

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 1960

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. D. E. Nicholson, Murrumba) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS**PAYMENT OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES PREVENTED FROM WORKING BY CYCLONE**

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Transport—

“(1) Did the Railways Department pay some employees at Townsville and other Northern depots, who stayed at home or went home during the visitation of cyclone “Connie,” and decline to pay others?”

“(2) If so, why was such Departmental discrimination indulged in and is it proposed to rectify this injustice?”

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

“(1 and 2) The basis of payment to Railway employees in respect of the 1959 cyclone in Townsville was the same as that applied on that occasion to other Crown employees. Payment was made in the case of employees who communicated with the Department indicating that due to cyclonic conditions they were not able to report for duty, those who reported for duty and were prevented by the prevailing conditions from performing their duties, and those who after reporting were subsequently obliged to leave their employment and return to their homes. If the Honourable Member's inquiry relates to those employees from whom no notification in respect of their absences was received, I would repeat the advice previously conveyed to him that such employees did not qualify for payment in accordance with the aforementioned ruling but those employees who did not take up duty by reason of cyclonic conditions and did not report such circumstances to the Department may, if they so desire, be allowed payment for the time lost as a deduction from recreation leave accrued to them.”

MURAL ON PROPOSED GOVERNMENT BUILDING, GEORGE STREET

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Public Works and Local Government—

“(1) Is it proposed to erect an eight-storey Health and Welfare building at or near the lower end of George Street, as reported in “The Sunday Mail” of last Sunday?”

“(2) If so, is it proposed, as reported, to provide a mural extending along most of the street-level frontage?”

“(3) If the answer to Question (2) is in the Affirmative, will he assure the House that another chromatic monstrosity similar to that at the Public Library will not be inflicted on the people?”

Hon. L. H. S. ROBERTS (Whitsunday) replied—

“(1, 2 and 3) Provision has been made in the estimates for the commencement of construction in George Street for the Department of Health and Home Affairs of an eight-storey Health and Welfare Building. General planning detail is designed to meet the requirements of the Department of Health and Home Affairs but the treatment of the ground floor frontage below the window sill has not yet been determined.”

JANITORS IN STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

“In view of the fact that the Education Department provides for the employment of janitors in State Secondary Schools, will he consider the employment of janitors in State Primary Schools, where the enrolment is such as to warrant such action?”

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

“While it may be possible to justify the employment of janitors in larger primary schools, the many other demands on Departmental funds preclude any expenditure on this account.”

SALARIES OF STATION MASTERS AND RAILWAY CLERKS

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) asked the Minister for Transport—

“(1) Does he regard the present position whereby Under Secretaries are in receipt of a greater salary than their Ministers as an anomalous one?”

“(2) If so, and when steps are taken to rectify the position, will he also endeavour to correct the position at Townsville where the chief station master is presently in receipt of £1,687 per annum and his clerk £1,808 per annum?”

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

“(1) The Commissioner for Railways has always been paid a salary greater than the Minister to whom he is responsible.”

“(2) The Industrial Court which is the authority charged with the responsibility for determining rates of pay for the various grades of employees as late as August 11, 1960, and again on October 27, 1960, gave its judgments on claims submitted for increased rates of pay for Station Masters. If the Unions concerned are dissatisfied with these judgments, they are at liberty to again approach the Court and endeavour to convince that authority of what the Unions consider to be the justness of their case.”

TOWNSVILLE AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“(1) Is he aware that it has been publicly announced in Townsville that the services of the Townsville Ambulance will have to be curtailed and the permanent staff reduced because of lack of funds?”

“(2) In view of the foregoing, will he give serious consideration to the placing of the Ambulance under control of, and to work in conjunction with, the Townsville General Hospital to ensure that this public utility is available to all irrespective of their ability to pay?”

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

“I have not received any official advice from the Townsville Ambulance Committee with regard to curtailment of services and reduction of staff because of lack of funds. I feel quite sure that the people of Townsville will rally to the support of the Committee if, as the Honourable Member states, it is in financial difficulties, and ensure that the Committee will have sufficient funds to maintain its services.”

REPAIRS TO ROOF, TOWNSVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) asked the Minister for Public Works and Local Government—

“If it is correct, as stated in a report in ‘The Townsville Daily Bulletin’ of Saturday, November 19, of the meeting of the Townsville Hospital Board on Friday evening, November 18, 1960, that the roof of the hospital was leaking and despite representations to the Public Works Department the matter had not been rectified, will he take steps to have the roof mended, as with the onset of the wet season conditions could become decidedly uncomfortable in the wards?”

Hon. L. H. S. ROBERTS (Whitsunday) replied—

“There were no representations to the Department of Public Works by the Townsville Hospital Board concerning this matter, as hospitals are not the responsibility of the Department of Public Works. However, at the request of the Department of Health and Home Affairs, an Officer of my Department did make an inspection of the flat roof of the main Hospital Building and the Dental Clinic at Townsville and a report thereon will be forwarded to the Department of Health and Home Affairs.”

MARY KATHLEEN—MT. ISA ROAD

Mr. INCH (Burke) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

“(1) When the construction of the 16-mile strip of bitumen at the Mt. Isa end of the Mary Kathleen-Mt. Isa Road is

completed, will he give an assurance that further allocations will be made in order to complete the whole of this road between Mt. Isa and Mary Kathleen?"

"(2) What reports, if any, have been submitted to his Department on the proposed construction of a high-level bridge over the Leichhardt River at Mt. Isa?"

"(3) If reports on this subject have been received and they are favourable, when is it likely that the work on the construction of this bridge will commence?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"(1) No. However, the Government has every intention of completing this road as quickly as funds permit."

"(2 and 3) None. Working survey, however, has been done and the matter is under investigation."

OPENING OF NORTH COAST TROPICAL LANDS FOR CATTLE-FATTENING

Mr. ROW (Hinchinbrook) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"Consequent on his appointment of a Departmental committee to investigate the North Coast tropical lands for cattle-fattening and other purposes, commencing in the Ingham district in December, will he give consideration to the opening of such lands as the survey is completed in each district?"

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham) replied—

"It is the intention of the committee to furnish progress reports upon the completion of the investigation of each locality to be inspected. Reports will be examined upon receipt and decisions will be made regarding future land usage. In respect of lands which are not required for forestry purposes and which are suitable for development for cattle fattening, early action will be taken towards opening such lands for settlement."

WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR SUFFERERS FROM HEART DISEASES

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough), for **Mr. NEWTON** (Belmont), asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"Owing to the number of compensation claims that are held up concerning diseases of the heart and other claims of this nature caused in industry, can he indicate what action is being taken by his Department in relation to these matters?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"An amending Bill has been prepared and I will submit it to the House as soon as I am satisfied that its effect will be to fully remove the doubts which arose following the 'Hussey' case."

FREIGHT RATES ON COAL

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) What is the rail freight rate on coal hauled from Collinsville and Scottsville to Mt. Isa?"

"(2) What is the rail freight rate on coal hauled from Bundamba to the Southern Electric Authority and Brisbane City Council power houses?"

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"(1) £6 5s. 8d. per ton."

"(2) To S.E.A., Murarrie, £1 5s. 6d. per ton; To Brisbane City Council, Tennyson, £1 3s. 11d. per ton; To Brisbane City Council, New Farm, £1 7s. 7d. per ton. The relatively cheaper rate applies to coal for the Mt. Isa Mines because of the long distance haul and also the fact that many wagons which would otherwise return to the area empty are utilised."

OVERLOADING OF SAND AND GRAVEL TRUCKS

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) Is he aware (a) that trucks engaged in the bulk transport of loads such as sand, gravel, soil and gypsum are overloading, in some cases to the extent of two tons, and (b) that such loads are greatly in excess of the braking capacity of these trucks, thus creating a serious danger to other vehicles and the public generally, will he institute a checking system to prevent this overloading?"

"(2) If a checking system is presently in operation, will he take steps to ensure that the check is rigidly enforced?"

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"Whilst the control of overloading of trucks generally is not a matter which comes under the provisions of the Acts administered by me, Police Officers attached to the Transport Department police this aspect of road safety in conjunction with their general transport duties. The Honourable Member has probably heard of the Government's plans for the erection of weighbridge stations at various points on our highways and this is expected to greatly facilitate in policing the overloading of vehicles. However, if the Honourable Member has any particular information on which he has based the suggestion in his question of over-loading of trucks, I would be glad to receive the details from him so that I can arrange for their investigation."

PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Report of the Minister for Education and Migration for 1959.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulations under the Regional Electric Authorities Acts, 1945 to 1958.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

PASSAGE OF APPROPRIATION BILL THROUGH ALL STAGES IN ONE DAY

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier): I move—

“That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the receiving of Resolutions from the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means on the same day as they shall have passed in those Committees, and the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day.”

Motion agreed to.

LAND TAX (ADJUSTMENT) BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Hiley, read a third time.

POLLUTION OF WATERS BY OIL BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Hiley, read a third time.

CANALS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Hiley, read a third time.

GIFT DUTY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (11.23 a.m.): I move—

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

There is a tiny amendment which I have arranged to be circulated. It in no way touches the intention or the purpose of the Bill, but merely tidies up some of the language of expression. After giving further thought to the language of expression in the Bill the Parliamentary Draftsman considered that the amendment was desirable to clarify and remove any doubt about its intention. Apart from that observation I have nothing to add to what I said at the introductory stage. I propose to listen with interest to any further views that may be expressed by hon. members.

Motion (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of s.10 (1); Stamp duty on instruments of gift—

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (11.24 a.m.): I move the following amendment—

“On page 3, line 3, omit the words—‘instrument of.’”

The reason for the amendment, as explained to me by the Parliamentary Draftsman, is that whereas in most cases stamp duty attaches to an instrument—no instrument, no stamp duty—in the case of a gift the duty attaches to the gift, and not necessarily to the instrument that evidences the gift. Because of that he considered on reflection that it would be preferable to delete the words “instrument of” so that the language of the section would proceed straight to the gift rather than refer to the imposition of duty on the instrument of the gift.

Amendment (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (11.25 a.m.): I move the following further amendment:—

“On page 3, line 6, omit the words—‘on that instrument.’”

A perusal of the language of expression will immediately convey the fact that this amendment is merely a reflection of the earlier amendment, which the Committee has accepted. I commend it to the consideration of the Committee.

Amendment (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of s. 21; Amendment of assessment—as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

SEWERAGE, WATER SUPPLY, AND GASFITTING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. L. H. S. ROBERTS (Whitsunday—Minister for Public Works and Local Government) (11.27 a.m.): I move—

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

I have nothing to add to what I said on the introduction of the Bill. This is a very minor alteration of the law. It extends from six months to twelve months the period for which a permit may be granted to a tradesman pending a decision by the Examination Board, which meets annually. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion (Mr. Roberts) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

SCARTWATER STATION TRUST
EXTENSION ACT AMENDMENT
BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—
Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation)
(11.29 a.m.): I move—

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

Since the Bill was printed several small amendments have been made to the wording of some of the clauses in order to express more adequately the desires of the trustees. I think it will be better if I leave the explanation of those small amendments until the Committee stage.

Motion (Mr. Fletcher) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor,
Clayfield, in the chair)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—Additional extension of objects and purposes of the Trust—

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—
Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation)
(11.31 a.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 2, line 18, omit the words—
‘when enlisted’.”

The original intention was that returned service men qualified if they had enlisted from the area of the Scartwater Trust or were resident within that area at the time of enlistment. The Trust has been enlarged, and service men who have returned from any of the various wars or who will return from future conflicts and who resided in the area at any time prior to their enlistment will now qualify under the Trust to receive benefits in terms of the Trust. Briefly, the trustees think that Trust funds are so buoyant that they can afford to widen the activities.

Amendment (Mr. Fletcher) agreed to.

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—
Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation)
(11.32 a.m.): I move the following further amendment:—

“On page 2, line 28, omit the words—
‘when enlisted’.”

The reasons I gave for the previous amendment apply also to this amendment.

Amendment (Mr. Fletcher) agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4—Home for aged returned service men—

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—
Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation)
(11.33 a.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 3, line 19, after the word
‘property,’ insert the words—

‘Or who, immediately prior to applying for admission to such home, have

been residents in the area for a period of three years or such other period as the Managing Trustees may fix from time to time and, except that they were not enlisted from the area, are persons for whose benefit the Managing Trustees are empowered by the said indenture, the principal Act, or this Act to manage and administer the Trust property’.”

The intention of the amendment is clear from its wording. It merely includes, in addition to those already qualified, any returned ex-service man who now resides in the area and has done so for three years or such other period as the trustees may deem fit. It provides for an enlargement of the terms of the Trust to cover others whom the trustees think they can afford to include as beneficiaries under the Trust.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—
Leader of the Opposition) (11.35 a.m.): I do not think I have any objection to the proposed insertion, but it seems extraordinary that this matter was not thought of earlier in a Bill that was specifically drawn up to deal with these problems. It seems to indicate a measure of untidiness on the part of the people concerned and that they cannot make up their minds on what they wish to do.

I indicated on the introductory stage that I thought the people involved in this matter were deserving of public thanks for what they are doing. I am not critical in any way, but it does seem to me to be rather unusual that this requirement was not thought of earlier in a Bill of this nature. After all, there is a fairly important consideration involved, and it is probably a very reasonable qualification or explanation that they wish to have in the Bill. In these matters, when the people concerned wish to have a Bill amended they should make their wishes known in greater detail before the Bill is drafted. The Minister may be able to advance some reason as to why this provision was not set up earlier. I am not against the principle at all. I think it is very commendable, and that action should be taken to use the income from this Trust for the pursuits indicated. I cannot think of a better way in which it could be used than for the provision of an old people's home, but it is a very important provision particularly when it is remembered that any of the buildings that will be required from time to time will probably be subject to the usual endowment from both the Commonwealth and State Governments.

Mr. Fletcher: I do not know about that.

Mr. DUGGAN: That is my point there. I suppose that the people in the town of Bowen are probably just as anxious as those in any other provincial city to have a fairly large old people's home. It is quite common to find the various religious denominations establishing these homes, and the

State and Federal Governments endow them very liberally. It is then within the financial ability of the church authorities to undertake works of this type. It is very pleasing to note that the trustees of the Scartwater Station Trust are prepared to undertake similar work there.

I have no general criticism of the provision at all. I just want to express my regret that this matter, which embodies a fairly important principle, was not thought of earlier. The amendment also provided me with the opportunity of asking the Minister whether this Trust attracts endowment from both the Commonwealth and the State Governments.

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (11.38 a.m.): I do not propose to raise any objection to the principle, rather, I endorse it. However, the wording of the amendment may cause a little confusion in the minds of the people who may be directly interested, inasmuch as it states—

“ or who, immediately prior to applying for admission to such home, have been residents in the area for a period of three years, or such other period as the Managing Trustees may fix from time to time . . . ”

That being the case, I do not know why the three years is stipulated. Seeing that we are giving the trustees the right to fix any period at all, I think it would be more clearly expressed, either as a greater period than three years or a lesser period than three years, if we stated, “who have been residents in the district for such period as the Trustees may fix from time to time.” I raise this point, because some people reading this legislation may think that they have to be residents of the area for three years, when obviously the trustees are being given the power to fix any period that, in their wisdom, they may desire to fix. I think it could be more clearly expressed to eliminate any confusion in the minds of people who may seek admission to the home, because the trustees will have the right—and are given the right—to fix the period. I think the provision relating to the period of three years is completely redundant.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (11.39 a.m.): I am thinking along exactly the same lines as the hon. member for Carnarvon. In my opinion the three years provision is quite redundant because the object of the amendment is to give the trustees of the Scartwater Trust power to do what they like in the matters covered by the amendment. Why write the words “three years” into the Bill?

Mr. Duggan interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: The Bill will give them an open go so why write in the words “three years”? It reminds me of the clause you will find in almost every set of local-authority by-laws dealing with building permits—the dragnet clause at the end—“Notwithstanding

anything herein contained the Council may wipe off every by-law in the book if it thinks it should do so.” This is much along the same lines.

I do not think we could have very much quarrel with the powers given to the trustees of Scartwater Station because it is an excellent show. It was conceived, I suppose, in the noblest way by the late Mr. Cunningham. It has been operated and controlled for many years by the most reputable men in North Queensland and I know that over the years there has been a desire among those trustees to get away from the rigid terms of the original Scartwater establishment. It was first established, I understand, to benefit only those who came from North Queensland or only those who enlisted from certain areas in North Queensland. Now, of course, with people coming into the North since the first World War and World War II, the trustees desire to extend the original provisions of the trust. In view of the fact that they are raising the money themselves and in view of the fact, if I may put it bluntly, that it is no-one else's business but theirs what they do with the money, I have no quarrel with any suggestion they make. I am quite happy to meet them in any reasonable demands that they make about the disbursement of the Scartwater Trust Fund. I repeat that North Queenslanders are very proud of the Scartwater Trust and the men who have run it so successfully and so reputably over the years, but the words “three years” might just as well not be in the Bill for all the use they will be.

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation) (11.43 a.m.): I should like to assure the Committee that every possible care was taken by the Parliamentary draftsman to clear up any doubt in the wording of the clause. I had the same sort of feeling as the Leader of the Opposition had that the matter should not be left in any doubt. We took the view that we could not go wrong in leaning over backwards to help such a body and that if they had not made their position absolutely clear per medium of their letters, which were our instructions, then we ought to do everything we could to get it just as they wanted it. It has taken some trouble. Even this morning we had to make a phone call to North Queensland to make quite sure that we were interpreting their desire correctly. I think we have got just about exactly what they want in the Bill. If we have not, I will be very surprised.

There might appear to be some doubt as to whether Scartwater qualifies for Government subsidy. The ordinary qualifying Yardstick of where the Federal Government come in on this, and where the State Government come in, is absent. That is to say, the clear and simple position of a personal gift is not quite so easy to apply to this trust, which has been going on for some time and which is using the income from a considerable estate. However, the

matter is being examined and the Scartwater trustees are hopeful—and we all are, of course, because we are on their side—that they will be able to qualify.

Perhaps it is true that the insertion of the words “three years” is redundant but it is probably a good thing to give those who may think of themselves as having now a very good chance of benefiting under the Trust some indication of where they stand at the moment and what the qualifying period will be. It is a good idea, even if it is subsequently changed, to indicate to the world just what the present thinking of the Scartwater Station Trust is on this. I do not think there is any trouble indicated for the Trust by the inclusion of that three-year qualifying period for the time being.

I gather that in principle all hon. members are clearly in favour of the amendment.

Amendment (Mr. Fletcher) agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES— FIFTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor,
Clayfield, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1960-1961

THE TREASURER AND HOUSING
TREASURY

Debate resumed from 22 November (see p. 1659) on Mr. Hiley's motion—

“That £1,404,585 be granted for ‘The Treasurer and Housing—Treasury.’”

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing (11.47 a.m.): When the Committee adjourned yesterday, I had indicated that the great number and wide field of matters that had been raised prompted me to make a fuller reply today, when I had had an opportunity of making some of the calculations that were sought by some hon. members and of assembling some of the information that I thought would be of interest and assistance to them.

I am dealing with the matters in the order in which they were raised. The Leader of the Opposition raised the question of the delay on worker's dwellings. When I took over as Treasurer and Minister for Housing, there was a delay of 12 months. By working continuous overtime in the architectural section, we improved that to six months. I must confess that in recent months that has again worsened, and at the moment the delay is at least nine months. The reasons for that are varied. In the first place, we find that we are getting more applications than

we can finance. In other words, whereas previously we were able to keep our financial capacity in tolerable balance with the flow of applications, we are now being swamped with applications. Indeed, my prophecy is that next year, with the tightening of credit restrictions, what I now describe as a swamping could become a torrential flood. Because the capacity to service these applications is governed by the money we have available to finance worker's dwellings, there will inevitably be a stack-up because of a shortage of funds. But that is not the whole explanation. We find it exceedingly difficult in all sections of Government employment to command sufficient architectural staff. During my term as Minister, we have been to the Public Service Commissioner on at least two occasions urging a reclassification of our architectural staff in order to attract people who are prepared to embark upon a Public Service career in either the architectural division of the Department of Public Works or in the architectural section of the Housing Commission. There has been some improvement, but it will not have escaped the notice of hon. members that there has been a tremendous surge in commercial building—one of the factors to which reference was made in the Commonwealth Parliament last week—and that has undoubtedly brought about competition for the services of architects and has attracted men out of governmental employment in spite of the higher rates that we have been paying.

Mr. Hilton: It has been that way ever since the end of the war.

Mr. HILEY: It is worse now. Frankly, it worries me, and although I do not think we can chase the cost to an impossible level, one of the really good features of the workers' dwellings scheme is that it has provided people in the lower-income group with a cheap architectural service. It has always been my hope that we would be able to avoid increasing the charge that is made to customers of the Housing Commission for this service, but the cost of architectural services has risen to the point where we just had to increase the charge.

Mr. Duggan: Excuse my interruption, but I did not have time to say this before. Many big concerns like David Jones and Grace Brothers have a long list of standard plans. You have some, too. Would it be possible to have a greater number of these?

Mr. HILEY: I was going to deal with that. I take it that most hon. members will have seen this booklet, “House Plans,” published by the Queensland Housing Commission. I looked at the publication that was in use when I took over and I considered that it was out of date, that the plan types in that booklet were not in accordance with the type of plans the Commission was then preparing. It was not a cheap job to prepare the new booklet that was brought

out recently. Indeed, it was only by using the new plant in the Government Printing Office that they were able to turn the publication out in this lovely form. This booklet of plans is right up to the minute, it contains many really modern designs. It gives the customer a choice of 56 designs. In addition, any one of these designs can be reversed. Instead of reading a plan from left to right, the house can be constructed by reading the plan from right to left. By simply reversing the orientation of the house it is remarkable what a change in appearance can be made. Therefore, it could really be said that within the booklet there are 112 varied opportunities for home builders. In addition, the Commission has prepared and accumulated a vast quantity of plans for other works. The Commissioner's attitude to prospective customers is, "If you choose a standard plan, if you take one of the drawings we already have prepared, you will pay a very nominal charge for architectural services, and you will get a quick service generally." I am sorry to say that such is the perversity of human nature that people will take one of these plans and adopt it 95 per cent. Instead of its being merely a clerical job to record their plan, the matter has to go to the architectural section for the drawing up of varied plans to meet the customer's wishes. I hope that what I am saying will reach the ears not only of all hon. members but of the public widely. People who want to deal with the Queensland Housing Commission will do themselves and the Commission an infinite service if they will only find it possible to avoid these minor variations and choose one of the standard plans. It will help their pocket because the Commission will charge them less; it will save time because it overcomes all the delays of the architectural section. I think all will agree that the plans contained in this booklet represent an accumulation of splendid design effort. With such a variety in the style of construction, the extent to which special attention is given to ventilation, particularly for homes built in the hotter tropical region, the consideration that is given to the type of site on which the home is to be constructed, the size and number of rooms, it is hard to conceive that any person genuinely anxious to get a house could not be reasonably satisfied with the plans in the booklet or the other plans held by the Commission. But everyone wants something exclusive.

Mr. Hilton: If you had a thousand plans they would still want something different.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly. Young people buying a home have something of the same philosophy as the woman who is buying a hat. As long as it is different, she wants it. The one hat she will not buy is the hat that she thinks some other woman might be wearing. I will not say it is an illogical attitude, but it is just as unimpressive as that. The very fact that the Leader of the

Opposition has raised the matter will encourage members of Parliament to impress upon people that if they want speed from the Housing Commission they should select house plans from among the hundreds of splendid plans that have been accumulated by the Housing Commission over the years. I might say that I have sent for—and I hope they will be here before lunch—a set of black-and-white prints of a number of recent Housing Commission constructions that were taken to send overseas to show intending migrants the type of house being built here. If they are available I will circulate them round the Chamber. I think hon. members will agree they represent a really impressive record of the very attractive type of construction design that is beginning to flow from the Housing Commission.

The next matter the hon. gentleman raised was a plea for trees. I openly confess that I am 100 per cent. on his side. As a matter of fact, there is a minor war—I will not express it in any more severe terms—between the estate development section of the Housing Commission and me, because their idea is to put bulldozers in and flatten everything. I say to them, "Have you to take all the trees out?" They say "Look, every time we leave a tree, after we get houses built all around it some tenant will complain that it is dropping leaves in his spouting or that branches will blow off in a storm. They have young children and they are fearful." All I can say is that I think there is far too unreasoning an approach to the reasonable addition of trees. I do not want them to retain every tree on an estate—I do not want them to nestle houses in amongst timber to such an extent that they have to be squeezed in with a shoe-horn—but the average building block ranges in length from 110 to 132 feet and nothing will persuade me that there is not, in the rear portion of the average suburban yard, plenty of room to retain a few trees, perhaps along the dividing line between the blocks that front one street and those that front the street behind.

In the front of the blocks probably the better answer would be the planting of the lovely exotics that are becoming a marked feature of the Brisbane and Queensland landscape. I was heartened by the observations of the Leader of the Opposition, as they supported what has been one of my favourite grouches with the personnel of the Housing Commission. We will see if we cannot, between us, get somewhere. I think that trees are one of the elements of gracious living and I am bound to say that, probably due no doubt to the assistance of the motor-mower, it is a pleasure to go round some of our older housing estates and see the nice order in which the yards are kept.

Mr. Hanlon: In New Zealand they give tenants a small rebate of their rent for keeping their gardens in good order. It seems to work successfully over there.

Mr. HILEY: It is true that you get the odd chap who is content to have the grass seeds leering over the front fence, but a trip around the estates will show that they are a minority. The great majority of tenants today seem to be able to keep a nicely trimmed lawn. Indeed, particularly as one goes north the motor-mower has completely changed the pattern of many North Queensland towns. In the wet, lush season of the year it was quite common to find grass growing almost fence-high from the formed edges of the road to the gutter and from the gutter across the footpath and there was usually a narrow laneway cut by which entrance through this jungle was made to the front fence. Today you can go through Innisfail, Babinda, Cairns and other towns in the wet, tropical areas and you will find splendidly trimmed footpaths. In many cases the residents carry this grass strip, or "nature strip" as they call it, right out to the edge of the formed road. It has transfigured the whole pattern of some of these towns within my memory and, I repeat, I am entirely in agreement with the observations of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Hilton: Have you been able to save any trees on any estates to date?

Mr. HILEY: I have lost the battle so far but, believe me, one of these days I will win one. It is a very sore point with me. I think most hon. members know I am a tree-lover. I have even called my residence "Twelve Trees," and there are many more than twelve in the grounds. I get no greater joy than watching the effects of changing seasons on the flowering trees I have, and strolling around in the morning and seeing this bud bursting and that shrub starting to bloom. It is one of my greatest joys.

Mr. Duggan: The hon. member for Salisbury has told me that at Inala the Housing Commission has planted hibiscus plants in Azalea Street and azalea plants in Hibiscus Street.

Mr. Sherrington: They went a little astray.

Mr. HILEY: That may be so, but at least it is refreshing to know that in one or two instances the Housing Commission has done something on the side of tree-planting. I do not think the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition can be met by planting a few low shrubs. I think his point was that we should try to improve the landscape by giving some appearance of general shade effect with trees of a more majestic kind. That is my personal view. I am glad he has raised the point. I am entirely in agreement with him, and I shall see if I cannot have one win on this minor matter. I do not try to force my detailed views in these matters on the Commission. I do not hesitate to say what I think, but frankly my attitude in all these departments is that it is no use having an effective manager and not letting him manage.

Mr. Davies: This may give some inspiration to some councils in cities and towns.

Mr. HILEY: I hope so. I am all in favour of trees. They have a definite part in the Queensland landscape, and the comments of the Leader of the Opposition will stimulate me to fresh effort in this direction.

Before I leave the subject, the prints that I referred to earlier have now arrived, and I will circulate them. They are not only a beautiful example of the draftsman's art, but are also a very great tribute to the design work of the Commission and to the manner in which the tenants of these homes are looking after them. This bundle of photographs will give the complete and utter lie to any thought that the Housing Commission is turning out stereotyped, low-standard dwellings.

Many hon. members went out of their way to express pleasure at the standard of Housing Commission construction and design. I rang the Commissioner this morning and told him of the many such expressions from both sides of the Committee. He was delighted to know that what has been done brought forth the tributes that were paid in the course of yesterday's proceedings. I shall circulate the photographs as the debate proceeds.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the problem of inflation, particularly in relation to the announcement in the Federal Parliament last week when the Commonwealth Government evoked some measures designed to overcome the balance of payments problem by removing some of the pressure of buying demand in certain parts of Australia. This is not the time to discuss the matter fully, and I shall content myself with making some brief observations.

First of all, in my judgment the overall effect of the proposals will be adequate to solve the immediate problem to which they were directed, but in regard to some of the details of the proposals I am certain that before very long the need for varying them will become very marked. For example, the proposal to impose a tax restriction on the allowable amount of interest paid in the commercial sector—a proposal that in particular terms has been advanced by my Government—I am certain that the manner in which it is to be applied will have to be varied from the interim indication of the Federal Treasurer. I think the critical weakness in it is that it creates a new race of "haves" and "have-nots." A person who last year paid a quarter of a million pounds in interest, unless the interim measure is changed, commands for all time the right to a tax deduction, irrespective of the rate he paid, up to the amount he paid last year. A new business that starts off, or the business that happened to be in the low borrowing trough last year, is placed at a corresponding disadvantage. It is my view that in all these

economic restrictions it is wise to guard against the creation of what I term the "haves" and the "have-nots."

Some hon. members will remember an extraordinary position that arose under import restrictions. There was the case of an importer in Western Australia who had an import licence that he could not make use of personally. He imported goods into the port of Fremantle and then they were shipped across the continent for consumption in other parts of Australia that needed the goods but did not have an import licence. That is the sort of nonsense that arises; when attempting to correct these things we create the "haves" and the "have-nots."

My feeling on the subject of interest is that the proposal will create those people who have a large interest-reduction entitlement, and side by side with them will be quite a number of people in the community—and quite a lot of new businesses that start in the community—who will have no corresponding right. I cannot persuade myself that that is the wisest approach to this vexed problem.

The third thing I observe is that whatever might be said in justification for some rise in the interest rates, I cannot for the life of me see that that rise in interest rates can be prevented from spreading to the gilt-edge field, whether it is Commonwealth borrowing, local-authority borrowing, or any of the other semi-governmental borrowings. In a community where free competition prevails, we just cannot hold an effective differential rate level in two important sectors of credit in the State. One of the unfortunate consequences of lifting the rates of interest in certain sectors will be that it must flow into the other fields. However, it is too long a story to discuss this morning. I think hon. members will know that I have always set my face resolutely against any rise of interest in the gilt-edge rate simply for this, if no other reason, that is, that the minute we lift the gilt-edge rate, we correspondingly depreciate every existing gilt-edge security. If, for example, the gilt-edge rate were, by some mischance, to rise 1 per cent. for new offerings, every existing Commonwealth bond on sale at the moment round £100 would drop forthwith, according to its term, by many pounds per hundred, and the souring of the market for so many existing holders who have been loyal to Commonwealth bonds and have their portfolio value spoilt as a result of the market value drop, will, I think, take away support from the market to an extent at least equal to all the new support that may be attracted by the lifting of the rate. In other words, I regard the lifting of the gilt-edge rate as very much of a two-edged sword, and a very dangerous thing to play with. I am really concerned about it.

I am still more perplexed at a statement that was made this morning to the effect that there will be no increase in the rate of interest for housing co-operatives. It is

one thing to say that there will be no rise, but it is a very old and true maxim that you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink. It is true that we can specify that the rate of interest on housing co-operative loans is not to rise, but how do we persuade lenders to lend to the housing co-operatives if the rate of interest in their case is held below the market rate? My fear was that the rate of interest for housing co-operatives would rise; I did not like it, and I said so. Now that I am told it will not rise my fear is that the housing co-operatives will not get the money if their rate is held lower than that for the general average of the community.

The fourth comment I make touches directly on a point raised by the Leader of the Opposition. I think it was in this context that he principally presented it: "I cannot see anything in the present proposals that will contain rising prices." My fear is that higher interest rates could result in increased rents because interest is the biggest component in rents, and, by increasing rents and thus lifting the cost of living and wage levels in the community and in productive industries, it seems to me that they provide all the elements of a further rise in prices with further inflation of costs. My main concern over these present proposals is not that they may not restore the balance of payments overseas, not that they will not draw off some of the excessive purchasing power, which has shown out in one or two places in Australia—mainly Sydney and Melbourne—but that as yet they provide not the slightest element of the answer that is concerning everyone who realises that here is a national economy still largely dependent on those industries that produce goods to sell on world markets, and if costs in those industries rise beyond the breaking point it will be indeed perilous for Australia. Let us be realists about it. The costs of the small wool-grower—certainly in this State, and, I suspect, elsewhere in Australia today, even with good management—are so perilously close to what he is realising for the sale of his wool that he has no margin to absorb any further costs. The wheat-grower has reached the stage where to some extent his current return is, I think, being assisted by running down some of the favourable balances of the past. We have just had issued the report of the dairying industry, which shows that we already have quite a considerable percentage of what are described as marginal producers, and indeed with some of them the gap between their costs and their returns is so great that the department that has advised the Federal Government on this matter has expressed the opinion that it would be the wisest course for the nation to find some other use for those badly marginal areas and not to try to prop them up with subsidy to keep them going.

Mr. Harrison: Even forgetting the depressed ones, on the average the dairying industry still would have difficulty in exporting at a profit.

Mr. HILEY: In Queensland particularly. We are not as happily placed as some of the southern States in the more temperate areas where they have a longer period of lush productive pasture.

Mr. Harrison: Even taking the average, they do not make a profit on exports.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly.

Mr. Davies: You have given the Commonwealth Government one of the worst headaches it has had for a while, too, in that report.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly. The whole problem comes from rising costs. The Leader of the Opposition said that this was a matter so important to Australia that it was not one to be made a political football of; it was not something to be advanced by one political party in Australia and rebuffed by another. In the spirit in which he presented it, I reply, and I do not think he will feel that what I say this morning has any marked variation from the trend of thought I have been expressing for some time past. I am deeply and seriously concerned about the continued rise in costs in Australia and I believe that we already have some of our industries tottering on the brink of "profitability". If the trend continues, more and more of them will be there, and when that happens every Australian will find it is a real problem to face up to. I would have hoped that the proposals that are now under discussion would not have contented themselves with merely trying to restore our solvency overseas or to drain off some of this excessive purchasing power, but that there would have been a really positive approach to the problem of stabilising costs in Australia. If we do not do it before very long, every Government and every person in Australia will regret it.

Mr. Hilton: What about our increasing imports?

Mr. HILEY: I feel sure that the steps proposed on that will be adequate for the purpose.

The hon. member for Townsville South raised the matter of comparative costs. While we know now that when he says "1,000,000" he really means 1,000 and when he says "1,000" he means 100, in view of the fact that he said what he did, it will be interesting to present the figures about which he paid me the quite unwarranted tribute of saying that I could work them out in my head. They were compound interest over 30 years and all I can say is that he really flattered me when he made that suggestion. I have had it worked out bearing in mind that not only was there compound interest but also that in one case the interest rests were quarterly and in another case they were monthly. How the hon. member expected anyone to pluck those figures out of the air, I do not know.

Mr. Duggan: It is a wonder he did not offer to do it himself.

Mr. HILEY: He did it, and he said it would cost £1,000 more. Here are the figures: if a housing loan of £3,000 repayable over 30 years is borrowed from the Housing Commission, interest and debt service charges will total an additional £2,985; if the same amount is borrowed for the same term from a co-operative society that obtains its funds from the home builders' account, the cost is also £2,985—nothing extra; if it is borrowed from a co-operative Society that lends funds that are guaranteed by the Government, the cost is £3,303, or £318 extra. While I am not suggesting that that is something that would not concern any borrower, I do not think any hon. member would regard £318 spread over 30 years in the calamitous way that was advanced in a loose fashion by the hon. member for Townsville South.

In addition to that, there is a further factor that I cannot measure precisely but that deserves mention. The co-operative terminating societies fix a margin of interest over the cost of their money to cover their management expenses, and they do not fix it narrowly. If they set up a society on a 28-year term, they do not want to finish at the end of 28 years short of sufficient money to repay what they have borrowed. Indeed their practice has been to fix the rate of repayment at a slightly higher figure. They know of the experience of similar societies in the South. Although they start off with a 28-year terminating society, many of them fold up in 26½ years. In other words, the rate of repayment paid in by the purchaser is greater than is needed to pay the interest-charge debt to the borrowing source and the expenses of management. I say quite plainly that if they are run efficiently a reduction in management expenses would result in a rebate to the borrower, thus reducing the overall cost of borrowing £3,000 below the top figure of £3,303 that I mentioned.

Hon. members might think I have devoted too much time to explaining that, but this co-operative housing society movement is something that has been quite close to my interest, and I am not going to pretend anything for it that is not warranted. At the same time, I do not want to see it damned by loose observations of the type that came from the hon. member for Townsville South, in which he suggested it would cost £1,000 more than if a person borrowed from the Housing Commission. At the very worst it would be £3,303, and in many cases, as I said, because of good management, it would be a good deal less than that.

The hon. member also raised the subject of the Townsville Harbour Board and spoil. Let us get our thinking clear. The Government, it is true, does set up the legislative machinery under which harbour boards are established. But the harbour boards are not puppets of the Government to be ordered and directed how they should conduct the affairs of their port. In fact, if the Government attempted to give detailed directions to

harbour boards, we would not get decent men to serve on them. They would say, "If we are just to be a rubber stamp for the Government, you run the whole show; we won't be in it." In the case of local authorities, we have adopted as a principle the practice that was closely followed by our predecessors in office, that is, that local government is a separate limb of government that should be encouraged to the maximum to make its own decisions, even though sometimes it makes its own mistakes. We take precisely that view with harbour boards, but we have not hesitated to make our opinion clear to the Townsville Harbour Board, for example. We have told them that in our judgment what they are doing is unwise in the interests of their own port and their own area. We have told them that from the point of view of their own selfish interests they should use the spoil for reclamation. Even if reclamation does cost them a little more at the moment their successors will rise up and call them blessed because "here was a harbour board with enough sense, imagination and foresight, instead of dumping valuable spoil into the area, to carry out valuable reclamation work with it." So far all our advice has fallen on deaf ears. Each time the matter is raised I repeat clearly what our attitude is. I do not propose to suggest to the Government that we should take legislative power to direct the Townsville Harbour Board, or any other board. All I can say is that constant dripping wears away even the hardest stone, and with the constant representations of local people and local members, and our repeated advice to the board, some day we will smile at one another and say, "It has taken a long, long time, but thank goodness the right thing is now being done." That sets out the Government's view.

Mr. Duggan: If there is such unanimity, don't you think you would be entitled to direct them to some extent?

Mr. HILEY: I think that the taking of the power of direction can be dangerous. I would not say that the situation could not arise where it may be necessary to come to Parliament and seek that power of direction. But strong and all as my views are on the matter, I would not consider that it warrants coming to Parliament and saying, "We want power to direct a harbour board." I have tried as carefully as I can to weigh my words this morning. They will be read, all right! I think the effect of what I have said in reply to observations that have come from both sides of the Chamber on this matter will slowly convince these people that this is a situation that just cannot be left as it is. It is not only killing the coral, and to that extent removing the natural harbourage for reef fish, but is also actually spoiling the beaches. That is the considered opinion of my departmental officers. I have been told that because of some vagary of ocean currents spoil comes from the Burdekin River. However, my officers do not accept that. They say that

quite clearly it is a local problem that is the result of the deposit of local spoil. We will keep at them.

An Opposition Member: Why are they so obstinate?

Mr. HILEY: I do not know.

Mr. Tucker: Don't you think that the preponderance of members from the hinterland as opposed to those from Townsville is the one thing that really stops this being brought in?

Mr. HILEY: That might be an explanation, but I think you would need to go to some of the administrative officers. It is the old, old story. Boards may lay down a policy, but if you get strong-minded men on the administrative side you need a strong-minded and determined board to override them. There have been one or two changes lately, and I shall be very interested to see, among the other consequences that flow from that change, whether there might be a changed attitude towards this matter.

Mr. Bennett: What about Mr. Tomlin's attitude? Does he agree with the board's decision?

Mr. HILEY: I have never asked him straight out, but he is a Government representative on the board. I am not going to conceal from the Committee that the appointment of Government representatives will come up again about the middle of next year. It is my intention to discover the views of the Government representatives before I ask my Cabinet colleagues to decide who the Government representatives shall be next year. That is something that is within our power and if, as I suspect, there is a little bit of resistance there as well, it will be either resolved or overcome.

Mr. Tucker: The feeling in Townsville is very much against this business. After I raised it with you the last time I got many telephone calls from old residents who have watched this devastation slowly take place.

Mr. HILEY: I have no doubt about it. One old chap took me up the Pallarenda Road and showed me where he used to catch fish so many yards off the road. He said, "Mr. Hiley, you can go there now and you will get nothing because of the mud." I sympathise with them, and I hope that before very long we will succeed in getting it the soft way rather than the hard way.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition complained of a reduction in the total number of houses built by the Housing Commission. Let us be quite clear about this. The Commission could build more houses by building fewer schools, hospitals, and dams, and carrying out fewer improvements to the railways, and so on. We have never concealed our policy. The answer to the housing shortage is not that the Commission should build a few more homes. The real answer is that the total number of houses constructed must be lifted not by a few but by many.

The figures show that we have been abundantly successful in that policy. I repeat a figure that I have given before, that is, that our assessment of the present annual new needs is 8,000 in all. In 1957-1958 we almost accomplished that with 7,716; in 1958-1959 we shot above the 8,000 by building 8,900 in all; in 1959-1960 we improved to 9,972.

Mr. Hanlon: A lot of those were built for people who already had a home, say, in Brisbane, and built another one at the coast.

Mr. HILEY: I thought the hon. member would say that. If he followed answers I have given to questions in assessing the need of 8,000 homes, he would know that we have taken out careful figures of where the homes are built, and we allowed 750 for holiday homes and 250 for replacing existing homes destroyed by fire or demolition. I can assure him that this point has been very carefully examined, and in fixing the figure of 8,000 homes, if we had not allowed for holiday homes and for fire and demolition, we would have needed only 7,000.

Mr. Hanlon: Yet last year the Government were able to build homes for only about 400.

Mr. HILEY: That is, the Commission?

Mr. Hanlon: What is the total lag this year?

Mr. HILEY: The pressure is off, so far as the Housing Commission is concerned.

An Opposition Member: It is off your department; it is not off local members of Parliament.

Mr. HILEY: Many people who have homes want to build bigger homes, or they want cheaper homes. Quite frankly, I tell hon. members that the Housing Commission is not, never has been, and never will be, in a position to satisfy all those demands.

Mr. Hanlon: Private enterprise will not build for those people. The Commission are the only people who will provide houses for them.

Mr. HILEY: If the purpose of your argument is that we should stop building the other things I mentioned—well, the money has to come from somewhere.

Mr. Lloyd: Don't you think you should satisfy the people requiring a home for rental, rather than those people who already have a home or who can provide the money to purchase one?

Mr. HILEY: Our portfolio of houses for rental is ever-growing; it is not shrinking. It is getting larger every year. In re-lets alone we have several hundred houses to be re-let because the existing tenant has vacated, and in addition we have new homes.

It is not necessary to go on constructing at the same rate to have a fresh letting rate for each year. I say quite plainly that all these difficult cases come under my notice and I defy anyone to produce any number of tenants whom we could possibly consider as not having a roof over their heads. When I came into the office there was a number of such cases that could not be met but we have gone long past that, and today, if a person comes in with a really distressing case he is fixed up almost immediately. As I say, I defy any hon. member to present a case of a person who has not a roof over his head. Only a few years ago we could see in the newspapers pictures of persons who had been evicted and were sitting on the roadside with furniture all around them. I defy any hon. member to cite such a case in the last couple of years. On all the evidence available to the Commission, having regard to the correspondence that flows across my table, there has been a very marked improvement. I know that any number of people pay more rent than is comfortable. Often that is because they have taken on so many other commitments, not placing a home, as I contend wise people should, ahead of the other things on which money can be spent today.

Mr. Newton: You spoke of people having a roof over their head. Would you class people living in a fowl house as having a roof over their head?

Mr. HILEY: I would regard that as a top priority job and we should look after them.

Mr. Thackeray: What about a home where all the children have contracted lead poisoning?

Mr. HILEY: I would not condemn the home on that basis. The home could be sanded down to the timber and repainted with a lead-free paint. It should not be condemned merely because it was painted with lead paint.

Mr. Thackeray: Even an old home erected 70 years ago?

Mr. HILEY: That would be condemned, I take it, because it was no longer habitable, because of its physical deterioration. The condemning of a home by a local authority is accepted without question as the equivalent of an eviction order. If the residents produce a notice from the local authority that their home has been condemned, they are given that priority.

Mr. Aikens: You cannot give them a home if you have not got one to give them, as is the case in Townsville.

Mr. HILEY: Even in Townsville homes are provided in a reasonable time.

Mr. Lloyd: What is the basis of your statement that the demand is 7,500 homes, or 7,000 without holiday homes?

Mr. HILEY: Seven thousand. It is 8,000 in total. Of that 8,000 we allow 750 for

new holiday home construction and 250 for the replacing of homes destroyed by fire or as a result of demolition orders.

Mr. Lloyd: It would be interesting to know on what basis that is established, because at least 8,000 young couples under 30 years of age are being married each year.

Mr. HILEY: What happens to the homes of people who die? They are not left vacant. All such information has been carefully taken out. And in regard to marriages, the first marriages have to be allowed for in the computation on a different basis from second marriages.

Mr. Lloyd: That is my computation—under 30 years.

Mr. HILEY: That was very carefully studied. The hon. gentleman asked me a serious question about it and I thought I had answered him fully. If there is any aspect that is still worrying him, I shall give him the necessary information if he submits a question.

As I mentioned some minutes ago, there was a variation in the computation of need by the Federal authorities and the State. I arranged with the Commonwealth Statistician to send along a man who was charged with the responsibility of measuring this housing lag. He had long and solid discussions with our officers and finally unanimity was reached. It is not a matter I can personally measure, but I saw the result of all those discussions and I was convinced, as a quick reaction to the whole measure, that it was sound. The tendency is to count the number of marriages and assess the need for houses on that basis, but other factors have to be considered. Take the case of a widow with a home who marries a man who has never been married before, or the case of a widower with a home who marries a woman who has never been married before, or the case of a widower with a home who marries a widow with a home from her previous marriage. The result in the latter instance is that there is a spare home.

Mr. Lloyd: That is why I took only people under 30 years.

Mr. HILEY: Second marriages occur even among people under 30 years.

Mr. Hanlon: How long will that figure of 7,500 last?

Mr. HILEY: 7,000.

Mr. Hanlon: Or 7,000?

Mr. HILEY: The 8,000 is gross. That will last until about 1963-1964. We then run into that bulge in requirements that I indicated, which is the result of the lift in the birth rate when the service men came back after World War II. That has already produced the bulge, in the early stage, and that in turn will produce a further bulge, by the expected new marriages, and new home requirements in the 1960's.

Mr. Hanlon: You still have this big lag of 6,000 to 8,000. How are you going to cope with that in 1964 and 1965,

Mr. HILEY: We do not think the lag will be anything like that.

Mr. Hanlon: You already have 6,000 rental applications. There are thousands of others who do not put in an application because they know it is hopeless to do so. Then there is the lag in workers' dwellings and everything else.

Mr. HILEY: If I could wave a magic wand and produce 6,000 homes tomorrow, not all of them would be occupied. Many of the 6,000 are already in a home.

Mr. Hanlon: They are overcrowded; they are sharing homes.

Mr. HILEY: Perhaps they are in a home that is too small. If we build a larger home for them they occupy it and immediately vacate the smaller one and thus they make room for a couple who have been living in a room. I can assure the hon. member that of the 6,000 only a small percentage would need homes. When we deal with those at the top a chain reaction sets in. The various State requirements would not need anything like 6,000 homes to meet them. I remind the hon. member that last year our rate of building exceeded our measure of demand by no fewer than 1,972 houses. It is my view that if we have another year like that we will have solved the worst of the problem.

Mr. Hanlon: You have made hardly any appreciable impression on your lag in the Housing Commission.

Mr. HILEY: That is what the hon. member thinks, but on the contrary, we achieved a very signal success last year in reducing the pressure. We do not take the trouble to write to these people; their applications are in the department. Very often when we offer them homes, they say they do not want them that they are already fixed up. They just allow the applications to lie there. I repeat that if by some happy chance somebody could drop a couple of thousand homes into my hands tomorrow, we would be scratching to fill them.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. HILEY: If we built them for rental, £1,000,000 would build only 300 houses.

Mr. Hanlon: If you had something like another Golden Casket, giving you £1,500,000 a year you would soon catch up with it.

Mr. Hughes: The building figures from the Brisbane City Council for new buildings and flats support your views.

Mr. HILEY: I have given the figures for the overall position, not Brisbane alone.

Mr. Newton: The point is what is the demand, irrespective of who the builder is.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HILEY: That is right, and whatever part of Queensland it comes from. I had better not be tempted to take up too much time on this subject otherwise I shall be accused of "burning" up the time of the Committee.

The hon. member for Windsor raised the subject of standardised building, and its effect on costs. This subject was raised some 18 months ago by Mr. Heading when he was Minister for Public Works and Local Government. A committee of architects was set up with liaison established with similar bodies in other States. The present Minister for Public Works and Local Government is now reading the report which, he tells me, contains 150 pages. The Committee suggested a standard code of building construction to apply to all phases of building. The hope behind that idea is, that if such a code could be evolved, it would replace the need for local authorities to lay down the varying codes, which occasion them considerable difficulty and great expense. It would simplify the work of specification and design. Instead of an architect having to run to a particular council and ask, "What is your particular requirement?" there would be the set standard code for building construction. It would have the further helpful effect on costs that it would allow, for example, the sawmilling industry to turn out standard sizes because they would know that everyone would accept them. It would allow the manufacturers of building materials to make hardboard and sashes and so on to standard sizes because they would know they would be accepted without question and that they would conform with the building requirements of every local authority in the State.

Inevitably the adoption of such a code will involve some compromise on standards and unless there is a preparedness to reach compromise, probably the only way to satisfy everyone would be to go to the greatest common denominator. Instead of helping to reduce costs, that would actually add to them. Take, for example, ceiling heights, on which I see that my friends at Murgon had something to say in the paper the other day. They are wedded to the idea of retaining the 10-foot ceiling.

Mr. Aikens: What is wrong with it? There is nothing nicer than an 11-foot or 12-foot ceiling.

Mr. HILEY: As long as the hon. member is not paying for it. The whole trend of building design accepted everywhere today is that the opinion that high ceilings provide better ventilation for a room is wrong. One has only to read the books on the subject to find that it is the cross-current that gives the best ventilation, with the avoidance of trapped pockets of air.

Mr. Aikens: You live in a dog-kennel type of house and then live in a house with an 11-foot or 12-foot ceiling and note the difference. I have lived in both.

Mr. HILEY: My home is 80 years old. It has ceilings 11 feet high and I sweat just as hard there on a hot night as anyone else does.

The matter of a standard building code is well in our minds. We think that advantages will flow from it. The Minister for Public Works and Local Government tells me, with a somewhat twisted grin, that there are 150 pages in the report referred to and that so far he has read the first 15. It will be a colossal job to go through it, but I am not unhopeful that something will flow from it. I suspect that one of the ancillary benefits will be that it will help reduce building construction costs by encouraging the manufacturers of building materials to produce greater runs of standard components. Anyone who has had any experience of manufacturing knows that that is the way to reduce costs.

Mr. Hughes: Will this be tackled on somewhat the same lines as the standard building regulations in Victoria?

Mr. HILEY: I cannot say. The hon. member should ask the Minister for Public Works and Local Government. When he has finished reading the report, no doubt he will be able to say. I have not seen it yet.

The next matter raised by several hon. members concerned speed boats. Here the Marine Board say they are dealing with a really mushrooming problem. Their assessment is that the problem of wash is a relatively minor one. With a modern hull designed to plane, the faster it goes the less the ripple. Indeed, I think those hon. members who have seen the boats on the water will agree with me that, when you get a speed hull travelling at high speed towing water skiers, there is more wash from the girls riding on the water skis than there is from the hull. In other words, the hull is designed in such a way that, as it drives, it settles down on a flat shoe and its motion across the water is very much like that of a flat iron when mother is ironing the shirts. It just sits down and slides across the top of the water.

Mr. Thackeray: A planing hull.

Mr. HILEY: Yes, whereas I have seen quite a considerable wash coming from the skis of a water skier when the weight of the skier is concentrated on the narrow area represented by the skis.

However, that is not the only problem. Noise in residential areas is a problem, too. I have read some very savage letters indeed from residents along confined watercourses who complain that their Sabbath afternoon rest is disturbed by these noisy wretches shooting up and down past their property.

Then, of course, there is the problem of navigational disturbance to which several hon. members referred. If these speedboats are going to over-indulge in a form of maritime bodgieism, trying to see whether they can drive a speedboat flat out and pass within

3 feet of a moored vessel, they will earn the retribution that they will certainly receive. There is no sense in that sort of nonsense, and there is no justification for it. The matter is being examined very closely by the Marine Board at present, and the idea is that we might direct some passing clearance by providing that no speedboat shall pass at speed within, say, 100 feet of another vessel. If it wants to pass another vessel, it must drop its speed and go past in a more temperate fashion, or else keep its distance. Only recently we had to ask the water police to go to Victoria Point to deal with a party of young hoodlums.

Mr. Houghton: They probably came down to Redcliffe after that.

Mr. HILEY: Quite likely. There was a whiting bank off Victoria Point that was being used by fishermen, and the speedboat fans decided they would hunt them away because they wanted to use that stretch of water. They proceeded to run boat after boat straight past the boats in which people were fishing, and the inevitable happened. A middle-aged woman of quite considerable avoirdupois stood up in the back of the boat to cast her line—some people cannot cast a line unless they stand up; they cannot sit in the boat and cast—and as she was standing a boat shot past and she was thrown into the “drink”. There is no excuse for that sort of conduct and we had to get the water police to stop it.

The Marine Board is considering this problem at every meeting, and having in mind the safety factor, it was decided recently to send the shipping inspector to an interstate conference. A number of these speedboat hulls have been designed with no air tanks in them, and the hulls have no indication on them of the engine capacity for which they are designed. We have had cases where such a high-powered engine has been put on the stern of one of these boats that when they have “given it the gun” the stern has been pushed out. It was never designed to take the pressure exerted by an engine like that. I have seen several of these vessels fitted with really powerful outboards, and their acceleration is so violent and the power they deliver is so terrific that when they are “gunned” from a standing start the vessel almost runs in under itself. The power of the engine throws the boat right up into the air before the hull settles down to its planing position. The view is that it would be wise to prescribe that on each of these hulls an indication should be given of the horsepower that can safely be used on it.

Mr. Aikens: Are you going to compel them to hold a driver's licence, just as they must have a driver's licence for a motorcar?

Mr. HILEY: That was the next matter I was going to deal with. How are we to enforce it in relation to navigation? As the hon. member for Sherwood pointed out yesterday, all one knows is that some wretch in a boat with a white hull and a flash of

red across the bows shoots across the bow of one's boat in a cloud of spray. He does not stop to say who he is or where he is going; he just shoots past. There are no means of judging the speed. All one knows is that he is going too fast and that he has come too close. The water is not the same as a road. There is no conduit road where a police trap can be set and a rich harvest of speedsters caught. My personal view is that it might be desirable to provide for the registration of all these hulls with a visible number on the bow. They could have a board running fore and aft on each side with the number on it so one could see it.

Mr. Aikens: It would have to be a big number, because you could not see a small number as they flashed by.

Mr. HILEY: Six-inch letters would do.

Mr. Houston: You would need one on the stern, too.

Mr. Herbert: You can't see the stern.

An Opposition Member: Luminous paint.

Mr. HILEY: It might be all right at night-time but I cannot see how luminous paint would help in the sun. But quite frankly, this is mushrooming at such a pace that we will have to do something about it. It is not the Government's desire to over-interfere with what is probably one of the healthiest and cleanest sports developed in the last decade. It has been my pleasure to watch many of the functions where speedboating and water-skiing has taken place. I spent one of the loveliest days in my life watching the function on the Nerang River attended by the Miss Australia contestants. We sat in a restful area on the pleasant banks of the river watching a show for over three hours that was really entrancing. Some people from overseas told me that it was one of the most magnificent shows, conducted in a lovely atmosphere, that they had seen anywhere in the world. It would be a great pity to interfere with the conduct of that sort of entertainment. They offer healthy, outdoor entertainment, and we cannot have too much of that in Australia. But we must find some practicable way of stopping the odd delinquent, the maritime bodgie, who fouls the nest for all the decent, sensible people who make desirable use of that extraordinary development that has taken place with the fibre-glass hull and the high-powered outboard.

Mr. Aikens: Numbers on each side of the boat would not interfere with decent people.

Mr. HILEY: The spray might cloud the numbers. That is my personal view, and we shall see what the Marine Board has to report.

The hon. member for Windsor raised the matter of the nominal defendant, for which he has been a most persistent advocate. It is not as simple as it would appear. Soon

after I came into office I took pains to ascertain what was the experience in Victoria, and I found that it was a combination of encouragement and warning. A nominal defendant is sued in a fair percentage of all claims, some of which, to say the least, are somewhat doubtful. But one of the results is that the premiums charged in Victoria are very much higher than those in Queensland. It would add to the insurance cost of the average motorist. It is our desire to devise a method that would meet the problem, and at the same time give better protection, but there could never be complete protection against the fraudulent claim.

Mr. Aikens: Are not the higher premiums brought about by jury verdicts instead of judges' awards for damages?

Mr. HILEY: That is one of the elements, but there is more than that to it.

Mr. Bennett: How do the premiums compare in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland?

Mr. HILEY: We have the lowest premiums. New South Wales and Victoria have had to increase their premiums recently. Their experience of losses is now under consideration by our Insurance Commissioner. I would say that increases in Queensland's rates are inevitable, but I am still very hopeful that we shall continue to have premiums below those charged in New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr. Hanlon: Have you gone any further with the idea of "no-claim" bonuses on third-party policies?

Mr. HILEY: I have tried to work that one out. It is a very complex matter. All I can say is that the economics of "no-claim" bonuses on third-party policies are just impossible. I should like to find that answer. That really makes the punishment fit the crime. I should like to find a practicable way of doing it. I was so keen about it that I rather harassed my people by my persistence. But the more I went into it, the more I had to agree that there was no practical answer to it.

Mr. Aikens: How have they got over the problem of proving that an injured person was in fact hit by a car and not injured in some other way?

Mr. HILEY: That is a glorious question mark in Victoria. As a matter of fact, they have discovered one or two cases of misrepresentation. I did not intend to spend time on this matter, but it has been brought up. One case was that of a man on a step-ladder painting his kitchen ceiling. He fell off the ladder and across the kitchen table, breaking his leg. A family consultation was held and they carried him onto the road at night-time and he was discovered there. He testified

that he was knocked down by a car. It was only later they found out the truth. That is the sort of thing that happens.

A classic example is that of a bunch of young people on a country road driving like fury; they cannot take a bend, and over they go. The passengers, of course, are covered but the driver of the car is not unless he can establish that his accident was caused by the driver of another vehicle. In Victoria there have been proven cases of the whole bunch testifying that the car was forced off the road by the blinding headlights of an approaching car. Those are the things that really worry them.

We believe we have an answer to it. I also inform the Committee that the problem is much deeper than that of the hit-run driver. In the course of examining this subject I found that even with people who have been insured and who get their notice for renewal from the Main Roads Commission several weeks in advance of the renewal date, on the actual date 25 per cent. of renewals are not made. By the end of a month after the due date that number has dwindled to a small residue but it means technically that 25 per cent. of all renewals on the first day of the renewal period are, in fact, not made so that they are unregistered, and consequently have not renewed compulsory third-party insurance.

We have devised a means of overcoming that problem. We have talked to the insurance companies and they are going to concede automatic cover for that month in order to ensure that that number of insured drivers will be eliminated. In addition, of course, you get the small residue of people who are clearly unregistered. They take out an unregistered vehicle that has been under the house for a couple of years, and they take a chance.

Mr. Aikens: And they often have no driving licence.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly. So you have the two categories: those who delay registration and those who drive totally unregistered vehicles. We will be bringing down a Bill in the March session that will go as far as is humanly possible towards bringing those two categories into line. When that occurs I will again be able to look the hon. member for Windsor in the eye. He has been hammering and hammering at me; I have paraded all these difficulties but he has come back with counter arguments. He has helped me in my consideration of the matter. I believe we will present to the Committee an answer to those problems in the March session.

The hon. member for Barooka described housing as a long-term community failure. There is no doubt that in the 14 or 15 years since the close of World War II. the Australian community has failed to overcome totally the housing lag. I ask the Committee to observe that during the period when the Australian community has failed to overtake

the housing lag it has embarked on record and almost fantastic expenditure on consumer durables such as cars, radios, television sets, refrigerators, washing machines, air-conditioning equipment, motor-mowers and speedboats. I do not accept that they did so because of a deficiency in choice. There is not a deficiency in capacity; indeed, if the Australian nation had been prepared to be a little less demanding in that very expensive field of consumer durables to which I referred, there is not the faintest doubt in my mind that we would have had no housing shortage.

It seems to me that it is a problem more of social outlook than necessarily of Government direction and organisation. Whether it arises through something in our educational system or the changing sense of values of the nation, we have got away from the days when the average Australian citizen sought to provide a home, the days when the first consideration in family budgeting and planning was a home.

Where the answer lies, I must confess I do not know. It has never been my view that, in a community with an advancing standard of living, we should complain about the fact that more and more people are able to enjoy all the things to which I referred. My only regret is that so many people are prepared to reach out and take so many of those things at the expense of something else within their capacity, that is, a home. I have often expressed the view, and I repeat it now, that it may be well worth while in the last year of primary school to have even four periods set aside for a little specialised study—call it household economics, family budgeting, or whatever you choose—to teach those youngsters who are about to finish at primary school and go out into the world of employment how to plan and to manage the income they will shortly be receiving.

Mr. Davies: Do you think the position has worsened over the last few decades?

Mr. HILEY: In what regard?

Mr. Davies: Fewer people desirous of owning their own homes?

Mr. HILEY: They desire it; but they desire to go to the absolute limit, and beyond the limit, in buying cars, radios, television sets, refrigerators, washing machines, air-conditioning equipment, motor-boats, and speed-boats. They indulge that desire and allow their desire for a home to be suppressed by over-indulgence in those directions. That is the social problem as I see it.

Mr. Davies: What about the percentage of people owning their own homes? Is that not gradually rising?

Mr. HILEY: It has over the last three years. If the hon. member studies the report of the Commissioner for Housing he will find that whereas a few years ago there was a regrettable increase in the swing-over to

rental homes, over the last three or four years the swing has been the other way, that is, away from rental homes to home-ownership.

Mr. Davies: Queensland did have a big percentage.

Mr. HILEY: Queensland had the record Australian percentage, and I think the record world percentage, of home-ownership.

Mr. Davies: I think you said that in a previous debate.

Mr. HILEY: Yes, and it always grieved me to think that what I regarded as one of the most wholesome features of Queensland's social life weakened a bit under the lure and attraction of those things that I mentioned, all of which in themselves are desirable and not objectionable. On a sense of priorities, within a sensibly conducted home, a person should put a home first and then put second the things that go into the home to enliven and enrich life within it.

Mr. Hanlon: If the 6,000 applicants for rental homes put down their £250 deposit tomorrow, you could not do a thing about it.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly. That is quite right.

Mr. Hanlon: Don't you think a contributing factor is that they now more or less despair of getting a home and have said, "We will spend our money on other things?" I do not say that is the reason entirely, of course.

Mr. HILEY: I agree that would be a factor. The worst factor is that there are too many diversionary ways in which people with a very considerable income, or quite a sufficient income, who could easily face up to buying a home, get into heavy debt instead with the hire-purchase companies for these consumer durables rather than seeking to get into debt with a house-purchasing society, whatever its nature, whether it is the Housing Commission or somebody else.

Dr. Delamothe: Do you think it could be the result of the salesmanship in the other field?

Mr. HILEY: That is the point I made when I spoke on this matter some 12 months ago. Quite rightly there is not the terrific profit margin attached to housing that there is to other fields, and consequently there has never been the measure of radio, television and Press advertising for homes that there has been in the other fields. I believe that the craving for a home has to come from the educational side rather than by extensive advertising, which is costly.

Mr. Davies: A few years ago you said you were going to do more for the schemes affecting the State Government.

Mr. HILEY: If we advertise by the conventional methods, it has to be paid for. If I budgeted for £10,000 for advertising, that is the cost of four homes. Personally, I have been reluctant to spend in diversionary and

ancillary ways what I regard as precious money for housing. I should love to be in a position to do it, but while I am sufficiently conscious of the lag, and of the fact that we cannot meet everyone's requirements, for every pound I have I want to see some results in home-building until we catch up with the lag.

In relation to the suggested school saving scheme to encourage a start in the schools on a long-range home-ownership plan, the money received by the Housing Commission has been a sad disappointment to us. Many start, but very few finish. A young couple come in with the gleam of love glowing in their eyes and they start with the best intentions in the world. He is paying in and she is paying in; they get to £100 and look at one another and say, "This will be a deposit on a 'jalopy'." They buy a "jalopy" and that is the end of their savings. All their future savings are used up in meeting the instalments on the "jalopy" and the dream of a home goes in the competition with the momentary attraction of some such thing.

Mr. Hanlon: If you had something like an insurance policy where the paid-up value is not so good for five years, it might be a solution.

Mr. HILEY: There might be an advantage to be gained from that. When that scheme was introduced by the previous Labour Government one of its essential features was that it was a completely voluntary scheme and the depositor was free to withdraw the money at any time. I must confess that so far I have not allowed my personal disappointments about what has taken place to lead me to feel that the right answer is to bring in some factor of compellability. All I can say is that unless I can find something better, it may be well worth while examining.

Mr. Hanlon: I have found that many of them do not even realise there is such a scheme.

Mr. HILEY: That is so. The big disappointment is that many start to use it, but only a few finish it. As soon as most of them get a little money together, it literally burns a hole in their hand and they proceed to buy something that "glues" them up.

The hon. member for Port Curtis gave us one of his usual talks on the problem of Central Queensland ports as he sees it. We do not as a Government share his lack of faith in Central Queensland development or in the viability of either of the Central Queensland ports. I want to say to him in all soberness that every speech he makes frightens industry away from Gladstone and makes it harder for the harbour board to raise money to develop the port and add to its activity. If he would really ponder the harm that he is doing the very cause he is claiming to serve, he would be more temperate and, on most occasions, more silent. I know that he unfortunately has

a complex on the matter. He is burnt up with hatred towards what he regards as the spectre of Port Alma. Experience in the Chamber is that any hon. member who allows himself to become burnt up with hatred not only does a disservice to the cause he is espousing but sooner or later does himself personal harm.

Mr. Burrows: Your Government are just as bitter towards Gladstone as anybody could possibly be.

Mr. HILEY: Just try telling the Gladstone Harbour Board that! They know that this year, for example, there have been two emergent opportunities for development that were not on their works programme and for which no allocation had been made. The minute they were brought to our notice, what happened?

Mr. Burrows: And would any self-respecting Government dare to refuse an opportunity to build roads when they pay their way?

Mr. HILEY: The whole point is that we have faith in Gladstone but the hon. member for Port Curtis has none. We have no hatred for Central Queensland or for any port in Central Queensland but he is burnt up with hatred.

Mr. Burrows: You expect the Gladstone Harbour Board to pay big interest and redemption sums and compete with another board that does not pay any.

Mr. HILEY: That is not right.

Mr. Burrows: That is right, and that has been the position. Why don't you admit that they put up the tariff on the harbour board's dues on meat in Rockhampton?

Mr. HILEY: The hon. member does not know. That shows how foolish he is. Quite clearly he is all burnt up, for example, with this stupid notion that it is a present to Vesteys. They will pay extra harbour dues in Central Queensland; of course they will! But because of the stupid, mad competition between those two adjoining ports and because of the interport hatred, the harbour dues that are charged by both those port authorities are below the standard of the ports along the coast of Queensland. It is stupid and it is mad.

Mr. Aikens: Cut-throat competition!

Mr. HILEY: It is the product of a silly cut-throat competition engendered by the sort of hatred that we saw demonstrated yesterday.

Mr. Burrows: Why is it that Gladstone charges only 6s. on petrol and they could charge 15s., because no other port handles it? As it is economical to charge 6s. they do it to give the benefit to the primary producer or the consumer.

Mr. HILEY: One of the consequences today is that every consumer of petrol from Rockhampton west pays 2d. a gallon extra. Think that one out.

Mr. Burrows: Where from?

Mr. HILEY: Because it is cleared through the port of Gladstone.

Mr. Burrows: How much would they pay if they cleared it through Port Alma? The people of Toowoomba pay more than the people of Brisbane.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Burrows: I do not want to be critical but I ask the Minister to be correct.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HILEY: The hon. member for Bowen spoke of delay in the payment of workers' compensation claims. Where the State Government Insurance Office has a branch office, the practice is to deal with minor claims by payment on the spot, but the position is worst in those towns where the work is done through the agency of the clerk of petty sessions and where there is no claims officer of the State Government Insurance Office actually present. Although we have encouraged clerks of petty sessions to exercise the power, they believe they are simply the vehicle for receiving the claims and passing them on. They do not feel that they are expert in adjudicating on them and deciding which should be paid. Although we have endeavoured to encourage them to make on-the-spot payments for minor claims, we have found it exceedingly hard to get them to face up to the responsibility. They are busy in their own right. They have courts to prepare for. Their practice seems to be simply to get the claim form, make sure it is in order and shoot it on as quickly as they can. They do not want to take time to consider it.

I entirely agree with the point he made about over-crowding. There is bad over-crowding. We tried to stagger it by working on the appointment system. On the assumption that we could handle 100 claims an hour, the first 100 would get a ticket that gave them an appointment for the first hour of interviewing, the second 100 for the second hour of interviewing, and so on. We very quickly found that the system did not work because the people did not keep the appointments. There is a terrific surge of applications first thing in the morning. It may have changed a little since television has come in, but in the days when the only form of entertainment was the picture show, an applicant wanted to get his claim in and be clear of the office before the first morning session of the picture shows. It is quite understandable. A man who is injured and away from work does not want to hang around at home. He wants to take his wife to the pictures; he probably has not

had a chance of taking her to the pictures for five years. However, this does produce an uneven flow of applications.

Mr. Graham: Why don't you stagger the pay-days?

Mr. HILEY: These are the claim days, not the pay days.

I have already told the Committee on several occasions that we are aware that a new building is necessary. The general manager has told me that he is giving thought to establishing two offices, one on the south side of the river, and one in the Valley, to avoid the congregation of applicants into one place and to lessen the traffic congestion caused by all these people pouring to a central spot, most of them in one mad rush. We hoped that the answer to our building requirements would come when the Main Roads Commission proceeded with work on its property at Spring Hill. The intention then was that the State Government Insurance Office would acquire the existing Main Roads building—hon. members know where it is situated, not far from King George Square—and that a new building there, which would take some years to erect, would provide the answer. We have had to adjust our thinking on that, and at present the general manager of the State Government Insurance Office has some city properties under consideration, and I am hopeful that before very long we shall settle on a new site and begin building. Until we get a new building, the answer will not be found.

Mr. Davies: I hope you start ours first.

Mr. HILEY: It will not affect that one. In cases of residual disability we do make some use of facilities provided by the Commonwealth, particularly where the disability is more on the mental side. When I say that, I hope hon. members do not misunderstand me; it is more on the nervous side.

Dr. Delamothé: The psychological side.

Mr. HILEY: Yes. At Kingsholme the Commonwealth have an institution where they deal with these problems of men who become physically well, but who still have a nervous problem. They persuade themselves that they are sick and that they cannot work. They become the victims of imaginary ills and aches.

Mr. Aikens: Hypochondriacs.

Mr. HILEY: No. A hypochondriac is a man who always wants new medicines.

Mr. Aikens: He suffers from imaginary ailments.

Mr. HILEY: We have made some use of the Commonwealth's facilities. One of our biggest difficulties is that we cannot order treatment, we can only suggest it. In three cases out of four a man is in need of treatment and he will not have it, but I have been reluctant to take any power of compulsion. A man can be sick in body and limb, but

he can be sick in his nervous system, too. He has mental difficulty, and he imagines that he is terribly ill. The thought that he should go along to this very excellent institution at Montrose is anathema to him, and it is a very big social problem whether we should compel him to go along and have treatment. If he goes voluntarily for treatment it is much more likely to be helpful to him. If you have to force him to have treatment for his mental illness his chances of benefiting from it are almost microscopic. In the light of the representations that have been made to me I have given further thought to the matter, but so far I cannot pretend to have found the answer. It is a very real problem and I am sure the State Government Insurance Office would be very happy to have any practical suggestions from hon. members on either side of the Chamber to help overcome it.

The hon. member for Norman spoke about the housing problem that was created when industries started to sweep through an area. He instanced the stretch between Woolloomgaba and Stones Corner, an area I have watched over several years. Factories and other industrial development are progressively sweeping the area, and within five years I should say there will not be a house along the main road.

Mr. Bromley: That will be "crook" for the next elections.

Mr. HILEY: It is only on the main road; it does not spread into the side streets. It should not make a difference of 200 votes, and in any case it would be offset by multi-storey development in the side streets. I should not think that that sort of development would cut down the electoral enrolment to the point that it affects the quota.

On this matter of industries sweeping across residential areas let me say that it is not something that should be lightly discouraged. Indeed, I regard the progressive zoning of areas for industry as one of the most practicable and costless ways in which to overcome the progressive development of slum conditions in old suburbs. In fact, many of the older countries of the world have had to go to the taxpayer for millions and millions of pounds to re-house people who found that slum conditions had swept across their residential areas. They were living in what previously were good residential areas, but age and decrepitude crept slowly across them and slums began to develop. If you can change the zoning from residential to commercial you can bring about the desired improvement without cost to the public purse. A house in its present aged condition, even on the most generous allowance for the residential site, might bring to its owner only £3,000 or £4,000 as a dwelling, but as a commercial site he might get £10,000, £15,000 or £20,000 for it. Countless people around the city have been delighted when oil companies have cast envious eyes on the corner on which they had their home. They have been really delighted to sell their land and

homes so that petrol stations could be erected. To them it has been as good as winning the Golden Casket. Only recently the Minister for Education and Migration wanted to secure some extra land adjoining the South Brisbane Technical College to enlarge operations there. We had occasion to look at the prices paid by some industries that bought decrepit old cottages and shops in the vicinity. We were staggered. When I went over and had a look at some of them for myself I just shook my head in amazement at the prices people were prepared to pay because the land was in an industrial zone.

Mr. Aikens: The Commonwealth Bank is one of the biggest suckers of them all. They paid £10,200 for an old house in Charters Towers Road the other day.

Mr. HILEY: That could be. The money a man can get for his house because it is in an industrial zone will enable him to build a mansion compared with what he is selling. The real problem comes about if the occupier of a house is only a tenant. Where there is a forced removal in those circumstances we have already adopted and widely practised the procedure of conceding eviction. Where it is inevitable that buildings have to be vacated we do not ask anyone to go through the procedures of the court to get an eviction notice. Eviction is conceded where we are satisfied that it is inevitable. If hon. members produce specific cases like that I will be prepared to examine them.

The hon. member for Sherwood raised the subject of fishing and I cite my views and policy particularly on the line-angler. First of all, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that in all areas, and particularly in those areas where there is a tourist following, it is in the very best interests of this State to encourage the thousands of people who will hopefully come to an area if they can catch an occasional fish rather than to keep in existence two, three or four crews of professional fishermen.

There is no doubt in my mind of the relative advantage. Consequently, our angle of approach is to spread sanctuaries gradually in order to allow professional crews time to adjust themselves. We do not think it is right that we should make a survey of every place with tourist potential and come in with a blanket order overnight and put perhaps 15 or 20 professional crews out of existence.

We believe that by doing it gradually and shifting one or two crews at a time, it will not provoke any cataclysm in the fishing industry. We think that is the wiser approach. We have already created more sanctuaries in three years than previously existed. It is my view that if they are spread it is hard to police them. That is the problem facing our people—the policing is difficult. If they are spread with a small patch here and another patch some miles away and another patch miles away again,

there will be too much leeching from the surrounding country, too much poaching on the borders.

Taking as an example the Broadwater, to which the hon. member referred, if we go slowly and progressively up the Broadwater until we reach Jumpinpin we get a big blanket area in which no professional crew with a fishing boat loaded with nets has any justification for being, but if you bring in small sections of sanctuary they have to be crossed by fishermen or they can be slipped into by fishermen within half an hour of sunset. That presents policing difficulties. It is only by policing them until they become major reservations that a real answer will be found.

For the information of hon. members, I repeat what I think was published in the Press. It is my view that eventually tourist streams like the Mooloola, Maroochy and Noosa Rivers will have to be totally restricted to netting, more particularly the Noosa River. I should not imagine that any purpose would be served by restricting netting in the lakes—the little lake and the big lake—but certainly in the whole of the river. In Lake Donnela and Lake Wyebe there is excellent reason why netting should not be restricted. At present we have a 3-mile stretch where netting is prohibited and every time there is a completely dark night without any moon, in go the poachers. Therefore, I think that the method of extending these sanctuaries and joining them together until they become considerable stretches will help to provide a practical answer.

The hon. member also expressed some concern over the effect that substantial catching of prawns is having, and raised the questions whether we were depriving our fish of one of their main elements of food and whether we were harming the prawning industry itself.

This matter received considerable attention some months ago when prawn sanctuaries were under consideration. Some hon. members will remember that I arranged for a man who is acknowledged to be the foremost expert on prawns in Australia, Dr. Racek, to be lent to us by the New South Wales Fisheries Department. He came up and gave us valuable advice and he was kind enough to present to me a number of technical papers he had prepared and published, all of which revolved round the prawn, its habits, its love-life, and everything else about it. From a very careful perusal of all those books I formed the conclusion, first of all, that the breeding capacity of the prawn is so tremendous that if only the tiniest fraction of the prawn population is allowed to reproduce it will ensure a stable prawn population in Australian waters.

The rate of the growth of prawns is fast. They lay hundreds of thousands of eggs, and the limitation on prawn numbers in Australia is not in any way governed by the capacity

of the prawn to breed or by fish numbers; the limiting factor is the molluscan factor, and the life the vehicle in which it lives can sustain. There is a certain amount of food potential in sea water which varies according to water temperature and chemistry. Unfortunately most of the waters off the Australian coast are low in plant life. The best exception to that is provided by Montague Island, where the food in the waters is extensive, and in consequence the fish numbers are tremendous. The potential food content of Australian waters cannot be compared with that of New Zealand waters, where it is exceedingly high, or the Humboldt Channel, which flows from Panama west across the Pacific Ocean and which is remarkable for its tremendous food potential and the amount of plankton it contains and consequently the remarkable amount of fish life it nourishes.

After reading all the material made available to me, I am satisfied that the limiting factor in prawn numbers is the food potential of our waters, not the breeding capacity of the prawn. I suspect that a good deal of the harvesting of mature prawns actually clears the opportunity for the propagation of young prawns. That could be the effect.

The hon. member for Rockhampton North raised the matter of a boat harbour at Emu Park. Within the last fortnight the hon. member for Callide has been in touch with me about some new association that has been formed up there, and he asked that I make available advisory services through officers of the Department of Harbours and Marine. I have told him I will do so. The hon. member's statement about Cooraman Creek is the first time this creek has been brought to my notice. I will see that his suggestion is examined by the Department of Harbours and Marine, because our instinctive reaction to providing a harbour on the ocean front was that it could be done all right, but at what cost? If this creek will supply the answer, development may proceed years before it could proceed on the ocean front.

The hon. member for Rockhampton North spoke also of the bar depth at Yeppoon. The position is quite extraordinary. When the Yeppoon people first saw me they had two complaints, the first that there was not enough area inside to meet the demands of the prawning or scallop vessels that use that river or creek, and the second that the water at the bar where a rocky shelf crosses the creek was so shallow that boats could get in and out of the creek only from half-tide to full-tide and from full-tide to half-tide. We said, "We will deepen the area inside and open it out for you, provide a swinging basin and so on, and we will take out the rock on the bar so that you can come in or go out much earlier on a rising tide and later on a falling tide."

I was at Yeppoon about a month or six weeks ago and I met a very extensive deputation composed of representatives of the shire, all the progress associations, the fishing bodies, and other interested parties. They

came to me and said, "We have been thinking more about this problem and we have come to the conclusion that we would prefer a greater depth inside rather than a longer period during which we can enter and leave the creek."

Mr. Thackeray: They changed their minds.

Mr. HILEY: That is so. I had Mr. Fison, the chief engineer, with me and we listened to their problem. At the present time, the rock bar at the entrance acts almost as a dam, and because it is there at that height, it dams the water inside and consequently the boats can move round inside the harbour over a longer period.

Mr. Thackeray: It keeps all the trawlers afloat.

Mr. HILEY: That is so.

They pointed out that if we took the bar down 2 feet it would drop by 2 feet the level of the water inside the harbour at low tide, and the boats inside would not be able to go to the oiling depot and the iceworks, except in one mad scramble when there was plenty of depth. They suggested that we should not spend anything on taking out the rock bar but should spend the money, totalling several thousands of pounds, on more dredging inside to give a greater depth of water there. I agreed to their suggestion, and I thought it would interest the hon. member to know the reason for the change. I smiled at these people when they made their request. I said, "It is extraordinary; you are now asking me to do the very reverse of what you sold to us initially." I said, "I think there is a good deal of sense in what you suggest and I can see no objection to it. If that is what you prefer and it suits you better, we are quite willing that it should be so." Not one voice was raised in protest against it, and I think there were 15 to 20 men on the deputation that saw us. They said that was how they preferred it, and as a result we cancelled the Executive minute that provided for removing the rock bar and brought in another Executive minute that provided for dredging inside. It was my impression that everyone was happy with the result, and I was a little afraid that they would name the reclaimed park after me.

Mr. Thackeray: Do you think that silting will be affected by it?

Mr. HILEY: I do not think it will be either helped or hindered by what is being done now.

The hon. member for South Brisbane gave me concern in the final stages of his speech when he made a very categorical charge against the Housing Commission by saying that it was the worst administered department in the State.

Mr. Bromley: The Traffic Department is the worst.

Mr. HILEY: The hon. member may make his own charges in relation to that.

Please do not think I am in any way thin-skinned about this. I regard the Parliament as the proper place to present charges, and the proper place for making allegations against public administration. However, I want to say with all the emphasis at my command that if a man has charges to bring, let him bring them, and support them. I was absolutely astounded to hear the hon. member's categorical assertion, and then for him not to bring one jot or tittle of evidence in support. I make my attitude perfectly clear: I will not protect any public servant if proper charges are brought against him and are established, but I must raise my voice in protest at what I can construe only as a broad and general besmirching of a department expressed in terms as flagrant as the hon. member employed, without one scrap of evidence being brought in support. If the hon. member feels as deeply as he surely must have felt to express himself as he did, let him go the whole way and bring in the evidence to support the charges he made. If he does not do that, all I am able to say is that the charge he made constitutes one of the worst offences against parliamentary privilege that it has ever been my experience to encounter. No department is made up entirely of perfect officials, but if they have done something wrong, in all fairness let us see it fairly and let these clear charges be examined.

I throw back at the hon. member one of the doctrines of his profession. It is a well-established rule of law that if in a court a man seeks to establish fraud, he must positively allege it and strictly prove it. All I say to him is let him, in his conduct in this Chamber, observe the same rule as is demanded in the practice of the profession of which he is a member. I do not wish to protect any public servant from having examined in Parliament anything that he has done wrong. But I must confess that I cannot sit quietly by and watch the reputation of men attacked in such a way that it becomes simply an assassination of their character without one jot or tittle of evidence in support. On that note I say to the hon. member that if he has any complaints I think it is his duty to bring them to the Parliament and to me.

I must confess that I found the matters that were raised in the debate of absorbing interest but I regret that I have taken up so much of the time of the Committee in replying to them. I do not propose to reply to any other observations that may be made. In saying that, I do not want to be discourteous or to indicate that I will disregard anything further that may be said. If any point is raised that I think calls for a quick reply, I will take advantage of the time available to me tomorrow night when the Appropriation Bill is introduced. I ask hon. members to understand that I will use that method so that I

will not interfere with their opportunity to join in the debate for the rest of the afternoon.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Aspley) (2.56 p.m.): I am somewhat loth to enter into the debate on the Treasury Estimates in succession to the hon. member for South Brisbane, for he is so well skilled through his professional practice in the presentation of matter that I am bound to suffer by comparison. Nevertheless, his submissions since he entered Parliament contain so many inconsistencies and he is so disposed to pervert the facts that we on this side of the Chamber are obliged to regard them as being of no consequence. Furthermore, he invariably injects into his submissions a degree of spleen and vitriol far exceeding that of any of his colleagues who might do it occasionally. We on this side of the Chamber realise that he is ruled by his passions and his prejudices and his emotions, and so we endeavour to take a charitable view of his outbursts. I can only conclude that somewhere along the line a quantity of iron has entered into his soul, which is now being subjected to the corrosive process that inevitably occurs with such a substance.

We derive great comfort from the fact that the Treasurer is in command of the financial policy of the Government; it is in very capable hands indeed. There is no need for me to inform the Committee of the importance of the role that the financial policy plays in the Government's administration. There have been many references during the debate to the effect of finance on the Federal Government's administration. The same applies to the States.

I wish now to refer to the question of housing, societies, not to exaggerate the importance of this aspect of administration but because I think all hon. members will agree that in the two years since the inception of the co-operative housing scheme, it has made a modest contribution to the housing situation and it will make an increasing contribution with the passing of the years.

It might be regarded as somewhat paradoxical that we as Liberals, who support the principle of free competitive enterprise, should be espousing the virtues of co-operation, because it is erroneously held in some quarters that the co-operative movement is a manifestation of socialism. Such a belief is not in accordance with the facts for it can be truly said that co-operative enterprise differs slightly from ordinary commercial business enterprise and in only one or two points. The main differences are firstly, that the shares subscribed for by members of co-operative societies remain constantly at par and their value does not fluctuate, and the dividend they attract is determined by the Articles of Association and remains at a fixed amount; secondly, the profits of the society are rebated to members in proportion to the amount of business transacted with the society. Here we see the main principle of

co-operative trading, wherein those who contribute to the profit obtain their proportionate share of that profit. This provides a stimulant and incentive to support this type of trading.

But these principles, of themselves, do not mean the success of the enterprise, and the same rigid business practices that are found in any other type of successful business must be observed. Most people who support the co-operative movement do so because they believe in its principles. Whilst it is admitted that a certain number of members regard it as a means to an end, the great bulk of its supporters are imbued with the spirit of the movement.

Briefly, that is the concept of the spirit of the co-operative movement. You have been rather tolerant, Mr. Taylor, because the co-operative movement comes under the jurisdiction of another department. I have introduced it in this way because I believe it is most important that all those associated with co-operative housing should approach it in the same spirit, a spirit that is designed to ensure that those who become members of such societies—I refer to those who obtain loans—should obtain the maximum benefit from the functioning of the societies.

The whole purpose of the Act is to provide homes for subscribers at a minimum cost, and unless this is kept in mind there is a great danger that the scheme will be unsuccessful. I mention this because there are certain pressures at work attempting to water-down some of the sections in the Act. I submit that there is not one section in the Act or in the regulations that is superfluous and that every section has been deliberately written into the Act to prevent undesirable practices.

I was surprised to hear the comments of the hon. member for Townsville South, who implied that the regulations were cluttered up with many unnecessary clauses. After hearing his previous submissions concerning what he alleged to be the undesirable practices of a certain real estate agent in a transaction in his own electorate, it is surprising that he does not concede that these regulations are devised to prevent such undesirable practices.

It is unnecessary for me to emphasise to the Treasurer the need for all these safeguards in the Act, but I appeal to all hon. members to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the benefits that co-operative housing offers to the community. Housing is still a real social problem, and the Treasurer, as he has shown, is alive to the seriousness of it. We realise that there will always be a section of the community who, because of circumstances outside their control, will require governmental assistance, and the Government will continue to endeavour to meet their problem. But I do not think it is unreasonable that we should attempt to induce young people in the community to give some thought to providing for their future in this regard, rather than depend on the philosophy that the State will provide for it.

I am greatly encouraged by the plan that the Housing Commission, in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council, is adopting to provide sewerage and drainage in Housing Commission areas. I have said before that tenants have been long-suffering in submitting to the inconvenience caused by the lack of adequate drainage and sewerage. It is my earnest plea that every effort be made to expedite the plan to give this very necessary relief.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (3.6 p.m.): My main purpose in rising is to deal with comments that the Treasurer saw fit to make on what I said in an earlier speech. I think he was referring not so much to what I said in the Address-in-Reply debate, but to my contribution to the debate on the Financial Statement. To refresh the hon. gentleman's memory, I shall read a little of what I said on that occasion because I think it throws a completely different light on the matter. I said—

"The establishment of new flats is his pride and joy. Under certain circumstances, flat life has advantages, and there are people in the community who wish to live under such conditions. But there are many thousands of people who do not like living in flats, and, as I have said on other occasions, the people of Australia, and particularly the people of Queensland, prefer to have their own allotments and their own backyards."

The Premier then interjected—

"I do not like flats much myself but I think you must admit that there is a demand for them."

I replied to the Premier—

"I said that there was a demand for them. The idea of building flats has been ill-conceived, as I hope to show later on."

What I meant there, of course, was "ill-conceived at this particular stage." At no stage did I say I was completely opposed to flats. It is a fact that there are many disadvantages associated with flat life, particularly from the point of view of building up a family. I do not think anybody would agree that it is desirable for children not to have their own backyards to play in. Pride of ownership has been spoken about and the pleasure to be derived from having your own garden with trees and all that goes with a garden. Even if modern flats are built to the most attractive design tenants still cannot have pride of ownership, which to me is most important.

Mr. Aikens: Many childless couples and old couples prefer flats.

Mr. HOUSTON: As I said earlier, that is quite true. It may be that the day will come when I decide that I should prefer to live in a flat and let someone else mow the grass. But all this does not get away from the fact that the people we are really concerned about today are those who need

priority to get into the flats. My main point was that under the present system I cannot see how young married couples or childless couples can get any priority. In my opinion, under the system there is no way that they can get priority because they are not living in condemned premises or in premises in respect of which an eviction order has been obtained. If the Minister, in reply, can tell me how a young couple just getting married can get a priority, I will be pleased to hear him.

Mr. Aikens: There are families in Townsville living in tents.

Mr. HOUSTON: That may be due to bad representation. I am sure I have none in my area.

Old couples also cannot get into one of these flats because they cannot obtain the necessary priority, mainly because they have a roof over their heads. I cannot conceive how people who reach the stage of wanting to change to flat-life can, under the present set-up, get a priority. That is why I maintain that under the priority system the building of flats is not an answer to the problem. The only people who can get into them at present are those who require their own places—and those with children. What the position will be when the Jones children and the Brown children get into a decent "blue" downstairs, I do not know. But those are the things we have to avoid if we can.

I can see the Government's point of view. They are trying to save expense by providing many units of accommodation under the one roof, but I feel it would be better to consider some of the recommendations that have been made. I think Mr. Sewell had something to say some time ago about reducing the size of allotments from 40 perches. Personally, I think 40 perches is more than is necessary to fulfil the requirements of the ordinary allotment. I think it would be wise to look at that aspect of reducing the size of the blocks to 20 perches.

Mr. Hiley: They do not have to be a depth of 132 ft.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is so.

Mr. Duggan: The council provides that they must be a minimum of 24 perches.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is the trouble. I believe that in the past, when the regulation first came into operation, it provided for a minimum of 24 perches, but I do not think anyone in those days foresaw the rate of post-war expansion. It would be better to use smaller blocks. I have no objection to using the duplex system, which still gives you your own backyard. I personally would take a lot of convincing, even with the number of applications for homes and the present state of our finances, that we cannot afford the luxury—if it is a luxury, and I do not think it is—of having dwellings with their own backyards.

I do not wish to labour the point. Time is valuable and I know other hon. members want to speak. The Minister said that too much money was being spent by young folk on articles that were not essential. That is something about which every hon. member has to think when representations are made to him for assistance in obtaining homes. We have to inform ourselves of the reasons why people are in the position in which they are. I believe that young couples have not the ready cash to build their own homes not so much because they spend their money on luxury items as that they look upon obtaining their own homes as something for the distant future. They cannot envisage the obtaining of a home immediately. That state of mind arises through their upbringing. They know—in most instances—that their parents had difficulty in obtaining a home and had to live for some time in rented accommodation. They know also that their parents had to wait for some years, until the children were growing up, before they could afford a home of their own. When they reach the stage of looking for a mate and getting married, they do not think of a home as something to be obtained immediately.

In the years before the war homes could be obtained easily. Young couples only had to go to the State Advances Corporation, and they could get a home quickly. All they had to do was to look round and purchase their own land. In those days a reasonable block could be obtained for £40. If a young couple had to pay £100 for land, they assumed that the area was a first-class residential locality. But that is not the position today. We are often told that some blocks cost, say, £800 or £1,000. Young people regard the purchase of land as something far beyond their capacity, and until we can persuade them that the owning of homes is not beyond their capacity, that there are ways of obtaining homes, we will still have the same problem.

Mr. Davies interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: As the hon. member for Maryborough has suggested, this state of mind is possible due to instability of the economy. I do not want to develop that point as it would lead to matters outside the scope of the debate.

I now turn to another matter. I have raised it before, but I think it is worth mentioning again, that is, the building of homes in areas far removed from the city. I cannot understand why we are still building homes at Inala. With every home built at Inala the problem becomes greater. I know the land was obtained at a reasonable price, much of it by the previous Government, but personally I think it should be sold and used for other purposes. By erecting homes on it we are perpetuating and accentuating the problem.

Men who live at Inala and work at the abattoirs in my electorate or on the wharves have to travel a great distance each day.

The position is ridiculous. Action should be taken immediately to see that people who work in such places do not have to travel great distances. Apart from the cost of transport, the time factor upsets their ordinary routine; they have to rise earlier in the morning and do not arrive home until late at night. The night meal is late, and the family does not get to bed until a later hour than is usual. The whole family routine is upset by the travelling time.

I suggest that the Treasurer consider taking over some of the resting paddocks in the Bulimba area. The Minister's statement about growing cabbages in Collins Street is appropriate to my point. In the days of slow transport when cattle had to be driven on the roads, resting paddocks were required near the abattoirs, but today those paddocks are an absolute waste of good building space. Cattle could be taken to areas such as Capalaba, which is not far from the abattoirs, bearing in mind the transport methods being employed today and the time taken in the transport of cattle compared with the time taken when resting paddocks were first acquired.

Mr. Hiley: Would that not cost quite an amount? The cattle are drafted from the saleyards to the resting paddocks and from the resting paddocks to the saleyards. If they had to be taken to and from Capalaba the cost would be great.

Mr. HOUSTON: I merely mention Capalaba as an illustration. It is an outer suburb. It would not be necessary to go as far as that. They could be taken to the outer parts of Belmont where there is plenty of vacant ground not suitable for housing owing to transport difficulties, the number of creeks running through it and so on. The resting yards could be transferred to that area, and many of the existing resting paddocks could be developed for housing. In that way we would overcome many of our problems. We would not have people living some distance from their places of employment, and we would not have such great crowds of people coming through the main parts of the city in motor transport. I know this ground is valuable and I do not expect that the Housing Commission would get it for nothing. However, I believe that if we were to balance the cost against the saving to the community in the long run, we would find that the scheme I am suggesting would be the better one. The people would be prepared to pay slightly more for the land. The Minister should make inquiries and see if some action can be taken.

I turn now to the Cairncross dock. I was very pleased to hear that electric pumps are to be installed there. They will reduce the time required to clear the water, and they should be more efficient than the present pumps.

I mentioned this matter to the Minister some two years ago and he said there would

be a drive to get more shipping for this dock. That drive was quite successful, particularly with the smaller ships, but it was not so successful with overseas vessels. I urge the Minister, through his officers, to make an effort once again to induce overseas ship-owners to use this dock.

Mr. Hiley: Our trouble was that we would get one ship in, and the owners would find the cost was so heavy that they would not come back. That is what worried me about this casual-time trouble.

Mr. HOUSTON: That may be so, but I am informed that the ship-owners were quite happy with the quality of the work.

Mr. Hiley: There is no quarrel with the quality; it is the cost.

Mr. HOUSTON: One of the contributing factors to the added cost is the necessity for so many sub-contractors to come in. We cannot get full continuity of work if we rely on four or five different firms to carry out the work.

Mr. Hiley: What would we do with the men who would be employed on engineering work when there are no ships in?

Mr. HOUSTON: That is why I say we should encourage more business. We have £286,000-odd worth of plant and buildings in our engineering works, and that is after depreciation over all these years. That figure represents assets of considerable value, and they are lying there wasted. We should have our own engineering shops at the dock. The Government engineering shop's employees could be used for ship work, and when there were no ships in port they could be used on building construction. During the debate on the Estimates for the Department of Public Works I suggested that it was about time the Government started doing their own steel and metal work. That would be an ideal tie-up. The Treasurer will agree with me that much of the work carried out simply requires the transfer of money from one department to another. In other parts of the world docks are run by one firm, particularly privately-owned docks, and they do not worry about outside contractors. We have the facilities, and with £286,000-odd worth of equipment lying idle some action should be taken.

At Fremantle, all the parties concerned—the contractors, the shipping men, the trade unions, the Federal and State Governments, and so on—are co-operating in an effort to have a dry dock built at that port to take overseas ships. Fremantle is the first port of call for many overseas ships and the ships are loaded both ways, whereas Brisbane is the end of the run and we would be working on an empty ship, whether it was coming or going.

Mr. Aikens: What is the biggest ship the Cairncross dock can take?

Mr. HOUSTON: I cannot tell the hon. member offhand, but it would be quite big.

Mr. Hiley: Cairncross has handled the "William G. Walkley," which is the biggest tanker plying the Australian coast.

Mr. HOUSTON: I think the Treasurer will agree with me that there is no ship that comes into the port of Brisbane that it could not handle at present. What the capacity is I could not say. I think the dock could be made to pay and I ask that it be examined from the point of view of supplying not only the needs of the Department of Harbours and Marine but also the engineering needs of all other Government departments. As it comes under the control of the Treasurer, I think it would be the ideal set-up and its finances could be watched. For main roads, bridge-building and the like, the Department of Harbours and Marine virtually would be the sub-contractor for all that type of work.

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) (3.26 p.m.): During the debate on the Financial Statement, a good deal of difference of opinion was expressed as to whether the adoption of the new tax reimbursement formula would prove a benefit to the State or a great disadvantage. Because of that I have undertaken a good deal of research and entered into no small amount of calculation in an attempt to arrive at a comparison between what the State will receive under the new formula and what it would have received under the old. We all agree that the State's ability to provide services and to carry out works of a developmental nature will depend to a very large extent on the revenue we derive from the Commonwealth Government through the State tax reimbursement grant system. The taxation grant to the States is now based on two factors—population increase and percentage increase in the average Commonwealth wage. Population increase is something that goes on and that is not affected by nearly so many factors as the percentage increase in the average Commonwealth wage. For instance, the average Commonwealth wage can be affected by the loss of man-hours, by the number of hours of overtime worked, and by the granting of an increase in wages and salaries. It is almost impossible for anybody to estimate with a great degree of certainty just how many man-hours will be lost through sickness or industrial trouble or any other causes and it is almost impossible to estimate what the percentage increase in the average Commonwealth wage will be.

The Commonwealth Statistician, Mr. Solomon, was kind enough to make available to me the figures of the average Commonwealth wage for the years from 1947-1948 up to 1959-1960, which was the last year for which the figure was available. The percentage increase was easy to obtain once those figures were made available. The information is

interesting and I give it for the benefit of the Committee. Remember that the percentage increase is the factor with which we are greatly concerned today. The figures are—

Year	Average Commonwealth Wage £	Percentage increase
1947-1948	431.384	—
1948-1949	489.927	13.6
1949-1950	533.557	8.8
1950-1951	635.658	19.2
1951-1952	779.811	22.7
1952-1953	846.632	8.6
1953-1954	898.032	6.1
1954-1955	955.356	6.4
1955-1956	1018.202	6.6
1956-1957	1068.048	4.9
1957-1958	1101.207	3.1
1958-1959	1137.346	3.3

In that year an alteration was made. The female wage, which was formerly regarded as half the male wage for purposes of computation by the Commonwealth Government, was changed to three-fifths of the male wage. In 1959-1960 it was £1,189.119, or an increase of 7.4 per cent. It will be seen from those figures that the highest percentage increase ever recorded in those years was 22.7 per cent. and the lowest 3.1 per cent.

For the purposes of my calculation, I have used the actual figure of 7.418 per cent. increase for the 1960-1961 financial year, and because the increases in margins and the steep increases in wages due to quarterly adjustments will mean an even higher percentage, I think it is reasonable to take the figure of 10 per cent. that I have used. After that I have used 3 per cent., which is lower than any percentage increase during the period from 1947-1948 to 1959-1960. I have used the formula now adopted by the Commonwealth Government to ascertain what the States are entitled to, and I will now tell the Committee what that formula is. If we take the financial year 1960-1961, we would take the grant that was given in the previous year, 1959-1960, and divide it by the population as at 1 July of the year preceding the year in which the grant is made—in this case, 1 July, 1959. That figure would then be multiplied by the population as at the first day of the financial year for which the grant was to be made—in this case, 1 July, 1960—and multiplied by 1.1, the percentage of increase in the average Commonwealth wage, plus 100 over 100. Applying that formula and using the population increases as they have been on an average over the last few years, and taking the lowest possible percentage of increase in the period 1947-1948 to 1959-1960, we

ascertain by calculation that our taxation grant from the Commonwealth Government should be as follows—

Year	Grant £	Basis of Increase Per cent.
1960-1961	39,917,000	7.418
1961-1962	45,725,000	10
1962-1963	47,442,756	3
1963-1964	49,576,785	3
1964-1965	52,013,345	3
1965-1966	54,556,797	3

That must necessarily be a very conservative estimate of what we should get as a State under the new Commonwealth grant scheme introduced in 1959. As the percentage increase has been as high as 22.7, and has never been as low as 3.1 in the years I referred to, and taking into consideration that I used 3 per cent., which is lower than any of these years, the conclusion must be a most conservative one.

If the grant for the year prior to the introduction of the new grant had been maintained during those six years it would have amounted to £218,250,000, but for the six years under the new grant, on a most conservative estimate, it will amount to £288,313,940, or £70,000,000 more than would have been received had we continued to get the same amount. But we would not have continued to get the same amount because there would have been an increase in population. Allowing for £20,000,000 to cover that, without the "betterment factor," I should say that as a State we shall be at least £50,000,000 better off under the new formula in the six-year period.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was very insistent that the old system was more advantageous than the new one, as was the former Treasurer, the hon. member for Bundaberg. Had they made a few calculations following their research they would have convinced themselves that the new formula is infinitely better than the one that operated previously.

Mr. Davies: It still will not give you enough for the Burdekin scheme.

Mr. COBURN: It will give us a lot of other things. It may give us the Burdekin dam, too. At the present time I am not concentrating on the Burdekin dam scheme but on the tax reimbursement scheme. I do not want to be lead off at a tangent by the hon. member for Maryborough because he is confusing the issues. The issue at stake at the present time is whether the present tax reimbursement formula is as good as, better than, or worse than the previous one. I say without any hesitation that the new formula is the best we have ever had from the Commonwealth Government, and it will prove to be much more beneficial to the State than the old one.

Mr. Davies interjected.

Mr. COBURN: Let the hon. member listen to what I am saying. If he thinks I am wrong, let him do a bit of research and calculation. Then let him see if he can arrive at a different conclusion.

The amounts I have mentioned will be recorded in "Hansard".

Mr. Hilton: No-one will read it.

Mr. COBURN: Over the next six years the hon. member will have the opportunity of comparing the amounts in "Hansard" with the amounts the Treasurer actually gets from the Commonwealth Government. I venture to say that in no instance will the grant from the Commonwealth be lower than what I have stated today.

Mr. Hanlon: Costs will be just as high.

Mr. COBURN: That is a different factor. The factor of costs comes into it, of course, but now we are going to get this money as a right. Previously, any additional amount that we received to met extra costs was contingent upon the beneficence of the Commonwealth Government. But now the formula gives us the money as a right, instead of its being something that we get as a favour from the Commonwealth Government. They are the calculations that I made, based on all the data I was able to obtain. As I said—and I think everybody will agree—it is the most difficult thing in the world to predict what the percentage of increase in the Commonwealth average rate will be. There are so many factors that come into it, and that we cannot possibly estimate, that we have to go to past performances and use those figures. To be fair to the Committee I estimated it on the most conservative formula that I possibly could.

Mr. Hilton: You are arguing that that is the best that it is possible to do?

Mr. COBURN: I am not arguing that at all. I am arguing that it is better than the one that we had previously. The argument of the hon. members for Bundaberg and Kedron was that the Treasurer and the Premier were foolish to accept the new formula because we would not get as much under it as we got under the old one. My actual reason for engaging in these calculations was to endeavour to prove to myself whether what I thought about this formula was correct, and to submit to the Committee the result of my findings. The figures will go down in "Hansard" and they can be checked for correctness. I was satisfied that these calculations, based on data available, were so near to what will actually materialise that I was prepared to take that risk. The only way that anybody can prove they are wrong in accordance with fact and the application of the formula is to make calculations for himself on data he can gather, and then show that mine are wrong.

That is all I have to say. Having given that information to the Committee I resume my seat.

Mr. WALLACE (Cairns) (3.42 p.m.): First of all, I should like to congratulate the Treasurer on his capacity to turn his replies to the contributions of hon. members on this side of the Chamber into a series of "to-be-continued" short stories. He told enough stories to take up considerable time and prevent quite a few hon. members from speaking. He has also caused me to curtail my speech.

Among the matters discussed today, a particular one to which I wish to refer, is the intention of the Government as it relates to small harbours along the coast. I agree that the provision of small harbours along the coast is a very good move as it will provide cheaper holidays for numbers of people who own small craft. That is all to the good, but it appears to me that in the past in some harbours, especially those around Brisbane, the onus has been on the councils to provide the money for the facilities for small craft. I understood the Treasurer to say that the Government will accept the onus of providing these facilities and thus relieve the councils of the burden. I also understood him to say that the same arrangement will apply also to at least one harbour board.

I should like to know if it is the Government's intention to relieve all harbour boards of that responsibility. I believe that most of them would be very thankful to be relieved of the task of providing harbours for small craft such as has been provided at Manly, but not of the same magnitude, of course. Most of the harbour boards would be pleased if something like that were done and they were relieved of the responsibility of providing these facilities for small craft. I should be interested to know, when the Treasurer is replying, if that is the Government's intention.

I was also interested to hear the Treasurer say that £3,000 is to be spent on providing a new approach to the Fish Board's premises in Cairns. Recently I asked the Treasurer whether an approach wharf was to be constructed in Cairns. In his reply he said it was not, but that a mono-rail was to be placed there so that the fish could be taken from boats. Nothing has been done in that direction to date, and the "schemozzle" that occurs in taking fish from the boats to the trucks and running them a few yards has to be seen to be believed. A high priority should be given to the building of an approach wharf to the Fish Board.

Speaking of the Fish Board, I want to re-open a matter that I raised by way of a question directed to the Minister. I asked him about fish supplied by Mr. Ron. Hodel to the Fish Board in Cairns, and for which he has not been fully compensated. According to his answers, the Minister apparently

agrees that after it has accepted the fish the Fish Board has the responsibility of keeping them in good condition. As the machinery of the Cairns Fish Board is new and in top order, I cannot see any reason why the fish should go bad while in the board's keeping.

Before I go further I want to say that in my opinion no blame attaches to the present manager of the Fish Board. He is new there and is a practical man. He was a professional fisherman. I think most of the problems arose through the quick turnover in managers in a matter of months. Further, that was not of advantage to the people who deal with the Fish Board. As the new manager has been a professional fisherman, I think conditions will improve and everything will be all right. Although I have drawn attention only to Mr. Hodel's predicament, others have been affected in more or less in the same way. Fish and bait have been placed in the board's rooms, and when those who have placed it there go to get it they find that it is not there. Although Mr. Hodel had all the figures and the receipts from the Board, he was down quite a few pounds in the amount he received for his fish. In all seriousness I say there is good reason for a further investigation into why fish placed in the board's premises at Cairns went bad. I do not think that can be advanced as a good reason for refusing full payment for the fish. Mr. Hodel is a very conscientious man. He is a week-end fisherman, and the fish he delivered to the Board would certainly have been in good condition. The manager who accepted them would be able to tell whether or not they were in good condition, and, as the board accepted the fish, the onus is on the Government to see that full payment is made for them, and it should be made without any haggling. It would appear to me that the trouble arose through administrative problems of the Board over that period. Managers were changed quickly over a short space of time.

Mr. Hiley: I think the circumstances were that he delivered the fish in a frozen state.

Mr. WALLACE: I do not think they were frozen, but they were iced. Mr. Hodel goes out on Saturday with a box full of ice. He ices-down the fish and delivers them to the Board on Sunday or Monday. Consequently they must be in good condition.

Mr. Hiley: I think you will find that the fish were received frozen. There are certain difficulties with frozen fish that are not detectable until the fish thaw out.

Mr. WALLACE: I am prepared to say right now that that would not be the case, because Hodel has not a freezer on his boat; he certainly did not have one at that time. He had an ice-box and his fish would not be frozen. I emphasise again the need for an investigation into the cause of these things.

The building of a jetty on Green Island was referred to. A jetty is really necessary there and we are very pleased to see it being built. However, I should like to see the responsibility for its maintenance placed fairly and squarely on one department. It is almost impossible for people who are injured in accidents on the jetty because of its faulty maintenance to know what department to sue for damages. Recently a man fell through the steps. It should be made clear what department is responsible for the maintenance of the jetty, and what department should receive summonses when anyone is injured in an accident.

The under-water observatory was also referred to. I agree with the Treasurer that it would be responsible for more than half of the people who go to Green Island. The people who built the observatory are to be highly commended for the work they have done. However, I do not agree that Green Island should have been exploited. It is one of the only two complete coral atolls on the reef, and for that reason it should have been retained as a coral island and the tourist resort should have been developed elsewhere. It could have been developed on the adjacent island.

Fishing has had a prominent place in this debate, and I wish to make reference to it. When the fishing legislation was passed during the last session of Parliament, many objections to certain sections of it were taken by people in Far Northern Queensland. In an effort to be fair to both the Government and these people who came to me, I suggested that they convene a public meeting to discuss the matter thoroughly among the amateur fishermen of Far Northern Queensland. That was done and I suggested—again to be fair to both the Government and the people—that the amateur fishermen should form a deputation to meet the Treasurer and discuss what they believed to be anomalies affecting amateur fishing in that part of the State. At the time I wrote a very courteous letter to the Treasurer suggesting that he might care to meet the deputation, which I suggested could be led by Mr. George Ernst who is one of the most, if not the most, knowledgeable men in the North on amateur fishing. I suggested that the Treasurer might meet a deputation led by him. Much to my surprise, I did not receive a reply to my letter. At a later date I again wrote to the Treasurer when I heard that he was coming to Cairns to attend a dinner that was to be held by the Institute of Engineers. I asked him, seeing that he was coming to Cairns at an early date, if he would be prepared to meet the deputation then. I received no reply to that letter either until the day the Treasurer was expected in Cairns. I received a telegram to the effect that he could meet the deputation after the dinner, but it might be quite late. Of course, I accepted the telegram at its face value and at approximately half-past 11 or 12 o'clock that night, with the rest of the

deputation, I was waiting in the main street of Cairns to meet the Treasurer at the hotel where we were advised he was staying, but to our dismay we were informed by the mayor of Cairns that he had not arrived.

Mr. Hiley: Did he tell you why?

Mr. WALLACE: I am not concerned about that part of it. He told me that there was a breakdown in the plane. However, the Treasurer advised the mayor; why did he not advise me or some member of the deputation?

Mr. Hiley: And I asked him to let you know.

Mr. WALLACE: Well, he did not, and my reason for raising the matter today is to voice the protest of the people concerned—the amateur fishermen of Cairns and district—at the failure of the Treasurer to recognise their request for a deputation.

Mr. Hiley: They made no protest. They came and saw me later and made no objection.

Mr. WALLACE: They did not, but later Mr. Ernst came to Brisbane on holidays and he had a conversation with the Treasurer. I had told the Treasurer that I believed that certain matters would be learned from the deputation that might lead to a modification of the legislation for that part of the State. Mr. Ernst visited Brisbane. We had not been advised that the Treasurer would receive a deputation. We had wanted other people to be on the deputation, too. Mr. Ernst returned to Cairns and it was only because I called in to see him one day that I was able to glean from him that he had been in touch with the Treasurer. The fact that he tells me that certain amendments to the legislation have been accepted following the advice he gave the Treasurer is proof positive that at least if the Minister had received the deputation he would have learned a few things about fishing in that area, and it proved to the people of Cairns and district that the Minister's advisers were not fully au fait with the requirements of the area. To date no mention has been made, in the Press anyway, of the results of the Treasurer's discussions, so the people of the Far North do not know what went on. I suggest that the Treasurer give some thought to making the result of that discussion with Mr. Ernst available to them. We know there has been some amendment about the measurement of garfish and about prawns, which is to the good of the fisherman. While I try to be fair to both sides, it was more or less intimated that I had not taken the trouble to write to the Treasurer, which, of course, is completely wrong. I suggest that he might tell us what happened.

Much has been said today about housing and other subjects. I do not want to hammer them at this hour but the Treasurer might consider providing single units, like bed-sitting rooms, for single people, and especially single women. There are many single women

in Brisbane, and indeed throughout the State, who cannot afford to pay high board and who are looking for accommodation such as that. I am sure they would greatly appreciate it.

Furthermore, the Treasurer might be able to give me some information today on the matter I spoke to him about on Friday concerning people who received an eviction notice in the Bungalow area.

Mr. Hiley: I have sent word out but I have not heard yet.

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East) (3.59 p.m.): Owing to the shortage of time left in the debate I shall have to confine my remarks to the Workers' Compensation Act and the State Government Insurance Office. As one who has come into very close contact with the activities of that office, I am very pleased to note that it continues to progress. Not only has it provided the people of Queensland with the cheapest insurance cover in Australia but it also renders valuable assistance in the economic life and the development of the State and the Commonwealth. By wise guidance under the management of a succession of excellent commissioners the office has invested £36,224,836. At present it is under the control of Mr. J. McGrath, who, since the amendment of the legislation during the life of the past Parliament, has had the title of General Manager. Of this amount, almost £27,000,000 has gone to local bodies, £3,259,074 being invested during the year under review.

Loans to the value of £175,673 were granted to co-operative building societies during the year, making a grand total of £400,000 that the State Government Insurance Office has either granted or allocated to these societies.

Almost £9,000,000 is invested in Commonwealth inscribed stock. I know that the Treasurer is proud of this office and very pleased to witness its continued success and ever keen to increase its efficiency and its service to the public generally. But I doubt very much whether any other phase of the workings of the office gives him greater satisfaction than the return the office gets from its investment in Commonwealth stock. He must feel that this is one occasion on which the Commonwealth have to give value for services rendered by our State and where discrimination cannot operate against us.

The progress the office has made is demonstrated in no uncertain way in Mr. McGrath's report. He draws attention to the remarkable increase in premium income received by the office. He states that at the end of the first decade it was £1,000,000, and at 30 June this year it had reached a figure in excess of £11,000,000. Even allowing for the present inflation that has seriously depreciated the value of the pound, it must be conceded that the growth in the business of the State Government Insurance Office has been phenomenal.

An increase in the number of claims for compensation naturally has resulted in an increase in compensation payments, which have reached a total of almost £4,750,000, an increase of 4.10 per cent. on the previous year. I think the best way to assess the value of these payments is to have some knowledge of the relief and comfort they bring to the injured workers and the worry and anxiety they remove from their families.

The ratio of claims to premiums, which is 90.2 per cent., is an indication of the efficient way in which this section of the State Government Insurance Office is managed. Less than 10 per cent. of the premiums is absorbed in meeting the costs of administering this section of the office's activities; the remainder goes to the injured worker. I think this is as it should be. Premiums are paid to compensate the injured worker for his loss of earnings and to assist him and his family in a small way to meet medical and hospital costs, not to build up huge profits.

The profit of £34,749 on the year's operations should not call for any adverse comment. A small profit—a profit in excess of that, probably—is justified to meet any crisis that may arise, any disaster that may take the lives of a number of workers at once, such as the big mine disaster we had at Mt. Mulligan some years ago or a big rail disaster.

The profit of £400,546 shown in the profit and loss account is the result of wise investment, and for that the management is to be commended. So successful has this section of the State Government Insurance Office been that it has been decided to grant employers a bonus of 5 per cent. on the premiums paid last year.

It is very pleasing to see that a profit has resulted from the operations under Section 14B. This section covers mining diseases and has been a drain on the ordinary account and domestic workers' compensation account for some years. That is because the people who paid the premiums to cover mining diseases—for example, metalliferous mining companies and gold mines—are no longer operating and the victims have been left behind. This has meant increases in the premiums, and in many cases increased compensation payments. The profit of £126,601 is therefore satisfactory.

Hon. members will recall that this section of the Act was amended during the life of the last Parliament by repealing the restriction of compensation to those workers who had last been employed in mining not more than 15 years prior to making their application for compensation. I move on to the Life Department where we find that that section of the State Government Insurance Office finished the year with a surplus of £757,520. The Fire Department had a record surplus or profit of £445,565, and the office has been able to approve a profit distribution of 33½ per cent. to policyholders. The General Insurance

Department has shown a profit of £89,696. The Marine Department has shown a profit of £14,199, with a profit distribution of 15 per cent. on premiums. The investments in debentures of local bodies, and in loans to co-operative housing societies gives some idea of the value of the State Government Insurance Office to the people of the State. It reveals how wrong were the people who opposed the establishment of this office so bitterly on the floor of this Chamber and in the Legislative Council. When we speak of workers' compensation paid by the State Government Insurance Office we must not lose sight of the fact that the establishment of that office was vigorously resisted by the opponents of the Labour Party, both inside and outside of Parliament, even to the extent of an appeal to the Privy Council.

The Legislative Council was abolished almost 40 years ago. It is apparent that its abolition has not interfered with the good Government of the State. I do not think any sensible person wishes to return to the two-Chamber system of Government in Queensland.

The State Government Insurance Office has functioned successfully during this period, and has confounded its critics. Its outstanding success is a tribute to the foresight of those responsible for its establishment and a vindication of Labour's forethought and policy.

It might be interesting to read from the report of John Goodwin, Insurance Commissioner, on 31 August, 1917. He reported—

"The sum of £20,000, appropriated under section 5 of 'The Workers' Compensation Act of 1916' for the purpose of establishing the State Accident Insurance Office, was duly paid over by the Treasurer, but having been repaid immediately, is omitted entirely from the attached accounts."

That establishes the fact that the office did not cost the State or the people of the State one penny piece. The report continues—

"A study of the many legal text-books on Workers' Compensation which have been published discloses that in the nineteen years during which the Imperial Workers' Compensation Acts have been in force, thousands of cases have been taken to Court, apparently with the deliberate intention of depriving injured workers and their dependants on merely technical grounds of the compensation which Parliament undoubtedly intended to provide for them. During the ten years the Act of 1905 was in force over 200 cases came before the North Brisbane Police Court alone, from which I estimate that the total number of cases contested in all Queensland courts during that period must have amounted to many hundreds, if not thousands.

"This procedure in most cases involved delays, uncertainty, and expense to the applicant, and undoubtedly resulted in much hardship."

Is it any wonder that the workers through their unions and political representatives at that time should ask that the business of workers' compensation be taken from private enterprise and made a State monopoly? The wisdom of the Labour Government in passing legislation to establish the State Government Insurance Office with sole control of workers' compensation in Queensland, is revealed by the success of that office. It removed any doubt about fair play to the workers, and the necessity to engage in many legal battles before workers' compensation was paid.

I wish to touch briefly on what the Treasurer said when introducing his Estimates. I will skip very briefly over that portion in which he told us that people engaged in dairy-farming and other forms of primary industry had been relieved of the payment of land tax. It is interesting to note that the number paying land tax has been reduced from 1,172 to 334, and that their contribution to the State by way of land tax has been reduced from almost £23,000 to a little over £7,000.

The Treasurer took hon. members for a trip from the Manly boat harbour up the coast of Queensland to Cooktown, but nothing pleased me more than his report that something is being done to remove the obstacle presented by 17-Mile Rocks to the movement of vessels between Brisbane and Ipswich, particularly the coal barges that ply up to the Bremer River. If the dredging operations that are now going on remove the obstacle that has been present since man first came to Australia, the expense involved will be repaid over and over again, particularly when it is considered that vessels are now held up on the upstream side of 17-Mile Rocks for as much time as it would take them to reach Brisbane if the obstacle were removed. In addition to that, as the Treasurer pointed out, it will make available beds from which sand and gravel can be dredged for use in building operations in Brisbane. In that regard I emphasise the Treasurer's statement that we are in the fortunate position of being able to get good sand and excellent gravel at a cost very much below that at which it is available in the other capital cities of Australia.

If that is the only improvement effected the expenditure will be worth while. However, in addition to that it is proposed to improve the depth of water in the Hamilton reach for berthing purposes. That will be appreciated by everyone. If that shipping basin, which is close to the mouth of the river, is deepened, I think all hon. members will agree that a big improvement will have been achieved.

The Treasurer also mentioned the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund, and said that an amendment would be made to it. If an amendment is made, I should like to see the remuneration payable to contributors who have gone out of Parliament,

either voluntarily or after having been defeated, increased from the present inadequate amount of £5 a week minimum and £7 maximum to whatever is to be provided for present members of Parliament. I think it is entirely wrong to keep those people on such a low superannuation payment when present hon. members of Parliament think it should be increased many times over. Those men have to live just as we do, and some of them have given this Parliament and this country many years of valuable and unselfish service. Some of them have served in this Parliament for perhaps longer than some of those who are at present in it and who will enjoy the increased benefits that may result.

I think the Superannuation Fund should be strong enough to stand an increase along the lines that I have suggested. If not, and if the payments in respect of present members are increased, let us see that former members are brought up to the same standard even if we have to give them a bit of ours. I shudder to think what would have happened if the pensions granted to retired mine-workers had remained at £2 a week instead of being increased from time to time.

I should now like to touch briefly on the subject of co-operative building societies. I appreciate—and have from time to time expressed such appreciation in this Chamber—the valuable services that these societies in Ipswich give to home-seekers there. But I doubt whether the legislation that was passed some years ago creating these building societies and enabling them to get money from the Commonwealth Government in addition to money provided by the State Government, was really worth while, or whether these building societies are serving the purpose for which they were created. I have no doubt that the homes they build are not nearly as good as those built by the Housing Commission and that the conditions they offer for the borrowing of money by people building homes are not nearly as generous as those of the Housing Commission. It is therefore to be regretted that the number of houses built by the Commission has, with the exception of one year, decreased progressively each year since 1956-1957. In that year 1,912 homes were completed; in the following year 1,504; in 1958-59, 1,781 and in 1959-1960, 1,452. From 1951-1952 to 1954-1955 over 2,000 homes were completed each year, and the number completed in 1952-1953 was 862 more than last year.

The Government cannot have it both ways. They cannot claim that they are building more homes in Queensland when the Commissioner for Housing shows conclusively that the number completed is considerably less this year than in previous years. I do not doubt the claim that more homes are being built in Queensland, but it is my definite opinion that homes built other than through the Housing Commission are not built as cheaply or as well as Housing Commission homes, and that the conditions offered to people building homes through other than

the Commission are not nearly as advantageous as conditions under the various schemes of the Housing Commission.

From time to time Housing Commissioners and Ministers for Housing have inspected land at Redbank, which has a growing community. New railway workshops were being built there, but unfortunately that work has now ceased. We thought we would need many homes for people who were living there and who would be attracted there with the growth of industry. I ask the Treasurer to do all he possibly can to resist the proposal of the Department of Main Roads to by-pass the village of Redbank and build the proposed detour, which will make necessary the removal of homes built by the Housing Commission.

The Treasurer spent some time in dealing with what he called the enjoyable, clean and advantageous sport of water ski-ing, which has become very popular at Indooroopilly during week-ends. I think it should be prohibited on that reach of the river, not because of any danger on the water, but because of the traffic hazard created by the cars not only of those who are taking part in the sport, but also of spectators. Many people use the road to go to the Nudgee Junior College and pick up the lads who are boarding there. I go there quite frequently, and conditions are definitely dangerous. People who ski on that part of the river, and spectators as well, park their cars on the side of the road, leaving very little space for other traffic. The problem should be given some attention by traffic authorities, and I think they would be justified in requiring that the sport be conducted at some other place. I repeat that I put this forward not because of any danger on the water but because of the traffic hazard created by parked vehicles.

I want to refer now to the great difficulty in getting homes that is experienced by people who are not in a position to purchase homes outright or through any available scheme. It is idle for the Government to say that they are providing sufficient accommodation for the people. They are not building rental homes and, irrespective of the conditions under which some families are forced to live, they find difficulty in getting rental homes.

The hon. member for Bulimba was very caustic in his criticism of further building at Inala. Anyone who travels by train between Ipswich and Brisbane, after seeing the number of people who get on the train or disembark from it at Darra, is forced to agree with him. They are in droves, and the additional expense that they have to incur in travelling to and from work, is unjustifiable. There are hundreds of acres adjacent to the main line, with transport available within easy reach, and served by water and electric light. It seems ridiculous that so much money should be spent to provide homes for people so far from their

place of employment. It is the only place where I can obtain Housing Commission homes for rental for people who come to me for help.

It is more desirable for a person to start paying off his home than to rent a home, but it is beyond the capabilities of many young people to accumulate a deposit for building a home because of the operations of land speculators. It costs almost a fortune to buy an allotment of land, before thinking about the deposit on a home, and these people are forced to seek rental homes.

The Treasurer paid a compliment to Mr. Deacon and Mr. Stevens. From the little business I have had to conduct with them I am able to confirm his statements, and I also express my appreciation of the assistance they have rendered me whenever I have had dealings with them.

In relation to Mr. Burke, the manager of the Golden Casket, I agree with the Minister's statement that his policy of refusing requests from various members of Parliament for agencies to be given to people for whom they have made representations is the correct one. It is likely that but for that policy, we would have got them into difficulties. I do not object to it because he has been given the job of managing an art union that has been of tremendous value to Queensland in providing money for hospitals, and he deserves all the support we can give him. I remember that year after year I asked him to grant an agency to a certain person in Booval, and I emphasised that there was no agency between Ipswich and Brisbane. My request was consistently refused, but eventually the agency was granted. However, the great promise that was envisaged in the first couple of weeks that the agency was open has not materialised.

(Time expired.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! By agreement, and under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 13 October, I shall now put the questions necessary for the Vote under consideration and for the balance remaining unvoted for the Treasurer and Housing.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to:—

The Treasurer and Housing—

Treasury	£1,404,585
Balance of Department, Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds, and Loan Fund Account	£48,534,487

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 4.27 p.m.