

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 28 OCTOBER 1976

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

LOCKYER BY-ELECTION

RETURN OF WRIT

Mr. **SPEAKER**: Order! I have to inform the House that the writ issued by me on 10 September 1976 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Lockyer has been returned to me with a certificate endorsed thereon by the returning officer of the election, on 16 October 1976, of Anthony James Bourke, Esquire, to serve as such member.

MEMBER SWORN

Mr. Bourke was introduced, took the oath of allegiance, and subscribed the roll.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

State Fire Services Council, for the year 1975-76.

Queensland Housing Commission, for the year 1975-76.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

Racing and Betting Act 1954-1975.

City of Brisbane Act 1924-1974.

Regulations under—

Workers' Compensation Act 1916-1974.

Land Tax Act 1915-1974.

Mining Act 1968-1976.

Hospitals Act 1936-1976.

PETITIONS

SECURITY AT ETNA CREEK PRISON

Mr. **HARTWIG** (Callide) presented a petition from 27 residents of The Caves and Rockhampton districts praying that the Parliament of Queensland will initiate an in-depth inquiry into all aspects of prison security and prisoner classification at the Etna Creek Prison and also take action to have a warning system implemented so that residents may be warned of any escapes from the prison.

Petition read and received.

Mr. **Houston** interjected.

Mr. **SPEAKER**: Order!

Mr. **Houston** interjected.

Mr. **SPEAKER**: Order! I warn the honourable member for Bulimba under Standing Order 123A.

AMENDMENT OF LIQUOR ACT

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) presented a petition from 21 electors of Queensland praying that the Parliament of Queensland will amend the Liquor Act so as to allow golf and bowls clubs to sell take-away bottled liquor to their members.

Petition read and received.

case may be to (a) Petrie, (b) Pinkenba, (c) Ferny Grove, (d) Shorncliffe, (e) Ipswich, (f) Lota and (g) Beenleigh stations?

(2) What will be the fares in each case after the increase of 15 per cent, as indicated in the Budget, is applied?

(3) When will the increase take effect?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) The information sought by the honourable member appears in Railway By-laws 1062 and 1072 published in the Government Gazettes of Saturday, 24 October 1975, and Saturday, 16 October 1976, respectively. I table the details of the information and ask that it be included in "Hansard".

(3) 1 November 1976.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. INCREASED RAIL FARES

Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) What were the rail fares on 1 September for each of the journeys from either Central or South Brisbane as the

SUBURBAN RAIL FARES

The rail fares at 1 September 1976 were:—

—	Single	Return	Multi Trip Weekly	3 Monthly Season
From Brisbane Central To—	\$	\$	\$	\$
Petrie	0.65	1.30	3.90	43.00
Pinkenba	0.40	0.80	2.80	31.00
Ferny Grove	0.40	0.80	2.80	31.00
Shorncliffe	0.50	1.00	3.40	38.00
Ipswich	0.85	1.70	4.70	52.00
From South Brisbane To—				
Lota	0.55	1.10	3.60	40.00
Beenleigh	0.85	1.70	4.70	52.00

Fares on and from 1 November 1976 will be:—

—	Single	Return	Multi Trip Weekly	3 Monthly Season
From Brisbane Central To—	\$	\$	\$	\$
Petrie	0.75	1.50	4.50	50.00
Pinkenba	0.45	0.90	3.20	36.00
Ferny Grove	0.45	0.90	3.20	36.00
Shorncliffe	0.55	1.10	3.85	43.00
Ipswich	0.95	1.90	5.30	59.00
From South Brisbane To—				
Lota	0.65	1.30	4.20	47.00
Beenleigh	0.95	1.90	5.30	59.00

2. BELLEVUE BUILDING

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

(1) What is the current situation in relation to the Bellevue building?

(2) As reported on 4 October, have Government officials recommended the complete reconstruction of the building

20 ft. back from its present position, with a facade the same as the old building?

(3) What is the estimated cost of this proposal?

(4) What is the estimated cost of restoration of the present Bellevue?

(5) Are there any plans to paint the building and restore the veranda and railings?

Answers:—

(1) The Bellevue building is being used at the present time for the purpose of residential accommodation for members of Parliament.

(2) No.

(3) See answer to (2).

(4) \$3,000,000.

(5) See answers to (2), (3) and (4).

3. PROHIBITION ON DEVELOPMENT OF RIVER-FRONTAGE LAND, BRISBANE

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

(1) With reference to Part VIII River Frontage of the Schedule to the Order in Council under the City of Brisbane Modified Town Plan, wherein the use or development of land within 30 metres of the Brisbane River is prohibited, as these prohibitions include the erection of any building, the parking of any vehicle or the placing of any goods within this area, how will these requirements affect the sheds, wharfage and other existing structures which are at present within the 30 metre limit?

(2) Will this plan affect the rebuilding of the fire-damaged shed at the McDonald Hamilton wharf?

(3) As the Marine Services Department apparently does not know, were these provisions of the town plan the subject of any consultation between the Brisbane City Council and the Marine Services Department?

Answers:—

It is not correct to state that the proposed Modified Town Plan for the City of Brisbane, which is presently on public exhibition, will prohibit the use of land within specified distances from the Brisbane River where the use of such land would, in terms of the plan be permitted, either as of right or with the consent of the Brisbane City Council.

I am advised that the provision of the plan referred to requires that, within the distances specified in the plan from the banks of the Brisbane River in the areas indicated, if the development of land proposed is not a prohibited use of land in terms of the plan, then such use may be permitted, subject to the consent of the council being first obtained.

I would therefore answer the questions as follows:—

(1) Any existing buildings or structures on lands affected by the provisions of the plan in question will not be affected by the coming into force of the modified town plan. Any additions, alterations etc. of buildings or structures on or changes in use of such land would, however, be subject to the plan.

(2) The rebuilding of the fire-damaged shed at the McDonald Hamilton Wharf would be subject to the provisions of the modified plan once it is approved, and it would be necessary to ascertain the zoning of the subject land and the precise use to which the shed was being put in order to be able to establish whether such rebuilding could be permitted under the plan. As I have no information relating to these matters or the exact location of the land in question, I can offer no further comment on this aspect.

(3) It would seem to me that apart from matters of navigation and the construction of wharves and jetties, the use and development of land along the banks of the Brisbane River affected by the particular provision of the modified plan referred to would not be the concern of the Department of Harbours and Marine. I have no knowledge as to whether any consultation took place between the Brisbane City Council and that department in formulating the provision in question.

4. IMPACT OF RESTRICTIONS ON RESIDENTIAL B LAND, BRISBANE

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

(1) Is he aware of the provisions of the Modified Town Plan, which has been prepared by the Brisbane City Council and which imposes new scales of density and other provisions inhibiting the development of zone B land?

(2) Has he seen public comments which indicate that the town plan will effectively cut by half the amount of land available on which flats can be built?

(3) In view of the desperate need for more Housing Commission aged person flats in Greater Brisbane, is he concerned that the town plan will place further obstacles and costs on the ability of the commission to acquire land for the construction of aged person units?

Mr. HINZE: In answer to question No. 4—

Answers:—

(1 and 2) Yes.

(3) As the honourable member is aware, the Modified Town Plan for the City of Brisbane is presently on public exhibition pursuant to the City of Brisbane Town Plan Modification Act 1976.

The period of exhibition expires at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, 2 November 1976, and interested persons have a right of objection to the Modified Town Plan provided such objections are lodged prior to the above time.

The honourable member may be assured that the provision of the Modified Town Plan referred to by him and all objections lodged thereto will receive full consideration when the plan is submitted by the council for the approval of the Governor in Council.

Mr. LANE: I rise to a point of order. Mr. Speaker, you did not call me for question No. 4 standing in my name.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! As I understand it, the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads answered the question on behalf of the Minister for Works and Housing.

Mr. LANE: No, Mr. Speaker, that is not so.

Mr. HINZE: It was an honest mistake, Mr. Speaker. I was handed an answer to question No. 4, but you did not call on me to answer the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I understand that the Minister for Works and Housing has certain difficulties with his voice this morning, and I took it that he had given the answer to another Minister to read on his behalf.

Mr. LANE: With respect, Mr. Speaker, the answer that would have been given by the Minister for Works and Housing is different from that given by the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads. The answer given by the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads was not an answer to my question. It could not even be construed as such. The Minister for Works and Housing has the answer to the question, and I should like to hear it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Minister for Works and Housing to give the answer to the question.

Mr. LANE: Mr. Speaker, I ask question No. 4 standing in my name.

Mr. LEE: I am sure the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads was only trying to save my voice. The answer

to question No. 4 directed by the honourable member for Merthyr to the Minister for Works and Housing is as follows:—

Answer:—

(1 to 3) Considerable professional-staff time has been given and is being given to study of the town plan and to discussion with council officers. I am very concerned with the plan's possible effects on the provision of housing, and if considered desirable formal objection will be lodged. I have asked that an objection be lodged.

5. SPEECH THERAPISTS, MARYBOROUGH

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

(1) How many vacancies exist for speech therapists in the Education Department?

(2) How long is it since Maryborough last had a departmental speech therapist?

(3) What was the established number of speech therapists set for the department as at 30 June and how many vacancies were there at that date?

Answers:—

(1) At the present time there are 12 vacant positions for speech therapists, which will be filled in accordance with guide-lines determined by the Government within the limits of funds available.

(2) The last speech therapist attached to the Education Department in Maryborough vacated that position in July 1974.

(3) On 30 June 1976 the established number of speech therapists was 48, with 12 positions being vacant.

6. UPGRADING OF DULULU-WESTWOOD ROAD

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

(1) Will he investigate the present Dululu-Westwood road section with a view to having it upgraded to highway classification?

(2) As the Banana Shire Council also favours this scheme, will he agree to authorise design work to commence as soon as possible, with a view to declaring this road a highway and so expediting permanent works and sealing?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I already have a report that was completed by the district engineer at Rockhampton regarding the Dululu-Westwood road and covering the matters raised by the honourable member. This report is being considered at present by my officers. All highways (except national highways) and main roads are rural arterial roads and are funded from this category. Declaring the road a highway would not therefore expedite its construction. I hope to convince the Commonwealth Transport Minister at the December meeting that rural arterials throughout the State urgently need additional funds, and this is what is needed to expedite construction.

7. PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE FOR YEPPON

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

As there is a great need for a pre-school centre at Yeppoon, what action has been taken to provide this facility and where will it be located?

Answer:—

In December last year I approved a recommendation for the acquisition of land to provide a site for the proposed pre-school at Yeppoon. Unfortunately the property involved changed hands at about the same time and the new owner had begun extensive improvements. As a result of this, further investigations are being made into alternative sites for the pre-school. I am not in a position to give any details at this time but I understand that the matter is being treated as urgent.

8. NEW MALE WARD FOR BILOELA BASE HOSPITAL

Mr. Hartwig, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

As a new male ward for the Biloele Base Hospital was agreed to in principle last year, when will construction of this urgently needed ward be commenced?

Answer:—

The commencement of construction will depend on the preparation of satisfactory documentation for this project and the availability of loan finance when such documentation has been completed.

9. INQUIRY INTO QUEENSLAND EDUCATION SYSTEM

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

(1) Has he seen the article in "The Courier-Mail" of 27 October headed "Modern Education under Fire"?

(2) In view of the serious statements contained in the article, will he set up a committee of business executives and other interested citizens to look into our modern education system and its effect on employment today?

Answers:—

(1) Yes; but having read the article, which emanated from London, I note that it refers to various aspects of education in the United Kingdom.

(2) No. I believe that we already have a surfeit of committees of inquiry into education.

10. UNFAIR COMPETITION WITH AIR CHARTER SERVICES

Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

Has he been advised that genuine Queensland companies conducting aircraft charter services, which observe the stringent regulations that apply to those services and employ pilots, engineers and office staff, are being driven out of business by fly-by-night operators from other States and even from Queensland whose licences are issued willy-nilly by the State Government, in some cases grazing companies and firms that primarily secure a licence for their own business and then expand their franchise to cover any and all air charter activities, and, if so, is any action contemplated to stop this gross abuse of governmental co-operation?

Answer:—

The issue of State licences for air charter services since the inception of licensing in this State in 1947 has been only with the prior approval of the Governor in Council in each individual case in accordance with the provisions of the Transport Act of the day. This could hardly be termed willy-nilly, which in the circumstances, to say the least, is a poor choice of words by the honourable member.

I am aware of allegations of the nature concerned and, following criticism emanating from certain operators in highly competitive areas, policy was comprehensively

reviewed earlier this year when it was decided to continue the existing long-established practice.

I would emphasise that no State charter licence is issued to an applicant in advance of the issue of a Commonwealth licence, which requires that an applicant satisfy the following requirements:—

- (a) Be a legal entity;
- (b) Possess control of a suitable aircraft;
- (c) Employ a properly qualified flight crew under the operational direction of a chief pilot approved by the regional director;
- (d) Have an approved maintenance organisation responsible for the maintenance of his aircraft;
- (e) Carry appropriate insurance as required under the Civil Aviation (Carriers' Liability) Act 1962-1972;
- (f) Be regarded as a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

The above requirements do in practice impose a significant restriction on entry into the aerial charter industry, in terms of financial commitment, the qualifications of personnel and the observance of maintenance standards.

11. BYPASS OVER RAIL CROSSING, RAILWAY ESTATE, TOWNSVILLE

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

With regard to the proposal to build a bypass over the railway crossing at the entrance to the big South Yard shunting-yard in Railway Estate, what are the particulars of the bypass and, in view of the growing need to eliminate the traffic hold-ups that are occurring more frequently and are of ever-increasing duration, what is the probable date when construction will commence?

Answer:—

The planning is now in progress for this work. It is intended to commence this work in the 1977-78 financial year. The future road will provide a direct connection from Railway Avenue by an overbridge across the jetty line and the shunting yard to the city.

12. SWIMMING-POOL, THURSDAY ISLAND

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

(1) Is he aware that a swimming-pool, promised for construction on Thursday Island by the State from a Commonwealth

Government grant, will provide employment for Aborigines and Islanders?

(2) As very little work has been done and material and equipment are falling into disrepair, what is the nature of the delay and what is being done to remedy the situation?

(3) When will this facility be completed?

Answers:—

(1) Yes; the work is being carried out by the Torres Shire Council with Commonwealth grants and State subsidy.

(2) It is correct that little work is being done at the moment, but I am assured that the material and equipment on hand are not falling into disrepair. The cause for delay is shortage of money. An application has been made by the council for a further special works grant from the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs of \$70,000 for 1976-77, but this grant has not yet been approved. I would hope that the grant will soon be made available so that the work can proceed. Expenditure to date is \$102,000 and the total estimated cost is \$420,000.

(3) With sufficient funding, the work could be completed in two years.

13. SEALED ROAD AROUND THURSDAY ISLAND

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

(1) Is he aware that the people of Thursday Island have been hoping for a sealed road around the island, which presently has road conditions worse than some of those in remote areas of my electorate on the mainland?

(2) When will the construction of this promised road begin?

(3) When will the road be completed?

Answers:—

(1) I personally inspected this road in February of this year and made arrangements for funds over the next two years to construct a bitumen road around the island.

(2) Victoria Parade and Hospital Road are being widened at present. Design of the balance of the ring road around the island is well advanced, and work on it will commence early in 1977.

(3) I would expect the road to be completed in the next two years since funds have been made available by the Main Roads Department and the work can proceed as quickly as possible.

14. STAFF VACANCIES AT WOLSTON
PARK HOSPITAL

Mr. Marginson, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Is he aware that a number of vacant positions exist at the Wolston Park Hospital for which applications have not been called, including six nursing supervisors, five charge nurses and 11 deputy charge nurses, and that some of the positions have been vacant for upwards of 12 months?

(2) Why is there a delay in the filling of these positions with permanent appointments and when will the appointments be made?

Answers:—

(1) At present, one Nursing Supervisor position, four Charge Nurse (Male) positions, three Deputy Charge Nurse (Male) positions and nine Deputy Charge Nurse (Female) positions are vacant at Wolston Park Hospital, Wacol. All of these positions, with the exception of six Deputy Charge Nurse (Female) positions have recently become vacant owing to resignation or retirement.

(2) Action is in hand for the filling of four Male Charge Nurse and two Male Deputy Charge Nurse positions.

Vacancies for Deputy Charge Nurses (Female) at Wolston Park Hospital were not filled when they came about some months ago as no suitable applicants were available for appointment at that time, or indeed, at the present time.

Appointments to these vacant female positions and the position of Nursing Supervisor are being withheld at this stage pending the staff rearrangements necessitated by the development of the new caring profession for the intellectually handicapped being implemented at Chalinor Centre and Basil Stafford Training Centre.

15. HOUSING COMMISSION PENSIONER
UNITS, REDLANDS

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

(1) In view of the large number of aged persons seeking accommodation in the Redlands electorate, will he investigate the problem?

(2) Are suitable units for aged persons able to be constructed and, if so, when will construction take place?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) With applications currently at 1,500 I am well aware of the demand for pensioner units in most parts of the

State. Available funds are committed to June 1977, and I am not able to guess beyond that date when the present Commonwealth Act expires.

16. SPEECH THERAPIST FOR MT. ISA

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

(1) With reference to his statement in Mt. Isa that if he could get speech therapists to go to the country he would be willing to appoint them, has his department received any application requesting an appointment to Mt. Isa?

(2) If so, when will an appointment be made?

Answers:—

(1) The Department of Education has received inquiries about a speech therapy position in Mt. Isa but no formal application has been received to date.

(2) As it is a new position, should a formal application be received it will be considered within the guide-lines determined by the Government for the growth of the Public Service.

17. ACCOMMODATION FOR DISTRICT
GUIDANCE OFFICER IN MT. ISA

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

As it is normal practice for the principal and deputy principal of State schools to be supplied with Government accommodation, what steps have been taken regarding accommodation for the new district guidance officer in Mt. Isa?

Answer:—

I presume that the honourable member refers to residential accommodation. In this case the matter is one for initiation by the Department of Education. Arrangements are in hand to provide office accommodation for this officer in the Special Education Centre at the Mt. Isa Central State School.

18. UPGRADING OF ROADS, MARYBOROUGH-
HERVEY BAY

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

(1) Has any request been received by any council for the upgrading of the very important tourist road connecting the

Bruce Highway with the Hervey Bay-Maryborough road from Torbanlea?

(2) When will the bitumen sealing of the new section of the Maryborough-Hervey Bay road be completed?

Answers:—

(1) There have been many requests, but priority has been given to the Maryborough-Urangan Road.

(2) Main Roads has recently taken over supervision of this job and is endeavouring to have the sealing completed towards the end of this year.

19. HOUSING COMMISSION PENSIONER UNITS, BAROLIN STREET, BUNDABERG

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

As the company which contracted to build the pensioner units in Barolin Street, Bundaberg, has not been able to fulfil the contract, when will the much-needed units be completed?

Answer:—

When the legal position with the construction company is clear, a fresh contract will be let to ensure early completion.

20. PRE-SCHOOL FOR PIALBA

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

When will the pre-school promised for Pialba be built?

Answer:—

Discussions involving the principals and the parents and citizens' associations of the primary school and the high school have been conducted with a view to obtaining a suitable site for a pre-school at Pialba. These discussions have indicated that a site exists but it will be necessary to conduct certain inspections before a final decision is made. Subject to the acceptability of the suggested site and to the availability of funds, construction should proceed during 1977-78.

21. PERMITS FOR MARCHES, BRISBANE

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

(1) How many applications for permits to hold marches in the Brisbane City area were received in 1973, 1974, and 1975?

(2) How many were refused?

(3) What were the reasons for the refusal in each category?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) Statistics of this kind are not maintained by the Police Department and consequently I am unable to supply the information sought.

22. COMMUNITY WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the decision in South Australia to appoint a Community Welfare Advisory Committee to inquire into the assessment of applications for the adoption of children there?

(2) How many people have applied to adopt children this year compared with the numbers for the last five years in Queensland, and what is the current waiting list?

(3) In order to alleviate the sometimes unrealistically long waiting period for applicants, will he consider introducing a special Community Welfare Advisory Committee along the lines of the South Australian committee, which comprises a number of outstanding doctors, psychiatrists, church leaders, social workers and community leaders, to make recommendations on general criteria for adoption and generally to achieve a reasonable balance of applications and the number of babies becoming available?

Answers:—

(1) I have now become aware of an article which appeared in "The Advertiser", Adelaide, on Monday, 6 September 1976.

(2) As indicated in my introductory speech for the department's Estimates in this Chamber on Thursday, 21 October 1976, the period for which potential adoptive parents would have to wait for the adoption of children is—

Male—Up to 30 months according to religious denomination.

Female—Up to 39 months according to religious denomination.

All applications received as at the close of the financial years were—

Year ended 30 June 1976—953

Year ended 30 June 1975—2,099

Year ended 30 June 1974—2,201

Year ended 30 June 1973—2,068

Year ended 30 June 1972—2,294

Year ended 30 June 1971—1,938.

(3) Since 11 May 1976, an Adoption Policy Review Committee has been established in the Department of Children's Services to make recommendations to the Director of Children's Services, and through him to me on the general criteria for adoptions within this State. In addition, under the auspices of the Queensland Council of Social Services, five task groups are examining specific aspects of adoption. These task groups will report to Q.C.O.S.S. and it will forward the findings and recommendations to me.

The five task groups are each under a convenor and the chairman of convenors is the Honourable Mr. Justice Demack. The groups are dealing with the following topics:—

- (i) The objectives of the adoptive practice.
- (ii) The placement practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children.
- (iii) Children with special needs for families, for example children with handicaps, older children.
- (iv) Inter-country adoption.
- (v) Developmental needs of adoptive children and their families.

The formation of these groups arose following the first Australasian conference on adoption held in Sydney earlier this year at which my department was represented by two senior officers. The topics referred to the task groups were thought to be in need of further discussion and Q.C.O.S.S. undertook to convene a seminar at which I gave the opening address. It was at that seminar that the five task groups were formed.

Until the recommendations from the experienced officers within the Department of Children's Services and from various members of the community already contributing to the Q.C.O.S.S. groups are received, I do not propose to commit myself on the establishment, or otherwise, of an advisory committee.

23. WATER POLLUTION BY INDUSTRIAL EFFLUENT

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

(1) With reference to the publication entitled "Legalized Pollution" released by the Public Interest Research Group, in which criticism was made of section 6 of the Clean Waters Act, which exempts certain leading industries from the control of the Act, will he undertake to ensure that Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Ltd., Alcan Qld. Pty. Ltd., Thiess Peabody Mitsui Coal Pty. Ltd., Utah Development Company, Metals

Exploration Qld. Pty. Ltd., and Freeport Queensland Nickel Inc. come within the ambit of the Act notwithstanding any agreement between these companies and the Government?

(2) How does he reconcile the exemption of these companies (as well as Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd. which discharges into the North Pine River at Petrie, Nestles Food Specialities (Aust.) Ltd., which discharges into the Mary River at Gympie, and Parson & Lewis, which discharges into the Aquarium Passage at Hemmant), which are exempted under section 6 because they have entered into agreements under section 10A of the Health Act, with the information that all people are equal before the law and the declared policy of the Government that it is serious about ensuring that Queensland waters are unpolluted?

Answers:—

(1) It is not necessary to take any action to bring the companies mentioned within the ambit of the Clean Waters Act; therefore my answer to this question is no.

(2) The reasons for the provisions contained in section 6 (2) of the Clean Waters Act 1971–1976 is that the discharge of wastes into watercourses by the companies mentioned, in the course of mining operations carried out by them under an agreement specified in that section, is subject to the provisions of that agreement. As an example, the agreement set out in the schedule to the Greenvale Agreement Act requires that any drainage discharge by the companies specified in that agreement into a river or stream as a result of their mining operations shall not be dangerous or injurious to health nor render the natural water in the river or stream less fit for human consumption or consumption by stock or for marine life, shall not cause harmful pollution of waters and shall not contain harmful solids. Similar provisions are contained in the other Acts mentioned in section 6 (2) of the Clean Waters Act 1971–1976.

It will be noted that control over the discharge of wastes into natural waters by the companies specified in section 6 (2) of the Clean Waters Act 1971–1976 in the course of their mining operations is already dealt with in the terms and conditions of the agreements mentioned, and accordingly the provisions of the Clean Waters Act 1971–1976 do not have application to such discharges by the companies in terms of their agreements.

The agreements made under section 10 (A) of the Health Act prior to the passing of the Clean Waters Act 1971 similarly cover any discharge into rivers or streams

and it is not necessary that these discharges be dealt with under the Clean Waters Act.

The agreements referred to adequately cover the situation and involve no departure from the policy of the Government to ensure protection of the waters concerned.

24. BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL CIRCULARS
ON RATIONALISATION OF ELECTRICITY
SUPPLY

Mr. Ahern for **Mrs. Kyburz**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the fact that the Brisbane City Council is using the mailing of rate notices as yet another opportunity to confuse ratepayers about the rationalisation of electricity?

(2) As this latest costly attempt to stir dissent states that ratepayers should fill in the form and send it to the council, is there any way in which the council can stop the legislation as it threatens to do?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) The Bill is before Parliament, which is the appropriate and only body which can decide whether it will be passed.

25. VALUATION OF HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES

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

How is the valuation of a Housing Commission house determined when a tenant is desirous of purchasing it under the new easy-purchase scheme?

Answer:—

The commission bases its calculation of replacement value on its own construction costs shown in recent contracts for a similar type of house. This is then depreciated for age. It also allows a deduction of the principal paid as part of rent.

Purchasers thus receive the benefit of lower commission construction costs, a generous allowance for age and whatever they have paid off the principal. In addition, purchases are exempt from stamp duty, and the commission does conveying free of charge.

With interest at a concessional 7½ per cent, as well as these other benefits, buyers are generously treated.

26. MOTORISTS CHARGED FOR WARNING
OTHERS OF RADAR TRAPS

Mr. Ahern for **Mrs. Kyburz**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) How many motorists in Brisbane have been charged with having hindered a member of the Police Force in the execution of his duty, particularly motorists who warn others of radar traps on the road ahead?

(2) What penalties have so far been imposed on these motorists?

(3) How many extra police are needed on a radar trap or speed-gun site to catch motorists in this relatively minor offence?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) Statistics of this kind are not kept by the Police Department and, consequently, I am unable to supply the information sought.

(3) No extra police are usually required. However, when information is received of this hindrance, additional police are then sent to the scene to catch this type of offender as well as traffic offenders generally. Whether the offence could be regarded as "relatively minor" is debatable. I do not consider the enforcement of any laws which could have an effect of reducing the toll of the road as being unimportant. Police must rely on the co-operation of members of the public in the discharge of their duties. If police are to achieve their objectives, including the reduction of the toll of the road, the co-operation of the public must be forthcoming and there should be no hindrance to police in carrying out this important facet of police duties.

27. REPAINTING OF CAVENDISH ROAD HIGH
SCHOOL

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

(1) Is he aware of the deplorable state of the external paint on the Cavendish Road High School?

(2) When will repainting be commenced?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) Action is in train to paint the building externally in a staged programme and quotations for the painting of Blocks

A, B, C and D are presently being considered. A decision on these quotations is being expedited. It is expected that the successful contractor will make a start on the work soon thereafter. The honourable member will be formally advised of the decision by me in accordance with usual practice.

28. RECOGNITION OF AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF MUSIC

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

(1) As I am a former student, graduate and examiner of the Australian College of Music, which is accorded general public recognition and exists under letters patent, and as I am concerned that its graduates and those who choose to study within that college instead of the Australian Music Examination Board are not enabled to have these studies and results recognised by his department and the Board of Secondary School Studies, why is this recognition not accorded?

(2) When will recognition be given to those people who are desirous of studying with the Australian College of Music instead of with the Australian Music Examination Board?

Answers:—

(1) Junior and Senior Certificates issued by the Board of Secondary School Studies are based on school assessments. Results obtained by students in examinations conducted by outside bodies such as the Australian Music Examinations Board are not recorded on those certificates.

Where, however, a tertiary institution recognises results of an outside examining body such as the A.M.E.B. for admission purposes, the board records such results on the Tertiary Entrance Statement which it issues, as a service to students, so maintaining a practice which was in existence in 1973 when the board assumed responsibilities for grade 12 assessments. Results obtained in examinations conducted by the Australian College of Music are not recorded on the board's Tertiary Entrance Statement, because they are not recognised by tertiary institutions for admission purposes.

(2) The practice of recording A.M.E.B. results in music will be discontinued after 1978. In subsequent years, the board will record only those assessments for which it is responsible. Results in examinations conducted by an outside examining body such as the Australian College of Music could only be recorded on Tertiary

Entrance Statements prior to 1979, if they were recognised by tertiary institutions, and after that, not at all.

29. REVIEW OF STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

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

(1) Is he aware of an article in the "Australian Financial Review" of 25 October entitled "Queanbeyan Flood Crisis tests Emergency Service Network"?

(2) Will he ensure that the procedures and facilities of Queensland's State Emergency Service are re-evaluated against the experience of the Queanbeyan operation and amended where necessary in readiness for the impending wet season?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Information is regularly exchanged between the State Emergency Service in Queensland and similar organisations in the other States, and information regarding the operations at Queanbeyan has already been received. The procedures and facilities of the State Emergency Service are under constant review.

30. MUNDUBBERA STATE SCHOOL

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

(1) How many students does his department expect will be attending the Mundubbera State Primary School in 1977?

(2) What proposals for improvements are in train for the school?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The needs of this school have been brought to my attention by the local member the Honourable N. T. E. Hewitt, M.L.A., Minister for Water Resources, and has been the subject of correspondence between him and me. If the honourable member is so concerned about this matter, I would suggest that he discuss it with the Honourable the Minister for Water Resources.

31. RESUMPTION OF INQUIRY BY SCOTLAND YARD DETECTIVES

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

When will the Scotland Yard detectives return and complete their inquiry and what is the reason for the delay?

Answer:—

As previously advised in this House, the return of the Scotland Yard detectives to Queensland is contingent on finalisation of court proceedings presently in progress against two members of the Queensland Police Force and others.

32. POLICE OFFICERS AND APPLICANTS

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) How many police officers were employed in the Queensland Police Force in January 1975?

(2) How many police officers were employed in the force in each subsequent month to September 1976?

(3) How many people applied to join the force for each month from January 1975 to September 1976, and how many were successful?

(4) How many officers resigned from the force in each month between January 1975 and September 1976?

(5) Which police districts do not have a 24-hour police station.

Answers:—

(1 to 4) I table the answers and ask that they be incorporated in "Hansard".

—	Strength of Force	Applications Received	Admitted to Training	Resignations
1975				
January	3,467	145	25	12
February	3,474	166	22	9
March	3,479	109	23	9
April	3,489	118	21	8
May	3,502	116	24	14
June	3,487	82	42	17
July	3,489	91	18	11
August	3,480	91	17	12
September	3,496	77	13	3
October	3,512	73	17	10
November	3,523	71	19	14
December	3,543	56	13	12
1976				
January	3,544	108	21	19
February	3,541	142	23	11
March	3,539	84	34	16
April	3,546	97	20	9
May	3,594	86	55	13
June	3,610	56	19	8
July	3,616	74	19	11
August	3,631	51	13	3
September	3,633	59	20	15

NOTE.—The number of persons admitted to training do not necessarily relate to the number who applied during each particular month. Statistics of this kind are not kept. Usually, inquiries, medical examinations, etc., do not permit admission during the same month as the application is made.

(5) There are no operational Police Districts not having a 24-hour station.

33. INFORMAL METHODS OF EDUCATION

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

(1) With reference to reports of charges made by the British Prime Minister against informal methods of education and their results and also to the document initiated by the Education Department, which reported on the British research by Dr.

Bennett, author of *Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress*, as the report supports the British Prime Minister's charges against informal methods of education, especially the trend to open education, is he impressed by these reports?

(2) Will he use his influence to turn policy away from the new emphasis in Queensland on open classroom and informal methods?

(3) Does he foresee a rethinking or even a soul-searching in his department with respect to spending on so-called progressive education methods?

Answers:—

(1) I have noted that British education has become the centre of controversy recently, and that certain reports have been debated with considerable heat. Not having first-hand knowledge of British schools, I prefer to maintain an objective interest in such reports.

(2) I have visited many Queensland classrooms since assuming my portfolio, and I invite the honourable member to do the same. He will be reassured if he does.

(3) If the honourable member is referring to careful professional consideration, I assure him that this is a continuous process carried out within my department by directors and the various boards and committees which advise them. As finance for education is precious, nobody responsible for its consumption is likely to advocate spending on methods which have not been thoroughly considered.

34. BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr. Yewdale, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) Who are the members of the Business Advisory Council?

(2) How long has the council been in existence and when will it be furnishing a report to the Parliament?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The need to establish a Business Advisory Council, as such, diminished with the defeat of the Whitlam Government in 1975. My Government maintains a regular contact with the State's industrial and commercial sector through the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development. Frequent discussions are held with the business community not only in Brisbane but in provincial centres throughout the State with a view to gaining a greater understanding of needs and requirements. Furthermore, close liaison is maintained with the Commonwealth Government in all matters pertaining to the State's economic progress.

35. PUBLIC SERVICE STAFFING

Mr. Yewdale, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) When will the proposed ceiling in the growth of the Public Service apply?

(2) How many resignations have occurred each month since January 1976?

(3) How many positions are unfilled?

Answers:—

(1) Public Service departments have been instructed that there is to be no increase in their staff establishments as approved at 30 June 1976.

(2)—

January	..	..	..	378
February	..	..	..	271
March	..	..	..	207
April	..	..	..	186
May	..	..	..	201
June	..	..	..	213
July	..	..	..	240
August	..	..	..	165
September	..	..	..	170
October (to date)	..	..	..	104

(3) It is not possible to give a precise answer at any given time without consulting every Public Service department. However, on recent examination there were approximately 2,000 vacancies and this is consistent with the position that normally obtains. These had occurred from a variety of causes and the usual procedure is being taken for the filling of these positions.

36. ILLUMINATION OF EXECUTIVE BUILDING EXTERIOR; CO-ORDINATOR-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT RENOVATIONS

Mr. Yewdale, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) What was the cost of outside lighting of the State Executive Building for the last financial year?

(2) What is the cost of renovations for the Co-ordinator-General's Department to move from the 10th and 11th floors to the 2nd and 3rd floors in the State Executive Building?

Answers:—

(1) \$10,000.

(2) \$179,250.

37. PERSONAL INCOME TAX SHARING

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

Has he read the Local (Personal Income Tax Sharing) Act and the States (Personal Income Tax Sharing) Act, which were recently introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament? If so, is he in total agreement

with the proposals and, if not, what representation has he or any other member of this Government made to the Commonwealth Government?

Answer:—

The measures to which the honourable member has referred are not Acts. Bills have been introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament and copies forwarded by the Commonwealth to the State. The proposed legislation is generally in accord with principles agreed at successive Premiers' Conferences but there are some aspects of the Bill dealing with the local government tax sharing arrangement on which the State Government would prefer a different approach, and these aspects have been raised by the Premier with the Prime Minister.

38. RETENTION MONEY, SCHOOL DENTAL CLINIC, GARDEN STREET, SOUTHPORT

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

(1) In relation to the construction of the school dental clinic at Garden Street, Southport, was any retention money held by the State Government for the purpose of offsetting any loss incurred as a result of a contractor being unable to complete the project as per contract and, if so, how much was retained?

(2) Will the retention money be used on this particular project?

(3) If sub-contractors have a secured charge on work completed under the Sub-contractors' Charges Act will they have access to the retention money?

Answers:—

(1) A retention of \$2,688.00 is held under this contract on the value of work, satisfactorily completed.

(2) Yes.

(3) Claims under the Subcontractors' Charges Act, to the extent that they are substantiated, have prior claim over any moneys in hand after meeting the cost of completing the works.

39. COUNCIL CHARGES FOR WATER FOR DOMESTIC USE

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

(1) Which three councils, with a population in excess of 10,000, make the highest water charges for domestic use?

(2) What charges were made for water in 1974-75, 1975-76 and 1976-77 by these councils?

(3) What charges were made by the Gladstone City Council for water for domestic use in the same years?

Answers:—

(1) On information at present available, the three local authorities with populations over 10,000 with the highest domestic water charge are the Mt. Isa City Council, Landsborough Shire Council and Mulgrave Shire Council.

(2) The domestic water charges in the three areas are:—

—	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77
	\$	\$	\$
Mt. Isa ..	67	67	126
Landsborough	39	71	95
Mulgrave ..	48	70	89
Gladstone ..	45	45	85

(3) The charges quoted are as calculated on a common basis of a residence with a floor area of 1,200 sq. ft.

40. FINES AND FEES, ART UNION REGULATIONS

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

(1) How many organisations have been fined or levied additional fees for contravening the Art Union Regulations during the 12-month period to 1 August 1976.

(2) What was the total amount of fines or additional fees involved?

(3) What are the total receipts to date by way of registration fees for approved associations under the newly amended regulations and how many organisations have been registered?

Answers:—

(1) No organisations have been fined for contravening the Art Union Regulations during the 12-month period, but 53 organisations have been required to pay fees for conducting unlawful art unions.

(2) A total of \$46,369.99 in fees has been imposed for such unlawful art unions.

(3) A total of \$145,322.64 registration fees has been received. 2,386 organisations have been registered.

41. STANDARD OF LIVING QUARTERS FOR FETTLERS

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

(1) What does his department believe is a reasonable standard of living quarters for fettlers?

(2) Is he satisfied with the present standard of the facilities and, if not, what action is being taken to upgrade them on a State-wide basis?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The Railway Department is pursuing an increasingly extensive programme for the provision of new quarters and accommodation and the upgrading of existing accommodation for employees including fettlers. Last financial year \$1,064,000 was expended in this direction; this year the provision is \$2,650,000. In addition, \$1,600,000 was spent last financial year on the maintenance of the 2,700 residences provided by the department for the accommodation of employees.

42. SWIMMING-POOL AT CENTRAL GIRLS SCHOOL, ROCKHAMPTON

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

(1) Will he initiate an urgent review of his department's decision to scrap the swimming-pool at the old Central Girls School, Rockhampton, because of the tremendous benefit to the new opportunity school and the National Fitness movement if the pool can be retained?

(2) While it is accepted that the cost of retaining the pool would be high, what would be the cost if a completely new pool was provided?

(3) What decision has been made regarding the removal of part or all of the old Central School building adjacent to the pool?

Answers:—

(1) No. Technical officers of my department have assessed the old swimming-pool as being beyond economic repair.

(2) In the vicinity of \$100,000.

(3) The future use of the building is still under consideration.

43. FAMILY ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE

Mr. Marginson for **Mr. Jones**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries—

(1) With reference to recent reports and his statement that direct personal aid last financial year to Aboriginal and Islander

people living on reserves was \$50,000 and to the answer to my question on 20 October when he said that his department provided deserted wives an average standard of living commensurate with that provided by the Children's Services Department, does this not mean that, considering the average supporting mother receives \$54.75 and \$7.50 for each additional child, only something of the order of up to 20 women would have been receiving this benefit from his department for that particular year?

(2) Will he give an undertaking to the House that officers of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement will ensure that mothers and their children who are eligible to receive the family assistance allowance from the Children's Services Department, but who are not receiving it, will now receive their just entitlements?

(3) If so, will he inform this House and the eligible women and children living on these reserves the date from which they will be able to make application, be paid and receive this benefit to which they are justly entitled?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The honourable member is reminded that my comment was: "in other words less than \$50,000 was spent in a way which could be construed as a hand-out". I emphasise the word "hand-out" as I do not consider an entitlement to be a "hand-out". Entitlements of people are absorbed in the total cost of administration of communities, whereas the amount referred to is additional benefit in the areas set out.

The honourable member is referred to my answer of 20 October, and I can add that negotiations are well advanced to a change-over being effected shortly.

44. REMOVAL OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ABORIGINES AND ISLANDERS

Mr. Marginson for **Mr. Jones**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries—

(1) With reference to recent Commonwealth legislation, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Act, which was passed with the support of the Liberal-National Country Parties in the Senate and is designed to remove the discriminatory provisions of the Queensland Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Acts, what is the attitude taken by his department in relation to the administration of the reserves in the light of this Commonwealth legislation?

(2) Does he consider himself to be bound by this legislation and, if so, what actual changes will occur on the reserves to ensure that people residing on them will receive the benefits of this legislation?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The honourable member should be aware that the laws of the land, in accordance with the Constitution, have universal application. Should at any time they become redundant, repressive or unjust, it is a responsibility of the lawmakers to effect remedial measures.

45. FAMILY ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE

Mr. Marginson for Mr. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport—

(1) With reference to recent reports that Aboriginal and Islander women living on reserves, settlements, communities and/or missions in Queensland, who, although eligible to receive the family assistance allowance from the Children's Services Department, are not receiving it, when are women living on the reserves able to make application to his department for the benefits?

(2) Will officers of his department co-operate with officers of the Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement Department who are running the reserves, to ensure that women know that they are eligible to receive this benefit, and process applications for them?

Answers:—

(1) My colleague the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement commented in the Chamber on the evening of 26 October 1976 that he favoured the handing over of responsibility for the payment of family assistance to the Department of Children's Services.

There are some details relating to this matter which will have to be discussed between my colleague and me, and a number of administrative matters which will have to be attended to at officer level.

Section 41 of the Children's Services Act provides—

“ . . . the Director may in his discretion give assistance . . . in such form and for such period as he may determine”.

For some Aboriginal women living on settlements, I am advised that help in kind rather than in cash payment would be appropriate. This is because Aboriginal

men on the settlements may approach the women and take money from them forcibly, and if this happened they would, of course, still be destitute. Providing assistance in kind requires proper administrative machinery. The present presumption is that the term “in such form” means assistance in kind, but it may be necessary to seek a Crown Law opinion on this matter. For this reason I am not able to give a precise date of hand-over.

In addition to administrative arrangements, the question of staffing will have to be examined by officers of the two departments and probably by the Department of the Public Service Board.

(2) Officers of my department will, of course, co-operate with officers of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement, so that Aboriginal people know what they are eligible to receive, and process applications for them.

46. EFFECT OF INCREASED RAIL FREIGHTS ON SMALL FARMERS

Dr. Scott-Young, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

As there is considerable apprehension concerning the viability of small-crop, vegetable and fruit farms in the North since the recent increase in rail freight rates, will he consider varying the charges if these farms prove not viable because of the recent increase in charges?

Answer:—

The honourable member should direct his question to the Honourable the Minister for Transport.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

FRASER ISLAND SAND-MINING PROPOSAL

Mr. ALISON: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: Has his attention been drawn to the editorial in “The Australian” of Wednesday, 27 October, stating without any apology whatever that the only way to save Fraser Island is to stop sand-mining and implying that the cliffs of coloured sands, perched lakes and rainforests are all to go under the blade of the bulldozer? Would he agree that such implications are typical of the lies, distortions and misrepresentations put out by hard-line conservationists and people who have not bothered to get the facts, thereby causing much confusion and misunderstanding regarding sand-mining? Further, would it not be an interesting exercise to have these hard-line conservationists and other rat-bags who have no community responsibility front up at a

meeting of the 250 employees of sand-mining companies on Fraser Island whose jobs are in jeopardy, so that they can explain to those workers that the temporary disturbance to the sand dunes is far more important than their livelihood? Finally, if Fraser Island is declared as part of the National Estate, would this not mean that the jobs of 700 to 800 Maryborough timber and sawmill workers would be in jeopardy?

Mr. CAMM: Following the Fraser Island Environmental Inquiry report, a lot of assumptions and assertions have been made as to what the result of the report would be. As the honourable member is aware, the result will depend entirely on the Federal Government, which may or may not exercise controls over the export of minerals from the island.

In the editorial referred to by the honourable member, the inference is drawn that the lakes, forests and coloured sands are in jeopardy. Anyone with any common sense whatever would have taken the trouble to find out if these features are in jeopardy. There is no chance of mining taking place in any forestry area on Fraser Island or of the lakes being placed in jeopardy. As to the coloured sands, they are of no interest whatever to any mining company. The coloured sands are caused by vegetable stains not by mineralisation.

I am gravely concerned at the suppositions arrived at by many people in relation to Fraser Island. Only a very small percentage of the area of the island would be mined. If the Commonwealth Government in its wisdom decides to invoke its powers and refuse to grant export permits to the sand-mining companies, the people on Fraser Island and in the Maryborough area will suffer a tremendous blow.

The honourable member is quite correct in stating that irresponsible people and certain conservationists have distorted the facts. If they were to come up to Maryborough and talk with the men employed there, they might change their view.

As to the suggestion that Fraser Island be declared part of the National Estate and the result of such a declaration on the jobs of men engaged in the industry—all I can say is that I am thankful that the timber industry does not depend for its livelihood on the export of its products. I am quite sure I speak for the Government of Queensland when I say that there is no intention whatever of placing in jeopardy the timber and sawmilling industry that relies for its supply of logs on Fraser Island.

HOUSING VOUCHER ALLOWANCE SCHEME

Mr. HOUSTON: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Why was Queensland not included in the housing voucher allowance scheme? Is this another example of Mr.

Fraser's federalism, or is Queensland just unable to present a worth-while case?

Mr. LEE: I have had long discussions with the Federal Minister for Housing (Mr. Newman) on the voucher system. Whilst it has merit in places where housing is plentiful, I believe Queensland would be better off spending that portion of money through the welfare housing scheme, and it is for that reason that we are not included in the voucher scheme.

Mr. HOUSTON: I ask a supplementary question of the Minister for Works and Housing: As the Minister has been so careful to explain how he wants the money to be spent, will Queensland receive additional money for welfare housing?

Mr. LEE: This all started back in the Whitlam days. The Whitlam Government gave Queensland the rawest possible housing deal of any of the States. Queensland receives \$18 per head for welfare housing compared with the Australian average of \$25. The Opposition can thank the Whitlam Government for losing Queensland at least \$80,000,000 in that field. The Australian Labor Party will go down in history as robbing the people of Queensland of that amount of money. On three occasions I wrote to Ministers of the former Government—Johnson, Reardon and so on. They were coming and going like yo-yos. Whitlam was hiring and firing them so quickly that, before a letter would be answered, a new Minister would be in the portfolio. It was impossible to receive an answer.

Since the present Government assumed office, I have written to the late Senator Ivor Greenwood. As the Opposition would know, he was not sacked. Now that Mr. Newman is the Minister, I have written to him explaining Queensland's position. I am looking forward to a reply from him.

STRIKE AT COLLINSVILLE POWER STATION

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I ask the Acting Premier: Has his attention been drawn to the desperate position of industry in North Queensland as a result of the irresponsible union action at the Collinsville Power Station, which has resulted in power restrictions and, in turn, loss of production and the stand-down of employees? Will he consider declaring a state of emergency or taking some other action which will ensure a continuous supply of electricity, thus relieving the chaotic state of affairs that now exists?

Mr. CAMM: I am quite aware of the circumstances prevailing in North Queensland at the present time as the result of the action of 57 maintenance employees at the Collinsville Power Station, who are

demanding a \$10-a-day isolation allowance to work in Collinsville. The manager of the Northern Electric Authority (Mr. McKay) has indicated to the men that their case should go to the Full Bench of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. The repercussions of their claim, if granted, would be so widespread and would affect so many of the so-called isolated areas in Queensland that it is the most important decision to be made in the field of industrial relations not just in the electricity industry but in all industries in Queensland.

Employers' associations are applying for stand-down orders in respect of employees who, because of the action of this small group of men in Collinsville, cannot be gainfully employed. I have appealed to the men to submit their case to arbitration so that the commission, which is the proper place for solving the problem, can assess their claim and deliver a judgment. Instructions have been issued to keep vital industries supplied with as much electricity as possible; but unfortunately severe rationing will have to be implemented on many industries in North Queensland if the men do not go back to work.

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— FIFTH AND SIXTH ALLOTTED DAYS

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1976-77

WATER RESOURCES

DEPARTMENT OF IRRIGATION AND WATER SUPPLY

Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT (Auburn—Minister for Water Resources) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

“That \$8,375,510 be granted for ‘Department of Irrigation and Water Supply’.”

In recent years the State has enjoyed favourable seasonal conditions. Honourable members, particularly those representing country areas, are, however, only too well aware of the serious drought that ravaged our State in the past decade. It is obvious that water conservation, irrigation and improved stock and domestic supplies are major weapons to reduce the effects of this hazard. I welcome the opportunity to debate the Estimates of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission for 1976-77 and to inform members of the Government's activity in this field. The Government has pursued a programme of assessment, investigation and development of our vital water resources. We have had regard to the

vast area of the State and the need to ensure that in all development due consideration is given to use for rural, urban, mining and industrial purposes, and the encouragement to improve supplies on individual holdings.

1976-77 APPROPRIATIONS

The total appropriations for expenditure by the Irrigation Commission, from all sources, amount to \$35,737,498. This is provided from—

Revenue Fund ..	\$8,375,510
Loan Fund	\$17,550,000
Trust Funds	\$9,811,988

Loan funds have been augmented by \$1,450,000 additional to that which the commission would normally be allocated to enable progress to be maintained on the Commonwealth-financed projects of Monduran Dam/Gin Gin channel and Kinchant Dam where Commonwealth funds are or will be exhausted during the year.

It is of interest to note that the trust funds include moneys provided by the Commonwealth, various mining companies, Mount Isa Water Board, debenture loans raised by the commissioner and repayments by landholders.

To provide funds for capital works additional to the loan allocation, the commissioner has been authorised to borrow funds by debenture loan raisings. Since early 1973, loans totalling \$5,313,900 have been raised for Julius Dam (spare capacity), Blackwater water-supply scheme, Saraji-Dysart stock water supply and three bore water supply areas. Debenture loans of \$800,000 will be raised in 1976-77 for the Julius Dam (spare capacity) and Blackwater water-supply schemes.

COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE

Commonwealth grants will provide \$4,318,059, of which \$3,422,859 is for the construction of rural water-supply works and \$895,200 in continuation of the programme of measurement and assessment of surface and underground water supplies. Since 1967-68 we have obtained grants from the Commonwealth of \$45,750,000 for the construction of works, which over a number of years enabled a virtual doubling of expenditure for this purpose.

It is unfortunate that the payments in this year will complete the firm commitments by the Commonwealth in this field. Of course we need more, and requests have been submitted for further funds to complete the Bundaberg and Eton Irrigation Schemes and Clare Weir, and to commence further urgent works.

The Commonwealth has agreed to continue assistance for the water resources measurement and assessment programme for a further three years. Since commencement of the programme in 1964-65, grants totalling \$7,435,880 have been provided for this work.

MINERAL DEVELOPMENT

The continuing expansion of mineral development is an important aspect of the State's development. Water supply is a vital and often key factor in such developments. To ensure the most beneficial development of works for this purpose, the commission arranges, wherever practical, that the works, while financed by the companies in return for an allocation of supply, be owned and controlled by the Crown.

Four storages now provide supply for eight mining developments, namely, Bedford Weir (Utah, Thiess Bros. and Q.C.M. in the Blackwater area), Eungella Dam (Goonyella, Peak Downs), Bingegang Weir (Saraji, Norwich Park), Julius Dam (Mount Isa Mines). Work is continuing on the design of Spencer Dam on Denison Creek, which is being financed by the companies proposing coal-mining development, in the Nebo area.

WATER CONSERVATION AND IRRIGATION WORKS

During my term of some seven years as Minister responsible for water resources, six dams and 15 weirs have been completed. In that period the storage available in the 14 dams and 63 weirs now in operation has increased by over 200 per cent to almost 3 500 000 megalitres. The total volume of water held in the main storages for rural purposes reached a record level, in April 1976, of 3 434 000 megalitres, or 99 per cent of their total designed capacity, and early this month they held 90 per cent of capacity. This is a very satisfactory position and provides real protection for the benefited areas.

In 1976-77, expenditure of \$15,751,988 is provided in respect of 17 major projects. These include completion of the Julius and Glenlyon Dams, Bingegang and Baralaba Weirs, Burnett Barrage, Blackwater water-supply scheme and Pie Creek diversion works (Mary Valley).

Work will continue on the Monduran Dam pump station and the Gin Gin main channel, Kinchant Dam, Clare Weir, development of the Bundaberg, Emerald, St. George and Eton irrigation areas, diversion works from the Callide Dam, and the design of the Spencer Dam on Denison Creek. A commencement will be made on Cania Dam (near Monto) and the first weir in the Haughton River scheme near Giru.

As indicated earlier, Commonwealth grants for the Monduran Dam and Gin Gin Channel and Kinchant Dam (Eton Irrigation Scheme) were largely expended by 30 June 1976. The Government has provided special allocations of \$1,450,000 from State loan funds to enable these works to continue.

It was a very significant occasion earlier this month when the Honourable the Premier and I participated in the ceremony to mark the completion of Julius Dam and the Mt. Isa water-supply scheme to ensure supply

to the company and the city for the balance of this century. The scheme cost some \$30,350,000 and was financed by:

Mount Isa Mines Limited	\$14,880,000
Mount Isa Water Board ..	\$4,200,000
State Subsidy	\$5,970,000
Debenture loans raised by the Commissioner and Commonwealth loan (for spare capacity)	\$5,300,000

This scheme is an example of the co-ordination of development works and the co-operation between the Government and private and statutory corporations.

On 19 November we mark another significant achievement in the completion of Glenlyon Dam, in the Stanthorpe/Texas area. The dam was designed by the Water Resources Commission of New South Wales and constructed by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission of Queensland on behalf of the Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission. The cost of almost \$17,000,000 has been shared equally by the two States. This is the first major storage constructed under the provisions of the New South Wales-Queensland Border Rivers Act. Queensland's share of half the stored water will stabilise production in the Dumaresq Valley and allow increased areas of irrigation by existing landholders.

The first irrigators from the channel system in the major Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme received supply in September 1975. Some 33 farms are now supplied, and by the end of 1976-77 some 66 farms will be supplied, with a resultant benefit to a significant area of ground-water availability. A further \$2,645,000 has been allocated in 1976-77 for the completion of the Burnett River Barrage, continued development of the Gooburrum Distribution System and commencement of resumptions for the Woongarra System. By 30 June 1977 State expenditure on the distribution works will exceed \$10,000,000. In addition, \$1,200,000 of State funds has been provided to enable work to continue on the Monduran Dam pumping station and Gin Gin main channel where the Commonwealth grant is exhausted.

In the Burdekin River Irrigation Area \$400,000 is allocated for works to serve additional areas and on enlargement of works to meet increased irrigation demand. Seven irrigation areas are now established. Of these, Mareeba-Dimbulah, Burdekin River, St. George and Dawson Valley are fully operational. Emerald is substantially operational, Bundaberg in its initial stages and Eton under construction. Supply of water is principally by channel reticulation and some 31 000 hectares were irrigated in 1975-76. Nine irrigation projects are in operation in which water released from storages for private diversion irrigated an estimated 10 250 hectares in 1975-76.

In 1976-77, \$2,501,000 is provided in the revenue fund for the operation and maintenance of the irrigation areas and projects. The area irrigated in the State as at March 1975 was 197 143 hectares. This represents 0.13 per cent of the total area of rural holdings in the State. However, the estimated gross value of irrigated production of some \$250,000,000 is equal to some 20.44 per cent of the State's total rural production. Total commission cash investment on storages and irrigation areas at 30 June 1976 is almost \$204,000,000 compared with \$84,300,000 at 30 June 1969—seven years ago, when I became Minister.

ACTIVITIES FOR OTHER BODIES

In December 1974 the Government decided that ministerial responsibility for "the administration and control of planning, design and construction of major dams for urban water supply purposes be vested in the Minister for Water Resources". As a direct consequence, the commission has undertaken the supervision of construction of Deep Hole Creek Dam on Palm Lsland, estimated to cost \$1,700,000. The design was carried out by the Department of Local Government and funds are provided by the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. Also, supervision of construction of Awoonga High Dam is being carried out by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission on behalf of the Gladstone Area Water Board.

Prior to this decision the commission, on behalf of the Townsville City Council, supervised the construction of Ross River Dam Stage I, which cost \$11,400,000, and is now supervising the raising of the embankment required for Stage II of the project. Design of Ross River Dam was carried out by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission for Townsville City Council. Funds for this dam were provided by Townsville City Council with State subsidy and Commonwealth grant.

Honourable members may be assured that in taking over these additional responsibilities related to urban water supplies, both the commissioner and I desire to ensure continuation of the harmonious relationship developed between local authorities and the Government, and the commission will maintain close co-operation with the Department of Local Government in carrying out these responsibilities.

The Co-ordinator General has delegated to the commissioner powers and duties for the resumption of lands for and the design and construction of the Wivenhoe Dam on the Brisbane River and Splityard Creek Dam, the storage for the associated pumped storage/hydroelectric project. The commission is very pleased to play such a significant role in this major project of such importance to the whole of the Moreton Region. The funds for this project are provided in the Estimates of the Premier.

WATER RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Underground water: An important aspect of Queensland's water resources is the large use made of underground water supplies as a source of supply for both urban and irrigation use. Some 130 cities and towns throughout the State already obtain supplies from this source. In 1974-75 over 55 per cent of the area irrigated utilised ground water.

Increasing attention is being given to these sources of supply, and already artificial recharge and conjunctive use of surface and ground-water storage is being practised and will continue to be considered wherever practicable. The North Burdekin and South Burdekin Water Boards in 1975-76 diverted 39 479 megalitres from unregulated flow in the Burdekin River to artificially recharge the underground supplies of the Burdekin Delta, from which some 30 000 hectares of cane are irrigated and supplies for the towns of Ayr and Home Hill are drawn.

A major purpose of the Bundaberg Irrigation Project is to relieve the current shortage of ground-water supply by providing surface supplies to up to 50 per cent of the area. This will enable landholders in the balance of the area of ground-water availability to continue using this source of supply. The first benefits in this regard will occur in the current year and progressively expand.

Works currently in progress in the Callide Valley and those to commence in 1976-77 at Cania Dam near Monto and on the Giru Weir provide for the improvement of ground-water supplies.

During 1975-76 the commission expended \$691,926 on the investigation, assessment and control of ground-water supplies. In the present year major investigations will be carried out in 10 areas, including Mossman, Herbert River, Haughton River, Bowen, Burdekin Delta, Mackay, Condamine Valley, Darling Downs and Lockyer Valley. Provision has been made for expenditure in the current year of \$705,300, of which 50 per cent will be financed by Commonwealth grants.

Work will also continue on the assessment of supplies from the artesian basin and provide data on which to base its further exploitation and use. Owing to the high losses from bore drains by seepage and evaporation in general, a licence for a new artesian bore requires that the flow be reticulated by pipes to tanks and troughs controlled by float valves. Work is currently being finalised to replace the bore-drain system for the Pigurra Bore Water Trust, in the Blackall area, with a pipe-reticulation system.

Present annual usage of artesian water is of the order of 313 000 megalitres, and it is expected that this will stabilise to about 216 000 megalitres in time to come, which is the assured annual recharge.

Surface water: As with the ground-water assessment programme, the Commonwealth has since 1964-65 provided funds to enable the acceleration of a programme for the measurement of discharge of rivers. In the past 12 years the Commission's network of stream-gauging stations has increased from 230 (of which 98 were equipped with automatic recorders) to 577 stations, 525 of them being equipped with automatic recorders. These virtually cover the whole of the State from the northernmost part of Cape York to the southern border and west to the Northern Territory border. Expenditure on this work in 1975-76 exceeded \$1,000,000 and \$1,041,100, of which the Commonwealth provides 50 per cent, is allocated for the current year.

This work is particularly important for future accurate assessment of usable water resources in view of the large variation in flow from year to year. It has been calculated that Queensland has some 40 per cent of the water resources of the Australian mainland, and this is a very valuable asset for the future development of the State.

INVESTIGATION OF PROJECTS

\$488,800 is provided for investigation of water conservation and supply in areas which include the Condamine, Mary and Fitzroy River basins, Bowen area, Mackay, Moreton and Wide Bay/Burnett regions, as well as drainage schemes, rural water supply schemes and farm dams.

Consultants to the commission have recently completed a report on the overview study of drainage problems in the North Queensland sugar areas at a cost of some \$71,000. The study examined aspects of local drainage in the area from Mossman to Ingham. A review of flood mitigation and river improvement problems in the northern sugar region is considered necessary to obtain the complete picture of the industry's problems in the area. This further study is estimated to cost some \$40,000, and funds have been provided in the current year.

BURDEKIN RIVER BASIN APPRAISAL

During 1975-76 all surface water resource investigations for the purpose of this study were completed. On behalf of the commission the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation prepared a compendium of Burdekin basin water storage projects, which included brief details of structures, layouts for eight sites and estimates of cost at a common date of June 1975.

Hydrological studies were completed of these eight sites, including the operation of combinations of storages. Investigations to evaluate ground-water resources were completed. In general, prospects of supplies were not good, except in the Lower Burdekin area. The joint State-Commonwealth Burdekin Basin Study Report is planned for release in the current financial year.

FORWARD PLANNING

The commission has for some time considered it necessary to make long-term assessments of future water needs and how these might best be satisfied. With the commission now having responsibilities in respect of major dams for urban purposes, this has assumed greater importance in order to ensure the best and most economic use of our limited water resources. I am pleased to report that to put this planning on a firm basis a forward planning branch has been established with the following prime objectives:—

To define and review the water resources of the State.

To assess future demands for water for all purposes, including non-consumptive uses such as the environment.

To make over-all river basin assessments of the development and management of water resources within such basins to meet future needs.

To update forward projections of demand, possible developments, options etc. on a regular basis.

FARM WATER SUPPLIES ASSISTANCE

The Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act implemented in 1958 to encourage and assist landholders to develop and improve water supplies for all purposes on individual holdings was amended in 1975 to include works for drainage. In the past year 679 applications for assistance were received and advances totalling \$880,996 made, bringing total advances since inception of the scheme to \$10,773,021. Provision of \$900,000 has been allocated for 1976-77.

DAM SAFETY AND SURVEILLANCE

A most important additional responsibility undertaken by the commission, following amendment of the Water Act in May 1975, is to provide controls and to undertake the inspection and continued surveillance of large dams as a means of preventing failure of such dams and to safeguard life and property. As stated in the commissioner's report, during 1975-76 13 applications were considered under the provisions of the Act.

CATCHMENT AREAS

For the purpose of prevention of pollution of the reservoirs and protection of the environment generally, areas adjacent to 12 storages, including the Wivenhoe Dam, have been defined and constituted as catchment areas. The commission has continued to develop the surrounds of storages for the use and enjoyment of the public. It is estimated that some 930,000 persons visited the storages last year. To maintain the facilities provided, \$211,000 will be required in the current year.

RURAL WATER SUPPLIES

Sixty bore-water supply areas established many years ago continue to benefit some 1 780 000 ha in Western Queensland. In addition 15 rural water supply areas provide stock and domestic supplies to 613 rural holdings with a benefited area of 115 872 ha. Six of these rural water supply areas have been constituted in the past seven years.

Provision has also been made for the enlargement of pipelines provided by mining companies to enable supply to properties en route. Four such schemes are in operation, all having been implemented in my term of administration.

STREAM CONTROL

Stream management and control is of increasing importance and since 1969 a further six river improvement trusts have been constituted; one in South-east Queensland, the others in areas between Proserpine and Cairns. The Government provides a subsidy varying from 20 per cent to 33½ per cent of the capital cost of new works.

STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION

In the three years since the Estimates of the commission were last debated (1973-74), the staff has increased by 89, or 11 per cent, to a total of 883 and we are providing for this to increase to about 900 in the current year. The commission has decentralised its activities, and regional offices are located at Mareeba, Townsville, Rockhampton and Toowoomba. Thirteen district offices and 12 project offices are located throughout the State. At 30 June 1976 some 365 officers, or 41 per cent of the total, were stationed at these centres.

REVENUE

Receipts for the year 1975-76 of \$2,658,753 were made up of \$2,450,908 from operation of irrigation areas and projects, quarry materials royalties of \$121,128 and \$86,717 from miscellaneous activities. The surplus of revenue over operation and maintenance costs from irrigation areas and projects, excluding interest, redemption and depreciation, was \$542,807.

For 1976-77 it is estimated that operations receipts will be of the order of \$2,640,000. A similar surplus of revenue over operation and maintenance costs is anticipated.

Honourable members must surely agree that we have provided and are continuing a well-balanced programme of assessment and investigation, the encouragement of private investment by landholders for on-farm development and the provision of Government-financed irrigation areas and projects. We have achieved a great deal; however, the many demands for works and services highlight that much is yet to be done.

The major problems of inflation facing the nation are having a serious effect on our ability to maintain satisfactory construction programmes and to plan adequately for the commencement of a number of schemes. The assistance we have received from the Commonwealth has enabled significant progress to be made. It is unfortunate that in 1976-77 the Commonwealth has not been able to expand this. We are of course hopeful that next year further grants will be made by the Commonwealth to enable acceleration of schemes for water conservation and use in the State.

As this is the first time my department's Estimates have been debated since the death of the former commissioner, Mr. Fred Haigh, M.B.E., I would like to place on record my appreciation of his contribution to this State's water resources.

Fred Haigh was the driving force behind water conservation in Queensland in the post-war years and was recognised in his profession and in Australia as an expert in his field. He was the commission's third and longest-serving commissioner, having held the position for 19 of the 27 years since the commission was reconstituted in 1947. From 1937 to 1948, Mr. Haigh was an engineer with the first Mildura Irrigation Trust. He joined the commission as senior irrigation engineer in 1948, and in 1949 was appointed deputy chief engineer, then assistant commissioner. He was appointed commissioner in 1955.

In 1956, Mr. Haigh was appointed Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire—Military Division. He became president of the Institution of Engineers, Australia in 1970—an honour not accorded a Queenslander for almost two decades. The University of Queensland conferred an honorary degree of Master of Engineering on him in 1971 for his long and valued service to the university and to Queensland. During his term as commissioner, 13 dams and 17 weirs were completed. All the major projects now under construction and many approved in principle for commencement when funds allow were initiated under his administration.

Fred Haigh was one of Queensland's most efficient public servants, and I as Minister fully appreciated his complete dedication and service to the State.

I would also like to commend the present commissioner, Mr. Frank Learmonth, for the very capable manner in which he has carried out his duties since succeeding Mr. Haigh in 1974. Mr. Learmonth has earned a very high professional reputation as an engineer and has ably administered the affairs of the commission. He served with the New South Wales Department of Main Roads and the Hydro-Electric Commission of Tasmania from 1938 to 1953. In October 1953, he was appointed senior engineer at Tinaroo Falls

Dam—Queensland's first major irrigation storage. After completion of the Tinaroo Falls Dam in 1958, he was transferred to head office as senior engineer in charge of all major works. In 1960, he was appointed chief construction engineer and as such was responsible for the planning and construction of many major dams. He was appointed assistant commissioner, engineering, in 1969 and was chairman of the Queensland Division of the Australian Institution of Engineers in 1970-71.

Mr. Learmonth will retire on 31 December, and I take this opportunity to wish both him and Mrs. Learmonth a long and happy retirement.

Mr. Learmonth will be succeeded as commissioner by the assistant commissioner, engineering, Mr. Don Beattie. Mr. Beattie joined the commission in 1948 and, after serving as district engineer at St. George and Charleville, was appointed to the irrigation and rural water supply branch. He became chief irrigation engineer in 1967 and assistant commissioner, engineering, in 1974. He was chairman of the Queensland Division of the Institution of Engineers in 1975 and is presently chairman of the Australian National Commission on Irrigation and Drainage. Mr. Beattie has travelled widely throughout Queensland and is well informed on all aspects of irrigation and drainage throughout the State. Earlier this year he travelled overseas to inspect the latest developments in water conservation, and I congratulate him on his new appointment.

I also take this opportunity to record my appreciation of the service rendered by the entire commission staff, professional or otherwise. In addition, I place on record my appreciation to my own personal staff—my secretary, Mrs. McLaren, the two girls in my office, Esther and Karen, my press officer, David Millar, and my driver, Bob Warner. Because I am a great believer in co-operation, I think we act more as a team than as individuals, and I thank them for that.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (12.28 p.m.): I was very interested in the remarks of the Minister. I know how important the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission is to the State of Queensland. I congratulate the Minister on what he has been doing despite the poor assistance given by the Federal Government.

I support his remarks about the late Fred Haigh. I knew Fred very well. He did much for the State. I know he was a driving force behind seeing that the Bundaberg irrigation scheme got under way.

I support his remarks about Mr. Learmonth, too. He was a worthy successor to Mr. Haigh. On behalf of the Opposition, I wish him well in his retirement, as well as offering my congratulations to Mr. Beattie, who is soon to take over from Mr. Learmonth.

I hope that the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission can continue to function efficiently and to get on with the job as it has been doing. I was interested to read in the report that the expenditure of the commission from all funds was \$38,660,000. I think the Minister said that this year the amount will be only about \$35,700,000. That cut-back is due to actions by the Federal Government. I know that the Minister has done as much as he has been able to in the past year with the money available, but I do say that not enough is being done on some schemes.

Conservation of water has always been an integral part of Labor's developmental policy on primary industry. Government members say that Labor does not support primary industry, but they know that Labor in fact has always supported primary industry. Conservation of water has been one of our major policies. That statement can be proved by a comparison of the amounts of money given for irrigation works by the present Federal Government and by the previous Labor Government.

Australia's water resources underline the growing interdependence of the city and the country. The Ross River and Burdekin River projects are as vital to Townsville as they are to its hinterland. The Wivenhoe Dam is as vital to Brisbane as it is to the Brisbane Valley. That can be said also of Bundaberg, Mackay and Emerald and their surrounding areas. All of these are major schemes. The Minister outlined what has been spent on them and what is planned for their future.

The present Federal Government has not recognised their importance. It is a city-based Government. I do not think that the Country Party has enough force behind it to push the Federal Government into recognising the importance of irrigation and water supply in this country. It seems strange that a Federal Government of the same political colour as the Queensland Government gives this State a worse deal than the previous Labor Government gave it. The Premier's inability to co-operate with anyone and his complete control of the State Liberal Treasurer—no matter who he might be—have led to a decline in the development of Queensland's water resources.

I shall now outline the Commonwealth grants for some Queensland projects in 1975-76 and the allocations for 1967-77. In 1975-76 Stage I of the Ross River Dam was allocated \$1,400,000 and the allocation for 1976-77 is \$1,560,000. For the Kinchant Dam at Mackay the amounts are \$2,000,000 and \$214,000. The Bundaberg Irrigation Undertaking was granted nothing in 1975-76 and, of the \$4,400,000 that the Labor Government allocated for the project in 1974, \$11,000 was not spent up to June last year. In addition, nothing has been granted for 1976-77. For the Clare Weir on the Burdekin River, the figures for last year and the present year

are \$349,000 and \$2,555,000. The totals are \$6,250,000 for 1975-76 against \$4,500,000 for 1976-77, a drop of over \$2,000,000.

What I have outlined indicates what the Minister for Water Resources has to put up with from a Government of his own political colour. He and other State Ministers condemned the Labor Federal Government for three years for not granting money and forecast what they would get if the Whitlam Government was put out of office. Now, every time a question is asked about the funds for this year, all of the Ministers get up and squeal. They are not getting the money and they are still blaming the Whitlam Government, which was in power for only three years. The present Federal Government has been in office for nearly a year and the Ministers continue to squeal.

Mr. Bertoni: What did the Labor Federal Government allocate to the Julius Dam project?

Mr. JENSEN: I have not got onto that one yet. I shall deal with it later. I know what the State Government did. I supported the honourable member in this Chamber to get him money for that scheme. That dam is most important to Mt. Isa. Considering that MIM Ltd. put in about \$14,000,000, it is astounding that the Government would not provide some of the money.

The Federal Government has cut by over 50 per cent the funds for these capital works, which provide hundreds of jobs. With the money that is available the Minister has to try to continue the work that is under way. He has outlined the schemes that are in progress and the projects that he is looking at. And the Federal Government has cut funds by over 50 per cent in real terms. This is part of Mr. Fraser's new federalism which has been sold to the States. The result is that the channel works to enable the water from the dams to be used will remain half finished. That applies also to the Bundaberg and Mackay schemes and others. They are half finished because the Federal Government will not give to the State the funds that it should have. Other projects will be delayed for many years.

In 1973, the Federal Labor Government granted Queensland \$5,000,000 over a three-year period for the construction of the Kinchant Dam, near Mackay. That dam is situated in a proven and established agricultural region in which there is significant scope for increased, efficient production.

Mr. Elliott: But where did they take the money from?

Mr. JENSEN: I ask the honourable member to listen to me. This region has been plagued by recurring droughts, and the absence of conserved water has seriously limited its stability and growth. A similar

case was put forward to support the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme, which is most important to the sugar industry. The absence of conserved water in the area of the Kinchant Dam not only affects farm incomes but reduces the efficiency of sugar mills in the area. The dam will stabilise sugar production and provide for future expansion of the industry in line with market opportunities.

Water would be made available for intensive beef production on improved tropical pastures. The recreational opportunities provided for tourists and the local community would also be of great value. At full development, the total additional sugar production will be 46 000 tonnes a year, worth about \$7,000,000. The cost to complete the Kinchant Dam is \$9,200,000. In 1976-77, \$814,000 of Commonwealth finance has been provided, and \$400,000 from State funds will be spent on the project in an attempt to keep it moving.

There is a similar situation in respect of the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme. It was supposed to be completed in 1976, yet another \$7,000,000 is still needed to complete it. Not a cent can be obtained for this purpose from the Federal Government, but the Minister for Water Resources has allocated to it \$1,200,000 from special funds.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: \$1,400,000.

Mr. JENSEN: The Minister has provided \$1,400,000 from his funds to keep that section of the dam in construction. He has done that because he knows the importance of the scheme. The Kinchant Dam is similarly important, but he cannot do much on it with only \$814,000. No more Commonwealth funds are forthcoming. If the State maintains its spending at the present level, it will take 20 years to complete that dam. The Minister knows that the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme is five years behind schedule at the present time, and that at the present rate of progress it will be another 20 years before the Kinchant Dam is completed. Its final costs will thus be nothing like the present estimate.

I should like to refer now to what has been said about some of these schemes in the commission's annual report. Expenditure on the whole of the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme for the year was, in round figures, \$4,900,000, representing \$2,500,000 from Commonwealth funds and \$2,400,000 from State funds. The total expenditure to date on that scheme has been \$24,900,000, being \$17,200,000 from Commonwealth funds and \$7,700,000 from State funds. I notice that State funds to be spent this year will increase the State's contribution to over \$10,000,000 by June 1977. It is also said in the report that approaches have been made to the Commonwealth Government. Of course, they have been of no help to the Minister. The Bundaberg scheme is most viable, but it is still only one scheme.

The Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply says in his annual report to the Minister—

"The area irrigated throughout the State was 197 143 hectares. The value of production from this area of \$250 million is equivalent to some 20 per cent of the value of all rural production which illustrates the importance of irrigation in the overall economy of the State."

That is a most significant statement, but the Federal Government does not seem to realise it. I think it is probably taking notice of some of the experts whom the Whitlam Government heeded in other spheres. Some of these supposedly expert economists said that irrigation does not pay and they tried to have Federal funds cut from such projects. At least 20 per cent of Queensland's production is derived from irrigated areas.

The commissioner also stated in his annual report—

"The overall storage capacity operated by the Commission now approximates 3 500 000 megalitres contained in 14 dams and 63 weirs."

He goes on to mention urban and industrial water supplies, and reports that water from commission storages is supplied to three cities, 25 towns, one hydroelectric and three thermal generating stations. That indicates the importance of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission to cities as well as rural areas. It does a most important job, as is outlined in the report.

Farm water supplies assistance, too, has increased. Last year farm water supplies assistance amounted to \$881,000, and since its inception a total of \$10,773,000 has been advanced. During the year the Julius Dam and Baralaba Weir were completed, and it is pleasing to know that some schemes at least are being completed. I noted that during his speech the Minister said that six dams and 15 weirs have been completed since he took over this portfolio. There are so many schemes at present under construction that I am very pleased to see that we do complete some.

At present there are seven irrigation areas—Mareeba-Dimbulah, Burdekin River, St. George, Emerald, Dawson Valley, Bundaberg and Eton—established under the Irrigation Act. As I mentioned, total expenditure last year by the commission was \$38,100,000. The principal expenditure item was \$24,800,000 on construction work, mainly dams, for which future Commonwealth funds are not forthcoming. But what is most important is that total commission cash investment on storages, irrigation areas and projects to 30 June 1976 was \$203,470,000, while receipts were only \$2,450,000—in other words, a return of only 1 per cent.

With the shortage of funds today, I would like the Minister to look at the returns from different schemes, especially schemes that are

more viable than others, from which the Government is likely to get a quicker return on its investment. The Minister should consider spending money on projects which will provide the best return. I would say that the Bundaberg scheme is a very viable one, as previous annual reports have stated, unlike the Fitzroy scheme, which was a political scheme. It has cost some \$35,000,000, and while the dam and some of the irrigation works have been completed, the entire project is not yet complete. All this money has been spent to irrigate a few little farms. I know it is probably in the Minister's electorate and he had to look after it, but it was initiated in an attempt to get a National Party candidate into Federal Parliament, something which did not eventuate at the time, although it has since eventuated.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: Dr. Paterson approved that.

Mr. JENSEN: I do not know if Dr. Paterson approved that. The Fitzroy scheme was in operation before Dr. Paterson—

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: The one you are talking about is the Fairbairn scheme, and that is not in my electorate.

Mr. JENSEN: That scheme is not a viable one, although money is still being spent on it, yet we see these delays in the Bundaberg scheme where the farmers would use the water and the Government would get a decent return. The Government is not doing enough, although in the circumstances the Minister is doing his best. The Government is fiddling about with too many of these schemes. We want to get a move on and complete at least some of them which will give us a return.

Mr. Aikens: You want to do Bundaberg first and leave the scraps for everybody else.

Mr. JENSEN: That is correct. We should do first those that will be the most viable. We do not want to hold back Townsville, either.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: Who started the Kinchant scheme?

Mr. JENSEN: I know Paterson started the Kinchant scheme; the Minister is right about that. He put \$5,000,000 into it, but it is one of the most important schemes in this State. I have the estimates here—

Mr. Elliott: The original estimate was \$5,040,000.

Mr. JENSEN: Don't give me that rubbish. That might have been the estimate for the dam, but not for the entire scheme. The honourable member does not know what he is talking about. We should look at the cost

escalations of some of these schemes. I have here questions asked of the Minister by the honourable members for Townsville and Mackay. On Tuesday, 26 October the honourable member for Belyando asked a question of the Minister about the Emerald Irrigation Scheme and what has still to be spent on it. The Minister said—

“Subject to adequate funds being available, it is anticipated that construction of works on the eastern bank of the Nogoa River will commence during 1977.”

But all these schemes are subject to adequate funds being available.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: What you have to remember is that the Emerald scheme was completed before the Bundaberg dam was even started.

Mr. JENSEN: The dam was, yes, but, as I said, it should not have been started before Bundaberg, and the Minister knows it. It was a political decision. Mr. Haigh gave number one priority to Bundaberg, but the Federal Liberal-Country Party Government at that time went ahead with the Emerald scheme, so the Minister should not bring that up. He knows that the Emerald scheme was potentially not as viable as was the Bundaberg scheme.

The Kinchant scheme will be viable eventually, but it will take 20 years to complete. The cost of water has increased already in the Bundaberg scheme, and it will increase further as costs escalate. If the Federal Government will not provide assistance, the Kinchant scheme will take 20 years to complete with the funds that the State Government can make available.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: Who was the Minister who got the Bundaberg scheme started?

Mr. JENSEN: You; I do not doubt that. I congratulated both Mr. Haigh and the Minister on showing some common sense. But when a scheme is viable, the Government should push ahead with it. Private industry would move on it. The Bundaberg scheme was supposed to be finished in 1976. We will be lucky, Mr. Miller, if it is finished by 1980, yet the returns from that scheme are said to be satisfactory.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: Do you know that the Commonwealth Government only gave \$5,000,000 over three years?

Mr. JENSEN: It gave \$4,400,000 in 1974. The Government could have spent it in one year if it had been able to do so, but it admitted that it could not spend it in one year. Costs have increased considerably since then. If the Government cannot spend the money when it is made available—

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: I will answer that later.

Mr. JENSEN: The Minister can answer it later if he wishes.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: The member for Isis might answer it, to save me answering it.

Mr. JENSEN: He can answer it. Let the honourable member for Isis have a go at it; I have said enough about it. I have helped the Minister along over a period of seven years and got things moving.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: I will give you a hand in Bundaberg.

Mr. JENSEN: Let us look at these schemes, Mr. Miller. In part answer to a question asked in this Chamber, the Minister gave the following information—

- “(I) Bundaberg Irrigation Project
 - (A) Additional costs Phase 1—\$7,524,000.
 - (B) Phase 2 Works—\$49,920,000.”

That has not even begun yet. It will never get going, with the Federal Government in power at present, anyway. The answer continues—

- “(II) Leslie Dam Stage 2—\$4,350,000.
- (III) Burdekin Extension Scheme
 - (A) Clare Weir and associated development—\$10,657,000.
 - (B) Urannah Dam and associated works—\$52,300,000.
 - (IV) Kinchant Dam—\$9,175,000.

(2) Construction is currently in hand on three of the rural water supply projects, namely, Bundaberg Irrigation Project (Monduran Dam pumping station and Gin Gin main channel), Kinchant Dam and Claire Weir. Completion date on these projects will depend on finance available in the years ahead.

(3) The funds provided in the Commonwealth Government 1976-77 Budget for the Bundaberg project and Kinchant Dam represent the balance of previously approved grants.”

I have mentioned that, and the Minister has said it already.

Let me turn now to the escalation in costs on the Ross River Dam. In answer to Dr. Scott-Young, the Minister said—

- “(1) When originally estimated in December 1968, the costs for Ross River Dam were:—
 - (a) Stage 1—\$7,790,000,
 - (b) Stage 2—\$4,620,000 (additional).

The Stage 2 cost was revised in 1973 and increased to \$5,120,000. The Townsville City Council's most recent estimate for the cost of Stage 2 is \$13,715,000. The actual cost of Stage 1 was \$11,638,000.”

That shows the escalation in costs because there have been too many schemes under way. I know that the Minister is trying to assist in providing irrigation in all areas of the State; but if the Government continues to fiddle with too many schemes, instead of finishing some of them and getting a return on its money, none of them will be completed till about 1990.

Mr. Aikens: According to you, we should do Bundaberg first and let everyone else wait.

Mr. JENSEN: Not exactly; the most viable scheme should be completed first. If the Bundaberg scheme is not the most viable, the Ross River scheme might be done first.

(Time expired.)

Mr. POWELL (Isis) (12.49 p.m.): The electorate that I represent is probably as much in need of water for irrigation in agriculture as any other area of the State. However, the situation is rather strange because areas at the northern end of the Isis electorate badly need water, whereas the central and southern areas of the electorate—cane-growing areas to the north and east of Maryborough—have plenty of water; in fact, they are interested in having some of it drained away, as are areas in Far North Queensland.

I congratulate the Minister on the manner in which he introduced the Estimates. Like the honourable member for Bundaberg, I also congratulate the Minister's departmental officers on the way they undertake their work. In the South Kalkie area of the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme and in a couple of other areas there is a little bit of opposition to the commission. However, every time I have approached the commission on behalf of people who have complaints, my representations have been met with the utmost courtesy and sympathy by the Minister and his senior officers, both in Bundaberg and in Brisbane. The Minister deserves credit for the way in which he leads his department. As he indicated at the end of his speech, he and his staff work as a team. That is very evident from the advances in water resources in this State.

Naturally the honourable member for Bundaberg dealt for some time with the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme, which is a very important scheme to Queensland. For the benefit of honourable members and anyone who might like to read this speech I will refer to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics Report on the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme, which was published some time last year, and refer specifically to page 91, Part V, under the heading "Summary of Results of Economic Evaluation". This is one of the very few irrigation schemes to have been thoroughly investigated on a purely economic basis. We can talk about other dams in the State that undoubtedly do an amount of good—we can talk about the

Tinaroo scheme, for example, which spreads water right throughout the Northern Tablelands area and is of tremendous value to that part of the State; we can talk about the other areas of Queensland to which dams contribute greatly to their economic viability—but the Bundaberg scheme is the first one of which an economic evaluation has been made.

The end of part 1, subsection 1 in the "Summary of Results of Economic Evaluation" states—

"... indicates that a return of around 6 per cent on capital investment might reasonably be expected from the scheme."

That was based on a sugar-price assumption of \$90 a tonne. At the moment the price of sugar is slightly higher than that. In fact we hope it never gets as low as \$90 a tonne in today's economic climate. But taking the low price of \$90 a tonne for sugar, a 6 per cent return on capital can be expected to be realised from the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme.

As the honourable member for Bundaberg and the Minister said, the Federal Government has not been very generous in its grants for expenditure on the scheme.

The honourable member for Bundaberg attacked the present Federal Government in a way that I think was unfair and unwarranted. Prior to 1972 when there was a Liberal-Country Party Government in Canberra \$12,800,000 was advanced to the State for the building of the Monduran Dam and the irrigation scheme associated with it. In the three years we had a Federal Government of the same political colour as the honourable member for Bundaberg, that Government advanced only \$4,400,000. The honourable member's criticism that since then very little money, if any, has been advanced by the Federal Government is valid, but it must also be remembered that, since the December 1975 election (when we thankfully made a change in Government in Canberra) until June this year, the Liberal-Country Party Government has had to work under the Hayden Budget. Short of causing an upheaval in Australian economics, we just had to wear what was given to us.

Let nobody be in doubt that it was the Liberal-Country Party Government that got this scheme under way in the first place. It took the Federal Labor Government three years to advance \$4,400,000 and to commission the B.A.E. report. Although the B.A.E. report is of value to the State in its efforts to get the Federal Government to advance further money for the scheme, it was an unnecessary report because we all knew that the dam was going to be of economic value to the Bundaberg area. It is most important to the Bundaberg area that this dam and its associated irrigation works be completed.

The honourable member for Bundaberg criticised the State Government for the implementation of the Fairbairn scheme. Again

his criticism is unwarranted. What would be the point of constructing a dam without also constructing the channels necessary to convey water from the dam to the farms? No point at all! It is most important that the Bundaberg scheme be continued. The Minister has indicated that by the middle of next year 66 properties will benefit from the scheme.

It is more interesting to note that the State Government has complete faith in the viability of the Bundaberg scheme. Eventually it will benefit approximately 1,300 farms and 1,300 cane assignments. The people in the district, however, are concerned at the fact that those areas in the Isis electorate that are in greatest need of water from the scheme will not get it for a very long time. The Bundaberg area has the unenviable record of being stricken by drought once every 5.8 years. We are presently in our seventh consecutive good season, so on the law of averages a drought is just around the corner. We are worried that at the time of the next drought we will have a dam full of water that cannot be used.

If that occurs it is not the Queensland Government that will be to blame. The Irrigation and Water Supply Commission has done all in its power to convey water to areas of need. It is all very well to criticise the Government for not spending money in certain areas, but anyone who criticises must come forward with an alternative suggestion. Where from the State finances can the Government find the extra money that is required for this work? I have made approaches to both Federal members representing the area—the member for Wide Bay and the member for Capricornia.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: They'll do nothing for you.

Mr. POWELL: They are doing plenty for us. Both those members, who are National Party members, do a lot for us. Unlike them, the Federal members of the political colour of the member for Archerfield are interested only in destructive criticism. The Federal members for Wide Bay and Capricornia have made representations on behalf of the area, and I am quite confident that the next Federal Budget will provide funds for completion of the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: Dr. Everingham did not even believe in sugar.

Mr. POWELL: He said it was a poison. That shows how far the irrigation scheme would have proceeded while he represented Capricornia. It's no wonder that while he was member for Capricornia we had trouble with the Federal Government.

I was pleased to hear the Minister say that in the forthcoming year land resumptions in the Woongarra area would proceed to enable channels to be laid. Again I come back to the problem confronting the Isis area of a very limited underground

water supply. It is essential that water be pumped from the Burnett River to the Isis area.

Some people have suggested that the farmers should contribute towards the cost of the scheme. I suppose that, as they are the ones who will benefit, that suggestion is reasonable. With others, I would be quite willing to sell the scheme to the farmers of Childers and Isis, asking them to contribute to it—so long as the Federal Government gave an assurance that it would provide money to allow for the scheme to be implemented quickly.

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

Mr. POWELL: Before the luncheon recess I was explaining that the most important part of the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme to the Isis electorate is phase 2. That, too, was investigated by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and it includes the Bingera and Isis systems and the Gayndah and Bucca Weirs but excludes all the major works, which are attributed entirely to phase 1. The investigation revealed that there was a return of only 4 per cent on the capital. However, I suggest that the report did not take into account the fact that the Isis area was included in the recent expansion of the sugar industry. This year the Isis mill will be crushing almost 1 000 000 tonnes of cane. So it is an extremely important area economically both to the Bundaberg district and to the State in general.

The honourable member for Bundaberg suggested that the State Government was tardy in applying to the Federal Government for moneys. The report indicates that the State Government had applied for \$4,400,000 for phase 1 and \$18,500,000 for phase 2. Of course, the extra costs in phase 2 are attributable to the tremendous distance the water has to flow from the Monduran Dam through the main Gin Gin channel to the Burnett River and then from the pumping station on the Burnett River further downstream for reticulation in the Isis area.

I indicated, too, that I would be very happy to sell a farmer-participation scheme, provided the authorities gave me a definite date when the scheme in the Isis area could be implemented and paid for. I realise the problems of the State Government in this field. First, we do not control inflation. Secondly, we cannot say with any certainty how much money will be contributed by the Federal Government. Until those two imponderables become clearer, it is almost impossible for us to suggest a scheme that we could confidently expect the farmers to accept. I think it reasonable to assume that the people in the area would contribute to the scheme; but, as I have indicated, I am not prepared to sell the scheme to them—and I doubt whether very many others would be prepared to in the absence of any definite likelihood of benefit from the scheme in the near future.

While phase 2 is, for my electorate, the vital part of the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme, until such time as moneys are forthcoming from the Federal Government, I cannot see that the people of my electorate will benefit greatly from the scheme at all. We need it; it is essential. Most of the farms in the Childers and Isis areas are dry farms. As I indicated before, the record shows that we experience a drought every 5.8 years, so it is quite likely that there will be a drought in the near future. I can assure the Minister that the people in the area will be most upset if they are drought-stricken with a dam full of water a few miles away that they cannot draw from.

I say also that it will not be the fault of the State Government if that happens. Our Federal friends have some answering to do. As I indicated before, I am quite sure that, as a result of the excellent representations being made to the Federal Treasurer by the member for Wide Bay (Mr. Clarrie Miller) and the member for Capricornia (Mr. Col Carige), in the next Budget we can be confident of receiving money for this very important project—one which will contribute much towards the economy of this State.

I am happy that the commission has gone ahead with a survey and investigation into the barrage that is proposed for the Mary River. This also affects my electorate fairly extensively as the cane areas to the west of Maryborough need irrigation. I look forward to seeing the results of that investigation. The converse is true of the north and east of Maryborough, where, as there is basically too much water, a drainage scheme will have to be undertaken.

In addition to the irrigation or conservation aspect, dams can be used for recreational purposes. The Monduran Dam is no exception. Vast numbers of people visit it each week-end to water-ski in the comparative safety of still water. One disadvantage I have found at that dam is the inability of some people to read. On a recent visit there I found so many cars parked right beside "No Parking" and "No Parking Any Time" signs that it was almost impossible to manoeuvre the vehicle and boat-trailer to get it down the ramp to launch the boat. It is also interesting that one person used the post of the "No Camping" sign to attach one of the stays for a tent on the bank of the dam. I hope that there will be some policing of these matters. There is certainly ample area at that dam to meet all needs.

The Irrigation and Water Supply Commission is to be commended for its recognition of the recreation potential of all of the dams in Queensland and for the landscaping that has been undertaken at most of them. Because of the landscaping these dams—and I think of Tinaroo Dam and Leslie Dam—are beauty spots that can be enjoyed by people who live in outback areas away from the large bodies of water that we on the coast are used to.

I wonder what is being done about stocking the dams with fish. Perhaps that is a matter for the Fisheries Branch, but the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission would have to co-operate. Our dams could be used as a source of food as well as for recreation in catching fish. In the dams we would not have the trouble with trawlers that we seem to have along the coastline and certainly in my electorate. I hope that the department is giving serious consideration to this matter.

With those few remarks, I should like once again to congratulate the Minister on the way he goes about his duties and to thank the officers of the department sincerely for their co-operation with me personally and with the people of my electorate who have approached them and asked for various matters to be attended to. The pleasant manner with which they conduct themselves is appreciated. I look forward to further association with them.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (2.24 p.m.): Politics being the grubby game that it is and party politics making it grubbier, it is not unusual for honourable members to work the parish pump when dealing with a matter such as this. I do not suppose that they can be blamed for pushing the needs of their own electorate or areas.

Very rarely, though, do we hear such an outburst as we heard from the honourable member for Bundaberg this afternoon when he said, "To hell with every other area in the State. Let them all go and jump in the lake. Whatever money there is should be spent around Bundaberg" on some nebulous scheme that he has in mind for the conservation and distribution of water there. I have no objection to Bundaberg getting its fair share of any funds available for water conservation or distribution; but when we hear remarks such as those made by the honourable member for Bundaberg, we begin to realise perhaps why it is that the A.L.P. has cast him into the outer darkness.

Mr. Jensen: I have disturbed you. The truth always disturbs you. You never speak the truth. When I speak it, it disturbs you.

Mr. AIKENS: The honourable member does not speak at all; he bleats.

I can remember some Governments that looked ahead and planned wisely and widely. The development that is taking place today in coal-mining in Queensland probably had its genesis in the Powell Duffryn report brought down when the late Ned Hanlon was Premier, which was many years ago.

I know that the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission does quite a good job in keeping au fait with the water resources of Queensland and planning what should be done for their conservation and use. But I

really think it is about time that the present Minister for Water Resources, who is outstanding in this field particularly in his zeal, set up a committee to investigate the long-term effects of water conservation in Queensland. It has to be remembered that in other parts of the world, particularly those that are heavily populated (the United States is a case in point), a dangerous shortage of domestic water is developing. In the large cities, and even in the smaller cities and towns, there is a dangerous shortage of water for drinking, domestic purposes and industry.

Many countries in which this problem is arising have something that we in Queensland do not have—they have snow-capped mountains from which there is a run-off of water when the thaw comes every spring. We in Queensland have to rely entirely on rainfall and that is quite unpredictable. Years of floods can be followed by years of drought. Planning in the long term is therefore necessary if our State is to fulfil its destiny. Perhaps some members do not know that half the surface water in Australia runs off Cape York, North Queensland and a few other places in the north of Australia, most of it into the sea. A lot of water runs into billabongs and dries up.

We must therefore ask ourselves what can be done about this situation. It is all very well to say, "Where is the need to conserve water? We have plenty of it. Let it run into the sea. We don't want it. It would cost millions and millions of dollars to conserve it and take it where it could be used." I have heard that point of view expressed from time to time.

Let us look at two projects in North Queensland which, although small by standards applying elsewhere in the world, are big by ours. Let us consider what has been done with the Leichhardt River at Mt. Isa. It is a compliment to the Leichhardt River even to call it a river; it is in fact a little creek which runs at not much more than a trickle. I can remember when the township of Mt. Isa was established. I was deputy mayor of the shire council that set up Mt. Isa. To cross this so-called river all that we had to do was run a causeway over it. We knew that there would be no problems with flooding. It flooded a couple of times a year but we were always able to keep dry when walking across the few yards of water by rolling up our trousers.

Look, now, at what has been done with that little creek. Further down the river, at Kajabbi and on to the Gulf, the Leichhardt is a river deserving of that description. But in Mt. Isa, where the river is nothing but a little creek, the Moondarra Dam has been built and, quite recently, the Julius Dam. They are two magnificent water conservation structures. Anyone who says, "What can we do? We have no snow-capped mountains with their run-off in the fall. All we

have is a bit of a creek and an annual rainfall of about 12 to 15 in." should go to see what has been done to conserve water in an area as arid as Mt. Isa.

But it is not necessary to go as far as Mt. Isa. One need go only as far as Townsville and see what has been done there. Townsville was founded by an old black-birder named Towns and he founded it on Ross Creek. A short distance from Ross Creek was a wider creek, so, in order to make the distinction between the two, they called one Ross Creek and the other Ross River. Of the two, Ross Creek is really only the local drain. It runs through Hermit Park and West End and then out to sea. What is known as Ross Creek has, by dredging and other manipulation by men who knew what they were doing, blossomed and bloomed into the Townsville Harbour, and it is a wonderful harbour.

But just a couple of hundred yards south of Ross Creek we have Ross River. No one in his right senses would call Ross River a river, because it is only 30 miles long. Its source is up at Woodstock in Double-barrel Creek and it meanders through some cattle country until it hits the sea. Honourable members should see what has been done to Ross River. The first stage of the big Ross River Dam has already been built. It holds back a huge area of water. When one flies into Townsville today, one wonders what one is coming into. If a person has not been there since the dam was constructed, he thinks he is flying over an arm of the sea, but it is the first stage of the Ross River Dam. Not only will the dam supply water to Townsville but it will stop the recurrent flood problem we have. As Townsville was built in the main on swampy land, it did not take very much water to make Ross River overflow, run over the little dam we built on it and flood the low-lying suburbs of Townsville.

There is a second stage planned, which has been criticised and condemned by the vociferous member for Bundaberg. The Government has resumed, or is in the process of resuming, quite a lot of land for the northern railway line, because when the second stage of the dam is completed quite a lot of the line will be inundated by the waters of the Ross River Dam. So do not let us say, "We don't have very much to do. We haven't got very much water, anyway, so what is the good of saving?"

Let us look at the facts as they are and stop the parochial barnstorming that goes on in this Assembly. North Queensland not only keeps Queensland going commercially, industrially and financially, but it helps to keep the Commonwealth of Australia going. The products of that wonderful area, especially cattle, sugar, copper, silver, lead and all the other things that come from that bountiful area, virtually balance the overseas payments of this country. Without the North Queensland area and its products, this country would

be almost bankrupt or at least closer to bankruptcy than it is at the present time, so we must look ahead to the development of North Queensland on a broad scale and provide for it.

Water being the lifeblood of commerce—indeed, the lifeblood of mankind—we have to see that we have abundant water in order to provide for the development that we hope will eventuate. Up there we have goodness knows how many rivers that can be dammed, including the Herbert, the Johnstone and the Russell, just to mention a few. Not only does every great North Queensland river flow out into the sea in times of flood and during the wet season, but many of them are ever-running streams.

I was transferred from Cloncurry to Townsville by the Railway Department in 1930. I hope that the three, shall we say, somnolent members of the Opposition who are listening to me will remember this. I was transferred from Cloncurry to Townsville in 1930 by the anti-A.L.P. Moore Government as a punishment for my activities on behalf of the A.L.P. in the Cloncurry district, so honourable members can imagine how I must feel and how I have felt on more than one occasion when I have seen come into this Assembly members of the A.L.P. who scabbed on me when I was a prominent trade-unionist in the Railway Department in the Cloncurry and Townsville areas.

One of the first pleasant things I experienced there occurred when I worked a train from Townsville to Tully. We got to Tully at midnight. Honourable members should remember that I had come from the dry western areas, from the arid plains and spinifex hills of North-west Queensland. We got to Tully and went to a little place that happened to be the railway quarters at the time. I woke up in the morning, and there was a beautiful freshwater stream, Banyan Creek, running right in front of the Tully quarters. It runs all the year round, but it is only a little trickle when compared with some of the big freshwater creeks and rivers that abound in North Queensland. They are to be found right up the coast to Cape York. Then, on the western side of the Cape, hundreds of millions of gallons of water a day run into the Gulf of Carpentaria from big rivers such as the Einasleigh, Gilbert and Norman.

Although I do not say that it should be done immediately, there is no reason why planning should not begin, just as the Powell Duffryn report began the planning for the exploitation of the big coal deposits in Queensland. If any future Government said, "Well, North Queensland is booming, as many people said it would, and we need water for industry, for domestic purposes, and for many other things", a basic plan would be available for the development of the great streams of North Queensland.

Mr. Dean: What about Dr. Bradfield's scheme?

Mr. AIKENS: I do not agree with that. Dr. Bradfield's scheme is one of those things that look all right in theory but are not practicable. I was born in the West and I lived and worked there. Dr. Bradfield's scheme was to dam some of the northern rivers and run the water to the West by pipeline over the Great Dividing Range. How he intended to get the water over the Dividing Range, I do not know. Then, having got it over the Range to the headwaters of the Flinders River and some of the other western rivers, he was going to let it flow on and on and be used for irrigation and many other purposes. Of course, in the dry season the water would not run more than 20 miles before sinking into the ground. Honourable members have no idea of the dryness of that particular area.

I have studied the Bradfield scheme; I have discussed it and debated it on the public platform with men who perhaps know as much about it as I do. As I said, the Bradfield scheme is quite impracticable, although it looks good in theory. It is like some women that one sees—painted and coiffured, they look nice, but as women they are not worth two bob.

I have no figures available at the moment, Mr. Miller, although no doubt the Minister whose Estimates are now being debated would be able to get them in a couple of minutes, but you would be absolutely astonished to hear the quantity of water that flows into the Pacific Ocean from the coastal rivers from, say, north of Rockhampton to Cape York and into the Gulf of Carpentaria from the rivers on the western side of Cape York. Big rivers such as the Gilbert, Leichhardt, Flinders and Cloncurry all flow into the Gulf of Carpentaria. The quantity of water flowing into the sea is absolutely incomprehensible to the ordinary man who does not know anything about the situation and does not have time to study it. Sooner or later a master plan must be drawn up for the conservation of water in northern Queensland, from Rockhampton up the coast to Cape York and from Cape York right down the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria to Arnhem Land. One has only to look at an ordinary atlas to see the immensity of the area that would be covered.

The Burdekin is, of course, a great river, and there have been many schemes for the conservation of the water that comes down the Burdekin. There has been talk for quite a number of years about the Burdekin Dam, and I have heard the desirability of that debated. I do not know how many meetings—public and private—I have attended to debate the possibilities of damming the Burdekin at the falls about 90 miles up river from Ayr. I have known that scheme to be blown to pieces by men who think they know what they are talking about; I have known other men who think that such a dam would solve all their problems. However, let us be honest about it, Mr. Miller.

Although the Burdekin Dam has some good points, I remind the Committee that the Burdekin has already been dammed and that the dams are being constructed nearer and nearer the coast.

All the dams along the Burdekin River—the Urannah Dam, the Broken River Dam and all the others—are serving a useful purpose. Burdekin River water can't be taken into the back country; Burdekin River water can't be taken up to the North. Besides that, it would not be wanted in the North. Who would want to channel Burdekin River water into the Herbert River area, the Johnstone River area, the Russell River area or to places around Tully? That would be absolutely ridiculous. But there is a place in the development of North Queensland for a dam on the Burdekin River.

The honourable member for Bundaberg mentioned that the Whitlam Government started off with some schemes—some of them hare-brained schemes—for water conservation and water development. The Whitlam Government started off more scatter-brained and hare-brained schemes than that. Many of its schemes were purely political. I received an answer this morning to a question about a conservation organisation in Townsville. I suppose it might be said that that Government set it up to investigate the conservation of water and other natural resources, but it set up such organisations purely and simply as a political front for a Whitlam A.L.P. half-baked Communist show. That organisation in Townsville is still carrying on as it was set up by Whitlam.

One of my big beefs against the present Fraser Government is that it is carrying on with organisations and schemes that were set up by the Whitlam Government purely and simply for the most putrid political purposes. I do not know why the Fraser Government does not do anything about it. We know why it cannot sack Al Grassby—he has himself tied up by agreement so that he cannot be sacked any more than the Government can sack Arthur Creedy. But they are only individual cases. We have big organisations set up by the Whitlam Government that can't be disbanded unless the Fraser Government gets on with the job and gets rid of all the dead wood, just as it should get rid of all the dead wood in the universities and various other places.

I do not know that the Whitlam Government ever set up any organisation, committee or instrumentality that had for its purpose or objective the examination of all the resources of any part of Queensland, particularly North Queensland, that could be used for the benefit of that part of the State in the future. We have had the Premier criticising the Fraser Government for its open-handed generosity towards everybody else. I agree with the Premier. I do not always agree with him, but I agree with him on this matter.

In days of stress such as we are experiencing now, there is not enough money for every scheme, and instead of spending it all in Bundaberg, as the honourable member for Bundaberg would suggest, the best of the schemes should be picked out and the available money spent on them. But there would be more money to spend if the Fraser Government would do away with many of the useless, political propaganda stunts that were embarked upon when the A.L.P. was in office. Having said that, I again appeal to the Minister to inquire into the water resources of North Queensland. I know he will not make a special job of it, and perhaps it does not deserve a special status at the present time, but it should be kept in mind. Just as the Powell Duffryn report of the Hanlon Government laid the foundations for our present coal exports and coal prosperity, so also could a committee of a similar nature set up by the present Minister to inquire into the great water resources of North Queensland lay the foundations for perhaps the most remarkable development that could occur in our lifetime.

(Time expired.)

Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (2.44 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to take part in the debate on these Estimates. I congratulate the Minister and his department.

In particular I should like to mention the Minister's private secretary, Mrs. Margaret McLaren, formerly Miss Margaret Cryan. It is often said that we are a lot of chauvinist people in Queensland. This is a very good example of a girl holding down a top job and doing it as well as any of her male counterparts in other departments. I place on record how much we appreciate the work that Margaret has done for the department, for the Minister and for members generally. She goes to tremendous pains, even in her own time, to chase up things for us, and we do appreciate it very much.

Whilst I would support the honourable member for Isis in his efforts to do something for his electorate, I point out to him that the Bureau of Agricultural Economics has presented reports on other irrigation projects of equal importance.

The bureau conducted a survey of Stage II of the Leslie Dam as part of the Upper Condamine Irrigation Scheme. In monetary terms it is probably one of the most important and practical irrigation projects in Queensland. The survey revealed that the actual net return on capital required to finalise the project would be very high, of the order of 9.7 per cent. That compares favourably with the bond rate of 9.5 per cent, and furthermore, it is based on conservative grain prices. If the grain world parity prices used for the purposes of the survey were increased by 20 per cent, the return on capital would rise to 13.5 per cent. Very few rural businesses would achieve results as good as that.

In the construction of the Leslie Dam, provision was made for its enlargement in what is termed Stage II. A sound case can be made out for the provision of finance to Stage II, based on the existence of the dam, the ability to proceed with the scheme at relatively low cost and, what is of utmost importance, the availability of means by which water can be directed from the Condamine River to the irrigators.

In the Condamine River basin a serious problem has arisen in relation to insufficient underground water supplies. The aquifers are not recharging at the rate at which water is pumped from them. This serious situation, of course, pertains not only in the Cunningham and Warwick electorates and the Darling Downs but throughout the State as a whole.

A map of Queensland's soil resources will show that the area that has the greatest potential for the cultivation of grain in Australia, let alone in Queensland, and the one that has ready access to ports and markets is the Darling Downs. The importance of Stage II of the Leslie Dam cannot be stressed too highly. We should do all in our power to ensure that the natural underground water supplies in the Condamine River basin are not depleted.

I believe, too, that the landholders must be prepared to play their part in this programme. We have seen evidence of that in many instances where they have shown initiative by taking advantage of some of the tax-deductibility incentives that were formerly available. Many off-stream storages, as they are called in that area, have been built. Water is pumped out of the Condamine, its tributaries or flood channels, and stored for dry times.

I was interested to hear the member for Isis make the point that as a State we have a drought factor of a very considerable magnitude. We are probably one of the driest continents on earth. I have always believed that water is like money in the bank. If we allow one single drop of it to run away unused, we have lost money—the same as if money were lost from the bank. Water is one of the nation's key problems. We must do all we can to conserve it whenever possible. I reiterate that water conservation is a serious problem for the Darling Downs and for the Condamine basin in particular.

What we are proposing—and I know that the Minister and his department are aware of it and are showing considerable initiative in this area—is that meters be placed on bores to ensure that people do not pump more than a reasonable amount. Where possible, flood run-off water should be used to supplement our underground water reserves. If that is not done, within the lifetime of many of the farmers who initiated much of the irrigation area, they will be faced with the real problem of running out of water. In view of the capital that has

been invested in the Condamine River basin, it will be realised that not only can they not afford to see their investment go down the drain but also we as a State cannot afford to allow that tremendous involvement by the landholders and the Irrigation Commission to go down the drain.

I stress, therefore, that the Government must seriously look at the over-all situation. From all I can read, it is my belief that the artificial recharge in this area, because of its unique silt properties, is encountering a great deal of difficulty. I do not believe that at this stage we can claim a significant degree of success in recharging the aquifers. Work is continuing on it. More research must be carried out. However, the results to date are not encouraging.

I congratulate the member for Mt. Isa for the work he has put into pressuring everyone involved in the Julius Dam project. It is my belief that that is one of the most forward-thinking plans to have been implemented for some time. It will put Mt. Isa's water resources on the map. The honourable member has done a tremendous amount of work on it.

I wish to refer to some of the other projects that have been mentioned by other speakers. Unfortunately the cost originally projected for the Kinchant Dam was exceeded many times over. That has caused tremendous problems for all the other projects in Queensland.

I should like to go on record as saying that we appreciate the assistance that we have received from the Commonwealth. It is very easy to continually knock the Commonwealth Government and say that it is not giving us this or that. If it were not for the efforts of the Federal member for Darling Downs (Mr. Tom McVeigh) Stage II of the Leslie Dam would not be as far advanced as it is. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics report on the dam, I believe, was pushed to a great extent by him and he should be given considerable credit for the result.

I shall conclude my speech at this stage to allow time for the many other speakers to debate these Estimates as they apply to their areas.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (2.56 p.m.): Because of the value of water to Australia and especially to North Queensland, I am rather intrigued that these Estimates have not been debated for some time.

As other honourable members have said, North Queensland has a very heavy rainfall with a very heavy run-off and very few natural storage areas. Certain areas do have large reserves of underground water which have been tapped successfully by farmers. In recent years, this project has been controlled by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission.

Over a period of years the Commonwealth Government has not been very generous in granting money to any of the States, especially Queensland, for water conservation. I gather from the Minister's speech that since 1967-68 the grants to Queensland under the National Resources Development Program have amounted to \$45,700,000 which is really a small drop in the ocean. In 1968, the plan provided for \$100,000,000 to be granted to Queensland under that programme.

In comparison with the amount of Commonwealth money provided for welfare work—and particularly in the past three years the sums poured into projects such as the Women's Electoral Lobby and various art and development groups—the amount made available to the Queensland department for conservation of water is very small. We need more money and I consider that our Ministers and public servants should lobby much more strongly in Canberra and not, as they have in the past, take no for an answer. In too many cases we have sat back and taken things too easily.

We must undertake long-distance and careful economic planning because the return from irrigation and water conservation schemes is not seen in the immediate future; those are long-range ventures and the benefit will not be noticed for many years to come—possibly generations to come. The people in those days will probably say, "Old grand-dad, or the Minister for Resources in 1967, was not too bad. He had great foresight in planning these very sound economic projects."

One aspect of water supply that intrigues me is underground supplies. According to the Minister, 130 cities are supplied with water from underground water supplies replenished by aquifers. In addition, about 55 per cent of our irrigation comes from underground water. I do not think that all the answers are known yet and the department should spend a considerable amount of money in researching this subject to learn more. From my reading, I consider there is quite a large gap in the knowledge of underground water sources and their recharging.

At one stage the Townsville City Council thought that it would be able to finance the Ross River Dam through the nickel treatment plant at Yabulu. While the city council was carrying out studies in conjunction with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission on the feasibility of the Ross River Dam, the commission was doing its own feasibility studies and dropping bores in the Bluewater area. They struck liquid gold in no uncertain manner, with the result that the Greenvale nickel project has become completely self-supporting. It is quite independent of the Ross River Dam project. Since 1974 approximately 11,600 million litres a day have been taken out. It is interesting to note that those water reserves do not seem to have been at all depleted. In fact, at some of the pumps

the water level is even higher than when pumping first started. A considerable amount of thought should be directed to the underground water supplies of this State.

There have always been problems with water in the Townsville area. At the time of the Water Authorities Act of 1891 there were bores down in the bed of the Ross River and its banks from which a considerable amount of very good water was obtained. That Act was supplemented by the Townsville Water Authority (Waterworks Approval) Act in 1926, which Act was itself amended in 1934. Under the 1926 Act, a weir was first put across Ross River and called a waterworks. The weir, in association with various wells, supplied the city until the dam was put in at Mt. Paluma and water was reticulated from Mt. Spec.

This supply, too, proved inadequate. In the Townsville area, all estimates have been short of the position that eventually came about. It was estimated that in 1974 Townsville would have a population of 80,000, an annual demand of 17,800 acre-feet, a daily average demand of 13,300,000 gallons and a daily average per-capita gallonage of 166.5. The estimate of the population in 1980 was 95,000. Statistics reveal that the population now is 85,000. All estimates of population and water requirements in Townsville have therefore been short of the target.

It must always be kept in mind that neither populations nor water requirements increase in an orderly manner. It is always better to keep a credit up one's sleeve when making estimates of population and water requirements. In a paper presented to the water committee by the Townsville City Council in April 1971, this appears in the notes on the extent of present resources—

"Stage I of the Ross River Dam, Crystal Creek and Paluma Dam will guarantee a daily average supply of 20,000,000 gallons per day. This means that Stage II of the dam will be required about 1982."

Actually Stage II is required now. Only last week we had water restrictions in Townsville. If we hope to attract further industry to Townsville we will need more water. At the moment there are hopes that Mount Isa Mines will go ahead with its zinc smelter, and if we are to attract more heavy industry, we will need more water again. But I would advise that an attempt be made to rapidly finalise Stage II of the dam and obtain money for the further works that are necessary. A lot of people think that the dam is complete, or will be once the walls of Stage II are completed; but about \$11,000,000 will be required after the dam itself is completed for rerouting of railways and roadways, the acquisition of land and the preservation of run-off areas.

Whilst I am talking about run-off areas, I would urge the Minister and his officers to think very hard about the use of catchment and storage areas. We have seen an

indiscriminate use of these water-ways for aquaplaning, water-skiing and various other fast-moving water sports. Considerable damage can be caused to the banks once people start aquaplaning behind fast-moving motor-boats, as we saw on the Nepean River in New South Wales. There the banks caved in; there was silting up; the channels were interfered with and considerable damage was done in that the over-all depth of the water was definitely altered.

We also face pollution problems, which can be very serious. We have seen outbreaks of hepatitis, which I assure honourable members can be a very serious disease. A man can contract hepatitis and seemingly get over it, then die from the residual effects of the disease with cirrhosis of the liver. I would advise members never to take hepatitis lightly because it is a dangerous disease. It is a disease that can be spread through out waterways if they are polluted.

People can also contract amoebic dysentery from our waterways, and there have been examples of this on Palm Island. I notice that the commission is going ahead with the construction of a new dam on Palm Island, and I congratulate it for that. I understand that the construction is to cost \$1,700,000. The original dam at Palm Island had been fouled by the local inhabitants, a large proportion of whom suffer from amoebic dysentery. I treated three nurses on Palm Island for amoebic liver abscesses, which can be fatal if not detected. A special order was issued to all nurses going to Palm Island that they had to have their stools examined because of the high incidence of amoebic dysentery caused by the fouling of the island's water supply. This could happen in any waterway, especially if it is used for recreation such as water sports. Water-catchment and storage areas should not be used for sport and recreation.

I congratulate the Minister on the over-all management of his department. His officers have always been extremely open-minded in their outlook. I would like to comment on the reporting of the ideas of his officers in the Press. In some cases this has enabled a lot of people to stop worrying about a problem. I refer particularly to an interview with Mr. Haigh reported in the "Townsville Daily Bulletin" of 25 June 1973, where he said that he considered all the projects put up to him were worth while but that the Bundaberg scheme had first priority and that the Urannah Dam would probably come second to that. He had arrived at this decision after a great many facts had been put before him. One that he referred to was most interesting. It was said that the population of Townsville could increase to 300,000 if the waters of Mt. Spec, Ross River and the Urannah Dam were utilised. The idea of Townsville with a population of 300,000 rather beggars the imagination. However, the officers of the department have worked that out and are quite sure that the necessary water can be supplied from those three

sources. That is very good forward planning and shows that the department has a very open mind on the subject of water conservation. I congratulate the Minister and his officers.

Mr. HALES (Ipswich West) (3.10 p.m.): I wish to speak first about the catchment areas in South-east Queensland as they affect the residents of Ipswich and surrounding areas.

It is common knowledge, of course, that there are three dams in South-east Queensland—the Moogerah Dam, the Atkinson Dam, and the Somerset Dam—and I wish to refer particularly to the aquatic sports on these dams. In our present affluent society, sporting activities on these dams have increased substantially in the summer months. Having in mind the safety of the people concerned, I think it might be prudent for the Minister, either now or in the near future, to consider declaring one of the dams an area for sailing only.

I have visited all three dams, and it appears to me that the number of sailing boats on them is increasing almost daily. In my opinion, if one of them were set aside for sailing only, the safety of people using sailing boats would be improved. Many people like flying on kites towed by power boats. These boats, of course, move very quickly across the water, while sailing boats move only as fast as the wind allows them to move. When boats of such differing types are used in the same area, it seems to me that sailing enthusiasts are at some disadvantage. Therefore, when the Wivenhoe Dam has been completed, perhaps the Minister might consider declaring one of the four dams in South-east Queensland an area for sailing only, having in mind the safety factor.

I appreciate, too, that the Minister's department has provided many park areas around the dams, and they are extremely well cared for.

In the main, the Atkinson Dam and the Moogerah Dam are used for irrigation. However, the Somerset Dam supplies water to Ipswich and the Brisbane metropolitan area. In Ipswich, the water is used mainly for domestic purposes, but at the Wulkuraka Industrial Estate there is a major user of water—Kinnane's chicken abattoir. It fills the sewerage line going round the river to the Tivoli treatment plant, and it appears that no other industrial manufacturer can establish an industry on that estate. It seems rather a shame that the sewerage line round the river is, as someone from the Ipswich City Council told me, chock-a-block and not capable of carrying any more sewerage, and I suggest that the Government might consider assisting the Ipswich City Council to provide a bigger line between Wulkuraka and the Tivoli treatment plant.

Mention is made in the annual report of flood-mitigation work in the Brisbane River catchment area, and investigations along the

Bremer River are also referred to. As the thrust of the investigations seems to be on the Brisbane River, I ask the Government to consider the erection of some type of barrage on the Bremer River to relieve the flood problem in Ipswich. I understand that through the officers of the Ipswich City Council, the police and the State Emergency Service there is a system whereby the actual height of the flooding can be predicted as the water comes downstream, but that does not stop the flood or mitigate it in any way. It merely means that a prediction can be given so that people downstream will know how much water is coming down.

The Deputy City Engineer (Bob Gamble) has an excellent system working whereby he can accurately predict levels downstream within two or three centimetres. Although the warning system is there, flood mitigation is just not on at the moment. It would appear that the department is channelling its main efforts towards flood mitigation around the Brisbane River and Moggill Creek, but it would not hurt the department to spend more time in the areas around the Bremer River. The report indicates the possible construction of weirs at two or three different places.

The Lockyer Valley in your area, Mr. Gunn, has become the salad bowl of South-east Queensland. The production of food from that area is worth millions of dollars. I should hate to think of anything going wrong with the underground water supply in that area. Some years ago the department erected a couple of recharge weirs on Flagstone Creek and Lockyer Creek, which have been a great success. We have had many years of good weather, but without doubt in the years ahead we will have another long drought. I understand Lennox Walker has predicted a drought of almost eight years between 1983 and 1991. Sometimes his predictions are wrong but more often than not they are right, and if he is right we have only a few years in which to construct recharge weirs in that area so that the underground water of the Lockyer Valley will be maintained.

We all realise the amount of food that comes out of that area to feed people in many parts of the State. The area is noted for its potatoes, carrots, peas and beans. If the department could build a few recharge weirs in that area, the effects of the drought which will most certainly come in the years ahead would be cushioned.

It is not usual for metropolitan members to discuss these Estimates, but I have done so to congratulate the Minister's secretary, whom I know, and his staff on the excellent job that they do. I also congratulate the Minister, of course, on his able handling of this portfolio. He is certainly a competent Minister.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (3.21 p.m.): I enter this debate to raise an environmental issue that would not have arisen if the Commissioner for Irrigation and Water Supply had carried out a thorough investigation as he should have done. I refer to the Cooloola National Park and specifically to Tewah Creek as well as to the decision to allow substantial interference to the flow of water in that creek, in total conflict with the concept of a national park. Such interference would, I believe, have given rise to substantial opposition from the National Parks Section of the Forestry Department as well as from the general public if they had been aware of what occurred.

At the outset I say I do not intend to level total blame at either the Minister or the commissioner, for I realise that it was the Governor in Council which authorised the Widgee Shire Council to draw water from Tewah Creek and Seary's Creek. Nevertheless, the Minister and the commissioner are involved; questions must be asked and answers must be given.

This issue goes back to 15 March 1967, when a group of people trading as Bayside Cattle Company acquired special lease S.L. 30851 of about 2,340 acres of land known as portion 65, Parish of Toolara, County of March.

On 11 January 1973, S.L. 30851 was freehold and became Special Lease Purchase Freehold 306. The area of the freehold was 2,197 acres 1 rood. The cost—I would ask honourable members to note this carefully—was \$43,945.

By contract dated 14 February 1973, barely one month later, the Bayside Cattle Company sold S.L. Purchase Freehold 306, comprising 2,197 acres 1 rood, together with S.L. 32818, 32819 and 32820, comprising in all 15 acres, and portion 1 comprising 7 acres 3 roods 3.1 perches—a total area of 2,220 acres 9 roods 3.1 perches—to Dubitante Pty. Ltd., whose address was c/- Morris, Fletcher & Cross, Solicitors, Brisbane.

At the time of that sale the members of the Bayside Cattle Company were William Nils Buchanan, Stanley Edwin Cox, Geoffrey Charles Sykes, Merwyn Alfred Sanders, Thomas Henry Sanders, Edwin Lumley Henzell, Donald Walter Clarkson, William Edward Stephen Gambling, Donald Edward Gambling, Margaret Shirley Bishop, Jill Byrne Johnston, David Bruce Nimmo and Clement William Bailey Renouf.

It is worth noting that at that time William Nils Buchanan was chairman of the Widgee Shire Council, the local authority controlling the area, and Donald Walter Clarkson was the shire engineer.

Now the point that I raise: the purchase price paid for the land and improvements was \$246,000. In January the land was free-

held for \$43,945 and barely one month later it was sold for \$246,000. But the story goes on. By a contract dated 29 June 1973, three months later, Dubitante Pty. Ltd. sold all the land and improvements to Crest Projects Pty Ltd. for \$443,800. The date of possession is shown on that contract as 30 June 1974 and it was a cash sale.

Mr. Lowes: The cost of freeholding would be included in that.

Mr. WRIGHT: I made the point that the cost of freeholding was included; but one still needs to distinguish between the freeholding price and the final purchase prices.

I accept that it was by Order in Council that the Widgee Shire Council received authority to draw water from Seary's Creek and Tewah Creek. However, I return to the conflict of interests that must have existed when the chairman and engineer of a shire can be involved in a company that freeholds land and in a council that is going to make very, very important decisions on whether or not water can be drawn from a certain creek. The story goes that land developments were taking place. This land development is a very valuable enterprise. The land is worth a lot of money.

Mr. Goleby: Anybody else could have done that.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am glad to see that the honourable member for Redlands is supporting this. He might answer by telling us what his involvement was.

Mr. Goleby: You would be entitled to do the same thing.

Mr. WRIGHT: I wonder. I wonder if a shire chairman or a shire engineer should be involved in decision-making processes from which they will gain financially. If the honourable member believes that they should, then I suggest that he rethink his role as a member of Parliament.

I go on further and state that it was the council that made the total land development possible. Had that water not been able to be obtained from Tewah Creek, the land development would have had very little potential. The decision made by Order in Council was the result of an application by the Widgee Shire, the chairman of which, as I stated, was a member of the company that made a massive profit out of the resale of the land.

I have always thought that on environmental matters we should have all types of studies carried out; that we should in fact be ensuring that some type of environmental impact statement or study is carried out.

Mr. Lowes interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: Let me go on. The honourable member can make his speech and I will make mine.

I have always thought that there was a role for local authorities to play and a role also for the Irrigation and Water Supply Commissioner to play. I want to know—and I believe we must know—exactly what has taken place and what type of investigation was carried out by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in relation to this.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: We would be committed to certifying that water was available.

Mr. WRIGHT: I take the Minister's point but I do not think that is satisfactory. If we are going to protect national parks and ensure that all types of activity are not taking place on the water-ways of these national parks, then the Commission has a responsibility—in its own right, if not on behalf of the Government as a whole. It was not so long ago—1972, I think—that the Premier made a tremendous statement on how the Government was keen to protect the environment. He set down guide-lines in a manual, and he made some comments in the foreword to it.

The role of Government is an important one. When it comes to water-ways, surely that responsibility devolves upon the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. We need to know also what interest the former shire chairman and the shire engineer had in the success of the venture. We need to know, too, who were the members of Dubitante Pty. Ltd. Did the shire engineer and the former shire chairman or anyone else assure Crest Projects Ltd. that it would be guaranteed approval for a subdivisional scheme and a water supply for the development? What part did they play in this? The whole project was able to go on because that approval was forthcoming. The recommendation came from the council when the application was made.

Mr. Ahern: Who is chairman of the Widgee Shire now?

Mr. WRIGHT: I do have the name somewhere here, but that is immaterial. Mr. Buchanan is no longer the chairman of the shire, but he was the chairman at the time this took place.

I call for the tabling of the application made by the Widgee Shire Council under section 32 (14) of the Local Government Act to take water from Tewah Creek. I call also for the tabling of the recommendation of the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply. I believe an open inquiry into the matter is required, because a lot of money is involved and I suggest that there is a conflict of interests. Finally, I say that the whole issue smells and I believe that, as the Minister is in charge of this portfolio, he has a responsibility to clear the air completely.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (3.30 p.m.): In rising to speak to these Estimates, I congratulate the Minister and the Irrigation

and Water Supply Commission for the able way in which, over the past 12 months and during previous years as well, they have administered the matters covered by this portfolio.

I note a ministerial Press release to the effect that the commissioner will be retiring later this year. I wish him well in his retirement and thank him for what he has done for the people of Queensland. I also congratulate Mr. Beattie, who has been named as Mr. Learmonth's successor. I am sure that he will fill that office capably and well.

Whilst I congratulate these officers on the work they have done, I still say that there is a feeling in the Government the commissioner has too much power. Although we are very happy with the existing officers, I hope that the Minister will amend the Act so that we can be assured that in future the Minister will have more power as of right and not because of the good will of the commissioner.

One of the most exciting prospects in my electorate at the moment is the opening in the near future of the Glenlyon Dam. It will do much to stabilise the population of the Texas and Goondiwindi areas and will increase production there substantially. Therefore there is a fair chance that as a result of the dam the population of those areas will increase.

The cost of the dam, which is estimated at approximately \$17,000,000, is shared equally between New South Wales and Queensland. The expenditure for 1975-76 was slightly more than \$7,000,000, making a total outlay of \$15,500,000 to date, of which the Commonwealth has contributed only a little over \$400,000. Whilst it is good that some Commonwealth money is involved in the scheme, it is a thorough disgrace that the Commonwealth Government did not honour the commitment to provide one-third of the funds for that dam.

The people in my electorate should be reminded continually that the Federal Government prior to 1972 committed itself to provide one-third of the funds for the construction of this dam. The Labor Party, on coming to power in Canberra, broke that pledge. It is very serious that a Government can commit itself to share the cost of a project and then renege on the promise. It indicates what the Labor Party thinks of people in my electorate. It is a shocking example of the Labor Government's taking funds from my electorate so that it can spend more millions of dollars on the bloated populations of Sydney and Melbourne.

Mr. Warner: The people won't forget that.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I am sure they won't and I will remind anybody who may be wavering that that is just what the Labor Federal Government did to a project in my

electorate that will go a long way towards doing something for decentralisation in that area.

Mr. Houston: How much money has your Government provided for housing the people out there who want their own home or want to rent one?

Mr. McKECHNIE: The honourable member for Bulimba likes to try to blame this Government for all the ills in Australia today. It is a great shame that he did not stand up and criticise the previous Federal Government, headed by Gough Whitlam, when it was following a path of economic madness that ruined any chances that this country had of an early economic recovery.

Mr. Houston: Your crowd were going to fix it up in six months. You said that if Fraser was elected he would fix it up in six months.

Mr. McKECHNIE: That interjection is typical of the misrepresentation of the Labor Party. I made it clear in all the speeches that I made in my electorate during the last Federal election campaign that it would take a Liberal-National Country Party Government at least three years to fix things up. That is what leaders of the present Government parties said. They said that the economy could not be made to recover overnight; that it would take a full term. If the present Federal Government can do it in a full term, it should be given all possible credit. The mess created by the economic madness of Gough Whitlam and his advisers was so great that overcoming it will take years and years. I am sure the people of Australia will remember for a long time just what a mob of economic bunglers A.L.P. members are irrespective of where they are.

Storage of water in the Glenlyon Dam began officially in May 1976. It will be remembered that there was a considerable amount of water stored in the dam at the time of the January floods. The outlet valve was not in place and all that water drained away. However, that temporary storage saved people downstream hundreds of thousands of dollars. Had that water not been temporarily held back, the disastrous January floods would have been much worse. I advise those living downstream from the Glenlyon Dam that this was a once-only saving, because in normal seasons the dam will not be empty and, when rains come, they will not be able to rely on the dam to mitigate the effects of floods. The January floods were quite serious but they would have been much worse if the Glenlyon Dam had not been nearly completed. Critics of the dam should remember the major part that it played in holding back water at that time.

Also in my electorate and administered by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission is the Coolmunda Dam on Macintyre

Brook. There are 76 licensees drawing water from this dam, and 132 pumps. Last year 3 012 megalitres were diverted and 1 481 hectares were irrigated. It is interesting to note that the capacity of the Coolmunda Dam is approximately 75 000 megalitres. This dam is not being used to anywhere near its full capacity. This is rather sad because it was built to stabilise the population in the Inglewood area. It has not been quite as helpful as some of us had hoped. The reason for this is the rural depression; it is no fault of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. But we must go ahead with the construction of dams whilst looking to the day when irrigation will be much more profitable in Queensland than it is now.

As I said before, I am confident that the Glenlyon Dam will play a major part in stabilising the population of the area, but this is not going to happen overnight, just as it did not happen overnight with the Coolmunda Dam. This Government and other Governments must adopt policies which will encourage the economic production of primary products. So many countries of the world have a low standard of living that we cannot afford to live in a country that does not make full use of its agricultural resources.

Major crops irrigated from the Coolmunda Dam are tobacco, lucerne, soya beans and navy beans. There is an interest in other crops such as green beans, grain sorghum and other grains. The pecan nut is being established in the area and early indications are that it will be most successful. Speaking of the tobacco industry, I think the common-sense approach is that if people choose to smoke they might as well smoke Australian tobacco rather than imported tobacco. I think it would be a great help to the commission in ensuring the full use of allocations if the Federal Government could find a way to encourage manufacturers to use a greater percentage of Australian leaf in cigarettes.

Another problem in my electorate, which the commission is endeavouring to solve, is the condition of the weir at Goondiwindi. It is an old weir and badly in need of repair. Back in June 1974 the commission approved a proposal for repairs to the value of \$12,000. But since then we have been both fortunate and unfortunate to have had good seasons. One of the unfortunate results of these good seasons is that it has been impossible to carry out this work, but I am pleased about the commissioner's assurance this morning that, as soon as the stream flow allows it, this work will be done.

When discussing the border rivers, it is interesting to note the allocations to New South Wales and Queensland. I understand that for the year ended 30 June 1976 the New South Wales allocation was 11 686 megalitres and Queensland's was 17 143 megalitres. This gives the lie to those people who say that Queensland does not get its

fair share of water from the border rivers, but there are only 198 current licence holders in New South Wales while there are 434 in Queensland. This makes one realise why New South Wales irrigators tend to be getting so much water. The reason is that there are fewer of them, and that in New South Wales the companies and individuals using irrigation tend to operate on a larger scale. In Queensland we have managed to allocate the water to a greater number of people. I think it is good that the total of people getting the benefit of water available under the border rivers agreement is greater in Queensland than in New South Wales.

There has been much criticism of the Federal Government for reducing funds for irrigation, and I also am very disappointed that more money is not coming from Commonwealth sources. However, as I said earlier, the Federal Government inherited a very serious financial problem and, obviously, cuts had to be made somewhere. The Opposition in this Chamber loves to criticise the present Federal Government when it is unable to provide additional money for various projects. It must be understood that the Liberal-National Country Party Government had an economic mess of huge proportions to sort out.

Mr. Houston: What about the 18 years before? Liberal-Country Party Governments did nothing. You are a mob of whingers.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn): Order!

Mr. McKECHNIE: I will take the honourable member's interjection, Mr. Gunn. He speaks about the previous 18 years. During those years Australia was on a fairly sound financial path, and the economic blunderers of the Labor Party came to power only because people had forgotten what it was like to live under socialism. It will be a long time before they forget again just what a mess those blunderers made of this country. If the Federal Government has had to reduce the amount of money for irrigation, that can be attributed directly to the mess that the Labor Government made of Australia in the three years that it was in office.

The Irrigation and Water Supply Commission is also trying to deal with the problem of depleted stocks of artesian water in Queensland. The total flow of artesian bores is now 859 megalitres a day, compared with 1 600 megalitres a day in 1914. Because of that, the commission usually does not grant licences for bore drains from new bores. It believes that all flows should be controlled.

In my opinion, graziers should be told more frequently about the danger of depleting reserves of artesian water, and the commission should crack down on any grazier who wastes water. Graziers who neglect leaking troughs or bores running uncontrolled just because they know that the chance of an

officer of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission coming round is not great must be made to realise that the only people they are hurting are themselves. They must measure up to their responsibilities and co-operate with the commission in its endeavour to make the best use of the underground water that this State is fortunate in having.

(Time expired.)

Mr. ALISON (Maryborough) (3.49 p.m.): I am pleased to take part in the debate on the Estimates of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. In all sincerity, I should like first to congratulate the Minister on the job he is doing in this portfolio. I had the pleasure of having the Minister, Mr. Learmonth and certain other officers of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in Maryborough towards the end of last year, when they made inspections relating to certain aspects of a project that is now under consideration. I thank Mr. Learmonth and his officers for their ever ready assistance. They always bend over backwards in assisting me to understand what is going on with this very important project on which I shall comment in a moment. I congratulate Mr. Beattie on his appointment, which I presume he will take up on 1 January. I am quite sure he will do an excellent job.

The Maryborough project I referred to involves a barrage on the Mary River downstream from Tiaro and a barrage on Tinana Creek, with an irrigation scheme within that U-shaped area, Tiaro being at the western end as well as some of the riparian land. That project is of major importance to my city and district. We eagerly await publication of the project report. I understand from the Minister that the report will be in his hands in December.

Sugar, of course, is the main consideration under this proposal, but there could be other crops. We will be interested to see what advice the Department of Primary Industries comes up with as to crops that might be grown there. Of course it is not just a matter of growing the crops; we have to be able to sell them. Referring to this project, the annual report indicates that there are 7 000 hectares of possible cane land within the area being looked at. Within that area there are 2 500 hectares of cane assignments at present. Because of the degree of slope, some of that land might not be suitable for cane-growing, but there still seems to be room for certain expansion in the sugar industry in Maryborough with new assignments in the proposed irrigated area as well as room for other crops.

In August this year the Minister advised me that the the latest estimate of the cost of the scheme was \$12,000,000 to \$13,000,000. It is really a relatively minor project on the score of cost, but to my area it is an extremely important one.

One of the very good points is that the commission has apparently moved away from the idea of having a concrete structure as a barrage on the Mary River and is considering simply a rock barrage for the sole purpose of keeping out salt water. It is not going to be a storage barrage at all, and this helps to keep the cost down. The commission is looking at stage development, as I understand it, which means that, even though it is relatively small project, the full cost will not have to be spent and the project completed before we get some benefits from it. I understand that the two weirs are estimated to cost \$2,000,000 or \$3,000,000. The scheme is of major importance and we eagerly await an opportunity to study the report. We look forward to the project getting some priority so that in the not too distant future we will have at least part of the project in operation.

I was advised by the Maryborough Sugar Factory that if this year we had a drought like the one we had in 1969, \$12,000,000 would be lost by way of production in the Maryborough area. That is just one drought. Such a saving in one drought would just about cover the cost of the barrage. Surely that has to be taken into account.

I wish to raise another matter that I would like the Minister and his officers to take into account. In the not too distant future Hervey Bay will be in strife with its municipal water supply. It now has a permanent population of 8,000 people and one of the highest growth-rates in the State. The latest census reveals that over the past five years it had a population growth-rate of 8.16 per cent and in the preceding five years a rate of 6.92 per cent.

As I understand it, owing to the inadequacy of the scheme—it is not that insufficient water is available—problems are arising at the present time. Hervey Bay does not seem to have any other worth-while catchment area. Its storage area is the Burrum River barrage. I am led to believe that at the present rate of growth in population the Hervey Bay area will be in real strife as early as 10 years from now. By then the Burrum River will have become totally inadequate to provide sufficient water for the population that the area is estimated to have at that time.

I am sure that the Minister will take cognisance of these facts. People who know more about these matters than I do have told me that it would not require a great engineering feat to reticulate water from the proposed project to Hervey Bay.

Another striking feature of the project is the Borumba Dam, from which water would be obtained to service the proposed irrigated area at Maryborough. It is interesting to note in the annual report that at the beginning of the year the Borumba Dam

was storing 38 070 megalitres, or 89 per cent of its capacity. At the same time the volume of water released was 6 318 megalitres, or less than one-sixth of the water stored and less than one-eighth of the dam's storage capacity. I would hope that the Minister will consider this as another good reason why the Mary River-Tinana Creek project should be given top priority.

Perhaps the Minister could in his closing remarks offer some comments on the method of obtaining finance from the Federal Government. I have not had a chance to study the annual report in full—perhaps this appears in it—and I would be interested to know how the State Government goes about asking the Federal Government for finance, what the priorities are, what guide-lines are laid down by the Federal Government, what schemes are looked at and what method of granting subsidy is adopted.

When the public have access to the project report, either later this year or early next year, I shall be forming a committee of interested civic-minded people to help get the message across to the community and so assist the project in some small way. Quite often confusion arises over any project, whether it is carried out by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission or the Works Department, so it is important to get the facts across to the general community and in particular the people who are directly concerned in the proposed irrigation scheme, in this instance the farmers. It is possible that we will get a feed-back to the commission from the community and the primary producers.

For some time now I have been assisted in my approaches to the Minister by John Jurss, the manager of the Maryborough and District Development Board; Councillor Tom Gee, the chairman of the Tiaro Shire Council and chairman of the Maryborough and District Cane Growers' Executive; and Tom Braddock and his executive staff at the Maryborough Sugar Factory. I greatly appreciate the assistance that they have given me.

One thing in my area that worries us is that within what is now the Woocoo Shire and the Tiaro Shire very good agricultural areas are being cut up into blocks of five acres, three acres and less. In some cases it is just a case of people making a quick quid. Fair enough; that is their prerogative. It worries me and others in the city and the district who realise that this is going on. I urge the local authorities involved to carefully consider the proposed developments when they are submitted for approval and to do what they can to avoid having good agricultural land cut up into small blocks that are useless in any irrigation scheme. I believe that the good of the community at large has to be taken into account and some effort must be made to stop these areas of

prime agricultural land being chopped up into areas that are useless for primary production.

In conclusion, I thank the Minister for his willing assistance and I thank Mr. Learmonth and his senior officers. Mr. Dowling is one of the officers I see most of. I greatly appreciate the assistance that he and Mr. Morse give me. I look forward to Nev Hewitt continuing to be the Minister for Water Resources in the coming years.

Mr. BERTONI (Mt. Isa) (4.1 p.m.): 8 October this year saw another milestone in the history of Mt. Isa. I was indeed honoured to be associated with that milestone—the official opening of the Julius Dam. That dam, which is 46 miles up the Leichhardt River from Mt. Isa, has been constructed for the development of the North West in general and for the use of the city of Mt. Isa in particular. The Government is to be congratulated for honouring its promise to the people of the North West by supplying adequate finance for the completion of that dam.

Mr. Ahern: You deserve a lot of personal credit for it yourself.

Mr. BERTONI: I had a lot to do with it, yes. I can recall that, when it was decided to proceed with the dam, the then mayor of Mt. Isa, Ald. Bill Weigh, signed the necessary documentation. I took over from him at the following election in March 1973 and had the problem of seeing that the dam was constructed and that it was adequately financed.

I remember the number of headaches and problems the construction of the dam caused us. We had to place continuous pressure on both the State and Federal Governments for additional finance. The projected cost of \$21,000,000 rose to \$30,000,000, and the contribution of the Mt. Isa ratepayers increased to \$7,000,000. As a result of the pressure we applied on the Government, the city's contribution has been reduced to \$5,000,000. I certainly express to the Government the appreciation of the people of Mt. Isa for the provision of that additional \$2,000,000.

Mr. McKechnie: I understand that the Leader of the Opposition is really worried about what a good job you have done for Mt. Isa.

Mr. BERTONI: He may have to worry even more about that fairly soon.

I can recall the number of discussions we had with the Minister and the number of submissions we made to the State Government for additional finance. I cannot speak too highly of the way in which the Minister handled his portfolio. He gave me tremendous support and backed my submissions in Cabinet at all times. I could not ask much more from a Minister.

I congratulate, too, the late Mr. Fred Haigh, who was the commissioner when the dam was first commissioned, and then Mr. Frank Learmonth, who took over from Fred. They both supported me in my various submissions to the Government.

The gentleman whom all Queenslanders and certainly the people of Mt. Isa should admire is the Premier. At one time he went out on a limb during a television programme and promised us assistance. As I said before, this Government has kept its promises.

The problems that led to the construction of the Julius Dam are important and should be recorded. I have spoken a number of times on this subject in this Chamber. I have dealt with the financing of the dam and I have pointed out the tremendous water-rate burden that would be placed on the citizens of Mt. Isa unless some type of financial assistance was forthcoming.

It should be recorded indelibly that the Labor Federal Government did not give as a grant 1c towards the cost of construction of this dam. The only contribution that came from any Federal source was a \$2,000,000 repayable loan. In return for the contribution made by the people of the North-west, some type of finance should be forthcoming from the Federal Government. I hope that it will keep its promises to support the people in the Mt. Isa area by providing additional finance in the next Federal Budget.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: You have my unqualified support in that regard.

Mr. BERTONI: I thank the Minister. I know that we have it.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. BERTONI: I can guarantee the honourable member that tremendous support did come from both the Minister and the Premier. I believe that the members of the A.L.P. should be more vocal and apply pressure on their Federal colleagues to obtain extra financial assistance for the Julius Dam project. However, I must agree that the honourable member for Bundaberg has always been an honest and sincere gentleman. I recall some of his remarks supporting me. I admit that. Also, I recall Mr. Whitlam saying in Mt. Isa that he would assist us on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Then when he considered the position at a later date he changed his mind. The people in Mt. Isa are indeed very disturbed that up to this stage the Federal Government has not assisted them in any way.

The project is now completed and commissioned. Even though it will be beneficial to our area, we are still not out of our financial problems. Next year there will probably be a further increase in water rates and it is imperative that the Federal Government provides some financial assistance. The

mayor of Mt. Isa said that the State Government had played its part and that now it was up to the Federal Government to play its part.

Recently in Mt. Isa a symposium was held on Water Resource Utilisation in Arid Environments, at which there were seven or eight guest speakers. A book was produced that outlined the problems experienced in arid climates. It may be interesting to honourable members to know that one of the biggest problems in the arid environment is the evaporation of water. If I recall correctly, it was said that Lake Moondarra loses over 30 per cent of its capacity annually through evaporation. It was also said that twice as much water is lost through evaporation than is consumed. This causes problems which must result in costly and larger dams. In addition, we do not have as much rainfall as other areas and we have to store as much water as possible.

We are fortunate that we now have three dams in Mt. Isa supplying the city. The first to be opened was the Rifle Creek Dam. Then as we grew, MIM Ltd. constructed Lake Moondarra, which supplied the city for a number of years. Then, looking to the future and considering the last drought season, we were compelled to build further water storages and that is how the Julius Dam came into being. I think it fair to say that there will be sufficient water in the Mt. Isa area till at least the year 2000.

During the period of the financing of Lake Julius Dam, approximately 18 to 20 telegrams were sent to various people. One was sent to each Minister and one was sent to the Liberal, National and Labor Parties. Replies were received from all except the Labor Party. They did not even acknowledge the telegram. They were not interested in what happened to Mt. Isa; it did not concern them whether finance was or was not obtained for that area. I should like that recorded in "Hansard" because that is exactly what happened.

I would like to conclude by once again thanking the Government for the assistance provided in the construction of the Julius Dam. Now, we must look further to the Cloncurry area. I believe that it is imperative that we support the proposed new dam for the township of Cloncurry so that adequate water will be available for the new smelter that I sincerely hope will eventually be established there. On behalf of the people of Mt. Isa, I again thank the Government for the part that it played in the financing of the Julius Dam.

Mr. LESTER (Belyando) (4.12 p.m.): In the first place, I wish to thank the Minister for what he has done in an attempt to help the people of my area. It is particularly dependent upon water for the production of its products such as coal, grain, cattle and timber. If ever there was diversification of

industry, it is in the Belyando electorate. Water is needed up in the cattle country in the North at Suttor River, where we are hoping to have water stored, up in Collinsville, down to Moranbah through the pipeline from the Eungella Dam, up to Goonyella and Peak Downs, down to Blackwater through the good graces of the Mackenzie River, and to Clermont, Capella, Alpha, Jericho and Duinga.

This brings me to the point that the Fairbairn Dam at Emerald is one of the greatest acquisitions that this country has ever had. There are in this area 41 farms so far completed and another four are to be completed by February next year. Furthermore, it is hoped that within two years farms will be built to the east of Emerald. Although there may be some concern about the time lag, finance and demand are such that we have to be thankful for what has already been achieved. Whatever the Minister can do to push the scheme along will certainly be very greatly appreciated.

In Blackwater, \$2,789,713 has been spent on the Blackwater water-supply scheme. Vast sums of money have similarly been spent on supply schemes to other major mining, industrial and grazing areas in my electorate. It is interesting to note in the Fairbairn Dam area that on the channel-supplied farms there are 674 hectares of wheat, 612 of cotton, 290 of sunflower, 138 of safflower and 1 227 of sorghum. These products, with others produced with water from the dam, represent a total output of \$888,720.

The dam is partly responsible for all of this production, and it is this production which brings people to the area—people who buy the farms, people who work on them and, of course, people who come to the towns to provide amenities. It is amazing to see the number of establishments in Emerald selling all sorts of farm machinery. In turn this brings in other types of business such as welding. All I can say is that the Minister's department is an extremely important one to my area and I most emphatically ask the Minister to continue to do all he can to help us. I say good luck to him in what he is trying to do.

Mr. WARNER (Toowoomba South) (4.16 p.m.): In rising to speak in this debate, I must say that I believe that the conservation of water is of the utmost importance not only for our immediate needs but for those of future generations. Over many years I have been through many periods of drought on the land, and I am very conscious of how precious water is. The work done by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission over the many years it has been in existence cannot be praised enough—likewise the work of the Minister who has been responsible for the commission for the past seven years.

It has been said by other members today that the Minister and his staff have worked as a team. If this team is now to be hampered

by a lack of funds from the Federal Government in any way so that it cannot carry on its operations to improve Queensland's exploitable water reserves, then I say it is a deplorable situation. Inflation has already curtailed work on projects under way, which is a worry to me and to other members because there are many areas that are or will be in desperate need of storage water in the very near future. The Government's policy is to provide funds for works to conserve water for irrigation, stock and urban supplies, and the provision of these works should continue unhampered. These funds should have the very highest priority, and I am very pleased to see that the Minister and the commission consider it necessary to make long-term assessments of Queensland's future water supplies and needs, and that forward planning is to take place in respect of major dams for urban purposes in the near future. This is long overdue. If this forward planning branch had been in operation 20 years ago we might now have had the second stage of the Leslie Dam and other such projects completed at a much lower cost than it will be today, if these projects are to be completed at all.

We must proceed further with assistance for rural water supplies, and also the provision for more water for irrigation. I might add that irrigation accounts for approximately 20.44 per cent of Queensland's total rural production, which is certainly a very important part of our economy.

There is a very serious problem looming in areas which have limited sites for further urban water storage. Toowoomba is one area facing this problem. Its last remaining viable site is some 30 miles away. This is the site of the proposed Cressbrook Dam which will, hopefully, be completed by 1985. It has run into problems which are going to increase its cost, and one of these problems is that we simply do not have any other sites to turn to. The escalating costs caused by delays in testing this difficult site must eventually be borne by the ratepayer. With a completion date of 1982 the estimated cost was \$21,000,000, but I do not believe any estimate has been made of the cost when it is finally completed in 1985 or 1987. The cost of water to the ratepayer must skyrocket in that case, and it is now said that the cost could be as much as three times the present rate of 63c per 1,000 gallons.

I do not believe that any local council or semi-government authority can cope with these extra costs without imposing an additional burden on the ratepayers, who are already carrying a heavy burden. Some solution must be found to assist in providing this extremely important water supply, which, I might add, supplies not only the city of Toowoomba but also the towns of Crow's Nest, Hampton, Cabarlah, Highfields and Meringandan and the army at Borneo Barracks. In addition, many small-crop growers are dependent on this water for irrigation.

The towns of Dalby, Pittsworth, Millmerran and Brookstead also face a deficiency in water supplies. The Dalby Town Council alone has estimated a shortfall of 15,000,000 gallons per annum. The requirements of these towns are estimated to be: ground water—urban 2,600 acre-feet per year; irrigation 75,000 acre-feet per year. It is known that the underground water level of the Condamine water basin has diminished and that many bores used for irrigation have gone dry. Although water levels are improving at present, only a small drought is needed for bores to go completely dry. It is accepted that with continued use at present levels, under existing conditions, the ground water storage levels will be incapable of sustaining large-scale irrigation by the mid 1990s unless corrective measures are taken, and I believe that they are being taken already.

The demand for more water for irrigation is probably up to the limit of the supplies now available. Already there is a shortfall of about 60,000 acre-feet. The area irrigated in the catchment area is in excess of 70,000 acres, and it produces 46,000 acres of cereals in conjunction with soya beans, cotton, pasture crops and fodder. The value of these crops is more than \$14,000,000 and, therefore, production must be maintained by irrigation. In fact, the total value would greatly exceed \$14,000,000, because that was the value in 1974.

If the proposed coalfield at Millmerran comes into being, initial requirements of water for that venture are estimated to be 20,000 acre-feet per year. On the basis of the facts presented, it is self-evident that there should not be any further irrigation development and that no substantial supplies of ground or surface water for urban and industrial usage can be made available in Toowoomba. So one is led to the inevitable conclusion that unless we preserve our resources we shall perish on the rock of want. It must be borne in mind that the Darling Downs has not suffered a drought of any magnitude for many a long day, and I do not believe that its luck can last for ever.

In conclusion, I again commend the Minister and his officers for the work they have done over the last year.

Mr. YEWDAL (Rockhampton North) (4.24 p.m.): I wish to make some brief comments on these Estimates. At the outset, I stress the importance of water storage and water usage in a State as large as Queensland in which primary industries predominate. However, in this debate I wish to relate the utilisation of finance in the field of water resources to the unemployment in Queensland, and probably in Australia as a whole.

At present, while Federal and State Governments are cutting back on capital works projects, more and more workers are joining

the ranks of the unemployed. My information is that the Commonwealth has cut water resources grants by 50 per cent in real terms. As all honourable members are aware, when there is a percentage cut, in real terms the cut is often greater, and my information is that in real terms the Commonwealth Government has cut water resources grants by 50 per cent.

I presume that other honourable members, including the spokesman for the Opposition, have already referred to the Monduran Dam in the Bundaberg area. It is of concern to everybody that that particular project is really continuing only at a skeleton level—if I could put it that way. In that area over 300 unskilled or semi-skilled workers are out of a job. Of that number some 130 could be described as young people. I do not need to emphasise the problem of having young people out of work. Of course, at the end of the school year we will have an additional large number of young persons coming onto the employment market. I understand that there are only 15 vacancies in that area. The Monduran Dam will not be fully utilised until the whole project is completed and the channels are developed so that water can be supplied to the users. Federal and State policies are leading to inefficient use of resources and keeping men out of work. In general terms the direct labour content of dam construction is about 40 per cent. The labour component in that sort of work is quite high. That somewhat justifies my argument about unskilled and semi-skilled labour. If together the State and Federal Governments were to spend a further \$1,000,000 on that project it would mean \$400,000 in wages, and this would create work for about 50 men for a further 12 months. That would be a constructive approach to the situation. The men who are going to have to be retrenched will have to receive some payment from the Federal Government by way of unemployment benefits. Surely together the Commonwealth and State Governments could use this unskilled and semi-skilled labour on a job with a high labour component.

If the present funding arrangements for the Kinchant Dam, near Mackay, continue it will be 20 years before the project is anywhere near completion. That means that the community in that area and the primary industries that will ultimately benefit from the completion of the Kinchant Dam will be left hanging for more than 20 years. My information is that in the Mackay area there are 550 unskilled and semi-skilled workers without a job. Out of that 550, 200 are classified as young persons. They will remain on the dole unless something is done about it. Why could not a further \$1,000,000 be allocated to the Kinchant Dam? These days \$1,000,000 is not a great deal of money when considering Government expenditure on projects of this nature.

The former Treasurer budgeted for a deficit of \$5,000,000 last financial year, taking into account the upward trend in wages in Queensland. For some unknown reason the Treasury was out in its estimation, and the Budget finished about line ball for the State. So that \$5,000,000 that was expected to be the State's deficit could be distributed around Queensland. The usual question these days is, "Where do you get the money from?" Certainly the Government expected to be \$5,000,000 in deficit at the end of the financial year, but it finished up square. The expenditure of another \$1,000,000 on the Kinchant Dam would provide jobs for 50 people. That means 50 people who would not be on the dole, and their wages would be supplemented by the dole money that otherwise would be paid by the Commonwealth Government.

It is sound common sense to put people to work so that they can involve themselves in production instead of being paid the dole, and, of course, their families are much better off if they are working.

The 850 people in Mackay to whom I referred are predominantly unskilled and semi-skilled workers. I should think that approximately 100 jobs would be created on the construction of the Kinchant Dam, thereby shortening its construction period, which is presently estimated to be 20 years, and benefiting the community as a whole. An added advantage would be the return coming to the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission from what I might term the sale of water.

The Federal and State Governments have cut back the rate of construction much too severely. Additional funds should be made available to provide employment and to supply our primary industries with the water that they so urgently need. If the money is forthcoming, the State will develop at a much faster rate than at present.

Mr. M. D. HOOPER (Townsville West) (4.32 p.m.): Until about 1975 Townsville was always short of water for both domestic and commercial and industrial purposes. For the 100 years of its existence the city was forced to rely for its water supply on the Ross River, a small stream only 30 miles in length. Successive councils constructed small storage weirs on Ross River, namely Gleason's Weir, Aplin's Weir and the Black School Weir; but they were never sufficient to meet the demands of the city.

I can recall that about 30 years ago water trains used to run daily from Rollingstone Creek and the Black River to Townsville, bringing water supplies so that people could get a drink. I also recall householders being allowed to turn on their taps for only one hour a day and having to store water in buckets and baths.

After World War II the Townsville City Council embarked on an ambitious scheme to lay an 18-in. pipeline approximately 50 miles

to Crystal Creek, which is situated in part of the watershed at Mt. Spec. It had a much higher rainfall than the city of Townsville, so it was able to provide a reasonably permanent water supply as an adjunct to the three weirs on the Ross River. Later the council constructed a further storage dam on Swamp Creek, also on Mt. Spec, from which water was channelled down to Crystal Creek and through a second pipeline to the city. In a very good wet season up to 10,000,000 gallons a day are pumped through the two pipelines to augment the city's water supply. However, even then water rationing was quite usual in Townsville.

In the early 1960s it became apparent that Townsville was at the crossroads. Its geographical position was such as to allow Townsville to be the commercial and industrial capital of North Queensland. The city was slowly reaching that status, but not quickly enough. There was a general lack of confidence and business activity in Townsville. Major companies such as Comalco did not even consider establishing their plants there. There simply was not enough water for them. Ironically, at that time we were having very good wet seasons with flooding in the low-lying suburbs.

The Government decided to lend a hand in the development of Townsville and the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission conducted some extensive investigations into the most practicable method of obtaining additional water supplies for the city. It was proposed that a major storage dam be built further up Ross River at its junction with a little stream called Five Head Creek. To most of the local people that seemed a ridiculous idea, as it involved building an earth-and-rock retaining wall some five miles long between two small ranges. There is no natural gorge and the retaining wall is purely for the purpose of encompassing the watershed of Ross River.

However, it was the only option the city council could afford, so it was decided to proceed with Stage I of the Ross River Dam. That was completed in 1974 and gave us a further 75 000 megalitres of water each year, or approximately 47 megalitres on any one day. That was the first time in Townsville's history that we were without water rationing. People greatly appreciated the dam, if only for that reason. However, whereas the cost was originally estimated at something like \$7,000,000, because of inflation the figure grew during the course of those few short years to \$11,000,000.

The city was hard pressed financially. We could not get additional loan funds from the State. We did not wish to cancel contracts—obviously we were not able to, even if we had wished to. The then chairman of the water committee, Denis Hagarty, and I went to Canberra to try our luck down there. We put a story to the Treasurer of the day, Bill Snedden, and Mr. McMahon that Commonwealth-paid personnel—Army and Air Force

families as well as people working in the P.M.G., A.B.C. and various other Commonwealth instrumentalities—represented some 15 per cent of the population of Townsville. The Government of the day decided that that was a reasonable argument and gave us an untied grant of \$1,500,000 towards the cost of Stage I. That went a long way towards getting us out of our temporary financial difficulties at that time.

We were then coming into the pre-election period of 1972, when Mr. Whitlam made some promises to the people of Townsville. He said that he would fund completely the cost of Stage II of the Ross River Dam. He said also that he would build an international airport at Townsville, and that he would station an extra battalion at Townsville.

Mr. Byrne: He said that he would halt inflation and unemployment, too.

Mr. M. D. HOOPER: We all know the promises Mr. Whitlam made. None of them were honoured, except that we received some contribution towards Stage II of the Ross River Dam. I do pay recognition to them for that. Although the other promises fell by the wayside, this was partly honoured.

The Labor Government said, "What is the estimated cost of Stage II?" The estimated cost on 1972 figures was \$5,200,000. The A.L.P. Government said, "We will give you half of that." We accepted \$2,560,000 from that Government as a grant towards Stage II. We let a contract for Stage II, which is to be built in three sections. It entails increasing the height of the embankment over its length of five miles and eventually relocating five miles of western railway line and the main highway and resuming some 6 000 hectares of land at council expense. The height of the spillway is to be raised by some 6.5 metres. That would give us eight to 10 times the water capacity of Stage I. However, the first part of Stage II has eaten up the \$2,560,000, and the Townsville City Council obviously has nowhere to go for finance to complete Stage II.

Temporarily we have sufficient water to keep the city going. However, if we are to encourage industry to Townsville, Stage II must be completed no later than 1980 or 1982. That will entail a considerable amount of finance—far beyond the capacity of the Townsville City Council ratepayers and the ratepayers of the adjacent Thuringowa Shire. At the moment that shire has a population of 10,000 and over the years has enjoyed the benefit of not paying for any headworks. However, it has benefited from being able to buy water from the Townsville City Council for reticulation to its urban and near urban areas.

It seems to me that we will need a water authority in the Townsville area before very long. Without a doubt, far greater funds will be required before we can proceed further

with Stage II of the Ross River Dam. The only way we can obtain funds is by persuading the Commonwealth Government to accept its responsibility. In my view the Commonwealth Government has a tremendous responsibility to decentralise and to populate North Queensland, and the best way to do that is to improve the quality of life for the people who live there. North Queensland should be given plenty of water for domestic purposes and for industry and this will make it a better place in which to live.

The Commonwealth Government must come to the party, and, if it does, we must recognise it must have a say in the composition of the water board. The State Government also will have some say. The funding of construction costs for dams must be taken away from local authorities, particularly large councils like the Townsville City Council and the Thuringowa Shire Council. The councils, which have the expertise, will be required to control the reticulation in the area.

My colleague the honourable member for Townsville, who has just left the Chamber, said that he was opposed to the use of the Ross River Dam for recreational purposes. I disagree with him. Townsville has a very hot climate, and during the summer months it is unwise to swim in the sea because of the large number of stingers in the coastal waters. Studies have shown that the use of dams for recreational purposes does not create health hazards to the extent one might expect. For the last six or eight years the dam at Swamp Creek has been used for swimming and water skiing and this has created no health hazards for the Townsville people.

The water-treatment plant for Stage II of the Ross River Dam will be completed in about three months' time. Studies have shown that the water will take at least two to three days to flow from the dam to the treatment plant, and after being treated there should present no risk to the residents of the city. Therefore I strongly urge the Townsville City Council to allow, and I believe that it will, a limited use of the dam for water sports, such as sailing, canoeing and sculling. It will be of great benefit to the people living in our northern climate.

I said earlier that I thought the Commonwealth and State Governments should take a far greater interest in the provision of water-storage facilities for Townsville. I am sure that they intend to do this because in the last couple of years we have seen the Federal and State Governments jointly fund studies of the water resources of the Burdekin River basin. It is perfectly obvious that by 1982 Townsville will have reached the limits of its water-supply sources within 50 miles of the city. The Burdekin River will be the only future source of supply. Several dam sites have been chosen from Keelbottom Creek down to the main Burdekin Falls dam site. When the construction

costs are established, I am certain that the State and Federal Governments will acknowledge their responsibilities and agree to fund jointly a major dam for the Townsville region, which by the turn of the century will have a population of approximately 200,000 people.

I would like to pay a tribute to the officers of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission with whom I have had some contact in the last four or five years as mayor of Townsville and as a member of this Parliament. The Minister, the late Mr. Haigh and Mr. Learmonth have been very helpful to me when I have approached them.

This is a very difficult portfolio and it does not receive a large allocation in the Budget each year. It relies heavily on funding from Federal Government departments. When the financial crisis in Canberra is overcome, I feel certain that the Federal Government will show a much greater interest in development projects for Queensland and particularly North Queensland, where water is the staff of life.

Mr. GOLEBY (Redlands) (4.44 p.m.): It is apparent from the remarks in the debate on the Estimates for the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply that water is without doubt the life-blood of the man on the land and the city dweller. It is important for industry, too.

I would like to draw attention to the importance of water to the sand-mining industry on Stradbroke Island. I think everybody knows that the sand-mining industry there is probably the largest of its kind on the coast of Queensland. There are two major companies operating and, in the main, they are doing a good job. One uses the dry method of mining, which is not nearly as efficient as the dredging method. To use the dredging method successfully, vast quantities of fresh water are required.

There is no better place to find water than on Stradbroke Island. At present millions of gallons of fresh water pour into the ocean each day from the various creeks, lagoons and lakes situated over the length and breadth of the island. I refer particularly to one swamp known locally as the Eighteen Mile Swamp, which has provided virtually all the fresh water for the mining ventures in the locality.

There are certain matters related to the Eighteen Mile Swamp that I believe the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply has to take into account. I know that it has kept a close surveillance on this swamp over the years. Swamp levels are reduced considerably when the enormous pumps used in sand-mining are installed. The water level drops and much of the vegetation associated with the swamp tends to be destroyed. The peat beds of the swamps must not be penetrated too far because, according to what hydrologists who have been in the area tell

me, if they are penetrated there is a likelihood that the water supply will be totally lost. In other words, the plug would, in effect, be pulled out and the water would seep through the sandy base below the peat and find its way to the ocean.

Also of importance on the island is the Blue Lake, which is so well known to tourists and particularly conservationists, who would prefer to see it kept in its present state for all time. The surrounding area has in fact been maintained as a national park. Nevertheless, enormous quantities of fresh water have been discharged from the lake into the sea hour by hour and year by year since time began.

There is sufficient fresh water on Stradbroke Island to cater for any development, whether it be mining, industrial or residential. I believe there are very few places in Queensland—indeed, in the whole of Australia—where such a large quantity of fresh water pours into the sea without being used by man. For some years it was thought that water from this area would be used to augment the water supply of Brisbane and surrounding areas. During the war years investigations were made, particularly by the Americans, of the possibility of bringing this water to the mainland to meet the needs of that era. However, to date nothing has been done to use those water supplies. Plans are now afoot to provide large earth dams to supply water to the south-east corner of the State.

The electorate that I represent has considerable rural importance. I refer to the "salad bowl" area which has for so long produced vegetables and fruit that have been supplied to all parts of Australia. Producers in this area rely on underground water supplies and much work has been done over the years by the commission to ascertain the extent of such supplies. With one or two exceptions, the underground water supplies in the Redlands area are poor. The red soils there require quite a considerable amount of water.

When one speaks of a viable unit in the Redlands area, one is not speaking of an area of thousands of acres. Time was when 10 acres was considered to be a large area. Because of the economics of the industry, it became necessary to amalgamate farms, so that now many of them are 30 to 40 acres. Compared with rural holdings generally throughout the State, that is, of course, still not a large area. However, the output of these farms, which produce at least three crops a year —

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention, Mr. Kaus, to the state of the Committee.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! There is a quorum present.

Mr. GOLEBY: This is the only time I have seen the honourable member in the Chamber today, and the first thing he does when he enters the Chamber is draw attention to the state of the Committee.

Mr. Doumany: He can't count.

Mr. GOLEBY: He never could.

Mr. Powell interjected.

Mr. GOLEBY: I did not like to show the honourable member up.

Many of the small holdings in my electorate are, to use a colloquialism, like pin cushions because the owners have been forced over the years to sink so many wells and bores in search of water. In many localities very little underground water is available, and where it is found it is affected by salt, which makes it unsuitable for most of the fruit and vegetable crops grown in the area. However, in 1969 the Leslie Harrison Dam was constructed, and although it was constructed as a residential water supply it has been used quite considerably for the rural holdings in the area. Very few bores or wells have been sunk in the area since this water supply was made available. Although it is not made freely available for farm usage, every landholder is entitled to a $\frac{3}{4}$ " connection. This supplies about 650 gallons an hour, and if it is used for 365 days a year it provides sufficient water to keep the landholder out of trouble in dry times. It is good water and has the effect of diluting some of the minerals deposited in the soil by the only water that was previously available.

I have heard other speakers today refer to the lack of farm water supplies in many areas and to the dams that have been constructed over the years. I would particularly like to draw the attention of the Committee to the Borumba Dam on Yabba Creek in the Mary River catchment area. This dam was built quite a few years ago and provides water for a very large fertile agricultural area. The main industries in the locality are pineapple-growing, and dairying. As everyone would know, unlike dairying, pineapples do not require large quantities of water. Unfortunately, at the present time, owing to the economics of the dairy industry, it is not able to adequately use the water available from this dam. Although many pump licences were taken out when the scheme got under way, it is now not economical for dairy farmers to take advantage of the water supply, and so many millions of gallons of water flow down the Mary River and out to sea, and thus are not utilised.

Prior to the construction of the dam, farmers on the upper reaches of the Mary River did not have any serious water problems. They were able to use all the water

they wished. However, since the construction of the dam they have naturally had to obtain a licence and now have to pay water rates. They realise, of course, that they cannot have their cake and eat it, too. They now have a guaranteed year-round supply of water, but, as I said, the economics of the dairy industry make the payment of these water rates quite a burden. The new Pie Creek diversion scheme in the area will mean a far greater use of the water stored in the Borumba Dam, especially in the Gympie area.

The honourable member for Townsville referred to the use of residential water supply storages for aquatic sports such as swimming. I know that this is done in some centres, but it is being done to a lesser extent because experts advise us not to use residential water supply storages for swimming, aquatic sports and this type of thing. We all know that modern-day filtration plants are quite able to remove most impurities from water, but if we look at the situation in Victoria and New South Wales today we find that land is being resumed and houses moved out of catchment areas in order to keep the water pure.

As I said, although modern filtration methods remove most impurities, it has been found that some human-borne diseases that may get into water are not removed by chlorination. If an outbreak of one of the more serious diseases occurred, it is quite possible that water supplies could become contaminated.

I realise that aquatic sports—swimming, fishing, and so on—are carried on at the Somerset Dam, but the situation there is quite different. The Gold Creek reservoir and the Enoggera Reservoir in Brisbane are fenced securely to ensure that there is no intrusion by humans. The water from the Somerset Dam is filtered on its journey down the Brisbane River. As it passes through the sand-beds in the filtration plant, impurities are removed by natural means. However, where a catchment area is small and the ponding area is close to the catchment, the problem arises of impurities getting into the water.

I advocate very strongly that steps be taken to ensure that domestic water supplies are kept as pure as possible, and I do not need to reiterate the problems that would arise if an outbreak of serious disease occurred. Modern communities depend more heavily on their water supply than any other amenity, and if disease got into a water supply there would be no way of stopping it spreading and no time to find an alternative source.

At this stage, I should like to pay a tribute to the officers of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission for their co-operation and for the help they have given over the years to landholders in my electorate. As

I said earlier, it is a confined farming area and many problems have arisen relative to underground water. Much of the advice that has been given has been heeded by landholders, to the advantage of all concerned. I also thank the Minister for his co-operation, and I congratulate the new Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply on his appointment.

Mr. AHERN (Landsborough) (4.57 p.m.): I have been waiting all day to take part in the debate, but there have been so many speakers that till now I have not had the opportunity.

It is my privilege to chair the Minister's parliamentary committee and I must say at the outset that I am tremendously impressed with the way in which the Minister is handling his portfolio and, in particular, with the investigations that are now being carried out over the length and breadth of Queensland. Every watercourse is being examined and every possibility is being very comprehensively canvassed with a view to planning for Queensland's future needs. Quite considerable sums of money have been drifting through from the Federal Government to enable a full study to be made of underground water resources, subartesian supplies and, in particular, the very many surface water resources in this State. Without this information, there is very little possibility of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission's planning effectively to meet Queensland's future needs. Basic information is now being thoroughly researched, and the establishment of a separate Water Resources portfolio is enabling information to be collated and planning to be undertaken in an efficient manner. There are very many competing uses that make demands on water resources in Queensland, and as the State continues to grow these uses will need to be planned and resources rationed by the commission.

This appears to be the last year in which any reasonable amount of Federal money will be available for planning by the commission. The Minister said that since 1967-68 \$45,000,000 in Federal money has come to Queensland for one type of planning or another or for construction projects. I pay tribute to the former Federal Minister for Primary Industry, Charlie Adermann, who initiated this type of scheme in Canberra. It has been a very worth-while scheme and has enabled a lot of very good projects to be commenced. It has provided the necessary capital to ensure that they proceeded to the extent they should.

The Minister has indicated that during this year there is \$4,300,000 to come, but that is it as far as Federal money is concerned. The Federal Government has made no new commitment for the future. I understand the position in which the Federal Government finds itself. From every point of view there had to be restraint in the Fraser-Lynch Budget—restraint in Commonwealth

Public Service numbers, all programmes, capital works and so on. A light is now visible at the end of the tunnel in the fight against inflation. The over-all policy of restraint has been shown to be working. That is proved by the statistics that are emerging. The Federal authorities should now be looking at providing some extra assistance, particularly in the area of capital expenditure where that assistance would lead to production.

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

Mr. AHERN: Irrigation and water supply is one area that the Federal Government could reasonably look at, because capital investment in this sphere would lead to a good deal of investment in the private sector, particularly if it was ensured that the contracts went to private-enterprise companies and that the work was not done by day-labour forces. It would provide a stimulus to production. I am not suggesting that across-the-board investment in capital projects of any nature is justified, but that small assistance for projects designed specifically to assist the private-enterprise sector to produce would be very useful indeed. It is in this area that I hope the Federal Government will give some assistance.

The Treasurer pointed out in his Budget that he would like to see some investment money go towards water storages. There are other areas of capital investment that would assist the private sector to produce. What we need in this country to overcome inflation and to lead the nation back to recovery is more production from the private sector. Some investment to assist private-enterprise companies to produce, both on the land and in the construction field, would help the economy. It would not adversely affect the fight against inflation—in fact it would strengthen it. The Minister should stress that point in his representations to the Federal authorities. This is one area where the Federal Government could assist without adversely affecting the fight against inflation. Indeed, it would assist Australia along the road to recovery.

What impresses me is the change in the emphasis on water resources planning in Queensland in recent times. As the Minister said in his introductory remarks, we now have greater emphasis on mineral development and the needs of the mining industry. Increasing emphasis is being placed on water resources planning to meet the needs of our urban communities.

There is an increasing need for water resources planning in the area of industrial development. Here I make particular reference to the development of a paper-mill in South-east Queensland. Most honourable members would know that this is on the

forward-planning list. At the present time Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd. owns 86,000 acres north of Brisbane, on which it is carrying out extensive plantings of *Pinus elliptica*. It has entered into firm contracts with the Forestry Department to purchase timber from State forests for conversion into paper-pulp. This long-term project has been in the planning stages for some time. At the present time the establishment of this industry, a water-thirsty industry, is in progress. A paper-mill is a competing use for water in this area of South-east Queensland.

Mr. Marginson: I wouldn't say it will happen simply because they are planning it. The Government has been planning a new railway station in Ipswich for six years and we still haven't got it.

Mr. AHERN: The honourable member's logic is about as strong as the Labor Party in Queensland. That is a non sequitur, if ever I heard one.

The Government has entered into firm contracts with A.P.M. to supply it with timber from State forests. The company has acquired 86,000 acres and is expanding still further for no reason other than to establish a pulp-mill in South-east Queensland. That is the fact.

The increasing needs of the hydroelectric authorities throughout the State also have to be taken into consideration. Quite clearly there is greater emphasis in this area of investment. Added demands for electricity, rising coal prices and more industrial disputation than ever before are placing the emphasis on the need for hydroelectric schemes and the supply of huge volumes of water for use by them. Another aspect that is of major importance is flood control.

As the Minister said earlier today, it is good that the Government decided in 1974 to give to the Minister for Water Resources the ministerial responsibility for the administration and control of the planning, design and construction of major dams for urban water supply and services. There is a need for more intense planning of future water-storage areas in South-east Queensland. In days gone by the major emphasis was placed on agricultural schemes, but that is no longer so.

One thing that astonishes me is that the new South-east Queensland water authority will not be the bailiwick of the Minister for Water Resources. Apparently it will be administered by the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads. I find that hard to understand. Why should it not be the responsibility of the Minister for Water Resources, so that he can bring all these competing needs together and, through his various commissioners, exercise ministerial supervision over them?

Intense competition for water resources will develop in South-east Queensland. We will need all the surface water we can lay our

hands on. The Minister should have insisted that the South-east Queensland water authority be placed under his jurisdiction so that he could maintain very tight control over the planning in this area.

In recent times the emphasis in agricultural development has been upon the consolidation of existing areas of agriculture rather than on the creation of vast new areas through massive investment. Perhaps the circumstances of the day have indicated that that is necessary. However, in most areas there has been a surfeit of supply. The Government could be justly criticised by sections of primary industry if it were to create vast numbers of new farms to produce commodities that are already in over-supply.

I would like to see in the future a greater degree of planning in new agricultural projects with co-operation between the irrigation authorities and the Department of Primary Industries. When new agricultural ventures are being established today, much economic and agronomic information is available to assist in planning; and it ought to be applied. Whilst I compliment some of the new efforts that have been made, I am quite certain that the latest expertise has not been brought to bear. I would like to see new emphasis given to this co-operation in the future so that proper economic planning is adopted in the establishment of new production units.

The Minister has said that greater emphasis is now given to exploitation of our underground resources. It is heartening that he is maintaining considerable interest in the management of those resources and their restoration by various methods. I suppose that the Burdekin scheme is most notable for its replenishment. It has been tremendously successful. The benefits have proved to be a marvellous return on the investment by the Government and the farmers who contributed to its establishment. I would like the department to give new emphasis to this type of thing. The water-tables should be replenished to their original levels.

The Minister commented that an investigation into replenishment is to be conducted. I would like to see special attention given to the replenishment of the artesian basin. From time to time people write about the possibility of achieving it by artificial means. In terms of the margin of return on cost, I think that the benefit would be tremendous. The Minister said, "We are keeping a close eye on it. We are husbanding the resources. People are not going to be allowed to let it run down drains as they did previously." I think a major replenishment scheme would be of great benefit. Indeed, it must be undertaken if that excellent resource is to be maintained in perpetuity for this State's pastoral industry.

I wish to make a few comments on the investment now made by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in various types

of dams for urban and other uses. We as a Government have to look more at the amount of excellent agricultural land that is being inundated as a result of these new schemes. The problem is compounded by the restraints that are imposed in respect of many thousands of acres of land in the catchment areas. The Minister has said that this practice will be watched very closely in future. This competition is something that will have to be watched in the future because I feel that the agricultural resources, particularly those in South-east Queensland, are quite finite. These schemes submerge thousands of acres of prime agricultural land.

Mr. Elliott: It puts some of the best land under water.

Mr. AHERN: The honourable member says rightly that we are submerging many thousands of acres of our best land. The community has to put a cost on this and take it into account. The best schemes in South-east Queensland might appear beneficial when only cost is considered, but they are not as lucrative when the area of agricultural land that is alienated is assessed.

Many members wished to participate in this debate, and I am very pleased to have had the opportunity to speak in it. I thank all members, particularly those of the Opposition, for hearing me in silence.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (Mulgrave) (5.17 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to say a few words in the debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Water Resources. I commend the Minister and the staff of his department on the job that they are doing for Queensland. I do not think it can be denied that this is a very important facet of government and the commission has done a very worth-while job over the last few years. I have found the Minister very forthright, very attentive and very prompt when representations have been made to him. He is not frightened to make decisions—something which is lacking in many other areas. I commend his staff for the help that they have given to me over the years when I have confronted them with my problems. They, too, have been very prompt and helpful.

When the late Mr. Haigh was commissioner, there was a problem in my electorate with a major flood, and he unstintingly gave his time round the festive season to inspect the areas. The Minister would have been there also but he was marooned in another part of the State. Occasions like this show how these officers apply themselves beyond the normal call of duty. It was greatly appreciated by the people of my electorate.

Even a quick look at the report brings home forcefully the important role played by the commission. The rainfall for the year was above average and the irrigated areas of the

State accounted for one-fifth of its rural production, or approximately \$250,000,000. This might not sound much, but under the present circumstances in some of our rural industries the situation would be very much worse had it not been for the water that was available for irrigation.

I would like to see a little more back-up reserve in the Tinaroo area. Because of the trouble in the powerhouse at Collinsville at the present time, these areas are drawing very heavily on water. It is necessary to meet the great demand required by some of the industries that are suffering very badly from this quite irresponsible blackmail. I shall not bore the Committee with that now, although it is extremely important when it is realised that almost every industry today is to some degree a user of electricity. At present users are stringently rationed and in some cases they are losing perishable commodities. It is beyond me how people in key positions can hurt others to the degree that they are being hurt at present, including their work-mates who are losing their jobs. Their great scream is for an isolation allowance or some other allowance. Nobody is interested in doing very much for primary producers, who are endeavouring to preserve perishables and who are sustaining losses.

As honourable members probably know, in the tobacco industry there are many curing barns that need power for their operation. If they do not get power, the tobacco is ruined. There may be some who see that as a good thing. I do not share their view; tobacco-growing is an important industry in North Queensland and one that makes a fairly large contribution to our economy. But for the efforts of the commission over the years, the production of this industry would not be stable, nor would it be anything like its present figure. When growers relied on the elements, tobacco was a pretty difficult crop to produce. With the advent of the Tinaroo Falls Dam and the reticulation of water to farms, the crop has become stable, of good quality and very good from an economic point of view.

I should also like to join with other members in wishing the present Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply well in his impending retirement. I hope he does not find retirement too boring after the hectic life that he has been leading in the commission. When he has shed his heavy responsibilities, perhaps he will wonder what is going on. I sincerely hope that he will be spared for many years to enjoy doing whatever he wants to do.

Whilst many members might be interested in preserving water, as I am, too, in some parts of my electorate, in others the reverse applies. I refer particularly to the coastal areas where sugar-cane is grown and major problems are interfering substantially with production. If time permits, I shall give a few examples. In the last expansion in the sugar industry, cane-growing was extended

into some low-lying areas, mainly because necessary services such as roads, tram lines and electricity were already available there. This is an area that receives over 6 000 mm of rain a year, which has a very devastating effect on production. It is in this area that my interest lies, in the main, at present.

The commission has played, and is continuing to play, a part in efforts to bring about stable production in the area to which I refer, which is mainly north of Ingham, in which a great deal of land needs draining. Much of it is subject to flooding in wet seasons and this plays havoc with the economy of the area, in both the production of sugar and the service industries and those dependent upon them.

To stress the importance of what I am saying, I shall give the Committee an indication of the pattern of events over the last few years. I referred a few minutes ago to the late Mr. Haigh and the way in which he came up during a major flood a few years ago to meet the people and make plans for a future investigation which might ultimately overcome the problem and stabilise production.

Let me give honourable members an idea of what is happening in the Babinda area, and to some extent other areas such as Innisfail. In 1972 the rainfall in Babinda was 5 181 mm. In 1973 the Babinda Mill crushed 632 000 tonnes of cane. In 1973 our rainfall went up to some 6 300 mm and the 1974 crush came back to 431 688 tonnes, a reduction of some 200 000 tonnes. We are talking about a commodity that at the time was probably worth \$18 a tonne, so we can see what a terrific loss that was to the area. While we know that drainage and flood mitigation are expensive, if we can stabilise production and get up to something like full production, this work would certainly not be as costly as it seems on the surface. In 1974 we had a lower rainfall of some 4 200 mm and in 1975 we crushed almost 700 000 tonnes of cane. Even then, because of wet weather we left some cane unharvested. In 1975 the rainfall again rose to 6 332 mm and the crush this year came down to 547 000 or 550 000 tonnes, which is again a big reduction. For other mill areas the pattern is somewhat similar, so it is in this field that we are looking forward to further co-operation from the commission.

I am not saying we are not getting co-operation. The Minister has come up to the area and met deputations. He has also made money available for other industry schemes and some investigations have been made into the land involved.

Let me briefly cite some important figures. Something like 43 000 ha of land are now under production, and of that total roughly 40 per cent is low-lying, so honourable members can understand why in a very wet year production in some mill areas drops to the extent I have indicated. I commend the

Minister and his commissioners for the assistance they have given us in this field. The Minister has made \$40,000 available to help with that investigation. I counsel him to do all that he can to bring about stable production in this area. I assure him that, with the present inflation, no sugar mill can survive when production drops by 200 000 tonnes in one year. That sort of thing is pretty hard to live with and it means a lot of hardship in the district.

So I again thank the Minister and wish the commissioner well in his retirement. I look forward to the same co-operation and help from his successor as I have had from him.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (5.29 p.m.): I would commend the Minister on the fact that since he took over this portfolio, six dams and 16 weirs have been built in Queensland. As honourable members know, Queensland now has a total of 14 dams and 63 weirs. What is more important, of course, is that all of these dams and weirs are operating at better than 90 per cent capacity, no doubt owing to the series of good years which we have experienced generally in the State.

Water is the life-blood of primary industry, a basic need of secondary industry and a necessity for the general welfare and convenience of people living in cities, provincial towns and country areas. In fact, nothing can live without water. If one considers the arid and semi-arid conditions in this State and the tremendous heat in summer months, one quickly becomes aware of how necessary it is to have additional water resources readily available. The motion before the Committee is—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1976-77, a sum not exceeding \$8,375,000 for Department of Irrigation and Water Supply.”

And one might well ask whether that amount is not only a drop in the bucket.

I should like to place on record my thanks to the Minister for the assistance he has given towards the construction of Stage II of the Callide Dam. During this financial year, \$1,200,000 is to be expended, and the work will include the building of a diversion channel to reticulate water from the Callide Dam to the Kroombit and Kariboe Creeks. It is hoped that this will build up the underground water storage through the aquifers of those respective creeks and provide a more substantial and stable irrigation system in the Callide Valley.

Without doubt, the Callide Valley is one of the richest valleys in Queensland, yet, because of the increase in railway freight rates of 15 per cent on top of the 40 per cent increase last year, the lucerne growers who are irrigating their crops find it almost impossible to get lucerne out of the region. I hope that people paying to irrigate their lucerne can be given a rail freight concession to enable them to sell their product.

I notice that the Commonwealth Government has provided \$4,318,059 this financial year and that \$3,422,000 of that is for the construction of rural water supply works. As I have already stated, I fought jolly hard to have Stage II of the Callide Dam undertaken, and I also fought hard to have the Callide Power Station extended. I believed that additional generating capacity should be provided at that power station because the Thiess coal mine is only a mile from the power station on one side and the Callide Dam is only a few hundred yards away on the other side.

However, in advancing that argument I drew the wrath of the irrigators in the Callide Valley, who said that I was ignoring their requirements. Nothing was further from the truth. I was attempting to get the gates for the dam by extending the generating capacity of the power station, thus also making sure that additional water would be available for irrigation. So I make it quite clear to the irrigators in the Callide Valley that I have at all times fought, and always will fight, for the installation of the gates on the Callide Dam.

In recent weeks and months I have had further discussions with the Minister, who has assured me that the deferment of the building of the gates does not mean that they will not be built. They will ultimately be installed on the dam, but increases in costs have made it impossible for him to allocate the necessary money at present. I point out to the Committee that the expenditure of \$1,200,000 this financial year on the Callide Dam is the second highest expenditure on the reticulation of water in this State.

I say to the Minister that I appreciate the assistance he has given me and the good job that he is doing. As I said earlier, the Callide Valley is one of the richest valleys in Queensland, and it should be remembered that the installation of floodgates on the dam will double its capacity. As surely as night follows day, drought will again raise its head in Queensland, and the installation of the gates will ensure that water storage is adequate for drought years.

Let us go all out with drought mitigation in Queensland. I believe that we are backward in planning for drought relief. We should do more to encourage the conservation of fodder; we should do more to encourage the conservation of water because it is the life-blood of the State. I am adamant that in the future development of the vast State of Queensland sufficient water is the answer to 90 per cent of the problems.

I thank the Minister for his co-operation. I look forward to the completion of Stage II of the Callide Dam. I look forward to the day when the flood gates are put in place, and thus give us over 100,000 acre-feet of water storage.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (5.36 p.m.): I rise to speak in this Estimates debate to point out that in establishing a specific portfolio of water resources, with one Minister being totally responsible for that area, the Queensland Government has pointed to the very great importance that water plays in productivity. In Australia water is one of the most important and valuable natural resources we possess. Although one can look around Australia and see the many attempts made to conserve water, if this nation is to fulfil its role in feeding the world, a great deal of foresight will have to be shown in planning for adequate water supplies.

When I travelled to South-east Asia with the parliamentary delegation led by the Minister whose Estimates we are debating, I was able to discuss with officials and authorities the important subject of water resources. At that time it came very much to my attention that the South-east Asian countries regarded water as one of their greatest resources. It became very clear to me that if we had water west of the Divide, if we had water in our under 24 in. rainfall belt, we would have the resources and the ability to feed an enormous population.

Those people who tell us that there is a problem of over-population in the world, those people who tell us that we must have zero population growth, and those people who tell us that we are going to starve ourselves out of existence always seem to fail to realise that for thousands of years science and technology have been able to provide man with the foresight and intelligence to prepare for the future.

We must all realise that upon this nation's shoulders, and therefore Queensland's shoulders, rests the task in the decades ahead of providing resources and food for other nations that are under more strain and stress than we are. Absurd statements are made about Australia's future, such as its being able to provide for a population of only 25,000,000 persons. Such statements always seem to fail to take into account the possibility of Governments' providing resources like water.

Mr. JENSEN: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is not speaking to the Estimates. He has no water in his area, anyhow.

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

Mr. BYRNE: I must admit that I have far less water on the brain than the honourable member for Bundaberg has. I might also add that unfortunately the esoteric comments I make appear to go over his head. He is becoming very submerged in the debate. If he looked into the matter closely, he would appreciate, in both forethought and afterthought, that water resources are relevant to

productivity and the development of resources for the achievement and fulfilment of a nation's potential. If he reflects upon that fact, he will realise that a thing is a resource because it can be put to good use. In intimating that productivity is totally irrelevant to resources, he is completely missing the point and sticking to the letter of the law.

Mr. JENSEN: I rise to a point of order. I didn't refer to anything of the sort. The honourable member is still on his feet, Mr. Kaus. You should make him sit down while I am taking my point of order.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! What is the point of order?

Mr. JENSEN: The honourable member has cast a slur on me. He claims I made a statement that I did not make. I want him to apologise, and also to speak to the Estimates. He is wasting the time of the Committee.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr. BYRNE: I am sorry if such few words slander such a great gentleman!

It is important that we appreciate our nation's capacity to produce. More forethought must be given to water resources.

If consideration has not already been given to the idea that I am about to put forward, it certainly should be given to it now. I suggest that water be taken from the eastern side of the Great Dividing Range to the western side. If we allow water to run off the eastern side of the range and be lost, we are not looking wisely to the future. If water could be taken into the 24 in. rainfall belt and put to use to increase our productivity, we would be able to bring about great changes in our western areas.

Honourable members smile at my suggestion and no doubt think it is absurd. Such claims of absurdity are similar to those made to certain ideas put forward in the past—ideas that in later times found fulfilment.

No-one can deny that if water could be taken to the lands on the western side of the Great Dividing Range, they would be much more productive than at present.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. BYRNE: Opposition members are not interested in anything west of the Great Dividing Range. They have not shown very much interest in the productivity of the State. I am aware that only three Opposition members have spoken to these Estimates. They have shown as little interest in this debate as they have in others.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would remind the honourable member that we are debating the Estimates of the Minister for Water Resources and the administration of the department.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Are you having trouble with your water?

Mr. BYRNE: I have no difficulties with my water.

Again I would ask: if water could be taken to the western side of the Great Dividing Range, would it not mean that the lands to our west would be more productive? Obviously the answer is yes. As the population of the world increases and as Australia takes upon itself a greater responsibility to provide food and resources to other nations, we must think ahead and plan to put into effect ideas such as the one I am putting forward.

The department has a responsibility in respect of the Great Artesian Basin. It is important that we understand how the waters came to be in the basin and consider how to utilise them to the best advantage.

Recently I attended a seminar held on the Darling Downs, in the Cunningham electorate, dealing with the conservation of water in the black-soil areas of the Downs for grain cultivation. It was interesting to learn that by the digging and formation of what are commonly referred to as turkey tanks—enormous reservoirs of 40 acres or more—the effective rainfall in the area can be increased by from 3 to 5 in. a year.

By digging a turkey tank of some 40 acres, the landholder was able to catch all the water that ran off a 1,000 acre property; that is, the excess that could not be absorbed by the land. With a system of storage and gravity pumps, in times of low rainfall the crops are given sufficient regular moisture to ensure that they are not detrimentally affected. This principle, which operates at private-enterprise level, is one that the department should bear in mind. It must be aware that conservation and the greatest possible utilisation of the natural resource of water must be fully pursued.

I repeat that this Government is totally aware that water is one of the greatest natural resources of this country. Unfortunately, it is not an enormously plentiful raw material in Queensland. Therefore, the department's administration must come to a greater realisation of its importance and ensure that the water nature provides us with is utilised for the benefit of the whole State and not allowed to run off our ranges and hills, down our rivers and out into the sea.

Almost every year we are afflicted by floods that bring with them great devastation. They also bring the necessary rainfall that is required. Of course, they are frequently

the aftermath of much-needed rainfall. However, millions upon millions of gallons of water, after having left a trail of damage, flow out into the sea. Having allowed that resource to dissipate, without a great deal of forethought, we are then left waiting for the rains to come again. As much as possible, we must preserve the water that falls on both sides of our range. We must realise that the preservation of this natural resource is something to which we must give greater attention.

Over hundreds of years of its existence—both prior to and after its habitation by Europeans—what is now known as Queensland has been renowned for the droughts that it has experienced. When we realise that, surely we cannot let year after year pass without giving a greater amount of forethought to planning water conservation and to spreading the resource further over our State.

Mr. Jensen: We can't get enough money now to complete the schemes that have already been started.

Mr. BYRNE: I accept the honourable member's interjection and point out that it is indeed difficult to find the necessary funds. If priorities can be established and if members such as the honourable member for Bundaberg would work harder in trying to convince Governments and others of the importance of gaining funds for water conservation, far more would be achieved.

When we consider the production of hydroelectricity, it is obvious that water has other potential uses. In the Eton Irrigation Scheme we have seen the establishment of aquatic recreation facilities in conjunction with water conservation. When speaking in the debate on the relevant Bill last year, I referred to the great importance the Government placed on having recreation facilities in areas where water is stored—water that is available to assist in achieving greater productivity for the nation's primary industries.

I conclude by congratulating the Minister on the advances that have been made possible by his work and that of his departmental officers in the time since these Estimates were last debated. However, I stress most fervently the absolute importance—perhaps more in this area of Government responsibility than in any other—of forethought, planning and an awareness of the responsibility that devolves upon Governments in Australia to provide the water required in the future for the production of sufficient primary produce to feed our own people and to discharge our responsibility to provide food for others in the world.

Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT (Auburn—Minister for Water Resources) (5.50 p.m.): No doubt the debate will go on long into the

evening, but that does not worry me one little bit because I am delighted to stay here as long as honourable members like. Apparently we have a lot more speakers than was originally thought, so I would like to reply to some of the honourable members who have spoken.

Mr. Moore interjected.

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: You can go back to Windsor. I will be all right in my area.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order!

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: If the honourable member for Windsor wants to talk in that fashion, I will leave it to his electorate.

The contention of the honourable member for Bundaberg that the Emerald scheme was not viable is incorrect.

The joint report of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission and the Department of Primary Industries, on which the Commonwealth grant of \$20,000,000 was made, showed the scheme to have a benefit-cost ratio of in excess of unity, the ratio normally regarded as being viable.

With regard to the comment that the Emerald scheme should not have been commenced before Bundaberg, I would point out that the Emerald scheme was approved by the Parliament on 28 March 1968, while the Bundaberg scheme was not approved until 22 October 1970.

A condition of the grant which the Commonwealth Government made for Fairbairn Dam was that the State should accept responsibility for the reticulation works below the dam. This situation exists today.

The member for Bundaberg suggests that work on Emerald should cease in order to enable work to be expedited on Bundaberg. If priorities were given on basis of time of approval, then his suggestion would mean a concentration on the Emerald scheme.

The member for Bundaberg has suggested that the second grant of \$4,400,000 towards Monduran Dam could have been expended in 12 months. When this additional grant was made, it was offered over two years. The offer was, however, made 12 to 18 months after it was first requested and when the grant finally was made, inflation had pushed the cost much higher and made the \$4,400,000 extra grant quite inadequate.

The member made reference to the grants made by the Whitlam Labor Government, but what he did not mention was the default of that same Government in meeting one third of the cost of Glenlyon Dam. This default required the New South Wales and Queensland Governments each to meet an extra \$3,000,000 towards the scheme. This default has made the task of my Government in financing water-conservation works more difficult over the past few years.

It was also suggested that the Irrigation Commission is working on too many schemes and not completing any. Schemes completed in recent years include: Maroon Dam in 1974, the St. George area extension scheme and Upper Warrill Valley diversion scheme in 1975, and Baralaba Weir, Bingeang Weir, Julius Dam and Glenlyon Dam in the current year.

I greatly appreciate the comments of the member for Isis and particularly his statements about possible industry assistance in financing the Bundaberg scheme. The Irrigation Commission will continue to discuss this possibility with interested people, but the honourable member will appreciate that, with the limited funds available to the State, it is not possible to give a positive indication as to when water will be made available to particular sections of the area.

The member's comments on the recreational facilities at Monduran Dam are much appreciated and I will see what can be done about the parking problem he recently experienced.

Stocking of dams with fish has been under review for some years but we do not have a suitable species of fish to be readily introduced. The Fisheries Service is looking at the problem but no easy solution exists.

The member for Isis raised the matter of the Maryborough area investigation. This investigation is proceeding and I hope to be able to put a report to Cabinet in the not too distant future.

The need for the completion of Stage II of the Leslie Dam, as raised by the member for Cunningham, is recognised by the Government. This project has been listed for some years as one of those requiring consideration for finance. Approaches to the Commonwealth Government for finance have to date not been successful and, from the recent comments of the Honourable the Minister for National Resources, it would seem unlikely they will assist in the future. As State funds become available, further consideration will be given to a commencement of this project but no firm construction timetable can be indicated at this stage.

The honourable member for Maryborough referred to investigations into barrages and channels on the Mary River downstream of Borumba Dam. The report is being actively processed in conjunction with information from the Department of Primary Industries and it is expected that a full report will be available early in 1977.

The honourable member for Maryborough sought advice on the basis on which funds are provided by the Commonwealth Government. In the past, projects of considered national importance were evaluated by the State Government and priorities determined. Detailed reports and submissions have been submitted to the Commonwealth for examination by the relative Commonwealth departments.

Initially the Liberal-National Party Government established a national water resources fund for such grants. Queensland received a very significant proportion of the funds allocated. Grants have been provided for a specific amount of money for specific works.

The Commonwealth has also considered a proportional assistance for flood mitigation works and some finance has been granted.

Several requests have been made for assistance in various areas during the last year. The Prime Minister has advised that, owing to economic conditions, the Commonwealth is unable to allocate additional funds in 1976-77.

There are at present no formal guide-lines for processing these applications. Members of the Australian Water Resources Council have been pressing the chairman, the Honourable D. Anthony, to consider future finance and guide-lines. In reply to the statement by the member for Rockhampton, I would reaffirm that the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission's role in matters such as this is defined clearly in the Local Government Act. The latter requires that when a local authority seeks permission to divert water from a particular stream, the commission shall report on the availability of water for diversion. In the case of Tewah Creek, the commission reported that water in excess of requirements was available to meet the needs of the water supply scheme proposed by the Widgee Shire Council. Subsequently an Order in Council authorising the diversion was issued several weeks before the Tewah Creek area was declared to be part of the Cooloolo National Park.

It was suggested that there was a need for an environmental impact statement. Basically, the development proposed relates to a subdivision proposal and, if an environmental impact statement is required, it is a matter for the local authority to require it.

In reply to the honourable member for Ipswich West—The recreational use of storage reservoirs has been given considerable thought in recent years. It is unfortunate that problems have arisen between the various forms of boat users on storages but, in the main, these result from the failure of individuals to comply with the rules developed in conjunction with the Department of Harbours and Marine. In consultation with the latter department, areas have been defined on individual storages for particular activities such as sailing, water skiing, power boating, etc.

If the public at large complies with the rules developed, there seems no reason why various boating activities cannot proceed on the same storage. The member's suggestion that a particular storage be set aside purely for sailing would no doubt be strongly criticised by other boat users.

For the member's information, Somerset Dam does not come under the control of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission.

The honourable member for Rockhampton North referred to Commonwealth money. Let me say that Commonwealth money remaining from the \$17,200,000 allocated to Bundaberg was about \$22,000 as at June 1976. To complete the installation and testing of the pumps at Monduran Dam and extend the Gin Gin main channel, an additional \$1,200,000 has been allocated from State funds for 1976-77 to enable the existing work-force to be retained. In addition, \$2,645,000 has been allocated to irrigation works in the area, which will allow completion of the Burnett barrage to concrete crest level and expand channelling in the Gooburrum system, including the pump station, and allow resumptions to commence on the Woongarra system.

He also referred to the Kinchant Dam. The Commonwealth money remaining there from the \$5,000,000 allocated was about \$850,000 at June 1976. To maintain the current work-force of about 30 men and to permit steady progress, the Government has allocated a further \$400,000 of State funds to this project. I am most conscious of the need to do everything possible to retain the commission's skilled staff. We realise that we have employed many of those men for a number of years and we do not like losing them.

In reply to the honourable member for Mt. Isa—although several applications have been made to the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance, they have not as yet been successful. Certainly no finance is available at this stage for 1976-77. I will certainly continue to support him in his approach to the Commonwealth Government.

The honourable member for Redlands referred to the water resources of Stradbroke Island. Withdrawal of water on the island is subject to control and licensing, as the area has been proclaimed a subartesian area.

As to the Leslie Harrison Dam—it is not under the control of the commission; it is under local authority control.

The problems of the dairying industry in the Mary Valley are appreciated and recognised.

The honourable member for Toowoomba South referred to the subsidy level on the proposed Cressbrook Creek Dam. That is a matter for my colleagues the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads and the Treasurer. The matter of a water supply for the development of the Millmerran coal-field is being examined.

The honourable member for Carnarvon referred to the benefits obtained from the Glenlyon Dam and other projects in his area. Naturally, he can be assured of my co-operation in any representations he makes.

The honourable member for Mulgrave referred to problems associated with flood

mitigation and poor local drainage in the North Queensland area. These problems are recognised. The Government has recently received from consulting engineers a report that deals with the problem and works needed to solve it. The report dealt only with local drainage, and major flood mitigation works will also be required.

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

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: Before the dinner recess I was referring to the remarks of the honourable member for Mulgrave. To assess what will be involved in the area a further study is now being commissioned. When the latest report comes to hand, the over-all content of the project will be closely evaluated.

The honourable member for Townsville West suggests that permission be given for water sports on the Ross River Dam. This dam is owned and controlled by the Townsville City Council. While the storage in the Ross River Dam should be ample for several years, the commission is continuing investigations into further storages in the region.

The honourable member for Landsborough expressed surprise that the Moreton Regional Water Authority was being introduced under the control of the Minister for Local Government. The authority will allocate treated water in bulk to various local authorities. The allocation of raw water supply will be subject to recommendations by the Commissioner of Irrigation as provided for under the Local Government Act. Consequently, it is reasonable that the Minister for Local Government be associated with the new authority. The honourable member also referred to the replenishment of the artesian basin assessed at about 160 000 MI per annum. Artificial recharge of the basin is not practicable because of the extreme length of recharge beds which feed the basin.

The honourable member for Callide referred to water storage in his electorate, and as one who lives in the Rockhampton district and was very closely associated with both the Dawson and Callide valleys, I naturally take his point. We have always said that the Callide Dam gates will be constructed but, like everything else, it is a matter of the availability of funds. When those funds are available this project will be completed. As I indicated earlier, there are many projects throughout Queensland which have been hampered by lack of funds, and the gates of the Callide Dam are only suffering the same fate as many other projects.

Mr. MOORE (Windsor) (7.19 p.m.): In rising to speak to these Estimates, I would first of all, for the benefit of readers of "Hansard", like to list the areas encompassed by the Minister's portfolio. They are: bores, including the construction of some bores; farm water supplies; the subdivision of freehold land for irrigation areas; major dams

for urban water supply purposes; treatment works; private works; pumps; weirs; water courses; levy banks, etc. The quarrying of material from watercourses also comes under the Minister's responsibility, although it does not cover those watercourses under the responsibility of the Department of Harbours and Marine. The Minister is also concerned with surface and underground water resources, water conservation and irrigation. That fairly broad compass will indicate to those honourable members who have in the past risen to points of order while I have been speaking that I can cover a fairly broad canvas.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You wield a nice brush.

Mr. MOORE: Yes, I think it is a rather good one.

The first thing that comes to my mind is the rather parochial matter of Kedron Brook. I know that while the Minister is not directly responsible for flood-mitigation work—that comes under the Co-ordinator General's Department—there is more to flood prevention than that.

In Kedron Brook, sand has been carried down by the water and deposited. It has increased inch by inch, year by year, until there are now sandbanks in the vicinity of Lutwyche Road. Because of lack of attention, gum trees are growing on these sandbanks. As there is a shortage of gravel for use in the making of concrete, I should like to think that contracts could be let for the removal of sand and gravel from Kedron Brook. This would not only clean out the creek, but also put the sand and gravel to good use.

When I was a child living near Kedron Brook, the stream flowed directly under the bridge on Lutwyche Road. Today it flows under the bridge only because several wooden piles have been driven into the ground to divert the water 90°. That will give the Committee an indication of how the watercourse has changed. But for the piles and rock-fill, a new bridge would have to be constructed. The creek bed has shifted more than 20 metres.

Worse than that is the fact that my constituents who live on the banks of Kedron Brook are paying rates on the creek bed. Work has not been carried out on the banks to ensure that the slope is correct—I forget the angle; I think it should be about 25° from the plane of the water—and that when additional water comes down, the rise will be gradual and the banks will not be eroded.

That work is necessary, but it has not been done. It is said by some people that it is a Brisbane City Council responsibility. If it is a council responsibility, why does the council have to apply to the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission for permission to do this or that? It should not need that permission. But if permission must be granted, the council should be given *carte blanche* to tackle the problem facing my constituents.

On the credit side, I must commend the Minister for the work that has been done in providing facilities in the vicinity of various weirs and dams such as the Fairbairn Dam and the Moogerah Dam. Those who have established the barbecues and the parking areas and provided bins to encourage cleanliness are to be congratulated. It appears that the public responds when good facilities are provided, because one can go to virtually any of these areas and see very little litter lying about. I am aware that someone is employed to cut the grass and pick up the litter, but the general tidiness of the areas is a credit to the people who use them. I again commend the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission for the job it is doing. Every person to whom I have spoken who has visited dams and weirs as places of recreation has commented favourably on them, and I think it is only fair that I should pass on those comments. A really good job is being done.

It might be said that the constructing authority has completed its job when the dam or weir has been constructed. Water is being held back and used for irrigation and other purposes, and the commission really has no further responsibility. However, it has accepted a responsibility that might well have fallen on the Tourist Bureau or the local authority, and that is really to the credit of the Government and the commission.

In addition, of course, some attempt has been made to introduce various fish to the dams under the Minister's control, and certain people have been given a licence to fish. However, in the time that I have known Moogerah Dam, I do not know of anyone who has caught a fish there—licence or no licence. I do not know whether fish are breeding in that area.

There is always a problem with dams that supply water for human consumption. Very few dams in Queensland supply untreated or lightly treated water to consumers. I think that Gold Creek Reservoir and one or two other storage areas do that, but generally speaking the water supply for human consumption is chlorinated so that its consumption causes no problems.

Mr. Goleby: Would you like to see swimming allowed in the Gold Creek Reservoir?

Mr. MOORE: Yes. We are going to close it down, anyway. I will come to that in a moment.

When water from a dam is being used for human consumption, there is always a problem if there is housing development in the watershed. Effluent from septic systems can be a cause for concern. Pig-farming and lot-feeding of cattle can pose problems. The odours that can come from some of those places would make even my hair curl. It is understandable that water leaching through that type of country would not be of a

very high quality. Necessary precautions must be taken but these can be restrictive on people who have lived in the area all their lives. And when their land is resumed the compensation paid is never in my opinion adequate. Of course, it is paid out of taxpayers' money, and it is not for the Government to hand it out too freely. But when someone loses something for the public good, whether it be for a dam, a road or anything else, I like to think that the Government errs on the side of generosity.

Without doubt water supply will eventually become a problem in this nation. Australia is a reasonably dry country. The day will come when the Government will have to think about some form of recycling. I do not fancy the idea of recycling sewage, and then someone saying, "Here is a nice glass of sparkling water." One day we will have to run a dual system—one for sewage and one for other sullage. The recycled water will come from the other sullage, not from the sewage. But that is something for the future.

In the future, hinterland areas are going to need more water. The cities are continually making an enormous drain on the available water supply. Various surveys have been made of natural water catchments, but we are fast running out of areas for the comparatively easy storage of water. I can foresee the day when dams will be used to divert water inland for the cultivation of fodder for livestock and of wheat, vegetables and other foodstuffs for humans.

With modern technology, large-scale desalination is around the corner. Mangroves grow in salt water yet, by the use of a membrane, absorb not salt water but fresh water. In their own sweet little way they are carrying on a process of desalination. It could well be that this nation will have to think of desalination, not by using atomic energy to boil the water and convert it into steam and then condense it—that would not be feasible in the long term—but perhaps by using solar energy. I can foresee the time when water that is presently used by the cities will have to be diverted inland and the cities and towns along the seaboard will have to obtain their water from the sea.

In the recent floods in North-western Queensland, particularly in the Gulf country, where stock were forced to remain standing in water for as long as a week, with the result that their hoofs fell off, it was found that the Mt. Isa railway line, which is raised 2 ft. above ground level, became in effect a low-level wall, forming a vast lake.

I was not present during the speech of the honourable member for Landsborough, but I understand that he referred to replenishment of the aquifers. I do not know where the underground water comes from—I have heard it suggested that it seeps underground from Indonesia, where it falls as rain—but

if it comes from rain falling on Australia, and the aquifers are in the Gulf country, the construction of low-level concrete dams, say, 6 or 10 ft. high and 200 km long with an earth-bank backing could help retain water in the areas covering the aquifers so that it would have time to filter through to the artesian or sub-artesian systems. I realise, of course, that in the West the rate of evaporation is a problem. It is 33 to 35 per cent faster than in South-east Queensland. I do not know whether water filters through the porous bauxite in the Weipa area. In the wet season, of course, the water-table is about 6 ft. below the surface. I do not know whether it is replenished that way as well.

We have to use every scientific method and all the ingenuity at our command to replenish underground water supplies. Population will never be attracted to any part of the country unless there is an assured water supply. If a water supply is established anywhere—whether it be in the West, the North or somewhere else—people will be enticed to go there. However, people cannot be encouraged to live in arid country. It is foreign to us.

The fertile heavy black-soil country round Julia Creek, with adequate water, could become the prairies of Australia. It does not suffer from any leaching. The country is fertile to the nth degree. With some form of irrigation—if the underground water supplies are adequate and if the soda content can be filtered out—I can see the day when that type of country will be growing crops for this nation and for export.

The Wivenhoe Dam is a very necessary project. It will have two purposes. It will mitigate against flooding and save homes built on the Brisbane flood plain over the years by people who believed that an 1893-type flood would never occur again. Of course it has. Those circumstances will arise again and again. Geologists who have looked at our layers of soil can tell us that there was a flood in a certain year—100 years before, 40 years before and so on. The Wivenhoe Dam will also provide water for Brisbane's needs. In addition, through the use of off-peak electricity, water can be pumped back into the storage and then used again for the generation of power in peak periods.

(Time expired.)

Mr. GIBBS (Albert) (7.38 p.m.): It is my pleasure tonight to support the Honourable Nev Hewitt in the debate on the Water Resources Estimates. Australians take too much for granted about the ease of getting water. They expect, when they switch on a tap, to have water flow from it. We know that in the Moreton region the water supply will be the factor that restrains growth—and of course this is the fastest growing area in Queensland.

The central, northern and western areas of Queensland are tremendously dry. In the long run, water will be one of the most

important commodities in the growth of Queensland and in deciding how and where it is going to grow. In the long term an onerous responsibility rests with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. It is obvious from the annual report that a tremendous amount of work has been done on water resources, in particular where it can be obtained and when it will be available. I repeat that one thing the Australian takes too much for granted is that he will get water whenever he turns on a tap.

It was interesting to hear the Minister say—

“The Co-ordinator-General has delegated to the commissioner powers and duties for the resumption of lands for and the design and construction of the Wivenhoe Dam on the Brisbane River and Splyard Creek Dam, the storage for the associated pumped storage/hydroelectric project.”

This is a tremendously important project for Brisbane and surrounding areas, my own electorate, Woodridge in the electorate of the honourable member for Salisbury, Kingston and into Slacks Creek—in fact, all the northern part of the Albert Shire.

Over the years there have been tremendous problems in obtaining sufficient water from the Brisbane City Council for these areas. I hope that the authority responsible for the distribution of the water from the new dam, whether it is the Brisbane City Council, the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, or some other authority, plans well so that water will be made available on a year-round basis, so that people can water their gardens and have pride in their homes, and not only during periods when rainfall is plentiful.

When resumptions are made for the Wivenhoe Dam, I hope that there will be an adequate amount of land in the catchment areas so that there will be no problems from silt and pollution. In the past it was the practice to purchase the minimum amount of land when dams, reservoirs, and other water-storage facilities were being built. Neighbouring piggeries and banana farms and the spraying of heavy poisons created great problems. This happened also at the Little Nerang Dam because insufficient land was purchased. It was possible to make this area free of pollution, but only after much work. It was possible to purchase much more land around the Advancetown Dam to keep the catchment in the complete control of the authority. I hope that the resumptions for the Wivenhoe Dam and all future water storage facilities will include adequate land in the surrounding areas.

It is interesting to note that resumptions to enable the construction of these dams are done by negotiations. I have found that the authorities have been very fair, and in fact in some instances over generous, in the valuations and the prices paid.

Water is a commodity that is needed by the community and, as the land is resumed for the benefit of the users, they should be prepared to pay adequate compensation for the resumptions through water rates.

I congratulate the Minister and his commission on the manner in which they are discharging their responsibility for the construction of the Wivenhoe Dam. It is a very exciting project and it will mean much in the long term.

The inland area of Queensland has a great potential. The Bradfield report has been mentioned. I have not studied it and I do not know whether the proposal to divert the rivers to the Inland is practicable. I believe that the Government has a great responsibility to study these concepts to ascertain if it is possible to increase the productivity of Queensland in the long term by adopting the proposals. If the Government is planning now, it should be planning for 30, 50 or 100 years ahead, taking into account projections of population growth and trying to find the solution to the problem of feeding these people.

Certain outer suburbs of Brisbane used to grow large quantities of fruit and vegetables. These areas are being broken up for housing and much productivity is being lost to closer settlement. It will be necessary to look further afield for areas in which there is plenty of water, good soil and a suitable climate for the production of food for the people. A very serious problem will arise in the long term if most of our people continue to concentrate on the coastal fringe and those who produce food have to move further out to the drier areas.

Mr. Goleby: Don't you think farmers should be able to cash in on the land boom if they are in the right position?

Mr. GIBBS: No-one would deny that. But it is a fact that areas that were productive are being used for housing. It is a pity that this is taking place in the Redlands electorate, where some of the best fruit and vegetables in Australia are produced. Much of that produce goes to the southern market.

Perhaps we could give some thought to the reasons behind the subdivision of such land. Perhaps some of the fault lies with the system under which land is valued on potential. This means in many cases that people are valued out of their areas. This is another matter that we could perhaps study closely to try to save these areas for longer periods than they seem to be safe now. This is all the more reason why we should be planning ahead and deciding where sufficient food can be grown to feed ourselves and to allow us to do our share in feeding the world. We have the land and the know-how necessary to grow food for overseas consumption if only we can produce it cheaply enough.

There are some interesting developments in irrigation at Gilston, near Southport, where lettuce are being grown by hydroponics. Beautiful lettuce are being grown above ground in water containing the necessary plant foods. Perhaps this is the method of the future where there is lots of water but the ground is poor. It is a method that has a considerable amount of merit. As long as stands can be built and water is available, vegetables could be grown by hydroponics where the land may be the poorest on earth. I think strawberries are being cultivated in this way in the Redlands electorate at this moment. Perhaps it may be possible to cultivate plants in this way in areas where the land is poor and keep the industry going in such areas.

I congratulate the Minister and his department on the fine job that they have done. It is obvious from the annual report that good work has been done over many years. It is a department that is very productive. It keeps close control over rivers and streams. I observe that there are quite a lot of pumping permits in force for the Logan River. I think there may still be some on the Coomera River. The department has always maintained a close eye on all that is going on, to make sure that there is sufficient water for all. It sees that everything works properly and that no one tries to outdo anyone else.

In the long term, the department has a tremendous responsibility in the planning of the water resources of Queensland to ensure that the State develops in the right direction and is able in the long term to produce the food needed for Australia and its overseas commitments.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (7.49 p.m.): I rise to support the Minister in the presentation of his Estimates and to commend his contribution to the welfare and development of our great State.

I think it would also be fitting at this stage if I paid a tribute to Mr. Learmonth, who, I understand, is retiring on 31 December of this year. In my opinion, he has served the commission very effectively for quite a lengthy period and I should like to record that I wish him a long and happy retirement.

I feel also that I should make some reference to his successor, Mr. Beattie. Mr. Beattie has been with the commission for quite some time, and I congratulate him on his appointment as commissioner. He will have a very responsible task. I must say that I have had many discussions with Mr. Beattie, and I would not be camouflaging the issue if I were to say that there were times when we were not in complete agreement, although I have always respected his opinion. If at times he disagrees with me, of course he is obviously wrong, but here again he has his own opinion. I congratulate him and I trust he will be as effective in the position as were his two predecessors—

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: I know you are always sincere in your approach.

Mr. MULLER: Yes. I refer here specifically to Mr. Learmonth and the late Mr. Fred Haigh.

As has been said by many speakers today, the conservation of our water resources is vital to the development of the State. It is rather staggering to see from the figures in the 1976 annual report of the commission the contribution that has been made to the economic situation by the development of our water resources. I think it is occasionally appropriate to quote statistics. I am not telling members anything new when I say that this is a vast State. The Year Book shows that Queensland has an area of 1 728 000 sq km. The report indicates that only 1 232 sq km are under irrigation. Breaking down the figures in order to ascertain the merit of irrigation, we find that the area irrigated is 0.13 per cent of the total area being utilised for rural purposes, but by virtue of the fact that it is irrigated this 0.13 per cent produced 20.4 per cent of the total rural production of the State. Although I am usually disinclined to quote statistics, that is one set of figures we should all note.

I now wish to refer to my own locality, where I have had some practical experience of the effectiveness of irrigation. There is no doubt that it changes the life-style of people. I am fortunate to have two dams in my electorate. I would like to say to Mr. Beattie here and now that he will be erring in his judgment if he does not build two more in the near future but, of course, that is beside the point.

As honourable members know, until 10 years ago dairying was a very profitable industry but, because of the decline of the industry, it was necessary for some dairymen to change their life-style and to produce commodities which could be marketed economically. The farmers in my electorate have done this most successfully, but it has been possible only because we have an adequate water supply. The capacity of the area now seems to be almost unlimited. I know that is a fairly broad statement, but when we see the things that our farmers are doing today compared with the methods they applied as recently as 10 to 15 years ago, it is almost beyond comprehension, and I believe that it is only the adequacy of our water supply which allows this to be done. Of course, this applies in many other localities as well.

Recently I had the privilege of visiting St. George with the Minister for Primary Industries when he opened a new cotton ginnyery. It would have been impossible to establish a cotton industry in that area until fairly recently because there was not an adequate water supply. The provision of an adequate water supply has made an enormous difference to those persons actively engaged in the production of cotton, and it seems to me

that there have been many flow-on benefits. For example, a great deal of machinery is needed for a ginnery, and it must be manufactured. Naturally enough, it is claimed by the manufacturer, who is an American, that the ginnery at St. George is the most modern in the world. I say "the most modern", not "the largest", because it is by no means the largest. The claim is that it is equipped with the most modern machinery.

That development has occurred only because some person had the foresight to exploit the irrigation potential of the locality, and it was made possible, of course, by the conservation of water. As has been said on many occasions, Australia is the driest continent. An adequate water supply is essential to the development and decentralisation of industry and I say to some of the critics of this State that, in spite of some of the statements that have been made, Queensland is not really doing too badly.

With the exception of Western Australia, Queensland is the largest Australian State, and I think that some figures I have here might be of interest to the Committee. As I said earlier, Queensland is the most decentralised State, and only 48 per cent of the people reside in the Brisbane statistical area. It is worth remembering that figure when one looks at the figures for other States, which in many instances have been established much longer than Queensland and think that they are more highly developed. In New South Wales, 61 per cent of the population is within the perimeter of Sydney; Melbourne has 72.3 per cent of Victoria's population; Adelaide, 72.9 per cent of South Australia's population; and Perth, 70.1 per cent of Western Australia's population.

In my opinion, decentralised development can continue in Queensland if Governments, not only now but in the future, have the foresight to develop the State's water resources. After some of my visits in the past two or three years to inland and north-western areas of the State, I am convinced that with an adequate water supply the potential of the land there would be almost unlimited. I know it would be a difficult undertaking, but I am sure that in many instances the commission could develop irrigation projects if money became available. If there is any criticism that I could direct at the Minister it is that he has not been able to influence the powers that be to give him more funds, which he, in turn, could then direct towards the development of Queensland.

Many statements have been made recently about the prospects of transporting iron-ore from Western Australia and taking coal back to Western Australia. If that enterprise is being considered seriously, I point out that enormous quantities of water would be needed for it. However, that is something for the future. Some people are very

enthusiastic about it. Perhaps they could generate greater enthusiasm by putting their money where their mouth is.

In my opinion, the development of irrigation makes it much more economical to meet the requirements of modern markets. The old idea was—and many honourable members are well aware of the truth of what I am saying—that it is not economical to produce without irrigation unless you are growing specialised crops that are suitable for and adapted to a particular locality. On many occasions it is not possible to apply that policy. Prior to coming into Parliament I was for many years actively engaged in farming, so I know a little of what happens. Experience over a number of years showed that a person was fortunate if he realised one crop out of three. He might get three crops in a row, but then he might go for a number of years with each and every crop failing. That did nothing to help anybody.

The assurance of an adequate water supply provided by the commission in so many localities has brought much greater stability and a happier way of life to many people. It has contributed a great deal to the life-style of people in small country centres. Until recently it was impossible to consider sewerage plants in country areas. Now I know of many small towns in my district with a population of less than 300 that have a water supply and are served by sewerage. It was only two or three years ago that Brisbane was completely sewered. But for the foresight of those who went before us who planned such projects I am certain that the life-style of persons in rural areas would not be at today's reasonably high standard.

I wish to refer briefly to the commission's attitude to the economy of the State's primary industries. It has given a clear indication that it desires to keep down the cost of water to rural producers. In my locality, which is served by the Moogerah Dam and the water flowing down Warrill Creek, the farmers are purchasing water at \$3 per acre-foot or millilitre or whatever the unit is at the moment, or \$4 per acre-foot out of the channels. Some people may ask, "Why the difference?" The water flowing down the main stream has a reasonable lift over a 25 ft. bank. Having the water distributed through the channels at a price of \$4 a unit is more economic to the farmer, because it is delivered to the area where it is required. He is adequately compensated for the pumping costs. It has been suggested that there should be an increase in that cost, but I appeal to the commission not to entertain that idea. After all, there are so many flow-on benefits. The persons engaged in these industries and providing vital commodities to great cities such as Brisbane are providing those commodities regularly, and the people of the cities benefit. Previously, the supply fluctuated. At

times city-dwellers were paying extremely high prices, and at times the farmers received very low prices. The only time the price went up in the clouds was when the producer did not have the product. The city-dweller was penalised both ways.

There are many advantages apart from that. Since I entered Parliament I have made representations on behalf of many people who have required financial assistance. I can truthfully say that, while I have been in this Assembly, I have not been appealed to by any person engaged in primary industry with an adequate supply of irrigated water available to him who had found it necessary to go beyond the normal recognised channels, such as banks, in search of finance.

Many suggestions have been put forward as to the best way of overcoming the problem if we are not endowed by nature with a plentiful supply of water. The honourable member for Windsor referred to desalination. It has been attempted in other countries, but we do not know how effective it would be. It seems that science has not yet found a practical solution to the problem.

As recently as last year I had the privilege of visiting Hong Kong with the Minister. There I was interested to see a desalination plant partly in operation. I was informed that, even in an area such as Hong Kong that is urgently in need of water, it is not possible at present to desalinate satisfactorily.

Although Hong Kong has an average annual rainfall of 78 inches, the colony is so small that it has insufficient run-off to meet the requirements of its huge population. Consequently the Government was toying with desalination. If there is any place on earth where desalination should be practical and economical it is Hong Kong; yet, even with the necessary expertise to develop its plant, Hong Kong is not able to utilise desalination satisfactorily.

Tremendous benefits flow from the harvesting of our irrigable waters. The Minister is to be congratulated on the able manner in which he has carried out the duties of his present portfolio. I trust that he will continue to pursue his present attitude to life, from which the people of Queensland will benefit in the long term.

Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT (Auburn—Minister for Water Resources) (8.8 p.m.): The honourable member for Albert dealt with the Bradfield scheme. Considerable thought has been given to the proposal to divert water from the eastern side of the Great Dividing Range to the western side in accordance with his scheme. Investigations have shown, however, that the run-off east of the Great Divide is sufficient only to meet the needs of the lands to the east of the range. For this reason it is unlikely that any serious consideration will be given to such a scheme in the years ahead.

In one area of the State water is already being diverted across the Great Dividing Range. I refer, of course, to the Mareeba-Dimbulah area, where water from a coastal stream, the Barron River, is diverted to the Walsh River catchment area.

The honourable member for Fassifern always makes contributions of a positive and constructive nature. Although he and I may not agree on everything, he has shown both this Parliament and me as Minister that his ways are very similar to those of his late father, a former Minister for Irrigation. He was responsible for the construction of the Moogerah Dam and he contributed a great deal to Queensland's dairy industry as well as to the State as a whole. I am sure that members of the Labor Party of the day would agree that Alf Muller was a straight-shooter and one of the hardest-hitting politicians. As I say, even though the present member for Fassifern and I may not agree on everything, I know he puts forward what he believes to be right in the interests of his electors.

The only other speaker was the honourable member for Windsor. Let me say to him that I know a little bit about what water means to people. Having had to bail out of an aircraft, being four days without a drink of water or anything to eat, with a broken bone in my ankle and having to do the best I could to achieve something for my friends, I say that the honourable member need not tell me about the need for water. All I say to him is this: I had hoped that in the new building I would be getting a double water-bed, but, as he is on the Parliamentary Building Committee, maybe I should have bought my palliasse back from North Africa.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn): Order! By agreement, under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 19 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Water Resources.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

Water Resources—

	\$
Department of Irrigation and Water Supply	8,375,510
Balance of Vote, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account	44,770,788

Progress reported.

CURRUMBIN BIRD SANCTUARY BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (8.13 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

At the introductory stage, I gave honourable members a full account of events leading up to the introduction of this Bill, together with a summary of its chief provisions. I indicated that the purpose of the Bill is to empower the National Trust of Queensland to control or conduct the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary, subject to the requirements of the Bill. These requirements deal with such things as the keeping of proper books and accounts, the establishment of certain funds, the treatment of surpluses and deficits arising from the operations of the sanctuary, and the auditing of the books and accounts by the Auditor-General.

I further indicated that an agreement had been entered into between the National Trust and Mr. Alex Griffiths, the founder of the sanctuary, providing for the transfer of the sanctuary to the trust as from the 1 July 1976. Top legal advice to the Crown was to the effect that the trust did not have power under the National Trust of Queensland Act to control or conduct the sanctuary, as outlined in some detail in my introductory speech. This Bill is designed to give the trust this power, and to obviate costly and protracted litigation initiated by the trust in the Supreme Court.

It appeared to surprise a number of honourable members that there were certain obligations attaching to the transfer of the sanctuary to the trust by Mr. Griffiths. Some members apparently had believed that the sanctuary was transferred to the trust free from all encumbrances. It is clear from the agreement executed between Mr. Griffiths and the trust that this is not the case.

As I mentioned at the introductory stage, information supplied to me by the National Trust shows that the sanctuary's liabilities at 30 June 1975 were \$287,042. I further indicated that Mr. Griffiths has some \$220,000 of his private funds invested in the sanctuary, and provision is made in the agreement for these moneys to be repaid to Mr. Griffiths, upon demand, at a rate of up to \$20,000 a year.

The agreement further provides that the trust has to discharge certain obligations to people in New Zealand, to the order of some \$30,000. The land upon which the sanctuary is established is subject to mortgage to the National Bank of Australasia to the extent of some \$123,000, and it appears that the trust will be responsible for the repayment of this amount.

In terms of the agreement, as well as being eligible to receive up to \$20,000 a year in loan repayments, Mr. Griffiths has a right to receive superannuation payments and other entitlements whilst he is employed as presiding director and chairman of the sanctuary board of advice. He also has a right to the use of a home on the site and a car. A figure of some \$10,000 a year, plus cost-of-living increases, has been mentioned as the applicable remuneration. These facts show that the trust assumes substantial obligations in connection with its control and management of the sanctuary.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North asked whether the trust would be able to meet these obligations. In its discussions with me, the trust states that it is confident of being in a position to conduct the sanctuary on a profitable basis—and of course I'm sure all members would hope that this confidence is proved to be justified.

Under the Bill, the financing of the sanctuary's operations will be a matter entirely for the National Trust. The intention is that the sanctuary should be self-supporting. Any surplus that may arise from the operations of the sanctuary will have to be used on the maintenance, improvement or enlargement of the sanctuary, unless the prior approval of the Governor in Council is obtained to its use for some other purpose. A deficit arising from the operations of the sanctuary will not be capable of being met or financed from moneys received by the National Trust from its general activities under the National Trust of Queensland Act. This means that if the sanctuary's financial operations result in a deficit at the end of a particular financial year, that deficit will have to be carried forward and funded in the ensuing financial year. This could be achieved, for example, by the trust's increasing the admission charge or imposing higher prices for goods sold at the rock shop, etc.

The principle that surpluses arising from the operations of the sanctuary have to be ploughed back into the sanctuary is in conformity with the agreement executed between Mr. Griffiths and the trust. This provides, amongst other things, that surpluses are to be applied in the following priorities:—

- (1) In reducing the liabilities of the sanctuary;
- (2) In improving and developing the sanctuary; and
- (3) In advancing and promoting the general objects of the sanctuary and nature conservation generally.

As mentioned in my introductory speech, the Bill provides that one of the objects of the National Trust, under the National Trust of Queensland Act, is declared to be, and to have always been, to control and conduct the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary in the form in which it is conducted immediately before the coming into force of the legislation. The intention of this provision was to ensure that the sanctuary venture will continue to be conducted as such.

The Bill goes on to provide, however, that nothing contained therein will be deemed to restrict the authority of the trust in its conduct of the sanctuary, to cease any commercial undertaking operated therein, or to introduce a new commercial undertaking if, in its opinion, that step is in keeping with the proper conduct and the best interests of the sanctuary.

It could be contended that the provision of the Bill which provides that the sanctuary is to be conducted in its present form might inhibit the taking of action by the National Trust to liquidate companies established by the founder of the sanctuary to control its operations. As I mentioned in my introductory speech, it is envisaged that the trust might desire to take this action, and have the sanctuary lands vested in the National Trust as registered proprietor. The trust would then conduct the sanctuary in its own name.

To clarify that the trust will have the power to liquidate any of the prescribed companies, I foreshadow an appropriate amendment of clause 13 of the Bill at the Committee stage.

I think the Bill gives the National Trust adequate powers for it to control or conduct the sanctuary. The ball is at the feet of the National Trust, and I wish it well in its venture.

Mr. MARGINSON (Wolston) (8.20 p.m.): Since honourable members spoke on this Bill last Tuesday night there have been published some discrepancies between the Minister's statement of the liabilities of Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Griffiths' reply in which he set out what his liabilities in fact are. The Minister told us that \$287,042 was owing by the sanctuary. He also said that there was a mortgage of \$123,000 to the National Bank of Australia and that some people in New Zealand were owed \$30,000. Those statements, if correct, naturally took quite a lot of the shine off what was supposed to have

been a gift. It certainly took some of the shine off the gift for many Opposition members, as I am sure it did for many Government members who may not have known of those debts.

But yesterday morning Mr. Griffiths made it quite plain in "The Courier-Mail" that what the Minister had said was not true—in his opinion, at any rate. I must make the point that the figures quoted by the Minister were as at 30 June 1975, not 30 June 1976. What does Mr. Griffiths say in reply to what the Minister said last Tuesday evening? I quote from "The Courier-Mail" of yesterday, 27 October—

"Mr. Griffiths said the bird sanctuary had 'nothing like' liabilities of \$287,042.

"When I handed it over as a going concern, it had only the small liabilities of any small business," Mr. Griffiths said.

"Mr. Griffiths said he had been given the house at the sanctuary."

It will be remembered that we were told that he had the use of a car. Mr. Griffiths says that he owns the car. He also says that he is having the use of the house.

We were also told that Mr. Griffiths was to receive a salary or remuneration of \$10,000 a year. Mr. Griffiths says that that is not so. He, of course, is open to questioning whereas what is said in this House is not. Sometimes I think it is most unfortunate that people outside Parliament have no redress, for statements made in the House cannot be questioned by people outside. At least they should have some legal right to do something about what is said here. On the other hand, Mr. Griffiths is making a statement in the public Press. The Press report goes on—

"No set salary has been agreed on with the trust for his caretaking job, he said."

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Somebody is telling lies.

Mr. MARGINSON: There is a great difference between the two versions. There is certainly something wrong here.

Mr. Griffiths is reported as saying, "I certainly did not receive \$20,000 for debts. That is ludicrous." That is how he put it. He went on to say—

"The only commitment with loan repayments is with the bank for a new kiosk we built last year."

The final paragraph commences—

"Mr. Griffiths said he had been living off undistributed profits of the sanctuary . . ."

It is rather disturbing to me that on the introduction of a Bill Parliament is told certain things and the very next morning, when we rise from our beds to read the Brisbane newspaper, we read that the man in question completely denies them. All I can say is that the figures quoted here were as at 30 June 1975 and it is now October 1976. I am sorry that these discrepancies have arisen and, if neither version is true, I hope that someone is able to tell us what is the truth.

Of course, I have to remind the House that this whole matter is subject to litigation. I feel that I know why this legislation is being put through the House in a matter of 72 hours. We are going into recess this evening for a week, I understand, and naturally the Minister wants the matter cleared up before the litigation gets completely out of hand. I still charge the Government with bringing down the Bill as a face-saving measure. I think it has in fact got itself tied up.

I think it was the honourable member for Albert who said, "We are trying to help the trust." If that was in fact the Government's intention, it had available to it two legal opinions by Queen's Counsel. One was that the Act did not empower the Government to undertake a venture of this nature. The trust's Queen's Counsel said that it could be done under the Act, so there was a doubt. If the Government was trying to help the trust, all that it needed to do to clear up that legal doubt was to amend the Act under which the trust is constituted. I feel that the Government is not helping the trust as much as it would be expected to.

The two speakers who followed me in the introductory debate—the honourable members for Surfers Paradise and Albert—both live in the locality in which the sanctuary is situated. I fully expected that they would keep to the Bill and tell us something about the litigation which has been worrying us and whether the Government is treating the trust fairly. From one of them—the honourable member for Surfers Paradise—we got a very nice description of how the sanctuary started, but he said nothing at all about the Bill.

The other speaker, the honourable member for Albert, apart from talking about galahs—I suppose any clown can do that even though he does not have a cap—told us what he, I think as chairman of

a committee, had done, and what the Gold Coast City Council had done, for Mr. Griffiths.

But we still claim that there is something wrong which has not been brought out into the open. I think that this Government has a strange desire to rush into litigation on almost anything that it does not agree with. If the citizens of our State or people outside Queensland doubt, contradict or express an opinion contrary to that of the Government, it immediately rushes into litigation; but on this occasion the Government forced the trust to enter into litigation.

Mr. Lindsay: Where did you get all this wrong information from?

Mr. MARGINSON: Listen to that galah! The honourable member does not even know what he is talking about.

Mr. Byrne: Answer the question.

Mr. MARGINSON: I received information from the trust, from the newspapers and from discussions with people associated with the trust. I ask Government members who speak after me tonight to endeavour to keep to the Bill and explain the things that we have inquired about. During the Committee stage I intend to speak to some of the clauses of the Bill.

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (8.28 p.m.): I am pleased to support the Minister and I will assist in any way I can to facilitate Mr. Griffiths' wish to make what is in fact a magnanimous gift to the National Trust of Queensland, which is really the people of Queensland and this Government, because it is the people of Queensland represented by this Government who will be the beneficiaries of this gift.

I have had the advantage of seeing some of the material, and I am able to assure the honourable member for Wolston that the facts are very clear. I hope to outline some of them in my speech tonight.

On 24 June this year Mr. Griffiths executed a deed by which he purported to transfer and assign to the National Trust of Queensland all his interest in the property which we know generally as the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary. He wished, in executing that deed, to preserve that area in perpetuity for the benefit of people generally. It is quite a normal deed. It is the type of deed that one would expect of a man who has a successful business and, because of increasing years, decides that he will get out of it

and pass it on to somebody who can probably exploit it—and I use that word in its kinder sense—to the full. That is what has happened here. Mr. Griffiths is anxious that the property which he has owned and developed over a number of years should be developed further, and he has selected as his donee—and surely any person is entitled, if he wishes to make a gift, to select the donee himself—the National Trust of Queensland. He has decided that the trust is the appropriate body to carry out his wishes.

I remind the Committee that the National Trust of Queensland was set up in 1963 or 1964 when another benefactor was looking for someone to whom he could give property. I think it was at Moggill, and if I remember correctly, his name was Moon. He wished to have his property used in perpetuity for the benefit of people generally.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: That was in Rafting Ground Road.

Mr. LOWES: The honourable member for Archerfield tells me that it was in Rafting Ground Road. I was aware of that.

The trust was set up at that time, and it has carried on from there. At present it is managing about 18 properties and is involved in about 50 projects. It also acts in a consultative capacity to the Government, so there cannot be any doubt about its integrity or its ability to perform the functions that Mr. Griffiths has been carrying on at Currumbin. It is understandable, therefore, that when Mr. Griffiths was looking for someone to do this job, he selected the National Trust.

The deed says that, so as to give effect to Mr. Griffiths' intentions, he shall transfer by way of gift the properties set out in the deed, which are also set out in the schedule to the Bill. That is in fact what he has done. The properties were not all owned in the name of Mr. Griffiths. He, as many businessmen do, carried on business through companies. There was shareholding in the companies, so the companies were to be transferred to the trust.

However, as I said, the position here is similar to that of the man who gets out of a successful business and passes it on to some large company that can exploit the assets of the company properly. What happens in such cases is that the company which takes over recognises the expertise of the man who has carried on the business

previously and recognises that so much goodwill attaches to him, and it is not unusual for it to engage the man, after he has transferred his property to the company, in an advisory capacity and, depending upon his activities, to remunerate him.

Remuneration may be of several types. It may be a salary or a weekly wage; it may include such benefits as the use of a motor vehicle or the use of a home. What is happening in the case of the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary is that Mr. Griffiths is being given an entitlement to the occupation for the rest of his life of a two-bedroom fibro cottage, which I think those of us who have been to the bird sanctuary have seen. I think we would all recognise that it is not a house of any great pretensions but quite a modest cottage. In addition, he is entitled to retain the use of a Valiant Centura car.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: What year?

Mr. LOWES: The fact that the registration number is OOS-700 and that it is a Valiant Centura would suggest to me that it is a fairly recent model. Again, it is not a high-priced Continental car; it is quite a modest car. I am assuming—and I think it is a reasonable assumption—that that vehicle belongs to one of the companies.

The transfer of shares has in fact taken place because the date of possession was 1 July this year, so it is a fait accompli. The shares have been transferred and the assets are now held by the trust, on trust for the trust—as I think may be the case with some of the shares. The deed says that from the date of the settlement, which is 1 July, and for the remainder of his lifetime Mr. Griffiths shall be employed at the sanctuary by the trust with the title of Presiding Director and Chairman of the Sanctuary Board of Advice. It further provides for his right to occupy that home.

The next clause is an interesting one in that it provides for superannuation. This, at first, could seem to be a further benefit to Mr. Griffiths. No doubt it is, but I think the whole tenor of Mr. Griffiths' intention is shown when one reads the end of that clause. It provides that on the death of Mr. Griffiths the trust undertakes, to the extent that it is empowered and able to do so, to outlay and expend any moneys payable as a consequence of the said superannuation on some specific project or purpose directly benefiting the sanctuary. If ever there was a man with an intent to benefit people and with good will in his heart, it was Mr. Griffiths. That

is why I support the Bill and say that we should do everything possible to facilitate its passage through the House.

The desirability of maintaining the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary, apart from all the interesting factors such as the sighting of birds and mammals, is also indicated by the employment opportunities it offers. Something like 95 men are employed here. That alone is a valid reason why we should do everything we possibly can to facilitate the transfer of the property to the trust as quickly as possible. Speed has been of the essence of this matter since early in the year.

I think it was as long ago as 9 January this year when the trust wrote to the Minister in his capacity as the member for the electorate rather than as the Minister. It wrote and said what was proposed. That was before any publicity was given to the proposal. It pointed out in that early letter the desirability of implementing the plan as quickly as possible. It pointed out in all fairness that an element of doubt had been raised as to the capacity of the trust, as incorporated under the Act, to administer such an undertaking. In the same letter the Minister was requested to look into that aspect and, if necessary, to do whatever was required to facilitate the intention of Mr. Griffiths.

From that time on there was an exchange of correspondence. By the middle of the year the doubt was fortified on different sides, and the trust took counsel's advice. I have had the privilege of reading Mr. Peter Connolly's opinion on this matter. I doubt if I have ever read an opinion less equivocal than his. He has no doubt whatsoever that the trust as incorporated under the National Trust of Queensland Act had the capacity to carry on the business of the sanctuary. May I say with the greatest respect that it is an opinion with which I concur.

I think that most people would agree that the National Trust of Queensland Act is adequate. Section 5 of the Act sets out the objects of the National Trust, as follows:—

“The National Trust is constituted for the purposes of promoting—

(a) the preservation and maintenance for the benefit of the public generally of lands, buildings, furniture, pictures and other chattels of beauty or of national, historic, scientific, artistic, or architectural interest;

(b) the protection and augmentation of the amenities of such lands, buildings and chattels and their surroundings;

(c) the access to the enjoyment of such lands, buildings and chattels by the public.”

Section 3 of the Act makes it quite clear that the trust has adequate authority to manage the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary.

It deals with the constitution of the National Trust and provides—

“(1) There shall be constituted a body to be called ‘The National Trust of Queensland.’

“(2) The National Trust shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in all courts and shall, for the purposes and subject to the provision of this Act, be capable of purchasing, holding, granting, demising, disposing of or otherwise dealing with real and personal property, and of doing and suffering all such other acts and things that a body corporate may by law do or suffer.”

Surely it can be said that the provisions of the Act are wide enough to enable the National Trust to administer the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary. However, if there is still any doubt as to its capacity to conduct the business, such a doubt can be erased by reference to section 16, which refers to by-laws and provides for the “making of charges or entrance fees on persons or associations or groups of persons using or entering upon such lands and buildings, or any specified part or parts thereof, and the collection and receiving of such charges and fees by the council of the National Trust or other persons.” Surely by referring to the making of charges, the Act intends that the National Trust shall have the power to carry on a business such as the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary.

Mr. Marginson: If there had been any doubt the Government need not have brought in this legislation.

Mr. LOWES: I should have thought that if there had been any doubt, all that the Government would need to do was make a minor amendment to the National Trust of Queensland Act.

Mr. Marginson: That's what I am saying.

Mr. LOWES: But by the middle of this year matters became bogged down. Obviously there was a fair amount of negotiation between the Minister and the trust. Several letters were exchanged.

On 20 August the trust wrote to the Minister stating that it was anxious to proceed quickly with certain plans for continuing the better development of the sanctuary. There again the urgency of the matter is being stressed. In the same letter reference is made to the desirability of facilitating the wishes of Mr. Griffiths. The letter reads—

“The purpose of this letter is to advise you of this proposed action and to make it quite clear that in the opinion of the Trust and the Directors of the Sanctuary Group of Companies, the early implementation of this plan is vital to the Sanctuary.”

That was in August, some six weeks after the date of possession, 1 July. It can be seen that the matter of urgency was being stressed then. It was at that time, too, that newspapers were playing havoc with the whole of the matter. It was becoming a confused issue—most unfortunately, because the intent of Mr. Griffiths was becoming somewhat blurred as a result of the unfortunate statements that were being made.

On 20 August—the same day that that letter was written to the Minister—Mr. Griffiths himself wrote to the Honourable the Minister in these terms—

“While I appreciate your interest and concern, I assure you that I am perfectly satisfied and happy with the arrangements that have been made regarding my gift to the National Trust.”

The word “gift” I stress, because in the Minister’s remarks at the introductory stage I see what is possibly a typographical error in that the word “gift” is in inverted commas. I feel sure the Minister intended that it should be in block capitals, as the gift is of such magnitude that it ought to have been stressed rather than put in a form that would suggest that it is not a gift at all.

I have read a number of letters in various actions—letters which were written with a view to litigation—but I doubt if I have ever read a letter such as the one of 27 August 1976, which was couched in such sweet terms of reason. This is a letter from Mr. Hancock, the president of the National Trust, to the Minister, in which he asked that the Minister should—

“. . . secure the advancement of the Sanctuary in accordance with Mr. Griffiths’ wishes and for the benefit of the public generally. It is certainly the desire of the

Trust that this should occur in co-operation and harmonious relationship with the State Government.”

The letter goes on—

“To indicate our thinking on the matter the Trust would like to see by-laws introduced to cover the following main areas”.

The by-laws proposed are set out. There are some five by-laws, which suggest by way of recommendation to the Minister the establishment of a board of advice (and, after all, under this Bill we are setting up a board); how that board may be constituted; the setting-up of books of account to be audited by the Auditor-General; that reports be made by the board to the Minister; and that whatever other necessary aspects be written into the Act and the by-laws for the employment of Mr. Griffiths and for the maintenance of the sanctuary.

Again on 27 August the matter of urgency was being stressed. I point out particularly the desire on the part of the trust that matters be brought to a conclusion harmoniously. Unfortunately, that was not to be. Somewhere along the line, not long after that, litigation was commenced. Admittedly litigation was commenced by the trust. It was commenced by an originating summons and sought a declaration by the court that the agreement of 24 June was valid, that the purposes of the agreement were valid and that the trust could manage the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary. It was the sort of application to which our attitude should have been one of consent. Had we gone to the court and consented to an order, I believe all doubts would have been removed. Unfortunately, that was not to be.

The next step in the whole affair was that the Government, through the Attorney-General, commenced an action in the Supreme Court—an action which frustrated the originating summons that had been issued previously. That action was again met by an action commenced by the trust against the Hon. the Minister in person and also against the Attorney-General.

These matters came before the Court, and there was an order made for a hearing of the whole action at an early date. There was a time-table laid down, when pleadings were to be delivered. I understand that those pleadings have in fact been delivered and the date of trial is near at hand.

Now we have reached the situation where we have an originating summons adjourned in the Supreme Court, and we have two

Supreme Court actions both of which have been fully pleaded and which now involve a great deal of money, because a great deal of time and effort has been put into this. How unfortunate it is.

Mr. Marginson: It was about \$10,000.

Mr. LOWES: If it is \$10,000 to the trust as the honourable member for Wolston has suggested, one might well imagine that it cost the Government about the same. So we are looking at a figure which would be nearly \$20,000. These are costs which have been incurred and, I think, probably incurred unnecessarily.

There is a solution to this and I am sure that the Minister will give consideration to the solution now that he is putting the Bill through the House. I would suggest that the Trust Act itself was adequate and that the need for further legislation was doubtful. There is a Bill now before the House and, on reading it, I wonder if it achieves what it sets out to do. It was to carry out the intention of the Minister. As I considered it was important I made a note of the Minister's remarks in his introductory speech. He said—

“ . . . the Government's sole motivation in presenting this legislation is to give legal effect to Mr. Griffiths' declared wish to present his bird sanctuary venture to the trust, so it could continue to be operated, as it is now, as a wildlife attraction for the benefit of future generations.”

That, no doubt, is the intention of the Bill before the House.

Looking at the Bill, one wonders if it quite achieves what it sets out to do. Why did it give the Currumbin trust the right to acquire and hold shares, when it did nothing about the disposal of shares? As I understand the proposal by Mr. Griffiths, his shares in some 11 companies would be transferred to the trust and the trust would wind up the companies and the assets of the companies would be distributed, as is said, in specie; in other words, the assets of the companies would be handed over to the trust.

I wonder whether the Bill in its original form went as far as that. There was a further provision later in the Bill for the disposal of certain assets. I have some doubts on the adequacy of the Bill.

The reference to this transaction as being a gift and the questions which have been raised whether it is a gift or not seem to

me to be quite unworthy of the people raising them. It is almost a slur. I believe that there is no question of this being anything other than a most magnanimous gift. The assets of the sanctuary of some 100 acres together with improvements on some of the land are considered to be worth between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000. I would not know how anyone could value them because it is a unique piece of land in the middle of a high-density suburban area. I would not be quite sure just how a figure for land valuation would be established. Even if it is as low as \$2,000,000 and with the total debts owing by the company at something less than \$500,000, here we have a gift of approximately \$1,500,000 being made virtually to the people of Queensland. For some time it looked as though we were looking a gift horse in the mouth, and that was a pity. It certainly took some of the gilt and glitter from the gift. As we all know, many people find as much pleasure in making a gift as in receiving one. For Mr. Griffiths' sake, it is a pity that we did not handle this gift in a different manner.

I should now like to refer to the various sums of money that are owing. They are referred to in the agreement, which is the deed of 24 June. There is an amount of \$30,000 referred to as owing to people in New Zealand. This represents a debt due by the companies to people in New Zealand who, I understand, are relatives of Mr. Griffiths. There was, I understand, a piece of land available that Mr. Griffiths believed was suitable for inclusion in the sanctuary. Because of a lack of liquidity at that time he borrowed \$30,000 from relatives in New Zealand for the purpose of acquiring the land. He bought it, and that land is now part of the land listed in the schedule to the Bill. There is still a debt of \$30,000.

The only strange thing that I can see about that debt is that, so far as I know, it is unsecured, and it is interest-free. Surely that is not a matter that should cause concern to anybody or make any member of the public think that the National Trust of Queensland is acquiring liabilities. Of course it is acquiring some liabilities, but when one compares the liabilities with the assets and sees the net figure one sees what a large gift is being made.

A great deal is being made of the sum of \$220,000 owing to Mr. Griffiths. There is nothing unusual about that debt. That sum represents undistributed profits. I believe

those profits have been accumulating for some time. Over many years money earned by the sanctuary has been put back into its development. There has not been \$220,000, or any part of it, available for Mr. Griffiths to take out to pay to himself as profits over a period of years. The debt was payable on demand and, with the transfer of the companies to the trust, Mr. Griffiths was entitled to say to the trust, "I want my \$220,000 today." It was payable on demand and he was quite entitled to do that. But he did not. By the deed, he has made an agreement with the trust to take the \$220,000 at the rate of \$10,000 a half year, and then only provided he gives the trust three months' notice that he requires it. That ensures that the trust will not be in the invidious position of having to find \$10,000 at short notice. What could be fairer than that? There is no profit in that for Mr. Griffiths. Any distributed profit he has already had, and no doubt he has paid tax on it. The \$220,000 represents undistributed profits due to him. There is nothing strange about that.

There is an amount of approximately \$123,000 owing to the National Bank. I understand that that amount was borrowed last year for, in the first place, erecting and revamping the kiosk and, in the second place, the construction of a railway line which passes beneath the highway. Of that \$123,000, \$27,000 was paid by Mr. Griffiths to the Main Roads Department for the construction of a viaduct over his railway on which people can be taken to other parts of the sanctuary.

Reference has been made to varying sums. I think the Minister referred tonight to a sum of \$2,000 as salary for Mr. Griffiths. Another figure which has been frequently mentioned as his salary is \$10,000. In fact, there is no agreement whatsoever between Mr. Griffiths and the trust for the payment of any salary.

The deed does provide for Mr. Griffiths to be employed by the trust for the rest of his life. It also provides that Mr. Griffiths shall become a director, and it is reasonable to assume that as a director he will be paid directorate fees, and to him that would be a salary.

I understand that over the years Mr. Griffiths has been drawing what would seem to be a very meagre amount indeed, and no suggestion is made anywhere that he intends to change his way of life and become avaricious in his demands for a high rate of

pay from the sanctuary. Perhaps the sanctuary could well afford to do this, because, whereas for the year ended 30 June 1976 the turnover of the sanctuary was approximately \$800,000, the estimated turnover for the current year is \$1,250,000. Although, as I have said before, there are some 95 people employed there—and, as it operates seven days a week, with a turnover like that in the current year it is quite reasonable to suppose that a director of that undertaking would be entitled to quite a sizeable directorate fee or salary. But that is not the case. Again, Mr. Griffiths is being most generous towards the trust so that he can see the implementation of what has been for him a lifetime desire.

The value of the land and the house which Mr. Griffiths occupies—a two-bedroom fibro cottage—is estimated at something like \$18,000. If we capitalise that for the sake of rental, we would come to a figure of \$36 a week, which again is not a large sum to be receiving by way of a fringe benefit, if you like to put it that way, which is the use of a house. But from that \$36 a week would have to be taken what would be reasonable rental for an office, because in that house there is an office, and that is the office which the board uses for its meetings. So again we see that, whereas Mr. Griffiths might be getting something on the one hand, he is virtually handing it back with the other.

I expect that the Bill will pass through the House—and we should do all that is possible to expedite its passage—but we are still left with the nagging matters of the litigation in the Supreme Court, and, by way of a recommendation to the Minister, I would say that after this Bill is passed and becomes law the Government should, if necessary, consent to the orders which are sought by the trust for a declaration, together with costs. I expect that the trust would wish to withdraw the originating summons. I believe that the Government should consent to the withdrawal of that originating summons, again with costs.

As to the action that was commenced through the Attorney-General—most regretably, I submit—I suggest that the Attorney-General withdraw that action and that the costs of the trust incurred in defending that action be paid by him.

I support the Bill in so far as it attempts to implement the intent of Mr. Griffiths; but I express my doubts as to its need or its adequacy for that purpose.

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (9.6 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for Wolston, who led for the Opposition, for his contribution to the debate. In the absence of other honourable members from both sides of the Chamber, he had the job of perusing the Bill and considering it in the time available. It relates to matters that have been controversial for some time, and he had to try to decide the right steps to take and the right attitudes to adopt on behalf of the Opposition in the House. I commend the honourable member for the job he has done and for his contribution to the second-reading debate.

As he has stated clearly, there were some doubts in his mind about figures that have been mentioned in this Parliament, in the Press and in the other news media. I can only say to him that the figures used by the Government have been those provided by the National Trust itself. They are not a figment of the Government's imagination. We have asked the trust for certain information; it has been made available to us.

There were some doubts in the mind of the Government, and all it set out to do was remove those doubts and give the trust the authority that it needed to allow it to proceed. To put the matter beyond all doubt, the Government decided to make the authority retrospective. That is what I said originally; I repeat it tonight.

After the Bill has been passed, it will become part of the law of the State of Queensland. In the years ahead, the efforts of the trust at the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary will come under scrutiny and probably will again be debated in this Chamber. Only time will tell. All honourable members can do at this stage is wish the trust well.

The honourable member for Brisbane has had quite a lot of information made available to him. Of course, he is one of Queensland's foremost legal men, an extremely capable lawyer.

An Honourable Member: He hasn't taken silk yet.

Mr. HINZE: After listening to his dissertation this evening, I wouldn't be surprised if he did before long. It is quite obvious that the honourable member for Brisbane, because of his outstanding ability, must expect people to furnish him with

information, and in the debate this evening he has given honourable members an indication of his legal prowess.

I only wish to say that, as a very humble Minister of the Crown in the State of Queensland, I have to take cognisance of the information made available to me. As a member of Cabinet—and, I might add, a junior member—I would be expected to take cognisance of the advice of people such as Sir Arnold Bennett. He told me, and the Government, very clearly what steps should be taken, day by day, week by week, and we took them. If I, as a Minister of the Crown, had done otherwise, I would have been regarded as a fool.

Tonight the stage has been reached at which the long legal battle, for which, obviously, the Government or the people of Queensland will have to pay, will be terminated. I believe that to this stage costs amounted to about \$10,000. Nothing has been proved, and the action could have gone on for 12 months and there could have been appeals.

An appeal was made for public subscriptions. I believe that something like \$2,500 to \$3,000 was subscribed. I understand it cost something like \$2,000 for the advertisements. There could be \$300 or \$400 in the pool to pay for the legal expenses. I indicated previously that I have received communication—some people call it "dialogue" or some other damn thing these days—

Dr. Crawford: Meaningful discussion.

Mr. HINZE: Meaningful discussion, in which I was asked to recommend to Cabinet that we accept the responsibility. I have said quite clearly that so far as this Government is concerned we should put aside the funds provided by some people in Queensland, and I will recommend to Cabinet that we defray the expenses. We are a benevolent Government and we try to be fair at all times. I say that, irrespective of the fact that we still believe, and I am strongly of the view, that the opinion given to us by Sir Arnold Bennett was the right one. Of course, if Peter Connolly had been the man the Government had briefed at the time, I would have accepted his opinion. That is the way legal men work, and apparently that is the way the nation works.

I do not want to take up any more time other than to say "Thank you" to the honourable member for Wolston, and the honourable member for Brisbane who, in his very

fluent speech, capably told this Parliament the complete story of that side of the argument so far. All I do on this occasion is again say to the National Trust—

Mr. Moore: You're taking a long time to say goodbye.

Mr. HINZE: When I look around the Chamber and see the honourable member for Windsor it leads me to the sort of feeling that I don't want to say goodbye to anyone, particularly him. If I did I would have to say "Grandfather", or something like that. He knows what would happen to him if he went down to Currumbin, doesn't he? He knows where the birds sit.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HINZE: To my learned colleague from Windsor I say "Thanks for the interjection." I think we need a little bit of levity when things get serious.

Motion (Mr. Hinze) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 11, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—Treatment of surplus and deficit—

Mr. MARGINSON (Wolston) (9.14 p.m.): This clause deals with the treatment of a surplus that may occur or a deficit that may occur in the trust's finances. The first part of the clause provides that a surplus must be put back into maintenance, improvement or enlargement of the property. The second part, dealing with a deficit, provides—

"A deficit in the general fund and any part thereof shall not be met by moneys appropriated for the purpose from moneys received by the National Trust in or for the purpose of the exercise of its powers and authorities under the Act."

That could mean that if there were a deficit the trust would have to find that money from some other source.

If the trust is ever in a court of law the court will not have before it the speech made by the Minister, which clears up the position. The Minister told us tonight that a deficit arising from the operations of the sanctuary will not be met or financed from moneys received by the National Trust from its general activities under its Act. That means that if the sanctuary's operations result in a

deficit at the end of a financial year that deficit would have to be carried forward. That is what should be done, but it should have been set out in the Bill. In effect the general revenue obtained in the following year should have to meet such a deficit.

As I said before, if the trust were to appear in court the court will not be able to read the explanation given to us tonight by the Minister. It could in fact say that the money will have to be provided at the end of the financial year to meet the deficit incurred during that financial year.

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (9.16 p.m.): I thank the honourable member for Wolston for his contribution and for allowing me to clear up this matter.

It is the wish of the National Trust and the Government that the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary pay its way. We have made provision for reserves and for the development of the sanctuary according to the desires and wishes of the board of management.

The honourable member is concerned that in a particular year a deficit may be incurred, and he asks: what then? It is ordinary, normal accounting practice to carry deficits forward. That is the intention of the Bill. It is not intended that this has to be spelt out specifically. It simply says that deficits incurred are carried forward into the next year, when the board of management may decide to increase the entrance fees or some of its charges, say, on the train or in the rock shop, or wherever else it derives funds from. This is the way the people of Queensland would want it, and this is the way the trust wants it.

There are numerous other undertakings like this in Queensland. They do not have the protection of this Government, and they are now saying to us, "You gave the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary a pretty good deal." Let us see what happens. The trust wants to take over this sanctuary. It believes it has the skill and ability to do it. It also believes that huge profits are to be made from its operations and that those profits will not be taxable. In time all these matters will settle themselves.

Again I say to the honourable member that ordinary accounting practice is that deficits are carried forward into the following year. The board of management will then decide what to do with them.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—National Trust's discretion preserved—

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (9.18 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 4, line 7, after the words ‘Currumbin Bird Sanctuary’ insert the words—

‘to alter the means whereby the sanctuary is conducted (including the liquidation of all or any of the prescribed companies) or ’.”

The intention of the amendment is to clarify that the National Trust will have power, if it so desires, to liquidate all or any of the prescribed companies established by the founder of the sanctuary for the purpose of its operation. If it so desires, the trust will have power to liquidate such companies and have the sanctuary lands vested in it so that it can conduct the sanctuary in its own name.

Amendment (Mr. Hinze) agreed to.

Clause 13, as amended, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Hinze, by leave, read a third time.

NATIONAL TRUST OF QUEENSLAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (9.23 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

As I explained at the introductory stage, this Bill is a short measure providing that the books and accounts of the National Trust of Queensland be subject to audit by the Auditor-General. The National Trust receives a grant from the Government each year, and it is normal practice for a body or organisation which receives governmental assistance of this type to be subject to Government audit.

In terms of the Bill, the Auditor-General may appoint one of his own officers to carry out the audit, or appoint a registered public accountant for that purpose. The fee (if any) for the audit will be determined by the Auditor-General. I understand that, if the National Trust can arrange for a registered public accountant who meets the satisfaction of the Auditor-General to undertake the audit in an honorary capacity, the Auditor-General will impose no fee.

Under the Bill, the auditor carrying out the audit has to certify whether the books and accounts have been properly kept and exhibit a true and fair view of the state of such accounts as at the close of the period in question.

As I mentioned in my previous speech, the trust is in agreement with the Government auditing its books and accounts.

Mr. MARGINSON (Wolston) (9.24 p.m.): We have nothing to add at this stage of the Bill. It is only a machinery measure and results from the passing a few moments ago of the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary Bill, which provided among other things for a certain method of auditing. It is necessary that this legislation be passed to provide for those auditing procedures.

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (9.25 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for Wolston again for his contribution and for the way in which he has handled the Bill on behalf of the Opposition.

Motion (Mr. Hinze) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Hinze, by leave, read a third time.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

COMMENDATION

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (9.27 p.m.): The Minister for Water Resources has requested me to express his appreciation of the efforts of the Acting Government Printer (Mr. Sid Hampson) and his staff, who went out of their way to prepare everything to facilitate the presentation of the Water Resources Estimates today. I do so in order that it will be recorded in “Hansard”.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy): I move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 9 November 1976.”

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.28 p.m.