries down there any more.

**Mr. GOLEBY:** No, because growers cannot get anyone to pick them. People prefer unemployment benefits to work. I could take the honourable member to Redlands and show him strawberry crops that are rotting because people are taking the dole instead of working as strawberry pickers.

The larger holdings in the Redlands area have been able to use specialised machinery and adopt bulk-handling methods, and the advent of the new Brisbane Markets at Rocklea—I think it was in 1959—brought a new era in fruit and vegetable marketing. They are controlled by the Brisbane Market Trust, which is administered by the Minister for Primary Industries, and they set the pattern for a new concept of marketing in Australia. The Brisbane Markets led the field in layout and design and also in presentation of the various commodities to the buyers. Both Newcastle and Melbourne have followed the example set here, and only a few weeks ago big new markets were opened at Flemington in Sydney.

This new concept of marketing can only be of benefit to the fruit and vegetable industry. The markets are more accessible to the growers, they give agents a better opportunity to display the goods, and because of the additional area in which the commodities are displayed buyers know exactly what they are getting.

Because fruit and vegetables are handled less frequently and because of the bulk-handling methods now adopted, generally speaking, the public receives a much better article. I probably do not need to remind honourable members of the shemozzle that the people of Brisbane put up with for many years at the old Roma Street markets. Any one who can cast his mind back to those days will remember what took place in the narrow alleyways there and appreciate what the new markets at Rocklea have meant to the fruit and vegetable industry.

The attitude of the Federal Government to taxation concessions to rural producers leaves a lot to be desired. Irrigation is the life-blood of any rural industry. Adequate water ensures a true harvest and a guaranteed harvest. Unfortunately, the water-harnessing programme which was well under way in this State has been seriously curtailed because of the negative thinking of the Canberra administration. Gone are the taxation concession incentives for the laying of main lines and the installation of dams, bores, windmills and so on. The concessions are now a pittance compared with those enjoyed by the rural industry previously.

There are many regional research stations throughout Queensland under the Minister's control. I should like to refer briefly to the Ormiston Experimental Station in the centre of my electorate. At that experimental station some of the new highly productive vegetable crops were developed as a commercial enterprise. Gone are the days of stringed beans. Housewives today look for only one type of bean—the stringless bean. The breeding of the stringless bean, as we know it in Australia today, was largely carried out at the Ormiston Experimental Station. I pay tribute to the Government and, in particular, to the plant breeders and the experimental station staff generally for the work accomplished in that field. It was there that the hybrid passionfruits which are now grown exclusively throughout Australia were produced. The strawberry varieties grown today can all be attributed to the work done by plant breeders and staff at the Ormiston Experimental Station.

The honourable member for Port Curtis placed emphasis on what he called the department's neglect of the papaw industry. I can assure honourable members that extensive trials are being carried out on papaws at the Ormiston Experimental Station. Similar trials have been carried out there over the last 10 years. A considerable amount of work is being done in that field. In addition to trying to locate and isolate

the disease known as die-back or crinkle top—in some cases, mosaic—the department has been able to breed a variety of papaw which carries very well, does not bruise and is easily picked from the tree because of the long stem it hangs on.

**Mr. Jensen** interjected.

**Mr. GOLEBY:** If the honourable member bought a papaw from a shop, he wouldn't know which was which.

The Redlands area pioneered the flower-growing industry in this State. Some \$3,000,000 worth of flowers are sold annually to the southern markets. Only yesterday I received a telephone call from frustrated flower growers to say that the southern markets were glutted with imports. Who would have ever thought that flowers would be imported into Australia in such large quantities that they would seriously jeopardise a flourishing industry in the southern part of the State? I was amazed to find that roses, carnations, chrysanthemums, lilies and freesias were being imported from Holland, Hawaii, Singapore and Columbia in South America. I understand that the bulk of the imports are coming from Columbia, a cheap-labour country, where the labour rate is \$2.50 a day, which is insignificant compared with the wages paid to labourers by the flower industry in Australia.

Those flowers are being imported into Australia with little or no quarantine restrictions. Normally if one wishes to introduce a new breed or variety of, say, carnation or chrysanthemum, one is allowed to bring in six specimens and, before they can be released from quarantine, they have to be fumigated with methylbromide to such an extent that the young plants are almost killed. Flowers, however, are, being imported in large quantities and are subject to little or no quarantine control. Many are imported from Columbia, in South America, where animal manure is used widely as fertiliser. South America is, of course, notorious for foot and mouth disease, and I am informed that the virus can be carried by any article entering Australia from such an infected area. I would ask the Minister to inquire into the importation of flowers, which already poses a threat to our local producers, to ensure that it is not the means by which foot and mouth disease is introduced into the State.

The poultry industry is a major primary industry in Queensland. As I said last week in another debate, 54 per cent of the industry is located within my electorate. I would refer briefly to the plight of the broiler producers. Under their contracts with the processors they have been squeezed to the limit in terms of both production and prices. Their prices have been reduced to such an extent that many of them can no longer meet their commitments to the Development Bank, from which they borrowed finance for the erection of sheds.

An industry to which little reference has been made today—in fact I cannot remember any other member mentioning it—is the pig industry. Queensland is a large producer of pigs, and my electorate contains three or four large piggeries that are well operated and very efficient.

**Mr. Jensen:** What do you think about swill-feeding of pigs?

**Mr. GOLEBY:** I have let everyone know where I stand on that matter.

The quality of the product from the piggeries in my electorate is a credit to the operators.

The honourable member for Cooroora has mentioned the dairying industry, and I do not think I need elaborate further on it. Everyone is aware of the problems confronting it. I would remind the Committee, however, of the fact that only two years ago the Federal Government eliminated the free-milk scheme for school-children. The Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for Education would do Queensland a great service if they were to reintroduce the scheme on a State basis. In spite of the claims of the so-called experts in Canberra, the scheme was of tremendous benefit to school-children in Queensland.

Finally, I compliment the Minister and his department on the work they do. I look forward to the day when he can again visit my electorate and inspect the Ormiston Experimental Farm.

**Mr. HARTWIG** (Callide) (8.24 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the presentation of his Annual Report, which displays on the front cover a photograph of four distinguished gentlemen, namely, the Premier, the Governor, the Minister and Dr. Harvey. The report is a very comprehensive one, setting out in detail the work of all sections of the Department of Primary Industries, including those dealing with livestock research, dairying research, pasture research, field and crop research and horticulture. Unfortunately only two members of the A.L.P. are in the Chamber at the moment. Two A.L.P. members are in Rockhampton entertaining Mr. Bob Hawke, but I do not know where the others are.

In a great primary-producing nation like Australia, 6 per cent of the population work unlimited hours to feed the balance of the community. Yet the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had the cheek to say he could not understand why people were leaving the land! The Minister introduced his Estimates at a rather difficult time, especially in the light of the policy of hatred emanating from Canberra towards our primary producers. When I say "policy of hatred", I mean it; no Australian Government could be proud of the record of hatred displayed by the Whitlam Government towards the primary sector of this great nation. As a matter of fact, the Federal A.L.P. has earned the title of the "Alien Party"—alien to all our ways of life.

Our great nation has witnessed a flood of imports. Mr. Whitlam has stated openly, "I will not prop up primary industries; they must stand on their own feet." He also said, "If need be, we will import all our produce and foodstuffs." Where would he get them? From the Communist countries; from his brethren in places like Red China.

**Mr. Jensen:** Who said that?

**Mr. HARTWIG:** That is what Mr. Whitlam said. He has even drawn up large contracts for the importation of canned and frozen vegetables from Red China grown in—we know what they do with their night-soil—

**Mr. Moore:** Human excreta.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** That is so. This food is being brought to this nation but a lot of it would not even make good pig-swill that the honourable member for Bundaberg referred to a little while ago.

Under the Federal Labor Government the man on the land has had to fight inflation rates that have gone beserk—so beserk that they are now running at between 15 and 20 per cent. Unfortunately he cannot pass on his increased costs.

In 1974-75 primary industry production was worth \$1,203 million—an increase of \$131,000,000 over the value of 1973-74 production. The policy of the Federal Government towards primary industry was designed to take away many things. Two or three days after the election Whitlam and Barnard, without a Cabinet, revalued the dollar. That cost the primary industries of Australia about \$27,000,000.

We often hear the Prime Minister talk about democracy and our Constitution. But he did not even have a Cabinet when he decided to revalue the Australian currency! That immediately put Australian producers at a disadvantage compared with those of other nations. When I was in Japan I was told that devaluation meant a difference of 10c a lb in the price of our beef. Japan was therefore buying its meat from New Zealand and the United States of America. Whitlam did that deliberately. By no other means could he get down the price of meat in Australia. That was his first act after being elected in 1972, and he took the step on Christmas Eve without having a Cabinet to consult. I suppose he and Barnard had a few drinks together and decided to revalue our dollar.

Under the previous Federal Government, timber treatment, soil conservation, contouring, water improvement, land clearing, fencing and yard repairs were allowable taxation deductions. Under Whitlam they are not; the primary producer is allowed to claim something like 5 per cent or 8 per cent over a period of 10 or 20 years. This took away the incentive from the primary producer.

Whitlam took away the butter subsidy, the phosphate bounty and the free-milk scheme and imposed an export tax of 1.6c

a lb. on beef—one of the most vicious impositions ever made. Then he tried to introduce a capital gains tax. If he gets a majority in the Senate, he will bring it in; make no mistake about that. He had a go at unearned income but the force of his own caucus made him withdraw it. Indirectly he got at the primary producer by taking away mail delivery runs, reducing air services and imposing additional fuel costs on air services. He has been responsible for everything that has anything to do with inflation, even down to postage, which cost 7c in 1972 and costs 18c today.

When I was a lad I used to plough with three horses and a two-disc plough. If I did an acre in one day, I thought I had had a good day—if the horse did not knock up. Today, with modern techniques and mechanisation of farming and agricultural implements, ploughing 100 or 150 acres is not beyond the average man who works all day.

**Mr. Jensen:** It is keeping costs down.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** The honourable member should be the last person to talk about costs. His leader in Canberra has virtually crucified the primary producers in this State.

We have heard a good deal about the stabilisation of the beef industry, and the honourable member for Mackay suggested it should have a statutory organisation similar to that which controls the sugar industry.

**Mr. Jensen:** That's right; sensible, too.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** The honourable member does not know what he is taking about when he says that. We had the dairy subsidy scheme and the equalisation scheme, and what has happened to the butter industry today?

**Mr. Jensen:** They wouldn't know what goes on down in the bottom paddock. Half the time, they wouldn't know that the cows are calving.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** That is right.

In 1962-63 butter sales totalled 36,455 tonnes whereas in 1971-72 they were right down to a little more than 10,000 tonnes. In 1967-68, Queensland had 511,000 dairy cows whereas in 1972-73 it had 375,000. Such is the sorry state of that industry today. Queensland, with its good rainfall and coastal belt areas that are suitable for dairying, is importing most of its butter and other dairy requirements from other States—no doubt due to the Federal Government's action.

A good deal has been said about the beef barons. For some unknown reasons—I suppose ignorance among other things—Opposition members think that when a beast is sold for \$200 or \$100 the price is all profit and the grazier puts it in the bank. They do not know anything about land clearing, water improvements, fencing or yard building. They would not understand that a

grazier or farmer ploughs most of his income back into his property. I know of many people today who are living in substandard dwellings on highly improved properties. They know full well that it is the property that keeps them; they do not keep the property. That is something that Labor members do not understand.

**Mr. Jensen:** Last year when all the cattle got washed out in the flood—

**Mr. HARTWIG:** The honourable member for Bundaberg has verbal diarrhoea. He should keep quiet.

Last year beef production totalled 404,525 tonnes, which was an increase of 20 per cent. Production of veal was 14,212 tonnes, which was an increase of 11 per cent. Pig-meat production decreased by 22 per cent, which is rather significant—and why? This has allowed the Commonwealth Government to open the gate to imports. As I pointed out to the Minister the other day, last year Australia imported 1,600 tonnes of ham and pork shoulders.

**A Government Member:** Where from?

**Mr. HARTWIG:** Ireland, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Canada, Argentina. By a little socialist trick, the Federal Government is trying to implement a scheme under which all swill-feeding of pigs would be stopped. It is another socialist plot. When the socialists get control of the unions that pick up the swill, they will say, "If you don't give us that, we will go on strike." That will give them the greatest lever for militant action ever obtained by any union in this country. They will say, "We refuse to pick up your swill, and you can call in the troops if you like." Then there will be disease.

There are a few other matters on which I wish to comment. Since I entered this Assembly, the State Government has extended the limit of Agricultural Bank assistance from \$20,000 to \$30,000. That is a step in the right direction. The sum of \$20,000 was too low, and the extension to \$30,000 has helped many primary producers in my area. I wish to place on record their appreciation of that action by the Government. As a matter of fact, last year Agricultural Bank advances totalled \$18,779,000.

The Minister also announced recently and advised me (because of some pressure, I admit) that a seriology laboratory would be set up in Rockhampton. It will now be possible to have blood plasma tested in Rockhampton for tuberculosis and brucellosis instead of sending samples to Yeerongpilly and having to await the results. This has not been satisfactory in the past, and the establishment of this laboratory has been greatly welcomed. No doubt the Minister was told of this on his visit to Rockhampton. This is a long-awaited facility, and I congratulate the Minister on its provision.

In Biloela there is a very fine research station which I consider to be one of the best in the State. It has helped considerably in research work carried out by various departmental officers in the area.

I refer briefly to the pineapple industry and small crop growers. The pineapple industry is making representations for assistance following the recent freight increases. If pineapple growers have to pay the full increase, many of them will be forced out of production.

One thing that is regrettable is the closure of the butter factory at Biloela. That was a sad day for Biloela. In the result, the dairy farmers in the area have to send their milk in bulk tankers to Monto for treatment.

Another matter worthy of comment is the recent huge loss in the wheat crop of the Callide and Dawson Valleys as a result of most unseasonal heavy rains. Up to 8 and 10 inches of rain have fallen in the Central Queensland area, and only about 38 per cent of the wheat crop was taken off before the rain. Many crops have been damaged and will have no value, and this after there were signs of a record season.

I want to comment also on the cotton industry. Last year 26,500 bales of cotton were harvested in Queensland. We have a very modern gin in Biloela and the chairman of the Cotton Marketing Board there, Mr. Shepparton, has called on growers to plant as much cotton as possible this season. We also grow oilseed. We have a lucrative lucerne co-operative that supplies lucerne to most areas of Queensland. We contribute greatly to the poultry industry. There are many poultry farmers around Wowan who supply fresh eggs to the Rockhampton market. This is diversification.

I cannot let the opportunity pass without calling on the Minister to consider a scheme for drought mitigation. Too often while it is raining we forget about drought. We have been very, very fortunate in that, whilst we have had depressed prices in our primary industries, we have at least had good seasonal conditions that have helped people to exist on their holdings. But a lot of people are not conserving fodder and I believe we should instigate a programme to encourage people to conserve fodder for the day when the rains fail. I believe the Government and the department should start something positive in this direction.

As I said the other day, the Industries Assistance Commission presented to the Federal Government a scheme to provide some assistance for the people on the land involving an amount of \$159,000,000. I know this will be another report that will be pigeon-holed in Canberra. Because it is just too good to think of Mr. Whitlam or any of his officers helping the people on the land, I know primary producers will not get the benefit of it. One man told me here in Brisbane the other day that he is collecting unemployment relief under six names

and addresses each week. One man getting six cheques a week! He is not even called on to explain. Every month a form is sent to each different address, he collects it, fills it in and gets six unemployment cheques a week.

Where are the 400,000 unemployed? I remember in the 1930's during the depression when people were queued—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Kaus): Order! The honourable member will return to the Estimates.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** They are multiplying their benefits by six. I think it is a great shame that in this nation today we have bludgers who refuse to work and yet collect up to six different unemployment cheques on which, of course, they exist very well.

**Mr. GYGAR** (Stafford) (8.43 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries, I would particularly like to direct the Minister's attention to two Votes—one of \$33,787 to be set aside for the Chemical Laboratory and \$749,000 for the Marketing Division Standards Branch. Over the past few months we have heard a lot about the problems of pesticides and pesticide control in Queensland. Pesticide control falls basically to those two branches, for which we have set aside almost \$1,000,000. Despite the statements of ill-informed and naive people to the contrary, pesticides, including insecticides, fungicides and herbicides, are necessary for high productivity in our rural industries and will remain an important component of control strategies in the foreseeable future. While we would wish it were possible to introduce pesticides which were specific for the pest to be controlled, it is an unfortunate fact that at the biochemical and physiological level, harmful organisms are exactly the same as helpful organisms. Again, if we can restrict these pesticides to use on rural land, few problems will arise from their application. However, we have to recognise that they do move away from the target area into other areas by drift during application, by run-off due to soil erosion and other factors and by being carried to the market-place on the produce onto which they are sprayed. Therefore, the potential hazard of pesticides must be recognised, and I suggest to the Minister that something must be done about it.

The current procedures for the control and registration of pesticides in Queensland must be examined, as they are not adequate. The Agricultural Standards Act was designed primarily to ensure that all chemical products were registered before sale, that the procedures adopted would be efficacious for the purpose for which they were intended and that the standard of production was maintained. There is nothing in that Act or any other measure that has been introduced to say that pesticides must be used in a safe, efficient manner.

The registration of pesticides in Queensland is vested at present in the Agricultural Requirements Board. It consists of eight members, all of whom, unfortunately, are officers of the Department of Primary Industries. They are the Standards Officer, the Director of the Agricultural Chemical Laboratory Branch, a plant entomologist, a veterinary parasitologist, a plant pathologist, a botanist and two veterinary surgeons.

Even accepting for the moment that the board must be composed of governmental officers, in view of the possible hazards to the environment, it is quite disturbing to find that there is not included on that committee any representative from the Department of Health or experts from the Fisheries Branch, the Department of Lands, the Department of Forestry or the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Service. It is left to the one small section of the economy that the Minister controls and does not take account of what may happen outside that narrow field.

I would argue that not only should the interdepartmental role of the board be expanded but also its decision-making process should include non-governmental personnel. There are many people outside government, with expertise from which the Government would benefit, who would be more than willing to offer their services to assist the State in this cause. I suggest that it would not cost much more than the \$750,000 already provided for the Standards Branch to pay allowances to some of those men, if they had to be paid.

I suggest to the Minister that he look closely at the existing system in the United Kingdom. That Government's main source of advice on risks arising from pesticides is the Advisory Committee on Pesticides and Other Toxic Chemicals. The committee has an independent chairman and other independent members from outside Government circles, together with representatives, both administrative and technical, of interested departments and research councils. It reviews all data relevant to the introduction of a pesticide and makes recommendations to the Government, which takes the final decision on registration. I suggest that a similar system should be introduced in Queensland. We should look at the registration board there, recognise its inadequacies and, in addition to the generous Vote of \$750,000 already provided, put a little more aside for the registration and control of pesticides.

I suggest that the Minister might also look at the labelling of pesticides, which calls for immediate and extensive revision. Statements about toxicity of pesticides at present are completely inadequate. "Poison", "Poison S6" or "Poison S7" conveys absolutely nothing to the user. All he knows is that there is something unsafe about it and he should not drink it. The labels carry no remarks or notes about possible damage to the human system or any other system, what environmental hazards could flow from

them, what sort of precautions should be taken against contact or ingestion, or even what treatment should be undertaken if an accident happens with these pesticides.

The label of a pesticide is probably the single most important piece of information available to users. If it is not on the label, you can bet your life, Mr. Kaus, that the person using it will not look up an extensive Government manual to find out what he should do with it, what he should not do with it and what the dangers are. I suggest that we must ensure that the labels contain all the relevant information that can be needed and should be required, and that in the Standards Branch and the Marketing Branch surely we have the base to spring from to organise both of these things. There is under the Minister's control a chemical laboratory for which he has provided \$33,000. Surely we should use some small part of that money for these purposes.

I suggest that our current administrative system to deal with pesticides suffers from the fact that two departments—Primary Industries and Health—are involved, although the former has the main responsibility for registration. For example, I have received information from the D.P.I. Standards Branch that, while applicants requesting registration of products were told to obtain information on poison classifications and first aid from the Health Department, at no stage does the Agricultural Requirements Board ensure that the information stated on the proposed label complies with Health Department requirements. That has got to be the greatest bureaucratic Catch 22 ever heard of! People must go to the Health Department, but then there is no requirement that they take any notice whatsoever of the information they are given. I suggest there should be more interdepartmental liaison in this type of thing to ensure that, as agricultural products come on the market, they are adequately assessed and labelled.

An unnecessarily large range of pesticides is available, which I think most of the Minister's officers would recognise. But that is the free-market system. One thing they should recognise about the free-market system is that if those pesticides were sold through a chemist shop, it is almost certain that, because of their level of toxicity, a purchaser would need a prescription for them. Why does that double standard exist? Why is it that if a man wants to buy 33 g of a substance, he has to have a prescription, but if he wants to buy three-quarters of a tonne, he can drive away with it in the back of a truck? I think the Standards Branch should exercise a little more control over this. The whole problem is that if a pesticide is approved for registration, it can be sold; that is the end of the matter; there are no further restrictions and no further requirements. As long as a pesticide is registered, it is on the open-market system. The only way any Standards Branch officer can obtain any inkling as to how a pesticide



is intended to be sold or what its purpose is, is by looking on the application form to see the size of package it is going to go in. If he sees that it is going to go into 1 cwt bags, he can assume that it is going to be sold for agricultural purposes; if it is going out in 30 g packets, it is for home gardeners or prescription purposes. That is just not good enough.

As in most cases when toxic materials are recommended for specific purposes there are equally effective and less hazardous materials available, I do not understand why the Government does not exercise some sort of control through the Minister's Standards Branch. It is a matter of public health and safety, and it is very important in the over-all field of primary industries.

I believe there is an urgent need for the Government to re-examine its system to regulate the use of pesticides, as well as the sale and standard of pesticides. The Department of Primary Industries issues recommendations for the control of pests. There must be some legal force or power rather than mere recommendation. In this way much misuse of pesticides would be avoided. I think the label must be drawn to the specific attention of those drafting any proposals that come out of the Standards Branch. I would remind the Minister that it is not uncommon to find on pesticide labels recommendations which no longer conform to D.P.I. recommendations; there is no control whatsoever.

Moving from the field of pesticides, I should like to draw the Minister's attention very quickly to the subject of milk and milk deliveries in the Brisbane metropolitan area. Again this is a problem that comes under the control of the Standards Branch and the Marketing Branch in the Minister's Department. I put it to the Minister that it is quite clear that the standard of milk being delivered to suburban households in Brisbane has fallen over the last 12 months. In fact, it has fallen since the introduction of homogenised or blue-top milk. I do not know what has happened, but something definitely has gone wrong.

**Mr. Burns:** The gold-topped stuff is not much chop either.

**Mr. GYGAR:** The Leader of the Opposition says that gold top is not much chop, but that is a matter of personal preference. We all know that in homogenised milk the fat is broken down so that it spreads evenly through the milk. In the plain pasteurised milk, which is not homogenised, the cream can rise to the top. Until a few years ago, milk was bottled in such a way as to allow the cream to build up at the top. On being taken out of a refrigerator, the bottle could be shaken until the cream was distributed evenly throughout the milk. It was, to all intents and purposes, homogenised by shaking. This just cannot be done any more. As a connoisseur of milk, I can tell the Minister that it is not up to scratch.

**Mr. Burns:** You're not a good advertisement for it. Having a look at you, I would give milk up.

**Mr. GYGAR:** Looking at the Leader of the Opposition, I can suggest quite a few things that people should give up; but I won't bring personalities into it.

The problem arises not from a lack of refrigerated delivery vans but in production. In closing, I ask the Minister to direct his attention to the production methods so that we can get back to the days when, on a bottle of milk being shaken, the cream can be distributed evenly throughout the milk instead of its gathering in little lumps, as it does at present.

**Mr. GUNN (Somerset) (8.56 p.m.):** Although the production of minerals in Queensland has increased tremendously over the past few years, the State is nevertheless basically a primary-producing one. As can be expected, in recent years many changes have occurred in our primary industries, particularly in agriculture.

Queenslanders can be proud of the fact that they live in a State in which nearly all crops known to man can be grown successfully. For example, grain and vegetables are grown in the south-eastern corner of the State; grain is also grown on the Darling Downs and in Central Queensland; fruit is grown almost all over the State; tobacco is cultivated in the northern inland areas, and sugar cane is grown right along the tropical coast. Furthermore, dairying is carried out along the coastal belt; cattle-raising is conducted virtually all over the State; and sheep are reared in the drier areas. All this is achieved in spite of the fact that, generally speaking, Queensland has a harsh climate, one that puts primary industry at risk.

The area that I represent—containing the Lockyer and Brisbane Valleys, portion of the Darling Downs and part of the South Burnett region—is a very fertile one. Over the years many changes have occurred within my electorate. I can well remember the days when crops, particularly vegetables, were harvested and consigned in bags to markets in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. Nowadays most crops are marketed in crates. Furthermore, a large part of the Lockyer Valley now produces baby carrots and beetroot. These are harvested by machines and sold under contract to canneries principally in the metropolitan area. The Lockyer Valley has now assumed the title of "Salad bowl of the State" at the expense of Redlands and supplies huge quantities of cheap food for the masses.

I am concerned at the importation of vegetables and I cannot understand the attitude of the public towards it. The Lockyer Valley, as I say, grows baby carrots. It supplies them to Edgell at a cost of 8c a kg, or less than 4c a lb. My wife was recently in a David Jones store and saw baby carrots packed in syrup and imported from Belgium offered for sale at 70c a lb.

**Mr. Burns:** Have you ever bought Edgell's carrots in a can?

**Mr. GUNN:** I must admit that I have not.

**Mr. Burns:** The cheapest thing in packed food is the grower's product from the farm. Canning and marketing add tremendously to the cost.

**Mr. GUNN:** It is a fairly cheap product compared with imported products.

I do not know whether honourable members have tried Golden Circle beetroot. It is without doubt a very good, cheap product. It is packed in a fairly large tin and sells for 15c. Women, who are inclined to eat salads, find it excellent.

**Mr. Burns:** No-one thinks of buying beetroot, cooking it and cutting it up as people used to.

**Mr. GUNN:** That is quite so. People do not seem to be able to get the same flavour as Golden Circle, which cooks the beetroot in a special syrup. This line is a very good seller. I like it. Sales of beetroot are worth over \$10,000,000 a year to my area.

**Mr. Burns:** How much did it cost your area when the produce merchant in Sydney went broke?

**Mr. GUNN:** I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has referred to this matter. This man cost one co-operative in my area \$248,000.

**Mr. Burns:** What can you do about him? Can you take action?

**Mr. GUNN:** No action can be taken against him.

**Mr. Burns:** Doesn't he have a fidelity bond?

**Mr. GUNN:** No. I had a look at his assets and he has next to nothing.

People must be very wary about where they sell their produce. It is very foolish to allow a man such a lot of credit.

**Mr. Burns:** People do. When you send your produce to the market, you do not check to see whether the agent has a lot of money.

**Mr. GUNN:** My God, I do. Anybody who is sensible does that. I watch where I sell my cattle. If the Leader of the Opposition were in this game, he would check, too. There is no profit to be made in selling to men who cannot afford to buy. When \$2 firms are formed, it is not long before they go out of business.

**Mr. Burns:** Have you tried to change the Act governing those firms?

**Mr. GUNN:** It is a pretty hard Act to change. For every one of the men who go bad, there are quite a number of small men who do well in little family businesses.

**Mr. Burns:** It's not a bad speech we're making, is it?

**Mr. GUNN:** They do extremely well.

I congratulate the Minister on the extremely hard work he did to get a 25 per cent reduction in freight rates. This will not mean so much to my area but it will be very helpful to people in western areas. Thanks to the Minister's efforts in Cabinet, this will mean a lot to country people, who were very worried about freight costs. On behalf of the people who use the railway system—and I have quite a number of them in my electorate—I thank the Minister for a job well done. I do not know whether members representing western areas have thanked the Minister but I think they should because he worked extremely hard to get this assistance.

I am not as concerned about the beef industry as I was some time ago. I can see light at the end of the tunnel. Conditions have improved somewhat. After listening to the Minister's speech, I realise that he does not believe that there has been a massive improvement—but we have come a fair way. Like the Minister I feel that in 1976, while we may not move up to where we were, we will see a marked improvement. I am pleased to be associated with a Government that has done so much to assist primary producers by way of the Rural Reconstruction Board, through which many of my people received assistance.

While speaking about beef, it is pleasing to note that the Japanese buyers have come back into the market. They are taking small tonnages. Recently, when we were in Japan with the delegation, mention was made of the fact that this would be the way Japan would come back into the market. They have kept their word and we have had small orders—I think the last one was for 20,000 tonnes—from which Australia will benefit greatly. There has been a slight recovery in the American market also. There seems to be a grey area between the Australian Meat Board and the media, particularly the country newspapers.

**Mr. Burns:** That last announcement took a lot of money out of the funds.

**Mr. GUNN:** I think that that was a shocking shame. I have not done any research into this matter, but it cost the graziers quite a lot. This is unfortunate because they cannot afford it. There should be closer liaison between the board and the media that give out the news to the graziers who market the beef. However, I agree that the beef industry has shown a certain amount of improvement and I hope that the outlook will be brighter in 1976.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Why do you say that?

**Mr. GUNN:** I am sorry that the honourable member was not in the Chamber earlier. If he had been here, he would have heard what I said. I do not want to repeat it. It

would be well over his head. Those honourable members who have been listening will agree that the industry has shown a marked improvement.

The raising from \$20,000 to \$30,000 in Agricultural Bank loans has been of terrific assistance to those who require finance. A good deal of this finance must be handled wisely. A person going onto the land who applies for finance should be very carefully screened. Over the years, in my area, I have known of a taxi driver who decided to buy a property. The only finance available was through the Agricultural Bank. I suppose he was entitled to his chance. I do not hold that against him. But in nine cases out of 10 people like him will go down. They do not seem to have an understanding of the land, how to work it and handle it, and the different types of season. I think that a person has to be born a farmer to be expert in this area. Sometimes a good deal of Agricultural Bank finance could be put to better use by giving it to a person who is skilled in farming or grazing although, as I said, every person is entitled to his chance.

It is interesting to note that the traditional sources of lending—the trading banks—are not involved as much in rural financing as they used to be. This is because the Government, through the Agricultural Bank and the Rural Reconstruction Board, has taken over quite a substantial proportion of the financing that was traditionally the province of the trading banks.

Over the past few years, we have been blessed with favourable seasons, particularly in South-east Queensland. I cannot remember a very mild winter, such as we have just had, followed by excellent Spring rains.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** The farmers have never had it so good.

**Mr. GUNN:** I agree with the honourable member. If we had had better prices and a different Federal Government, we would never have had it so good. Unfortunately this was not to be, but there could be a change in the near future.

It is interesting to note the extension of grain-growing into the Lockyer Valley and the increase in soybean production. In the last couple of years it has increased five or sixfold. This is quite heartening. It is a crop that does very well, and it is quite hardy. I do not know what it will pay next season, but it was quite lucrative last year. It certainly added to the income of those who grew it.

Whilst potato crops have been very good, the price has been very bad. There have also been imports of potatoes from overseas. I cannot understand the necessity to import potatoes at a time when thousands of tons are available, particularly in Victoria.

**Mr. Burns:** Didn't you tell me that the Fish Board was using spuds from the southern States?

**Mr. GUNN:** The honourable member knew that; I did not have to tell him. I told the Fish Board about it. I do not know if they were familiar with the situation.

**Mr. Burns:** We cannot really complain about imports from overseas when our own fish marketing authority in Queensland used potatoes from the South.

**Mr. GUNN:** I make no apology for the Fish Board. I have already told them what I think about it, just as I tell others what I think. I have also said that, if it is true that the Federal Government has lent Caines \$1,000,000 or \$1,500,000 to build a factory in Victoria to use potatoes imported from Canada, that, too, is wrong. Equally it is wrong for a board or anyone else to import potatoes to this country. I do not think it is necessary, particularly when 40,000 tons of potatoes are still waiting to be dug in Victoria, and the potatoes left in the ground in Queensland would not be worth taking out.

I should now like to mention the tuberculosis and brucellosis eradication campaigns which have proved successful over the years. I think it could be said that 95 per cent of tuberculosis has been eradicated from the State, and 100 per cent in the dairying industry. A considerable amount of work has been done in brucellosis eradication. I recognise that this is a Commonwealth-State campaign, and it is excellent. I do not know the incidence of brucellosis at present, particularly in beef herds. It was fairly prevalent in dairy herds. I have had it myself, and I know what it is like. I did not think I was going to recover from it.

**Mr. Burns:** Did you recover?

**Mr. GUNN:** I recovered very well, as a matter of fact. I do not think this is really a joking matter. I feel extremely sorry for meatworkers and others who have to face the possibility of contracting this disease. The sooner it can be eliminated, the better.

**Mr. Burns:** Do you support a compensation scheme?

**Mr. GUNN:** I have always supported a compensation scheme.

We in this State are very fortunate in the way in which stock diseases have been combated. We are extremely fortunate that we have almost eliminated tuberculosis and brucellosis. I am not saying that the cattle tick has been brought under control, but much work has been done in that area, particularly in the field of inoculation. I think it was Dr. Les Callow who was sent overseas to learn about tick control, and a vaccine has now been developed that is sought in tropical areas all over the world where Bigemina and the Argentine strain of Babesiosis, in which the tick is a vector, have been found. This has been done by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries, and the vaccine has been sold

very cheaply to farmers. I do not know what its cost is now. I know that it was about 10c a dose when I bought it. It is a very safe vaccine and once cattle have been inoculated with it they have a passive immunity.

I should now like to deal with the milk situation, which is always a touchy subject. I do not agree with those who make unfavourable comments about the quality of milk. I think that its quality has increased.

**Mr. Burns:** That bloke didn't know what he was talking about.

**Mr. GUNN:** I don't know; he might just have been unlucky, but the quality of the milk is excellent. Milk is tested at the various factories for antibiotics, blood and dirt and is handled in a very clean way. We assure the people that they get an excellent product, and I really believe that they do. Tests are carried out also on the fat content of milk. I know there is quite a lot of ill feeling amongst a lot of farmers who would like to supply milk to Brisbane. It is probably a lucrative market. I know that the Minister has been involved in this problem, as have a lot of honourable members. Unfortunately, it is a fact that every dairy farmer in South Queensland cannot supply the Brisbane milk market. Unfortunately, once again, we lost the school milk subsidy. That was a bitter blow because it was worth over \$2,000,000 to the industry.

**Mr. Greenwood:** Some country towns don't get fresh milk at all.

**Mr. GUNN:** That is most unfortunate because I have always regarded milk as a very wholesome food. As a matter of fact, I would say it is a complete food.

(Time expired.)

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (9.16 p.m.):—It certainly is pleasing to listen to the points of view of such a large number of members from both sides of the Committee. In all, 20 members have given me and the officers of my department the opportunity to listen to their points of view, and some excellent contributions have been made. Most comments I agreed with, and it is good to see that generally speaking the Estimates as presented have been accepted by members on both sides of the Committee. There are certain things with which I do not agree, but I will now go through the speeches and comment on the propositions put forward by the various speakers.

As usual, the honourable member for Port Curtis made a very good contribution. I appreciate his assurances regarding reports about my health. I am happy to advise that I am not in pretty good health but in really good health. However, it is reassuring to know that these rumours to the contrary did not emanate from the Opposition. I did not think they would, because I think all Opposition members know I am a force to be reckoned with and fairly fit.

I heartily endorse the remarks of all members about the valuable service the late Jack Jones gave to the rural industries of Queensland and Australia. It was a great blow to me when I was overseas to hear of the sudden passing of Jack Jones—not only because of his value as an officer but also because he had become a personal friend. His death was untimely, and many of us suffered a great loss.

In regard to the allocation for my department, I share the views of the honourable member for Port Curtis that the amount is perhaps not sufficient to carry out all the things which we would like to do. However, with the present financial stringency and with our dependence on inadequate Commonwealth allocations, it is the best we can do. The honourable member indicated his general support for an effective stabilisation scheme for the beef industry. Others have touched on this, and I believe that we all agree on the need for some form of stabilisation. I believe that this applies not only to the beef industry but to all primary industries. Because of the parlous economic plight of the beef industry, I suppose the need is perhaps a little more evident there. I am sure the honourable member appreciates that ultimately the decision must be taken by the beef producers themselves.

In answer to his specific questions on papaws, the position is that both yellow crinkle and mosaic are virus diseases and there is just no simple or economic way of controlling their spread. Periodic outbreaks occur and the only thing that can be done is to replant. Die-back in papaws is being investigated at the Redlands Horticultural Research Station. It is suspected that it is a nutritional problem.

The honourable member for Port Curtis levelled a number of criticisms at the Wacol Artificial Insemination Centre. Most of them are half truths and refer to occasions a number of years ago. He referred to incorrect labelling of semen. In one case a privately owned Hereford bull—not a Poll Hereford, as claimed by the honourable member—was used for semen collection and there was a complaint—so far unsubstantiated—that Friesian calves resulted from the use of some of the semen. Perhaps a Friesian bull jumped the fence. Who knows? However, that complaint was made two years ago and, after correspondence, the matter seems to have lapsed.

An allegation was also made concerning incorrect labelling of Santa Gertrudis semen. That apparently referred to an incident alleged to have occurred in the late 1960's. The department has no record to substantiate it and cannot accept any responsibility. It attempted to ascertain the precise nature of the complaint but received no answers to its correspondence.

In reply to the charge of incorrect handling of semen, I point out that 100,000 doses of semen produced each year are used commercially. The percentage of complaints

is virtually nil, and any complaint is acted upon. The average first-service non-return rate exceeds 70 per cent.

I listened carefully to what the honourable member said about losses of semen through failure to put liquid nitrogen into owners' units. There is only one case to which he could possibly be referring, and that also occurred some years ago.

The facts are that a certain studmaster had several thousand doses of semen custom collected in about 1971-72. The semen was stored at Wacol and nitrogen was put into the client's container. In this case the container failed twice. After the first failure, semen was collected from the property to replace the stocks, at no charge to the studmaster. Unfortunately, the container failed a second time and the semen was lost.

The department has always told owners of containers that they should insure their semen stocks against failure of the containers. It is now investigating ways in which privately owned semen stocks held in the owners' containers can be included in the department's own insurance cover.

I also assure honourable members that private veterinary surgeons collecting semen in the field can have that semen processed either at Wacol or at a private laboratory. The majority of private vets using custom collection continue to patronise Wacol.

The experience and skill of the collector is all-important in determining the success rate of semen processing. I know one experienced private practitioner using Wacol processing who has a record of virtually 100 per cent of his collections being processed satisfactorily. I am also aware that in one particular case the conception rate was in excess of 80 per cent.

As to technician training at Wacol—the techniques taught and the intensity of the training conform to the requirements laid down by the chief veterinary officers of all States in the Commonwealth. The department has always provided an artificial insemination training service, and alternative services are provided by at least three other organisations. People have a free choice, and applicants for the departmental course who cannot be accommodated are always referred to the other courses available.

The honourable member for Fassifern made mention of the various measures that the Government has already taken to assist the beef industry. He also pointed out the problems that the Government faces in endeavouring to get an Australia-wide stabilisation plan for beef. The structure of the industry differs greatly between one State and another, and the type of arrangement that may suit one State may not suit another. Nevertheless, an attempt must be made to develop a generally acceptable scheme that will reduce the massive fluctuations that occur in the incomes of producers.

The honourable member for Fassifern is well aware of that need, because he is a very valuable member of the committee of which I am privileged to be chairman that is examining the problems of the beef industry and recommending on them. I thank him not only for his contribution to the debate but also for his work as a member of that committee.

The honourable member for Warwick is also a member of the committee, and he stressed the need for ensuring that meat exporters adequately service Australia's overseas markets. As he rightly pointed out, that is a function of the Australian Meat Board. I am sure that the board endeavours to supervise exports on that basis, but I certainly agree with the honourable member that there is a need for long-term export contracts for meat.

I know that the honourable member is talking from experience. He would well recall our seeing cuts of meat in Jeddah being displayed alongside meat from Europe. The Arab people require very lean meat. We saw there meat from Western Australia with a selvage of fat one inch thick alongside European meat with a selvage of fat about a quarter of an inch thick. The owner told us, indicating the European product, "That's the meat that will sell." Whoever those exporters were in Western Australia, they were doing a damned disservice to the Australian beef industry. We were told the same thing by a chef in a hotel at Kuala Lumpur. Those are things we have to watch very carefully. Long-term contracts have proved to be the salvation of the sugar industry since Britain went into the European Economic Community.

I thank the honourable member for his kind remarks about Mr. Arthur Clay, who recently retired as Director of the Division of Animal Industry. Mr. Arthur Clay was regarded very highly, not only in the Government but right throughout the length and breadth of Queensland by people in the industry.

The honourable member for Warwick made mention of the stock assessment levy. The statutory Government endowment on stock assessments received is at the rate of \$2 for \$1. The endowment payable in 1975-76 is \$2,682,411, which is based on the assessments received in 1974-75, namely, \$1,341,206. In addition, for 1975-76 the State Government has provided a supplementary grant of \$2,589,022 to maintain a viable Stock Fund. Therefore in fact the State Government's contribution to the Stock Fund is close to a ratio of 4:1 on assessments received in 1974-75.

I was pleased to hear the honourable member for Bundaberg say that he supports the sugar industry and the fruit and vegetable industry. I support the lot. Any industry which is in trouble will receive the full support of my department to the maximum extent of its resources. At the moment the industry in the worst position is beef,

which is why it is receiving special attention. I can assure the honourable member that our other rural industries are not being forgotten.

He was somewhat critical, as was the honourable member for Nudgee, of some people in the grazing industry. He referred to them as wool barons and beef kings. I think the honourable member for Warrego dealt fairly satisfactorily with those criticisms. Who would know better? The honourable member for Warrego lives out there and endures the hardships of those areas.

The honourable member for Murrumba spoke very briefly. He referred to the one-third reduction in road transport fees, and indicated the appreciation of the people he represents. This is the first move in phasing out road transport fees entirely. As the honourable member pointed out, the licensing arrangements at the Brisbane Market are a matter for the Brisbane Market Trust. I understand that the trust has already had some discussions with the trade about licence arrangements, and I have no doubt that the trust will act in the best long-term interests of all parties involved. The money has got to be found somewhere. If it were not put on at the retail end, it might have to be put on at the production end. After all, costs can be handed on to the consumer, but if they are put onto the producer he has no way of passing them on. I understand that the trust has already received 321 applications from retailers for licences.

With regard to criticism of some of the department's inspectors, I should say that very few would adopt the somewhat over-zealous approach indicated by the honourable member. The vast majority of our inspectors are willing at all times to assist rather than criticise. I have heard this throughout the countryside. If the contrary were the case, I would be the first to have something to say about it. Generally speaking, our inspectors are held in high regard and are not the over-zealous type.

Naturally, with a staff as large as that of the Department of Primary Industries and human nature being what it is, a few problems of this type would arise now and then. However, honourable members have my assurance that our policy is to advise and assist rather than to compel. Compulsion is used only as a last resort—and it does have to be used sometimes, because, quite apart from inspectors, among the people we service in the primary industries there are some cranky characters.

The honourable member for Windsor asked whether or not we might continue the printing of market price information in the "Agricultural Journal". We were doing this, but we found that in today's situation prices change so rapidly that often they would be out of date by the time the farmer received the journal. Instead, we are publicising most of the information through radio and Press reports as well as by special bulletins, so

that the producer will be given up-to-the-minute market news. I think this is working pretty satisfactorily.

As to dairy farm amalgamation, I agree with the honourable member that many of the amalgamated farms went over to beef production. This occurred when beef prices were high, and there is no doubt that a number of these producers are now experiencing financial difficulty. The decline in the dairying industry is very worrying. Queensland is already a deficit State in terms of butter production; in fact, we import large quantities from Victoria.

The honourable member for Mackay pressed for a long-term approach to the problems confronting the beef industry. I couldn't agree more, and, as the honourable members for Warwick and Fassifern pointed out, we are looking at the problems of the beef industry both in the short term and in the long term.

The Commonwealth Government now has the report of the Industries Assistance Commission, and its contents have been made public. I hope that a Government in Canberra—I am not sure which one—will implement the recommendations contained in the report. The history of the present Government has been not to take notice of the recommendations made by the Industries Assistance Commission, so if the present Federal Government is to remain in office—if we are stuck with it—let us hope that on this occasion, in view of the seriousness of the situation, it will take notice. Many of the commission's recommendations were made as the result of submissions put forward by our beef industry committee, my department, the Director of Marketing and the Director of Animal Industry. Those two officers gave evidence to the Industries Assistance Commission, so let us hope that the Government will take notice of the recommendations of the commission. If it does not, why the hell do we have an Industries Assistance Commission? The situation is a serious one, and I believe that the commissioner looked at the problem in a most objective manner and that the recommendations will be of assistance in the short term.

The long term is, of course, a different kettle of fish. It took us a long time, for example, to negotiate the sugar agreements with Japan, Korea and Malaysia. Expert negotiators, such as John Laurie of C.S.R. and others, were acting on our behalf, in relation to raw sugar, one commodity of one quality. Meat, however, is a perishable product with a wide variety of cuts. The implementation of long-term marketing and a stabilisation scheme for the beef industry is not a simple task, particularly as Queensland exports up to 80 per cent of its beef, whereas other States consume nearly their total production. It is useless for one State to do something unless agreement of all the other States can be obtained. If not, the move made by one State is destined

to collapse. Many matters have to be attended to, but nobody is keener than I to see some form of stabilisation in the beef industry. Whatever we do would have to be acceptable to the people in the industry. We are not a Government that inflicts things on the people without their first having an opportunity to study them and negotiate if they do not agree.

I was very interested in the remarks made by the honourable member for Mackay about the setting up of a statutory producers' organisation for the beef industry. Moves have been made already along those lines. A draft constitution has been drawn up by the beef industry. I expect a ballot on the matter to be taken early next year. As a matter of fact, this draft constitution for the setting up of a statutory organisation of the U.G.A. was presented to me this morning. The final decision here, too, is up to the graziers themselves. I agree that the sugar industry marketing organisation, as stated by the honourable member for Mackay, is a model of efficiency. Because I believe that, I certainly would not want to interfere with the board's proposal to improve facilities at Lucinda and Bundaberg. The honourable member was rather critical of the decision to improve facilities at Lucinda and Bundaberg, but this has been looked at by the board and has been approved by the Cane Growers' Council and the industry. With due respect to the honourable member for Mackay, I would rather be guided by them than by him.

The honourable member for Maryborough sought an assurance that the coastal lowlands study would be completed as soon as possible. Although I cannot give him a firm date of completion, I can assure him that the work will proceed as rapidly as possible. The irrigation study and the soil work in the Maryborough-Tinana sector is already 80 per cent complete and the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission is still working on grade levels and topographical studies in the Yerra/Pilerwa sector. The soil work will commence in a few weeks. My department's land-use officers will start a similar study in the Hervey Bay area in 1976. We hope to complete it in the same year. I thank the honourable member for Maryborough for his kind references to me and my leadership of the trade mission. I was very pleased to have him as a member of that mission. I might add that he was a very valuable member. I can only say of the honourable member what he said about me—he worked like a drover's dog.

The Leader of the Opposition stressed the need for considerable additional work on the marketing of rural products. I agree that this area is becoming increasingly important. We are tapping a wider range of markets. Markets are becoming more sophisticated and demands relative to quality, hygiene, packaging and promotion are becoming more stringent. At the other end of the

pipeline, the producer is finding that he needs much more information than before on prices and markets. I am pleased to have the support of the honourable member in my efforts to improve the working conditions of officers in my department. I think he referred to our office as a rabbit warren. I have often used that expression myself. It is a very apt description. I hope to be able to report soon that some improvement has been effected. Officers in the department are working under conditions which, perhaps, should not exist in 1975. Even in recent weeks Cabinet has discussed this matter. Before the passage of many more days I should be able to announce what measures are proposed to assist employees in my department. It will not be the answer to everything, but I think we can improve the situation.

I assure the Leader of the Opposition that I regard the brucellosis problem as very serious. It must be eradicated at the earliest possible time not only on human health grounds but also because of sheer market necessity. I mentioned this morning that by 1983 the United States will be free of this disease, and we are expecting that it will demand that countries supplying that market with beef be free of brucellosis and tuberculosis.

I endorse the view that funds for the eradication of this disease should not be cut back and that it is the responsibility of both the State Government and the Federal Government. The Queensland Government has not cut back on funds for this work. Regrettably the Federal Government has allocated far less than required. The amount agreed upon by the States was \$13,800,000. The Commonwealth has allocated only \$8,400,000. If the Leader of the Opposition can do anything to assist in this regard—if his colleagues are still in Government—we would be very appreciative.

The honourable member for Cunningham gave very strong support to the department's extension services, which I appreciate very much. He was quite correct in saying that part of the problems of the dairy industry in Queensland stem from the Commonwealth Government's phasing out the subsidy on butter. Under the previous Liberal-Country Party Government, the level was \$27,000,000. Prior to the 1972 election campaign, the then member for Wide Bay (Mr. Hansen) said that if Labor was elected the \$40,000,000 subsidy would be restored. The extra \$13,000,000, according to Doug Anthony, was for a special purpose for only one year. But it has been phased out at the rate of \$9,000,000 a year. It has now been completely phased out. So has Brendan Hansen.

I am fully conversant with the Darling Downs soil-erosion problems. Substantial sums of money have been made available already for this important work. I thank the young honourable member for Cunningham for his very keen interest.

**Mr. Burns:** Did you see his photo in the report?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** He is a pretty fine-looking lad—a lad with a future. One day, in the years that lie ahead, when he is standing where I am to deliver the Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries, people will look back and say that this is where he started in 1975. He, like the honourable member for Warwick, has an electorate with a real soil-erosion problem and I thank him for the interest he is showing in it.

The honourable member for Carnarvon stressed the need for all services in all departments to be carefully scrutinised to ensure efficiency, and also the need for as much decentralisation as possible. I assure him that, in my department, this is done on a continuing basis. With the limited funds that are available, it is an absolute necessity. We have done more for decentralisation over the past 10 years than ever before and the process is still continuing.

I realise that the apple industry on the Granite Belt is going through a very difficult period. At one stage it appeared that the prospect of establishing some form of juice-processing facility in the Stanthorpe area was reasonably good. However, the prospect was soon torpedoed by the Federal Government's action in removing the incentive of including apple-juice concentrate in fruit drinks.

I compliment the honourable member for Kurilpa on his very good summary of the economic importance of the rural industry to Queensland and to Australia. Figures of gross value of rural production are quoted often in comparison with secondary industry production values. What is overlooked in those comparisons is that much of our secondary industry is entirely dependent on our rural industries for raw materials. The honourable member also stressed the increasing importance of farm management and marketing, and the role that these services must play in the future. I commend the honourable member for his very good contribution. In becoming an able member of Parliament, he has the advantage of being at one time an officer of the Department of Primary Industries.

I was pleased to hear the honourable member for Nudgee fully recognise the importance of rural industries. He stressed the need to keep men on the land, and he drew attention to the problems that all will face if rural resources are allowed to decline. I fully agree with him that both State and Federal Governments have a responsibility in this matter. We are measuring up to ours very well. I hope that he will urge his colleagues in Canberra to do the same. There is no question that this State Government is living up to its responsibilities.

I said earlier that approximately half the work-force in the beef industry has had to be stood down because of lack of funds.

Many of those workers are unlikely to return, and when markets revive there is likely to be an acute shortage of labour in the industry.

I fully agree that vegetable imports should be severely curtailed. In most cases vegetables should not be imported at all. I have made very strong representations to the Federal Minister for Agriculture on this matter, but so far without success. There is now a new Federal Minister for Agriculture, and I hope that he can do better than his predecessor. I do not say that with any disrespect to Senator Wriedt as a man. It just seems that there are too many people around the Federal Cabinet table who have no concern for the rural sector. I hope that Dr. Patterson will have greater influence in Cabinet. But I have my doubts.

The honourable member for Belyando indicated by his contribution that he has a sound knowledge of the rural industries in his area. I appreciate the plight of producers and people generally in country areas. The abolition of the free-milk scheme is just one more example of the Federal Labor Government's callous attitude to these people.

The honourable member for Cooroora put his finger right on the spot when he said that there is an urgent need for Federal incentives to primary producers. Unfortunately the policies of the Federal Labor Government are exactly the opposite. They are continually removing incentives to rural producers rather than granting them.

The honourable member for Gregory drew attention to a very important aspect of the beef industry. I refer to the tremendous debt structure that has built up, and that is still building up. In many cases the level of debt has gone well beyond the figure that can be serviced. Even when prices return to more normal levels, many will still not be able to service their debts. For those who can, it will take years of good prices before they can get out of debt.

I commend the honourable member for Gregory on his fine contribution to the debate this evening. He is obviously a man who is well equipped for the task that the people have given him. When Wally Rae took on the job of Agent-General, we wondered who would replace him. I am sure that if Wally Rae were here tonight, he would be proud of the contribution put forward by the present member for Gregory. He is a very valuable member. I thank him for his references to the work of my department at the Toorak Research Station. I took him there with me, and he outlined to the Committee the excellent work that is being done under extremely difficult conditions in that very arid part of Queensland.

The honourable member for Redlands paid tribute to the lead that Queensland took in establishing the modern fruit and vegetable markets at Rocklea. What he said is quite true: our lead has since been followed in Victoria and New South Wales. An efficient



market set-up is essential to ensure not only that the producer gets the best possible return but also that the consumer gets fresh fruit and vegetables of good quality.

The honourable member for Callide expressed concern over the flood of fruit and vegetable imports in recent times. He said it so often that I do not have to repeat it. He gave the Federal Government a few rips up the milking side, as he always does. He is well known for that, and I do not have to repeat them.

The honourable member for Stafford raised the very important question of pesticides and herbicides. I can assure him that the expenditure on control and supervision of agricultural chemicals in Queensland is the highest in Australia. I might mention that we are the only State which requires licensing of commercial aerial and ground spraying operators. Before getting a licence, the operators are required to pass a stringent examination. Over all, I believe there is very little abuse of agricultural chemicals and because of this I would be very hesitant even to suggest that additional costly requirements should be imposed.

On the subject of milk, no doubt the honourable member has his preferences. However, I can assure him that the quality of all milk sold in Brisbane is subject to continuous quality checks.

The honourable member for Somerset is the last on the list, but by no means the least. I appreciate his comments about the Government's action in reducing the impact of the proposed rail freight increases on the beef industry. I have had a lot of support on this matter from other honourable members—and not only country members. The Treasurer has been very understanding. Our record is such that, if a primary industry is in trouble, people know we will come to its assistance. It was realised, reluctant though we may have been to admit it, that there was a need to increase rail freights by an average of 40 per cent because of increases in costs. This has had to be done. I believe certain of our rural industries, because of the affluence they are enjoying, can stand it; but the beef industry finds itself in a different situation and we looked at it separately. What we decided in Cabinet yesterday had to be done, and I believe from the messages I have received in my office today—no doubt other Ministers have also received messages—it has been very well accepted by the industry.

I certainly agree that there should be the maximum possible liaison between the Meat Board, meat marketing people and the production side of the industry. I have discussions from time to time with the Meat Exporters' Association. I did so recently after coming back from a trade mission. Teys Brothers from Beenleigh have sent representatives to the Middle East who have assessed the market with people there and indicated to me that in their view in the

next two years a market will develop there for about 25,000 tonnes of special cuts of beef. Mr. Hart from Warwick Bacon joined us on the trade mission in Japan. He is touring the Middle East and the Far East at the present time, looking at markets and quoting certain cuts. He is hopeful he will build up a market there, as Teys Brothers already have.

I believe that winds up the discussion of the Primary Industries Estimates. I have tried to comment on all the points raised. As I said earlier, the debate has been of great assistance to me and to the officers of my department, and I thank honourable members for their co-operation.

At 9.55 p.m.,

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 22 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Primary Industries (Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account).

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to:—

	\$
Primary Industries ..	23,799,668
Balance of Vote, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account .. ..	63,972,937
Progress reported.	

## RACING AND BETTING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

**Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK** (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (9.56 p.m.):  
I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Racing and Betting Act 1954–1974 in certain particulars.”

I recently announced in the Budget that from 1 November 1975 bookmakers' turnover tax will increase by one half per cent and that the amount of tax to be channelled back into race clubs would increase from 20 per cent to 33½ per cent. This amending Bill provides for these changes.

The Bill also doubles the opportunities for night coursing so that meetings might be held on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, except 25 December.

The quick growth of greyhound racing in the State in general, and in the south-east portion in particular, has led to a situation where it has become extremely difficult for certain classes of dogs to obtain a run at the presently available night coursing grounds. Public interest in night coursing is also growing apace. To cater for such interest, it is intended that night coursing facilities of a

good standard be developed on the Gold Coast and in the Redcliffe Peninsula area, as well as at Mackay and Townsville.

At this point of time, coursing meetings are not held interstate on a Tuesday evening. Consequently, bookmakers fielding in Queensland would only have the local fields to operate upon. Such would limit their activities and be to the detriment of the coursing club concerned. It is therefore proposed that, with the approval of the Minister responsible for the administration of the Act, the Governor in Council will be empowered to allow coursing bookmakers to operate on interstate night trotting events if there are no suitable interstate coursing meetings in operation on the evening of the Queensland meeting. There is already provision in the Act for bookmakers at trotting meetings to be given authority to bet on night greyhound races held interstate.

At present the Act states that when subsequent appointments of members to the Greyhound Control Board are made, the Minister shall nominate, among others, one person from a panel of at least three names of persons submitted by the Queensland Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association. There is a proposal to incorporate a body to act as successor to the association.

The Bill provides that if a new body is formed and as long as it is recognised as representing greyhound breeders, owners and trainers in the State, in lieu of the present association, the nomination procedure would apply to it instead of the association now named in the Act.

There is provision in the Bill for the Commissioner of Stamp Duties to approve or otherwise any application to hold what might be described as crowd-pleasing novelty events at night trotting or night coursing meetings.

At the discretion of the commissioner, it is intended that a limited number of these events could be sanctioned, but only on the conditions that no prize-money or monetary reward applied to them and no betting on them was allowed. The galloping clubs already provide on occasions a certain amount of variety to their programmes by staging novelty events such as fashion parades. The Bill extends the right to night trotting and night coursing clubs.

It is considered desirable that the method of allocation of galloping racing dates be altered slightly so that the allocation of mid-week dates to metropolitan clubs is clearly the duty of the principal club. The Queensland Turf Club, as the principal club, already has the duty of allotting racing dates to the provincial clubs within its area of control. In order that a proper balance can be maintained with regard to mid-week fixtures held by the provincial clubs and the metropolitan clubs, it is essential that the allocation task be conducted by the one body.

Doubts have been expressed as to the correctness of advancing loans from the Racecourse Development and Assistance Fund for the purpose of assisting the establishment of facilities for new racing clubs as against the expansion or development of existing facilities. The amending Bill makes it clear that such advances may be made available for both purposes.

The opportunity has been taken to include a reference to coursing events in the section of the Act which prohibits the keeping, using, etc. of a common betting house. At present this section refers only to horse-racing, including the racing of trotting horses. The omission of a reference to coursing events has been corrected in the Bill.

It is considered that higher penalties than those presently imposed by section 109 of the Act for illegal bookmaking should be introduced. The penalties for S.P. operators were last raised in 1962. There is, in the opinion of the Government, a need to strengthen these particular penalties in an endeavour to eliminate the S.P. operator, who takes from the racing industry money which otherwise and in many ways might be ploughed back into racing. The Bill provides for penalties as follows:—

For the first offence—a penalty of not more than \$3,000 or imprisonment for a term of not longer than two months;

For the second offence—a penalty of not more than \$6,000 or imprisonment for a term of not longer than six months;

For the third or subsequent offence—imprisonment for a term of not longer than two years.

I have tried to outline in clear terms the changes which are proposed in this amendment of the Act. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

**Mr. HOUSTON** (Bulimba) (10.5 p.m.): The proposals put forward by the Treasurer seem to cover two major areas. The Government has taken notice of the fact that greyhound racing has now taken on in Queensland and is expanding. Therefore it has seen fit to make certain amendments to the legislation covering the control of greyhound racing.

The second aspect seems to deal with the attempt to eliminate S.P. betting in its various forms. There is another factor which concerns loans from the Racecourse Development Fund. It is wise that that matter be cleared up, because with the possible future combination of galloping clubs, it would be necessary for a new club to be formed before money is made available from the fund. It is also possible that, with the increase in population and decentralisation, trotting clubs will spring up and they would benefit, too. As we know, greyhound clubs have been established at Southport and Redcliffe as well as

in some of the provincial towns. It is important that those clubs, too, have this type of money made available to them.

To revert to greyhound coursing—a few anomalies come to light when it is compared with galloping. I should like the Treasurer to take note of my comments and to pass then on to the control board. I know the board is aware of these anomalies, but it seems to be a little slow in taking what I believe is the desired action.

No trainer of a greyhound is permitted to enter two dogs in one event. In other words, graders will not grade two dogs from the one trainer in a certain event. If that principle were applied to galloping, Tommy Smith and Bart Cummings, just to mention two well-known trainers, would be out of business very quickly. I cannot see why a distinction should be drawn between galloping and coursing.

It is all very well to claim that this rule applies to coursing events conducted in New South Wales. In that State so many courses are available to greyhound trainers that there may be some logic in the argument. However, in Queensland, there are only two night courses available, and it is not right that, when a trainer gets two dogs to such a high standard that they could win major events, he is forced either to hand over one dog or to refuse to take any others. It would be in the interests of everyone concerned if the laws applicable to galloping were to apply also to coursing. No-one would suggest, for example, that Tommy Smith and Bart Cummings are not honourable men, and the same comments would apply to greyhound trainers.

As to the clubs, recently it became apparent that they are not given the same privileges as those extended to galloping clubs, which, in the main, control their own race-tracks. For example, the Q.T.C. controls its tracks, as do the B.A.T.C. and other clubs. This is only right. Yet greyhound clubs are not permitted to do so. I do not think I would be wrong in claiming that the meeting scheduled for last Thursday night at the Gabba was postponed primarily because of lack of maintenance on the track during the preceding week. If a coursing club were to have authority to control its track, it would, I am sure, maintain it in a fit state at all times. Apparently this anomaly has crept into agreements entered into, in this instance, between the Cricket Trust and the coursing club. It is not wrong to suggest that a coursing track should be under the control of a coursing club. The stewards would decide whether or not the track was fit for coursing events. I say this as an individual, not necessarily on behalf of the club.

As to night coursing on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays—this is a wise move.

**Mr. Dean:** What about on Sunday night?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is a different matter altogether. As for the other four nights—I believe it is in the interests of the sport to conduct meetings on those nights. People derive a great deal of enjoyment from attending the meetings, others from owning greyhounds and others from training them.

Control is the main thing in all these sports and the control of greyhound racing is first class. The board is doing a particularly good job. We must ensure, however, that we do not have too many meetings in a small area. I do not think the Treasurer's proposal will mean that.

In horse-breeding it is usual for a mare to have one foal, but greyhound litters of up to 11 pups are not uncommon. As a result more greyhound dogs are bred. As a matter of interest, I point out that it costs about \$50 a week to train a galloper, but greyhound racing is a sport in which a man on a low income can participate.

If allowing on-course bookmakers to operate on interstate night trotting events means better service for the public, I can offer no opposition to the proposal. However, I suggest that the Treasurer should consider looking into whether or not night meetings are being held in which Queensland dogs are involved. Without going too far into it, I have in mind the night meetings at Lismore, Casino and Grafton that are held quite often and on which the New South Wales T.A.B. operates. Knowing something about the fields at these meetings, I assure the Treasurer that a large number of the dogs are Queensland based. I believe the permitting of trotting bookmakers to operate on coursing will mean a better service to the public and I have no argument against that.

One matter concerning the operation of T.A.B. and bookmakers on course which concerns me is the fact that, regrettably, the T.A.B. coverage of Lawnton was not persevered with. At the time, I said that I felt the decision to restrict the T.A.B. operations to a certain number of weeks contributed greatly to the alleged failure of the project. I do not accept that it was a failure. I believe that, during the debate on Matters of Public Interest, I proved conclusively that it was a financial goer for the T.A.B. Another factor was that radio stations refused to co-operate to the fullest extent. They failed to broadcast the races while they were in progress. People who bet on the T.A.B. like to hear a race broadcast whether they win or lose money. One of the factors militating against Lawnton was that, although one station indicated that it was interested in Lawnton, it finally decided not to broadcast race descriptions. It would not hurt the T.A.B. to investigate the matter again to see whether this station is interested in broadcasting events.

The Treasurer said that he wants to eliminate S.P. betting. S.P. betting is encouraged when people who desire to bet on greyhound, trotting or galloping meetings do not have

normal facilities available. It is useless for us to close our eyes to the fact that some people bet substantially on all forms of racing. It is quite logical that, if they gambled on a greyhound, galloper or trotter at one meeting which starts at a subsequent meeting not covered by the T.A.B., they are very likely to look for an S.P. operator to accommodate them.

I take it that allowing one member on the board of control from any organisation that truly represents breeders and owners is only to cover something that could happen at some time in the distant future. I take it that there is no suggestion at the moment that there is any organisation—

**Sir Gordon Chalk:** It is only if it occurs.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** It is tidying up the situation to cover a possibility at some future time. I know of no move against that particular organisation.

The provision concerning novelty events will be welcomed by the newer clubs, particularly the newer greyhound clubs. If the prize-money is not large—and no new club can offer large prize-money—a club cannot rely on the quality of the racing to attract the public, and these novelty events have an attraction for some people and will bring them to the various tracks. Again this is something that the clubs have been asking for and something that I believe will be in the interests of the promotional side of the sport. I term it a sport because many people enjoy it and make a livelihood out of it.

In my view, no matter what action is taken S.P. betting will never be eliminated. I have heard arguments in this Chamber from time to time about this matter. In fact according to the then Minister in charge of racing, the T.A.B. was established to do away with S.P. betting; but the T.A.B. and tote-betting break down in one major aspect. The investors do not know what odds they will get. If they invest with a bookmaker, they know they will get 4/1, 6/4 or whatever the price happens to be. If they invest with the T.A.B., the more money they put on the more they cut their own throats in regard to the dividend. While people want to gamble large sums of money—and there are people who want to do this—they will look for some way of investing their money at known odds.

No matter what the Government does, there will still be contracts between two people. Let me deal with the proposed fines and gaol terms. They certainly put S.P. betting into the upper echelon of crimes in this State. We have had cases of people being bashed, houses robbed and old people annoyed and generally we are speaking about a complete breaking of law and order. I do not see many people being fined \$3,000 or being sent to gaol for two months the first time they commit an offence. I suggest that the Treasurer has allowed his desire to stamp out something and to get

money for the State to carry him away. The punishment is ridiculous compared with that for other offences.

After all, what is an S.P. bet? Firstly, the average person considers it a crime to take away the freedom of another person, to steal something or to harm another person. In those circumstances, a crime has been committed against a person or against property. But in S.P. betting the two people concerned—the punter and the bookmaker—virtually come to a mutual arrangement. If the bookmaker welsches, he has a very disgruntled punter on his back and other action can be taken. But it seems that the real crime, in the Treasurer's view, is that nothing has been contributed to the State coffers.

I wonder whether the Treasurer has considered legalising registered bookmakers, allowing them to operate from a registered office and taking bets at the prices they are prepared to offer. Once the fields are announced, the newspapers give the prices that each dog, trotter or galloper will start at. If you look a couple of days later, you will find that the prices have altered. Why does this happen? Is it because some information has become available that a horse is sick or galloping particularly well, or is it because certain moneys have been placed on it with that bookmaker? I do not know the answer.

**Mr. Moore:** It might have lead shoes.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I do not know. If the Government wants to stamp out S.P. bookmaking, it has to consider who wants to bet in this way. If the facility to bet cannot be provided in one way, consideration has to be given to providing it another way. I feel that the registration of bookmakers could be a solution to the problem. This would not eliminate the T.A.B.; there are plenty of people who would prefer to patronise it.

**Mr. Jones:** That's free enterprise.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is so. If there is to be a choice, this would be a means of providing it. I would not like to argue whether the T.A.B. pays more than would be paid by bookmakers but all who gamble on the T.A.B. know that the more money that is placed on a horse or a dog the lower is the amount paid out on it. There are also those who prefer T.A.B. betting. Let us therefore give the people a choice. If the Government wants to eliminate S.P. bookmaking, let it give the public the right to bet with a registered bookmaker. The Government would have to insist that such a bookmaker had a registered office, a proper set of books and proper betting tickets. I cannot see that the registration of bookmakers would have any great effect on the T.A.B.

It would be very interesting to learn from the Treasurer how much money is bet in large sums. It will be recalled that amendments to the Act were introduced to reduce

the 55c minimum to 50c because of the operations of big bettors. This meant, of course, a reduction in the pay-out to the small punter. If the big bettor could be isolated from the small punter, it could be to the advantage of the latter. I am not proposing that this be done, but I am suggesting that it be considered. I would prefer that to gaol sentences of two years after the third offence, or the so-called crime, of S.P. betting. It has to be borne in mind that there must be two people involved in this offence, and even for a first offence the penalty is to be a fine up to \$3,000 or two months in gaol. To me, that seems completely out of step with the reality of life, particularly when one considers the penalties for many other crimes.

The Opposition naturally is prepared to consider the legislation. We are in agreement with some of the matters covered, and others that I have mentioned we would like the Treasurer to consider. I know that it has to be passed on to the board of control, but I believe there is logic in the suggestion that the board take another look at some of its own administration problems in the operation of tracks, and in allowing trainers to have more than one dog in a field.

**Mr. MOORE** (Windsor) (10.24 p.m.): Although it is not my intention to speak at great length, I cannot help making some remarks about the T.A.B. It is my view that it has always had shortcomings. One of them is that it was to some extent established under sufferance. When agencies were set up, they were sited so that they would not be close to hotels, and they were given the minimum of facilities, such as radios on which race broadcasts could be heard, that would have made them betting shops. Everything was done in an attempt to placate all interests, and the result suited neither the punter nor those who were opposed to the T.A.B. It has been a half-baked scheme in which we have inherited the worst of the New Zealand system and have suffered the consequences of it. I feel that the whole legislation is designed to support racing clubs. I suppose if they did not get a certain amount of revenue from the T.A.B., they would go out of existence. If punters did not turn up at the racecourses, then they would go out of business. So in administering the Act the Treasurer has to strike a happy balance. But the T.A.B. has its shortcomings. I believe punters should be able to collect immediately after a race and then reinvest. The T.A.B. should provide some sort of a service which it does not provide now. When one talks to the people who administer the Act, one is told, "Well, it is to get people to go down to the races."

The main reason I rose to speak was to deal with the imposition of mandatory gaol sentences for those convicted of S.P. bookmaking for a third time. That might be all right for the very large S.P. bookie in the

suburbs who frequents one or two of the larger hotels, or wherever these people operate; but what about the situation in country areas where we might have a railway fettler or ganger out at Bullamakanka, where there is no racetrack and no pub. He might be working on his own collecting a few bets. He might have been picked up 10 years ago for S.P. bookmaking, picked up a few years later, and, if this legislation is passed and he is picked up again, then, because it is his third offence, this poor fellow, whose turnover might be \$100 a week or thereabouts, finds himself facing a mandatory gaol sentence for a piddling thing like S.P. bookmaking. It is a damned disgrace; it is criminal; it is contrary to everything that I stand for; it is contrary to everything the Liberal Party stands for and it should not be done. We are simply introducing legislation to support the racing clubs and the on-course bookmakers. When we start imposing mandatory gaol sentences simply to force people to attend a racetrack—and that is all we are doing—there is something wrong. I do not know whether the Minister intends to carry on with the introduction of that provision. He should amend the Bill and impose a larger fine instead of a mandatory gaol sentence. Whenever the question of mandatory gaol sentences has raised its head in our party room—I will say this—in the past it has been thrown out. It was not liked by the Treasurer's committee and it is not liked now. It is not liked by a vast number of people on this side of the Committee and I ask the Treasurer to give the matter a second thought before the debate on the second reading because it is such a piffing thing. We are introducing it simply to flog people into going to the racetrack. It is a damned disgrace and I hope the Treasurer withdraws that provision.

**Mr. HANSON** (Port Curtis) (10.29 p.m.): I do not want to take up the time of the Committee for very long; but, as one who on odd occasions goes to a racecourse, I thought it would be quite in order if I entered the debate so that as a legislator I could make myself a little more conversant with one of the many Bills that are presented to the Parliament from time to time on this subject. In his Financial Statement, the Treasurer stated that he was increasing bookmakers' turnover tax by half of one per cent to 2½ per cent on metropolitan courses and to 2 per cent on country courses, and that there would be an increase in the return to the race clubs from 20 per cent to 33½ per cent.

This has evoked considerable criticism within racing circles, and it is worthy of note that, in the industry as we know it, totalisator tax received from the board in 1975 and credited to various funds—the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the Racecourse Development Fund, the Totalisator Investments Deduction Fund, and the Anzac Day

Trust Fund—amounted to more than \$10,000,000. That is a significant contribution.

It is a matter for sincere regret that society in this generation has largely failed to divert the attention of young people to more wholesome activities. The great racing business exists and it will continue to exist. The breeding and training sections and the large number of people they employ make a very significant contribution to the economy of the State and Australia as a whole.

Naturally, with the dual system of betting in this country (as distinct from the system in many other countries in which there is only totalisator betting), the industry expresses a great deal of concern when additional imposts are placed upon certain sections of it by Government decision. After the Treasurer delivered his Financial Statement on 25 September, criticism came from two leading bookmakers in this State—Mr. Beattie and Mr. Ogilvie—who said that bookmakers would possibly have to pay an additional \$25,000 a year and that there would be considerable concern and anxiety within the industry generally. Mr. Beattie estimated that overheads took, as he suggested in an article in the "Telegraph" of 26 September 1975, from \$3.50 to \$4 of every \$100 bet with him, and that overheads of smaller bookmakers would be about \$7 for each \$100 bet with them.

This will, of course, cause considerable concern in country areas, particularly centres far from the Brisbane metropolitan area, in which people have very few opportunities for fun or amusement other than going to the local racetrack. I am not altogether applauding that. As I said earlier, I think it is a grave reflection on the society in which we live that, over a long period of years, the public has not been encouraged to become interested in more wholesome activities. But racing is here, and it has been freely and widely publicised that for many years the policies of the National-Liberal Government have resulted in returns from turnover tax and the T.A.B. being lower than those in any other Australian State. The amendment now proposed has brought that matter into very sharp relief.

Recently the Treasurer spoke of racing in this State as being very sick indeed. Apparently he found it to be very healthy when he decided to impose an additional one-half per cent on the bookmakers' turnover tax.

**Mr. Dean:** It gets back to the punter.

**Mr. HANSON:** Yes, eventually he has to carry the load.

Formerly, of course, allocations of money were made from the contributions of off-course punters. In past Budgets, the Treasurer provided for big deductions to be made from T.A.B. double and treble dividends, the proceeds of which went to the clubs.

Of course, there never seems to be any suggestion of the Government's surrendering its right at any time. It takes 6 per cent off the top of the T.A.B. pool and, under a cloak of respectability, it gives some \$500,000 in unclaimed dividends back to racing. It is a form of conscience money. Despite that, the disbursement to Queenslanders is only some 70c in the dollar, which is very much less than what is paid in New South Wales.

It is worthy of note that the total prize-money for a mid-week meeting at, say, Bundamba is \$4,900. One race on a mid-week meeting at Canterbury might attract prize money of \$4,000. Of course, racing is encouraged more in New South Wales than it is in Queensland. In New South Wales a greater contribution is made by the Government to the clubs and for the assistance of racing generally. At Doomben on a Saturday, the total prize-money would be \$16,200—far below that offering at a mid-week meeting in Sydney. One asks: does it cost more to feed a racehouse in Sydney than it does in Brisbane? So much for that argument.

Naturally, I am in accord with statements by members that Queenslanders are at a great disadvantage because they have to place bets with the T.A.B. 40 minutes before the advertised starting time of a race and cannot collect any dividends before 4 p.m. With the sophisticated equipment in Sydney, bets can be placed up to 20 minutes before a race and pay-outs may be collected 20 to 30 minutes after each race. That is a much better service for punters.

Honourable members may have noticed a recent Press article giving a comparison between T.A.B. operations in Tweed Heads and Coolangatta. That article is worthy of consideration and thought. I hope that the T.A.B. computer system to be put in operation very shortly will lead to a much better service for Queenslanders.

In April 1973 I addressed questions to the Treasurer about the operations of the T.A.B. Naturally they were very searching questions. One day I asked a question without notice, and the next day I asked three questions—one without notice, followed by two supplementary questions. The Treasurer's replies were very comprehensive. As a matter of fact, they were very insulting in that he maintained that I had access to some documents in the T.A.B. When I took a point of order, he said I was psychic or some sort of a seer and able to read what was in the mind of the T.A.B. Despite the fact that I asked searching questions, there was not one mention of them by the media. I am not unmindful of that. I am not a fool. I know full well the reasons for the absence of reference by the media to the very searching questions I asked on that occasion. I am not entirely blaming the Treasurer. On occasions I regard him as a personal friend and naturally I value that friendship. I raised that matter because it

was very serious and deserved the attention of the media. It did not receive their attention, but, as I say, I know full well the reasons for that.

I am in accord with the honourable member for Windsor, and particularly the shadow Minister for racing, the honourable member for Bulimba, when they say that a hard look will be taken at the mandatory gaol sentences. It is very pleasing indeed to see that there is a member of the Government who has the intestinal fortitude to stand up in caucus—as he obviously did—and express himself. It is a refreshing change.

**Mr. MOORE:** I rise to a point of order. I find the honourable member's remarks offensive, and I ask him to withdraw them.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I have never before been requested to ask for the withdrawal of complimentary terms. I am not going to spoil a perfect record. There is no point of order.

**Mr. HANSON:** I am not an avid reader of Charles Dickens. Nevertheless I know of a certain character named Oliver Twist, who asked for more. Be that as it may, the matter of mandatory sentences is one which we will examine closely. I am fully in accord with the principles enunciated by the honourable member for Bulimba, who drew comparisons between the types of crimes that are committed. Some of them are quite serious and naturally would attract mandatory gaol sentences. However, a mandatory term of imprisonment for two years merely for accepting a bet is abhorrent to me and contrary to the principles espoused by the Australian Labor Party. At first glance I would strongly oppose this proposal.

As the honourable member for Bulimba said, when the T.A.B. legislation first came before this Chamber, the Honourable T. A. Hiley said, "We will rid the State of S.P. betting." The pious hypocrites who were then in Opposition and are now in Government, and who condemned the Australian Labor Party by alleging it was a gambling and boozing party and one that accepted backhanders here and there, told us what they would do if they were elected to office. They are now in office, and what have they done? They have fostered gambling and opened the pubs on Sunday. This is absolutely scandalous. It is no credit to the Government. As one who has been associated with the liquor trade, I did not want to go along with Sunday trading. I was forced into it by the Government.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The Committee is debating an amendment to the Racing and Betting Act.

**Mr. HANSON:** It is essential that the Government reflect on its past history and be reminded of many of the pious and sickening statements made by its members on earlier occasions. As I have said, the

twisting and turning engaged in by Government members, particularly the Premier, is absolutely scandalous. Anyone who reads past parliamentary debates would be shocked at the attitude of the Premier and his fellow members to these matters on earlier occasions.

Like the honourable member for Bulimba, I will enjoy studying the legislation in detail. I am sure that, as usual, he will give it his close scrutiny and will present a very comprehensive case at the second-reading stage.

**Mr. LINDSAY (Everton) (10.44 p.m.):** I hesitate to speak on gambling, particularly in view of the fact that I am following the learned speakers who preceded me. I realise the truth of the basic premise that a little knowledge is dangerous; I also know it is true that no-one has a monopoly on truth. I am somewhat concerned at the depth of understanding of racing on the part of members in this Chamber. It is a huge industry and one that concerns an enormous number of Queenslanders. I therefore feel it behoves all honourable members to take some interest in the subject, hence my attempt to make a small contribution to the debate. My comments are put forward on behalf of the very large number of people in the Everton electorate who bet on gallopers, trotters or dogs, whether at the track, at the T.A.B. agency or with the S.P. bookmaker.

I have already expressed my opinion to the Treasurer about the very stiff increases for S.P. betting offences. I should be most grateful if he would spell out at the second-reading stage why the penalties for illegal S.P. betting should be increased to the extent that the first offence attracts a maximum fine of \$3,000 and a second offence a maximum of \$6,000. A man would have to be a very big operator to remain in business and risk being caught for a third offence. I am very concerned about the mandatory gaol sentence for a third or subsequent offence. However, those who are likely to commit a third offence would be operating on such an enormous scale that I would find it very difficult to feel in any way sorry for them. I realise that I represent the average Australian who has a little dabble on gallopers, trotters or dogs. I would very much appreciate it if the Treasurer would spell out at the second-reading stage the problem that has led to the enormous increase in the rake-off that S.P. operators are taking from the State coffers. I am intrigued about the sudden increase in S.P. bookmakers' clients. As an earlier speaker said this evening, S.P. betting involves a two-way agreement. It is not only the S.P. bookmaker who commits an offence; the person who places the bet is also committing an offence. Why is it that so many people want to bet illegally with S.P. bookmakers?

Bearing that in mind, I asked the Treasurer the following question last Friday—

“(1) How is the construction of the large T.A.B. headquarters at Albion being funded?”

“(2) What benefit will the building be to the T.A.B. investors in the Everton electorate?”

“(3) In view of his understandable concern regarding the increase in illegal S.P. betting, in what ways does he propose to upgrade T.A.B. facilities in order to attract Queensland gamblers back to the T.A.B.?”

In his answer the Treasurer said—

“(1) Basically, the new T.A.B. complex is being financed from the board's own reserves and will be completed without recourse to borrowings and thus will function with no debt costs to be financed from future board operations.

“(2 and 3) The new headquarters will house sophisticated computer equipment which will allow an automated system for the selling and processing of cash and telephone betting. It will also provide modern, centralised accommodation for the T.A.B. The total facility will provide for future expansion and will give a smoother, better and faster service to its Queensland-wide customers, which of course, include those who reside in the honourable member's electorate. The computerised system will, for instance, allow up to five bets on a cash ticket and will permit tickets bought at automated agencies to be paid at any other automated branch. T.A.B. investors and race clubs alike will undoubtedly benefit from a facility that improves efficiency and service, and when in full operation the period of closing time prior to an event will be reviewed and I hope considerably reduced.”

I emphasise the remark of the Treasurer that, as a result of the completion of this new T.A.B. headquarters, the actual period prior to an event during which a bet cannot be lodged will be reduced. That in itself will attract gamblers away from S.P. bookmakers and back to the T.A.B. I wonder if there are other initiatives that the Government could undertake.

It must be established clearly that we are not discouraging gambling. The T.A.B. colossus itself would indicate that our society depends to a very considerable degree on the T.A.B. for many of the luxuries that it enjoys from gambling. Therefore it seems reasonable to me that our society in some way should show its appreciation of the very considerable effort, commitment and financial contribution that the T.A.B. bettor makes. Any improvement that we can legitimately give to the T.A.B. is worthy of consideration.

In this regard let us consider the winnings—be they for first, second or third place, or for a double or treble—that are not collected each week. A punter has won and does not know about it, has lost his ticket, or has

forgotten all about it. The end result is that he does not collect the amount. It rightfully belongs to the T.A.B. punters in general. If the individual does not collect his winnings, the Government has a moral obligation to use that money to improve the existing amenities for T.A.B. bettors. In my second-reading speech, after having heard the Treasurer's comments on what I am saying, perhaps I will come up with some suggestions on how that money could be used to the best advantage.

There is an adage that you need to speculate to accumulate. I believe that if we speculate to a greater degree—and certainly the new T.A.B. headquarters is a speculation—we will accumulate moneys out of the venture. There is no doubt that Australians love to bet. However, I believe that the T.A.B. in Queensland, compared with those in other States, leaves a lot to be desired. I am sure that the silent majority of Everton punters agree with me.

My last point concerns the horse Fury's Order which, prior to winning the W. S. Cox Plate on Saturday, was vying for favouritism in the Melbourne Cup. Many people thought it would do well, but many knowledgeable people knew it would do well and they would hesitate to invest their money with the T.A.B. because, as other speakers have indicated already, they would not know the odds they would get. Equally they would realise that a large number of Queenslanders would back Fury's Order on spec in the hope that it would get up.

In the sporting results on Saturday evening the sports commentator announced that Fury's Order had won at 7/1, and the T.A.B. price was \$6.50. That means that a person who invested 50c on Fury's Order for a win would get back \$6 plus the 50c. One therefore wonders where the big money on that horse went. Presumably it went on S.P.

I reserve further comments till the second reading of the Bill. I shall be most interested to hear what the Treasurer has to say, always appreciating that we in Everton think that he is an extremely knowledgeable and vocal member of the Government. We reserve our final decision on the Bill till we have heard from him.

**Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (10.57 p.m.):** I enter the debate because Bundaberg has an interest in the gambling game in certain respects. Increasing the amount of bookmakers' tax that is channelled back to the race clubs is a good idea, provided the Treasurer does not take some for himself. I have no doubt that he will increase his share of this tax.

When we look at the composition of the various boards that he sets up, we see that the punter, the one who is always hit the hardest, is never given representation. Boards consist of representatives of trainers, owners and the Government, but never a



punters' representative. The Treasurer may say that it would be difficult to obtain a good representative of the punters. I do not know about that. I think that a fellow like Pat Hanlon would be a good punters' representative. He would certainly do the right thing by punters if need be. The punter is the one who keeps racing going, but he has no representation on any boards connected with racing.

The Treasurer mentioned loan funds for new clubs. Attempts are being made to establish coursing in Bundaberg, and I hope that good use will be made of a loan for that purpose. I hope that the Treasurer does not permit trotting in Bundaberg, as both trotting and coursing are not wanted there. In a small city, coursing would be preferable to trotting, as more people could take an interest in it. With trotting there would be only one or two owners, a few trainers and a couple of drivers to be considered. The ordinary person could not afford to race trotters. There is also the way in which fields can be tied up in trotting. When listening to descriptions of trots at night, one often hears of favourites becoming locked in the field against the rails. I would not care to see trotting in Bundaberg. But I would like to see coursing, and I should like the Minister to give it every consideration.

The honourable member for Bulimba mentioned the registration of bookmakers. We hear talk about the free-enterprise system in which one has a choice, and in which one organisation competes against another. Why not register one or a dozen bookmakers in each city, or even the bookmakers who operate on the course, and let them compete against the T.A.B.? When the T.A.B. improved its conditions, it would be able to stand on its own feet. But it will not stand on its feet at the moment the way things are going. It is easy enough to avoid trouble with the S.P. bookmakers. We should legalise the S.P. bookmaker, or the present legal bookmaker in city and country areas should be allowed—

**Mr. Lane:** Is this A.L.P. policy?

**Mr. JENSEN:** It is a good sensible policy I am stating. It is a common-sense policy to legalise these bookmakers. We have half a dozen or so bookmakers in Bundaberg. We get bookmakers up from Maryborough, Kingaroy and everywhere else. There are 18 bookmakers at the course on a Saturday and there are half a dozen or more in Bundaberg operating illegally. If they were legalised and could set up an office to compete against the T.A.B., we can imagine how the T.A.B. would go. One honourable member mentioned that when the new computer comes into operation we can expect a reduction in the period before a race during which a bet cannot be placed. We have been expecting that for a long time.

Having to bet 40 minutes before race time is a racket, and it is the country areas which suffer most. This can be seen on any day when the T.A.B. money is not channelled through to the course. We see this on mid-week racing days. The T.A.B. money is not channelled through to the course and we see the difference in prices. But when the country money is channelled through to the course—country betting stops 40 minutes before a race—we can see what happens. The totalisator odds are turning over in the last 20 minutes before race time as the country money comes in, and the bookmakers watch them and rush over to snatch the prices showing. They will be much better than the odds they can get with fellow bookmakers. The country bettor therefore does not get the good price he should.

If we read the T.A.B. report each year, we find that over 50 per cent of the investment comes from the country and only 49 per cent from the city. I think in one year it differed slightly, but in most years honourable members will find 50-point-something per cent of the money comes from country areas and 49-point-something per cent comes from the city. I wanted to bring up the point that country areas are being robbed all the way along the line by the Queensland T.A.B.

I do not want to hold up the Committee, but I have one last point to make. We have all spoken about the imposition of a mandatory gaol sentence, which is proposed in the Bill. We have heard in this Parliament that there is no such thing as a mandatory gaol sentence for child rape, yet here we have a mandatory gaol sentence for a bloke who takes a bet off his mate, and that is what it amounts to. But there are two sides to the argument. I suppose the punter will be fined \$50, while the bookmaker will be put in gaol. Each is as guilty as the other. If I have a bet S.P., by rights I am just as guilty as the man who takes the money, yet only the bookmaker faces a mandatory gaol sentence, which is ridiculous. I will resume my seat now because I have made the points that affect my area and I hope the Treasurer takes notice of them.

**Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (11.4 p.m.):** I am sure the introduction of this Bill will do something towards the rationalisation of totalisator betting on racing, coursing and trotting in this State. However, my comments will be very brief and will cover mainly one aspect of the Bill, that which will allow for the trots to be run until a later hour at night by the Albion Park Trotting Club at the Albion Park Racecourse.

This course is in the centre of my electorate and the noise nuisance to the many thousands of my constituents who live on the hills surrounding this racecourse is of some concern to me. I live in that vicinity. In fact, my home overlooks the Albion Park Racecourse. My front-bedroom window almost hangs over

the 7-furlong post and I am very conscious of the fact that on Saturday night and some other nights of the week the trots run till a late hour, creating considerable noise in the area. On any permitted night, the scheduled starting time for the last trotting event is shown in the official programme as 10.45 p.m. Therefore it is probable that, the last race having been completed, the final announcements will not be made over the very adequate public address system until about 11 p.m. each night.

I am aware that a submission was made to the Treasurer, who controls racing in this State, by the Albion Park Trotting Club and the associated racing clubs to allow trotting events to begin later in the evening. In fact, a firm proposal was put forward that the last trotting event be allowed to begin at 11.20 p.m. After the running of the race, the result and other necessary announcements would have to be made over the public address system. Taking everything into account, one could not expect the noise nuisance to subside until about 11.30 p.m.

One of the reasons I am taking part in the debate is to place on record my appreciation and the appreciation of my constituents for the good reception that the Treasurer gave me when I met him on this matter and stressed to him the inconvenience and the nuisance that would have been created for people in the Breakfast Creek, Albion, Albion Heights and Hamilton area if the trots had been allowed to continue later, with the last race beginning at 11.20 p.m. After listening to my submissions, the Treasurer agreed—quite reasonably, I think—to tie the club down by providing that in the official programme the last race could not have a scheduled starting time later than that presently permitted. I am grateful for the Treasurer's receptive attitude, and I hope that when he replies at this stage he will acknowledge that fact, so that the couple of thousand people living in that vicinity will understand quite clearly that they will not be annoyed by noise from Albion Park till a late hour at night.

I enjoy a night at the trots and I think it is a good sport. I certainly would not wish to interfere with it unnecessarily; in fact, I think it should be encouraged. The standards set by the Albion Park Trotting Club are very high and it is to be commended for them. The supervision of those standards by the Treasurer and his officers also has been very good. However, the club has to live with the local community, and possibly someone may raise the question of who was there first. Old engravings of the area that I have seen indicate clearly that people were living there before there was a trotting club or a race club at Albion Park. So it seems that the race club has to live with the local residents, and I thank the Treasurer again for the action he has taken.

Another matter of importance to my electorate that comes within the ambit of the Bill is the proposal to open the new T.A.B. headquarters at Albion. I commend the Treasurer and the board for their far-sighted approach to the decentralisation of the board's administrative activities.

Mr. Moore interjected.

Mr. LANE: The honourable member for Windsor may have his bets wherever he wishes. I will have mine in my electorate.

The new building at Albion adds something to the area, and I think there will be a small financial benefit to local businessmen and traders from the employees who will work there. I commend the Minister for agreeing to establish the T.A.B. headquarters in a suburban area and to keep the workforce in the suburbs.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (11.10 p.m.): I rise to speak on this Bill in order to raise with the Treasurer the inclusion in the Bill of a mandatory penalty. I point out for the benefit of the honourable member for Bundaberg, who says that in this Chamber we are opposed to mandatory sentences, that the proposal imputed here is not one of a mandatory sentence but rather a mandatory penalty. That mandatory penalty is imprisonment.

I want to point out to the Treasurer the disadvantage of having just that penalty. If it simply remains as a mandatory penalty of imprisonment, as there is no capacity for the imposition of a monetary fine, the magistrate, having no other guide-lines, could simply determine that the period of imprisonment be one day, one hour or one minute. Unless there is a monetary penalty for a third offence, for a very insignificant offence a person could be let off with a penalty of 10 seconds' or 10 minutes' imprisonment simply because the magistrate determined that it was unfair to impose any more than that.

The first principle I raise is that I think there needs to be included within any concept of imprisonment a monetary fine. If there is not a monetary fine, I am opposed to the principle of a mandatory penalty, just as I am opposed to the principle of a mandatory sentence. My proposal to the Minister at this stage—I intend to raise the matter at the second-reading stage, if necessary—is that for the third offence the magistrate should have the power to impose a monetary fine of, perhaps, a maximum of \$10,000 and/or a prison sentence of up to a maximum period of time. That leaves in the correct place—in the hands of the courts—the determination of the penalty, chosen from monetary fine and/or imprisonment, and it also leaves in the hands of the court the amount of fine and/or the length of term of imprisonment associated with it.

A legal definition of "punishment" follows along these lines—

"Legal punishment is punishment awarded in a process which is instituted at the suit of the Crown standing forward as prosecutor on behalf of the subject on public grounds."

As it is the Crown that institutes the case for the prosecution, it is the Crown, representing the Executive or the Legislature, that institutes the case against the person offending. As that is so, it is obvious that the Crown's case can be presented against the offender on whether it should be a monetary fine or not. In other words, the gravity of the case can be established by the Crown—that is not just the end of it. That is why I say there is no need—and in fact I consider it to be wrong within our society—to have any form of mandatory imprisonment or sentence in that the Crown also has a right of appeal not only against conviction but also against severity of penalty. If the Crown feels the punishment to be insufficient, it is possible for the Crown to appeal against it. Therefore it is desirable for us to have an amendment to the Bill or an incorporation in it to remove the mandatory penalty of imprisonment and in its place insert provision of a large monetary fine, say \$10,000 and/or a maximum prison sentence.

It is very important, with the principle of the courts' determining guilt and therefore the precise penalty, to remember that the Legislature determines the law and the guidelines as the parameters and that the courts will determine the degree of guilt. Because the courts determine the degree of guilt, it is important that the courts can also determine the degree of punishment. Because it is possible for the third offence to be of a minor nature, it is important that there also be a broad scope within the elements of the penalties provided. I quote further here as follows—

"Legal punishment is of various kinds, and includes death, imprisonment and fine."

In relation to that, it is essential that there be the possibility not only of punishment by imprisonment but also of a monetary penalty. I would hope that this could be incorporated within the Bill.

It is important that we appreciate where the Legislature and the Judiciary stand and that the very delicate line that exists between them should be retained. Indeed, the purpose—and I applaud it—of the Bill is to increase penalties for various racing offences. This has a deterrent effect. It has the added effect of the fear of detection in that a person is afraid that a greater penalty may come down upon him. That is the guideline that this Legislature must set—the fact that there may be a greater penalty. However, the duty of stating what that penalty should be or the amount of that penalty is not something totally for the Legislature. It should be left within the hands of the

court after presentation of the case by the Crown through the prosecutor, so that both conviction and penalty can follow a proper and equitable judicial course.

With those words I request the Minister to look into the matter to see whether it is possible to incorporate the concept of an effective penalty—in other words, a penalty which might incorporate not only the possibility of imprisonment but also a monetary fine on an and/or basis.

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (11.17 p.m.): The Bill is predominantly a machinery measure, and to that extent I support it. However, it proposes mandatory penalties, and to that extent I oppose it. I shall oppose mandatory penalties whenever and wherever they are introduced into this Chamber. My experience in my field has been that they are most unsatisfactory. Their effect is to drive the magistrate into an impossible position in which he either bends the law—which he does not wish to do—or alternatively comes up with some penalty such as sentencing the accused to the rising of the court. That would not achieve what the Minister proposes by providing a penalty for the third offence.

By providing a mandatory penalty we, as legislators, are usurping the functions of the bench. As I say, I oppose mandatory penalties, and I know that the policy of the Liberal Party is to oppose them. I had believed it was the policy of this National-Liberal Government to oppose them. In fact, we have done so. In the short time that I have been in the Parliament we have opposed them. Where they have existed in legislation, such as the Traffic Act, that legislation has been amended. I know that in other proposed legislation mandatory penalties were included but when the matter was drawn to the attention of members at joint party meetings they were removed.

Mandatory penalties are bad wherever they occur. Where they are monetary penalties, they are bad; where they are mandatory terms of imprisonment they are particularly loathesome. With imprisonment go all the other consequences of incarceration, and probably these matters were overlooked by the Deputy Premier and Treasurer when bringing forward this Bill.

Since the ventilation in the Press last Thursday of the proposal to amend the Act, we have seen opposition to it from such people as the president of the Queensland Law Society, Mr. Foote. We have also seen the rather equivocal response by the New South Wales Treasurer. Neither of these persons favours the mandatory penalty proposed in this legislation.

The honourable members for Bulimba and Windsor suggested that the Treasurer is over-reacting to the S.P. operations in this State in imposing such penalties. The failure of the police to stamp out S.P. betting is no reason for the Legislature to over-react and introduce Draconian penalties such as are proposed here. If the failure of the police

to stamp out S.P. betting continues, all the mandatory penalties under the sun will not in any way prevent this offence. It may be a matter for more police control rather than mandatory penalties fixed by the Legislature.

There are various types of offence. The honourable member for Bulimba referred to some of them earlier. There are offences against the person (such as assault), which I regard as serious crimes and there are offences against property (such as wilful damage to property and vandalism, as we know it today), which incense many people, but the latter are of a lesser degree than offences against the person. Then there are offences against revenue—and we are dealing with legislation controlling such offences tonight. No doubt people who dodge taxes offend, as do people who commit any offence against the State. But of the three types of offence, surely offences against revenue are the least serious. Of all the offences that might warrant mandatory penalties, the offences that this legislation covers are the least serious. It is proposed that the penalties for first and second offences shall be substantial fines of up to \$3,000 and \$6,000 respectively. Those are substantial fines compared with fines provided for other offences, whether they relate to offences against the person or against property.

If S.P. betting is rife in Queensland, it will be of a continuing nature. Because it is of a continuing nature, there is no reason in the world why there cannot be an arrest and a conviction every week. If S.P. betting is going on, it is not our responsibility but that of the police to detect it, and it is the responsibility of the courts to hear the cases and determine what should be done. It is not our function as legislators to go into the court, as it were, and impose penalties.

I have found that the Treasurer is quite reasonable, particularly when considering some of the humanitarian sections of the Budget. On that basis, I invite him to reconsider the penalty for the third offence and to abandon the proposed mandatory penalty.

**Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK** (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (11.24 p.m.), in reply: I have listened with considerable interest to this debate, which has indicated to me what I might describe as a cross-section of opinion. I think it is necessary for me to deal firstly with the points raised by the honourable member for Bulimba. I believe that he expressed the general views of people associated with the racing industry and his own views, particularly in relation to night coursing.

The two points he mentioned about the right of a trainer or owner to enter two greyhounds in the one event have been exercising my mind for some time. I assure him that it is a matter that is being discussed with the Coursing Control Board. In the earlier stages, there was justification for

the action that was taken. What we are endeavouring to do now, following the demands coming from coursing enthusiasts, is increase the number of coursing tracks in the State, to provide an opportunity for those people who own dogs to start them in various places and to encourage those people who want to have more than one dog under their control.

The honourable member for Bulimba dealt with another matter that is also of considerable interest and that creates some problems. When night coursing was established in Brisbane, two or three grounds were available. Finally the decision was made to go to the south side. I believe that one or two reasons prompted that decision. One was that no sporting activity other than cricket was conducted on that side of the city. There was considerable encouragement to go there. There have been some problems with the Brisbane Cricket Trust; there is no doubt about that. These are matters that again are taking a little sorting out and clarification—one or two gentlemen are involved—and I hope that a little later on we will overcome them.

The honourable member for Bulimba said that we would not want to have too much night coursing. I agree with him. In the past day or so, I read in the Press where somebody was indicating that I should not move into the Mt. Gravatt area. I say here and now that from my point of view there is no intention of having a second night coursing track in what might be regarded as the metropolitan area. I believe that the facility provided at the 'Gabba is ample. On the other hand, I am not unmindful that on the Redcliffe Peninsula and at Lawnton, which are removed from the heart of the metropolitan area, the opportunity and scope for a night coursing operation exist, just as on the Gold Coast. So I want to allay the fears of anyone who feels that a night coursing track will spring up somewhere in one of the major suburbs of this city.

Another question touched upon concerned the T.A.B. operations at Lawnton. This was given a trial. The honourable member for Bulimba feels that the trial was not conducted for long enough. After the recommendation came from the T.A.B. to discontinue the operations, and looking at it from a business point of view, I studied the figures and agreed with the decision that was taken. I can assure the honourable member that coursing is being examined very carefully. I have the co-operation of the board and in broad principle it is a growing sport; it is certainly growing much faster than trotting. We will provide the opportunities for the provision of facilities so that the necessary expansion can take place.

Many honourable members, including the honourable member for Bulimba, referred to S.P. betting. So that I can reply to them collectively perhaps I might be permitted to delay my comments on that aspect of the Bill temporarily.

The honourable member for Port Curtis raised a number of questions about the return of only 70c in the \$ from racing activities in this State. He also mentioned that in Queensland there was a delay of 40 minutes between the T.A.B. closing time and the event whereas in Sydney it was only 20 minutes. What we are endeavouring to do is provide facilities comparable with those in other States. But let us not overlook the fact that this State has a population about one-third of that of New South Wales, and that Victoria has 2½ times the population of Queensland. On the other hand, Queensland covers a much greater area than the other two eastern States. If Queensland is to provide facilities throughout the whole of the State, the time factor has to be taken into consideration. We are endeavouring to introduce computerisation, which in the long run will to some degree overcome the time lag.

New South Wales has a pay-out after each race. I believe—and I think statistics prove—that paying out after each race in Sydney is killing the racing industry in N.S.W. Attendances at race meetings in Sydney, except on very special occasions, are not much larger than the attendances at Eagle Farm meetings. Anyone who talks with those associated with racing in Sydney will discover that they are very concerned about what is happening there. If racing does not receive fair public patronage on the course, it is to the detriment of the sport generally.

The honourable member for Everton was the first to deal seriously with the question of penalties. He also dealt with T.A.B. facilities in his area and dividends returned by the T.A.B. I do not know where he obtained his information about Fury's Order, which won a race at Moonee Valley last week. If the honourable member is possessed of certain racing knowledge, which I believe he is from the manner in which he spoke, he would surely know the T.A.B. dividend it paid. As one who backed Fury's Order, I can say that the dividend was not what he told the Chamber. It was in fact \$4.25, and for those who backed it in New South Wales it was only half that amount.

The honourable member then went on to say that he could not understand what happened to the price structure. If he had applied his mind to the subject on which he addressed the Chamber, he would have known that Dalrello, a Queensland horse, took part in the W. S. Cox Plate, and that it was also backed very heavily in this State. In fact, it started on the course at 7/1.

**Mr. Hanson:** It came through as a shortener.

**Sir GORDON CHALK:** Yes, at 7/1. The honourable member, in expressing his knowledge in this Chamber, has demonstrated that he is not au fait with the facts of the

racing industry. The fact that Fury's Order paid \$4.25 is an indication that it started at approximately 8/1 on the T.A.B. in Queensland. It was backed in from 10/1 and started at 7/1 at Moonee Valley. But the T.A.B. can pay only in accordance with the amount of money that is invested on a race. Everyone has equal opportunity and receives the dividend after the deduction of the percentages taken by the Government and the clubs.

Reference has been made to the amount of money that is taken from the investment, and I think it was the honourable member for Port Curtis who referred to the fact that only a certain amount of money was available for distribution in racing. That is true. Recently the Industrial Commission laid down that no longer can casual labour be employed in the T.A.B. Consequently the cost of operations increased terrifically. Of course, when the wages of employees associated with a hotel business are increased, all that happens is that the honourable member, together with other hoteliers, increases the cost of the product that he is distributing. But there is no opportunity here other than to take a greater percentage from the punter, the result being, of course, that the honourable member gets up in this Chamber and condemns the fact that a greater percentage is to be taken from the punter. So what we are endeavouring to do at the moment is maintain something like the same return to race clubs as was possible some years ago when their return from the operations was 70 per cent. This Government has made available additional funds to build up to 70 per cent the return on each occasion it has fallen below that figure on galloping and trotting meetings, and on the last occasion to 55 per cent for the return in connection with coursing.

I come now to the remarks of the honourable member for Bundaberg. I have a blank sheet in front of me and I think that is a fair indication of the points he raised.

The honourable member for Merthyr raised the issue of noise. It is true that there is some concern about noise coming from Albion Park, and while the club would have liked to be able to keep abreast of operations in the south and race up till 11.15 p.m., following representations from the honourable member and discussions which took place in our joint party room it was agreed that the time of the last race should be 11 o'clock.

Let me deal with the question of the penalties proposed in this legislation. I have heard a lot tonight about the small S.P. operator. Let me say here and now that there are a number of small S.P. operators—

**Mr. Hanson:** They don't like you.

**Sir GORDON CHALK:** I know they are not small in the honourable member's town. The figures that come from his town are excessive and we know very well the investments that can be made in and around hotels and other places.

The point I want to make is that it is all very well for the honourable member for Brisbane to say that the police have a responsibility and should carry out that responsibility. To a very large degree they are carrying it out. When a person comes before the court for a first offence under the Act as it now stands, he faces a fine of \$300. What is \$300 to an S.P. operator? What is a fine of \$600 for a second offence?

Let me give the Committee one example. In a case that came before the court in the last few weeks, the person arrested had bets in his book totalling \$55,536. In all, there were 208 bets, so the average was \$267. Going into it a little further, I point out to the Committee that many of the bets were over \$1,000. That was only one offender. I can tell the Committee here and now that over \$1,000,000 is being wagered in this State every Saturday afternoon through S.P. betting operations. It is not the small operator in an out-of-the-way place such as Bullamakanka, which was mentioned by one honourable member, that I am concerned about.

**Mr. Houston:** How many big operators have been arrested in the last six months?

**Sir GORDON CHALK:** There have been a number of arrests and people have appeared before the courts. I do not intend to become involved in discussing matters that may be before the court and, therefore, sub judice. I merely point out to the honourable gentleman that there are problems in that direction.

If S.P. betting is to be stamped out, fines laid down in legislation must be a deterrent. The law is made by this Assembly, and if something is illegal, it should be treated as being illegal. If honourable members say that there should be betting shops, let us bring down legislation to provide for the establishment of betting shops. However, while the present law stands, let us ensure that it is a deterrent to S.P. betting operations.

A number of appeals have been made to me to introduce an amendment of the penalty for a third offence. Anyone would think that the proposed legislation had been designed and introduced into this Chamber by Chalk, the member for Lockyer. It is not brought here by me as an individual. It is brought here by me as Treasurer of the State and Minister administering racing in Queensland, having been submitted to a fully attended meeting of the joint Government parties and having been accorded the support of that meeting. Honourable members have risen in this Chamber and spoken on the matter, and that is their prerogative. There is nothing to prevent a member of

the Liberal Party or a member of the National Party from expressing himself in the Chamber. However, appealing to me as Treasurer and trying to put the onus on me to amend the proposed legislation, after it has received the support and approval of the Government parties, are completely different matters. Although I have been in the Chamber for many years, rarely have I seen an exhibition such as the one I have seen tonight.

**Mr. Moore:** You might see a better one on the second reading.

**Sir GORDON CHALK:** Well, I am prepared to face up to the situation. One can look through newspaper after newspaper and find reports of very favourable comment from the racing industry about what the Government is endeavouring to do. That includes reference to the penalties recommended in the Bill.

It is said that the penalty is mandatory. It is—on the third offence. If a person is going to break the law three times—

**Mr. Houston:** And get caught three times.

**Sir GORDON CHALK:** . . . and get caught three times, and probably he breaks the law many more times than he is caught, there is every reason for this Parliament to indicate to the magistrate the seriousness with which that type of offence is viewed by Parliament.

The honourable member for Brisbane referred to what was said by the president of the Queensland Law Society. I can quite understand the views of some people associated with the law. I am not saying that the expression of the Queensland Law Society is the over-all opinion of those who are responsible for the law in this State. Considerable sums of money are invested, as it were, by law-breakers. The reply I gave when I was asked what I thought of that expression of opinion was that possibly some people were losing good clients.

I think that everything proposed in the Bill, except the matter of S.P. operations, has received the general approbation of the Chamber. I regret that apparently there are some who disagree with an attempt to stamp out illegal S.P. operations in Queensland. I feel that the Government has a responsibility, and the responsibility rests on me, as Minister in charge of racing, to endeavour to see that the law is amended in such a way that it meets the requirements of the day, that it can be implemented and that it gives an indication of what the Parliament believes should be the law at the present time. On that basis I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Motion (Sir Gordon Chalk) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, read a first time.

The House adjourned at 11.50 p.m.