

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 26 MARCH 1952**

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## WEDNESDAY, 26 MARCH, 1952.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Mann, Brisbane) took the chair at 11 a.m.

## QUESTIONS.

## REFRIGERATORS FOR RAILWAY WAGES MEN.

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Transport—

“How many refrigerators are provided by the Railway Department for wages employees (a) engaged on construction and (b) engaged on maintenance work?”

**Hon. P. J. R. HILTON** (Carnarvon—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government), for **Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba), replied—

“(a) and (b) It has not been the practice to provide refrigerators for Railway employees, but the matter is now under review.”

## TENANTS OF RESUMED HOUSES, KANGAROO POINT.

**Mr. CLARK** (Fitzroy), for **Hon. J. H. MANN** (Brisbane), asked the Premier—

“1. Is he aware that the tenants of the houses on the property resumed by the Crown in connection with the shipyards at Kangaroo Point, besides paying rent to the Public Curator, are called upon to pay to the Brisbane City Council general rates and cleansing rates?”

“2. Is this practice followed in all cases where tenants remain in houses on property which is resumed by the Crown?”

**Hon. V. C. GAIR** (South Brisbane) replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. The condition that all rates and charges due to the Brisbane City Council are the liability of the tenant applies to all land resumed at Kangaroo Point for shipbuilding purposes. However, when determining the rent to be paid by these tenants the Lands Department took into account the fact that the tenant will be required to meet rates and charges due to the Brisbane City Council. As regards houses on property resumed by the Crown for other purposes, varying conditions apply according to the particular circumstances.”

CONSTRUCTION OF HAUGHTON RIVER RAILWAY BRIDGE.

**Mr. McCATHIE** (Haughton) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. How much has been expended to date on the preliminary work in connection with the high level railway bridge over the Haughton River near Giru?

“2. When will the actual construction of the bridge be commenced?

“3. When is it anticipated that the bridge will be completed?”

**Hon. P. J. R. HILTON** (Carnarvon—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government), for **Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba), replied—

“1. £4,676 8s. 6d.

“2. About July, 1952.

“3. About the end of 1955.”

PRICES ADMINISTRATION, TOWNSVILLE.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra) asked the Attorney-General—

“1. How many officers of the Prices Branch are stationed in Townsville?

“2. Are regular checks of the prices of all commodities made? If so, what has been the result of such checks in that city?”

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona) replied—

“1. Five (5).

“2. Yes. Results of such checks reveal that, except in a few instances, the prices charged by traders are in accordance with the relevant Prices Orders. If the Honourable Member were as conversant with local matters as the Honourable Member for Townsville (Mr. G. Keyatta, M.L.A.) there would not have been any need for him to have asked this question.”

QUEENSLAND-BRITISH FOOD CORPORATION;  
PIG PRODUCTION.

**Mr. SPARKES** (Aubigny) asked the Premier—

“In reference to his answer on 13th instant that the pigs from the Queensland-British Food Corporation properties have been sold to a meat exporting company, will he kindly explain why such pigs have not been sold in the open market, the price in that market being higher, as in the case of cattle sold from the same properties?”

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**Hon. V. C. GAIR** (South Brisbane) replied—

“The practice of the Corporation in the sale of its pigs is the same as that adopted by the majority of other commercial pig raisers in the areas concerned.”

SUGGESTED STATE SCHOOL,  
WACOL HOUSING CAMP.

**Mr. KERR** (Sherwood) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“1. Will he investigate the question of young children of the Wacol Housing Camp having to travel by train to the Darra and Goodna schools particularly in respect of the danger of train travelling?

“2. As I understand the Victoria Park and Holland Park Housing Areas have schools in those camp areas, will he give serious and sympathetic consideration to the establishment of a school for these young children in the Wacol Housing Camp, which number approximately 400 children of school age?”

**Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry), for **Hon. G. H. DEVRIES** (Gregory), replied—

“1. Pupils travel to school by train to various schools throughout the State, and if there is any question of alleged danger involved in such method of travel, the particular circumstances should be brought to the notice of my colleague, the Minister for Transport.

“2. Pupils from the Holland Park Housing Settlement attend either the Provisional Primary School or a denominational school established in that area. Pupils from the Victoria Park Housing Settlement attend the adjoining Kelvin Grove State schools and the North Brisbane Intermediate School. In November, 1951, an application from a local resident, and in January, 1952, a petition from residents in the Wacol Housing Settlement seeking the establishment of an Infants' school at the Wacol Housing Settlement were received by the Department. In both instances, the applicants were furnished by the Department with the forms prescribed under the State Education Acts, on which essential particulars as required by those Acts were to be supplied to the Department so that the usual investigation could be made by a departmental inspector. In neither case have the forms been completed and returned to the Department. As, however, inquiries made yesterday reveal that there are approximately 250 children at present travelling to schools by train and bus from the Wacol area, I will arrange for the District Inspector to investigate the position and furnish a report to me.”

FETTLER'S ACCOMMODATION, KYBURRA.

**Mr. COBURN** (Burdekin) asked the Minister for Transport—

“In reference to his letter to me dated 17th instant, in which he stated that if reasonable accommodation were provided

for fettlers at Kyburra there would be a rental charge of 16s. per fortnight for each man, how does he reconcile these facts— (a) that wholly unsatisfactory accommodation is at present provided and (b) that if reasonable accommodation were provided, a rental charge would be imposed—with the recent statement of the Minister for Labour and Industry regarding free workers' accommodation by private enterprise, that the Government was not asking private employers to do what it was not prepared to do itself in respect of its own employees?"

**Hon. P. J. R. HILTON** (Carnarvon—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government), for **Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba), replied—

"The two single men's huts now at Kyburra and occupied by two fettlers are wartime buildings erected when manpower and materials were in very short supply. The Department is vigorously pursuing the policy of increasing and improving the accommodation available for railwaymen throughout the State consistent with its resources of manpower and materials, but it is quite impossible to immediately bring all accommodation up to the desired standard, and the most pressing cases, more particularly those where no accommodation exists, are being attended to first. Kyburra is the permanent location of the gang, and in such cases it is the practice to charge rental for the accommodation provided in just the same way that an employee occupying the Departmental cottage in Townsville would require to pay rental for it."

#### BUILDING PERMITS FOR NON-LICENSED HOTELS.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR** (Clayfield) asked the Premier—

"In view of the failure to provide adequate hotel accommodation in Queensland generally to meet the demand over recent years, will he give serious consideration to giving at least equal facilities for the erection of non-licensed hotels as is now given for the improvement of existing licensed premises?"

**Hon. V. C. GAIR** (South Brisbane) replied—

"All applications for building permits are considered on their merits, and just as permits have been given for the improvement of existing licensed premises, particularly under the heading of safety and hygiene, so permits have been approved for improvements and additions to non-licensed hotels, residentials, &c."

#### QUEENSLAND-BRITISH FOOD CORPORATION; PIG ASSETS.

**Mr. V. E. JONES** (Callide) asked the Premier—

"In reference to the statement of live-stock on hand at 1 October, 1950, and at 30 September, 1951, in the pig-raising

trading account of the Queensland-British Food Corporation, is there any minimum age at which pigs were taken into account, and, if so, what is that age?"

**Hon. V. C. GAIR** (South Brisbane) replied—

"This matter will be referred to the Corporation."

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

**Mr. SPARKES** (Aubigny) (11.11 a.m.), by leave: I wish to make a personal explanation. When speaking in this Chamber yesterday I said that the forecasting of rain had not been satisfactory and could not be depended upon even for a few hours ahead. This morning's "Courier-Mail" stated that it was not a fair statement on my part.

On 15 March the forecast was "Fine over most of the State." During 15 and 16 March, over 70,000 square miles of Queensland was drenched with rain, the falls being from 18 inches at Maryborough to between 4 and 5 inches as far west as Roma. On Tuesday, 18 March, Mr. Shields said, "Only passing showers." On Wednesday, 19 March, the best rains for 12 months fell in Brisbane. On Thursday, 20 March, Mr. Shields said, "More heavy rains for the next two days." They were perfectly fine.

I leave it to the intelligence of the people to say who was right and who was wrong.

#### SURVEY CO-ORDINATION BILL.

##### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Farrell, Maryborough, in the chair.)

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Belyando—Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation) (11.14 a.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to provide for the co-ordination of surveys, for the establishment of a Central Plan Office for the recording of surveys, plans, and information relating thereto, and for purposes connected therewith."

The Bill I am introducing is primarily to establish a pool of survey information and for the exchange of such information between public authorities. During the development of Queensland, Government and semi-government bodies have operated independently in carrying out surveys for land settlement, road location, railway construction, water supply mining, forestry development and the like and each surveyor recorded only the information he required and left only the survey marks necessary to serve his purpose and worked to the standard of accuracy demanded for his immediate requirements or for the particular survey he was carrying out. On the completion or deferment of any project the plans and the field notes were stored away with departmental records, and in the absence of a general index the existence of many such surveys might not be known outside that office. This procedure has been

responsible for much overlapping and duplication of effort and consequently has resulted in unnecessary expenditure and waste of public money.

The need for some plan for co-ordinating survey work in the State has long been apparent and the first definite step towards this end was taken in November 1935 by the then Secretary for Public Lands, who convened a conference representative of the Survey Office, the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply, the Main Roads Commission, the Department of Mines, the Department of Railways, the Department of Harbours and Marine, the Titles Office, and the Brisbane City Council, with the late Professor R. W. H. Hawken as chairman, to consider—

(a) Co-ordination of levels in Queensland by the establishment of a standard bench mark and the equation of existing and future levels to a standard; and

(b) The co-ordination and correlation of all land surveys in the State.

A report of the conference was submitted in September, 1936, and I have extracted the main portions of that report forming part of the recommendations. The conference said—

“We find that Government departments and other authorities have used different datums in various parts of the State which have not been correlated and we are unanimously agreed that State-wide co-ordination is necessary in order that full economic use might be derived from surveys effected by all authorities. Furthermore, we are agreed that machinery for co-ordination might be established with but little additional cost to the Crown.

“The closest co-operation among harbour, port, local and other authorities in the establishment of bench marks, tide gauges and survey marks may be anticipated with confidence, since in the past all authorities have incurred avoidable expense through the lack of permanently established survey marks.

“The recommendations submitted by us provide for the collection, indexing, correlation and dissemination of information now filed away in different offices, and for the co-ordination of future surveys in order that economic waste, due to overlapping or duplication may be avoided. The attainment of that objective requires a unified and continuous policy by all concerned. We therefore recommend the establishment of a small standing committee to deal with the co-ordination of levels and for the convening, when deemed necessary, of further survey conferences.”

The committee that was recommended by that body was eventually set up; it received the approval of the then Acting Premier on 24 March, 1937. The purpose of that committee was the co-ordination of levels proposed by the conference. It has functioned ever since then, and according to the Surveyor-General the results have been very satisfactory. The degree of co-ordination of State levels so far achieved has been of

much assistance to all constructing authorities, and the results obtained by co-operation between the various departments have been of great benefit to the State.

Government departments were asked in 1939 to furnish lists of surveys of any potential value for inclusion in a central register of surveys, but with the outbreak of war and the continuing shortage of trained efficient staff, no progress has since been made in that aspect of co-ordination. In the meantime, other States, Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales, have passed co-ordinating legislation in respect to surveys and levels, with the result that those States have saved considerable sums of public moneys because of the co-ordination that now exists between the various public bodies.

The committee was asked to draw up a draft Bill, including its recommendations, for submission to me. The committee did that, and we are now presenting a Bill containing the provisions that were recommended by that committee. I believe that this is a non-contentious measure, and I think all hon. members will agree that it is desirable that we should do something to bring about the co-ordination that the committee has recommended.

I might mention that semi-official and private survey agencies exist in Queensland, as well as the various public authorities such as the Survey Office, the Department of Public Lands, the Department of Mines, the Department of Harbours and Marine, the Co-ordinator-General's Department, the Department of Main Roads, the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, the Railway Department, the Forestry Department, the Department of Local Government, the Department of Public Works, the Queensland Housing Commission and the State Electricity Commission and regional electricity boards. All have occasion in the work they are doing to carry out surveys. If each of those authorities has to use its own marks to start with, the result is often a good deal of confusion. If, however, they were working to recognised datums laid down for the guidance of all surveyors, naturally it would facilitate the correlation of all the survey work carried out in the State. On the passing of the Bill a surveyor will ask for the information he needs, and it will be made available to him from the Central Plan Office that will be established under this measure in the Survey Office, so that he will be able to go onto the job with full information of previous surveys in that locality. When he sends back his records, a copy will be held for the benefit of any other survey that may have to be done in or adjacent to that area. As a result, long traverses will be avoided and much expense will be saved.

The Commonwealth authorities also have their Survey Departments which includes the Army, Survey Corps, the Royal Australian Air Force, the Department of the Interior, and other departments. I know from experience that their work, especially with relation to aerial surveys, has been a great help. We get copies of the R.A.A.F. aerial

surveys, and they save a great deal of work by the ground staff in various parts of the State. I had occasion the other day to have a look at a holding, the lease of which has now expired, part of which was flooded, and from the aerial photographs of it available in the office we will be able to save a great deal of work by the ground surveyor, who eventually will have to design the holding for subdivision.

The Bill is designed to bring into contact these public authorities, one with the other, so that their work will be based on exact data furnished by surveyors. It contains also provision for a Central Plan Office within the Survey Office, and for the compilation of a register containing information supplied by departments, sub-departments, commissions, boards and local authorities. It will contain all plans considered to have a potential value, and hon. members will notice that the definition of "local authority" in the Bill is a very wide one.

The Bill prescribes the standard of accuracy suitable for general requirements that can be readily obtained, and it requires the authorities to give notice of their intention to begin surveys so that the necessary connections to existing surveys or to permanent marks may be made. It allows advice to be furnished on any existing survey that might render any proposed survey unnecessary or limit its scope. It requires the Surveyor-General to take all such steps as may be expedient in avoiding unnecessary duplication of survey work. It gives authority for the erection of standard permanent marks of approved design on streets and roads, on Crown land or land under the control of local authorities, and, with the owners' consent, on privately owned land, and sets out the authority responsible for their maintenance. Penalties are provided for unlawful interference with or damage to permanent marks.

It is confidently expected that the corrective legislation now proposed will not only allow full use to be made of the surveys already effected, but will ensure that future surveys are undertaken in a way that will best serve the public interest. According to the Surveyor-General it will promote a great measure of efficiency, which is desirable, and it will effect substantial economies in public administration.

I have given the history or the genesis of the measure and I have outlined some of the main principles. It really provides for a pool of survey information to which any public authority or any private surveyor will have access on payment of a nominal charge, and consequently it will be of immense advantage generally in the advancement of accurate surveys. It will save a good deal of public money, too. There is nothing contentious in it, and its sole purpose is to bring about that desirable measure of co-ordination that is so necessary today. I commend the measure to hon. members.

**Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) (11.28 a.m.):** According to the description of the Bill by the Minister, it will be regarded with distinct favour. My only reason for rising at this stage is to seek a little further information

to help me consider more fully the precise nature of the measure. I gathered from the Minister's remarks that its primary purpose is to help public departments and public bodies generally. Various departments have been separately carrying out surveys and retaining all the information separately, and Government departments have not always had the means of seeing the surveys made by other departments. In order to overcome that the use of a common register and a common plan room would be wholly desirable and there is no argument against it.

The only additional information we need is whether the use of that common plan room will be accomplished by a double set of plans, the first one being retained by the department immediately concerned and the second set going to the common plan room so that the other departments can have access to it. That I imagine would be a very desirable approach to the problem. I think it is generally accepted that officers who carry out survey work are reluctant to part with their own plans but, I think you will find they are all very happy to part with copies of the plans and field notes for the use in a common plan room. If the proposal is that those various officers should use the common plan room and send in to it all their primary notes and everything else, I think there would be a degree of departmental objection.

There is a second point I should like the Minister to elucidate. He has made it clear that on the payment of a small fee private people will have access to the advantage of this common register and the common plans filed in this Central Plan Office. Is it intended to project this beyond the field of the Public Service by public bodies, into the great and wider field of service touching all the lands of the State? I did not gather from the Minister's introductory speech that it was. I should be glad if the Minister would make the intention clear.

I take it that if a private surveyor is carrying out work that impinges on railway land or main roads he would be able to see the records in the common plan room and the central register, in order to get access to the plans and drawings filed there to help him in his work. I take it, however, that is not the present intention to make a common plan room extend to all the lands of the State and all surveys.

**Mr. Foley:** Only those surveys of any potential value. The Surveyor-General would be the judge.

**Mr. HILEY:** In connection with the ordinary work of the Real Property Office, where all the surveys go and the register is established, there would be no crossing of the work of the Real Property Office by this measure?

**Mr. Foley:** No.

**Mr. HILEY:** It would touch a great deal of the work of the Survey Office and would correlate the work of the other various public bodies?

**Mr. Foley:** Yes.

**Mr. HILEY:** That impresses us as being a logical and beneficial approach. On my consideration, nothing but good can come from this measure.

There is one detail that might conveniently be mentioned now; although it is not normally within the purposes of the measure, there is some analogy between the two. I refer to the time factor involved in the Real Property Office in obtaining an examination and passing for recording purposes of new subdivisions where new plans are involved. The matter of delays at the Titles Office in dealing with transfers has been ventilated on a previous occasion, and in spite of the difficulties that have swept over that department since the war there has been a notable improvement there. I think most people appreciate that there has been an improvement in clearing transfers of ordinary plans, but when it comes to a new subdivisional plan that involves perhaps a block of perhaps five acres, I can assure you the delay is commonly from 12 to 15 months. Although there may be sales of allotments they cannot be recorded or a new plan issued until the Titles Office has completed its work of examining the re-survey and passing it.

The matter is one that the Minister might discuss with his colleagues. I can assure you that the sale of land and the financing of land sales do touch on the question of new homes on the fringe of the city. Delay in transfers can be regarded as one of the most vexing aspects of the surveying of lands in this State.

I mention the matter so that it can be examined by the appropriate authority. Of course, I realise that it is one thing to desire extra examiners to be available and another thing to produce them. There is not the slightest doubt that shortage of qualified examiners is the cause of the bottleneck, but we have had other bottlenecks in departmental administration and when they have been tackled resolutely we have managed to overcome them before very long.

I repeat that I feel disposed to favour the measure the Minister has brought forward and I shall examine it with keen interest. I was particularly interested in what he said about the use of permanent marks, not only on public surveys but also, with the consent of the owner, on private land. It has always struck me as one of the sad things about this State that we have retained in so many important markings the use of the old white-painted peg, which all of us have seen abused with such abandon. There is not one of us in a suburban neighbourhood who has not seen a man cheerfully dig out a survey peg and stick it back at a spot somewhere near where he thinks it came from. In country areas we know about the ravages of fire and how difficult it is to retain these pegs. Sometimes we go through an old survey line and see the charred remains of a block that we presume, from its position is probably an old survey peg.

I have always felt that it was a pity that 50 or 100 years ago somebody did not think of providing permanent markings. I know

we have to be realists. I know that it would be almost impossible in country areas in particular to have gangs going round with cement and gravel putting in concrete markings, but in these days perhaps distinctive pure iron pegs could be used. Pure iron, of course, is as resistant to corrosion as steel is subject to it.

**Mr. Keyatta:** More so.

**Mr. HILEY:** Much more so, indeed so much so that the Main Roads Commission goes out of its way to get specially made pure iron bolts and straps for some of its heavy construction work because it knows they will stand the ravages of corrosion for years without any noticeable deterioration. It might be that we could use markings of that kind. They would be fire-proof, resistant to corrosion and relatively long-lived. They would be infinitely better than the wooden peg that is so persistently used in so many places.

In these days of synthetic materials it is possible that we can discover something else that could be used for survey markings. Perhaps some imitation porcelain, something white that can be clearly seen, something that does not rust or corrode, may be evolved. If something could be done to overcome the repeated need for surveyors to go over land that has been surveyed not once, twice but sometimes 20 times, watching for something that will give a reliable basis for a survey it would be a useful contribution to the welfare of posterity. So I am going to examine with keen interest what provision the Minister has made in that connection, but the general direction of the legislation impresses me as being good.

**Mr. KEYATTA** (Townsville) (11.40 a.m.): I compliment the Minister on this very desirable and important reform. I think what moved the department to bring down this legislation was the time involved in searches and in recording these important documents. It is imperative that specialists be appointed to work in co-ordination with the various departments concerned in all phases of surveying and recording these documents. There are matters that may be looked upon as border-line matters, matters in which there is doubt about which department should be handling them, and this causes long delays. The purpose of this Bill is to centralise the registration under the control of one trained staff with a view to eliminating these undesirable delays. I think that it is a very fine move indeed on the Minister's part and I commend him for it. This improvement in public administration has been talked about for any years and in all probability it was because of the lack of staff that effect could not be given to it. As hon. members of this committee realise, search is the factor that takes up a good deal of time.

**Mr. Evans:** And it is costly.

**Mr. KEYATTA:** Yes, it is costly. This Bill will make for expeditious administration.

I was interested in the remarks made by the hon. member for Coorparoo about survey

pegs. It is true that the old wooden peg is outmoded and it is only a matter of a short time when it is either lost or affected by dry rot. Hon. members may cast their minds back to the cast-iron used in cemeteries. Iron numerals have been in cemeteries for, say, 60 or 70 years and are still in a good state of preservation. Cast-iron is very effective. Hon. members will recall also the old cast-iron water pipes. I can speak of Townsville, where cast-iron pipes have been down for 50 years and when they were found to be too small for main reticulation lines were taken up, repainted or re-tarred and put to further use. I suppose some of those pipes are 60 years old and are still in good order. Cast-iron is a lasting material and it is desirable that it be used for survey pegs. The suggestion made by the hon. member was a fine one.

I congratulate the Minister on his initiative, which will make for expeditious working and the centralising and storage of documents under the supervision of trained staff.

**Mr. EVANS (Mirani)** (11.44 a.m.): I should like the Minister to give us some further details as to how this Bill applies to local authorities. Generally I commend him on the outline he has given because I believe the measure is necessary; duplication is costly. In my own experience I have found that some surveyors are to blame. On some occasions surveyors have endeavoured—and I say deliberately—when they gave tracings to delete from those tracings important datum points that would help another surveyor doing a job in the locality. I am speaking of local-authority work and I know that very often surveyors out on a job have found that tracings they were following were not correct and they have had to send to Townsville or the Survey Office for correct tracings. All this cost has to be met by the person actually paying for the survey and I hope that the Minister in this Bill has made provision that when surveyors supply tracings to a council the tracings will be in conformity with the plan and show datum points. I am telling the committee some positive facts and they are specially important at present when we have a shortage of surveyors. Very often there is no need for a search; all tracings should be supplied and most councils make surveyors supply them. I know what I am speaking about in this regard and I say that I do not think any surveyor has any right to alter a datum point on tracings to mislead another surveyor.

I think the Bill is an important one and very necessary.

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Belyando—Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation) (11.47 a.m.): On the point raised by the hon. member for Mirani I should like to say that local authorities are included in the definition of “public authority.” There is a provision in the Bill that every person authorised in writing by the Surveyor-General shall at all reasonable times be entitled to inspect any recorded plan kept in the Central Plan Office and the Surveyor-General may authorise any

person to inspect any recorded plan kept elsewhere than in the Central Plan Office. It goes on—

“Every person authorised in writing by the Surveyor-General, whether generally or in any particular case, upon production of the authority issued to him by the Surveyor-General and upon satisfying a public authority having possession of any recorded plan as to his purpose for inspecting such plan, shall at all reasonable times be entitled to inspect and copy any recorded plan in the possession of such public authority.”

**Mr. Evans:** Those plans must be in accordance with—

**Mr. FOLEY:** They would have to be a true copy of the survey.

**Mr. Evans:** They are not.

**Mr. FOLEY:** In that case, if a complaint were made to the Surveyor-General, the individual who falsified the copy would be brought to book. I feel quite sure that action under this Bill could be taken against him. I think that will be covered in the penalty clause. However, that matter can be looked into before we reach the Committee stage of the Bill.

On the matter raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, all plans that have a potential value naturally will be recorded and registered in the Central Plan Office, and an index will be kept. In some cases, of course, anybody desiring access to a particular survey that is in the hands of a public authority will be given authority to inspect and copy what he requires for his purpose. However, there will be no great duplication there, because today we have apparatus and equipment at the Surveyor-General's office that I suppose is as good as anything in the Southern Hemisphere. With the aid of that apparatus, we can photograph any set of plans in a few minutes. The cost involved will not be very great, as the work can be carried out quite easily.

I feel quite sure that after hon. members have read the Bill they will find that it covers all the matters they have raised and that all anomalies have been provided for. The Surveyor-General will have very wide powers as the officer in charge of the Central Plan Office, and I feel that we shall get reasonable co-operation from those bodies that are included under the heading of “Public Authorities.” As a matter of fact, without the assistance of any legislation at all, the Government departments concerned have already responded very well, and their co-operation has meant a big thing to public authorities generally, particularly to the Surveyor-General's office. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Motion (Mr. Foley) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Foley read a first time.



SUGAR EXPERIMENT STATIONS ACTS  
AMENDMENT BILL.

## SECOND READING.

**Hon. H. H. COLLINS** (Tablelands—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock) (11.54 a.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

It would be impossible in a short speech to outline the remarkable work the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations has done on behalf of the sugar industry generally. Suffice it to say that it is carrying out a tremendous amount of work on the various stations in different parts of the State. The station at Bundaberg is a particularly good one and it has done far-reaching research work in respect of agriculture generally.

It is surprising to notice the results obtained from the various soils in one part of the State as compared with those in another. A very interesting experiment was carried out recently at the Bundaberg station, where on a certain plot of land they have ploughed in the cane trash for the past 20 years instead of burning it off. On a plot alongside of it and with the same class of cane they have regularly burnt off the trash each year. Otherwise the land has been treated in the same way as the first plot. The experiment was to determine to what extent the ploughing-in of the trash would add humus to the soil and so lead to any increase in cane production. According to ordinary agricultural practice one would expect that the ploughing-in of the trash would enrich the soil and add to the growth of the cane on it, but the experiments disclosed that there was no difference in the production from both plots.

**Mr. Evans:** These experiments are conducted on volcanic soil?

**Mr. COLLINS:** Yes. It does not follow that similar experiments on a different type of soil would have the same results. However, it is very interesting to know that in these volcanic soils there was no difference between the ploughing-in of the trash and the burning of it off regularly every year. Of course, the easier method would be to burn the trash. Perhaps with a different kind of soil the results would be different. This experiment, however, indicates the desire of the sugar industry to persevere with research work continually.

Another experiment was carried out with the use of weedicides. On one plot, after the ratooning of the cane or the planting, the weeds were killed by an application of weedicide. The ground was left entirely alone. It was not cultivated or loosened in any way so as to let in the air, which is a very good agricultural practice, and it was found from the experiment on this volcanic soil, which is of a loose and open kind, that no advantage was to be gained by cultivating the land. On the one plot the weedicide had kept the weeds in check and the cane from it was just as good as the cane on the plot

alongside where the land had been cultivated. No particular advantage was to be gained by cultivating the land. Perhaps there are other parts of the State that have the same type of volcanic soil as that to be found at Bundaberg. I believe that the soil on the Atherton Tableland is similar but they do not grow sugar-cane there.

It is remarkable also to know some of the lucerne crops that have been harvested from the soils on some of the stations. We have records giving absolutely correct and irrefutable information that crops up to 20 tons to the acre were obtained. That would be all right in the case of green lucerne but this was lucerne hay and that shows what can be done on some of these soils.

I have given only a few of the many experiments that have been conducted by the experiment stations. They are breeding various types of cane, many of which have been a great advantage to the sugar industry of Queensland. Canes such as R50, 48, 49, 46 are growing in various districts.

I am not going to say that the bureau is the only organisation doing this work. I give credit to the C.S.R. Coy. for doing other good work out of its own funds. There is no compulsion so far as this research by the industry is concerned. If any other branch wants to experiment there is nothing to stop it from doing so. It is to the credit of the C.S.R. Coy. that while it is paying its levies to the Sugar Experiment Stations Fund, it is carrying out private work to develop such canes as have given remarkable results in high density, such as Trojan and Eros.

The majority of canes that are planted in Queensland are still either bureau-introduced or bureau-bred. Up to a year or two ago that was true of 70 per cent. of the canes used in Queensland. At the beginning of the century the Badila cane, which is one of the best canes ever grown here, was introduced by the bureau. A couple of days ago I saw the state of growth of some of the cane that was introduced from New Guinea recently. Officers of the bureau were sent over to investigate some of the sweeter and more frost-resisting canes that were grown by the natives as human food. The canes that were introduced are growing on the new experiment station at Redland Bay, and although the season has been very much against it, some of the canes are showing remarkable growth. It is quite possible that as a result of these experiments new varieties of cane may be introduced into Queensland that might add to our sugar yield, just as other canes brought in by the bureau and the C.S.R. Coy. have in the past.

A new experiment station has been opened in the Burdekin and is showing considerable promise. We have one at Mackay and at Bundaberg and another at Meringa in North Queensland, where cross-breeding of cane is carried out. There is also one on the Burdekin River near Ayr. Taken all in all, the sugar-growers, I believe, are very happy

about the alteration that was made in the Act 12 months ago in order to place the staff employed by the bureau outside the ambit of the Public Service Commissioner. The reason for that was that the men in the industry thought they were losing men whom they had trained and they wished to retain their services by paying higher salaries. Whether this will be good or not for the industry I am not prepared to say. I was one who took the attitude, looking down the years and considering the results of the work of the bureau, that it had never lost a great deal by the fact that men trained in the industry were leaving the bureau. As I pointed out at the time, one of the very valuable men who was trained by the bureau is the Under-Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Stock. I said then and I say now that I believe his value to the sugar industry is greater now than it was when he was connected with the bureau and the sugar industry only; his sphere of influence now is greater, and he never was lost to the industry. Dr. Kerr was trained by the bureau and was a very able and valuable officer, and he is now in the employ of the sugar-growers who are running a station of their own. Other members of the bureau staff from time to time have gone to outside employment in the sugar industry so that their knowledge is still used by the industry. It also gives more scope for the younger men who are coming on. I believe we have as valuable young men coming on as we ever had. Scholarships are provided to train them.

I commend the industry for its spirit of self-help. If that spirit of self-help was more generally practised in other industries it would have the same value to those industries as it has had to the sugar industry, which is one of the most efficient and best organised of agricultural industries in Australia. Great credit is due to the sugar men who have seen fit to put their hands deeply into their own pockets and find nearly all the money required for the work of the bureau.

As it has expanded, as the staff is being taken away from the Public Service, as salaries have increased and as the sugar industry is expanding, and keeping in mind the future expansion of that industry, the costs of the bureau are increasing. It requires over £90,000 at the present rate of wages, with the present number of staff, to finance the work of the sugar experiment stations each year. Expanding expense on the one hand and the reduced amount of cane crop last year, with an estimated reduced crop this year, will mean that the levy must be increased. It is intended by this Bill to increase the levy on cane from 3d. to somewhere about 4½d. a ton in order to give the Bureau the amount of money it requires. Then the method of collecting the money has to be altered because at the end of June the bureau would have only approximately £23,000. Unless the Act is amended, it will not be possible for the bureau to meet its commitments because the legislation now provides that it will not be able to strike any further levy until 28 February, 1953. We

propose to amend that to enable the bureau to levy on cane from month to month. This will enable it to obtain the money it requires. I think I mentioned yesterday that of the £90,000 that will be required for next year the State Government are finding £7,000 and the cane-growers the other £83,000 by means of levy on cane.

We are also proposing to take power to either increase or decrease the levy by order in council instead of by amendment of the Act. I remind hon. members that an order in council will not be made except upon the recommendation of the Sugar Advisory Board. Two of the members of this board are elected by the industry, one by the millers and one by the growers. A third member is the Under Secretary for Agriculture and Stock and the present occupant of that position, Mr. Bell, is a man who has been trained in the sugar industry. The fourth member is the chairman, who is the Minister, whoever he may be, from time to time. It will be seen, therefore, that the recommendation will be made by a body well qualified to judge whether the levy should be increased or decreased.

The increase or decrease is governed by matters entirely outside the control of the bureau. For instance, it has no control over rising costs, wages, and the many other things the stations have to finance. They are governed by world- or Australia-wide demands. We cannot tell what they will be from year to year. With the huge expansion that is taking place in the industry now in an attempt to do what all primary industries should do—meet the increased overseas demand, and so build up our credit overseas, and keep pace with the increasing demand for sugar in this country as the result of increased population and the greater use of sugar—costs will be heavier. At the moment the expansion taking place in the industry is greater than has ever been known in its history. Its production is being almost doubled and this will mean a tremendous expansion of the work that the sugar experiment stations will be required to do. For instance, they will have to deal with all diseases in cane throughout the State—and cane is subject to disease. We have had all the known cane diseases in the world except two. The point is that we have all these diseases under control in this State, and they are not causing us any particular harm. But this has only been brought about by exercising strict control over the use of canes and the transference of them from one district to another. A cane might be perfectly resistant to disease in one district but on transference to another it would not be resistant to disease, and consequently measures of quarantine are provided for. All that is part and parcel of the work of the sugar experiment stations.

I think I gave a very good outline of the Bill on the initiation, and I now commend it to the House in the belief that it is in the best interests of the industry, and that it is required by it and recommended by the Advisory Board.

**Mr. EVANS** (Mirani) (12.13 p.m.): Judging by his remarks the Minister is quite an advocate for the industry.

**Mr. Collins:** I have been the best advocate you have had.

**Mr. EVANS:** I think he is. When he decided to take the staff of the station away from control by the Public Service Commissioner I thought he was acting against his will. However, the industry is very happy about that position. I have always felt and I have made this statement on many occasions since I have been in this House—and I am an executive member of one of the organisations in the industry—that staff must be contented and well paid. One has always to endeavour to be sure that his staff are not angling and looking for other jobs, or that they are afraid of being dispensed with. We have lost some valuable members from the staff of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, and whilst they did not go entirely from the industry they went to branches of it—individual units—and a lot of the knowledge that we paid them to collect and collate was lost to the industry to some extent. But notwithstanding all these things the Bureau has done a marvellous job, and I want to tell the House that only last week Mr. King, Mr. Clayton and Mr. Vallance addressed a conference of between 90 and 100 delegates representing the sugar industry and I do not think that any report was more appreciated than theirs and the advice given by those three valuable men. I am satisfied that it was the unanimous opinion of all that they were outspoken in the statements they made—outspoken when many public servants would have been afraid to touch on the matters they did. They said what they had to say because it was what they thought was to the advantage of the industry. They had no hesitation in submitting their views as to what was best in the interests of the industry.

As to the levy, we are not concerned about the increase, because we have to pay for services. We had a short crop last year but notwithstanding all this research is still going on and help is being given to the men engaged in the industry. I listened to the Section 12A hearing yesterday before the Central Board and heard the representative of one mill make the statement that his area had lost 50,000 to 60,000 tons because of grubs. Thanks to the efforts of the bureau it is felt that the grub menace has been controlled. I accept that statement. In my own area we have had experience of the use of gammexane in the control of wire-worms, and I know land that once could not be put under cane is now growing 40 to 50 tons to the acre in reasonable times. That has been brought about by the use of gammexane.

Many growers are selfish and will not accept advice, and I have had to stand up to them in my own area. Downy mildew, which was one of our major difficulties, has been wiped out. The bureau had to take a stand, and the reasonable people in the industry

backed them up. As the result, downy mildew was wiped out in about three years, and the affected cane was again put on the list of approved varieties.

It is well known in the industry that cane pollen in the southern districts is not fertile, so they are bred in the northern districts and then brought to the South. When we go to an experiment station and see the work the bureau is doing, it makes us realise that our money is being well spent.

I remember the days when our crops consisted of noble canes, and I commend the bureau for having the courage to put up a fight in that connection. It had to fight the miller, who preferred the noble canes as they contained free juices and were of a low fibre content. However, the bureau crossed the noble varieties with other varieties, and I contend that it adopted the correct attitude in doing that. After all, we must give every consideration to the man who is growing the cane. It is the miller's duty to build his mill in such a way that it can treat the cane that the grower can grow, and that is mainly what has happened in Queensland. During the Section 12A hearing before the Central Board yesterday, I heard a mill representative condemning Trojan cane because he said it was hard to treat. However, in my opinion it is the mill that is to blame, not the Trojan cane. That mill should do what the other mills have done. We are crushing cane in our mill with a higher fibre content than Trojan, and it is the duty of each mill to build up its factory so that it can treat the difficult varieties of cane. They should consider the growers who are growing the cane. If it is economic to grow those varieties of cane, it is the miller's duty to treat them. In the main, however, the millers are very keen to co-operate with the growers.

I am not saying that the mills are not co-operating with the bureau. For example, the C.S.R. Coy. bred the Trojan cane and I remember an occasion when one of the company's mills was averaging over 15 c.c.s. It is rather selfish for any responsible person in the industry to talk about condemning such a variety.

With regard to the trip to New Guinea that was undertaken by officers of the bureau, I should like to point out that Badila cane originally came from New Guinea and it eventually became a marvellous variety. Mr. King and his staff will undoubtedly cross the canes that were brought back from New Guinea with other canes, and I am quite sure that the money spent on the trip to New Guinea will result in great advantage to the industry generally.

I believe that the industry is playing a very important part by the establishment of its own research institute. It was not that we had no confidence in the bureau, but at the time there was a shortage of staff and we thought it was our duty to establish our own research institute, not with the idea of

competing with the bureau but of co-operating with it. We were prepared to contribute a considerable amount of money—and we are contributing it each year—to establish a research institute in connection with the milling side of the industry. Last year we had a very bad experience in our area with standover cane, and I instructed the manager of my mill to get Mr. Clayton's advice, which was very helpful. A man who understands thoroughly the manufacturing of sugar and who goes through the whole of the sugar districts every year knows far more than one who remains in the same district and handles the same varieties of cane and the same juices each year. Possibly the condition of the juices in Bundaberg three years ago helped Mr. Clayton considerably in advising us what to do last year. Of course, we will always take advantage of any advice offered by officers of the bureau when we are in any difficulty.

In the sugar industry I have found that it is not what you know that counts so much as what you do not know and so it is important that the research institutes and the bureau should get all the information they can. We have our technologists' conferences, at which papers are written and read by the capable men in the industry, and all the information supplied by them is passed on and collated for the people concerned. When we had the world technologists' conference here just recently I was quite proud of the Queensland industry. Some of the delegates went through some of the sugar mills. I can only speak intimately of my own mill in this connection. Some of the representatives came to me here at Parliament House and asked me if we would make our laboratory available to them and give them the assistance of some of our staff. Later on I had three very complimentary letters from three representatives of different countries who told me how pleasant their tour of Australia was and how they appreciated the help that was given to them. In their letters they pointed out that no other sugar industry in the world was more efficient than the industry in Queensland.

The Minister mentioned Mr. Bell, the Under Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Stock. I compliment the Minister very much on his decision to take Mr. Bell overseas with him. Mr. Bell has played a very important part in agriculture in Queensland and by going overseas and making contact not only with our own representatives but the representatives of the various Commonwealth countries. Mr. Bell must have gained a good deal of knowledge concerning the ramifications of the sugar industry throughout the world that will be of great help to the Minister and very helpful to the industry in this State. We in the industry know Mr. Bell very well. We have a lot of confidence in him. We look upon him as one of the most capable public servants in Queensland. We admire him because he is not a "Yes" man. I have seen him at conferences over many years. If he has to fight he will get up and fight and if he has to say "No" he will say "No."

I want to assure the Minister in conclusion that we are very happy with the set-up of the bureau. Of course, we want to see it expand. We want all the help we can get and we want it more now than ever before. With the knowledge that he had before he went overseas and the knowledge that he gained over there, the Minister saw fit on his return to call a conference of the industry to have a talk and I want to assure him that there is not one sensible person in the industry who did not appreciate his action.

Yesterday and the day before we were considering matters of vital importance to the industry. We must fill our markets, and if we do not, there is no need to tell the Minister what will happen. If we cannot fill our quotas they will be given to someone else. We in Queensland and Australia must take advantage of the opportunities offered to us today and we cannot afford to do it bit by bit. We must have courage and foresight and whatever we do we must do in a big way. The markets of the world are pretty sure for a period. The mills cannot afford to cope with the crop unit by unit—it must be done in a big way. We must face up to it in a big way. I commend the Minister on his foresight and courage in calling the conference of the industry after his return from overseas so that he might put his views to us. I can assure him that the industry accepted his opinion and all the representatives at the conference warmly approved of what he did.

I commend the Bill. We have no objection whatever to the paying of the employees at the bureau and we are not going to suggest at any time that our members on the advisory board should deal with this matter in a niggardly way. We want our staff to be well paid. We want them to be happy and if there is any money to be expended in helping scientific research then I say—and I am sure I have the support of every member in the industry—that you will not find the industry bucking about finding any money for that.

**Mr. WATSON (Mulgrave) (12.29 p.m.):** I join with the hon. member for Mirani in complimenting the Minister first of all on the legislation that was passed last year and is now being put into effect and today on introducing legislation to increase the levy on sugar-cane, which is necessary in order to cover the expenditure of the bureau.

As representatives of the industry, we shall be asked why we should support a 50 per cent. increase in the levy. One reason is the small crops, and the most important reason is that the representatives of the industry have implicit confidence in the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. Many years ago they were to a great extent ridiculed by the growers, but today we have on the advisory board representatives of each section of the industry, who are able to give us expert opinions on our important problems.

As one who has had vast experience in the sugar industry, I say that while the bureau may have made many mistakes it has given pound for pound for anything we have paid in the way of levies.

The total amount of levies has increased considerably over the years. It possibly costs a small farmer with a tonnage of 1,000 approximately £1 a week in levies.

**Mr. JESSON:** Does that include levies to the Country Party too?

**Mr. WATSON:** When you speak of sugar you speak of sugar and not of Country Party members. I represent the sugar industry and I am also proud to represent the Country Party. The levies I speak of include those to the Cane-growers' Executive and the mill suppliers' committee. The industry will not squeal. If we get a fair return for our levies we are satisfied.

I agree with what the Minister said about the results we get from our experiment stations. I was very interested particularly in what he said about the experiments at Bundaberg. I have a farm of volcanic soil. I know that although the trash may be turned in and not give good results, but when you burn it you get some potash and therefore something of value. Years ago I was rolling the trash into each second row but today I am burning it and I am getting value. At one time we were told that was the wrong thing to do.

**Mr. EVANS:** There is a deficiency of potash.

**Mr. WATSON:** There is a deficiency of potash in volcanic soils, and it has been proved to be so at Bundaberg.

In the Far North 80 per cent. of the cane was Badila up to the last five years. Our station at Meringa proved that Badila was on its own, as the saying is, but over a period of years it was becoming inbred and it was necessary to substitute other cane varieties. The bureau has proved that we can get other varieties that can pay big dividends and show a good c.e.s. content. Under this new production scheme gam-mexane will be the deciding factor in whether we shall fill the target or not.

It is a pleasure to me to compliment the Minister and his department.

**Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) (12.34 p.m.):** I am particularly pleased to be associated with this Bill, and to know that the officers of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations are doing a fine job of work for the growers and the industry. Although you may have an efficient mill, unless you have good c.e.s. in cane, the result to the farmers may be almost negligible. No matter what we do in the production of sugar-cane there are unexpected difficulties to be surmounted each year. We know that the breeding of cane has come into prominence over the last few years, and as a result of the good work that has been carried out the financial return of many mills has been such as to put them on the correct side of the ledger. The propagation of these varieties and the efforts of the men to control the breeding of cane has been such that we should be proud of them. Some mills can do little, as I stated previously,

unless they have the varieties of cane that are suitable for their district, and if their mills are competent to get the utmost possible c.e.s. out of the cane.

Even within one district varieties that might be suitable in one place are not suitable in another. Breeding of cane is essential because it is the quantity and quality of the sugar in the cane that determines your financial gain or loss.

Another important fact is that mentioned by the hon. member for Mirani. We must have a satisfied and contented staff. I know the Minister appreciates the services of the bureau staff, and, as I have been associated with cane-growers' conferences many years, I have come to know intimately the present Director of the Sugar Experiment Stations, Mr. King, and Mr. Bell, who was attached to the bureau. The services of both these excellent officers have been retained.

I should like to refer here to my own area and reiterate what I have said many times before. We are very unfortunate at Tully. We did have and we still have excellent officers, but for one reason or another their services either were terminated or their positions made so insecure that they had to seek employment elsewhere. They have gone to Babinda, to Mossman, South Johnstone, and various other places that eagerly sought their services. As a result of this dissatisfaction, I feel that our mill has gone back considerably, and the same discontent exists amongst a number of the present staff. I put it down to an unfortunate state of affairs under which control and management are perhaps not vested in the right people. I could be more critical, but I do not think it would serve any good purpose.

I commend the Minister for bringing forward the proposed amendments, and I commend his officers, who I know will carry on the good work that has been started. I know also that the industry will surmount its difficulties and prosper as the result of the application of good sense and a willingness to do the right thing and to put the industry into the position to which it is entitled. Our overseas markets must be filled, and our home-consumption quota is rising each year. This makes it necessary for the industry to produce the cane that will be made into sugar for not only ourselves but also the overseas markets, which we cannot hope to retain unless we do something to fulfil requirements. There is much to be done. We must expand. In my area, the obvious expansion is the duplication of our mill. We cannot help it. It must come, and existing farmers as well as those who enter the industry as a result of that expansion will all benefit.

I do not wish to say anything further except that it is my opinion that there is an absolute necessity to see what can be done to improve the quality of cane, to direct our efforts to increasing the c.e.s. content of the cane, for it is the tons of sugar per acre that can mean either a loss on the one hand or an excellent profit on the other.

**Mr. PIZZEY** (Isis) (12.41 p.m.): I support the remarks made by hon. members on this side applauding the work of the sugar experiment stations, but I am at a loss to understand what the hon. member for Mourilyan meant when he said that some employees were dissatisfied and that the right men were not running the station in his area.

The industry supplies the greater proportion of the money required to finance the bureau's activities. It provides something like £83,000, against the Government's £7,000. The industry would be only too happy to run the bureau itself but the present situation, whereby the Government invariably accept the advice of the advisory board, is almost as good.

I should like to speak of the contribution the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations makes not only to the industry but to the public as well. Through the years the bureau has greatly helped the industry in producing cane more cheaply. In the last decade, despite rising costs, the increase in the cost of production has been kept to a minimum by the introduction of new varieties, grub control, and many other things, and the point I am making is that not all the advantages given by the bureau have been passed on to the sugar-grower because the greater part of them have gone to the consumer, or the buyer of sugar in Australia. He has got as much benefit from the operations of the bureau as the farmer.

I think it is the Government's duty to continue their contribution to the working of the bureau and I hope that £7,000 will not be the limit. It might be said that now the bureau is away from the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commissioner it can meet all the extra costs and the Government might say, "We put in £7,000 and that is our limit." The Government must remember, however, that they have a duty to the industry because of what the industry has done in the way of supplying cheaper sugar to the consumer.

The importance of the activities of the bureau in the eyes of the farmer is exemplified by the far better attendances in recent years at the bureau's field days. Today a field day would attract up to 300 farmers, all vitally interested in the work of the bureau, and realising how much that work can mean to them in the improvement of their industry.

I do not think the Minister really meant that he was not sure that he did the right thing in removing the bureau from the Public Service of Queensland. I venture the opinion that had this been done 10 years earlier many of the good officers would not have been lost to complementary organisations.

**Mr. Collins:** The officers today are of high calibre.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** And so were the officers of yesterday. The industry will be happy to see the Director of the Bureau become

Under Secretary of the department, because of the great value he could give to the industry in that position. It is fortunate in having one of its ex-directors as Under Secretary.

I feel that the bureau could extend its activities in the field of soil erosion. I know that there are several officers who can advise farmers on the problem of soil erosion but it is impossible, with the few officers we have, to cover more than a fraction of the eroded land in Queensland. I should like to see specially trained officers attached to the bureau to give advice in the many sugar-growing areas where soil erosion is a real problem. It is a real problem in the Isis district, for instance. During two hours last Monday morning more damage was done by erosion than occurred over the last 20 years. Depths varying from 6 inches to 1 foot of good top-soil were washed away and we are in need of real help and advice, but with the present inadequate staff—

**Mr. Collins:** We are sending Mr. Ladewig up tomorrow night.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** We can do with his help. The staff is inadequate at present to handle the problem of soil erosion. It is so important that a special officer could be assigned permanently to the bureau to help in that work.

**Mr. F. E. Roberts:** Would that be right—6 inches to 1 foot of good top-soil was washed away in a couple of hours?

**Mr. PIZZEY:** Yes.

**Mr. Collins:** It could occur on steep slopes.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** The farmers were waiting for months and months to plant and the few inches of rain that fell gave them the encouragement to plant. We had 16 inches at the week-end; there was 5 inches of rain in two and a half hours on the Monday morning and away went many good farms. Gullies 2 feet deep and from 10 to 12 feet wide were created and it would break one's heart to see the devastation. Something will have to be done. We want these officers trained, and we want them stationed in those districts. About half-a-dozen farmers have received advice on soil conservation and, while they were not wholly successful, they saved far more of their soil than those who had not practised the building of contour banks.

I am sure that the whole industry appreciates the service that is given by the bureau, and if they can get an added service in the way of expert advice and assistance in overcoming soil erosion, they will regard the extra 1½d. as a very low cost indeed.

**Mr. JESSON** (Hinchinbrook) (12.49 p.m.): I realise that nobody likes the imposition of extra levies, but I am quite convinced that the sugar industry is prepared to pay an extra levy for the services that are being rendered by the bureau.

I should like to bring before the notice of the Minister the need for a sugar experiment station in the Abergowrie area, where quite a lot of cane will be grown in the very near future.

**Mr. Evans:** They are very slow in getting it under way.

**Mr. JESSON:** I will tell the hon. member all about that in a minute. As a matter of fact, I have noted the jealousy and the vindictiveness of the hon. member for Mirani with regard to Abergowrie, and I intend to deal with that matter.

There will be a very big settlement at Abergowrie, and the nearest experiment station at present is at South Johnstone. In view of the development that will undoubtedly take place in the area and the extra levies that will be paid as more cane is grown, it may be possible for the Government to give consideration to the establishment there of a separate experiment station. The C.S.R. Company has an experiment station for the breeding of canes at Macknade, and if a V.C. is ever given in the sugar industry it should be given to Mr. Garde for the work that he has done in the breeding of cane varieties. I believe that his work at Macknade, particularly the introduction of the Trojan cane, was the salvation of the Ingham district. Previous records show a decline in cane production, even with the heavier use of fertilisers, but as the result of the introduction of improved varieties it has been possible to use less fertiliser and get a greater tonnage per acre.

Dealing with the hon. member for Mirani and his statement regarding our commitments overseas, I am satisfied that what he really wants is that the big fellow who already has plenty should receive an increase in his assignment.

**Mr. Evans:** I did not say that.

**Mr. JESSON:** That was the idea, and that was the idea before the last State elections when the hon. member for Mirani showed his vindictiveness towards the opening up of the Abergowrie area.

**Mr. Evans:** I was opposed to the proprietary mill.

**Mr. JESSON:** No other mill could have done the job. All the Abergowrie lands would still be covered with trees and no cane assignments would have been granted in the area if it had not been for the fact that the C.S.R. Company was prepared to spend £2,000,000 to create the facilities to crush the extra cane. It is no use Opposition members trying to pull the legs of the growers in the Ingham district. If they had waited for the establishment of another mill in the district they would have been waiting for the next 20 years. Events that have taken place in the Federal Parliament recently would have made it impossible for anyone to import mill machinery. Increased restrictions have been placed on the importation of tractors and other farming implements, and their effect will be felt in the sugar industry very shortly. Hon. members opposite should be pulling at the coat-tails of the Federal Government for

restricting the importation of farm machinery and mill machinery. The sugar industry is in a very precarious position at present because of the action of the Federal Government. We have only to consider the miserable price increase that the Federal Government recently gave to the sugar industry, and the time they took to grant it, to realise how they are treating the industry. They were more concerned about increasing the price—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. JESSON:** What will things be like in another six months? I hope that this Government will give every consideration to the Abergowrie lands before fattening up the Mackay areas with increased cane assignments. The Abergowrie people should be given every opportunity to get on their feet. If there were ever pioneers in the sugar industry, it is the people who are at present opening up the Abergowrie area.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. JESSON:** What will be virtually a new mill will be in a position to crush the cane from this new district and surrounding areas and thus will be able to bring in many thousands of pounds more by way of levies.

While the hon. member for Mourilyan was speaking I made some reference to levies paid to the Country Party and while it is not news to us it may be news to some people that quite a number of persons pay levies to various organisations. For instance, in some cases there is a levy of a farthing a ton for the ambulance.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. JESSON:** I am dealing with levies.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. JESSON:** My point is that the growers should have an itemised list of all the levies. In my own area there are people paying levies to the Country Party when they should not be paying them at all.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. JESSON:** The sooner this matter is cleaned up the better it will be for all concerned. I hope the Government will give consideration to the establishment of an experiment station at Abergowrie. Already there is one at Macknade but healthy competition does no harm to anyone. It might liven up the C.S.R. Company or the C.S.R. Company might liven up the Government bureau. I also ask the Government through the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board and the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, to see that the new people in the Abergowrie area are properly settled before there is any slinging of assignments to all and sundry.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Nicklin, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 12.57 p.m.