Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 28 OCTOBER 1982

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. S. J. Muller, Fassifern) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Departmental Appropriation Accounts

Mr SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his report on departmental appropriation accounts for the financial year ended 30 June 1982.

Ordered to be printed.

PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN

Nomination of Mr R. Jones, BEM

Mr SPEAKER: Pursuant to the requirements of Standing Order No. 13, I nominate Raymond Jones, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Cairns, to fill the vacancy in the panel of Temporary Chairmen caused by the resignation of Neville George Warburton, Esquire.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Commissioner of Water Resources for the year ended 30 June 1982

Council of the Griffith University for the year 1981

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulations under the State Transport Act 1960-1981

Order in Council under the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act 1944-1981

Report of the State Stores Board for the year ended 30 June 1982.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) (11.4 a.m.), by leave: In the debate on the proposed Housing Commission rental scheme on Thursday, 16 September 1982, the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton) stated that I was backing the haves in our society and dumping the poor. To lend weight to his argument, the Minister quoted in part a letter he had received from Mr Doug Schwede, president of the Queensland Council of Social Service.

Last night Mr Schwede released a statement which I intend to table. In that statement Mr Schwede calls on the Government not to implement the new policy and states that the introduction of the scheme will have devastating social implications. I now call on the Minister for Works and Housing to make a clear statement that the new policy will be scrapped and that no tenant will be charged rent higher than the market level.

Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the document referred to.

PETITION

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petition—

Pedestrian Underpass, Bridgewater Street, Morningside

From Mr Burns (134 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will direct the Railway Department to construct a pedestrian underpass at Bridgewater Street, Morningside.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice by members were answered as follows:—

1. High Schools and Students

Mr Greenwood asked the Minister for Education—

(1) How many State high schools were operating in Queensland when the Gair Labour Government was voted out of office in 1957 and how many are now operating?

(2) How many students attended (a) State high schools and (b) private high schools in Queensland in 1957 and 1982 respectively?

(3) How many students attended Year 12, or its 1957 equivalent as the final year in high school, in 1957 and 1982 respectively in (a) State high schools and (b) private high schools?

(4) What was the population of Queensland in 1957 and what is the estimated population in 1982?

(5) How do the figures for high school age children and Year 12 age children compare in those two years?

Answer:—

(1) The number of State secondary facilities in 1957 and 1982 are given below—

——	1957	1982
High schools	37	141
Secondary departments ..	34	64
Correspondence	1	1
Evening classes	1	3
Total	73	209

(2) Enrolment figures for the two years are as follows—

——	1957	1982
State secondary schools ..	15 444	114 022
Non-Government secondary schools	11 724	46 332

(3) Year 12 enrolments in 1957 and 1982 were as follows—

——	1957	1982
State secondary schools ..	1 479	9 942
Non-Government secondary schools	1 309	6 054

(4) The estimated population of Queensland as at 30 June 1957, according to the Government Statistician for Queensland, was some 1 396 740 persons. For 30 June 1981, the most recent date for which information is available, the estimated resident population for Queensland was 2 345 335 persons.

(5) Taking "high school age" children as referring broadly to the 12-to-18 year age range, in 1957 there were some 154 500 children in this age-grouping, while in 1981 there were almost twice as many, with some 290 065.

For 16, 17 and 18-year olds, who make up the main age groups amongst Year 12 students, there were some 60 000 such children in 1957 and 125 400 in 1981.

In using these population figures for comparisons between 1957 and 1981, the honourable member should acknowledge that factors such as the school-leaving age and the grade structure of secondary schools were quite different in 1957. Furthermore, the figures do not include the 5 700 students in the 16-18 year age group who, during 1981, attended full-time courses, other than apprenticeship courses, at rural training schools and colleges of technical and further education. Such courses were not available in 1957.

2. Legislation Restricting Foreign Ownership of Land in USA

Mr Greenwood asked the Minister for Lands and Forestry—

With reference to an article in "The Australian" of 26 October referring to Foreign Investment Review Board actions and to USA legislation restricting foreign ownership of land in that country—

In view of widespread community interest in balancing the need to attract overseas investment capital with the need to maintain a preponderance of Australian ownership of land, is he prepared to obtain details of the USA legislation and make it available to members of this Parliament?

Answer:—

Yes. I have available a photocopy of the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978. I will make a copy available to any member of this House who requests one.

It is a Federal Act. I believe that, in addition, there is a Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act of 1980, but I do not have a copy available.

3. Monitoring by Local Authorities of Noise Levels

Mr Yewdale asked the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services—

With reference to the Noise Abatement Act which has application throughout Queensland—

(1) How many local authorities in Queensland have acquired instruments for the purpose of measuring noise levels?

(2) Has the Government initiated any discussions with councils with the objective of suggesting or recommending suitable monitoring equipment?

(3) What method of noise monitoring is being used by local government should they not have suitable effective equipment?

Answer:—

(1) A number of the larger local authorities in Queensland have noise-measuring instruments. Of the remainder, many have access to noise-measuring instruments and the Division of Noise Abatement also provides support in that regard.

(2) Last year 12 regional seminars were conducted for local authorities in Queensland. All local authorities were invited and over 200 delegates attended. During these seminars suitable equipment has been discussed. A substantial number of local authorities have expressed continuing interest in measuring techniques, and it is planned to devote additional time to this in the second round of seminars currently being planned.

(3) If local authorities do not have suitable effective equipment, the Division of Noise Abatement provides support within the constraints of its own manpower and material resources. A good deal can be achieved by subjective evaluation as the very first step, particularly when the noise problem is well defined and local in character.

4. Road Trains, Banana-Biloela Road

Mr Hartwig asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police—

With reference to the prohibition of dog-trailers between Banana and Biloela, which combination can carry about 1 000 bales of hay compared with a semi-trailer's capacity of 500 bales—

Will he consider allowing permits to be issued to ensure that road transport of hay, so desperately needed in Central and North-west Queensland, can go unimpeded?

Answer:—

Although some savings in transport costs are possible by using road train combinations instead of semi-trailers, road trains carry a greater safety hazard to both the vehicle itself and to the other road users.

Full consideration was given to the route between Banana and Biloela in the recent revision of road train routes which was approved by Cabinet. Inclusion of this section of road was not possible because of the present inferior alignment, formation and pavement width; also, overtaking opportunities are inadequate for the traffic volume, which exceeds 1 100 vehicles per day.

The matter of road trains on this route was again raised by officers of the Main Roads Department with the Rockhampton Superintendent of Traffic and his staff in the last few weeks. The police are also opposed to use by road trains on the grounds that extremely hazardous conditions for other road users would be created if road trains are permitted to operate on this route, irrespective of the nature of the load to be carried.

5. Importation of Foodstuffs; Ice Cream Manufacture

Mr Hartwig asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to the importation of foodstuffs—

(1) What amounts of (a) canned pineapple products (b) fresh and frozen boned-out beef (c) butter, cream and milk and (d) pork and bacon, have been imported in the years ended 30 June 1980, 1981 and 1982?

(2) What are the ingredients, expressed as an amount per litre, used in the manufacture of ice cream?

Answer:—

(1) The figures for the year 1979-80, 1980-81 and 1981-82 are respectively—

Canned pineapple products—668 000, 1 277 000 and 1 770 000 litres valued at $291,000, $618,000 and $909,000.

Fresh, frozen and boned-out beef—1 502, 2 179 and 1 648 tonnes valued at $4,040,000, $5,876,000 and $4,031,000.

Butter—1 332, 2 530 and 336 tonnes valued at $1,508,000, $2,979,000 and $573,000.

Cream and milk—2 171, 3 274 and 2 453 tonnes valued at $3,540,000, $3,509,000 and $4,232,000.

Pork and bacon—24 tonnes valued at $67,000 in 1979-80 only.

(2) Ice cream is a frozen dairy product which contains milk fat, milk solids, sugar, flavourings, colourings and gelatine or other approved stabilisers. The Food Standards Regulations require that (a) it must contain a minimum of 100 grams of milk fat per kilogram of ice cream and (b) it must contain a minimum of 168 grams of food solids per litre of ice cream.

Ice cream sold in Queensland is analysed on a routine basis by the Division of Dairying and Fisheries. On an average analysis, one litre of ice cream is made up of 170 grams of food solids, of which approximately 70 grams is sugar, 50 grams is milk fat, 40 grams is milk solids and 10 grams is flavouring, etc. Added to this is approximately 300 grams of water to make a total of about 470 grams. The balance of the product to make up to a volume of one litre is air which is incorporated in the product in the churning process and gives ice cream its characteristic texture.

6. Assistance for Owners of Drought-declared Properties

Mr Neal asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

As many grain growers with failed winter crops will not receive any substantial income until December 1983 if good summer rains are not forthcoming, which situation will be reflected in the economies of affected country towns and districts—

(1) Will he consider widening the criteria by which individual drought declarations of properties are made so that owners, who are either totally or predominantly dependent on grain production, are eligible for the various drought-relief measures?

(2) Will such owners be given consideration in the scheme whereby interest payment rates over 12 per cent will be subsidised to 12 per cent provided they can prove hardship by having failed or poor crops?

Answer:—

(1) Owners of individually drought-declared properties are currently eligible to apply for assistance under the current drought-relief measures for carry-on purposes until receipt of income from their next crop.

(2) The Commonwealth has already announced details of the interest subsidy available to primary producers in drought-declared areas. Full details of this assistance and the eligibility criteria have already been published. Application forms are available at all Post Offices and from Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry Regional Offices.

7. Mail-order Tattoo-removal Kit

Mr Yewdale asked the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations—

With reference to a mail-order tattoo-removal kit being sold by a Victorian mail-order firm which has been banned by the South Australian Consumer Affairs Minister—

Will he communicate with his South Australian counterpart with the objective of taking similar action to protect Queensland from this product?

Answer:—

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

Mr Yewdale: I do so.

8. Research Funding for Primary Industries

Mr McKechnie asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to a page one article in "Queensland Fruit and Vegetable News" entitled "14 Industry Research Projects in Jeopardy"—

What action will be taken to overcome the problem of Commonwealth cuts in research funding for primary industries?

Answer:—

I understand that the Commonwealth special research grants have not been reduced in total quantity in recent years. However, they have not been expanded sufficiently to supplement the increased voluntary industry funding of agricultural research in Australia.

For example, in 1982-83 these Commonwealth grants supplemented less than one quarter of the fruit and vegetable research projects submitted by my department. Partial funding for these projects has been promised by the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing on the basis of my department applying for matching Commonwealth special research grants. The COD is now reconsidering its position on the matter.

During the last year, the Senate Standing Committee on National Resources conducted an inquiry into the Commonwealth's role in rural research and extension. The Queensland Government made a formal submission to the inquiry, and included in this submission was a recommendation for expansion of the Comonwealth special research grant. The inquiry report has not been released as yet.

9. Effect on Employment of Claims for Wage Increases and Shorter Working Hours

Mr Bertoni asked the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations—

With reference to the recent Canberra demonstrations by steelworkers and others employed in the mining industry—

(1) Will he embark on a public relations campaign directed specifically to those unionists still pressing for wage increases and shorter working hours, to bring home the damage they are doing to the State?

(2) Will he also endeavour to convince the new Leader of the Opposition to convey the same message to those unions affiliated with the ALP in the interest of retaining employment for those working at the present time in this State?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) The Government has already demonstrated its concern about excessive demands for wage increases and a shorter working week together with the damage it does to the economy and productivity at a time when every effort should be made to get more jobs and keep costs down.

The honourable member's observation are noted, and the Government will keep on reminding the trade union movement that there are much bigger issues at stake in the current economic climate.

10. Webster and Wood School of Advanced Hairdressing Courses

Mr Bertoni asked the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations—

With reference to an advertisement which appeared in "Sunday Sun" on 17 October soliciting candidates for the Webster and Wood School of Advanced Hairdressing courses where, it is claimed, trainees can become fully qualified hairdressers within nine months, which advertisement read:

"Special 9 months' diploma course. Not 4 years (as with a lowly paid apprenticeship/s), but 9 months and you're a fully qualified hairdresser earning top salaries. The ultimate financial benefit is substantial. Next school commences February 1st, 1983. The full price (with everything included, such as books, tools and clip ons) is only $3,900."—

(1) Does the State Government recognise the diploma from this school?

(2) Are hairdressers from this school allowed to employ apprentices?

(3) Why should any person undertake a four-year apprenticeship when this course can be completed in nine months?

(4) What is the real difference between a four-year apprenticeship course and this abbreviated course?

(5) Is he aware that Webster and Wood require a $1,000 registration fee and the balance of $2,900 to be paid one month prior to the commencement date and that no money will be refunded for any reason?

(6) Will he make the public aware of the complications and restrictions that may arise from these short-cut qualification schemes?

Answer:—

(1 to 6) I am aware of the advertisement to which the honourable member refers and the course as advertised is currently being investigated, in conjunction with the principals, by officers of my department.

A graduate from this school or any similar school who sought an apprenticeship would be assessed as to his competence in relation to the apprenticeship calling concerned. He would then be granted the appropriate credit off the term of apprenticeship and from technical college training. An evaluation could be made only after the completion of the course.

Experience with an interstate short-term hairdressing course is that most graduates from that course have reached a level approximately equivalent to the first year of the Queensland Technical College course. In a small number of instances a greater degree of competence is obtained.

The real difference between short or long courses in any field would be dependent on the content of the course. Individual aptitude and competence of the trainees would be a factor to be considered. However, persons undertaking a short-term program would not have the facility to reinforce acquired skills in a work situation to the extent that they would under a usual apprenticeship arrangement. No person could directly employ an apprentice hairdresser unless he himself had attained tradesman status or had in his employ a qualified hairdresser.

11. Maximum Permissible Blood Alcohol Level for Motor Vehicle Drivers

Mr Bertoni asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Will he explain why he did not wait for the results of an exhaustive RACQ report which was financed from Government funds before introducing the .05 blood-alcohol legislation?

(2) While I and many others seek to reduce the road toll, will he agree that his rapid action in this direction was a knee-jerk over-reaction which has many other adverse effects such as those on the social life of Queenslanders, and employment in the catering industry at a time of worsening unemployment?

(3) Is he aware that a National Party Justice Committee report presented to a recent National Party State Conference said: "The Committee was of the opinion, as a result of research, that the lowering of the blood alcohol concentration level is not a particularly important matter in lowering the road toll. In dangerous driving causing death and in dangerous driving causing grievous bodily harm cases, alcohol is either—(a) not a substantial cause of the offending driving, or (b) it is in the very high range in cases which it is a major cause of the driving. Such high readings occur in hardened drinkers and irresponsible hoons. The cases have been negligible in which the blood alcohol concentration in such cases has been between .05 and .08 and in the cases stated in such range, alcohol was at most a minor contributing cause"?

(4) If he is keen to take positive and effective action, why not legislate against the introduction of a new strong beer, being introduced by a major brewery, although that legislation would be yet another bureaucratic invasion of private enterprise?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The Queensland Road Safety Council and the RACQ have joined forces to conduct a major road safety research project to identify road accident causes in Queensland. The total cost of this joint study project will be $20,000 and is financed on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the Road Safety Council, an arm of my department, and the RACQ. The study is a very comprehensive and detailed one and it is anticipated that it will take more than 12 months to complete.

The study will look at a wide range of factors relating to the road toll, including age factors, licence experience, ambient causes such as weather, roads, lighting, with a specific overall emphasis on the under 25-year-old drivers. In view of the long time involved in this joint study, a number of initiatives have already been taken to attempt to bring about a reduction in our road toll.

As the honourable member is aware, legislation relating to the lowering of the permissible blood alcohol level and other aspects of road safety were recently introduced in the House for the consideration of all honourable members. Elected representatives, including the honourable member, debated the issue and the proposed changes passed through all stages without amendment. Just for the record, no-one from either side of the House voted against the Bill.

(4) The matter of the alcoholic content of beer is one for consideration by my colleagues the Honourable the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and the Honourable the Minister for Health.

12. Gateway Bridge

Mr Burns asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police—

(1) With reference to the announcement in September 1979 that the lowest tender for the Gateway Bridge at Queensport was from Transfield for $40,383,000 and as this Parliament was told the toll one way would be 80c, what is the estimated cost of this cross-river link today?

(2) When will the Gateway Bridge be finished, and what is the estimated toll for cars, trucks, pedestrians and other users for a single crossing?

Answer:—

(1) The contract price tendered for the construction of the bridge was $40,383,000. The contract provided for the adjustment of the contract amount in accordance with the rise in costs in the building industry. The final contract amount by 1986 is expected to be approximately $80,000,000. The final cost, including land acquisition, design and supervision and financing costs, is expected to be approximately $120,000,000.

(2) The bridge is expected to be completed early in 1986. The toll for a single crossing for a car was 80c in September 1979 values, with this value indexed to inflationary factor. The indexed value of this toll is currently $1.10 and it is expected to be approximately $1.50 when the bridge opens to traffic. The toll for a 5-axle truck was given as $3.20 in September 1979. This is expected to be approximately $6 when the bridge is completed. There is no provision on the bridge for pedestrians.

13. Queensland Cultural Centre

Mr Burns asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

With reference to the construction of the Queensland Cultural Centre on the south bank of the Brisbane River, to the original cost of $40m announced when the project was first planned, and to the public announcement that the project, including the Performing Arts Complex, Lyric Theatre, Concert Hall etc., would be completed in time for the now finalised Commonwealth Games—

What are the current costs, the projected final costs, the expected completion time and reasons for the long delays and increased costs?

Answer:—

It was never intended that the Queensland Cultural Centre would be completed by 1982. Although some delays have been experienced with the Performing Arts Building, which is not unusual on a project of this magnitude, it has not interfered with the target dates for other stages, and it is anticipated that the whole complex will be completed in 1985.

The original budget of $42.4m at 1974 prices for the completion of the total complex has now increased to $126m at June 1982 prices as a result of inflation.

14. Art Education

Mr Burns asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Is the Board of Advanced Education predicting that the number of third-year art graduates will decline from 40 to 10 between 1986 and 1989 and that this figure will remain at that level until 1990?

(2) If so, on what criteria are these predicted figures based?

(3) Why, apart from physical education, is art the only subject area to show a decline of such magnitude over this period when all other subjects show a rise?

(4) What is the reason for the decline in demand for graduates in art education?

Answer:—

(1) Present planning documents of the Board of Advanced Education suggest that graduates from the three-year art teacher education course will need to be of the order of 40 each year until 1986. Thereafter the number will need to be reduced progressively to about 10 by 1989.

(2) The planned pattern of graduates reflects the fact that secondary school enrolments are to peak in 1986-87 and decline thereafter until 1992-93. Consequently, there will be a reduced demand for secondary schoolteachers between 1986 and 1992.

(3) Teachers of art are not produced exclusively from the three-year course. It is not accurate to say "all other subjects show a rise"

(4) Apart from declining demand for art teachers on account of decreased secondary school enrolments between 1986 and 1992, the decline in demand reflects also the fact that there is no backlog of shortage to be overcome as applies in some other subject specialties. As indicated in the planning document from which the figures are quoted, teacher-employing authorities have advised of the need to decrease the output of teachers of art from courses of teacher education because supply in recent years has exceeded demand.

15. Use of Carcasses in Fertiliser Manufacture

Mr Stephan asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to the severe drought conditions being experienced in many areas of the State and Commonwealth and the action being taken to shoot both sheep and cattle so affected by these conditions and to the high price paid for chemical fertiliser in the market-place—

(1) Will these carcasses be available to be used in the manufacture of blood and bone fertiliser?

(2) Has any fertiliser company expressed an interest to use the carcasses so destroyed in blood and bone fertiliser?

(3) Have the economics of such a venture ever been investigated and, if so, what was the finding of the investigation?

Answer:—

(1) It is anticipated that limited numbers of drought-affected sheep and cattle will be shot under the on-property slaughter subsidy scheme. They are likely to be destroyed in small numbers over widely scattered areas at any one time. It would therefore be difficult to co-ordinate the collection and transport of such stock for manufacture of fertiliser.

(2) My department has not been approached by fertiliser companies or other processors to utilise the carcasses.

(3) I am not aware of any specific study of the economics of such a venture, but I am advised that the value of the potential yield of fertiliser is far less than the average cost of freight plus processing costs. Travelling drought-stricken livestock on the hoof would create serious welfare problems.

16. New South Wales Government Promotion of Fruit and Vegetable Sales

Mr Stephan asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to suggestions for the introduction of sales promotion of fresh fruit and vegetables by the New South Wales Government—

(1) Who have made the contributions to the cost of this promotion presently suggested by the New South Wales Government in NSW?

(2) What total funding has been suggested for the scheme to be introduced and who will make the contribution?

(3) Is it accurate that the officers from New South Wales came to Queensland for first-hand information from the COD Sales Promotion Department and have followed this material and information indicating its high quality and content?

Answer:—

(1) The promotion of fruit and vegetables in New South Wales forms part of the Government's decision to introduce in that State a consumer information service relating to fresh food.

The promotion service began in November 1981 and was initially funded by organisations involved in the marketing of fresh produce, most notably the Sydney Farm Produce Market Authority. I understand the New South Wales Department of Agriculture provides assistance by way of personnel to co-ordinate the service and provides liaison with both the industry and the media. This co-ordination role is undertaken by a primary products promotion officer in the New South Wales Department of Agriculture.

(2) I understand the New South Wales Government is proposing legislation which would enable a fee of 2c per package to be collected on produce sold in the Sydney Market. It is proposed that moneys collected in this way, in addition to vehicle parking and stall-holding charges, be used to finance the promotion service from the beginning of 1983. I am informed that the revenue raised in this manner is expected to amount to between $800,000 and $1m in 1983.

(3) Officers of the New South Wales Department of Agriculture sought the advice of the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing in Queensland prior to becoming involved in the promotion of horticultural products in New South Wales. The Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing has been a leader in the field of promotion of fruit and vegetables for many years and this has been extremely beneficial to horticultural producers in this State and, indeed, throughout Australia.

17. Instrumental Music Instructors, Gympie

Mr Stephan asked the Minister for Education—

With reference to the instrumental music instruction program operating in State schools and owing to the outstanding success of this program in the Gympie area—

Will he give consideration to increasing the instructors for this course in Gympie?

Answer:—

Yes. The instrumental music program in the Gympie area will enter the second phase of implementation in 1983, and appropriate staffing arrangements are being made for that extension.

18. Overloading by Trucks Registered Interstate

Mr Harper asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) What action is taken by the Main Roads Department to make departmental officers aware of overloading by trucks registered interstate?

(2) If the Main Roads Department is, or if it were to be, so advised, would action be taken by the department to prosecute the owners of any such interstate registered vehicles who do not have a current Queensland roadworthiness certificate and licence to hire?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) The honourable member should direct the question in so far as it relates to overloading of vehicles to the Honourable the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police.

The matter of licences to hire is one within my jurisdiction. If a vehicle with interstate registration was detected carrying goods for hire intrastate without a licence to hire, then, subject to the circumstances, prosecution action would be initiated against the offender.

It is a pre-condition to the issue of a licence to hire that the vehicle be covered by a current certificate of inspection issued under the Motor Vehicles Safety Act.

I would also mention that vehicles specifically registered for interstate carriage, namely, with IS plates, will not be issued with a licence to hire to carry intrastate in Queensland.

19. Queensland Housing Commission Home Loan Scheme

Mr Mackenroth asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

With reference to the Queensland Housing Commission Home Loan Scheme—

(1) What are the funding details for 1982-83 and what proportion of this funding is being obtained from (a) Commonwealth advances under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreements, (b) internal or revolving funds, (c) State Government funds into the CSHA program, (d) loans from State Treasury and (e) any other source, specifying the nature of that source?

(2) What is the interest payable for each amount given in (1)?

(3) What is the anticipated breakdown of funds to be advanced between the (a) interest subsidy scheme, (b) commercial scheme and (c) funds advanced prior to 1 August?

(4) How many applications were held for home finance by the Queensland Housing Commission on 1 August?

(5) How many new applications have been received since that date?

(6) Since 1 August, how many applicants have declined the offer of home finance?

(7) How many loans have been advanced since 1 August under the (a) interest subsidy scheme and (b) commercial scheme?

(8) What is the value of these loans under the (a) interest subsidy scheme and (b) commercial scheme?

(9) For the first 20 loans advanced under the interest subsidy scheme, what was the (a) amount of the loan, (b) breadwinner's weekly wage and (c) assessed weekly household wage for loan repayment?

Answer:—

(1)—

	$	$
Home Purchase Assistance Account		35·6m
Queensland Housing Commission Fund		118·0m
		$153·6m
(a) Commonwealth advances under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreements		21·4m
(b) Internal or Revolving Funds—		
Home Purchase Assistance Account ..	14·2m	
Queensland Housing Commission Fund ..	18·0m	32·2m
(c) State Government funds into the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement program		Nil
(d) Loans from State Treasury		100·0m
(e) Any other		Nil
		$153·6m

(2)—

(a) 4·5 per cent

(b) Home Purchase Assistance Account from 3·5 per cent to 7·0 per cent. Queensland Housing Commission Fund from 3·0 per cent to 16·4 per cent.

(c) Nil

(d) 14·0 per cent to 14·5 per cent

(e) Nil

(3)—

(a) $65m

(b) $88·6m

(c) Included in (a) is $2·9m advanced prior to 1 August.

(4) 2 993

(5) 748

(6) Accurate figures unavailable. 139 were either refused or were unable to proceed.

(7)—

(a) 83

(b) 28

In addition, 826 loans are being processed for both schemes.

(8)—

(a) $2·4m

(b) $1·1m

(9)—

Loan	Main Breadwinner's Weekly Wage	Household Income
$	$	$
30,000	300	300
28,400	270	270
30,000	228	228
30,000	240	474
30,000	275	505
30,000	202	363
30,000	249	459
30,000	224	224
30,000	234	234
30,000	256	256
30,000	244	542
30,000	236	279
29,655	235	235
30,000	235	235
30,000	261	397
30,000	242	448
30,000	251	251
30,000	277	492
30,000	235	235
30,000	257	257

20. Queensland Housing Commission Home Rental Scheme

Mr Mackenroth asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

With reference to the Queensland Housing Commission Home Rental Scheme—

(1) What are the funding details for 1982-83, and what proportion of this funding is being obtained from (a) Commonwealth advances, (b) internal or revolving funds, (c) State Government funds into the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreements program, (d) Commonwealth grants for rental housing, giving details and (e) State Government funds outside the CSHA?

(2) What is the anticipated net increase in rental dwelling units held by the Queensland Housing Commission in the 1982-83 financial years?

Answer:—

	$	$	$
(1)—			42·9 m
(a)		4·6 m	
(b)		18·8 m	
(c)		Nil	
(d) Pensioner	5·1 m		
Crisis Accommodation	0·6 m		
Welfare	13·8 m		
		19·5 m	
(e)		Nil	
			42·9 m

(2) 980.

21. Works Department Contracts

Mr Mackenroth asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) How many contracts exceeding $1m were awarded by the Works Department in 1981-82?

(2) For each of these contracts, what was the (a) nature of contract, (b) value of contract and (c) name of company awarded the contract?

(3) How many contracts exceeding $50,000 were awarded by the Works Department without going to tender in 1981-82?

(4) For each of these contracts, what was the (a) nature of contract, (b) value of contract and (c) name of company awarded the contract?

Answer:—

(1) Sixteen in the 1981-82 financial year.

(2) I table the information requested by the honourable member.

(3 & 4) There were two quotations in this category accepted during the 1981-82 financial year. One was from Cemac Interiors for $103,242 for partitioning in the Executive Building. This partitioning was required to match the existing partitioning system and the price was negotiated on that submitted on a previous contract. The other quotation was from Melicco Ltd, Sydney, for $64,000 for paving material at Parliament House. Melocco Ltd was the only source of supply for the porphyry paving cubes required.

It is the practice of the department to invite competitive tenders either by public tender or by selective tendering in some instances.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid on the table the document referred to.

22. Parking Concessions for Disabled Persons

Mr Warner asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police—

(1) Is he aware of a report from the International Year of Disabled Persons which requested city councils in Queensland to consider making provisions for parking for disabled people?

(2) Is he also aware that although many concessional schemes already exist within some city areas in Queensland, there is no existing arrangement by which a disabled person, having a permit for himself or his vehicle entitling him to concessions in one local authority area, has reciprocal rights in other local authorities within this State or in other States so as to give a reciprocal arrangement between authorities?

(3) Will he give consideration to a means whereby practical implementation of this scheme can take place and, if necessary, introduce the appropriate legislation?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) In terms of the Traffic Act, local authorities may make by-laws defining traffic areas in which regulated parking shall prevail and providing for the fees payable in respect of parking a vehicle in a metered space.

Following representations from various sources, the Traffic Act was amended earlier this year to provide that a by-law made by a local authority in relation to regulated parking may provide that the appropriate parking fee shall not be payable in respect of vehicles used for the carriage of disabled persons.

Such power is exercisable at the discretion of individual local authorities and any further amendment of the Traffic Act to meet the request of the honourable member would be a matter for consideration by the Honourable the Minister for Transport in the first instance.

23. Processing of Documents by Titles Office

Mr Katter asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Will he streamline the operations of the Titles Office to expedite the processing of all documentation?

(2) Is he aware that nit-picking and sometimes entirely frivolous requisitions are made prerequisites before documents can be processed, thus not only adding time but also enormous legal costs to what should be regarded as fairly straightforward transactions?

Answer:—

(1) The systems in operation in the Titles Office are constantly under review to ensure that the processing of documents is expedited.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I rise to a point of order. I do not wish to be a nark, but the noise from the public gallery is so loud that it is impossible for members to hear what is being said.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I request co-operation from all persons in the public gallery this morning in obtaining silence. At the same time, I seek the co-operation of members in the Chamber, who are also making a tremendous amount of noise.

Answer (contd):—

A system of loose-leaf titles and new registration procedures has been introduced.

At present, a team from the State Government Computer Centre is investigating the Titles Office to determine means of introducing computerisation of the register at an early date.

Releases of mortgages, transfers and bills of mortgage, which constitute 85 per cent of documents lodged in the Titles Office, are processed and registered within two days in Townsville, five days in Rockhampton and six to seven days in Brisbane. This compares more than favourably with delays in this type of document of ten days in New South Wales, three months in Victoria and six days in South Australia.

(2) The registration of real property documents is subject to the requirements of the Real Property Acts, the Building Units and Group Titles Act, the Property Law Act, the Local Government Act, the Trusts Act and other Acts which impose many duties on the Registrar of Titles. Accordingly, all documents registered must comply with these legislative requirements. All requisitions are issued solely for obtaining this compliance.

The registrar does have power to correct patent errors and does in fact effect such corrections in 6 per cent of all documents lodged. As the purchase of land and a home is usually the most important and expensive transaction the average citizen enters into, it is essential that the documentation be correct to avoid unlawful registration. That this caution is justified is borne out by the few claims made on the Assurance Fund in Queensland over the past 80 years.

24. Hot-line System for Reporting Dangerous Drivers

Mr Katter asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Since USA studies indicate that accidents, particularly those with alcohol as an element, tend to involve habitual offenders, will he not agree that zeroing in on these irresponsible people will eliminate a large cause of road fatalities and lessen accidents?

(2) Will he institute a hot-line system similar to that which operates in a number of USA States whereby any person can ring a certain phone number and report any driver driving dangerously, thus zeroing in on and removing from the roads people who are a danger to themselves, as well as to pedestrians and to the public of Queensland?

Answer:—

(1) I would point out that the existing legislation already provides more severe penalties for those persons detected with a high blood alcohol level. Drivers with a high blood alcohol level are more readily detected on our roads, and much of the present drink driving enforcement is concentrated on these drivers. This is reflected by the fact that in 1981-82, of the 1 687 positive tests, 985, or 58 per cent, were .15 or above.

The honourable member would also be aware that recent amendments to the Traffic Act passed by this House provide for a system of court referrals of drink drivers to a special series of lectures conducted by the Queensland Road Safety Council. Naturally, persons attending these lectures will be given specific information about the medical and social consequences of alcohol abuse and will be provided with information concerning the availability of various rehabilitation programs.

(2) With regard to the initiative proposed by the honourable member—it has never been the policy of this Government to approach or appeal to members of the public to act in a parapolice role by reporting or informing on other citizens for traffic or driving offences. Such methods are fraught with inherent dangers and are best left to well-trained and professional police law enforcement officers.

25. Proposed Uranium Enrichment Plant

Mr Katter asked the Premier—

Will he attempt to influence the decision on the siting of a uranium enrichment plant so that if in fact the plant is ever proceeded with it will be sited in the Gulf or Peninsula country of North Queensland, where the plant's inherent dangers will be more than offset by the advantages such development will bring to these very sparsely populated areas?

Answer:—

The siting of a uranium enrichment plant in Australia is primarily a matter for the Uranium Enrichment Group of Australia in consultation with the international enrichment consortium Urenco-Centec, which is the holder of the centrifuge technology.

UEGA's expression of interest in siting a prospective plant in South-east Queensland reflects the need to locate a plant in a zone of low seismic activity and in an area with access to a major established industrial base.

For the information of the honourable member, I would advise that operating experience overseas has demonstrated that the uranium enrichment industry is safe. There is no involvement of highly radioactive materials in the process, and the development of such an industry in Queensland would be subject to strict environmental safeguards and international regulations.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr WRIGHT: Because some Ministers are not in the House I will be forced to put two of my questions on notice, the first of which is to the Minister for Commerce and Industry.

Mr Sullivan: I am here.

Mr WRIGHT: The matter is a little difficult. I have to put my first question on notice because the Minister would not have the relevant information.

[*The honourable gentleman proceeded to give notice of a question.*]

Mr WRIGHT: I am sure the Minister would not be able to give that information. I apologise if I implied that he was not present in the Chamber. The Minister of whom I wish to ask a question without notice is the Minister for Lands and Forestry, who is not present.

[*The honourable gentleman proceeded to give notice of a question.*]

Pay-roll Tax

Mr WRIGHT I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Is he able or prepared to disclose the employment growth estimates on which the projected increase in pay-roll tax revenue was based, that is, the 17 per cent increase or an amount of $408m for the 1982-83 financial year? Is he prepared to table those estimates?

Dr EDWARDS: I would have thought that the Leader of the Opposition would be aware that the mechanism by which pay-roll tax estimates are arrived is based on the number of people that the Government believes will be employed in Queensland. That figure, in turn, is based on the rate of growth over the last year, the estimated growth rate the Government described in its Budget and the estimated receipts. That is quite simple, and the honourable member can see clearly what the growth will be.

The Government has made clear what it believes the growth will be, and it stands by those figures. I have no doubt that there will be an increase in pay-roll tax as has been forecast, and as was the case last year. In fact, pay-roll tax receipts last year, despite the prophets of gloom on the other side, were far in excess of what we budgeted for, and I have no doubt that that will occur again. It will be a success story, and the Leader of the Opposition can expect that pay-roll tax receipts this year will again exceed the estimated receipts.

National Water Resources Program Allocations

Mr RANDELL: I ask the Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs: Was yesterday's announcement by Senator Carrick about the allocation to the State under the National Water Resources Program in line with that made in the Federal Budget? Is there any possibility of further Federal funds being obtained from the Federal Government to provide urgently needed relief for the Eton Irrigation Scheme and for other projects throughout Queensland?

Mr TOMKINS: I thank the honourable member for giving me notice of this question. I have taken steps to get the information for him. The answer is that the Federal Budget handed down in late August indicated that a total of $41.7m would be made available to the States under the National Water Resources Program in 1982-83. The Budget announcement indicated that the States would be advised of their individual allocations at a later date, and yesterday's announcement by Senator Carrick has confirmed the individual grants made available to Queensland.

I understand that some States are experiencing difficulty in providing matching funds for possible grants under the program and that, as a result, some additional funds may become available later in the year. The honourable member may be assured that I will press Queensland's case in respect of any additional funds that may become available, and I will keep in mind his comments regarding the Eton Irrigation Scheme.

Water Supply for Coppabella Swimming-pool

Mr RANDELL: I ask the Minister for Transport: As it has been announced that the Braeside-Moranbah water pipeline will be completed shortly, when will water from that project be available at the railway township of Coppabella? Will a water-treatment plant be built, and when? Is the Minister aware that the swimming-pool complex in Coppabella is almost complete and that unless water is obtained to fill and test the pool for leaks, the finishing date for the project could be put back several months?

Mr LANE: The water from the Braeside pipeline will be available for houses at Coppabella in April 1983, if the current program keeps to schedule. Water for Coppabella will come from bores from Braeside, near Denison Creek in the Nebo area. It will be necessary to establish whether the water needs treatment and, if so, in what way. The bores will have to be pumped for some weeks to establish consistency of quality and to determine whether treatment is necessary.

As to the latter part of the honourable member's question—I appreciate his concern about the filling of the swimming-pool that is under construction at Coppabella. I find myself and the railway administration somewhat constrained by a number of difficulties. The first difficulty is caused by the current drought in Queensland. The second one is caused by the limits placed on the use of water in Coppabella. I can appreciate the reluctance on the part of staff to use water for swimming-pool purposes. Thirdly, I understand that, because of the present acute shortage of water in Mackay, there is some initial reluctance on the part of the Mackay enginemen to haul water to fill a swimming-pool. The Mackay City Council also has some reservations about supplying fresh water by tanker for that purpose.

When I visited the township with the honourable member for Mirani last year, I gave an undertaking that the construction of the pool would be completed and that it would be put into use at an early stage. I wish to meet my obligations to the people of Coppabella and maintain the very excellent relationship that the honourable member for Mirani and I have with the local people. I will be doing everything I can to find a way through the tangle of obstacles so that I may meet my obligation to fill the swimming-pool at Coppabella.

Use of Mercantile Acts for Tax Avoidance

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I refer the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General to the growing popularity of limited partnerships in Queensland set up under the Mercantile Acts, 1867 to 1896, and to a statement made by the Premier in "The Sunday Mail" of 15 August 1982—

> "I know what I am talking about. We've got a company and the tax rate is another rort that Canberra is up to."

I ask the Minister: Is it not a fact that limited partnerships in Queensland are being used as a tax-avoidance mechanism by which supposed losses can be claimed on tax without the silent partners incurring liability over those losses? As the Taxation Commissioner and other taxation authorities regard limited partnerships purely as tax lurks, is it not the responsibility of the Government to review the structure, purpose and use being made of limited partnerships in Queensland with a view to preventing further abuse of the provisions for avoidance and evasion of tax?

Mr DOUMANY: Purely as a matter of interest, I notice that the Leader of the Opposition is out of his seat and that the Opposition benches are quite empty. As the Leader of the Opposition chooses to use the tactics that he used this morning, it is about time that be got a bit back in return.

In reply to the honourable member's question—he knows, from previous answers that I have given in this Chamber, that an inquiry has been under way for some time by the Queensland Law Reform Commission. It has been given terms of reference to examine the workings of the Mercantile Acts in Queensland and the workings of limited partnerships.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What terms of reference?

Mr DOUMANY: If the honourable member wishes to discuss that matter with me I will certainly tell him the terms of reference.

I am awaiting a report from the commission. In the interim I am not prepared to comment in any conclusive way. I will say, though, that it may be that some limited partnerships are being used as devices to assist in tax avoidance or evasion. But many limited partnerships are bona fide and are being used for the original purpose for which limited partnerships were designed. It is really an extravagant claim, and it goes a long way beyond reason, to suggest that all limited partnerships are being used in an improper way. I am informed by people in business who are not engaging in tax evasion or avoidance

schemes that limited partnerships are useful to business in Queensland and other parts of Australia. As the honourable member knows, the same legislation is available in Tasmania and Western Australia.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: No. Their legislation is tighter.

Mr DOUMANY: The same entity is available in those States for businesses to utilise. When the report from the Law Reform Commission reaches me I will certainly bring it forward. In the interim, I will be happy to discuss the matter further with the honourable member.

Aboriginal and Islander Defendants

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I ask the Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs: What steps has his department taken to implement the recommendations of the 1977 Lucas Committee of Inquiry into the Enforcement of Criminal Law in Queensland, which accepted the need for special responsibilities towards unrepresented Aboriginal and Islander defendants? What steps has his department taken to implement the findings of the Australian Law Reform Commission recommendations on the Aboriginal customary law?

Mr TOMKINS: I cannot give the honourable member a complete answer to his question. He knows that today there will be a debate on the Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs Estimates. The matter referred to by the honourable member is mentioned in the annual report of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. I will also refer to that matter to some extent when I speak to my Estimates.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Would the Minister like me to place the question on notice?

Mr TOMKINS: Yes.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I do so accordingly.

Government Funding for Independent Schools

Dr LOCKWOOD: In directing a question to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, I draw his attention to the headline in today's "Telegraph", which states "State aid stir by ALP". The article beneath that headline reports as follows—

> "Federal Labor MPs today are expected to endorse a new education policy which will cut government funds for top independent schools."

I now ask: Will the Treasurer affirm his Government's support for all schools, and could the closure of the independent schools referred to in the newspaper report lead to overcrowding in State schools?

Dr EDWARDS: I am not at all surprised at the statement attributed to the Federal Labor Party.

Mr Wright: You know it would not be true, anyway.

Dr EDWARDS: The Federal Labor Party's past record indicates that the report is correct.

The report reflects the ALP's prejudice and class war against many of the long-established and traditional education institutions, such as grammar schools, private schools and independent schools in Queensland, to which parents, by choice, love to send their children and to which the parents make a substantial financial contribution, thereby relieving the taxpayer of a considerable additional financial burden in meeting the total costs of education in Queensland.

The Government's commitment is to a continuation of its policy to give the people of Queensland a choice of schools. The Government will continue to provide funds to private schools at as high a level as is possible. The Labor Party, of course, is committed to a philosophy that is totally opposite. The Queensland Government makes no apology for its stance.

The attitude expressed by the Labor Party is indicative of its attitude to private schools throughout the nation. A philosophy based on needs or on discrimination against private and independent schools is anathema to this Government. We will have no part

of it; we will fight it tooth and nail. As Treasurer, I commit the Queensland Government to a continuation of support for private schools in Queensland and of funding education programs through the State system. The choice must be given, and it must be provided by adequate funding at both State and Federal level.

At some time the ALP will have to go to the people. This issue is one that must be raised at that time. The Government stands by its record. The ALP record is absolutely disgraceful. In Queensland the ALP stands condemned for its policy. The Government's policy is clear; it will continue to give support to the private schools system, which plays a major role in the education of the children of Queensland.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1981-82

Mr SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor transmitting the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1981-82.

Estimates ordered to be printed, and referred to the Committee of Supply.

At 12 noon,

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

SUPPLY

Resumption of Committee—Estimates—Third and Fourth Allotted Days

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Miller, Ithaca) in the chair

Estimates-in-Chief, 1982-83

Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs

Queensland Water Resources Commission and Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

"That $42,521,475 be granted for 'Queensland Water Resources Commission' and 'Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement'."

I rise today to speak on the Estimates of the Queensland Water Resources Commission and the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.

I have, since being appointed to the portfolio, derived great satisfaction from being involved in these very divergent administrations. To the respective Permanent Heads and all the officers of these departments, I convey my thanks for their assistance and loyalty.

I now propose to deal with the achievements and future proposals of the respective departments.

The primary duties of the Commissioner of Water Resources are the administration of the Water Act, the Irrigation Act and the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act. He also administers the River Improvement Trust Act through which river inprovement trusts undertake works of flood mitigation and stream improvements in their respective areas. The commissioner represents Queensland on the Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission. Commission officers serve on a number of inter-departmental committees related to development projects.

Through these Acts and activities the Government is involved in all aspects of water resource development including stock, domestic and irrigation purposes and provision for urban, mining and power-generation development.

The commission activities range from large projects to works on individual properties.

The rural economy is very dependent upon the whims of nature, and unfortunately below-normal rainfall over parts of the State has been the pattern over the last few years.

The assessment, conservation and development of the State's water resources therefore continues to be of increasing importance. The impetus which my Government has provided to ensure effective control and development of this finite resource will be maintained in the current year.

The commission administers seven irrigation areas and 10 irrigation projects. During 1981-82, some 3 200 properties irrigated an estimated 104 240 ha from these schemes. The estimated value of production from these properties is $116.8m. In addition to these major projects, 36 schemes to provide bulk urban and industrial supplies, stock and domestic supplies, irrigation and for drainage works to serve groups of landholders have been constituted. In addition, 57 bore water areas are in operation.

1982-83 Appropriations

The total appropriation from all sources for expenditure by the Queensland Water Resources Commission, other than for Wivenhoe Dam, amounts to $137.56m. That amount is provided from consolidated revenue, $17.66m; loan funds, $13m, and special project fund, $13m. The balance is provided from trust and special funds. The Treasurer, in his Budget Speech, announced that he will continue to supplement the funds available for capital works and his provision of $13m from the special projects fund will enable the commission to maintain its capital works program at similar levels of activity to those during 1981-82.

In addition to fund balances, the major sources of trust funds are: $59.7m from the electricity industry for the water supplies for Tarong and Callide B Power Stations and Commonwealth non-repayable grants of $13.35m comprising $6.5m for the Burdekin Falls Dam, $4m for the Bundaberg Irrigation Undertaking, $1.8m for the Eton Irrigation Project and $1.05m for the water assessment program. The last three items were part of the $7.85m in grants to Queensland under the National Water Resources Program announced earlier this week by the Minister for National Development and Energy, Senator Carrick. The remaining $1m is allocated for flood-mitigation work on various creeks in the Brisbane city area and on the Don River at Bowen. Another major source of trust funds is the borrowing of $8.5m under the semi-Government authorities program, including a special semi-governmental borrowing of $7m for the Burdekin River irrigation works.

Construction Program

Expenditure of $114.15m from all sources (including salaries and administration costs) is provided for capital works. This will enable progress on 13 major projects. The year is a very significant one in that major activity will commence on the Burdekin River Irrigation Project and a number of works including the second weir on the Haughton River, the Mary River barrage, Boondooma Dam and Cania Dam, and the Emerald Irrigation Area will be completed.

The firm commitment of both the Commonwealth and State Governments to the Burdekin River Irrigation Project is evidenced by the allocation of $16.85m for the dam and irrigation works. In addition to the $6.5m being provided by the Commonwealth for a start on the on-site works for the Burdekin Falls Dam, State loan funds of $3.35m are provided for continuation of works on the access road to the dam site and completion of detailed design of the dam itself. The special semi-governmental borrowing of $7m will enable commencement of construction of the first 5 km of the main channels on both banks of the river, calling of tenders for the supply and installation of gates on Clare Weir, construction of the administration complex near Ayr and provision of staff housing in Home Hill. The special semi-governmental borrowing for the project has already been raised by the recently constituted Queensland Government Development Authority, and I compliment the Treasurer on his action in establishing that body and on the success of its first public loan.

An allocation of $10m, including a Commonwealth grant of $4m, has again been provided for the Bundaberg Irrigation Undertaking. As at 30 June 1982, 587 farms were supplied from the channel system and by private diversion from the regulated streams. That represents 57 per cent of the total number of farms to be supplied from these sources. Works to be undertaken during the current year will provide for further work in the Gin Gin/Bingera irrigation system, commencement of the Abbotsford system and installation of crest gates on the Burnett River tidal barrage. The latter work will provide an addition 10 500 ML of storage.

The $3.6m provided for continued development of the Eton Irrigation Area includes a Commonwealth grant of $1.8m and represents a significant lift on funds able to be provided in the year just completed. The available funds will enable a further 6 km of main irrigation channel to be completed and progress made on raising the embankment of Kinchant Dam to its planned final height. It is hoped that increased funds can again be provided for this project in the 1983-84 year so that its completion can be expedited.

Work will continue on the Lower Mary River Irrigation Project, which will provide assured supplies of water to cane lands in the district. An amount of $2m has been allocated for completion of the Mary River barrage and associated works and the commencement of construction of pipelines along both banks of the river below the barrage.

Detailed design and investigation will continue for the Barker-Barambah Irrigation Project which includes the construction of Bjelke-Petersen Dam on Barker Creek, a weir on Barambah Creek and a diversion pipeline between the dam and the weir. When completed the works will enable some 4 725 ha to be irrigated annually. An amount of $1.25m has been allocated for these preliminary works and related acquisition of land. A pleasing aspect of the progress to date on this project has been the acquisition, by agreement, of 12 properties to enable affected landholders to arrange their re-establishment.

The storage level of Leslie Dam has been low throughout the past year and I am pleased to provide an allocation of $2.15m for further work associated with the installation of gates on the dam. When completed in late 1984 the storage capacity will more than double to 107 000 ML.

The Curragh Mining Co. will provide a further $2.5m to complete the upgrading and relocation of a section of the Blackwater water-supply scheme. The total cost of this work is to be met by the company.

Expenditure of some $58m, funded by the electricity industry, will provide for completion of Boondooma Dam and the laying of the 95 km pipeline from the dam to the Tarong Power Station. The dam will also provide supplies for irrigation by private diversion along the Boyne River. The electricity industry will also fund expenditure of $1.2m for investigation and design of the pipeline from Awoonga High Dam to Callide Dam to provide a water supply for Callide B Power Station. Both the Tarong and Callide water supply schemes will be owned and operated by the Queensland Water Resources Commission and provision has been made, as appropriate, for stock and domestic supplies to landholders along the pipeline routes.

In keeping with the Government's policy for centralising of responsibility for the investigation, design and supervision of construction of major dams, the commission has been the construction authority for the Wivenhoe Dam and Split-yard Creek Dam on behalf of the Co-ordinator-General's Department, and is also supervising the construction of the Awoonga High Dam, near Gladstone, for the Gladstone Area Water Board.

It is a matter of regret to both me and the Commissioner of Water Resources that the overall availability of funds for capital works will once again prevent a start being made on any new works throughout the State. The needs of many areas for further water conservation has been clearly indicated in recent years and an increase in activity in this area is highly desirable when the necessary funding can be made available.

The Farm Water Supplies Assistance Scheme, which provides technical and financial assistance to landholders for water-supply and drainage works on individual properties, continues to meet a significant demand. The Estimates provide $1.65m for advances in 1982-83. In view of the present level of demand, the position is being carefully monitored in case additional funds are required to meet the year's requirements.

The commission will continue with its program of investigation of water conservation, irrigation, water supply and drainage projects throughout the State. A total of $550,000 has been provided for these investigations. The proposed expenditure includes $170,000 for investigation of flood-mitigation and drainage proposals in North Queensland. The commission does not have a direct responsibility for flood-mitigation works but is assisting river improvement trusts to complete, as urgently as possible, studies of possible flood-mitigation works in their respective areas. Early completion of these studies is an essential prerequisite to river trusts seeking financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government under the National Water Resources Program.

Consolidated Revenue Fund

The major item of expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund is $7.8m for salaries and incidentals. Salaries are also charged to trust funds and works funded by other bodies. Despite the commission's widening role and increasing activities, total staff numbers have been virtually static over the past four years.

The completion of works results in a growing requirement for the operation, administration and maintenance of irrigation areas and irrigation projects. $6.6m is provided for this purpose in 1982-83. A significant part of this expenditure is incurred on wages, services and materials obtained in the local area.

An amount of $987,520, together with a matching Commonwealth Grant, is provided for the continuation of the Water Resources Assessment Program. In this regard, the commission maintains a network of 587 gauging stations, of which 562 are equipped with automatic water-level recorders.

Information on ground-water levels and water quality is collected as part of the continuing program of basic data collection. Some 4 837 observation bores are distributed throughout the State. Regrettably, Commonwealth grants for the water-assessment program have not been escalated in line with rising costs, and it is again necessary to provide additional State funds for the assessment program.

Revenue Receipts

Receipts from water and drainage charges during 1981-1982 totalled $7.115m, giving a surplus of $551,663 over actual operation and maintenance costs. For 1982-1983, total revenue to the commission is expected to be $9.09m, including a similar level of surplus from water and drainage charges.

General

Honourable members will note that my Government continues a program aimed at providing improved water supplies throughout the State.

The expansion of the mining industry has maintained a heavy demand on available water supplies. Fairbairn Dam near Emerald and two weirs on the Mackenzie River provide supply through company pipelines and the commission's Blackwater water-supply scheme to cater for six major coal mines and related urban development in the Blackwater-Bowen Basin area. Construction of a weir at 94.4 kilometres on the Bowen River by Mount Isa Mines Ltd to service the company's mining developments at Collinsville and Newlands and upgrading of the commission's Collinsville water-supply system for this purpose is in hand.

The storage capacity in 17 dams and 72 weirs under the control of the commission now totals 3.89 million megalitres.

The construction of the Burdekin Falls Dam and the development of an extended Burdekin River irrigation area will bring an exciting period of development to North Queensland. It has been extremely rewarding for me to have been associated with getting this project off the ground. The funding available in the current year from both the Commonwealth and the State will ensure a significant start on the project. My Government's land development policy for the extended irrigation area will ensure landholder participation in the scheme and, as a consequence, the State's overall capital development costs will be reduced.

The Government will continue to vigorously promote the State's water resources program to ensure that the benefits of an assured water supply are available to as wide a range of people as possible throughout the State. It will continue to pursue a program of multi-purpose schemes in the best interests of the people of Queensland. My Government will also continue to press the Commonwealth Government for a greater commitment to long-term water resource development within the State. I believe that the Government can be proud of its achievements in the management and development of these resources.

I turn now to the activities of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.

Mr Davis: The Government has not been doing enough.

Mr TOMKINS: I have given a good idea of the work of the Water Resources Commission and what has been done in the past year.

The past year has seen unprecedented public attention directed to Aboriginal and Island affairs, culminating in the recent publicity surrounding the Commonwealth Games. Despite this attention, however, little has occurred which indicates development of a widespread and realistic public understanding of the situation in Queensland today.

That, of course, is because publicity has been of an essentially political nature, concentrating, at best, on the Queensland Government's specific policies on land tenure and, at worst, dealing with issues long-past or untrue rather than referring to the outstanding successful works in all fields of Aboriginal and Island affairs undertaken by this Government and others. This is not surprising, as an unbiased assessment could not do other than undermine the basis of claims made against this Government and expose the paucity of information, reason and thought of the claimants.

In passing, I may mention that few such claimants are of Aboriginal or Islander descent and, even when they are, rarely are they themselves Queenslanders. This was most obvious during the Commonwealth Games period when the vast majority of Queensland's Aboriginal citizens ignored and refused to be drawn into public demonstrations. This confirms both the meaningful involvement of the community people through their own elected councils and the fact that Aboriginal and Islander Queenslanders are not those who generally seek to engender racial disharmony. There is a lesson there for those who seek to use Aborigines for political ends or to boost sales or ratings.

I must also mention in passing that some sections of the media appear to be attempting to develop a stereotype of Queensland Aborigine based on the activities of city born and bred part-Aboriginal people, not all of whom are Aboriginal or even know of the Queensland situation, who loudly proclaim they are speaking for all Aborigines.

It is a matter of profound regret that virtually all such presentation of Aboriginal affairs recently has been destructive. It is increasingly rejected by Queenslanders of all descents to the detriment of the media's credibility. However, until the many forms of media are prepared to accept these facts, I am afraid that much misinformation and suffering will continue to occur and further retard the cause of Aboriginal and Islander people, aggravated as it is by the irresponsible actions and activities of a very few radicals. Just how few was vividly shown during the demonstrations.

Mr Davis: That is all you can ever say. If somebody does not agree, he is radical.

Mr TOMKINS: That is nearly always right. It is not always right but it leans that way.

During the recent Commonwealth Games my department was inundated with protest calls over the conduct and the activities of the so-called Aboriginal land rights demonstrators.

Regrettably this cause was aggravated by irresponsible media activity and I believe that the time has come when the Press Council of Australia and other authorities maintaining media standards should carefully examine just what is occurring in some of the metropolitan Press and national media. There can be no reasonable doubt in the mind of anyone who checks his facts that, in Queensland, more than anywhere else in Australia, Aboriginal and Islander advancement is progressing more smoothly, more beneficially to those concerned and the whole society, and more efficiently in terms of value for money and effort.

Ironically, it has also been true, given social and historical circumstances, for many, many years. It has been due to two crucial factors, the first and foremost of which is indisputably the zeal of Queensland's thousands of people of indigenous descent to become active participants in Queensland society and their own efforts to effect this. The second factor, of course, is the assistance of the Government in this process; but let it be quite clear that that would not be effective if it were not in keeping with the needs and aspirations of the people to whom it is available. I do not imply, of course, that Aboriginal and Islander citizens of other States are not similarly motivated, but rather that there exists, and has existed in this State for many years, a dynamic situation of mutual development quite unmatched elsewhere.

Mr Davis: You don't believe that claptrap.

Mr TOMKINS: I visit the area regularly; the honourable member does not. Even the honourable member for Cook would have to agree that, in his area, there has been a great deal of development, including housing development.

Indeed, this is further evidence by the number of Northern Territorians and New South Welshmen of Aboriginal descent who have continued to move into Queensland, a fact which totally belies the absurd claims of racial discrimination in this State. When people vote with their feet it is a most sincere vote, and in this case it is for Queensland.

These then are the two principal components of State Government activities, designed to promote the legitimate aspirations of individuals and communities rather than to impose development upon them and, as a necessary corollary, to work via partnerships between people and Government officers, drawing upon those resources available from the whole society where necessary. By this means has the remarkable rate of development been possible, an achievement which I must again stress has not been matched elsewhere in Australia.

It is also necessary to note the dedication and efforts of officers of the department who are an essential, but often unrecognised, element.

Inherent in Queensland policies lies the concept of consultation, from which has arisen the lead of this State in communicating with the people to whom assistance is extended. Over the past year the work of the three primary high-level consultative bodies—the Aboriginal and Islander Commission and the two Aboriginal and Islander Advisory Councils—has continued at an enriched level, and I must commend these leaders for, in the main, they have demonstrated great wisdom and maturity under the most trying conditions and stress.

It is a matter of regret that, given the extremely difficult tasks they have faced, they have been still further pressured by politically motivated persons and groups to adopt policies and perform actions which are not a development of their own thoughts, wishes and aspirations. I am pleased to be able to go on record today in expressing my gratification in seeing this trend resisted by the majority of these genuine leaders, and the increasing awareness of the pitfalls associated with such pressures by those few who may initially have been inclined to bow to them.

Indeed, I am immensely pleased at the development of councillors' abilities to deal with the unscrupulous politicking so often inflicted by manipulatory minority pressure groups upon indigenous people, the like of which would not be tolerated by the broader society and which it is clear will no longer be tolerated by Aboriginal and Islander communities. I am confident this will effectively assist co-operative development without trivial, but vocal, allegations of this, that and the other being raised each time an effort is made to overcome real and existing problems. I trust that during the debate in the Chamber today honourable members will be cognisant of this development, and that the debate will not reflect some debates in previous years, and recently, too, in which a lack of appreciation of the people and of their development has led to the most remarkable unsubstantiated statements and allegations by some Opposition members.

It is necessary to emphasise this point. Not one positive idea or program has been offered by the Labor Party or Opposition members in recent years; rather has there been a continuous cacophony which can only be described as destructive and, indeed, even deceitful, if not downright hypocritical.

Mr Prest: Are you going to tell us about your statements that were broadcast on New Zealand radio?

Mr TOMKINS: Later.

What I have outlined is surely a sad indictment of a party that claims to have the needs of the people at heart, yet perhaps that is to be expected from a political party that is still suffering from the guilt of having made, as its greatest contribution to race relations in Australia, the so-called White Australia policy.

The current ALP policies seem to promise much, but only because something that cannot be given is easily promised, and in the unlikely event that Labor may attain office in this State within a decade, I can safely predict a hasty change of policy to one not greatly different from this Government's policy. Be that as it may, I can say that much consultation, consideration and work has been proceeding toward development of supportive legislation, yet councils and advisers still seek time and interaction to develop their thoughts, hopes and aspirations, and this is proceeding with the varying groups in an endeavour to obtain the widest possible views of those concerned.

I again invite all interested people and organisations to submit their views in writing to me or my department, with the assurance that the information will be made available to the advisory councils. It will receive their fullest consideration, as well as the department's and mine. This is a matter of greatest importance and deserves more substantial thought by society than it is being given.

Mr Scott: Does that mean that the services legislation is not going to come into this Parliament this year?

Mr TOMKINS: I am not saying that it will not be introduced. I do not think that it is ready. I forecast that it will be introduced early next year.

Much lip-service is paid to appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal and Islander affairs and culture and the consequences that spring therefrom. For example, a popular view has developed that Aboriginal people universally hold a unique and special relationship with "the land", words which must apparently be spelt with capitals. The beleivers in that myth demand acceptance of the idea that only through some never defined "land rights" will prosperity be obtained. To the proponents of such a view "prosperity" seems to be equated with "salvation". That is the material of fairy tales. Nor is it correct to say that there is no need for special attention to be paid to cultural factors. Stemming from the myth I have mentioned, the opinion of some who should know better is that the Aborigines are a singular group with a belief that "what applies to one applies to all".

Let me go from the philosophical level to hard, practical reality. Consider two Aboriginal communities, for example, Cherbourg and Edward River. Cherbourg developed from 1904 as a Government settlement drawing together a wide range of people from virtually all of Queensland. Geographically it is situated among a group of small country towns with which the people for generations have had close contact. Indeed, high school children from Cherbourg receive their education at the Murgon High School, illustrating the close interaction which exists in the area, which encompasses sporting events, social functions, employment and numerous facets of people's lives and endeavours.

In addition, many Cherbourg people live throughout the area and also in Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba, etc., retaining close contacts with friends and relations residing at Cherbourg itself.

It is not an exaggeration to say that former Cherbourg people are manifestly over-represented in senior positions in organisations throughout Australia, a fact which in itself attests to the success of Queenslanders.

In contrast, Edward River was established in the mid-1930s, drawing together two tribal groups. However, it was not until the 1950s that it was established as other than a northern area of Kowanyama community. Few people from Edward River had, until the latest generation, travelled from the area; fewer still on any extensive undertaking. Until recent years its position kept it remote and relatively isolated. There are, even today, few Edward River people residing in the nearby urban areas, primarily Cairns.

Such differences cannot be blithely subsumed under the overly simplistic and sweeping coverage of "Aborigines and their needs", for it is manifest that both cultural factors and the needs of the two communities are quite different.

The Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement is uniquely adapted and qualified in this State to appreciate these facts, which are crucial to development in terms of the people's wishes and needs, and to assist in substantiating the resources and skills necesary to do so.

I believe that society should be reminded that attempts are being made to assist a people with less than 200 years of contact in varying degrees and levels to adapt to the results of contact with European culture (itself the end result of some 2 000 years of European society). It is totally unreal and an unacceptable proposition to expect this to be imposed, to be subject to arbitrary time-scales or to be without numerous problems in its own process.

The Aboriginal people of Queensland since first settlement—a short span of 160 years—have had varying degrees of contact ranging from, for the city Aborigine, a lifetime to, for the more isolated groups, less than 40 years, without significant social interaction. Socially the difference is even more pronounced with some families having had a full 160 years of contact.

Consequently, it is my view that any attempt to stereotype either Aboriginal people and Aboriginal society or Islander people and their society and culture is futile. This is grossly unfair, absolutely unrealistic and certain to create greater problems than already exist.

This illustrates not only the essential specialised nature of the department, but gives a good indication of how far many other groups have yet to go before their philosophies and claims can be given due credence as being truly aware of relevant factors prevailing at a more than superficial level in Aboriginal and Islander affairs.

In the past year the developments enabled by well-founded State Government assistance have increased. I will not now detail this, for it appears most concisely in the annual report of the department.

It has been said previously, but it bears repeating, that any departmental program or service cannot be imposed on any Aborigine or Islander, but is offered as a matter of individual choice.

No persons are required to remain on any Aboriginal reserve; they are free to leave at any time. Their return is determined by their own elected councils, and full freedom exists to seek or not to seek any of the services.

In my travels and consultations, the message from Aboriginal people on communities has been loud and clear. It emphasises that people wish to continue to enjoy the use and benefit of the lands they presently occupy and seek to ensure its security for future generations.

This, the Government has endeavoured to do. I say without fear of contradiction that the legislation approved by the Government meets that requirement as a trust which will continue while the people feel they have a need for it. However, it has respected the totality of the State by providing that security within the normal framework of the land laws which apply to all Queenslanders.

Let me say also and emphasise that any Aboriginal citizen of Queensland and any Torres Strait Islander citizen of Queensland can hold any title to land on exactly the same basis as any other Queenslander. Indeed many do.

The programs of my department are designed to enable equality of opportunity in society to any Aboriginal or Islander person who needs and wishes to have available such assistance.

In addition, it is sought to develop a social atmosphere in which all citizens shall have the opportunity to benefit from and share in one another's cultures without animosity generated by needless emphasis on the differences between people.

To achieve these goals, much specialised development work is required—work which deserves support and encouragement from both sides of this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I inform honourable members that, on the Vote proposed, I will allow a full discussion on all of the Minister's departmental Estimates (Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds, and Loan Fund Account).

For the information of honourable members, I point out that the administrative acts of the department are open to debate, but the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply.

Mr HANSEN (Maryborough) (12.38 p.m.): I wish to devote the short time that I have available in this debate to the Queensland Water Resources Commission. I am sure that my colleagues who have a responsibility in the field of Aboriginal and Island Affairs will speak on that subject.

Paradoxically, Queensland, of all the States in the dry continent of Australia, can be affected by both drought and flood, sometimes simultaneously but in different areas. There is a more urgent need in Queensland than in any other State to conserve the millions of gallons of water that flow into the sea.

Droughts affect not only crops and the people who grow them but also industry, individuals, communities, the State and the nation. Droughts cause loss of revenue and increase costs. There is a national responsibility to assist water conservation projects. This year, the Federal Budget, through the National Water Resources Program, will provide $41.7m for water conservation projects throughout the whole of Australia. The Treasurer indicated that the Queensland Water Resources Commission has a works

program of $114.15m. Of that budget of $114.15m, $59.7, or more than half, will be provided by the Queensland Electricity Generating Board. Not all of the water conserved under that program will be used for primary industry purposes; some of it will be used in other areas.

In this country we have to look not only at storing water but also at making greater use of the water that is stored. That can be done by reprogramming or recycling the water, and the Clean Waters Act was introduced for that purpose. I do not know whether that Act has been completely successful. I certainly believe that much more can be done in that field.

The Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme for 1982-83 has been allocated $4m from the National Water Resources Program. In addition to that, the Queensland Water Resources Commission has allocated the scheme $6m for the year, which is to be commended. In the early days I was associated with that scheme and I am quite certain of its viability. It is one of the largest irrigation projects undertaken since the construction of the Tinaroo Dam.

Much of the expertise that was gained during the construction of the Tinaroo Dam has been used in the Bundaberg scheme. At the time of the planning of the Tinaroo Dam the Labor Government wished to divert water to the Burdekin, but that idea died on the vine. In the last few years, with the renewed interest in water conservation, the State has collected a work-force that should be maintained, because the skills of both those who worked for the Water Resources Commission and those who worked for the contractors are needed in the State. Those people are very much like the workers who were associated with the Snowy Mountains scheme. In fact, some of those who were associated with that scheme many years ago have been associated with irrigation projects in Queensland.

Apart from the allocation from the National Water Resources Program, the Commonwealth has allocated $6.5m to the Burdekin Dam. The total cost of works to be carried out by the Queensland Government this financial year is $16.85m, which I understand includes the Commonwealth allocation of $6.5m. In his Budget Speech the Treasurer indicated that, in addition to the funds for the Bundaberg scheme, $12.3m would be available for the State. I would like to know where the money will be spent and in what proportions it will be allocated to the schemes in the State.

The Barker-Barambah Irrigation Project, in the Premier's electorate, has been allocated $1.25m for the dam that is to be constructed. That has been discussed for quite a long time and I know that a great deal of design work was required because of the slight fall of the land in that area. The Minister mentioned that further resumptions along the Barker and Barambah Creeks would have to be made. Because of the resumption of part of their best country, some people objected to the scheme. To make a comparison of resumptions—last year the Barker-Barambah Irrigation Project required three acquisitions of a total of 691 ha, whereas the Lower Mary Irrigation Project called for five acquisitions of a total of only 9 ha.

A large slice of country has been taken for the Barker-Barambah Project, and I am sure that if the Minister saw it he would agree that it is excellent country. It needs irrigation at times because the creeks run dry, but the big question is: is the commission sacrificing good country to provide water? That issue must be studied by the experts in the field. They do not always satisfy everyone with their final decision, particularly those landholders whose beautiful river flats are being flooded and who are being left with much poorer country. Unfortunately, that is always a problem with resumptions. An even larger area was resumed for the Boondooma Dam, but it was a different type of country.

There needs to be a serious investigation into the types of weirs that are built, and perhaps the $1.25m that has been allocated this year will go a long way towards solving that problem; but it is very hard to convince people that they should give up their good country so that other people have water. Once again, it is a matter of priorities. It has been suggested that the commission should concentrate on completing fewer schemes to the stage of generating revenue rather than spending money on a large number of projects around the State. That is another problem that has to be faced by the decision-makers in the commission. Sometimes it is not politic to pour all the money into one big irrigation scheme.

Mr Scott: Probably if it is in the right electorate, it is all right.

Mr HANSEN: Yes. It depends on whose electorate it is. I see that the Barambah electorate is doing well, anyway. However priorities are allocated, the commission will run into strife. People in one area will believe that their need is greater than that of people in another area. The commission also runs into financial problems when the completion of a scheme is dragged out. The original estimates go out the window and cost escalation becomes a real problem.

I am pleased to note that revenue has almost doubled in the past two years. A great proportion of that increased revenue has come from the sale of water to coal-mining companies. Revenue has increased from $6,503,992 in 1979-80 to $13,407,937 in 1981-82. It could be said that the sooner schemes are completed the sooner they produce revenue. Although the money goes into consolidated revenue and not to the commission, it must build up the commission's case for an increased allocation because it is producing something with the money that was originally allocated. On that basis, previous irrigation projects and many future projects can be justified. The Minister will probably remember the old saying that if a thing is necessary and is physically possible it should be financially possible. That was the old Social Credit cry, but it holds true. Most people, particularly those on the land, feel that they can justify borrowing money to carry out work that they believe will pay for itself in the long run. That is very much the case with water.

To be parochial for a moment, I will speak about the allocation for the Lower Mary Irrigation Project, and ask the Minister to spell out more clearly, if possible, what is happening. Although people have expressed doubts about it, thanks to a lot of co-operation, both barrages are completed. The Minister said that the channelling connecting the Mary River to Tinana Creek above the barrages and the pipeline on both sides of the river to service the areas that previously drew water from the river will be provided.

I thank the Minister for his undertaking to construct the levee banks before the barrage was completed. I understand that, in the last couple of days it was sealed off completely and that clean-up work around the barrage is under way. Construction work on the levee banks is continuing, with floodgates being installed. In all, 12 men are working on the projects, but I understand that yesterday eight of them were given two days' notice.

Mr Tomkins: Would they be with the contractors?

Mr HANSEN: No, I understand that they are Water Resources Commission people. They have been given notice, although further work has still to be done on the levee banks. This work will have to be done before the big tides at the beginning of next year, because saltwater intrusion could well be a problem if the level of the river should rise higher than normal with the king tides. I do not know why these men were paid off when a further $2m has been allocated for the work.

Now that the Minister has said that the channelling and piping will be provided to serve the affected areas below the weir, he might care to indicate whether the next stage will be the installation of the pumping station, the cross-country channelling or the pipeline to carry the water to the Walkers Point cane-growing area. It is important that this scheme be completed so that the people who have undertaken to pay for the water, whether they need it or not—particularly the cane growers—know exactly where they stand. The availability of water assures the continuation of a crop, or guarantees a crop. Although costs might increase because irrigation water is used, the expenditure is justified because the growers know what the land being cultivated can be expected to produce.

As the Water Resources Commission report was tabled only about an hour ago, I have not had an opportunity to peruse it.

Mr Davis: It is a shocking example of bad Government not to have had the report available until today.

Mr HANSEN: Some people may blame the computers while others will blame the printers. It could well have been available a little earlier so that we could learn more about the working of the department.

All in all, more should be done to provide additional water resources. Revenue receipts from the sale of water have almost doubled in two years, so there is a case for further investment in the future of the State by constructing additional water facilities. I do not detract in any way from the farm dams. In certain areas they are the only means by which the farmers can get water. Soil conservation and water conservation guarantee the future of the country for those who will follow us.

[*Sitting suspended from 12.57 to 2.15 p.m.*]

Mr POWELL (Isis) (2.15 p.m.): I preface my remarks in the debate on these Estimates by expressing my appreciation of the conduct of the Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs, the Honourable K. B. Tomkins. His conduct is in stark contrast with that of some of the persons who are yapping around his heels. I have had the honour of presenting a number of deputations to the Minister on some very touchy issues in my electorate. I assure honourable members that the Minister accepts those deputations and acts as a real gentleman. Although we have not always got our own way, he has always listened sympathetically and requested his department to implement as many as possible of the measures that have been requested. Like many other people, I am dismayed that the Minister is being treated in such a manner by some very unscrupulous people in the community.

I also thank the Minister's departmental officers, who, at times, have had some rather scurrilous things said about them in areas close to where I live. They have conducted themselves with utmost decorum. I congratulate and thank them for the work that they do for the Government in a very difficult area.

Water resources are of vital importance to this nation. They are no less important to the completion of the Bundaberg/Isis irrigation scheme and the Mary River barrage scheme. I hope that the Bundaberg/Isis scheme can be expedited so that water can be provided for the dry farm lands in the Isis area as soon as possible. I place on record my thanks to those officers for the work that they have done and for the co-operation that they have given. No matter what the circumstances, they treat people courteously.

Aboriginal and Islander advancement is pertinently concerned with basic views, attitudes and philosophies of our society. No-one can seriously disagree with the necessity for maintaining a Police Force, providing education or ensuring standards of health within society. Any disagreements that may occur relate to how many police there should be or what duties they ought to perform, what should be taught in our schools, or how comprehensive a network of health care is required by society. Even at that level, I am sure that there is really little difference of opinion. It is only on the question of whether the cost benefit is satisfactory, whether efficient management exists, or still more relatively specific matters, that real contention begins.

However, none of that applies to Aboriginal and Islander advancement. The controversy that commences at square one is whether it is necessary for Governments to provide any extraordinary services, and it continues through the spectrum to the lowest levels of mud-slinging during which it is common for citizens, Government officers and a whole host of other people to be named and accused in the media, in Parliament and elsewhere.

I venture to suggest that the Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs would not have suffered continuing trials by media had he not been so closely involved with Aboriginal and Islander advancement.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr POWELL: It is clearly obvious that the whole issue strikes a very raw nerve in our society—and probably a raw nerve in the member for Brisbane Central—yet that aspect is very rarely referred to by anyone. The media have generally failed in that regard, for they have given the topic of Aboriginal and Islander advancement the most cursory, emotional treatment, treatment that can only be compared to play-school type issues when one relates the coverage to the department and nature of the real controversy. Regrettably, academics who have chosen to be deeply involved have, again speaking generally, not succeeded in performing the functions that society expects of them in complex matters such as this. So the story goes. It must be said that much of the level of consideration displayed here today reflects the fact that a close look must be taken at our most basic belief in this area.

If Aboriginal and Island Affairs is looked at in the most abstract terms, it is essentially an interaction between people. This interaction is not and, so far as I can tell, never has been between black people and white people, or any such scenario as simple as that. To coin a phrase, it is not simply a black and white issue.

In essence, it is the interaction of various groups of people with many different backgrounds, and how they have coped with and been stimulated to further actions by that interaction.

I have no doubt that there have been numerous acts of deceit, self-delusion and plain inhumanity through the history of this continuing and dynamic relationship. I have no reason to doubt it, simply because the picture is not drastically different today. That statement may shock some honourable members, but I am quite convinced that Aboriginal and Island Affairs today is still a confusing jungle in which few people really know what is occurring or why.

A situation such as this lends itself to manipulation by the unscrupulous. It would defeat the purpose of my speech to enter into the matter of who I think may be examples of such unscrupulous behaviour. I am sure that this opinion would alter from person to person and from viewpoint to viewpoint, which in itself illustrates the point that I am trying to make.

No-one really knows what is right or what is wrong when it comes to Aboriginal and Island Affairs, yet we must make decisions in relation to it and we are left in the quandary of trying to do the best that we think can be done on very limited information.

There are many theories involved upon which various groups and Governments base their actions. So far as I know, very little attempt is ever made to test those theories, although all of them seem to require many dollars and, quite often, much emotion. The issue cannot really be tested by trying to find out where particular ideas may or may not have worked, although I note that 50 or more years ago it was the experience of this State upon which much credence was placed.

Let us look at the whole issue in its most basic terms. Up till some 200 years ago, Australia was the home of at least two distinct groups of people: Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Except in the most fanciful of imagination, their societies cannot be considered as nations.

There are very reasonable doubts as to whether they were the first people here and as to just how strongly intergroup relationships in a political or government sense were held. Frankly, it is irrelevant, anyway—except as purely an emotional issue.

I believe that there is some considerable evidence that in the space of the 100 years or so up till the settlement of Botany Bay, quite a number of these groups came in contact with a wide range of other ethnic groups. The Dutch and British were certainly among them, and the Malays and south sea island cultures, and possibly some others, cannot be ignored.

The greatest impact occurred following British settlement, and this of course is upon which most of the emotional debate today is based. If it were only that simple! The issue is not just about British settlement, with all of its rights, wrongs, perhapses and maybes, for the act of British settlement was, if I might say, the opening of the door upon a continent which was at best sparsely populated and certainly of great potential. That, stated very simply, has been the trend ever since, and today Australian society is made up of many diverse groups from virtually every corner of the world, representing every colour, creed and religion of mankind.

I may also add that the reason for many people coming to live in Australia perhaps more than any other continent, with the possible exception of the Americas, has been to start new lives arising from the adversities suffered elsewhere in the world.

In very simple and basic terms, that is the background to the issue to which we address ourselves today. It raises a number of questions which I think must be considered carefully and without undue emotion; but they must be considered compassionately as well.

We are all migrants or the descendants of migrants. We are all here. What do we do about it? We must face some facts. It is indisputable that Australia is a high technology nation and enjoys both the benefits and disadvantages of being a high technology nation. There are two ways in which people can live together within a society—compatably or separately. I do not know of any society which has ever succeeded in living with another by attempting to be separate from it. Perhaps it would be best if this were the case, but history suggests that human nature determines otherwise, if only because the grass is always greener on the other side of the hill.

I doubt that there are many cultures which would wish to be without the benefits which can be derived from technology, although I am sure all would wish to be without the disadvantages.

I really see no evidence that Aborigines wish to be without the benefits. There is overwhelming evidence that they do wish to have them. Therefore the next question is: Are we prepared to share the benefits and, if so, under what terms? There is no question as to whether we are prepared to extend the benefits; we must do so.

Again, that is something which humanity, common sense and justice decrees that we must. Once we have decided that, then we have agreed that society—and in ours, that, in effect, mainly means the Government—is committed to assisting Aboriginal and Islander development. So on what terms, or, more simply, how?

The first point that must be made is that the decision is, and must be, based upon neither charity nor guilt. Charity is often seen as demeaning the recipient, for the term "charity" has changed from a once most nobler meaning; so, that is out, for it is surely the people's right.

Guilt is out because of a number of reasons. I was born in Australia. It is my home just as it is that of every Australian, irrespective of how long, or under what conditions, their forbears may have been here. Some arrived sooner than others, and some have suffered more than others, either in this country or in others. I repeat: it is the people's right, not something which must be begrudged to them as payment for some debt which is, at best, most tenuously laid home to many people today. "Society" is a loose term covering the way numerous groups of people live together. People who claim that we owe them a debt are, in essence, among those most afflicted by ethnocentricity and least cognisant of the fact that our society has changed, and is changing. It is most certainly no longer only a white Anglo-Saxon Australia, and I doubt that it has been for the better part of 50 years or more.

Given that fact, assistance must be given where it is needed. As to those who do not need it—they can be said to have already acquired the benefits without either the need for aid or without acquiring to many of the disadvantages. This is due in most cases, I am sure, to a combination of circumstances and personal factors; but be that as it may, such people deserve our approbation but not necessarily special consideration in terms of aid from a society such as ours.

Secondly, assistance should be of a practical and interim nature; that is, it is given to achieve a goal and, once that goal is achieved, there is no further point to it. Honourable members will note that I do not consider seriously either the idea of continuing compensation or the long-term continuance of such agencies as the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. It would make sense to achieve that goal as quickly as possible. The term "as possible" incorporates a number of factors, such as the need for the allocation of resources and people's capacity to change. This is a further important point.

Up to now I have been looking at assisting Aborigines to adjust to a cultural change. It is not as simple as that, although morally and philosophically it would be. Even rationally, this is the way it should be. People are not, unfortunately, rational beings. Prejudices form and, once formed, are reinforced from generation to generation. If people are going to live compatibly, then such prejudices must also be broken down, for it is not only Aborigines and Islanders who must change, but each and every person who is ever likely to come into contact with them and whose prejudices are unacceptable. It is a two-way deal in which many people, irrespective of background, must be prepared to change in some way or another. That is an essential element.

This process has many ramifications. I cannot accept that if society's assets are used to aid one group, then society should not be able to hold someone to account for the use of those assets. There must be accountability, and I feel that much of the confusion today is that too many people are not accountable to the public for their actions. In straightforward terms, the structure of Government in this country is all about accountability for decisions affecting the public generally, and I fail to see why exceptions should be made in this area, either as a matter of principle or as a course of expediency.

I also add that any attempt to engender development is towards a goal of compatibility between people. Again few but the most extreme would argue with that, and those who do would do so for ideological reasons connected with a desire to see an "Aboriginal nation", although ironically it is the level of technology introduced by other racial groups

that enables such a concept to be even a possibility. Is it not strange that the very coming of other cultures to Australia is the complaint and the means of achieving the goal of establishing nationalism simultaneously?

The point remains, however, that the greater majority of people would agree that the ultimate goal is to establish mutual compatibility and a basis of equality. It seems to me that this should then be achieved by having various racial groups working together to achieve it. I see very little real justification for agreeing to this premise and then saying to Aborigines and Islanders that while it is accepted the goal is compatibility they should achieve it by working it out for themselves to the exclusion of other racial groups. This seems, nevertheless, to be the basis of Commonwealth policy, which if carried to its extreme must also be applied to every significant ethnic group in Australia. It may not be a bad thing, but I very much suspect it is likely to lead to a state of chaos in which ethnicity, or supposed ethnicity, becomes an end in its own right to the exclusion of other goals. If this were to occur then it seems to me that Government would merely become a disbursement centre of funding with few other real functions.

There is another point of concern to me and that is the assumption, which appears to exist in a number of areas, of how we deal with social problems. In the general society there has been an ever increasing trend towards experts. Increasingly over time voluntary groups, comprising concerned but usually untrained people, have withdrawn from providing various essential community services as Governments have gradually encroached into these areas. There have been a number of reasons—Government sets the standards; it can have access to greater funding and therefore afford to employ professional staff.

I will undoubtedly make myself unpopular by saying this has not always succeeded. I make no apologies for that, for I believe there are two reasons why this has not always been successful. Initially, by placing a responsibility upon Government agencies the problem is then somewhat divorced from being a responsibility of the general community. This is particularly relevant to Aboriginal and Islander advancement because to many people for many years this was exactly what was wanted. It does not necessarily make it right. The result is less genuine community involvement, with little opportunity to scrutinise the activities of those involved and less scope for those who feel they are concerned to comment upon the situation with real knowledge. The opportunity at first hand to find out what is actually occurring is less available to members of the public.

When the churches were directly involved in missions, for instance, a clergyman who felt the wrong line was being taken on Aboriginal affairs would have had every chance of obtaining a posting to a mission to apply his ideas. Such a chance does not necessarily exist today.

The second reason is that, as a society, we cannot necessarily assume every person holding professional qualifications is in fact a professional. I consider this is far from always being so, and once becoming involved in other people's problems becomes a matter of course rather than arising from commitment, then the person would be better off doing something else. The clients would be far better off.

This is not to say that professionals are not required. People who do not have professional training or experience are at a disadvantage in social welfare matters. Of that there can be no doubt. Training and education are essential, but so is commitment, which brings me to the heart of the whole matter.

I fail to see that Aboriginal and Islander advancement is any different in its essential points from any other social endeavour. That being the case, why should it be necessary to treat it any differently from any other area of social endeavour?

I am aware of the arguments about cultural differences. I put it to honourable members that Aborigines and Islanders do not have a unique claim to cultural difference and that not only is there a great deal of cultural difference between even white Anglo-Saxon Australians but also there are ever increasing social differences throughout society, and we are just going to have to cope with them without going overboard on the whole business.

Both professionalism and commitment are required of those who work in the interests of people. The whole community is concerned and must be involved as far as possible. The whole community has a right to hold someone accountable for the use of social resources. The use of those resources must be toward practical goals. Equality must be the ultimate goal; assistance cannot be infinite in either duration or scope if people can

ever truly live together. Perhaps most importantly, we must accept that Aboriginal and Islander affairs are but one example of cultural interaction, and how it is dealt with must to some degree set a blueprint for how we are to cope with cultural interaction generally.

We are a small but not minor nation on a very large continent. We must also accept that we are a new nation which is only now beginning to develop a truly Australian culture.

(Time expired.)

Mr SHAW (Wynnum) (2.35 p.m.): This morning the Minister challenged Opposition speakers to be constructive when debating the Estimates for both departments in his portfolio. I wish to speak particularly about Aboriginal and Island Affairs, and I intend to be constructive.

This morning, the Minister was not as sincere as I would have liked him to be, because I believe that Opposition members have always been constructive about this very sensitive issue. It might be that on many occasions the opinions they have expressed and some of the things they have had to say have not been welcomed by the Minister. It is an unfortunate fact that, usually, criticism of the Government's activities in this sphere has not been welcomed either by it or by the Minister, which is a great pity.

It has become a standard Government response to say that people who raise objections or comment critically about problems that exist within the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement are radicals, are insincere, do not mean what they say, or are using Aborigines as a political football. It is an unfortunate response that seems to be creeping into every sphere of Government endeavour. The idea seems to be to divert attention from problems that arise rather than to make a collective effort to correct problems and overcome difficulties. Honourable members have seen that happen in the endeavours of the Minister for Health to cover up the scandalous situation in which people in this city are exposed to radioactivity, and in so many other spheres of endeavour. Instead of trying to do something to overcome a problem the Government tries to use its propaganda machine to hide it.

I do not claim to be an expert in the field of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, and I agree to some extent with the opinion that has been expressed previously that there is no such thing as a person who has all the answers at his fingertips. Although I appreciate the difficulties, some very obvious points can be made. During this speech I want to list some of the things that the Government can and should be doing.

Before going into that, I want to make a quick perusal of the department's report. The introduction is couched in very strange terms and contains some very strange statements. In fact, I do not think it is unreasonable to say that the thoughts expressed by the director are, in many ways, quite frightening. In the final paragraph he says—

> ". . . the 1980s must be a decade of conciliation and the advancement of human values within the race relations field. This will require an honesty and sensitivity which has been lacking in the public arena of Aboriginal and Island Affairs since the 1960s."

I agree——

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What is this stunt? Have a look at this.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Akers): Order! The honourable member for Wolston will cease interjecting. The honourable member for Wynnum will continue with his speech.

Mr SHAW: Do we proceed without the clowns, Mr Akers?

I agree with the sentiments expressed in the final paragraph of the director's introduction to the report.

Mr SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order. I find offensive the remark of the honourable member in which he referred to me as a clown.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Cooroora finds the remark offensive. I ask the member for Wynnum to withdraw it.

Mr SHAW: I withdraw, seeing that the honourable member has surmised that he is the only clown in the Chamber.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member to obey the ruling of the Chair.

Mr SHAW: I have withdrawn the remark.

The Government has a responsibility to promote the honesty and sincerity that is referred to in that statement. We must look at the period since the 1960s to see what the Government has done to promote the honesty and sincerity that is so necessary. It has done very little.

This morning, the Minister said that the problems associated with this difficult period were little understood. I agree with him. I must ask, however, what he is doing to promote better understanding. Later, I will refer to some of the obvious things that could be done to promote better understanding.

We will be unrealistic if we look to the people concerned to put their case properly to gain an understanding of their problems, or if we look to them to articulate their needs. Clearly most of them lack that ability. Unfortunately they are not alone. Generally speaking, disadvantaged groups in the community share their inability to articulate their problems. It would not be fair to expect the Aboriginal and Islander people to tell the community about their problems. It is not fair to expect them to provide the answers to their problems, no more than it is fair to expect the unemployed to put their case to the community, to explain their special difficulties and provide the answers. We should not expect them to tell the community how jobs should be created. That is a responsibility of government. My remarks apply equally to the people without housing. We cannot expect them to be able to put their case and to overcome their problems. We expect the people with training and expertise to provide the answers. We have a right to expect that they will consult with those in need to gain a full understanding of their wants, and then provide for them. Unfortunately, that is not being done.

It is fair to say that the hopes of the Aboriginal people were not achieved by the protests that were held, particularly during the Commonwealth Games. The protests attracted attention to their needs and to the fact that there was a problem. Unfortunately, they did nothing to increase the understanding in the community of their problems, and nothing to encourage the Government to change its policies and attitudes.

It should be noted that some people who formerly said that they had sympathy for the Aboriginal and Islander cause are now saying that, because of what they saw happening in association with some of the protests, they are no longer sympathetic. I can only say that such people are very shallow in their appreciation of their needs. Their sympathy for the cause lasted only as long as the protestors caused them no inconvenience. They have displayed a deep lack of understanding of the problem and fall within the group referred to by the Minister.

Aborigines and Islanders are readily identifiable as being in need. The statistics show that they have a shorter life span and a higher infant mortality rate. Their school-age children have a higher incidence of health problems. I could identify many other areas in which it is quite clearly established that those people are living at a standard much lower than that enjoyed by the rest of the community. We must accept the responsibility for doing something about the problem. We must ask why it is so. I deplore the suggestion that people who bring these problems forward and ask that something be done are politically motivated.

Government members often draw comparisons between Aborigines and Islanders and other people in the community whom they say are just as badly off. They claim that assistance should not be given to Aborigines because, in many cases, people in the white community are just as badly off. There is no doubt that that is sometimes the case, but to say that one section in need should not be given assistance because others are in need is a very weak argument. Where people are in need they should be given assistance, regardless of whether they are black, white, or any other colour. They have problems and are entitled to assistance.

Suggestions have been made that it is a waste of time to provide adequate housing for Aborigines and Islanders. I wonder how much thought has been given to discovering why, in some cases, what we consider to be adequate and good housing sometimes appeared to be unappreciated by these people and why they did not look after their houses. The Government says that, because that scheme failed, it should no longer provide housing. Perhaps the answer lies in asking why it failed. Consideration should be given to whether the design of the

houses was suitable for the people who were to use them. An investigation should be conducted into what is needed by those people in the transitional stage, and why they are not ready to accept the sort of homes we use. Certainly they want something better than upturned galvanised tanks.

Many people in the community—certainly in my area—who have an Aboriginal or Islander background have coped very well. They are very highly respected members of our community and they have no problems whatever. The Minister said that there is a great difference between Aborigines and white people and that the problem is not easy to solve. There needs to be some flexibility in the way in which the problem is dealt with. The very strict application of policy, which appears to have been the case in the past, seems to be inappropriate.

Prior to the Commonwealth Games, I feared the sort of misunderstanding that arose as a result of some of the protests. I suggested quietly to many people who were in a position to do something about the matter that the opportunity should be taken to promote proper displays of the culture of the Aboriginal and Islander people and the problems confronting them. That would have given them an opportunity to promote the understanding that the Minister said he desires. An Aboriginal and Islanders affairs week should be held regularly in this city. It should not be an event which, at the conclusion of the week, is put aside, with the case for these people having to be organised by a minority group.

I have always been opposed to using the City Square as a place for displays and a forum for protest groups. However, it seems that that is what the community is demanding. A place that is accessible to the public should be provided so that people do not have to go to a great deal of trouble to get there. It is no use providing a place in an outlying suburb. Assistance should be given to groups that wish to voice their different points of view.

In the past, token efforts have ben made. Aboriginal protest groups should be given an opportunity to hand out literature. Alongside them the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement should be able to put its case. By doing that people would be able to make a fair and reasoned judgment. They would be able to understand the issues more clearly. A more realistic appreciation of matters such as the land rights issue would be gained. Perhaps the Government could convince the people that some of its points of view are correct. However, so far it has failed to do that.

Some of the arguments advanced by the Government, which in some circumstances might be acceptable to the lobbyists on behalf of the Aborigines and Islanders, are not acceptable to them because of their basic distrust of the Government. There is a feeling that anything that is incorporated in legislation, or in conditions attached to the granting of land rights, will not be in the best interests of those people and will be misused. The groups that do not have the expertise and money to provide an adequate display should be given assistance to put forward their points of view. It is important that both points of view be presented.

If public relations back-up had been provided and a prominent site for displays provided during the Commonwealth Games, a worthwhile effort would have been made to overcome some of the mistrust and difficulties that are presently being experienced.

Recently much criticism has been levelled at the Minister because of his statements that were broadcast on New Zealand radio. I come to the Minister's defence. It is unrealistic to expect the Minister to resign because he made those remarks. If he did, he would only be the scapegoat. He was reflecting the general view and attitude of his colleagues in the Cabinet. It is most unfair that he was singled out and has to carry all the blame for those statements. Some people have probably misconstrued some of the things he said. His statements were an indication of the Government's lack of credibility and attitude.

As I mentioned earlier, Government back-benchers claim that too much money is going to Aboriginal people, that it is a waste of money and that they are being turned from a downtrodden section of the community to a privileged section of the community. That is absolute rubbish. Statements of that type only serve to make the problems worse instead of solving them.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention, Mr Akers, to the honourable member for Cooroora. Is it in keeping with Standing Orders to wear fancy dress in the Chamber? He has a sign on his back saying, "Wedding gear for hire."

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Akers): Order! The honourable member for Cooroora is correctly attired according to the rules of the Parliament.

Mr KATTER (Flinders) (2.56 p.m.): I rise to speak mainly about water resources, but before doing so I want to comment briefly on the ALP's attitude towards the Aboriginal question. The ALP's policy is amazing in the light of the ALP's past history. It is not a very nice history on the aspect of racial relations.

The pages of the "Worker", which was the official journal of the ALP—in those years the terms "AWU" and "ALP" were synonomous—portray an attitude that I should like to hide from other people throughout the world. That attitude is nothing more than blatant unadulterated racism. It was most strident when reflected in words and actions. The famous phrase "Two Wongs don't make a white" was coined by Arthur Calwell, and it reflected the very strong racist tendencies of the ALP. The ALP's facade of looking after people of Aboriginal descent cannot make up for its very sad record in looking after the Aborigines over the last 50 years of ALP Government in Queensland.

A very eloquent speech on Aboriginals was made recently by the honourable member for Townsville South. In that speech he delineated some of the horrific problems confronting Aborigines in Queensland. The only problem with the honourable member's speech was that he was referring to the days when the ALP was in office in Queensland. An ALP Government was responsible for the administration that resulted in those fairly horrific problems in country areas of Queensland. It was not until the coalition Government came to office that a more enlightened attitude was adopted towards Aborigines.

I turn now to water resources. It is extremely difficult in the present economic climate to talk about improving water resources. Four years ago, the Federal Government promised that $200m would be allocated to water resources. Up to this year, after four years of the five-year plan, only $100m has been spent. I think it can be concluded that very little of the other $100m will be seen by the States, particularly by Queensland.

The reason for that is that the Federal Government simply has no funds. At present it is incurring extreme Budget deficits and, because it has no money, it is increasing taxation. The reason why it has no money is that it has a horrific load to carry, namely, the current unemployment levels in Australia.

In looking at the policies espoused by the Australian Labor Party, one must look at the comments of the new Opposition spokesman on Treasury matters, Mr Fouras. So far, his contribution to the debate on the Queensland Budget consists of the following statement—

> "I urge the Queensland Government to support the Hayden plan for economic recovery. That plan, which was announced yesterday in the Federal Parliament, makes a lot of economic sense. That plan includes a 12-month freeze on State and Commonwealth charges, a one-off increase in Commonwealth funding to States for spending on housing and capital works. Queensland needs money."

That is the policy of the ALP in this Chamber. I ask the people of Queensland to very soberly assess the implications of what the new Opposition spokesman on Treasury matters has said. Mr Wright has not spoken during the Budget debate.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Akers): Order! I ask the honourable member to use the correct title when referring to members of this Chamber.

Mr KATTER: I apologise to the Chair. The member for Rockhampton and new Leader of the Opposition (Mr Wright) has made no contribution to debates on budgetary matters. That is confirmed by my reading of "Hansard."

I am pleased that the member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) has entered the Chamber. On 27 October 1982, he said that he would support Mr Hayden's economic policies. Let him be hoist with his own petard.

I shall now read Mr Hayden's policy for Queensland and for Australia. For eight pages of "Hansard" he condemned the Federal Government, and on the ninth page he devoted two paragraphs to what he will do. I can understand why he kept it so brief. If

they were my proposals, I would hide them underneath the nearest box that I could find. They do not deserve to see the light of day. When referring to Labor's program Mr Hayden said—

"It would include an employment policy that would directly boost job opportunities by about 150 000 in the public and private sectors. . ."

What a nebulous statement! It should be noted that he put the word "public" first. He continued—

". . . increased spending on capital works on overdue social and economic infrastructure programs."

That is a lovely phrase! In three years, Whitlam took Australia's inflation rate from 1 per cent to 21 per cent and unemployment rate from 0.7 per cent to 7 per cent. Members of the Labor Party are like the Bourbons—they have learnt nothing and they have forgotten nothing.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr KATTER: I am quoting from Mr Hayden's speech. The honourable member can get "Hansard" and see it for himself.

Mr Fouras: 7 per cent unemployment under the Whitlam Government? That is rubbish.

Mr KATTER: It is in Mr Hayden's speech, and the honourable member can read it himself.

Mr Hayden continued—

". . . a boost to the public housing rental stock. . ."

There might be something to be said for public housing, but when he refers to "public housing rental stock", his obvious answer is for people to live in houses owned by somebody else. I admit that there is some merit in what he said there. He continued—

". . . and associated community services."

In the first paragraph he said, "We will expand the money supply." He will spend that money on "overdue social and economic infrastructure programs", "a boost to the public housing rental stock", and "associated community services". In other words, the whole of the spending under Mr Hayden would be devoted to social security, social service matters. The member for South Brisbane is entitrely obsessed with creating an expansionist monetary policy, and for the extra money to be spent on social security, social services, community services, etc.

This is the point that I want to get to, and which has such a vital bearing on water resources: I am the first to admit that we need an expansionist monetary policy at present. Both the leader of the National Party and the leader of the Liberal Party in this State have attacked the Federal Government strongly, asking for what effectively means the implementation of an expansionist monetary policy. There is no nice way of stepping around that phrase—that is what the Queensland Government has asked for, and I make no apology on its behalf. I am quite proud of the fact that our two leaders have adopted what is a courageous and independent stance.

The vital difference between the Government's policies and the policies of honourable members opposite is that the Opposition wants to spend that amount of money on social security, various community activities and the other useless things, such as RED schemes, on which the Labor Party spends money. If one reads "Hansard" from both the Federal Parliament and this Parliament, one sees that the ALP continually seeks to spend money on social security items. For somebody who understands nothing about economics, has never read anything about economics and does not understand anything about the international economic debate that is raging today, that is fine.

Any honourable member can go to the Parliamentary Library and read articles of Milton Friedman—I do not think anybody would argue about their correctness—which state that a growth in money supply should be compensated for by a growth in the supply of goods and services.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Akers): Order! I ask the honourable member for Flinders to relate his remarks to the Estimates under discussion.

Mr KATTER: Mr Akers, I fully anticipated your intervention, but within the next three or four sentences my direction will become fully obvious.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member has already had 10 minutes, and I ask him to do it now.

Mr KATTER: The big difference between the Government's policies and those of the Opposition is that the Opposition's policies will not result in any increase in the supply of goods and services coming to the Australian economy. If the nation has expansionist monetary policies and money is spent in areas in which the result will be an increase in the supply of goods and services in the Australian economy, the effect will be deflationary rather than inflationary, because the growth in the money supply will be more than compensated for by the growth in goods and services. That will not add to the nation's economic woes.

Now I will closely consider the areas in which Governments can expand the money supply, in which they can borrow and spend money and, by so doing, produce an increase in goods and services that can be sold overseas. I say one word to this Chamber—wheat! I read a newspaper article—I do not know how accurate it was—that stated that the estimated wheat losses in New South Wales for the current year will be $1.6 billion. Obviously Australia has lost markets because of the present drought; obviously a vast gap exists that could be filled by increased production of goods and services. Wheat is but one product the production of which could be increased.

The cotton industry is in a fairly depressed state at the moment. The world supply of cotton is so huge that any spending that results in an increase in the production of cotton in Australia will certainly lead to an increase in the volume of goods and services coming into the Australian economy. Either the balance of payments or the production of goods and services will be affected.

In my opinion, there should be a massive increase in the amount of money spent on the development of water resources, not only in Queensland but also in other parts of Australia.

I will now move on and quickly look at the scene in Queensland, which is very interesting. The losses in the cane fields north of Townsville are now of the order of approximately $30m per year. I will quote statistics from two reports, one prepared by Gutteridge Haskins & Davey Pty Ltd, the other by an independent firm of engineers from North Queensland. I do not believe in looking at reports in isolation, because some reports tell the reader what the reader wants to be told. I do not intend to quote vague generalities; I shall quote hard, cold, ugly statistics.

In 1979, the Babinda mill, of which the member for Mulgrave is chairman, had a gross production that yielded $7.2m. In 1980, its production was again comparable with the 1978 figure, which was $16m. So in 1979, as a result of floods, that mill lost some $10m. Statistics show that that area can expect to have a flood every 30 years; in fact, it has had three floods in seven years. That is why there have been recurring losses.

That is the loss revealed by the balance sheet of one mill; but there are about 20 mills in an area in which drainage and waterlogging problems exist. The Tully mill, as well as a half a dozen other mills that I could name, has produced similar figures. Similar figures can be produced for the giant mills in Ingham, and we have heard members from those areas speak about those problems on many occasions.

Let me cite the case of a friend I went to school with who owns a sugar-cane farm in Ingham. Until about 10 years ago he had never lost a crop and had reached his peak every year. The last time I spoke to him he told me that in the four previous years he had lost 30 per cent of his production in one year and 40 per cent in another. He was not telling me that because I was a member of this Assembly; he was just telling me what his financial position was. But there is a specific farmer who is suffering. A mill which employs people in that area in a valuable industry is suffering. There is a $30m a year problem in the sugar-cane industry north from Townsville. The great irony is that if one moves 100 miles west from Ingham, from the 100-inch a year rainfall area, and crosses the Great Dividing Range north-west of Charters Towers, one comes out onto the flat, rolling downs country which stretches all the way down to Blackall, Barcaldine and Longreach. In that area, particularly the northern section of the black soil plains, there is another problem which is called protein drought. Even though the area receives a reasonable rainfall of 17 or 18 inches a year, unfortunately it all falls in two months of the year. Every year there are eight months with no rainfall at all. Anyone who has

grown anything, even if it is only flowers in the backyard, would know how well plants do after eight months without any water at all. Needless to say after eight months without any water, the grass on the black soil plains has no nutritional value. Consequently ewes lose their lambs. It is virtually impossible to reproduce sheep in the northern wool-growing areas of Queensland.

Because of this protein drought the 10 major meatworks in that area close two months earlier than all other meatworks in Australia. With 400 persons employed in each meatworks that means a fairly large loss—$15m—and that is just for the meatworks; I am not talking about the cattlemen of North Queensland.

So we have a $30m problem in the cane fields caused by waterlogging and flooding, and on the other side of the Great Dividing Range we have an annual protein drought which is costing the cattle industry $15m a year and the wool industry $1m a year. Obviously when the State is suffering such horrific problems there should be some sort of effort to come to grips with it. To date we have made no such effort.

Very sadly, there are two basic reports on which all the water resource development policy of North Queensland is based. Something like 50 per cent of Australia's water resources lie in North Queensland. So we have the water. We have some potential for doing something in that area. As I said, only two reports form the basis of our philosophy, and they centre upon sending the water uselessly through hydroelectric turbines into the Pacific Ocean. When I say "uselessly", I emphasise that the very narrow coastal strip north of Townsville is drenched by about 8 or 9 feet of water every year. That area is not likely to need water for irrigation purposes. What I am talking about is the philosophy of utilising the water for hydroelectric purposes—an excellent thing in itself—and then dumping uselessly the only water we have to spare in Australia into the Pacific Ocean.

That is the philosophy which Dr Nimmo and the Kemp report espoused. I do not condemn either of those men. Anyone who has read those reports would realise that they did a magnificent job. Having regard to the politics and the thinking of people at the time the reports were brought down, I think I would have made similar recommendations. But times change. There are now close to 1 000 000 people in North Queensland. It has been proved that people can live in North Queensland. They want to live there. As every year goes by more people are moving up there, but they are not moving west of the Great Dividing Range.

In Queensland, 2.4 million people live east of the Great Dividing Range, with growth rate of 2.2 per cent. Only 56 000 people live west of the Great Dividing Range, and the population is declining by 1.7 per cent a year.

Mr Prest: That is your Government's policy.

Mr KATTER: I like it when members such as the member for Port Curtis open their mouth. They usually do so to change feet. When he said that that was Government policy I immediately recalled that while Labor was in office for 50 years not one inch of bitumen was laid between Cloncurry and Toowoomba. Aborigines lived in galvanised-iron sheds.

(Time expired.)

Mr Prest: The Arabs and the blacks ran the country in those days.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Port Curtis interjected to say that the Arabs and the blacks ran the country in those days, and that that was why it was run down. I ask the honourable member for Port Curtis to withdraw that interjection.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Akers): Order! It was not a personal affront to a member of the Committee, and therefore I cannot ask the honourable member to withdraw it.

Mr KATTER: I have a Semitic, ethnic background, and I understand that some Aborigines are in the public gallery. In the circumstances, I think the honourable member for Port Curtis should have the decency to withdraw the remark.

Honourable Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Because there is no personal reflection on a member of the Chamber I cannot rule on the matter.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate) (3.17 p.m.): One of the basic objectives of the Water Resources Commission is the proper supervision of water-supply operations. I respectfully suggest that, judging by the antics of some members of the Brisbane and Area Water Board, the commission's objectives have been tucked away completely in a bottom drawer in the Minister's office.

I am sure that honourable members are aware of the money-borrowing powers of the board and its responsibility to collect precepts from the various local authorities that have to contribute towards the construction, for example, of the Wivenhoe Dam. The Brisbane City Council is required to contribute millions of dollars a year to the board. An examination of the Auditor-General's report on the Books and Accounts of the Brisbane City Council discloses that the amounts to be paid by the Brisbane City Council to the board during the year, as required by these precepts, total a mammoth $10.3m. In 1980-81, the amount was $6.57m. The report continues in these terms—

> "The precept for 1981-82 included an amount of $2.84 million to cover the anticipated operating costs of the North Pine and Somerset Dams. As control of these dams did not pass to the Board as anticipated no operating costs were incurred. The Council sought a refund but the Board decided to retain the sum of $2.84 million and have advised the Council that it will deduct this amount from the precept for 1982-83. The Board's Operating Fund has to date been applied towards loan raising and administrative expenses and to meet interest and redemption payments on account of loans raised to construct the Wivenhoe Dam."

The moneys collected by the board are invested on the short-term money market.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! As I understand it, the Brisbane and Area Water Board does not come within the jurisdiction of the Minister whose Estimates we are debating.

Mr WARBURTON: It is in the annual report.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! It is, but I understand it is not under the control of the Minister at the moment, and that no Estimates are provided for it under the Minister's portfolio.

Mr WARBURTON: With respect, Mr Akers, while it is not a direct responsibility of the Minister, the fact is that the moneys raised by way of precepts from the various local authorities are repaid through the Co-ordinator-General's Department. The Minister's area of responsibility has a great deal to do with the operations of the water board. The moneys that pass through the water board are relevant.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I shall allow the honourable member to continue with his speech whilst I check the matter.

Mr WARBURTON: I shall get to the point because that may help you, Mr Akers, in arriving at your decision. In the Minister's Estimates, provision has been made for further large expenditure on Wivenhoe Dam.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: If that is the case, I shall allow the honourable member to continue.

Mr WARBURTON: That is the case. The amount involved is about $22m, so the board has quite an input.

The money will pass through the Co-ordinator-General's accounts because the Co-ordinator-General is the nominal constructing authority for the dam; but the funds will undoubtedly be raised by the Brisbane and Area Water Board and the Co-ordinator-General will be completely reimbursed for his outlay. Because of the water board's responsibility in this matter, I should like to take a closer look at its activities. I do not think that the board has been acting responsibly or that it is competent to handle the amounts of finance involved.

A year ago, during the debate on the Bill to amend the Brisbane and Area Water Board Act, some very plain words were said by Opposition members about the ineptitude of the board. Circumstances have not changed since last year. The board has been in

operation for more than three years. What has it really achieved? Under the provisions of the Act, which are mentioned in the report, the board has the power to assume control of local authority dams. Right from the outset, the board wanted to take over the Somerset and North Pine Dams from the Brisbane City Council. However, it has not achieved the transfer in three years. Admittedly, the transfer of the dams has been complicated by a cumbersome and very badly written Act, which has already required amendment and is, I understand, due for further amendment.

Under the Act as it stands, the Brisbane and Area Water Board, after taking over the dams, would have no power to control the public's activities in those areas. The council, as operator of the dams for the board, would not be protected against claims for damages arising from the normal operation of the dam. The Government seems to be in no hurry to introduce those essential amendments, in contrast to its actions last year when it hurried to interfere with the processes of the Supreme Court by introducing an amendment to prevent the Brisbane City Council's being compensated for its loss of assets in the dams.

In spite of all of this, the board must carry the blame for its own inefficiency and lack of understanding of the whole problem that it faces. No doubt the board will accuse the Brisbane City Council of deliberately using delaying tactics to hold up the transfer of the dams. Obviously the council's main concern is to operate within the provisions of the Act and to protect the interests of Brisbane citizens. The tactics of the board, on the other hand, make the Kelly gang seem like a respectable afternoon tea party.

The board was established in July 1979 but did not serve notice on the council until 18 months later for the transfer of Somerset and North Pine Dams. In view of the complicated procedures required under the provisions of the Act for the transfer of the dams, the board set an unrealistically early target for the transfer. When the target date inevitably passed, the board accused the Brisbane City Council of deliberately stalling the transfer. It emerged that the board had done virtually nothing about drafting the various agreements necessary for the transfer of the dams and was itself entirely to blame for the delay.

To expedite the transfer and prevent further waste of public money, the council put two of its senior officers to work with the board's representatives to draft the complicated transfer documents. It was only shortly after that that it was drafted. Only one major point had not been settled at that time. Now, almost a year later, it has still not been settled. That point gives a vital clue to the whole of the board's behaviour and shows quite clearly why the board was set up in the first place and the real purpose of the board.

The disputed point revolves round who is to pay for rural water extensions. Until now there has been no problem. Every local authority drawing water from the Brisbane system has paid for its own trunk mains. However, two very small sections of the very large Brisbane and Area Water Board Act specify that the board may, at the request of a local authority, construct a trunk main to supply that local authority with water and build a treatment plant to treat the water. However, the Act is silent on the subject of who should pay. Brisbane, naturally, does not believe that its citizens should subsidise water supplies to rural shires. The Brisbane City Council sought to be excluded from being charged for that type of activity.

The Act specifies that once the board has taken over Somerset and North Pine Dams, it owns all of the water and is to sell it to the relevant local authorities. The Act also specifies that the board must enter into an agreement with each local authority for the sale of water and that the agreement must specify the basis on which the charge for raw water is to be made.

The Brisbane City Council wanted the appropriate pricing clause of its raw-water supply agreement with the board to specifically exclude the cost of any trunk mains and treatment plants required to make water available to local authorities. Alternatively, the council wanted the board to adopt a policy on rural water supplies and to incorporate that policy in the pricing clause of the agreement so that there would be no doubt as to Brisbane's liability. For the best part of a year, the board refused to consider the council's proposal for the exclusion of trunk mains and treatment plants from the cost of raw water. Contrary to the previous practice, which had worked very well up until that time, the board's secretary failed to place the matter before the board. At the same time, the board dodged the issue of adopting a policy on rural water extensions.

Gatton and Laidley Shires applied to the board for a supply of treated water from the Brisbane River source. The scheme was costed at the present equivalent of some $14m and it was shown that water rates in the shires would have to increase eightfold if the two shires were forced to pay for the scheme themselves. Clearly they wanted a generous subsidy from the water board, but the board could only subsidise a scheme of this nature by increasing its raw-water charges to the urban local authorities in its area. They, in turn, would have to increase their own water rates to subsidise the rural shires. The Gatton and Laidley scheme would cost Brisbane over $1m a year in subsidies. It would cost the other urban local authorities proportionate amounts.

The board decided to have a report made on the matter; but, when no report was issued after many months, the shires again raised the issue and the board again decided to have a report on all aspects of providing trunk mains for local authorities. The report took many months to compile—and what a report it was! It was a series of vague generalisations with no associated recommendations. It could have been put together in a week! The main argument of the report was that the board is really a regional water authority and, on that basis, should take the initiative in distributing water right throughout its area. There was not a word on the economics of such proposals!

A special meeting was set aside to consider the report. The arguments for the wholesale building of distribution mains by the board throughout its area were enthusiastically supported by the rural local authorities represented on the board. Naturally, they had much to gain from such a policy and had almost certainly been promised it as part of the price of toeing the board's line. However, the Brisbane City Council members on the board pointed out that the Act clearly establishes the board for the principal purpose of providing raw water for sale to local authorities and power-stations, and that only two very small sections of the whole Act empower the board to assist with rural water supplies, and then only on the request of a local authority. The board again evaded the issue of adopting a policy on rural water supplies by calling for a further report on the distribution of water to local authorities but, this time, only for raw water. How the change from pure water to raw water could have any significant effect upon the economics of such obviously uneconomical schemes is impossible to understand. However, this ploy allowed the board to dodge the issue for a further six months.

The board also evaded the issue raised by Brisbane of excluding the cost of rural water supplies from the price of raw water and even tried to get round the issue by dumping the problem on the then Minister. The board claimed that a dispute existed. There is provision in the Act for the Minister to intervene in the event of a "failure to agree" between the board and a local authority. The Town Clerk of Brisbane had indicated that the board should adopt its own version of all the documents involved in the transfer of the dams and then refer those for the consideration of the council. The board did not agree with the proposal and, claiming that that represented a dispute under the Act, referred the matter to the Minister. That was obviously not a dispute under the terms of the Act, because neither the board nor the council had, in its own right, considered the documents. The matter had been handled, up to this time, at officer level, and a difference of opinion between officers cannot under any circumstances be elevated to the dignity of a "dispute" for the purposes of the Act.

My understanding is that the then Minister simply ignored the request. After all, he had taken up a similar request in the previous year, only to find that the same circumstances applied and that there was no dispute within the terms of the Act for him to resolve. This instance is quoted to show to what lengths the board was prepared to go in order to evade its responsibility for making decisions. By trying to bluff Brisbane City Council into agreeing to practices which are not allowed under the Act, the board has wasted a full year of its time and has caused the council unwarranted expenses.

The board finally realised that it must approach the matter along the lines indicated by the council and adopted its own versions of all the documents involved in the transfer of the dams. And what an inglorious mess it made of the process! Only one of the documents that the board adopted was correct, and this because it was a straight copy of a draft prepared by the Brisbane City Council. The others were full of inconsistencies and

spelling mistakes. Some clauses did not have any meaning whatever, and some matters which had been agreed at officer level were changed arbitrarily by the time the documents were submitted to the board. That in itself is a very serious matter.

It is not as though the board had no warning. Council members on the board had pointed out those errors at prior meetings of the board's committees, but the board ploughed on regardless. It adopted the documents placed before it and resolved to forward them to the council for adoption. The final comedy was enacted when the documents were forwarded to the council. One of the documents was not even a copy of the one which had been adopted by the board but was a copy of an earlier, outdated, version. The correct copy was sent some time later. Gilbert and Sullivan would have laughed at the antics of some members of the board, particularly its chairman.

However, on the more serious and sinister side, one wonders what induced the board to behave in such a ridiculous manner. Why would the board members, who are all elected representatives of local authorities, consent to even consider documents which they had already been warned were spurious, let alone adopt them? Do they behave this way in their own councils? If so, God help the cause of local authorities in the contiguous shires around Brisbane!

The answer is not difficult to find. With the exception of the Brisbane and Ipswich City Councils, the local authorities on the board are National Party-dominated. That is what the whole issue is about. It cannot be claimed that the minority group on the board is provided by two Labor councils who are determined not to co-operate, because the Liberal Party in Brisbane is also a determined opponent of the high-handed actions of the board. Furthermore, the Liberal Party in Brisbane is no mere minority group but a fully committed and active party holding 10 of the 21 Brisbane wards; so it cannot be said that this is some sort of Labor plot. The Liberal Party in the Brisbane City Council rejected the activities of the board, which is operating not in the best interests of the residents of Brisbane.

This, in itself, is a condemnation of the Government and its satellite water board. The major National Party group in the board is simply determined to milk Brisbane and Ipswich of everything it possibly can for its own interests.

The technique of voting at board meetings is obvious. The most important issues are never included in the agenda paper but are sprung on the meeting without warning—without warning, that is, to Brisbane and Ipswich. The others are all in the conspiracy. Strangely enough, some board members who ordinarily cannot even understand what is going on mysteriously produce complicated resolutions worded exactly in accordance with the Act. There is no worthwhile debate on major issues. The Brisbane and Ipswich delegates argue against the obviously loaded motions, but never a word is spoken by the others until the debate is stifled under the usual rules applied by the chairman. They all then vote solidly for the motion. If that does not show conspiracy at work, what does, particularly as the board has no formal executive? There is obviously an unofficial one working very actively beyond the scenes.

That may well have been the intention of the board, but things are misfiring. Someone on the lopsided board realised how ridiculous the Government would look if it issued a certain Order in Council validating and publicly printing wrong documents.

In conclusion, in my view the Brisbane and Area Water Board has to go. I do not know whether the Government intends, after the completion of the Wivenhoe Dam in 1984, to become involved in some other politically motivated plot to convert the Brisbane and Area Water Board to a regional board.

(Time expired.)

Mr BERTONI (Mt Isa) (3.37 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity to speak in this debate, because I represent about 20 per cent of all the Aborigines in Queensland.

For a long time, I have been listening to what amounts to a pile of verbal garbage on Aboriginal matters. In the main the statements have been orchestrated by Opposition members in this Chamber and by members of the Labor Party at the Federal level. Therefore, I am extremely pleased to have this opportunity to clear many of the ill-informed, mischievious and downright vicious utterances made by members of the faction-divided group known as the Australian Labor Party, who obviously are using the Aborigines of this State as political footballs.

At the outset, I make the very important point that Aborigines are proud people. They want to be independent. They do not want to survive on hand-outs or charity. As the Premier has pointed out, they are Queenslanders and Australians, and the Government seeks to ensure that they regard themselves as such. That is why the Government seeks to provide for them the essential items to which they are entitled and that allow them to take their place in society in their own right. Those people, like everyone else in the State, are entitled to a place in the sun.

What I say today is true. Unlike many of the city-based and ill-informed critics of what this Government does with taxpayers' money, I have sat down many times with Aborigines and talked with them to find out what they really think—not what many say they think, but what they really think. I have deliberately set out to do that in my electorate. How many Opposition members can say the same? How many of them have sat down to a feast of dugong, for example? Well, I have. What is more important, it was an honour that was accorded to me. Being asked to participate in an Aboriginal meal means that the Aborigines are prepared to talk as well as feast. If they are not prepared to talk, one is not offered a meal.

Because of the honest answers that the Aborigines have given me, I am able to tell the Committee that they are sick and tired of being used as a political football, to be kicked round and used by ambitious members of the Opposition. They know that when the stirrers on the Opposition benches have used all their nice words and got their media mileage, they go away and forget about the Aborigines, or put them in the too-hard tray.

Aborigines are very intelligent people, and those who seek to con them should remember that. I am merely repeating to the Committee what many of the leaders of the Doomadgee and the Dajarra people, the descendants of the Kalkadoon people, have told me. I include also the Aborigines from Mornington Island through to Burketown, Mt Isa and Cloncurry.

While I am on the subject of my electorate, let me deal with some facts that the Opposition and many of the ratbags who love to criticise so often either ignore or choose not to know. Mornington Island, which is in my electorate, is one of only two areas—the other is Aurukun—controlled by a democratically elected local government Aboriginal council. That council runs the area fully and completely; so much so, in fact, that if a person wishes to visit Mornington Island, he has to ask permission to do so. I doubt whether such a situation exists in the "People's Republics" of New South Wales and Victoria, for example. The Mornington Island and Aurukun Aboriginal communities control their own destiny, and that certainly did not come about during the 40 years of Labor Government that, regrettably, this State once experienced.

Some—not all—Opposition members should hang their heads in shame. Instead, they catcall and make their usual childish noises to cover their own uncaring, unthinking attitude. The fact cannot be ignored that the Aboriginal people living at Mornington Island and Aurukun are free people who run their own affairs. Under the National-Liberal Government of Queensland, and no other, they have reached a stage of development that probably is not equalled anywhere else in the world. That is something of which the Government can be justly proud.

I turn now to Doomadgee. The missionaries of the Brethren Church have put God's word into practice and gone out and lived with and worked for the Aboriginal people, and Doomadgee is now a show-place of achievement. The Aboriginal people there, although proud of their own ways and cultures, are respected by all as diligent, hard workers.

Let me now consider a few other basic facts. The party to which I belong—I am proud of it and its achievements—was the first to have an Aborigine, Eric Deeral, as a State member of Parliament. The National Party's coalition partner at the Federal level has Senator Neville Bonner. Where are the Aboriginal members of the Labor Party at either the Federal or State level? Where does one see the slightest evidence of the Labor Party's encouraging an Aborigine to become a member or even thinking about endorsing an Aborigine as a candidate. I suggest that neither of those intentions is there because the ALP, in spite of all its talk, is a racist party in the truest sense. Its members go around the State, pat a few Aborigines on the head, say that they will do this and that for

them, get their names in reports in the media, then promptly forget all about them—until there is the chance of hammering the Government again. That is about the sum total of their actions and intentions. Basically, their actions are a series of insults to the Aboriginal people, who, I know, do not swallow that sort of rubbish.

The ALP's attitude to Aborigines is similar to its attitude to women, pensioners and the underprivileged, to whom it says, "Back us up. Vote for us. We'll give you a lot of goodies." What it is really saying is, "Give us your vote. Put us in and we'll continue to treat you like children. Let us be a father to you." Anyone can see through that kind of nonsense.

The Government has stated many times that Aboriginal Queenslanders can no longer be treated as children. That has been proved at Mornington Island, Doomadgee and many other places. What the Government says is, "We'll help you to stand on your own two feet. We are not going to give you more and more hand-outs and further reduce your pride by continuing to treat you as second-class citizens. We want to help you to become first-class citizens, on the same basis and with the same benefits as any white Queenslander. We do not want to have a form of apartheid here." That is what the Government has said; that is what it has done.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I rise to a point of order. On the point raised by the member, I believe he is deliberately misleading the Committee. If they treat them so well, why did the Queensland Government refuse the trachoma program and let the men, women and children of this State suffer from sandy blight? It was because of the political interests of this Government.

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

Mr BERTONI: Thank you, Mr Jones. The honourable member is trying to prevent my making these statements.

Some State Labor Governments and the Federal Opposition see the solution in the adoption of totally paternal, bureaucratic and dictatorial methods. For instance, in New South Wales, the haven of socialism, the Government adopts Moscow-type methods and says to its long-suffering Aboriginal people, "That is where you will live. These are the houses you will live in." The thoughts and feelings of the Aborigines themselves are totally ignored. As the Minister pointed out, New South Wales has enormous numbers of fringe-dwelling Aborigines right now, but we do not see any of that depicted in television programs. Unlike other States, we have nothing to hide. Indeed, we have a very creditable list of achievements which television programs such as "Four Corners" do not want to know about.

What we end up with here is the result of a Federal body of professional stirrers, namely, the Aboriginal Development Commission, a Commonwealth authority. It is an extravagance that is swallowing up taxpayers' money. The Aboriginal Affairs Department received something like $192m to spend on the Aboriginal population this year. Of that, the Aboriginal Development Commission has $51m to spend on properties for the use of Aborigines. The Aborigines pay nothing. $51m! That money could be used to make loans at 5 per cent interest, but it is only for Aborigines. No white man gets that sort of advantage. The commission can make loans or grants to business ventures which do not necessarily have to be viable. Can members opposite get that sort of loan from a bank? What other Australians get that sort of treatment from the taxpayers' purse? The commission has the most incredible powers and can do that sort of thing. What it boils down to is racism in reverse; there is no other phrase to use. The commission is headed by the famous Charles Perkins. Members know him; he is the person who preached about blood in the streets during the Commonwealth Games, but was later conspicuous by his absence. He did not have the guts to come here. Instead he left Senator Neville Bonner to cope with a near disaster. How such a highly paid senior public servant has not been sacked for a long line of inflammatory statements, I do not know. Any other public servant of that status would have been sacked long ago if he had done a fraction of the sorts of things that Charles Perkins has done. I think it is downright scandalous, as does almost everybody else in Australia.

Let me now look at some of the other benefits of being an Aborigine. First of all, Aborigines receive full social service benefits that apply to all other Australians. I have no quarrel with that at all, because that is what any citizen of this country,

black or white, is entitled to. From there on the equality ends. Let us look at Federal education grants for Aborigines under 21 years of age attending secondary school. A student living at home receives $484 a year. If living in a private home a student receives a boarding allowance of $24.20 a week, $33 a week if he is living in a hostel and up to $1,700 a year if boarding at a school. Aboriginal students receive a book and clothing allowance of $360 a year and personal pocket money in excess of $4 a week. White children receive nothing. Aboriginal students have all fees paid at Government schools for sports, library and examination purposes, and all fees paid at non-Government schools. They receive four return trips home each year if they are living away from home. All fees for extra coaching outside school, plus music, dancing and art, are paid.

Members opposite are always espousing the virtues of workers so let us look at the situation of a white man with a wife and four children and compare him to an Aboriginal worker with a wife and four children. These are the benefits: clothing allowance for the white family, nil; for the Aboriginal family, $720 a year. Pocket money for the white family, nil; for the Aboriginal family, $624 a year. For dental treatment, the white family is means tested; the Aboriginal family gets it free. The white family pays for sporting trips; the Aboriginal family gets them free. The white family provides school lunches, but the Aboriginal family gets them free. Taxis to hospitals are paid for by the white family, but the Aboriginal family gets them free. Legal aid is means tested for the white family, but it is free for the Aboriginal family. Boarding school fees are paid for the Aboriginal family if the courses are not available locally, but that help is not available to the white family.

Those are some of the benefits that the Aboriginal family gets. Aborigines in Queensland and throughout Australia are not equal. In monetary terms, many Aborigines in Australia are better off than white persons. That is why visting dignatories from underprivileged African and other nations have been very silent after learning the facts. The Commonwealth Games did much to enlighten them. They soon realise that people in their community are far worse off than any of the Aborigines in Australia.

I will deal now with the stirrers who are so vocal about Aboriginal affairs. Apart from the paid Commonwealth public servants who do their best to stir up problems that do not really exist—the Minister referred very accurately to them—where do stirrers such as Bob Weatherall, Gary Foley and Mick Miller get the money to go flitting around the world to England, America and Africa? How much of that money comes from Moscow or Peking? Does it come from the World Council of Churches? Does it come from the Aboriginal Development Commission as heavily camouflaged Commonwealth funding?

A Government Member: It may come from the ALP.

Mr BERTONI: It may.

I have good reason to believe that the fines imposed on Aborigines who engaged in the Commonwealth Games protest were paid by the Commonwealth Government. If that is not so, let the Commonwealth Government deny it.

The persons I mentioned seem to have unlimited access to funds, unlimited world travel and accommodation. At the same time, those who purport to be representative of the Aboriginal life-style know very little about it. They are using the Aborigines for their own miserable ends—and the Aborigines know it.

Those false representatives and the rent-a-crowds, in which we see the same familiar white faces on TV news with monotonous regularity, know a lot about the international socialist headquarters from which many of the recent so-called protest marchers are controlled.

I have given some facts on the matter, not because I want to deprive the Aboriginal people of anything, but just to set the record straight. It is about time these things were said. The Government's policy is not to segregate or create ghettoes. The Government is trying to give pride and dignity to a rare and magnificent race of people who are part of the heritage of every Australian. That cannot be done by continuing a policy of hand-outs, charity and pats on the head. It is done by helping people to help themselves.

I fully support the Minister's Estimates. In doing so, I take this opportunity to thank him for his true, deep feeling for the welfare of Aboriginal people, and his generosity, his kindness and understanding in trying to keep the Aboriginal people above politics.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to the director, Mr Pat Killoran, and the staff of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement for their continuous co-operation, understanding and resilience in the face of undue and unwarranted criticism by the socialist Labor Party.

(Time expired.)

Mr SCOTT (Cook) (3.56 p.m.): It was quite incredible to have to sit in this Chamber and listen to a tirade of nonsense from the honourable member for Mt Isa. It indicated the sort of hypocrite that he is. He would never have made that speech in some parts of his electorate.

Mr Bertoni interjected.

Mr SCOTT: No doubt he would send one part of it to one area of his electorate and another part of it to another area. He does not have the intestinal fortitude to say things in his electorate.

Mr BERTONI: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member called me a hypocrite. That remark is abusive and offensive to me and I should like him to withdraw it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Jones): Order! The honourable member for Mt Isa finds the remark of the honourable member for Cook offensive and he wishes it to be withdrawn. I ask the honourable member to withdraw it.

Mr SCOTT: I withdraw it.

The Estimates for the Water Resources Commission are particularly significant in the Cook electorate. Water schemes are needed in towns as far away as Thursday Island and on almost all of the outer islands in Torres Strait. Very little has been done by the Government. Coen, Cooktown, Normanton and Karumba are badly in need of domestic water schemes. I am not talking about elaborate irrigation schemes for National Party electorates; I am talking about a basic water supply for people living in towns. Only places such as Bamaga and Weipa and, to a certain extent, Dimbulah, have an adequate water supply. Dimbulah is located in the Dimbulah irrigation area and the farmers there are greatly concerned about rising water costs. Water is an expensive item in farming. I urge the Government to reduce the rate instead of raising the price of this very vital commodity.

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

Mr SCOTT: Mr Fraser's iniquitious fuel tax is also a great impost on tobacco farmers in the Cook electorate. No rebate mechanism is available yet. The money has been forcibly lent to the Commonwealth Government with no interest payable. The money will not be returned to the people for months and I point out that it is already several months since the impost was placed on the people.

I shall speak briefly about the Karumba water scheme or, rather, the scheme that is not yet in existence. For a mere $2.8m the Government could provide a water scheme for the people in Karumba. It should do so. The local residents and the manufacturers in that town are quite prepared to play their part in paying a normal water charge, but they do not want unconditional cash contributions imposed on them. That is what the Government has expected of the business people in Karumba. It wants $600,000 in cold, hard cash. That is totally wrong.

I have urged the Premier to implement a water subsidy scheme for those people who have to cart water. The town is supplied by two or three bores which are controlled by the Water Resources Commission. Unfortunately, the water is not fit for human consumption. This non-potable water is piped through the town. It is of poor quality. The

volume is small. Water is not available in the town 24 hours a day. The Minister no doubt would remember a small but disastrous fire a couple of years ago there when the supermarket was burnt down. Water was not available.

Mr Tomkins: Where was that?

Mr SCOTT: In Karumba. I am sure that the Minister will have one of his departmental officers check that out for him. It is true. I urge the Government to do something about the Karumba water supply and to introduce a subsidy scheme to assist the residents.

I now turn to Aboriginal and Islander affairs—a vital matter that concerns many people in this State. I have to refer to the vitriolic remarks of the member for Mt Isa. I have to describe them in that way. He made a dreadful speech— and he is smiling! I would not grin about something like that.

I have been asked why the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement is so different. I wish to refer to the role played by the director in that department. Before very long I will have a lot to say about that man. Although he is in the Chamber at the present time, he was not in the Chamber this morning because he either slept in or forgot that the debate would take place today. Another reason why the department is so different from other Government departments is that it deals with the total lives of people. Their whole 24-hour existence is controlled and governed by the activities of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and, in particular, by the director. That is the difference between that department and other departments. Even the Prisons Department does not have so much effective control over people's lives.

We were told before the 1980 election that the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Act would be repealed; yet since then the Government has been unable to introduce effective and acceptable legislation and have it on the statute-book for the people of Queensland to see. What a terrible record of incompetence on the part of the Government! The legislation providing for deeds of grant in trust is totally unacceptable to the people. The Minister would be aware of that because recently he travelled round the electorate with the director of the department, Mr Killoran. He has been told continually by the people that they will not accept it. The Minister knows that that is true.

Mr Tomkins: No, that is not true.

Mr SCOTT: The Minister knows that that is true, despite all the things that he has done. Despite the machinations of the director, and the playing off of one person against another, the Minister has not been successful in selling it.

When will the services legislation be introduced? This morning the Minister said that it may not be introduced this year. I appreciate the Minister's honest answer to that question. However, that is scandalous.

Mr Tomkins: All these things take a long time. It is like the land legislation.

Mr SCOTT: It would be all right if the Minister was having proper consultations; but that is not so. He is wasting time. He is incompetent and cannot introduce the legislation.

Mr Tomkins: You are very unfair, really.

Mr SCOTT: I have not started yet. I have a lot of what the Minister calls "unfairness" in my speech. There is not enough time in this debate to fully examine the operations of the Minister's department.

The department ought to be very closely scrutinised. One cannot extract, even with a fine-tooth comb, any statistical information from anything prepared by Mr Killoran. His information is totally convoluted and hides the facts all the time.

Mr Underwood: Start by sacking him.

Mr SCOTT: I am told that he is going to retire.

Time is needed to record in "Hansard" in this type of debate the incredible machinations of the Director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. Many of the things that the Government does in Aboriginal affairs are not honest. Unfortunately, many of the things that the Minister says on Aboriginal affairs are not honest. Certainly the things that Mr Killoran does and says are dishonest. It is a shame. He produces a

dishonest report. Later I will show honourable members why I say that. That man contaminates the people who work under him. He makes them say and do things that within themselves they are ashamed of saying and doing. That is the way he carries on. It is certainly time that he retired.

The trouble is that the Minister will also be retiring. The Premier has put the skids under him; he has given him a month to resign gracefully. After the speech made by the member for Mt Isa, I shudder at the thought that an even worse Minister could be appointed to the Aboriginal and Island Affairs portfolio. But, no, all is not lost; I am told that it will be Mr Ahern. The reason why he will be appointed to the position is that the Premier has swung his support to Mr Hinze in the deputy leadership battle. The Premier will set Mr Ahern a little further down the ambition stakes ladder by giving him the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio. It might be interesting; we might be able to talk to him.

I place on record that the director has indicated a political interest in the electorate of Cook. I will tell honourable members how I know that. When I visited Coen on a recent trip to Lockhart River by motor car to look at the road-works in the district, a senior National Party person told me——

Government Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Jones): Order! The interjections are too numerous. Interjections should be directed one at a time.

Mr SCOTT: I was told through the National Party circles in Cook that the director had shown an interest in nominating for the next election. The local people totally abhorred such an idea. One of them had gone off with his tail between his legs to the Premier to try to get him to tell Mr Killoran that they did not want him in that electorate. A woman came down from Thursday Island to attend a Cook Branch National Party executive meeting and, we are told, said, "What a horrible bloke he is. You could not possibly have him as a candidate." It will be very interesting to see what happens. I do not care.

Mr Frawley: Tell the truth. You do not want him as a candidate.

Mr SCOTT: I will take on any candidate. I will take candidates as they come. I would love to see that man campaign in the Cook electorate. In fact, I think he has already done some campaigning.

I am told that a couple of kilograms of lollies were taken on the trip that the Minister did recently. They were thrown out onto the ground for the local people. The director will not win the seat of Cook by handing out lollies. The people of Cook know that he has been the power in the department for the past 15 years. He has had weak Ministers to lead round by the nose to show them what is going on. If anything is wrong in Aboriginal affairs, the Minister cannot be blamed; the blame must lie at the door of the director.

Mr Bertoni: Why are you always picking on the director?

Mr SCOTT: That is a good question. I shall tell the honourable member why I am always picking on the director. The man is totally and absolutely political. I do not believe in naming public servants in the Chamber, because they do not have an opportunity to talk back. However, that man can talk back when he is campaigning in the Cook electorate. He is a political person. He has already campaigned with National Party candidates. Fortunately, they have lost. So he might have been taught a thing or two. Nominations for the National Party close in Cook in January 1983. We will see what happens after that.

What troubles me about the interest that that man indicates is that it puts another nail in the coffin of the Westminster system. A Minister takes political responsibility for the actions of his department. The Minister who presented these Estimates has broad shoulders and he can take responsibility not only for his department's actions but also for his own foolish statements. Incidentally, it is a shame that he has made foolish statements recently. I know that at heart he is a nice man, but he simply cannot cope politically and he should not be a Minister. It is a shame that he has got himself into more hot water.

The Minister's department must be apolitical, non-political, and it must be seen to be non-political. On information that has come from the National Party, I know that every time a member writes to the Minister the reply is concocted by the director. He has political aspirations. His actions are destroying the Westminster system, but they are typical of actions on the Government side. The Government would destroy the democratic process if it possibly could.

I know that every letter I receive from the Minister has been not merely drafted but written and almost signed by a man who envies me for holding the Cook seat. He is a would-be member of Parliament. I am not going to canvass the reasons why he wants to be a candidate in Cook. It is nothing more than an ego trip. He has had totally useless Ministers previously and he believes that even in his old age and dotage he can be a better Minister than those thrown up by the National Party so far.

Mr Frawley: If he gets in here he will give you a bucket or two.

Mr SCOTT: Maybe. I must say that the man is an ill-mannered boor. He cannot deal with people, either black or white.

I am sure that he will remember the incident that occurred at the Bamaga Motel. My wife and I were sitting nearby as he got out of his car. I do not mind how he treats me, but I deplore him for the way in which he treated my wife. He did not even pay her the courtesy of a polite hello. There was merely the little beckoning of the finger when two managers, like puppy dogs, trotted over to his car and got in. Away they drove. I was there as a member of State Parliament. His conduct is typical of the way in which people are denigrated by that man in public—and the honourable member for Mt Isa asks me why I am concentrating on him!

The director puts fear into his staff. However, I shall get away from that subject, because he manipulates not only his staff but also the people out in the electorate. It is all there in very fine print in his report. He has continually played one group of black people against the other. He does it all the time. He certainly did it over the deed-in-trust legislation and he is now doing it over the so-called services legislation. I do not know why that is allowed to happen.

There has never been any real consultation with black people. The director went round with his little bags of lollies. That is the way he holds consultation. He talks at people, not to them. In spite of strong pressure exerted by the director, two working parties were set up before and after the Bamaga conference in June. One was a working party of the Torres Strait Island Advisory Council. It is having an effect. About once a month, a departmental officer commutes to the Torres Strait to actually talk to the people. That breakthrough has been achieved because of the strength of purpose of the leaders in the Torres Strait. Even the Government realises that it can no longer play with those people up there, as it has done in the past. It is a sad story.

The members of the Aboriginal working parties are not being given any sort of a go. On the one hand, they are told that they will receive funding and, on the other hand, they are told that they will not. In a question in this Chamber, the member for Mackay (Mr Casey) asked the Minister whether or not finance would be provided to allow the working party meetings to take place. The Minister said that he did not say that and that if people wished to get together for meetings they would not do so at the Government's expense.

Mr Tomkins: That is right, too.

Mr SCOTT: That is what the Minister says now, but it is not what he said when he was negotiating with the people. He cannot even spell people's names. He did an injustice to the people from Palm Island. In his answer, the Minister referred to "Mr Geier" and "Rachel Cumming". He or his director did not have the courtesy to check the transcript and correct the spelling of the names of those people. That is how the Minister writes down people all the time.

Mr Tomkins: What are their names?

Mr SCOTT: Is the Minister referring to Rachael Cummins and Mr Geia?

Mr Tomkins: Yes.

Mr SCOTT: The names will be spelt correctly in my speech, and the Minister can read my speech.

On 10 August 1982, an Aboriginal member of the working party wrote a letter to a person who has a great deal of sympathy for the Aboriginal cause. The letter reads—

> "If you could please send any relevant correspondence concerning services legislation because I am pretty well in the dark up here when it comes to communications. Numerous items that we should know we find out too late."

That letter was written by a responsible member of one of the working parties. That is the scandalous way in which the Minister treats those people. I just hope that the working parties achieve something. They comprise a lot of good people. They have been given assistance by church groups and a whole range of other people who have been denigrated in this Chamber consistently and continually by Government members. These people have done much good work.

I give credit to Father Frank Brennan, who has worked tirelessly for the Aboriginal people. I know that the Minister will dismiss every one of those workers. The people whom the Minister says are just stirrers are working for the Aboriginal cause, trying to get out of this Government some justice for Aboriginal people. The Minister's actions in Aboriginal affairs have caused considerable concern even to people in the establishment in this State. Some very top church people are perturbed at the way the Minister is performing. They have written to all members of Parliament. I know that Government members simply tear up the letters and throw them in the waste-paper basket, but Opposition members——

Mr Milliner: Their answer is to try to denigrate those people.

Mr SCOTT: Yes, all the time. We take note of what they say and give them the type of support which they deserve.

Father Brennan has worked tirelessly. He has given good advice to the Aboriginal people. He has not intruded into their affairs too far. He has simply been there to provide assistance when it has been requested.

I must try to stiffen the resolve of the Commonwealth, which produced a nice little glossy document entitled "Aboriginal reserve land tenure in Queensland". I quote from the introduction, because it is a classical statement by the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs—

> "The Queensland Government has announced its intention to ensure security of tenure and integrity of reserve boundaries. In view of legal uncertainties—"

and I underline that—

> "the Commonwealth Government has given an unequivocal guarantee to ensure that the Queensland intentions are upheld."

On page 6, the document stated—

> "Because of these concerns, the Commonwealth Government now gives an unequivocal guarantee:
>
> > that it will stand behind the stated intent of the Queensland Government to provide 'security of tenure and integrity of the reserve land'."

Those undertakings have to be given, because already there have been changes in the areas that will be incorporated in the deeds of grant in trust. The Minister knows that. It is documented in issue after issue of his department's reports, and also in the Government Gazette. The Minister can check my statement. I have checked the facts about how the areas have been reduced. It will be found that areas to be included in the deeds of grant in trust will be much smaller than they were originally.

Mr Tomkins: We haven't set them up at all yet.

Mr SCOTT: No, but the intention is there. Anybody can see the way the Government is heading.

My next point relates to the population of what are called the fringe areas. The department's 1980 report reveals that the population of those areas combined with the Torres Strait population was then 30 115. The current report gives a figure of 4 000 for only the Torres Strait people. What has happened to all those who are called fringe-dwelling people? The Government does not want them to be shown as living on

those reserves because it has no intention of granting the fringe reserve areas deeds of grant in trust. That is a shame, because they have been an integral part of the reserves that the Commonwealth mentioned in that little document from which I quoted and they were also mentioned in the Government's own undertakings. It is a shame that the Government does not intend to honour those undertakings. I have to give credit to the NAC.

(Time expired.)

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (4.16 p.m.): I am pleased to be able to join the debate. First of all I thank the Minister very much for the assistance and co-operation that he has so willingly given in relation to the various sections of his portfolio. The Minister has shown his interest by being willing to travel to the various parts of the State to see at first hand what is required.

A State such as Queensland has great variations in its requirement for water. At times some parts of the State have so much water that there is difficulty in disposing of it. However, the major concern is its short supply, which has to be met by reticulation. The Pie Creek diversion project has faced some problems, not the least of which has been caused by the pumps that were installed in the first place. The pumps have had difficulty in coping with the lift that is needed to get the water to the necessary height. When the problem was first realised, which was possibly before I became the local member, the sensible thing would have been to replace the pumps, but because it was cheaper the pumps were repaired. However, they kept on breaking down, which created a problem for those who required the water. After some time and some argument new pumps were installed. That action has gone a long way towards alleviating the problem for the growers, as well as for me because I have had to listen to many genuine complaints about the inability of the old pumps to supply the necessary amount of water.

The water for that area comes originally from the Borumba Dam. It is one of the smallest dams in the State but it fills a very great need in that area, namely, water for farm irrigation, water for city supplies and water for the barrage downstream on the Mary River which helps to prevent salt water becoming a problem.

Recently the district engineers had a conference in the forestry complex near Gympie. That gave them the opportunity to discuss their common problems and work towards a common goal. It was appreciated by me and the personnel concerned.

The licensing of surface water supplies is another matter of some concern, particularly with the number of smaller producers presently coming into coastal areas, which has caused an increase in the number of applications for licences, and in turn an increase in the amount of water being taken from existing streams.

The result is that existing water will not take too long to run out in dry times. In those circumstances neighbours can become almost bitter enemies. While there is water flowing in the creeks there is no problem, but when the water is being rationed and crops are dying it is very difficult to get neighbours to co-operate. There is a great need for more weirs to be constructed on our coastal creeks. I realise that it is a problem to achieve co-ordination and co-operation between farmers, but the construction of additional weirs would help a great deal.

I compliment the commission for the assistance it has given for farm water supplies. An amount of $1.6m has been provided for loans and technical advice. In many instances the assistance given in the technical area is what is most appreciated. The commission is aware of how important it is for farmers to be able to utilise its facilities and services. As has been pointed out so often, the rural community's greatest need is a continuous supply of water. That certainly applies in my own area.

The fruit and vegetable industry is extremely labour intensive, particularly at harvest time. The industry needs a reliable water supply and cannot rely on the whims of the weather. Irrigation is used to produce 73 per cent of the vegetables grown in the State and 33 per cent of the State's fruit crop. The irrigation needs of fruit growers differs markedly from those of vegetable growers.

In his speech this morning the Minister said—

> "The needs of many areas for further water conservation has been clearly indicated in recent years and an increase in activity in this area is highly desirable when the necessary funding can be made available."

I am rather disappointed that the commission's funding has been so meagre. The Minister continued—

> "The Farm Water Supplies Assistance Scheme, to provide technical and financial assistance to landholders for water-supply and drainage works on individual properties, continues to meet a significant demand. The Estimates provide $1.65m for advances in 1982-83. In view of the present level of demand, the position is being carefully monitored should additional funds be required to meet the year's requirements."

I have no doubt that additional funds will be sought. It is important to ensure that, when a submission for extra funds is placed before a Minister, he has a little bit up his sleeve so that he can meet the request. An enormous amount of money is involved when individual producers lose their income and assets because of a lack of water. Under those circumstances, the denial of a little assistance is no credit to those who are responsible for making the decision.

After listening to the comments made by the honourable member for Cook I can only say that he was trying to be political. At the same time, he ridiculed the director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. No doubt he had political motives for saying what he did, but I wonder if he visits Aboriginal communities and does as much for Aborigines and Islanders as the director does.

Contrary to what we are led to believe, the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement spends fairly large sums of money in looking after Aborigines and Islanders throughout Queensland. For instance, about $8.75m has been appropriated for the purchase of stores, stock and equipment. Without doubt, all that money will have to be spent. No-one should underestimate the value of what is being done in this way. No-one should try to sweep expenditure of that size under the carpet as if it were of little or no importance. At the same time, $8.8m is to be spent on welfare housing. When I visited various island settlements I realised that some of the people who had received housing assistance greatly appreciated what was done for them, but some of the recipients are not yet ready to accept the responsibility of looking after the houses and furnishings in the way that we would expect them to look after them. It seems that further education is necessary. That $8.8m will go a long way in helping those people to settle down in the areas where they want to live.

If Aborigines and Islanders want to live on communities they must be allowed to do so. Many of them have pleasure in being able to say that they no longer require the protection of the settlements and want to live on their own. I commend them for doing so. I am pleased that so many of them are able to take the step. Some of them, who find it a much harder step to take than they thought, return to the communities.

Much has been said about land rights for Aborigines. It is said that they do not have access to very much of their own land. I know that figures can be boring, but for the information of honourable members I list the areas of land that have been set aside for Aborigines—

Locality	Area in hectares
Edward River Mission	466 000
Kowanyama	258 000
Lockhart River	313 000
Northern Peninsula area	477 000
Weipa South	344 000
Mt Isa Hostel	1
Wujal Wujal	116

In all, 2.2m hectares have been set aside. That is much more than 1 per cent of the overall area of the State.

When we hear comments about land rights and the setting aside of land for Aborigines to live on in the way they want to live or in the manner to which they are accustomed, we should not be carried away by them, because these people already have a large area of land available to them. The way in which they use their land will determine how successful the undertakings are.

Pastoral activities could be undertaken to a very large extent. The number of stock on hand in some of the areas is very large. For instance, Kowanyama has 13 000 head of cattle. However, there are not as many cattle on other communities in which the area is almost as

large. Perhaps more emphasis could be placed on making these people aware of the programs that could be used to grow cattle, to produce feed for them, to fence them and to keep them free from disease and pests. This is a great opportunity for those people if they want to help themselves. It would be a good project, even if they only fed their own communities.

An excellent area of land is available for cultivation on communities, for instance at Bamaga. However, that land is not being used to its fullest extent. The local people require a little drive. It is up to them to decide whether they will do the manual work involved. It is not because of lack of opportunities that the work has not been done.

I am a little disappointed that not enough attention is being paid to the Aboriginal crafts, such as carving and the production of curios, boomerangs, spears, nulla-nullas and didgeridoos. Tourists who visit these areas have difficulty finding places at which they can purchase such articles. A lot more use could be made of that type of activity, because the potential is there. When a demand is created, as happened some time ago, the supply must meet it. It is no use these people deciding to make 10 or 20 articles one week and to go fishing the following week. The supply must be maintained, or the interest will disappear and other avenues of supply will have to be found.

Earlier this year I travelled through the Torres Strait area with the Minister.

Mr Davis: Was it on the boat?

Mr STEPHAN: Yes, and I have an idea that "Melbidir" is its name. The vessel was on its normal round of duties. It was interesting to read some of the Press comments such as that it would have been cheaper to hire a plane or a helicopter. I wonder if the journalists thought twice about making that comment. The only additional cost involved would have been for a few tomatoes, lettuce, bread and bully beef which was eaten by the half dozen people in the party.

Mr Frawley: The Minister should have invited a few members of the Press.

Mr STEPHAN: I am not too sure that they would have liked to go. The living conditions on the "Melbidir" are not very good compared with the facilities on tourist ships. It is not very pleasant to be in the fairly warm hold of the vessel.

The crew worked an eight-hour day, just like anybody else in the community, be they black or white. They did their four hours sailing for the day and spent a certain amount of time loading and unloading the ship. The eight-hour day was soon gone. There is not much point in saying, "We will go for a further eight hours." if the crew will not work. I do not think that any honourable members would expect the crew to work for more than the required time.

Of course, one would expect them to anchor the boat in an area that has the protection of a reef or an island. At 5 or 6 o'clock at night, or before heading off the following morning, they might fish from the boat or lower a smaller boat and go fishing. I cannot see anything wrong with that. If there happened to be some fish around, it might be possible to catch a feed of fish for the evening meal. They were the circumstances under which the trips were conducted.

(Time expired.)

Mr BLAKE (Bundaberg) (4.36 p.m.): I am aware that the Queensland Water Resources Commission is involved in and concerned with the development of water resources for stock, for domestic and irrigation purposes, and for urban, mining and power-generation purposes. My chief interest is in the domestic, urban and irrigation areas of water resource activity.

The rural economy is very much at the mercy of the whims of nature. I was pleased to hear the Minister refer to the below-average rainfall in many parts of the State during the last few years. That indicates that he is aware of the vagaries of the weather and of the devastating effect that they can have on rural production.

The Bundaberg/Isis area experiences one of the greatest variations, if not the greatest variation, in rainfall on the Queensland coastal strip. However, it is a compact area of rich agricultural soil and has an excellent production performance when not stricken by drought, as it so often is. Its production potential is tremendous when irrigation is used, but it took many years for the State Government to recognise it as the No. 1 priority area in the State for the establishment of an integrated irrigation scheme.

However, having recognised the cost benefit ratio of the Bundaberg scheme and having given it No. 1 priority, the State Government has been true to its commitment to that scheme. If the commitment had been made earlier, as was requested, the people would have been much happier. It could be said that, to a reasonable degree, Commonwealth Governments of both political colours were firmly committed to the scheme until the election of the Fraser Government. The Fraser Government has dragged its feet for years in providing funding for facets of the scheme that were the Commonwealth Government's responsibility.

The Bundaberg Irrigation Committee and the Bundaberg and district community appreciate the fact that, during the period of that great dearth of Commonwealth funding, the State Government exerted itself to make a semblance of progress in the construction of that scheme. I have always given credit to the State Government for its actions in that regard, and I know that the recommendations of the relevant Ministers and commissioners at that time are greatly appreciated by the people of the Bundaberg area.

Of course those recommendations could not have been implemented if the necessary finance had not been made available. The actions of the successive State Treasurers over that period—Sir William Knox and, later, Dr Edwards—in making money available to keep the construction moving have received, and are still receiving, well merited tributes from responsible people in both the local organisation and the community as a whole. Their actions are greatly appreciated.

At one period in the Qunaba area the intrusion of salt into the underground storage was so bad that only ongoing work with surface water meant the difference between a crop and virtually no crop at all. If the State Government, through the Treasurer, had not made provision for approximately half a million dollars, a devastating downturn would have occurred in production at that time.

Perhaps it can be claimed that it is bad tactics for an Opposition member to give credit to the Government. In that instance, credit was due to the Treasurer. He came, looked and saw the stupidity and futility of not making money available to rectify the situation. To his credit and to the credit of the Government, the crop was saved and quite a lot of people were saved from disastrous losses.

It is refreshing to have such people come, look and listen, and appreciate that the benefits of previous expenditure—and pretty big expenditure at that—should not be negated for the sake of a small saving on a necessary objective at a critical time.

With adequate funding by both the State and Federal Governments in earlier times, the scheme would have been completed. Instead, as at 30 June last, only 587 farms were serviced from the channel system and by private diversion from regulated streams. That is only 57 per cent, or a little over half, of the assignments to be catered for in this stage of the designed scheme. Everyone thought that it would have been completed long before 1982. Had the funding been adequate, it would have been finished. The benefits would have been not only an escape from inflated costs but also a terrific increase in the revenue flowing to the Government, in particular the Federal Government, from production. Some disastrous years were experienced during the period in which funding was lagging. My criticism is directed particularly at the Federal Government, which would have been the greatest beneficiary of income tax and other revenues that would have accrued if the scheme had been completed on time.

In this current year provision is made for further work to be undertaken in the Gin Gin/Bingera system. I understand that the Abbotsford system will commence and that crest gates will be installed on the Burnett River tidal barrage. As yet, no start has been made on the Isis channel to take water to the most drought-stricken cane-producing area that the scheme is intended to serve.

As the former member for Isis and now as the member for Bundaberg, and as a politician, I have copped quite a bit of flak because I recognised that it is not much good taking water long distances before it can be used and when no revenue can be obtained from the sale of the water or from the production of crops. The Bundaberg and District Irrigation Committee and the communities in the area have now accepted that, if somewhat reluctantly.

The time is coming when the commitment to the scheme demands that at least a start should be made on the Isis channel. People will then know that the funding, as presently provided, will eventually—I emphasise "eventually"—result in water going over to the Isis

area. When I say "going over to the Isis area", I am saying that the present rate of funding of $10m a year is far too slow. That represents a commitment of $6m a year by the State Government and $4m a year by the Federal Government. That is appreciated, but a serious attempt should be made to complete the scheme and rescue drought-affected areas from recurring droughts.

When the Federal Government committed itself to an expenditure of $4m a year, the Honourable D. J. Anthony expressed the view that the total scheme for Bundaberg-Isis should be completed by 1988. I express satisfaction at that, but I believe that $15m a year is nearer the amount required to complete the scheme in eight years, which is the period to which Mr Anthony committed his Government. With present funding, there is no way that the scheme will be completed in eight years.

At present, the Bundaberg and District Irrigation Committee is seeking to have the Commonwealth Government make up some of its backlog in funding by providing funds additional to the $4m a year, to assist in enlarging the Monduran pumping station, which was originally a Federal responsibility, and in installing the siphons in the station without any delay to the reticulation of water to the Bundaberg-Isis areas.

If funding stays at its present level, I believe that the scheme cannot be completed at least before 1992, which is 12 years, not the eight years stated by Mr Anthony. It is significant that if the region was irrigated to its full potential, some 122 000 tonnes of sugar could be produced over and above existing production, and 84 000 tonnes of sugar could be produced from existing assigned lands if water was available now. Even if the scheme was completed as originally envisaged, a further 54 000 tonnes of sugar would be forthcoming. It is patently obvious that any additional funds injected into the scheme would be covered by increased production. That has been the story of the scheme from its inception. If the level of funding had been stepped up, the money would have been back in the State and Federal coffers. As recently as 1978, shortfalls in four of the five mills in the Bundaberg and Isis areas caused by drought conditions meant a loss of $10.6m to the district and to the economy.

When I began my speech, I said that I wanted to speak about the domestic/urban aspect of water supply from this scheme, as related to the city of Bundaberg and surrounding shires. The city and shire water supplies were considered at the time of the development of this project and, with rising costs, cleansing the city water is becoming more and more costly. At present it costs about $200,000 per annum to cleanse the city's water supply. In fact, it costs more than that; I will give the Committee the exact figure in a moment.

Future urban development in the Woongarra Shire will, under existing plans, cause the council to expend some $6m to install piping to the river to obtain the water and also to clean the water. It would definitely be very prudent to take water from the underground supplies as soon as possible for the use of both the city and the shires. In no way will that upset the growers' allocation. I know the story of the scheme, and I know the Minister's interest and experience. I am not speaking about robbing anybody of water. What I am advocating is the reallocation of water in the most sensible way for the use of the city, the shires and the cane growers. I will demonstrate to the Minister exactly what I mean, and I do not think anyone involved either with politics or with the department could argue with my logic.

The city of Bundaberg needs more water, and it needs existing surface water. Instead of extending existing expensive water treatment plants for surface water, it needs to provide more underground water. At present, the city of Bundaberg uses 70 per cent underground water and 30 per cent surface water. Last year, the cost of treating 5 400 ML of underground water, which represents 70 per cent of its supply, was $20,400. I ask honourable members to listen because these figures are very illuminating. The cost of treatment of surface water, which is only 30 per cent of the supply, was $257,600 for 2 100 ML.

There would be no loss to cane growers if they were to use surface water. I say that advisedly, because I was present when the late Commissioner for Water Resources, Mr Fred Haigh, had to battle with growers who did not want to use surface water. They argued that they had equipment down their bores, they had good water and they did not want to use surface water. They said it would contain grass seeds that would contaminate and infest their farms. That has not been the case.

At that time, I argued that when the farmers discovered the cost of pumping surface water and compared it with the cost of the electrolysis on their pumps, they would be pleased to use surface water. That has been the case. Many growers will be pleased to use surface water in the future. That is an eminently sensible suggestion. On the other hand, for the department not to look at that suggestion in a new context is eminently stupid. That is no criticism of the original planning of the scheme; nobody knows all the answers.

With the return of surface water, the underground water levels in the Gooburrum area have risen. Large areas of land in that area are now boggy and some water is running off into watercourses and eventually into the sea. That has been caused by the lifting of the water-table, and that is how things used to be before the depletion of underground supples.

The area of which I speak is within sight of the water-tower at North Bundaberg. If there is a good wet season and a replenishment of the underground supply, there might be plenty of water for the city of Bundaberg, not only on the northern side but at other locations where bores could be sunk exactly where water is needed to supply the central parts of the city and other concentrations of population.

I ask the Minister to consider the figures that I have given and the stupidity of forcing Bundaberg to rely on surface water when the treatment of the 30 per cent of its supply provided by surface water costs $257,600. As I said, the 70 per cent of the supply—that is, 5 400 ML—that came from underground supplies cost only $20,400 to treat. Those figures speak for themselves.

I reiterate that the original intention of the scheme was to reduce the drain on the supply of underground water by using surface water. Farmers were reluctant to give up their quotas, if I might call them that, of underground water because they did not know when they were going to get surface water. They were not au fait with the savings achieved by pumping surface water. However, they had no experience of it and so cannot be criticised in that regard.

There is no need to treat surface water used to irrigate cane, but it is too costly to treat surface water for home consumption when water can be drawn from underground, if it is available, at 10 per cent of the cost of surface water. This is not wishful thinking on my part. I realise that the potential of new underground water supplies has to be tested systematically by the commission. I am not looking for anything airy-fairy. In my opinion, underground water will be available for the city of Bundaberg and for the surrounding shires.

(Time expired.)

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (4.56 p.m.): It is my pleasure to join in the debate on the Estimates of the Water Resources Commission and Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. It is not my intention to speak at length on the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement, but I will say something about the Water Resources Commission—the need for water and what we should be doing to obtain it. We can do only so much, perhaps; but I will speak about the allocation of water after it has been impounded. I was interested in the comments of the honourable member for Bundaberg. Some of my comments will be in the same vein.

In Queensland we have been carried away a little with the idea that the big should get bigger and that those farmers who do not have the resources to pump water or irrigate to the same extent as bigger farmers should be deprived of all water. All water, whether surface or underground, belongs to the people of Queensland. It should not be given only to the greedy. We should be asking ourselves whether it is right that only some farmers have the right to obtain large amounts of water.

I particularly want to deal with the allocation of water from the Leslie Dam. Although the Leslie Dam has not been able to supply quite as much water as I would have liked, it has been a great success. The water from that dam has been obtained as cheaply as water from any other part of the Condamine River. I was pleased to hear in the Minister's speech and to read in the annual report of the Commissioner for Water Resources that it is expected that the second stage of the Leslie Dam will be completed in 1984. Although

that seems to be some time away yet, it is only a very short period in the context of history, and the commission has to start considering the allocation of the extra water that will be impounded when the second stage is completed.

The present allocations of water from the Leslie Dam are weighted very heavily in favour of farmers down river from the dam itself. In the Rosenthal Shire, where a great proportion of the water from the Leslie Dam is impounded, 26 licence holders are entitled to 1 370 ML per annum. In the Cecil Plains area 29 licence holders are entitled to 12 124 ML per annum. That is a large variation in total allocation between licence holders in the Cecil Plains area and those in the Cunningham area. Licence holders in the Cecil Plains area are allocated approximately nine times as much water as licence holders in the Rosenthal Shire—yet the water is impounded in the Rosenthal Shire.

This afternoon, I make a plea on behalf of people in the Cunningham area. I will also stress the need to impound water and to construct dams in the years ahead. It will be very difficult to sell to a local population the idea that a dam should be constructed if a vast amount of the water is to be allocated to places further down the river. I do not suggest that some water should not be allocated downstream; but I emphasise that the Rosenthal Shire gets slightly over 10 per cent of the available water while the Cecil Plains area benefits from approximately 87 per cent.

When water is allocated from the second stage of the Leslie Dam, common sense should prevail. I compliment the Minister by saying that he has more common sense than most. The part he has played will be remembered long after he has left Cabinet. I should like to be able to say the same about his staff. Admittedly, I am relying on Press reports of statements attributed to the Commissioner for Water Resources at a meeting in Pittsworth. Perhaps he did not say some of what is attributed to him. However, if he did, the matter is fairly serious. For instance, he is reported to have said that in the second stage of the Leslie Dam the first commitment would be to cover the overcommitment to existing holders of licences. That is fair enough. I do not take issue on that. He then said that new licences would be issued on the north branch of the Condamine to enable a reduction in the amount of underground water used for irrigation. He said, however, that people on the north branch would still be able to use their underground bores if they wanted to. That would allow them to have two bites at the cherry.

The expenditure of a good deal of money is involved on the north branch. Surely the licences for underground water should be cancelled. I am opposed to the issue of new licences unless new licences are issued in the Cunningham area as well. The allocation of licences should be fair, across the board. Licensees in one area should not be told, "Yes, you may have new licences," while people in another area are told, "You will not be allowed to have licences. Common sense should be exercised.

The commissioner is then reported to have said that minor volumes of water would be allocated to holders of existing licences in the Cunningham area—that is, the Rosenthal Shire. I am not unhappy about that, but I am worried that some of them will still have a small allocation. The people in that area have not been greedy. They have not asked for huge quantities of water. I think they have asked—and I emphasise the word "think"—for approximately 2 000 ML to be committed to the Cunningham area in the second stage of the Leslie Dam. The idea was to bring most of the licence holders up to approximately 100 ML and to allow for the issue of a few new licences to some who had missed out altogether. It must be admitted that they have adopted a tolerant approach, but it now appears that even their tolerant approach will fail.

On the Condamine flood plain a large area of excellent land is available for lucerne, vegetables and cropping. It is possible that, in years ahead, vegetable-growing will increase dramatically in the Warwick area and the adjacent shires of Glengallon and Rosenthal. I visualise a dramatic increase in vegetable-growing in the next 10 years because areas that have been regarded as salad bowls—the Redlands and Lockyer districts—are subject to the encroachment of urban development.

More water should be provided in Warwick and on the flood plains of the Condamine River for the establishment of a vegetable industry. That would be beneficial to the city of Warwick and perhaps to the city of Brisbane. The longer the distance vegetables have to be carted, the greater the cost. Anything that increases supply is beneficial.

I return to the initial issuing of licences in the Cunningham area. It has been said—truthfully, I think—that when Leslie Dam was constructed some farmers did not realise that if they missed out on getting water initially they would be left without it for

all time. They asked for small allocations. In fact, some of them even surrendered their small allocations. However, because they did not ask for enough water at the initial stage, they should not now be debarred from obtaining a reasonable share of the water. The second stage of Leslie Dam should be considered as a new dam. We should correct some of the initial wrongs rather than multiply them so that the position becomes untenable. These people should be told that, as the water is being taken from their area, more of it will be allocated to them.

If a new dam were built, a considerable area in a shire or in the vicinity of a town would be inundated. If that water were to be diverted to another area, it would be only natural for the people in the area in which the dam is to be constructed to oppose the construction of the dam. We should set about righting the wrongs that occurred in the initial stage of Leslie Dam. That could be done if the matter were approached in a commonsense way. It should be done. It was claimed that Mr Beattie said certain things at the meeting at Pittsworth. However, it was possible that he was not correctly reported. Perhaps his remarks were taken out of context.

I am opposed to issuing new licences in the North Branch area. I do not know how much will be spent—possibly millions of dollars—to channel the water into North Branch. How can the Government then say that if there is a shortage the people can still use their bores? That is grossly unjust. If that amount of money is to be spent, they should not have to use their bores. The money should be spent to channel the water into North Branch only if there is good reason. The people in the Cunningham area and in the Rosenthal Shire are already being deprived of water, so the Government cannot tell them that they will get nothing out of Stage II of the Leslie Dam. The water is harvested in the Rosenthal Shire. Surely the people there are entitled to a fair allocation of it.

A fresh look should be taken at the allocation of water and the licensing of underground supplies. I instance a farmer who has a bore. If another farmer wants to put down a bore, there would be an objection from his neighbour. It would be better to license both farmers and allocate a limited volume of water to each rather than reject one application.

Queensland's water is a great resource. It belongs to the people. It does not belong to the few greedy people who have been able to arrange sufficient money to collar it. What would happen if a new dam were built and injustices were perpetuated? All of the water from the dam could be purchased by one or two people. They could then say to someone else, "We will buy your land cheaply because you do not have a water allocation." That is what happens. I am upset that at this early stage we are talking about what we will do with the water without listening intently to the claims that people put forward. Their suggestions are not ridiculous. They have asked for an allocation of an extra 2 000 ML in the Cunningham area. No-one could say that that is a greedy request. At present they have 1 370 ML per annum, while people further down the river with almost the same number of licences have 12 124 ML.

With the water behind the Leslie Dam at a fairly low level—it has been that way for a few years—it could be argued that there is insufficient yield in that area. If the yield is down in any particular year, surely it is better to share the water than to say to some people, "Yes, you will have first bite of the cherry. You will be able to use as much water as you want. You will be able to go ahead with your enterprise and do almost anything you want to."

We should take a fresh look at the total allocation of water in Queensland and at new allocations in particular. We should have a fresh look at underground water supplies. The greedy should not receive the water before the needy. The supplies should be spread as far as possible. If water is the life-blood of the nation—and most people think that it is—surely it is only right that we spread it as far as possible. I hope that in the not-too-distant future the Minister and his staff can work out the new allocations from Leslie Dam before greater trouble is experienced. It is possible to solve the problem for the betterment of the people in the area.

Some time ago the Minister opened a clubhouse at the site of the Leslie Dam and on that occasion he saw fit to have a good look round. He seemed impressed with what he saw and felt that he should do as much as possible to help us get the second stage.

Mr Tomkins: I think I have got you the second stage.

Mr BOOTH: That is appreciated. I thought I should say that, otherwise the Minister might think that I have spent the whole afternoon whingeing. My whinge is not against the Minister or whether he has obtained for us the second stage of the Leslie Dam. The amount of work that he has done is appreciated. However, the allocation of water should be examined more deeply.

It is not right for a person to say that, because he has a pump, he can handle more water and that one or two other persons must go without. That is not the interpretation that the Government should put on it. I am sure that it is not the interpretation that the Minister would put on it. My principal appeal was for a greater spread in the allocation of water, more time to think about the allocation of water and as much tolerance as possible to spread the benefits widely.

There has been some wastage of underground water in the area that seeks the extra allocation. Although I admit that flood irrigation looks very good, is probably a little cheaper and some benefits are derived from it, much water running down tail drains is being wasted. When water is being pumped from underground, that water could be considered as being mined. I have said before and I will say again that if coal miners took all of the coal out of a mine and said to the Government, "Put the coal back in.", we would say, "You are surely joking." That is exactly what the people on the North Branch of the Condamine want us to do. They have mined the water; they have cleaned it up. They say, "There is not much left. Mr Government, put the water back underneath or give us some from somewhere else." That is not cricket. Queenslanders should not support that attitude.

The Government should say to those people, "As you pumped this water and wasted it with flood irrigation instead of using spray irrigation, you must pay the penalty. You do without." The Government should be cracking down on them. No-one will convince me that flood irrigation is an economic use of water. Water can be used much more economically by spray irrigation.

I suggest that the Water Resources Commission give a lot more thought to the way in which water is used. There may be some dams in Queensland that have an abundance of water and there may be some areas that have ample water, but the area to which I am referring does not have an abundant supply. The area along the Condamine above Warwick contains many irrigators who are interested in using the water. The benefits should be spread as widely as possible.

Mr WILSON (Townsville South) (5.16 p.m.): On numerous occasions I have spoken about water conservation and the need to harness the State's water resources to cater for the people's needs. Approximately 30 per cent of Australia's water runs away to waste in North Queensland, yet the people of Townsville do not have an adequate water supply, let alone one to meet the future needs of population growth and industrial expansion in the Townsville area.

Although it may appear that Townsville has sufficient water to meet present needs, unless the city gets a reasonably good wet season its people can expect the imposition of water restrictions again next year. As has happened in the past, council inspectors will be running around at midnight trying to catch little old ladies watering their pot plants.

Townsville has a long history of water shortages. The council has had to introduce a number of schemes over the years in order to meet the city's needs.

Firstly, the town's water supply came from an underground source known as the Hubert Wells. As the town expanded and its population grew, the first dam was built on the Ross River. Later a second dam was constructed, then a third. Later a pipeline was built to Mt Spec to bring water from Crystal Creek. Next a dam was built at Swampy Creek, in the same area, and a second pipeline was built. A fourth dam was built on the Ross River; it was named the Five Head Creek Dam. It is the fourth dam on the Ross River. The Ross River is only a very short river and it does not drain a very large area. I would not be surprised to learn that for rivers of its size throughout the world it has the highest number of dams. It is probably worthy of mention in the Guinness Book of Records.

The Water Resources Commission, the Government, the people of Townsville and those of the Thuringowa Shire are aware of the problems that arose in the construction of the Five Head Creek Dam. All the indications are that the dam was built in a hurry as a matter of political expediency. Care was not taken to seal off the aquifers, with

the result that seepage problems have occurred. The people of Townsville have been assured that there is no danger and that the problem can be overcome by way of a system that will return the seepage water to the dam. I believe that this will prove effective. However, I should like to know who will bear the costs. Will it be the ratepayers of Townsville or the Water Resources Commission?

Over the past 80 years, seven attempts have been made to provide adequate water to meet the needs of Townsville. In spite of the construction of four dams on the Ross River, plus another dam, a pipeline from Paluma and a pipeline from Crystal Creek, Townsville, cannot be guaranteed sufficient water to meet the needs of its future population growth and industrial expansion. It is estimated that Townsville has sufficient water only to meet its needs until 1984, when, once again, the city will be short of water and industrial growth will stagnate.

Industry cannot be expected to develop if it cannot be guaranteed an adequate water supply. What do we find? Because of procrastination over 25 years in its approach to the building of the Burdekin Dam, the Government is denying industrial growth in Townsville and expansion in the Burdekin delta area.

Mr Katter: Why would they be pumping water uphill from the Burdekin instead of getting it from up above the Burdekin, say, at Mt Foxton?

Mr WILSON: I have heard that story before. At that time, pressure was put on the Government, but the members representing the Charters Towers, Ingham and Bowen areas banded together and took that pressure off the Government. They all wanted little water-supply schemes in their own backyards, and they got away from the Burdekin irrigation scheme. I will prove to the member for Flinders that water from the Burdekin Falls can be reticulated to Townsville without being pumped. If he sits back and listens, he might learn something.

If it is built to its full capacity, the Burdekin Dam will meet the needs of Townsville and the Burdekin delta area well into the 21st century, even allowing for much agricultural and industrial expansion. The Government should stop procrastinating and get on with the job in a meaningful way. The dam should be built to its full capacity in a one-stage operation. If that is done, not only will it be cheaper, but it will employ more people over a longer period.

A pipeline should be built from the dam to Townsville to allow the water to gravitate to Townsville instead of having to be pumped from the Haughton River at a great cost to the ratepayers of Townsville, probably for ever more. The building of the Burdekin Dam to its full capacity in a one-stage operation, together with a hydroelectric power-station, would demonstrate that we are capable of building for the future, that we are able to see the future needs of the State, and are doing something about it. Instead, the Government continues to procrastinate by doing things in an ad hoc way. That sort of an approach may be all right for the present, but it will take us nowhere.

In case any Government members or other people doubt what I have just said, I remind them that the Burdekin Dam scheme has been around since 1950. This Government has been in office since 1957, or for 25 of those 32 years, and even now it is merely playing with the scheme. Further proof of the Government's procrastination is to be found in the delay by the Government in completing the electrification of the Brisbane suburban rail system. It should have been finished some 20 years ago.

The Burdekin Dam should be built to its maximum capacity, together with a hydroelectric power-station, to supply power to North Queensland. People and industry in North Queensland should not have to depend on power from Gladstone, some 500 miles away. Only about a week ago a fault occurred in the transmission line in the Nebo area, and the whole of North Queensland was blacked out for 35 minutes. It was suggested that the fault was only a minor one. One wonders what the effect would have been if a major fault had occurred. Would the Government or the Queensland Electricity Generating Board have paid for the loss of production of firms that depend on electric power or the loss of wages that could have occurred in the event of stand-downs? There is no need for electricity to be reticulated to North Queensland. The area has coal to fuel thermal power-stations and the Burdekin Dam on which to build a hydroelectric power-station.

A more realistic approach should be adopted towards the construction of the Burdekin Dam. There should be an earlier commencement date. The dam should be built to its maximum capacity, and sufficient labour should be employed to complete it in the shortest possible time. There is no doubt that there are available engineers who are capable and willing to do the job.

Plenty of labour is available. As the Premier had no trouble in finding an extra $259m to build the power-station at Tarong instead of at Millmerran, money should be no object. That amount of money would be more than enough to build the Burdekin Dam to its full capacity.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. The statements by the member for Townsville South are an indictment against me. He has said that hydroelectric power can be obtained from the Burdekin Falls scheme. It can't; the water would have to run uphill.

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

Mr WILSON: Money should also be made available for an immediate start on the pipeline to Townsville to ensure that on completion of the dam water would be immediately available to Townsville. As I have said, the Townsville water supply is geared to only 1984.

A start should also be made on the various water channels that will supply water in the areas on the southern side of the Burdekin as well as the channels to the Haughton so that water will be available as soon as the dam is completed and fills with water.

I refer to an article that appeared in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" of 12 July 1977—

> "The Burdekin Dam Scheme got the go-ahead from State Cabinet yesterday. But it will be several years before the project becomes a reality. State Premier, Mr Joh Bjelke-Petersen, said after yesterday's cabinet meeting in Townsville a committee would be established to investigate the project and its findings would be passed on to the relevant departments.
>
> Those departments will then produce a recommendation for the implementation of the scheme which the Premier said would include a hydro-electric power station and water storage facilities."

An article in "The Courier-Mail" of 12 July 1977, headed "Cabinet approves Hydro-electric Plan for Burdekin", stated—

> "State Cabinet yesterday approved the Burdekin River Hydro Electric Scheme to serve the area between Cooktown and Mackay."

The article also quoted the Premier as stating—

> "I hope construction will be underway in the 1980s."

A start has been made on the Burdekin Dam. Some of the roads are being built, there has been test drilling of the dam site, plans are in hand to build a small township to house the people who will work on the dam and I believe that NQEB plans to supply power to the site. The completion of the first stage of the dam, which does not include a hydroelectric power-station, is planned for 1990. That can be built only with the second stage of the dam, and as far as I can ascertain that is not expected to be built until some time after the year 2000. In other words, the area between Cooktown and Mackay referred to by the Premier will be dependent on power from South Queensland for another 40 years. That will do nothing for the development of the North.

I shall now read an article from "The Courier-Mail" of 17 May 1978—

> "Next Power Station on Burdekin
>
> The State Government commissioned the Snowy Mountains Authority to investigate the establishment of a $1,000 million power-station on the Burdekin River in North Queensland. The Mines and Energy Minister (Mr Camm) said yesterday it was planned as the next power-station after Tarong."

I wonder how Stanwell came to be considered, although I believe that it, too, has been shelved.

Further on in the article Mr Camm is reported as saying—

> "Hydro-electricity is the cheapest way to run power-stations. A power-station on the Burdekin would be the first major hydroelectric powerhouse. The force of the river will turn the powerhouse turbines."

It looks as though Mr Camm was whistling in the dark in that instance, just as he was when he said that the power-station would be built at Millmerran and the Premier said that it was to be built at Tarong.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. There is a definite misleading of the Committee here. It is not a hydroelectric power-station; it is a pump station.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member cannot take a point of order on that matter.

Mr WILSON: I suggest that the member for Flinders start primary school next year and get some of his facts straight.

It has been well established by various commissions that the Burdekin Dam scheme is a viable proposition because of the contribution it will make to agriculture and horticulture in the Burdekin Basin, the Haughton River area and areas south of that river. I will not go into all the details; they have been mentioned many times before. In fact, the only people who do not seem to be aware of them are Government members.

At present, I am concerned about the source of an adequate water supply for domestic and industrial purposes for Townsville and that part of the Thuringowa Shire close to Townsville. Without an adequate water supply, the chances of further development occuring in the area are greatly diminished.

I repeat that the building of the Burdekin Dam to its maximum capacity, in conjunction with a hydroelectric power-station, is an urgent necessity for the development of North Queensland. Its construction will help to offset unemployment and will go a long way towards stimulating private enterprise so that it can also take up the slack. The water it will make available will be of utmost importance to the development of North Queensland.

In the few minutes that I have left I want to deal with a number of questions relating to Aborigines. This Assembly was given a wealth of information by my colleague the member for Cook, but I wish to reiterate some of the problems that exist. The next time Mr Katter goes out seeking Aboriginal votes, I will remind the Aborigines of what he says in this Assembly and how he laughs——

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. I resent the remark made previously. Earlier, one of the honourable member's colleagues said I was a black and trying to run the State, so I hardly think he should talk.

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

Mr WILSON: Health and education in the islands should be taken away from the DAIA and put in the hands of the Departments of Education and Health. Who ever heard of a department with no expertise in education or health controlling how they are administered? No wonder Aborigines take umbrage at what happens. It must be a joke to them, particularly when the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police says that they have a lot of land and that, if they have land, they are very rich. I wonder how many people living in country towns and on farms and cattle stations are very rich. I wonder how that remark would go over with the owner of a cattle station at the moment.

I have already said that the Government is procrastinating over the building of the Burdekin Dam. It is also procrastinating over land rights for Aborigines. It is putting off the inevitable, because it is only a matter of time before land rights are given to Aborigines. The sooner members opposite who are so ardently opposed to land rights face up to that fact, the better. There is a responsibility on all honourable members to ensure that Queensland Aborigines receive land rights as a matter of justice.

Mr FRAWLEY (Caboolture) (5.34 p.m.): I have listened to many speeches in my time, but the speech by the honourable member for Townsville South was the greatest load of tripe I have heard. He referred to land rights. What about land rights for white people? There is nothing wrong with Aborigines owning land, provided they go out and buy it like everybody else.

It is a pleasure to be able to make a contribution to the discussion of the Estimates of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. The member for Cook used much of his time attacking the director of the department and the Minister. The Minister is a good, sincere and compassionate man. His only failing, if he has one, is that he is a gentleman, and gentlemen find it very hard to engage in the type of politics played by the ALP. Fortunately, I have no such inhibitions. I can play any game played by the ALP.

Mr Milliner: Do you owe the Minister some money?

Mr FRAWLEY: I do not owe him a cent. He is a good man. I have the utmost confidence in him as a Minister. I hope he remains a Minister until the end of his term in Parliament.

Mr Burns: For ever?

Mr FRAWLEY: Not for ever; until the end of his term. He has announced that he intends to retire. He should remain there until the end of his term.

Mr Milliner: Do you think that the member for Cooroora is improving his chances of getting into the ministry?

Mr FRAWLEY: I think that, after wearing the outfit that he has on, he has done his dash. Whatever chance he had is gone.

Mr SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order. I have not done my dash yet. I do it on Saturday afternoon when I open the Noosa Picnic Races.

Mr FRAWLEY: That is no point of order. The honourable member wants to keep away from the mare.

Parliament should be the place for clear thinking and reasoned debate. No-one can say that I have been unreasonable in any debate in which I have participated. Parliament should act in that way when any issue such as service to a group of people is being discussed. I have always stated by views as clearly and as honestly as I can. I intend to continue doing that while I am here; I do not intend to change. I do not care what members may say about old dogs and bees. There is much to be said for deciding what is good and what is not, and sticking to it.

Today, I intend to speak about the Aborigines and what we, as a Government, can do for them. Unfortunately, the tone of some of the speeches——

Mr Milliner: Unfortunately you are wrong all the time.

Mr FRAWLEY: Unfortunately, the tone of some of the speeches this afternoon makes it necessary for me to defend the Government's policies and its officers.

Mr Milliner: Can't the Minister do it?

Mr FRAWLEY: The Minister will do it, but he has so much drivel and tripe to answer that I intend taking some of the load from his shoulders.

It is disgraceful that the Member for Cook used this debate to launch a personal attack on departmental officers. His speech should be ignored; it was simply muck-racking. However, I am not prepared to let it go without springing to the defence of some of the officers. The comments by the honourable member for Cook are recorded in "Hansard". I want what I say recorded in "Hansard".

It would have been much better for me and all other members to speak about meaningful issues. However, because the member for Cook lowered the whole tone of the debate, I feel compelled to reply. The honourable member for Cook has been here for five years. At no time has he tempered his remarks, and he has never given credit where it is due. On the other hand, I heard the member for Bundaberg say that he was prepared to give the Government credit where credit was due.

In the past year, the member for Cook has become more and more bitter in his remarks about the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement, but he has never backed up his statements. In my opinion, he has taken on the position of de facto Opposition spokesman on Aboriginal and Islander affairs. On at least two occasions in this Chamber he has summed up his whole attitude to Aborigines and Islanders,

I have taken a lot of interest in Aborigines because I compete against them in veterans' athletics. Many Aborigines are friends of mine; they are good people.

Mr Milliner: Neville Bonner?

Mr FRAWLEY: No, he is not; but he could not beat time with a drum stick or run across the road. I do not count him as a competitor.

Last year, when members were debating the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act Amendment Bill, the member for Cook asked why, if the amendments were necessary for Aurukun and Mornington Island, they were not being extended to the other communities. The member for Windsor interjected to point out that people in other communities had not asked for a similar provision relating to alcohol. The member for Cook then said that it was not a case of their having asked for it or not having asked for it; that the Government should not respond in that way; that it was supposed to be responsible and it should introduce legislation when the need arose. Anybody who has had anything to do with Aboriginal and Islander affairs knows that the people concerned must be consulted. I am not on the committee of the present Minister for Aboriginal and Island affairs, but I served on the committee headed by Charles Porter, when he was the Minister. I have visited the Torres Strait islands twice. On each occasion I found my visit to be very enlightening. The people of the Torres Strait islands are wonderful people, and I enjoyed the few days that I spent there.

Surely the honourable member for Cook did not really mean what he said. Of course, if he did not mean it, why did he say it? Can any credibility be placed in anything he says? He makes too many violent criticisms of the department. He has embarrassed the people in his electorate. I have many Aboriginal friends. They tell me what should be done about Aboriginal and Islander affairs. I sometimes give the Minister some advice but he does not always take it. Of course, he is running the department.

Mr Tomkins: Did you find the Aborigines unfriendly up there?

Mr FRAWLEY: No. They had heard about me, of course. It is somewhat the same as when I met the Queen the other night. She said, "Mr Frawley, we read so much about you in England. You are that famous veteran athlete."

The director will confirm that when I went to the Torres Strait area I was challenged to a javelin throw. I competed with them. I ran in a 100-metre race with them and I even ran in a three-legged race. We came third. I chose a little bloke in the piggyback race and I managed to win. Of course, I made sure the other fellows had big blokes on their backs.

It is absolutely necessary for the Minister, the director and the members of the Minister's committee to visit the Torres Strait and Aboriginal communities. I have visited various islands, including Hammond Island which is only a short distance from Thursday Island. I cannot understand why the Press creates such an uproar about it. The Minister for Commerce and Industry made a visit. He has held many portfolios and has handled them properly. He had never been on a trip. He is acting Premier while the Premier is away. He was certainly entitled to go on the trip. As I have said before, there was nothing wrong with their fishing after dark. The boat had to anchor. Because of the coral reefs, it could not be navigated at night without a pilot. I do not like fishing so I did not bother about it. I cannot see anything wrong with other people enjoying it. The Minister made a mistake; he should have taken some members of the Press with him. I would have taken Maxine McKew, Jane Singleton and other decent, responsible women in the media. They would have given a pretty fair account of what went on during the trip.

Mr FitzGerald: I thought you were going to say that they were good looking.

Mr FRAWLEY: Well, that has something to do with it.

Members of the Opposition must be embarrassed by the attitude adopted by the honourable member for Cook. He has never given any credit where it is due. He asked the Premier to appoint an all-party select committee to visit appropriate centres to obtain the views of the people concerned with legislation. I hope that he was not suggesting that we go back 20 years or more before Aborigines and Islanders were responsible for obtaining the views of their own people. There is nothing wrong with the leaders of those people obtaining their views.

The honourable member for Cook has precious little to say if all he can do is launch vicious, personal attacks on the department, especially on the director, and on any Aboriginal and Islander people who do not agree with him. His views do him little credit. I do not know whether they are his personal opinions or the opinions of the Opposition. The previous Opposition spokesman on these matters was the honourable member for Townsville South. He did not take much of a stand. He is a nice bloke who did his job, and we managed to put up with him. He did not criticise the department.

The honourable member for Cook represents a very large electorate and should be aware of the job that is being done by the department. He should be aware of all of the problems. I know some of them and I have visited the area only twice. He should not cut the ground from beneath everybody involved and then slam them. I know that this is a controversial topic which is being raised everywhere. Remember what happened at the Commonwealth Games. People tried to stir up the Aborigines purely to make political capital. The southern Press and the Queensland Press wanted them to demonstrate. They did not care two hoots about the Games. They wanted those people to disrupt the Games.

Muck-raking by members and attacks on public servants will do nothing but achieve division in this Assembly. It is absolutely disgraceful that that should occur. I think the honourable member for Cook is doing a job for somebody else. He should be honest with himself and start showing his commitment to the people of his electorate. It is obvious that he does not believe that they should be consulted. I can go back years to the time when the ALP was in office. It did not give the Aborigines or Torres Strait Islanders of this State a fair go at all. It did not care about them. At least the present Government has given them every consideration.

I heard the member for Townsville South say that health should be under the Health Department and education should be under the Education Department. I will tell honourable members something about education shortly. The personal attacks made against the Minister and the director by the member for Cook and other members have never been justified. It is wrong that they should do that. I hope that that will cease.

I have been to the Torres Strait and I am aware that education in the Torres Strait is not as bad as some member have suggested. I had an opportunity to speak to the principal on Yorke Island. Although there are plenty of white teachers in the Torres Strait, there are plenty of Aboriginal and Islander teachers, too. Some of them have attended courses at the Kedron Park College.

Dr Lockwood: And in Townsville.

Mr FRAWLEY: That is correct.

In fact, one of the Church of England ministers has undertaken a teachers' course. The teachers do a very good job. Some of the assistant teachers on the island are doing their bit for the education of the Torres Strait Islanders.

The Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement is the largest employer in the Torres Strait. It provides work for 300 people. When I was in the Torres Strait I saw the fisheries and the refrigerated cold-rooms that have been built to store the fish products. It is great to think that the Government is finding employment for those people. Of course, on Hammond Island there is not much employment available. The Sacred Heart Mission employs some people on Hammond Island. I visited that island with the previous Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs. Airstrips have been constructed on almost every Torres Strait island. I spoke to the nursing sisters at Yorke Island. If I remember correctly, there were two sisters there.

Mr Burns: You were chatting them up?

Mr FRAWLEY: As a matter of fact, I wasn't.

Mr Burns: I do not want to be in your speech, so don't take my interjections.

Mr FRAWLEY: I will take the interjections from the honourable member for Lytton. I do not believe in missing any interjections. I take anybody's interjection, no matter how silly it may be. I am pleased to take the interjection made by the honourable member for Lytton. I never chatted up the nurses. When I go to islands I usually speak to the oldest people and to the youngest people. I find that the old people will

tell me about the customs and traditions of the island. I am very interested in that. In fact, the last time I was there I met a couple who were sponsored by a Bible society from New York. They were writing a language for the people of the Torres Strait. Incidentally, there are only 15 letters in the alphabet of the language they were writing for the Torres Strait Islanders. They were writing short stories for the children because there was no written language in that area. There are not many dogs on the Torres Strait islands. As a matter of fact, I like dogs. I pointed to a dog and said to one of the boys, "What is that? Is that a dog?" He said, "That's an oumi." I said, "How do you spell it?" He could not spell the word because there was no written language. The husband and wife missionaries, who had their two children with them, were writing this language for the Torres Strait Islanders.

Mr Burns: Wind up.

Mr FRAWLEY: I am not going to wind up at all. I will take my time in the debate.

Mr Burns: A lot of people want to speak.

Mr FRAWLEY: I know there are. They will have to wait. A couple of weeks ago I was deprived of speaking by one of the Ministers who wanted to close a debate, and I called for a division. I will digress for one moment so that I can state the correct position. I called for the division. I did not vote with Opposition members; they voted with me, so I should have received the credit.

Mr Milliner: It shows your leadership.

Mr FRAWLEY: I think so. I showed my leadership qualities. I think that it should have been recorded in "Hansard"

All honourable members should be doing their best to help the Aboriginal and Islander people. They need help. The white man's customs have caused some of the degradation that has occurred amongst Aborigines. Trying to assimilate Aborigines into the white race is the worst thing ever. They should be allowed to go their own way. They should be in partnership with the white man, but the white man should not try to foist any of his culture on them.

The Aboriginal culture is quite interesting. I remember that when I was working in Charleville for what was then the Public Works Department I met a group of Aborigines on the bank of the Warrego River. I forget what I was doing; I think I was training for football. Those Aborigines were a very nice group of people. I spoke to them many times and to the elders of the tribe. That was back in 1949. I have forgotten the name of their tribe.

Only recently when I was out at Goondiwindi I met an old Aboriginal friend of mine named Smoky Walker. He said to me, "Look, all the trouble that is being caused between the Aborigines and the white man is being caused by blokes like Denis Walker, Pastor Brady and Senator Bonner. If any of those blokes come out here, I will kill them." He said, "All the trouble is being caused by the do-gooders." Take fellows like Mick Miller.

Mr Milliner: He's a good fellow.

Mr FRAWLEY: I am surprised that the honourable member for Everton said that. I thought he was a responsible young man. As I have said before, he will go a long way in this Parliament and in the Labor Party. I predict a brilliant future for him.

The Minister deserves to be congratulated on the way that he has borne the brunt of attacks by members of the Opposition and by the Press over the past few months. Only a couple of weeks ago he went up to Torres Strait again, with the director, to consult with the local people. There is nothing wrong with consultation with the people. He went up and consulted with them.

Mr Burns: Did you say "insulted"?

Mr FRAWLEY: No, "consulted"

Mr Burns: He insulted them when he was in New Zealand.

Mr FRAWLEY: His remarks were made facetiously.

Mr Burns: He is not one who says things facetiously.

Mr FRAWLEY: Yes, he is. I, too, was misquoted. On 18 August, in answer to an interjection from the honourable member for Aspley, I said that we have enough women in Parliament, that there were two here and that was enough. I said that we did not want any more and that if women got the upper hand it would be dangerous. My comments were written up in "The National Times". I do not read that newspaper unless I get it for nothing.

Last Monday, someone from the ABC telephoned me and asked whether what I was reported in "The National Times" as saying was correct. I replied, "Good Heavens! That was said facetiously." Similarly, the Minister's comments were made facetiously. Often the Minister says something in a facetious manner. He is a kind-hearted gentleman. His remarks were taken out of context, just as my remark was. I like women in Parliament. There should be more of them, as long as there are more men than women.

Mr FOURAS (South Brisbane) (5.54 p.m.): For many years I was a public servant with a philosophy different from that of the Government that I was then serving. I am absolutely appalled at the political statements made by the director in his report. It is appalling that he is politicising his position as a public servant by making statements of that kind.

In the introduction to his report he says—

> "If there is a single undeniable fact today about Aboriginal and Islander people, it is that their exploitation continues. Not exploitation for land, not for labour, but exploitation of their political worth."

He goes on to say—

> "Few of the exploiters are Aboriginal."

He also refers in his report to a person who is associated with Aboriginal land rights who, he claims, travels all over the world to spread malicious untruths about the State Government.

It is amazing that in this State, which treats Aborigines as second-rate persons, a public servant should be making such political statements. It is important to realise that the policies of assimilation that are being followed by this Government would not be accepted by any migrant groups in the community. Australia is a nation of migrants. All white men in Australia are migrants. We took over the country from the Aborigines.

For decades now, when it has come to accepting migrants into our work-force, community and society, we have said to them, "We will let you integrate into our community." Migrants have come to Australia because they wanted to belong, to contribute and to play a major role in the social, political and economic life of this country. Their cultural differences have been accepted. They have been allowed to retain their language. They have been allowed to integrate into the community, and the community has been much richer for it. The community is much more diverse, and we have a better society. Only when the many migrants who have come to this country are integrated in the community will they obtain a truly Australian culture.

Although we are a migrant nation, this State is absolutely racist in its attitude to Aborigines. That fact cannot be more effectively proved than by referring to a judgment that the High Court gave after it had the opportunity of scrutinising the racist land policies of this Government. In the case Koowarta v. Bjelke-Petersen, the Chief Justice, Sir Harry Gibbs, said about the refusal of the Government to allow the transfer of the Archer River lease—

> "There can, of course, be no doubt that a reason for the refusal of the Minister was the race, colour or ethnic origin of the Aboriginals."

Here was the High Court saying that we were behaving in a racist manner. I see many examples of that in my own electorate.

There was a proposal to establish a rural alcohol and drug rehabilitation centre at Aratula. This Government's refusal to accept the funding of the Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs for that centre was racist. It was based on the colour of the people who would have been rehabilitated there. One of the reasons the Government gave for refusing to establish the Aratula centre was that facilities existed at "Biala" in Brisbane, so there was no need to use Federal funds to set up another centre. Yet chronic alcoholics

are dying in the parks in my electorate of South Brisbane. It is appalling that this Government refused those funds. In so doing, it went against every town-planning decision. Another reason the Government gave for not setting up the centre was that it would damage the fauna and flora in the area. The reasons that the Government gave were highly political. The attitude of this Government even permeated through to the local authority in Boonah, which refused to allow such an essential service for Aborigines to be provided.

For the Director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement to be making political statements in a report to the Parliament is abhorrent to me, because I support the Westminster style of Government. If there were a change of Government, I would find it impossible to have that sort of a person associated with a Labor Government. It is appalling that he uses his position in such a way. He has politicised his role in the Public Service to such an extent that he will go down in the annals of the Public Service. He has done it blatantly and for highly political motives.

In his report he said—

> "It is a sad fact that having provided a 'transition' area between 'tribal' existence and 'total' Christianity, some factions of some churches (not necessarily those of earlier involvement) are today, apparently deliberately, creating confusion in part as a reflection of their own uncertainties and flowing from a sense of perhaps shame or belated conscience over earlier failures to be involved to a meaningful extent."

This public servant is concerned about the role that the churches are playing. I suppose he has a right, in his own political way, to be annoyed because the churches were responsible for retaining a leading Queen's Counsel to consider legislation that was to come before the Parliament. In his published and undisputed opinion on deeds of grant in trust for the reserve communities, he said—

> "If there was a genuine intention of giving security of tenure, it is manifest that that intention has by no means been achieved in the Bill placed before me."

The legislation is not to be amended, despite what the Commonwealth has called "legal uncertainties"

Certainly the director is annoyed and is giving a serve back to those concerned people who had the gall and temerity to criticise this Government's decisions. However, surely in any democratic community it is the right of people, whether they be from the church, as individuals or as part of any group, to take a meaningful part in debates on issues affecting the environment in which they live—or the quality of life of a group such as Aborigines. They have a responsibility to express their views. To say nothing is to be damned. Too often too many people by their own silence show their moral cowardice. In this instance the churches, through their own Christian beliefs, have had the temerity to criticise the Government's policy on land rights and to ask for social justice for Aborigines, who are being demeaned and denigrated by the director.

[*Sitting suspended from 6.1 to 7.15 p.m.*]

Mr FOURAS: I am appalled at the strong criticism of the media in the Minister's speech. Worse than that, the Minister criticised anybody who was critical of the department or who expressed concern about Aboriginal people. In his speech to his Estimates the Minister said—

> "Inherent in Queensland policies lies the concept of consultation, from which has arisen the lead of this State in communicating with the people to whom assistance is extended."

That is appalling exaggeration. To pretend by saying those things that the State Government consults with Aborigines is to be very careless with words and shows a lack of regard for the true circumstances.

In the past I have criticised the repeal of the Aborigines Act and the Torres Strait Islanders Act on three basic grounds. Those Acts are a denial of civil rights and basic civil liberties that ought not to be accepted in any democratic society. The Acts do not provide for consultation with Aboriginal people and also they pass on what ought to be the responsibility of the Parliament to the Director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.

On 1 March this year, the Premier announced that Cabinet had authorised the drafting of the new legislation to repeal the Aborigines Act and the Torres Strait Islanders Act. He also said—

"Continuing consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Councils will take place during the preparation of the legislation."

On 25 March the Minister told the Parliament—

"Later this year, detailed services legislation will be introduced

This will follow the consultations to be held with Aboriginal and Islander representatives over the next few months."

How many meetings of the advisory councils have been held in the last year? One, and one only! Although the legislation providing for deeds of grant in trust was passed by this Chamber, there is no doubt at all that it is totally unacceptable to thinking people in the community and certainly to Aboriginal people. I am appalled that the Government tried to justify the rejection of the land rights called for by Aborigines by stating that if land was given to Aborigines they would only give it away. Some said, "They will sell it off for a bottle of plonk." A very responsible person in my electorate said to me, "Jim, you can't be fair dinkum. You know if they get the land they will not be able to hold onto it." But nobody was speaking about that concept of land rights.

After the legislation was enacted, the advisory councils showed their disapproval by voting 35 to 1 against it and supported—

" . . the feeling of the majority of Torres Strait Island people seeking for inalienable freehold to their land."

The Aboriginal Advisory Council, in the words of its working party, voted that it did—

". . not accept the Deed of Grant in Trust at this stage until further investigation is carried out by the Queensland Government and the Lands Department of alternative land tenure as outlined by Mr. Wally Baker."

That was carried by all members present, with only the two representatives from Cherbourg abstaining from voting. Yet after that, on 13 July, the Premier said—

"No vote on the Deed of Grant in Trust title was taken at the meeting."

The vote was 35 to 1, yet statements of that sort are made. It is an absolute distortion of the facts for the Minister to state "Inherent in Queensland policies lies the concept of consultation . . ." That debate is lowered to that level is appalling. Unfortunately those words would have been written for the Minister by his own public servants. It is unfortunate that he has to promulgate them in this Chamber.

Until recently I was the Opposition spokesperson for welfare. The State has an extreme need for something to be done about Aboriginal welfare, particularly in children's welfare programs. Developmental and preventive programs ought to be implemented, but nothing at all is being attempted. The Government has an assimilatory policy. It does not believe that where there are special needs and difficulties there ought to be special programs. It believes that the facilities available for the white community are adequate for the black community. That belief is proven to be false by the fact that an alarming 36.5 per cent of the children in institutions are black, although they represent less than 2 per cent of the population.

We recently saw the publication, with a great deal of fanfare, of a Parliamentary White Paper on Family Welfare. There are two themes in that report. One is the use of a justice model in the juvenile justice system and the other is the concept of community involvement, that is, the provision of more services at the local community level so that the needs of families and children can be best served. Those themes ought to be adopted as part of the approach to Aboriginal children. It is important that the Department of Children's Services should urgently address itself to this area in view of the intended repeal of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Act. That has been foreshadowed, but unfortunately has not occurred. It appears that a repeal Bill will not be introduced during this session. If that legislation is repealed, there is a need to consider the services to be provided to Aboriginal and Islander reserve communities. At the same time, the Government ought to be looking at the future role of reserve community courts that deal with family matters and juvenile offenders.

Some of the blame for the lack of support for Aboriginal children I sheet home to the Federal Government. It has thrown away its responsibility under section 51 of the Constitution, the amendment of which was whole-heartedly supported by the entire Australian community in 1967. The Federal Government is not carrying out its responsibilities. The continued failure of Federal and State welfare departments and legislators to respect Aboriginal mores and values in their policies, practices and legislation relating to black families is a matter of great concern. I express that concern and, in expressing it, I am a little more fortunate than those in the community outside in that I will not be called an agitator, a person who has been manipulated by the Coms or a person who is trying to foment dissent and hate in the Aboriginal community.

Statistics on the number of Aboriginal and Islander children in the care of the State are not kept by the Department of Children's Services. The department refuses to keep such statistics because they would be a terrible embarrassment. The department does not want to know about the problem and, if it does not keep statistics, the problems can be hidden under the carpet and forgotten. The department does not then have to worry about them. However, a survey conducted by the Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs in December 1980 indicated that an alarming 36.5 per cent of children in Queensland institutions were of Aboriginal or Islander descent.

The Federal Parliament should enact an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child-care Act, in exercise of the power granted by section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution. I shall certainly be telling the next Hayden Labor Government—whenever Mr Fraser decides to hold an election—that this is a vital piece of legislation. Only in that way can services be provided to those children, because this racist Government in Queensland is not concerned about them and will not act. Let us have a national policy to care about Aboriginal children. In accordance with such an Act, there should be a national body staffed by Aboriginal and Islander people, incorporating the existing State Aboriginal child-care agencies, which with minimal resources are doing a marvelous job. This national body should have the responsibility for developmental and preventive programs for Aboriginal and Islander children. For too long our institutions have been full of these children. For too long this Government has failed to understand the mores and values of Aborigines in its policies on the Aboriginal people. For too long Queensland institutions have been allowed to dehumanise those children and cause them extreme problems. Institutionalising children—particularly black children in a white institution—is the worst thing one can do. It is disgraceful that black children are being institutionalised at the rate they are.

I believe that a positive role ought to be adopted by the State Department of Welfare Services. Unfortunately, in my view—and I believe it to be correct—if the department wants to, for example, implement any new policies, it is not allowed to do so unless they are first cleared with the State Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. It appears that the Department of Welfare Services cannot get permission to set up a black social-work unit for Aborigines because the DAIA does not believe in separate programs for Aborigines. The departmental officers call it apartheid, but I would describe their attitude as depicting a lack of concern, which, in turn, becomes a very convenient way of forgetting about the problem.

The State Welfare Services Department must implement policies in keeping with community-based models promoted in the White Paper. It is fitting that a black unit should be formed within the Children's Services Department to play an educational and consultative role within that department and within the community and to be involved in policy-making. The lack of black workers in the State Welfare Department must be overcome by a positive policy to recruit and train Aboriginal child-care officers and field officers, whose understanding of their own people would enable them to find solutions not always evident to white workers. Those people must be involved in the policy sections of the department so that they can help by doing something positive.

The Minister spoke about white people occupying Australia for 160 years and said that some Aborigines have mixed with the whites more than others and that some do not seem capable of doing so. It is important to have positive policies that will allow self-determination. Positive short-term and long-term policies are necessary to make that possible. The Government should be implementing such measures rather than running away from the problem.

It is not good enough to judge the Aborigines by our own materialistic standards. It is not good enough to try to inculcate in them our values and mores and neglect what they are thinking and trying to achieve. Positive ways of doing things with Aborigines, not for them, must be devised. The hand-out approach exhibited by the State Government must cease. Aborigines must be allowed to control their health and legal services and train their own people to play meaningful and positive roles in developing programs and in servicing Aboriginal people. That is the way to raise their dignity.

These words written by George Bernard Shaw are very apposite: "The worst thing we can do to our fellow human beings is not to hate them but to be indifferent to them, because indifference is the essence of inhumanity." Our indifference to Aborigines is a shocking indictment of the Government's policies. We ought to be fair dinkum and allow them to make their own mistakes and do their own thing. We should allow them to run out-stations, allow them to buy properties such as Archer River and allow them to run rural camps for alcoholic members of their community. We should give resources and the dignity and pride to lift themselves to become full members of the Australian community. We have done that with the migrants; we must now do it with the Aborigines. The attempt to assimilate them must be ended. Aborigines must be integrated into the community.

(Time expired.)

Mr SIMPSON (Cooroora) (7.28 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to support the Minister's Estimates. I was rather disappointed to note that the previous speaker was very confused. He does not know the difference between assimilation and segregation. Segregation is the opposite of assimilation.

Mr Fouras: I did not say segregation.

Mr SIMPSON: If the honourable member is not for assimilation, he must favour segregation.

Mr Burns: That is wrong.

Mr SIMPSON: One is the opposite of the other.

Mr Fouras: I said integration—an integral unit of the whole. "Integration" was the word.

Mr SIMPSON: "Integration" is not the word. That is typical of the hypocritical remarks made by people who are trying to confuse the community into thinking that integration is different from what has been suggested.

The country was developed by people who integrated to form a great Australia. These days, people speak about multiculturalism. They are now beginning to refer to segregation and developing and preserving people's differences rather than fostering the qualities that bring people together. For the good of Australia, they should be highlighting what we have in common. For the good of Queensland, people should be treated equally. It is absurd for people to talk about other than integration, because integration is the only way Australia will be a nation. If we go the other way, there is no hope for the future of this State or country. It would become separated and divided. That is what Opposition members are trying to achieve.

What is more, some people in the church are suggesting segregation. That is very sad. The good Lord was down on hypocrites more than anyone else. He was concerned for and forgave the sinner, but He had no time for the hypocrite. The hypocrite is a person who claims, on the one hand, that he will support segregation, which means that Aborigines should revert to what they were and be treated differently from everyone else and have different sets of standards and rules—it would be absurd to let them revert to being, for instance, cannibals and killing members of other tribes or to not using modern medicine—and, on the other hand, that he will show brotherly love for Christians who believe in the tenet, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" and say that Aborigines' land rights are sacred.

An African Christian visited Brisbane during the Commonwealth Games. I believe that only Channel 0 telecast a short snippet of what he said at one rally. When Perkins and Bonner were screaming about land rights, that African gentleman said, "We are all one. There is no division of Christians into black and white." He said that land rights had no

place in the affairs of a Christian. He said that land rights made no difference to a Christian, and that Christians were not screaming for land rights. That point was not reported except on one television channel. It is unfortunate that a few leaders in some of the churches have put that forward as being the cry of the churches. That is misleading people within their own ranks. What a good job has been done for Aborigines in Queensland can best be seen by visiting the various reserves rather than by taking someone else's word.

Some 58 000 Aborigines or part Aborigines live in Queensland. Of that number, some 15 000 are on reserves. Many people do not realise that. Legislation was passed in this Assembly to give secure title to the land on those reserves. That is the position in some other States, but they dare to call it a type of freehold or conditional freehold. It is not correct to talk about conditional freehold. We in this Parliament are accused of being paternal if we give other than freehold rights to land on Aboriginal reserves, yet our accusers would be the first to say that the land should not be freely available for sale to anyone else and therefore be lost to the Aborigines.

The Government has faced up to its responsibilities. The deed of grant in trust makes land title for Aborigines secure in the future. Other legislation to be introduced will spell out in detail the public areas, roads, hospitals, post offices and other services that should be available on those reserves. Public access to those reserves should be provided for all Australians. There should not be any segregation, as was suggested by some Opposition members.

There has been a cry from some groups to set aside reserves so that no other Australians may enter upon them. I am not referring to a private area such as a home, where the normal rules of trespass would apply. I have visited a number of Aboriginal reserves in Queensland, in the Northern Territory and in some of the other States. The Aboriginal reserves in Queensland appear to be better administered than those in other States.

The main problems encountered on reserves are problems associated with alcohol. Alcohol causes greater problems in Aboriginal communities than it does in white communities. The Aborigines do not benefit from the hoo-ha and banner-waving carried out by a few Christian leaders. They are not trying to help the Aboriginal people; they are only being party political throughout Australia. Some of those persons admitted that quite freely during the Commonwealth Games.

Aborigines need to be integrated into the community. Those people who have worked closely with Aborigines realise that, other than integration, there is no long-term solution to the problem. Segregation will take us back in time. That is not what we want. It will take a long time for the Aboriginal community to adapt to standards that are regarded as the norm. That can be achieved only by integration.

The other responsibility of the Minister's portfolio is Water Resources. The river system in this State has been changed dramatically for the benefit of its residents. Many rivers have been dammed. Many native fish have been killed. Following the impounding of water, new species of fish must be found to live in those waters.

Mr Burns: You are doing a good job at Noosa.

Mr SIMPSON: That is right. Work is being carried out in that area.

Mr Burns: Have you seen the yellow belly? They are quite large, aren't they?

Mr SIMPSON: Yes, they are.

Species such as a Nile perch, which have been found in other parts of the world to do well in impounded waters, should be introduced. I hope that the Minister for Primary Industries, who is in the Chamber, will continue to pursue that matter with some vigour. The impounding of fish is a side-effect of the Government's water resources policy.

Water can be used in a number of ways. A warning that I would give is that water should not be carted any great distance for consumption in the cities. The Government should insist on the use of water resources by only the local people. The creation of water-storage areas outside the cities and major towns leads to decentralisation. I would not be in favour of transporting water from the Mary River system, for example, to Brisbane so that Brisbane can become an even greater city than it already will be. Brisbane will become big enough as it is and it will suffer from all of the inherent problems that that

entails—transportation problems, sewerage problems and pollution. Brisbane has some natural features, such as surrounding hills and on-shore winds, that do nothing to help a major city.

Mr Burns: What is the answer to the problem of the dirty, smelly water up on the Sunshine Coast? In the dry period at Christmas, people do not like to drink that brown water.

Mr SIMPSON: Is the honourable member referring to problems arising in the Landsborough, Maroochy and Noosa Shires?

Mr Burns: That is right.

Mr SIMPSON: Problems do arise, not in the storage areas but in the reticulation and treatment of the water. The Minister's department has advisers in the area. However, no great advances have been made in obtaining purer water. It is amazing how the local people become used to drinking it. The honourable member for Lytton, who comes to the Sunshine Coast only occasionally, would notice the water, but the locals appear to be used to it.

The aspect of water resources that interests me is the use of impounded water for irrigation. Recently the Landsborough and Maroochy Shires discussed the construction of a dam on the Obi Obi River. Little or no consideration has been given to ensuring that there will be a permanent flow of water for the farms on the Obi Obi and Mary Rivers. From a report that has been presented I see that reference is made to a major dam on the Obi Obi River. I would oppose such a dam, which would have the effect of submerging some of the richest farmland in the valley. Such good agricultural land simply should not be put under water. Other methods of obtaining water, such as by constructing freshwater barrages and sinking artesian bores, should be investigated. Agricultural land is very precious and very scarce. It is impossible to replace it. I leave that thought with the Minister and ask him to give serious consideration to the needs of agriculture.

Recreation on dams is a matter that does not receive sufficient thought. From time to time it is criticised as posing a health hazard. Nevertheless, the use of dams for recreational purposes must be looked at.

An important aspect of impoundment of water is flood mitigation. In Queensland, the flow of water in the rivers and streams is not sufficient to enable the State to make great use of it for the generation of power. Therefore, Queensland is left with the supply of water for domestic, agricultural and industrial purposes as being the main use for water that is impounded.

I have said in earlier debates that the ingredients of energy and water resources will make this State the greatest State in Australia. With the good, sound management that this Government provides, Queensland can look forward only to a bigger and brighter future, and we should be encouraging the young people leaving school to take advantage of what the State is able to provide.

Mr SMITH (Townsville West) (7.46 p.m.): I rise tonight to update remarks that I have made in this Chamber previously. Before doing so, I point out that it was an insult to honourable members to present the annual report of the Commissioner of Water Resources only 10 minutes before the debate on the Estimates for the Queensland Water Resources Commission was to commence. The report contains 62 pages of very detailed information. Such a document should be made available to members at least two weeks before the Estimates are debated to give them an opportunity to look at it and ask pertinent questions about it. Our spokesman on water resources, the member for Maryborough (Mr Hansen), was given only a few minutes this morning to peruse that document before he spoke in the debate. It was quite unreasonable to ask him to speak to that document.

I believe that a confidence trick is being played on honourable members. This has happened not only with this commission but also with other departments. A certain pattern seems to be emerging, and it is about time that it stopped. The Minister is a decent fellow, and I thought that he might have been an exception. I will not be too hard on him, and I hope that he is around here for another three years.

I congratulate the commission on the presentation of the report. As a matter of fact, I think that it is one of the best reports that have been presented. It is easy to follow. It contains quite a lot of information and a good deal of time is required to digest it.

When we talk about water-supply projects, I guess that most of us look very closely at our own areas because they are our responsibility. It is well known that the Townsville area is facing another water shortage. In spite of the expenditure of quite massive sums of money, very serious problems have occurred with the Ross River Dam. Extensive investigations have been carried out into the seepage problem. At present, I am not certain how the repairs for the dam will be funded, but that matter has to be considered very seriously. I doubt whether it is within the capacity of the Townsville City Council to meet the cost of those repairs. If the Government is not prepared to accept its responsibilities for the design faults of that dam, it may well be that the long-term solution is to take water for Townsville from the Burdekin Dam. That is not my opinion, but the suggestion cannot be brushed aside; it must be seriously considered. I do not really believe that all the options for overcoming the water-supply problems in the Townsville area have been examined as closely as they should.

In the brief opportunity that I have had to look at the report, there are a couple of points that I wish to make about it. Under the 1978 Act, the National Water Resources Program made $200m of Commonwealth funds available for water projects.

I understand that at the end of the third financial year only about $76m has been expended and $127m remains. Therefore I am surprised to see that Queensland's allocation for the past year was only a little over $6m. I think a recent Commonwealth agreement has varied the figure to some extent, but the discounted value of the original $200m in 1978 terms will probably be of the order of $150m by the time the money is expended. I do not know whether the Commonwealth conned the States or whether the States were not very astute.

If the State is to undertake planning that involves great expenditure based on allocations from the Commonwealth, it has to be very clearly agreed by all parties that those amounts be indexed so that planning can go ahead with the knowledge that at the end of the line there will be no shortfall, which is what happens at the moment. There are uncompleted projects all over Queensland. The Commonwealth has allocated $6m of which $3m has been spent at Bundaberg and so many hundred thousand has been spent somewhere else. There is complete fragmentation and that does not get the job done very well.

Mr Tomkins: We can only spend that money when we get it.

Mr SMITH: I realise that, but I am saying that in many ways it seems to be bad planning to take on a number of projects that the Government cannot service. Because they have been going on for such a long time, obviously the Government cannot service them.

I was interested to look at the details in the report of the Burdekin scheme. Some information appeared for the first time. I see that the feasibility study is now centred around a 500 MW hydroelectric unit. Until now I understood that the basis of thinking was a 1 000 MW station. I am surprised that that information has not been revealed before, but I am ready to admit that I did not really see the hydroelectric option as being very viable until the concept of a pump-storage system was considered. I now totally support that concept.

Only about $3.6m has been provided for this year and the total expenditure up to the end of June 1982 was $8m. That is certainly a long way from $125m, so there is a long way to go. From the figures I have, the $6.5m of Commonwealth money will basically build the town. There is the balance of $3.3m, but there is still approximately 30 km of road to construct by the end of the year. It seems to me that if the dam is to be built in time to meet the water shortages in the agricultural and city areas, there will have to be a greater expenditure.

This evening I intend to speak more about the resumptions in the Burdekin area than about the dam. The member for Flinders is here this evening and he often puts forward the Bradfield scheme. I do not blame him for that because he represents a very large western area. However, I tend to think that it could well be another pipe-dream, because my information is that the evaporation rates of any water that might be channelled to the western area would be such that the project would never be economic.

Mr Katter: Can I ask you what the evaporation rates are?

Mr SMITH: I cannot recall the figures.

Mr Katter: I can tell you.

Mr SMITH: I do not intend to go into that now. In fact, I am not interested in the honourable member's opinion. I admire his enthusiasm but I do not ask for his opinion. If the honourable member wishes to argue that project he should produce thoroughly authenticated figures. The Premier runs around the State and talks about that being the next project, but I cannot see any point in it.

Mr Katter interjected.

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

Mr SMITH: As I said before, there are a number of uncompleted projects throughout the State. They are starved of funds, and it is a pipe-dream to be talking about projects such as the one mentioned by the member for Flinders until some of the projects already in hand are cleaned up.

Mr Katter: You just said that the problem is the evaporation rates. You don't know the evaporation rates.

Mr SMITH: The best thing that the honourable member can do is evaporate himself.

Mr Katter interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Flinders has had the opportunity to address the Chair.

Mr SMITH: Back on 24 March I brought to the attention of this Assembly in some detail what I believed to be a rort with respect to a deal that was being considered for the distribution of land which would become available under the proposed Burdekin irrigation scheme. I raised the matter again on 31 August. Just to refresh your memory, Mr Miller, in every other irrigation scheme that has been considered in this State there has certainly been the principle of one retention farm. The initial proposal put forward by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission for the Burdekin was that growers would have the option of retaining up to an additional three farms, to give them a total of four. That was hotly contested, and after the personal intervention of the president of the National Party, the number was lifted to eight. On the basis of farms being 70 ha, that meant that certain landholders would finish up with holdings of 560 ha. I have discovered that another idea was pushed on 10 September at a meeting of the recently formed advisory committee. We now find that the landholders are not satisfied with 70 ha retention farms; they are now asking that those farms be 100 ha. That would mean that the biggest landholders would finish up with a massive holding of 800 ha. That is completely unsatisfactory. I have here a table which sets out the number of farms that would be made available, and I seek leave to include it in "Hansard".

(Leave granted.)

Farm Size	Total Farms Developed	No. of Retention Areas	No. of Additional Areas Retained	No. of Farms for New Settlers
70	660	123	202	335
80	595	123	183	289
90	543	123	169	251
100	500	123	152	225

Mr SMITH: On the basis of 70 ha, 660 farms would be developed, and on the basis of 100 ha, 500 farms would be developed. Allowing for the fact that farmers would take their full entitlement, the number of 70 ha farms available for new settlers would be 335, whereas if the area was increased to 100 ha the number would be reduced to 225. I just cannot accept that further denial of the opportunity for young people to go on the land, and I believe that many members opposite would share that view.

On 24 March Mr Casey asked a question about some dealings by Mr Geoff Cox. On 1 January 1981 he converted 6 055 ha to freehold for a total cost of $394,495, an average price of $65 a hectare. He has been arguing since then that that was a fair price and that there was nothing wrong with the deal. The Minister has had to go along with it,

but I honestly believe that if he had not intended leaving this Assembly in the near future he would not have gone along with it. If he had intended to remain here for another three years he might have opposed that proposition more vigorously.

Because the Burdekin Training School needed additional land it was necessary to resume land from Mr P. B. Cooper and Mr F. R. G. Stricklan. The total amount of land involved was 4 148 ha. By way of compensation, the Lands Department offered $300,000. The owners, advised by Mr David Cox, the brother of Mrs Vicki Kippin, the defeated member for Mourilyan——

Mr R. J. Gibbs: She will never be back.

Mr SMITH: I do not believe she will. That is well understood.

They pursued the matter in the Land Court. Finally a judgment was handed down by Mr Dan Barry on 10 September, awarding the sum of $354,164. It is interesting to note that that judgment was based on the assumption that $800 a hectare was allowed for arable land and $46 for non-arable land. The figure of $800 should be kept in mind.

It will be realised that the land that the Cox family obtained from the Government for $65 a hectare could be sold back to the Government within the terms of the resumption, for more than $800 a hectare. The arable land valued at $800 a hectare was nowhere near as valuable as the land that the Government will have to resume for the Burdekin scheme. As I have said on other occasions, what happened was a scandal. I will not walk away from that.

Millions of dollars are involved in this scheme. I have asked the Minister a number of questions about it and he has not defended it vigorously. I think it will stand as a monument to the Government's greatest hand-out to its supporters in the past 25 years. It is a disgrace.

Mr HARPER (Auburn) (8.2 p.m.): I have much pleasure in supporting the Minister's Estimates. I thank the Minister and his officers for the courtesies that they have extended to me since I have been in this Parliament.

I will deal briefly with Aborigines and Aboriginal development, about which too much is said, too much unnecessary speculation is entered into and too much controversy is aroused. In my electorate an improvement has taken place in the health of Aborigines, particularly in the Eidsvold area. Integration is occurring to the benefit of both the Aboriginal groups and the other Australian groups.

Although no Aborigines reside in Baralaba, children from the Woorabinda Mission, which is in the Minister's electorate, travel to school at Baralaba. They have to travel over a road that the Minister might consider trying to get improved. It is in the Roma electorate. Any improvement to the road would be an advantage for those children when travelling to and from school, although they travel in just the same way as do any other bush children who travel by school bus.

An integration situation exists at the Baralaba State School. The children from the Woorabinda community are able to mix with, to study with and to play with other children and also to take part in all of the usual activities and some of the special activities that are developed at that centre. This move will ensure that the future Australian population is a total community and that the Aboriginal people are able to take their rightful place as members of that total community.

I have a lot of concern about the use of the term "land rights". I feel strongly that the term to which we should be referring is "land grants", because that is what we are talking about. The people who talk about land rights are really talking about mineral rights. With very few exceptions no-one in Queensland is entitled to mineral rights.

The Government introduced legislation which has given a deed of grant in trust to Aboriginal communities. It is a security of tenure. Here perhaps I disagree to some extent with the comments made earlier by the honourable member for Cooroora because, when talking of freehold land, we are talking of a deed of grant. Let us understand quite clearly that any member of the Australian community who is resident in Australia, regardless of whether he is an Aborigine or any other Australian, has a right and is entitled to purchase freehold land. What we are talking about are lands over which a deed of grant has been given by this Government.

It has been a secure tenure but, instead of the land being given to an individual as freehold, the land is given to a group of individuals in trust, in exactly the same way as deeds of grant in trust are given to other groups of Australians, such as show societies, so that the land can be held in trust and used for the purpose for which it is intended, that is, for the continuing use and benefit of the total group, without any risk of its being alienated without the consent of the whole of the people of Queensland, as expressed through this Parliament.

It is time that those sections of the community which claim to have the interests of Aborigines at heart realised this fact and stood beside the Queensland Government in its intent to genuinely assist its Aboriginal population. It has given the total Aboriginal population an opportunity to be integrated into the Australian community, at the same time retaining their own rights and many of the privileges to which they have become accustomed as well as their own role in the community.

The other responsibility of the Minister is water resources. I cannot help feeling that the funding in this area is totally inadequate. That is not the fault of the Minister. I guess that we must all accept some responsibility because there are other areas which, perhaps in our ignorance, we believe deserve higher priorities.

Government members and, I am quite sure, many Opposition members, recognise that the economic problems of any nation are dependent for solution on productivity. If we are going to develop economically and if we are going to retain our place in the world community as a progressive nation with a high standard of living, we must have productivity within our work-force. We fail to fully appreciate the fact that primary production is very dependent upon water. We fail to recognise the need to allocate more funding into those areas which will provide productivity—water resources and soil conservation.

In the Auburn electorate there are two major rivers with tributaries. The Dawson River and its watershed are of tremendous importance. At present there are six weirs on the Dawson River. However, only two of them are modern structures; the other four either need replacing or are virtually defunct. The Binda Weir, which was a timber construction built in 1953, has been virtually demolished. That was an unfortunate decision, but it is a decision that cannot be reversed. In the future we must look very carefully at such decisions before we allow situations to develop such as the demolition of Binda Weir. That decision cannot be reversed without heavy expenditure on its replacement by a modern structure. The Orange Creek Weir is an old timber structure that was built in 1932. The Water Resources Commission recognises the need to replace those two structures with a modern weir in the not too distant future. The timber structure built at Theodore in 1930 must have been a massive undertaking at that time. At Moura a timber structure serves the dual role of weir and bridge. Fortunately, the bridge is to be replaced by a modern structure. I hope that plans before the commission will come to fruition in the next few years and that a new weir will also be constructed at Moura.

The Neville Hewitt concrete weir at Baralaba was built in 1976. Perhaps it is an opportune time to once again record the sterling service given to this Parliament by Neville Hewitt, whose name is carried by that weir. The Glebe Weir near Taroom is a concrete structure that was completed in 1972. That brings to mind representations that I have made to Ministers, particularly to the present Minister for Water Resources, about fish ladders. Despite answers given by the departmental officers I again ask the Minister to consider in future Estimates making provision for fish ladders to be fitted to structures on our major river systems. It is not good enough to give the answer that they are not necessary, that they would not work or some other reason. One needs only to go out to those weirs to see the fish population at the foot of them at times to realise that if some structure was there to enable the fish to go upstream, they would go upstream as fish had done prior to the construction of that weir.

I ask the Minister to look not decades ahead but only a few short years ahead to the urgent need for at least two major dam storages upstream on the Dawson River. Sites have more or less been determined by the commission. One is on Palm Tree Creek and the other is upstream from the town of Taroom. I ask the Minister to give serious consideration to initiating steps towards having those two major dam storages constructed in the not-too-distant future.

I turn now to the Burnett River catchment area. The Burnett River is a major watercourse with tributaries at the headwaters. The recharge Cania Dam project is

nearing completion. The dam itself has been completed. The associated facilities are nearing completion. The dam is on Three Moon Creek, which also has a number of weirs built on it.

The Cania Dam is designed as a recharge facility to build up the underground water levels. Apart from a weir at Mulgildie, those at Monto and Youlambie are designed to recharge the underground aquifer. On Three Moon Creek water is being used to the best advantage. It is a great shame that more of Queensland's watercourses do not fall into the same category.

In the same area, there is a weir at the town of Mungungo on Monal Creek, and further downstream on the Nogo River lies the Wuruma Dam. That very fine facility has not been helped by nature, with the result that its water level is still very low.

Last year it looked as though the dam would have been dry by January of this year. Fortunately, some rain fell in the area, so a reprieve was granted. However, surely that should be a lesson to all honourable members as well as to the commission and the Minister that Queensland must have more water storages on the Burnett River and its tributaries. The largest citrus orchard area in Queensland was faced with having no water whatever. Citrus trees cannot be sent away on agistment. If they do not have water, they die, the whole citrus industry goes, and it is years before the trees can be replaced. Queensland cannot afford to let the citrus industry in the Mundubbera/Gayndah area again be put at risk. With God's help, the Wuruma Dam may be filled during the forthcoming wet season. If it is, the Government should look upon that as a reprieve. But it must ensure that never again does Queensland's largest citrus orchard area find itself in a situation in which it has only a few months' water supply available.

Mr FitzGerald: They export citrus, too, don't they?

Mr HARPER: The area certainly does.

The one weir at Mundubbera, which is a concrete structure, is inadequate to make the best use of the water from the Wuruma Dam when it is full. So additional water storages are needed on the river below the Wuruma Dam so that the river can be put to its best use. The construction of the Boondooma Dam on the Boyne River will be of little assistance in that area, although those waters will come in and complement the water from the Nogo River and the upper reaches of the Burnett River.

Throughout my comments on these Estimates, I have been talking about money and a lack of money. Again, one sees that the construction of the Boondooma Dam is being delayed because of lack of funding. There will never be a better time than the present to build that dam to its full capacity in an economical way. The height of the bank might be added to at a later stage, but never could the dam be built more economically than at present. But because the Government is not prepared to find the money, or because it is unable to find the money, it has to let the dam be constructed at what is less than a totally efficient rate. It simply cannot afford to go on in that manner. It must face the facts of reality—not that it is short of money, but that it has to find money for water resources.

(Time expired.)

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (8.22 p.m.): Although Aborigines comprise only one per cent of the total population of Australia, they make up nearly 30 per cent of the prison population, and at times exceed that level. Comparing the disproportionate numbers of arrests of Indians in Canada, Maoris and Islanders in New Zealand and Malaysians in Sri Lanka, it can reasonably be speculated that Australia's rate of 726.5 Aborigines in prison per 100 000—according to the 1976 census there were about 140 000 Aborigines in Australia—is the highest in the world for the imprisonment of indigenous people.

Elizabeth Eggleston, in her pioneering work on Aborigines and the criminal justice system, concluded that there is discrimination against Aborigines in sentencing, and that that discrimination occurs chiefly in the choice of imprisonment as a suitable sentence, instead of the imposition of a lighter penalty, in a higher proportion of Aboriginal cases. In this debate, I shall touch on a case that I think highlights that point of view. It concerns the gaoling, fairly recently, of Percy Neal of the Yarrabah Reserve near Cairns.

In October last year, Percy Neal received a sentence of two months for spitting at a white officer, or a person acting in a position of authority, at the Yarrabah Reserve. Neal appealed to the Court of Criminal Appeal in Brisbane against the two months' prison sentence, and his sentence was increased to six months on the unanimous decision of Mr Justice Andrews, Mr Justice Sheahan and Mr Justice Connolly.

Prior to going into the details of the case, I wish to say quite forthrightly that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General should remove from office Mr Spicer, SM, in Cairns, who I believe showed a total lack of responsibility, fairness and understanding of the law in imposing a two months' sentence on Neal. It is relevant for me to say also that it is my considered opinion that while Mr Justice Andrews holds the position of a judge in this State, he should never be allowed to sit on the Bench for cases involving people of Aboriginal or Islander descent.

The case went to the High Court, which gave its decision on 24 September this year. The case was heard by Chief Justice Gibbs, Mr Justice Murphy, Mr Justice Wilson and Mr Justice Brennan, and it is desirable that I outline to the Committee some of the comments made by Mr Justice Murphy and Mr Justice Brennan.

In handing down his sentence on Neal, Mr Spicer, SM, said—

> "Violence is something in recent times which has crept into Aboriginal Communities. I blame your type for this growing hatred of black against white. You are not giving true representation as a leader to the people who voted you their leader. As a magistrate I visit four to five communities, and I can say unequivocally that the majority of genuine Aboriginals do not condone this behaviour and are not desirous in any shape or form of having changes made. They live a happy life, and it is only the likes of yourself who push this attitude of the hatred of white authority, that upset the harmonious running of these Communities."

During the hearing in the High Court Mr Justice Murphy had this to say about Mr Spicer, SM—

> "These remarks disclosed, if it were not already apparent, that this was a race relations case, intimately related to the politics of Aboriginal communities and the system under which Aboriginals live in the communities. The remarks assume more importance because they were advanced in this Court as a justification for sentences by the Magistrate and by the Court of Criminal Appeal. The Crown claimed that they showed that the Magistrate had properly taken into the special circumstances of the Aborigines. Rather the Magistrate's remarks show that he had put himself in opposition to the political stance of the defendant that conditions need changing on the reserves.
>
> The Magistrate took into account political views and actions against the appellant. This is rarely, if ever, justified, whether it be on trial or sentence. Those remarks were not only patronising and insulting; they also made clear that anyone who agitated for change, 'in any shape or form', in the Aboriginal communities, would be under a disadvantage in that Magistrate's Court. In its supervision of the criminal justice system of the State, the Court of Criminal Appeal—"

he there refers to the Queensland Court of Criminal Appeal—

> "has a duty to see that racism is not allowed to operate within the judicial system. It should have disapproved of the unjudicial manner in which the Magistrate dealt with sentence."

That is a very clear indictment by a High Court judge of Mr Spicer and, worse still, of a fellow member of the Bench.

Mr Justice Murphy said also that the magistrate in his findings overstated, misunderstood or overlooked some of the other evidence. Collins was the person who laid the charges against Neal. Mrs Collins swore in court that she did not see the spitting, nor did she see any spit on Mr Colilns, but she heard the spitting. The four-year-old child of Mr Collins was called to give evidence against Mr Neal, but there was no evidence that the child saw the spitting incident take place. None the less, in sentencing Mr Neal, the magistrate said—

> "The fact that you (Mr Neal) did this in the eyes of the complainant's wife and his four year old daughter . . . adds to the degradation and undoubtedly it leaves an ugly scar on the minds."

I find that to be an incredible event. The wife of the complainant swore that she did not see the spitting event take place. She heard it but did not see it; the child did not see it.

The magistrate, in handing down the two months' sentence for the offence of spitting, stated that it was a degrading thing to do in front of both the wife and the child, yet evidence before the court proved quite conclusively that neither of them saw it take place.

As for the case against Mr Collins—evidence in court revealed that for quite some time Mr Collins had been selling rotten meat from his Yarrabah store to the Aboriginal community. If a member of this Assembly constantly received rotten meat from his local butcher, although he may not go to the extent of spitting in the gentleman's eye, I would be very surprised if he did not have a few choice words to say to him.

I realise that in quoting from that case I could be accused of choosing it because one of the judges on that case happened to be Mr Justice Murphy, a former Attorney-General in the Whitlam Labor Government. But to offset that accusation, let me turn to some comments in the same case by Mr Justice Brennan of the High Court who, as I understand it, is not a gentleman who, on past performance, could in any way be said to be a Labor sympathiser. He had this to say—

> "Neither the reasons of the Court of Criminal Appeal nor the reasons of the Magistrate refer to the emotional stress affecting Mr Neal though the facts of the case are eloquent to suggest it. Emotional stress which accounts for criminal conduct is always material to the consideration of an appropriate sentence. "

He went on to say—

> "The fact that the incident was to be accounted for by the problems (whatever they are) of life on the Reserve was a material factor for consideration. It is erroneous to neglect consideration of emotional stress which explains criminal conduct; that factor is material to the assessment of proper retribution and it may be material to deterrence—at all events if those to be deterred are likely to be subjected to similar emotional stress.
>
> Making full allowance for the fact that the Magistrate was speaking ex tempore, it appears that the Magistrate was influenced by his view that Mr Neal was seeking a change in the control of the Reserves and that he ought not to be seeking that change or inducing others to seek it. While conduct of the kind engaged in by Mr Neal is both an unlawful and an unacceptable means of seeking political or administrative changes, he was entitled lawfully to advocate political or administrative changes without penalty. The Magistrate not only condemned the fomenting of hatred—and in that he was right—but he condemned also the legitimate exercise of political rights—and in that he was wrong. Legitimate advocacy of change is no matter of aggravation affecting the exercise of the sentencing discretion."

This evening I call on the Minister to finally show some initiative in this portfolio by at least going through the motions, if he has to, of pretending that he cares and that he has some understanding of the problems faced by Aboriginal and Islanders people in this State, and show some small amount of compassion, by approaching the Attorney-General and asking him to consider very seriously the future of Mr Spicer SM. I understand that Mr Spicer is still on the circuit in North Queensland. Because he is a stipendiary magistrate he has some influence in the community. It is obvious that he will continue to have black people from North Queensland, whether they be from Cairns itself, Yarrabah or other outlying communities, appearing before him in similar cases related to threats of violence or drunkenness, and I believe that by his actions he has shown himself to be not a fit and proper person——

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Akers): Order! It is the practice in other Parliaments, including the House of Representatives, that criticism not be made of judges or the judiciary. The honourable member can criticise their judgments, but not the judges themselves. I ask the honourable member to refrain from speaking about the members of the judiciary.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I will accept your guidance on that, Mr Akers. I realise that you have a job to do, but I must say that I find it quite objectionable, from the point of view of an elected representative in this Chamber——

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The practice to which I have just referred means that the honourable member cannot discuss the conduct of a member of the judiciary other than on a substantive motion. He cannot do that in general debate as he has been doing.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I will not mention the two gentlemen for whose removal I have called because of the irresponsible action that they have taken. I believe I have made the point.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member not to speak in that way.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I certainly will not mention their names again. Suffice it to say, it is time that the Government, in the area of law concerning Aboriginal problems in Queensland, carried out a full and thorough review of its attitudes and responsibilities.

This morning, I asked the Minister a number of questions pertaining firstly to whether he had taken action at any time in Parliament, or elsewhere in discussion with officers from his department, to have implemented the recommendations of the Lucas Committee of Inquiry Into the Enforcement of Criminal Law in Queensland. At the time I asked the question, the Minister seemed quite baffled and perplexed. I may be forgiven for saying that he was not aware of what I was asking him about.

Almost a decade ago, the Lucas committee recommended that Aboriginal and Islander people should be given a special privilege, in that every police station in Queensland should display the name, address and telephone number or contact point of a person from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Service, so that if an Aborigine or Islander was arrested, the arresting police officer could immediately get in touch with someone to represent him and be present at all times during the questioning.

Only last night, when I was walking through the streets of Brisbane, I passed a certain take-away food establishment in George Street, where I saw four young persons of Aboriginal extraction standing on the footpath. Two of them were eating pies and two were eating hamburgers. That indicates the notice I took of them. A passing police patrol car stopped suddenly. Three of those young persons were bundled into the police vehicle and taken away. The other young fellow was left on the footpath in a distressed state not knowing what was going on. I should think he was disgusted by what he had seen and frightened about what could happen to him later in the evening. I had been in the area for about five minutes. There was no alcohol in sight and there was no swearing or any behaviour that I found to be objectionable, but suddenly the three of them were bundled off without apparent reason. It is the Minister's responsibility.

A Government Member: What did you do?

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I telephoned a friend of mine who is associated with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Service. I asked him to immediately contact the Brisbane Watch House to find out what offence they had been charged with and, if they were not to be charged, to get over there so that they would be released as soon as possible.

Before I finish my speech this evening I will quote a few words that I believe to be very apposite at this time when Aboriginal and Islander people in Queensland are going through a very traumatic stage in their history. This is the time when people in the community have to decide whether they wish to play a responsible role —and I emphasise that point—in relation to the claim by Aborigines for justifiable land rights. I am happy to say that the Labor Party has a distinct policy on that. We believe in the granting, totally in freehold, of present reserves to Aborigines. We believe in self-management on the reserves, with every possible back-up and assistance being given.

I revert to the case of Mr Neal. I believe that he was treated most unjustly. The order contains the following passage—

> "As Wilde aptly pointed out in 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism,' 'Agitators are a set of interfering, meddling people, who come down to some perfectly contented

class of the community and sow the seeds of discontent amongst them. That is the reason why agitators are so absolutely necessary. Without them, in our incomplete state, there would be no advance towards civilisation.' "

In my opinion Mr Neal, like Mr Miller and other people associated with the black movement, is entitled to be an agitator. It ill behoves the Government to label them as Moscow Communists, stooges for socialist parties, and some of the other paternalistic and shocking things that I have heard today.

It is significant that only one member of the Liberal Party has spoken during this debate. That shows the lack of concern that the Liberal Party members have for the black people of this State. The only contributors to the debate have been members of the Opposition, the knockers in the National Party and one Liberal Party member. Because of that, the true blue Liberals stand condemned.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (8.42 p.m.): It gives me much pleasure to be able to discuss the Estimates of the Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs. Both parts of the portfolio are very important but I will direct most of my remarks to water resources.

Mr Smith interjected.

Mr FITZGERALD: I can assure the honourable member that I know a great deal about water. Any member who is as concerned about water as I am would be very familiar with the subject and would go out of his way to understand the subject. I do not have to be briefed before I speak. I shall concentrate on the Lockyer Valley part of my electorate, because that is where most of the irrigation takes place.

Most people who travel through the Lockyer Valley think that it is the most prosperous area of Queensland. They cannot help thinking so when they drive through the area, particularly when the rest of Queensland is suffering from drought, and see irrigation sprays working, green paddocks, crops being harvested, tractors working and soil being worked.

I disagree with the remarks of some of my colleagues on this side of the Chamber. They said that water is the answer to all of Queensland's problems, that the Inland should be flooded and that every dam possible should be built. They suggest that if those things were done, all the economic problems would be solved. I ask those honourable members to remember that it is expensive to irrigate a farm. It is very capital intensive and very costly to run an irrigation farm. A farmer who has developed an irrigation farm is totally dependent on water to maintain his productivity and viability. An irrigation area cannot be opened up without going into the economics of what crop should be grown, whether it can be grown viably and whether a crop can be produced and marketed.

I support the honourable member for Flinders who suggested the growing of irrigated wheat in Central Australia. I will not go into the economics of growing irrigated wheat; only a small proportion of Australian wheat is irrigated. A relatively small area of cane is irrigated. No doubt cane production would increase with irrigation. As the crop is exported, it would no doubt be viable. However, development by irrigation in other areas should not take place at the expense of existing farms and existing enterprises.

I sound a note of warning to those members who advocate the construction of major dams in their electorate. I know that at times the Commissioner for Water Resources and some of his staff, because of their engineering background, prefer to build large dams. Large dams are not always the most economic dams. I do not believe that large dams should be constructed because of an engineer's whim or because——

Mr Burns: Because of an election promise?

Mr FITZGERALD: Or because of other ulterior motives.

If dams are constructed merely because of pressure from city people who think that by flooding inland areas we will have a prosperous nation, unless a viable crop can be grown in those areas peasant farmers will go down the drain. Water would be supplied to the farmers who eventually went onto those properties with no return to the taxpayer whatsoever. I

am totally opposed to that concept of irrigation farming. Irrigation farming should be prosperous. Farmers must grow the right crops. An economic impact study should be carried out to determine what would happen if a particular crop could not be grown.

It has recently been suggested that sugar-cane should be grown in the Ord River district. I was surpised when I saw the reaction of the cane growers in North Queensland to that proposal. For many years irrigation farming has traditionally been a way of life for Lockyer Valley farmers. Without doubt, I would probably be one of the most experienced irrigation farmers in this Chamber. I have probably shifted more chains of spray lines than any other member. I have shifted spray lines ever since I was able to lift one end off the ground. That occurred well before aluminium pipes came into vogue. I have also had experience with flood irrigation. I have been a cotton grower for a number of years. I sound a note of warning that irrigation farming is not always profitable just because water is available. A farmer must have economic crops. For instance, in the Lockyer Valley at present onions and potatoes are being harvested. Because a great part of Queensland is presently drought stricken, people travelling past the farms say, "Isn't that a glorious sight?" It is very picturesque. It is uneconomic to send potatoes from a farm when only $90 to $100 per tonne is received for them. That it is totally uneconomic, and well below the cost of production. Today's price for onions leaving the valley was approximately $140 a tonne. That is an uneconomic price. Some people driving through the Lockyer Valley say, "You are well off in the Lockyer." If other irrigation areas are set up in Queensland in opposition to the existing farming areas, unless they can grow the right crops they will suffer the same plight as any other farmer who grows something about which he knows nothing. There is probably more expertise in the established areas; they can take the hard times with the good times because they have been around for a lot longer. If irrigation farms are established in other areas of Queensland, the farmers will experience problems in transporting their goods over long distances to markets, and they will find themselves in opposition with an existing farming area, and that will be to the detriment of all primary producers in Queensland.

Farmers in most of the vegetable-growing areas in Australia could double their production if they received higher prices. Economics are a prime consideration. Over-production is presently one of the greatest problems in vegetable-producing irrigation areas. The honourable member for Mackay suggested that we would be better off socialising the vegetable industry. That would not be possible with any perishable crop. If the price is too high, there will be over-production; if it is too low, there will not be enough production. It would be totally uneconomic. All attempts to socialise the vegetable industry have failed.

Mr Lester: All prices come back to the market value.

Mr FITZGERALD: That is so. That must be the natural level at all times.

Farmers in the Lockyer Valley have spent large sums of money on developing their properties. They have sunk bores, installed irrigation equipment and installed other machinery such as packing machinery, all at their own expense. It would be totally immoral to allow an area in the canelands, for example, to grow vegetables or to allow a large irrigation area, say, in western Queensland to produce vegetables in opposition to the farmers of the Lockyer Valley, who have invested their capital over a very lengthy period.

Free enterprise still has a place in primary production, particularly in the production of vegetables. Therefore, I issue the warning that, unless economic crops can be found to grow in a new irrigation area, the Government should forget about developing an irrigation area. If a site is available, if land is available, but if a marketable crop cannot be grown, the farmers on that land will go down the drain.

I note with interest that the cane growers are totally opposed to the establishment of cane-growing in Western Australia because they fear that the creation of another major sugar area in Australia will react to their detriment. I share their view and say that farmers, too, in the Lockyer Valley feel the same about vegetable production.

To give some idea of the importance of irrigation in the Lockyer Valley, I want to quote some figures that were supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the local branch of the Department of Primary Industries. It was estimated that in 1980 the total value of production from the Lockyer Valley amounted to $45.5m. Compared with most other areas, that is a fair production for vegetables. Of that sum, $36.5m, or 80

per cent of production, came from 6 per cent of the land that is irrigated. That gives some idea how important irrigation is to the Lockyer Valley. The remaining 20 per cent of production came from the balance of the land.

The main crops that are grown in the Lockyer Valley are heavy vegetables, hay, grain, oil seed, lucerne, soya beans, the processing vegetables such as beetroot, beans, green peas, carrots and sweet corn, and fresh market vegetables such as cabbages, tomatoes, cauliflowers, lettuce and broccoli. Last year, some of the enterprising farmers in the Lockyer Valley developed an export market for broccoli in Singapore. Chilled broccoli is now flown regularly from Brisbane to Singapore.

I want to highlight how important irrigation is to vegetable production in Queensland. Often it has been said that wheat-growing can be economic under dry-land conditions, under which the grower might miss out on a year's production now and again, provided overheads are kept low enough.

When I looked at the figures published in the Queensland Year Book, I found that in 1980-81 a total area of 19 451 ha was turned over to the growing of vegetables in Queensland. That means that 73.4 per cent of all vegetables grown were cultivated under irrigation. In the same year, only 28.7 per cent of sugar-cane produced came from irrigated areas.

Cotton and tobacco are heavily irrigated crops. The figures for those crops were 92.6 per cent and 95.3 per cent respectively. Most other crops receive supplementary irrigation.

The fact is that 73.4 per cent of vegetables grown in Queensland in 1980-81 came from irrigated areas. That indicates that without irrigation there will not be high vegetable production. Irrigation is a relatively small component of the total cost structure of vegetable production.

In the Gatton Shire in 1980-81, a total area of 6 844 ha was irrigated on 293 holdings. Of that, 3 416 ha were devoted to the growing of vegetables, and 188 ha were devoted to fruit-growing, including grapes. I think that I have indicated the importance of irrigation and vegetable production in that area of Queensland.

In April 1982, the Queensland Water Resources Commission released a report on a Lockyer Valley water resources investigation. It highlights the alarming conditions that have developed in the Lockyer Valley through over development or over-use of the water resources. The report deals at some length with the position in the Lockyer Valley. Briefly, the total average annual water usage in the valley is 47 500 ML. For the aquifer to stay at a reasonable level, the suggested safe withdrawal rate from the ground water aquifer system is 25 000 ML per annum. In other words, with the development that has taken place in the valley over the years, the situation has been reached where farmers are drawing more water out of the aquifer than is flowing back into it.

I ask the Minister and the Commissioner of Water Resources to allocate money in the next couple of years to alleviate that situation in the Lockyer Valley. There are quite a few solutions to this complex problem. Firstly, I believe that a series of recharge weirs should be built along Lockyer Creek, Tent Hill Creek, Laidley Creek, Maa Maa Creek, Sandy Creek and Flagstone Creek. A whole program will have to be arranged so that a couple of weirs are built along those creeks every year. I, and I think most farmers in the area, realise the costs involved in building major dams. Therefore, it would be impossible to construct major dams in that area.

When I was talking to the member for Mirani he referred to the number of water projects throughout the State that have never been completed. I think that more money should be provided to complete those projects so that the existing areas can be catered for. He said that the Eton irrigation scheme was commenced in 1975, and at that time the estimated cost was $21m. To 1982, approximately $23m has been spent on that scheme. Now it is estimated that it will cost about $35m to complete the scheme. The scheme has been enlarged to cater for more farms. That scheme, and other schemes that are under way at present, will have to be completed.

I was rather disappointed to find in the Budget that only $1.65m is being provided for the Farm Water Supplies Assistance scheme. In answer to a question, the Minister

informed me that $1,684,600 was spent on the scheme in 1981-82. I think that the allocation of $1.65m this year is totally inadequate. Farmers have to be encouraged to develop their own schemes with the assistance of the officers of the commission.

The Auditor-General's report on his audit of the Departmental Appropriation Accounts for the financial year ended 30 June 1982, which was prepared by the accountable officers and transmitted to him, reveals that the loans owing to the department by way of advances on account of the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Scheme are now $7,139,999.

I also note the following comment—

> "Applications for assistance under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act were far in excess of those anticipated."

In other words, last year the Government budgeted for $1.6m and, as I pointed out, $1.8m was taken by way of assistance; yet this year the Government has allocated only $1.65m. Assistance under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance scheme is a more economical way of getting water to farms than the building of large, grandiose schemes throughout Queensland. One of the principal ways in which the department provides assistance is by helping farmers to develop their own farms or by helping a community of farmers to develop their farms.

When the Lockyer Valley Water Resources Investigation was released, I was terribly disappointed to find that no mention was made of the smaller schemes that could be developed by farmers. I am a farmer, and I have just installed a fairly large irrigation scheme and dam. Although not many farmers would have a similar natural watercourse or similar natural features on their properties to enable them to do what I did, many smaller schemes could be undertaken. They do not cost the taxpayer anything.

(Time expired.)

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (9.2 p.m.): Earlier this evening the member for Flinders mentioned the problems facing people in the northern coastal area of Queensland. I can do no more than endorse his remarks.

Over $30m is lost each year in that area. Many people fail to realise that the area from Ingham to Mossman is the wettest part of Australia. No doubt the Minister and his department are very well aware of the requests for water conservation and drainage schemes by various mill supplier associations, local authorities, individual producers and various other groups that are involved in that area.

People who do not live in the area do not realise just how heavy the rainfall is. They look at me in disbelief when I try to get the message across by saying that the area receives over 20 feet of rain a year. Since the introduction of metrics, not very many people comprehend the meaning of a figure given in millimetres. It is not uncommon for that area to receive over 25 feet of rain a year. Those rainfall records are available from post offices as well as from the Bureau of Meteorology. Two Ministers did not understand the rainfall in those areas. When I produced the independent rainfall figures for that area for the last 10 years, they simply looked at me in disbelief. They had no idea of what happened in those areas. So I emphasise that point.

For those reasons the Minister's responsibility for water resources has a considerable bearing on that part of Queensland, perhaps more than on any other area of the State. I know that dry areas have a great need for water conservation, but my electorate has the combined problems of water conservation, water storage, water supply and drainage. The Water Resources Commission should work in with the local authorities and, perhaps, Treasury so that moneys are made available to undertake projects that would increase the income of those areas. As I have already said, $30m is lost by cane farmers every year because of water lying in the paddocks. Anybody who has anything to do with the production of sugar knows that if water lies in the paddocks too long it affects the cane. On the other hand, other areas have a demand for irrigation so that the water necessary can be applied to the crops.

Mr Scassola: Most of your rainfall comes in about six months of the year, doesn't it?

Mr EATON: It can be even less than that.

I will now give a comparison of how rainfall affects different areas in the North. I have the entire area of two shires and part of a third shire in my electorate. The floods in January 1980, during which approximately 60 or 80 inches of rain fell in a week, caused damage of approximately $230,000. The Herberton Shire received six inches in the

same period. That shows the extremes of the two shires within my electorate, one that has droughts or extended dry periods and the other—the Johnstone Shire—on the coastal belt, which is very rich and fertile, and thus more densely populated.

I have here a document titled "Preliminary Report on Water Resource Development, Herbert River", dated December 1961. Because of the present downturn in the mineral industry, I will cite a few details in that section of the report that applies to Mt Garnet, Ravenshoe and the Wild River/Innot Hot Springs area. I refer particularly to the tin industry in Mt Garnet, which is losing workers. This is affecting the storekeepers, the schools—when the number of children drops, the school loses a teacher—and even the hotels. In that country when men have no money to buy beer, things are really crook. The same applies at Ravenshoe and Herberton. The report was compiled by a former Irrigation and Water Supply Commissioner, Mr Haigh. I do not remember him very well, but I have heard other members speak of him.

Mr Sullivan: A very fine man.

Mr EATON: I have heard that. We can therefore take some cognisance of this report compiled by such a fine gentleman.

On page 13 in the section headed "Desirable Timing for Development of the Mt Garnet Area", this statement is made—

> " and there will be a national need for development of the Mt. Garnet or some similar area within 10 years. The project would thus be a suitable one for financial assistance by the Commonwealth Government in view of the import saving aspects—up to $16,000,000 annually."

Members can see that there would be no loss of investment there because the proposition about which I speak is for a dam for irrigation as well as for diverting water from the Herbert River into the Burdekin River, which would require a tunnel four miles long. In 1961 that would have cost $8m. I have said that these figures are 20 years old; so not only would import savings be greater, but also the cost would be. But the scheme would provide employment, and there is a great need in the North for the Lands Department to open up land for closer settlement.

The tin industry is not prospering in those areas; neither is the beef industry. The Government should be providing employment opportunities. The annual report of the Commissioner of Water Resources for the year ended 30 June 1982 lists production under the Tinaroo Falls Dam scheme that was opened by this Government but was built by a Labor Government. The same production could be gained from the Mt Garnet scheme. Products include tobacco, rice, vegetables, pumpkins, fattening pastures, horticulture, seed legumes, onions, sorghum, potatoes, peanuts and flowers.

Stage I of the proposed scheme would cost roughly $20m. The overall cost of a three-stage scheme, including the diversion of water from the lower Herbert River to the Burdekin River, would be $40m. I emphasise that there is a three-fold purpose in going ahead with this scheme. For the benefit of the Minister and his departmental officers, I point out that the 1961 report states—

> "Surveys have shown that there is a difference in level of some 30 feet between the Herbert River at 105.3 miles and the bed of Deep Creek, about 2½ miles above its junction with the Burdekin River near Wairuna.
>
> The estimated cost of such a weir and tunnel is approximately £4.1 million."

The present-day equivalent for the full cost of the diversion scheme, including a four-mile tunnel, would be $8m.

All of us, including the Government, should try to make openings for people in the smaller rural areas. Because of the shortage of funds made available by the Government to the various departments, including the Water Resources Commission, development is being held back and people are being forced from the small country towns to the big cities to look for work. Many who took their families to the country areas worked there for years without receiving any incentive to stay. In the meantime, the children were deprived of many of the benefits available to children in the larger towns, such as music, ballet classes and so on. There is very little opportunity for the youngsters in the country to learn those talents. Country areas have very poor health services. The doctor visits Mt Garnet once a fortnight. Should the day of his visit coincide with a

public holiday, his visit is delayed for a further fortnight. No public transport service is available. The Government closed the railway line. I emphasise that this is only one of such areas in the North. I hope that the Government is noting what I have to say. It is time that it introduced schemes similar to those that were undertaken many years before it came to office for the benefit of the people in the Outback. The Government came into office about the time of the completion of the Tully Falls, Barron Gorge and Tinaroo schemes. Since then, no major projects have been undertaken. Although it will cost millions more today, the Government should get itself into gear and make a start.

I thank the Minister for allowing me the time to make my contribution. I hope that, in the future, he will look closely at putting something back into the North because it has been neglected for far too long. The portfolio of Northern Development has been a sad let-down.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (9.12 p.m.): I thank all honourable members who participated in the debate on Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs. It was certainly a wide-ranging debate. I sometimes ask myself if the two parts of my portfolio have much to do with each other. On the other hand, individually, they are real subjects.

As I said, the debate was diversified. The honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) knows all about irrigation on the Lockyer, but some honourable members seem to know very little about Aboriginal and Island Affairs. All in all, the debate has been very interesting. I will now present my comments on it.

The Opposition spokesman on Water Resources is the member for Maryborough (Mr Hansen). In reply to his comments, I point out that the $12.3m from the Commonwealth includes $4m for Bundaberg, $1.8m for Eton and $6.5m for the Burdekin Falls Dam.

The honourable member's comments about losses of good land where major storages are constructed are quite correct. I assure him that losses of good land are not viewed lightly. However, the real fact is that suitable storage sites are not available in great number and dams have to be built where sites are available.

I share the honourable member's views that every effort should be made to complete schemes as rapidly as possible. This has been both my own and the commissioner's view in recent years, but it has led to significant criticism from regions seeking commencement of new schemes.

The honourable member's comments on the completion of the levee banks required in association with the Mary River barrage are noted. The extent of levee banks required has increased dramatically since the decision to construct them was first taken. I am informed that the earthworks for all the levees has been completed and work is proceeding on the construction of outlets through these banks. It is correct that the number of employees on this work has been reduced in the last day or two. However, only four of the employees laid off were working on the levee banks. The others were employed on some clearing in the storage area and on supervision at the barrage. The honourable member may be assured that work on the levee banks is continuing, albeit at a reduced rate.

I think I have covered the very reasonable contribution made by the honourable member for Maryborough.

I endorse the views of the honourable member for Flinders on the spending by the Commonwealth under the National Water Resources Program. The grants announced over the last few days will increase the expenditure under that program to about $142m or about 70 per cent of what was planned for the five years. However, I have been assured by the Minister for National Development and Energy (Senator Carrick) that the program will continue beyond the current year. Although I am disappointed at the level of Commonwealth expenditure under the program, I believe that Queensland's share of the grants has approached almost 20 per cent.

I share the honourable member's concern at the effect that flooding and poor drainage have had on production in the sugar-growing areas north of Townsville. My department

has long been conscious of those problems and has been investing heavily in studies aimed at producing solutions. In the current year the commission will expend $170,000 in assisting river improvement trusts and local authorities to investigate those problems.

I have a few comments to make now in reply to the honourable member for Cook, and I shall make other comments later on. I remind the honourable member that the provision of water supplies for the small communities in his electorate is not a direct responsibility of mine. Although the potability of the temporary supply provided for Karumba by the Queensland Water Resources Commission is not suitable for all purposes, the scheme has met a real need for the town and industry.

In respect of water charges in irrigation areas—the rising costs to be met by landholders is appreciated. However, it must be understood that water is a real crop-growing cost. The honourable member may be assured that, in determining charges, the particular circumstances of each area receive full consideration.

I remind honourable members that there is a real problem with water at Karumba. It has been going on for many years. We almost had a scheme with Norman River water coming from Normanton. It is not going well at the moment, and I do not know what will happen.

I share the concern of the honourable member for Gympie about the shortages of water that occur in drought periods. However, weirs alone are not the answer to the problem, as they are very quickly depleted by irrigators when stream flow ceases. The real need is for more dams like Borumba Dam, in the headwaters of catchments, which store reasonably large volumes. In conjunction with a major storage, some smaller weir storages along the downstream reaches serve a valuable purpose in intercepting unregulated flows which would otherwise run to waste. I assure the honourable member for Gympie that the Queensland Water Resources Commission is continually investigating the potential for water conservation and utilisation.

With reference to the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Scheme—I repeat that the situation regarding loans is kept under constant review and every effort is made to meet the demand for assistance, both practical and financial. The requirements are subject to the demands and decisions of landholders to undertake and proceed with projects. I am sure that if the need for additional funds arises the Treasurer will give the need careful consideration, as he has in past years.

I thank the honourable member for Bundaberg for his tribute to the Government's development of the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme. I am genuine in saying that. It is nice, for a change, to hear a person who has a wide knowledge of land settlement say something complimentary about what the Government is trying to do.

I point out that that scheme has received assistance from the Commonwealth Government in each of the five years of the current National Water Resources Program. My Government has tried strenuously to have the Commonwealth Government adhere to its statement that the revised assistance arrangements would be outside the National Water Resources Program, and has tried equally strenuously to have such assistance indexed to cost increases. As the honourable member is aware, neither of those efforts has been successful to date.

Although it has not yet been possible to start construction in the Isis area, survey and design work has started and construction will begin when the sections of the scheme currently being built are completed in the logical progression which has been followed up to date.

The honourable member's comments on the quantities and costs of treating water for urban use are certainly revealing, but the situation is not quite as simple as he propounds. The present surface water system has been designed to transfer sufficient irrigation use from ground-water to surface water to ensure that ground-water use is within the safe yield of the aquifer. There will not, unfortunately, be surplus ground-water available to enable a drastic change in the pattern of use from these sources for urban use.

I commend the honourable member for Warwick for the views that he espoused. I have taken his comments on board and will discuss them with the commissioner. I very much appreciate the tenor of his comments.

I point out to the member for Townsville South that I am informed that the present stage of the Ross River Dam will provide assured supply to Townsville until 1984. With regard to the seepage condition at the dam—the situation can indeed be rectified at reasonable cost by a series of pressure relief bores and a gravity drainage channel.

At the time of original design, it was not considered that the geological conditions warranted the installation of a relief system, but the possibility was recognised and a limited set of bores was installed in one area during construction. Because the total system was not installed originally, the expenditure has in effect been deferred for a number of years. The final decision on whether or not to install this system and proceed with stage 2 of the dam is for the Townsville City Council to yet decide. Whether the Ross River Dam should be raised or whether water should be provided from the Burdekin Falls Dam is presently an important issue in the Townsville area.

With regard to the Burdekin Falls Dam—the planning is for stage 1 to be storing water in 1988. The second stage and construction of the power-station will be implemented when the electiricty industry determines that that particular power source is necessary and economical.

I assure the honourable member for Cooroora that our colleagues in the Department of Primary Industries fisheries section are researching the stocking of dam storages. At the same time, the Queensland Water Resources Commission is researching improvements to fish ladders on weirs.

The question of water quality in urban supplies is no longer one of my responsibilities and has returned to my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Local Government. I can assure the honourable member that if a dam on Obi Obi Creek is constructed for urban water supply purposes, the rights of farmers downstream will be preserved. A good deal of attention is given to the recreational uses of storages by the Queensland Water Resources Commission, which provides picnic areas, boat ramps and other facilities. $330,000 was expended on the maintenance of those facilities at dams and weirs in 1981-82.

I apologise to the honourable member for Townsville West and to the Committee for the late tabling of the Queensland Water Resources Commission's report, and I will endeavour to arrange for its earlier production in future. It will, of course, be appreciated that the compilation of the data and statistics recorded is a time-consuming matter.

I have referred to the Ross River Dam situation previously and would simply comment now that the cost of providing the required drainage system is a very small item in the total cost of the dam and supply system. Supply from the Burdekin River is a long-term option being considered in detail by the Townsville City Council.

It is a fact that the Commonwealth Government has deliberately slowed the rate of assistance being supplied under the National Water Resources Program, but Queensland has received each year appreciably more than other States, on a population basis—a recognition of the cost effectiveness of the State's major projects.

In regard to the Burdekin Dam—expenditure is following a pre-planned program which will build up to a peak of some $20m per annum within two years, and the dam is scheduled for completion in 1988.

I believe that the decisions of the Government concerning the resumption of land for the Burdekin Irrigation Area are a fair and reasonable recognition of the overall position and will reduce to some extent capital cost to the State.

Mr Smith: You surprise me.

Mr TOMKINS: The honourable member might complain about the number of farms, but he should appreciate that dry conditions are presently being experienced and low prices are being received for sugar. The decision to propose the 70 ha is quite satisfactory. With the additional number of blocks that will be available, I do not think that anybody should complain.

Mr Smith: It looks as if they are going to go to 100 ha now.

Mr TOMKINS: That would have to go through Cabinet, and I doubt whether it will.

I must reassure the honourable member for Auburn that the older Dawson River weirs have been closely examined and temporary repairs carried out where appropriate.

Investigations are currently being undertaken to determine a program of new weir construction to replace the old structures and provide for additional future water needs.

The Queensland Water Resources Commission is, as I have already said, constantly improving by research the design of fish ladders. Provision of such ladders is always considered by the commission, in conjunction with the fisheries section, for each stream concerned.

I thank the honourable member for his appraisal of the value of irrigation to primary production, and I endorse his statements that there are many worthwhile projects to be tackled in the future.

The honourable member for Lockyer is quite correct in stating that irrigation is a costly business. That is why no such schemes or major dams are undertaken in this State without a thorough cost/benefit study.

Although the honourable member is correct in saying the biggest is not necessarily best, when it comes to water conservation there is no doubt whatever that the cost per megalitre of water stored will decrease until a limiting height is reached which can be determined by the hydrology of the catchment topography of the site.

The points made by the honourable member about further water conservation in the Lockyer Valley are taken, and detailed investigation is being commenced immediately into off-stream storage possibilities.

Provision for the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Scheme is based on anticipated requirements for loans, taking into account estimates of the progress likely to be made by landholders on approved works. The member may be assured that, as previously stated by me, the real needs are being closely monitored. I confidently expect that adequate funds will be made available to meet demands as they arise.

In reply to the honourable member for Mourilyan, I point out that the drainage problems in the very high intensity rainfall areas of North Queensland are well known to me and to the Commissioner of Water Resources. The Government gives every possible assistance to the investigation of flood mitigation schemes that are capable of being implemented through river improvement trusts. In fact, tonight the commissioner is up in the honourable member's area on such matters. I cannot comment in detail on the honourable member's revival of the proposal for the development of the Herbert River, which was one of the many schemes looked at over the years. However, I will ask the commissioner to brief me on the proposals.

I turn now to the other section of my portfolio, Aboriginal and Island Affairs. The debate this afternoon covered a wide range of topics and styles, from reasoned criticism and praise to over-emotional smears. It would take too long to go through each speaker's point in detail. I realise that it has been a long day. There are, however, a few matters that call for specific comment.

I must congratulate the speakers on the Government side of the Chamber for their interest and, in many instances, for their keen perception of various issues. More importantly, I compliment them for trying to do something positive to support the Aboriginal and Islander people of this great State. The same cannot be said for all members of the Opposition. Whereas I appreciate the more reasonable attitude adopted by a few Opposition speakers, I regret that some Opposition members cannot be said to display a reasonable attitude. It is noteworthy that only some ventured to discuss Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement, and of those few, two are outstanding for their lack of knowledge and obvious willingness to push ideas that could only have come from the more malcontented and radical sectors of society. I refer, of course, to the honourable member for Cook and the honourable member for South Brisbane, whose performances were a disgrace.

Opposition Members: Rubbish!

Mr TOMKINS: Any Opposition members who heard those members' speeches this afternoon would know. I shall deal with their comments in due course.

A Government Member: Where are they?

Mr TOMKINS: They are not here.

It is worth contrasting their performance with the speeches made by other members. The honourable member for Isis presented a reasoned and well-researched coverage of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, which indicated a depth of understanding that is rarely displayed in the Chamber. For that, I thank him.

Quite rightly, the honourable member for Wynnum referred to the director's seeking honesty and sensitivity. This has been sadly lacking in his fellow members. I would hope that as Opposition spokesman he might be able to engender those sentiments among his fellow members; but that is a forlorn hope, as he has an almost impossible task ahead of him. Again I thank him for his very reasoned speech. I certainly wish him success in the new job that he has been given by the ALP.

He suggested that, because of an alleged failure by Aborigines to care for houses, the Government would not provide houses. Our record is unsurpassed in Australia. We have rehoused some 17 000 people with minimal failure. Even those who fail are not given up as hopeless, but rather are given every chance again. I note the honourable member's comments about the need for understanding the issue. This viewpoint is appreciated, but I must mention that some members of his own party were also involved in some of the demonstrations—admittedly they were minor—that occurred during the Commonwealth Games.

I turn now to the comments made by the honourable member for Cook. I have no intention of forcing legislation on people without adequate consultation, and this is proceeding at the pace that they determine. I do not accept the dictatorial approach advocated by the honourable member for Cook, of which the honourable member for Caboolture reminded the Committee tonight. To the contrary, this Government has faith in the people and will work with them.

The working parties to the advisory councils were set up at the suggestion of the director. It must be said, however, that a determined attempt was made by ALP supporters, the legal aid service, the so-called North Queensland Land Council and other cronies to manipulate them.

Yesterday, and again today, the honourable member for Cook made vicious, personal attacks on the Director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.

Mr Booth: Shocking!

Mr TOMKINS: It was dreadful.

Mr Burns: Are you impartial? Do you believe that the way you are performing shows some impartiality on this issue of Aborigines?

Mr TOMKINS: I am saying——

Mr Burns: You are saying that no-one is allowed to criticise.

Mr TOMKINS: The honourable member for Cook can criticise as much as he likes, but he is a bit hard pressed when he criticises a man's integrity. In this portfolio I have worked with the director for two years, and I have known him for a lot longer than that. I have always found him to be a thoroughly honourable man. The honourable member for Cook made an attack in this Chamber on the director, who has no right of reply.

Mr Smith: Will he or will he not declare whether he is going to stand for Cook.

Mr TOMKINS: That is all Opposition members are worried about—whether he is going to stand for Cook. As far as I am aware, he is not standing for Cook.

Mr Burns: Has he been using the "Melbidir" to get round the islands?

Mr TOMKINS: Not as far as I know.

Mr Burns interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the honourable member for Lytton under Standing Order 123A. I will not allow a discussion to take place across the Chamber when the Minister is on his feet replying to speeches that have been made during the day.

Mr TOMKINS: Yesterday, and again today, the honourable member for Cook made vicious, personal attacks on the Director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement, and upon the ability of the Torres Strait teachers as well as other departmental officers. That was done under the protection of Parliament. It was a shameful and unparliamentary act, one that I can only describe as disgusting and matched only by the performance this afternoon of the honourable member for South Brisbane. They obviously share common beliefs, perhaps arising from interrelated sources of misinformation. Members in this Chamber should not attack public servants who are conscientiously carrying out their duties, as they are required to do, and, in particular, those officers who have devoted years of service to the people of Queensland. The director, the staff of the department and the Torres Strait Islanders should not be abused in such a way.

When the honourable member for Cook attacks the role and the performance of Torres Strait Islander teachers, he is attacking the people in his electorate and their entire culture. It is these very Islander teachers who have for many years carried out the responsibility of providing education in Torres Strait and have done so much to preserve and enhance their people's culture. They have demonstrated a willingness and capacity to help the present and future generations of their own and other people's children acquire knowledge and understanding. They have done a sterling job for decades in imparting to their people the need for education.

We have endeavoured to teach them to become better teachers. I do not say that they are the best teachers in the world, but it is pretty lousy to say that we should get rid of them and send up more qualified teachers. Those teachers are paid by our department. The poor beggars certainly try to do a good job, and I think they should be encouraged, but instead of that Opposition members say, "Put the Education Department teachers in." I think the honourable member for Lytton would agree with that.

Mr Burns: I cannot say. He has just warned me.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the honourable member against having a discussion across the Chamber.

Mr TOMKINS: I must regrettably suggest that the honourable member for Cook has yet to show such a commitment, or indeed any commitment at all, to the people of the area. I question whether he has any feeling whatever, as he took a job from an Aborigine. In effect, yesterday he suggested that if these fine Torres Strait Islanders—that is the teachers—are unfit to hold the positions they occupy they should be thrown on the scrap heap after many years of dedication and devotion to their people. That seems to be par for the course for him. That is utterly unacceptable as those very people have done much for the encouragement and uplifting of Torres Strait Islanders.

For many years Mr Killoran himself has acted as a buffer for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Queensland against such attacks by irresponsible people, and I must include the honourable members for Cook and South Brisbane.

Departmental officers, the director, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have, over many years, consistently and persistently worked toward increasing the roles of the people themselves in all aspects of their lives. At least the honourable member for Cook was kind enough to criticise all of them together, which is perhaps fitting. The achievements are made together. They must be criticised together by those who do not know.

The honourable member for Cook was present not so long ago at a graduation ceremony when six Torres Strait Islander teachers were awarded certificates as assistant teachers within the educational framework of Queensland. This was achieved by their own effort and merit, the culmination of many years of dogged perseverence and simply hard work by the Islanders themselves. It is most shocking that an elected representative can now ignore such an achievement and suggest that these men and women should become unemployed. I must ask what has caused this change of heart or if in fact his views have changed. I have previously stated, and I say again on his performance today, that the honourable member for Cook should resign for his obvious racism in continually distinguishing between black and white Queenslanders, as though they were entirely different people. That is the type of campaigning which may carry weight with the irresponsible

and so-called North Queensland Land Council, but it is totally unacceptable to more rational groups. I urge the honourable member to have another look at his beliefs and outlook in the interests of his electorate, of all Queenslanders and of Australians. One wonders whether he has any loyalties to this country. I know he refused to express the loyalty of the people of his electorate during the Address-in-Reply debate.

I regret the need to speak in such strong terms, but because of his obvious lack of understanding and appreciation of the people of the area he represents, I have no alternative but to record my objection in this Chamber to this disgusting abuse of parliamentary privilege, in which he has been supported by the honourable member for South Brisbane. Therefore, I must express my deepest concern at the continual personal attacks levied by the member for Cook at the director and loyal, devoted officers of the department as well as Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. It is all the more worrying when the allegations he makes are known to him and others to be false and can be proven so, yet he claims the status and privileges of a member of this Assembly.

The positive comments made by the honourable member for Gympie are appreciated and will be carefully considered. However, I should say that land usage presents a major problem as it exists to provide an economic base for the inhabitants and to allow training programs to proceed. It would be detrimental if massive programs were mounted to use the land at maximum capacity only to find that the people were unable to cope and were thus relegated to being fringe-dwellers. All programs are carefully reviewed to ensure maximum benefit results to the people themselves.

Again, through the honourable member for South Brisbane, the Opposition attempts to cloud the issues. The Government's policy is quite clearly to integrate all people as a single, mutually compatible society which allows cultural and ethnic groups to retain cultures, languages, etc. Indeed, the honourable member is not even aware of the bilingual education programs which have been in progress for years, or the very concerted program to preserve and protect the material culture as a basis for cultural identity. I make no apology for the policy, evolved in close consultation with those concerned, which allows the people themselves to determine their own rate of progress. The honourable member would dare to suggest that few meetings have occurred. It is clear that he has no real idea of what is happening.

Both my director and I have travelled far and wide. We have talked with councils, individual councillors, the people at grass roots level, with the advisory councils and the working parties. Yet the honourable member says we are rushing things, we are not consulting, and then in the next breath he complains of delay in introducing legislation! There is a word for that; it begins with the letter "h", but it is unparliamentary.

Mr Smith: Do you intend to distribute that speech through the electorate of Cook?

Mr TOMKINS: It will go into "Hansard"

One wonders just who is deluding who. It is certainly not the Government. The honourable member would be well advised to get his head, or his advisers' heads, out of the sand.

Let us once and for all lay to rest fancy words of assimilation, integration or any other "ation" We have an interest in people, all the people, those who count as citizens of this State and nation, and I suggest that it is about time the Opposition, through its spokesman, the honourable member for Wynnum, woke up to itself and put people before politics, got rid of the members for Cook and South Brisbane and allowed the honourable member for Wynnum to guide the Aboriginal policies of the ALP. Maybe his more rational and realistic approach, devoid of personal selfish interests and politics, will do something to drag the ALP and its policies out of the depths of mud and filth into which it has descended. At least he may be able to moderate that party's political use of Aborigines and Islanders. Perhaps the disproportionate criticism levelled by the honourable member for South Brisbane at the director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement for his remarks in the foreword of the annual report were so violent because the director's remarks were a little too close to the truth.

It is obvious that the main advisers of the honourable members for Cook and South Brisbane are the same tired group of ageing "concerned people" who have been attempting to interfere in Aboriginal and Islander issues for the past six or seven years. They

include the organisation calling itself the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islanders Research Action, the North Queensland Land Council and other titles of convenience. It is time the honourable member for Cook ceased doing the bidding of Mr Mick Miller and Mrs Barbara Miller, and the member for South Brisbane ceased to be the voice in this Assembly of the erratic Matt Foley.

I assure the honourable member for Auburn that I will look into the matters he has raised. He has for many years held a keen interest in Aboriginal people and has done much to fully represent them.

It is shocking that the honourable member for Wolston would seek to defend one of the most disgusting and degrading acts that one man can do to another. Mr Neal has been disowned by his own people and has gone interstate with his family. The magistrate determined the case on its merits. On appeal, a higher court increased the penalty to six months, then the High Court reduced the penalty to that originally imposed by the magistrate, thus confirming Mr Spicer's decision. I may add that Mr Spicer SM is very highly respected throughout North Queensland by Aborigines and non-Aborigines alike. The same cannot be said for the honourable member for Wolston or, presumably, his friends in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Services, which certainly do not enjoy much popular support in the area. It was immaterial to the court's decision that Neal, then chairman of the council, a responsible position, led a mob of drunken louts on what can only be described as a drunken rampage, invading the privacy of homes and families at the week-ends, and after dark, and spitting on and threatening innocent families. This rampage culminated in one man losing his limb below the knee.

Surely the honourable member's remarks are not only intemperate but totally uncalled for. I must respect the decisions of the courts and support the actions of the police and judiciary. The honourable member for Wolston would appear to have been fed, like his compatriots, the honourable members for Cook and South Brisbane, a mixture of selected facts padded out by untruths. "It's time", to use an ALP term, that those honourable members realised that they are being used.

Finally, I wish to once again say that, contrary to some of the despondent and dismal projections in this Assembly today, the deed of grant in trust is a secure title and is quite acceptable to the vast majority of Queenslanders of all descents. Honourable members are assured that, so far as this Government is concerned, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders will continue to have the use, benefit and enjoyment of all their current lands and the necessary assistance they have requested.

I again thank all members for their contribution to the debate, and I thank you, Mr Miller, for your patience and perseverance.

At 9.44 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! By agreement, under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 21 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs—

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Queensland Water Resources Commission and Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement	42,521,475
Balance of Vote, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account	183,272,916

Progress reported.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Commerce and Industry): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 9 November 1982."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.47 p.m.