

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 6 OCTOBER 1964**

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**TUESDAY, 6 OCTOBER, 1964**

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

**MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

Assent reported by Mr. Speaker.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his report on the public accounts of the State for the year 1963-64.

Ordered to be printed.

**QUESTIONS**

**DERAILMENTS OF COAL HOPPERS, MOURA-GLADSTONE RAILWAY LINE.**—Mr. Thackeray, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

(1) How many coal hoppers have been derailed during the months of June, July, August and September, 1964, between Moura and Gladstone?

(2) How many coal hoppers have been damaged beyond repair during each of these months?

(3) How many tons of coal have been lost on account of these derailments?

(4) What is the cost of these derailments to his Department?

(5) As these derailments have been happening frequently, can he say what has been the cause?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Sixty-seven."

(2) "None."

(3) "Five hundred and sixty-one."

(4) "Not yet available."

(5) "These derailments are believed to be due to a number of causes, all of which are being enquired into."

**EXAMINATION TIME TABLES FOR TRADE APPRENTICES.**—Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) Does the proposed amended syllabus concerning trade apprentices, provide for daytime examinations?

(2) Does this allow that in certain instances candidates for examination will be required to sit for up to three subjects

on the one day? If so, is he prepared to amend the syllabus to provide that each subject shall be allotted one half-day?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Yes."

(2) "No determination has been made regarding future examination time tables."

**TRUCK WORK ON BOWEN-COLLINSVILLE ROAD CONSTRUCTION.**—Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

(1) Has the Main Roads Department hired trucks and drivers from the Bowen Shire Council on a day labour basis for work on the Bowen-Collinsville Road, and if so, for what reason?

(2) Was any endeavour made to recruit private owner-drivers for this work?

*Answers:—*

(1) "The Bowen Shire Council is the constructing authority and uses its own trucks on day labour works."

(2) "Yes. Two owner-driver water trucks are consistently employed, and additional owner-drivers are engaged when necessary."

**BEEF CATTLE ROADS, MOUNT SURPRISE.**—Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

In view of the Treasurer's statement in the debate on Supply on August 25 concerning transport from Cairns to Mount Surprise,—

(1) When will the Mount Surprise-Georgetown section be completed?

(2) When will the Hann Highway-Mount Surprise section be completed?

*Answers:—*

In view of the Honourable Member's statement in this House on September 3, 1963, and I quote "This brings me to beef cattle roads. Irrespective of how much publicity is given to these roads, they will do nothing to increase the number of cattle in the cattle country", I am surprised that he bothers to show any interest in the beef roads scheme at all. However, to answer his Questions—

(1) "The specified date for completion of Georgetown-Mount Surprise section is September 1965."

(2) Completion of the section from Mount Surprise to the Kennedy Highway is aimed at for June 1966."

EXPENDITURE ON MACHINERY, BRISBANE ABATTOIR.—Mr. Newton asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

(1) What was the amount expended in connection with the replacement or installation of new machinery at the Brisbane Abattoir in each financial year from 1957-1958 to 1963-1964?

(2) What types of machinery were covered by this expenditure?—(Originally asked on September 24.)

Answer:—

“Further to my reply on Thursday, September 24, 1964, I now lay on the Table of the House tabulated statements containing the information requested.”

Papers.—Whereupon Mr. Row laid upon the Table of the House the statements referred to.

### PAPERS

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

Reports—

Nominal Defendant (Queensland) for the year 1963-64.

President of the Industrial Court for the year 1963-64.

Director-General, Queensland Tourist Services for the year 1963-64.

Chief Safety Engineer, Chief Inspector of Machinery and Scaffolding and Weights and Measures for the year 1963-64.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamation under—

The State Development and Public Works Organisation Acts, 1938 to 1958, The Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1955, and The Petroleum Acts, 1923 to 1962.

Orders in Council under—

The Harbours Acts, 1955 to 1964.

The Racing and Betting Acts, 1954 to 1963.

The Sewerage, Water Supply and Gas-fitting Acts, 1949 to 1960.

The State Enterprises Repeal and “The Under Secretary, Department of Labour and Industry” Corporation Act of 1931.

The City of Brisbane Market Acts, 1960 to 1962.

The Fauna Conservation Act of 1952.

The Stock Acts, 1915 to 1960.

The Explosives Acts, 1952 to 1963.

Regulations under The Banana Industry Protection Acts, 1929 to 1937.

### FORM OF QUESTION

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) having given notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have to re-draft his question.

Mr. BENNETT: There is some evidence of that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The question will be completely disallowed if the hon. member passes remarks.

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (11.23 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to order under Standing Order No. 115. You have been most consistent—I say this deliberately—in your rulings under Standing Order No. 69 on questions asked by hon. members on this side of the House. I wish now to draw your attention to the answer given this morning by the Minister acting for the Minister for Mines to a question asked by the hon. member for Tablelands.

Standing Order No. 70 states that in answering a question a member shall not debate the matter to which the question refers. The question asked by the hon. member for Tablelands was a simple one, and in my opinion the preamble to the answer breached Standing Order No. 70.

I hope that in future, when dealing with answers to questions, you will be just as consistent as you are when ruling on questions asked of Ministers. I should like your ruling on the particular answer to which I have referred.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think I have already made it amply clear that unfortunately I have no control over answers prepared by Ministers. It is not my prerogative to peruse them. If answers are given in a certain form, I think that is entirely up to the Minister concerned. However, let me say also that, in answering questions, it is the responsibility of Ministers, just as it is the responsibility of other hon. members, to maintain decorum. If questions are framed in the correct way, I think the answers should also be framed in a like manner.

Mr. LLOYD: There is one further point that I should like to raise in regard to the rule. When hon. members give notice of questions that are obviously out of order, they are excised from the reports of proceedings of Parliament. When the reply of a Minister to a question is obviously out of order, I submit that it, too, should be excised from the reports of proceedings of this House.

## DEATH OF MR. G. H. MARRIOTT

## MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

**Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN** (Landsborough—Premier) (11.26 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late George Henry Marriott, Esquire, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.

"2. That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the relatives of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss they have sustained."

I move this motion with a great deal of regret, because I am one of the few members of this House who was also a member during the period that the late George Marriott was a member of the Parliament of Queensland. I believe that all those who knew him respected him for his sincerity and for the way in which he carried out his duties as a member of Parliament.

The late George Marriott, who, by the way, died at the ripe old age of 78 years, was elected to the 28th Parliament as the representative for the Bulimba electorate at the general election on 2 April, 1938, and served until 28 April, 1950, a period of 12 years. It is inevitable that, one by one, the ranks of the retired parliamentarians of this State are thinning with the passing of the years, and from time to time we have the sad duty of recording a message of appreciation of the services of those gentlemen to the State and conveying a message of condolence to their relatives. Most of us who knew the late George Marriott remember him as a quiet, somewhat reserved, slow-spoken man, who always sat in the right-hand rear corner of the Chamber, as it was then. He did not speak in the House very frequently; but, when he did, he spoke with fluent earnestness in support of the principles and ideals that he espoused and in which he believed sincerely. He was constant in his attendance in this Chamber, being absent from his place only rarely, and he gave great service to the electors whom he represented. That is indicated, I think, by the fact that he enjoyed their support for so long.

He was a man who had strong convictions, and he had the courage of his convictions. He served his State and his constituents to the very best of his ability. In addition to the service that he gave to the State and his constituents as a member of Parliament, he had a fine record of community service in the area from which he came. He was a foundation councillor of the old Balmoral Shire Council before the advent of Greater Brisbane, a foundation member of the Bulimba Kindergarten Committee, and, for several years, treasurer of the Cannon Hill School of Arts. That is an example of the zealous work he carried out for the good of

the community and of the support he gave to efforts directed towards the welfare of the district in which he lived. He gave very fine service to this State and very sincere service in community work. He was admired for those qualities by all who came in contact with him and had the privilege of knowing him.

On behalf of the Government of this State I express deepest sympathy for the relatives of the late George Marriott and reiterate that he gave excellent service to the State as a member of this Parliament during the time he represented the electorate of Bulimba.

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 a.m.): On behalf of the Opposition, I join with the Premier in recording in the pages of "Hansard" our sympathy at the loss sustained by the relatives and friends of the late Mr. Marriott. I do not know that I can usefully add anything to what the Premier has said because I think he has given a very accurate portrayal of the late gentleman's characteristics.

It is true that he was a man who was very quiet in his demeanour. He held very strong convictions and identified himself very strongly with various aspects of community life. His death was not altogether unexpected. After the loss of his wife some little time ago, there was a sudden marked deterioration in his health and, because of his relatively advanced years—he was 78 years of age—I do not think that his death was altogether unexpected.

Mr. Marriott served in the A.L.P. for quite a while and because of his very intense convictions in regard to a movement at the time associated with a later ally of ours, namely, the U.S.S.R., he joined in a campaign for the export of sheepskins to Russia. As a result of his identification with this particular group he fell into conflict with the policy of the Labour Party at that time and suffered the penalty of being expelled from the party because of his refusal to disassociate himself from the group.

Steps of this kind are not taken lightly by any major political party because, when one is associated with a party over a long period of time friendships develop and the sense of loyalty in all political members is such that they will endeavour to persuade a person to apologise or amend his views to accord with the policy of the party to which he is attached. Mr. Marriott felt so strongly on this matter that he refused to do that, but a measure of the esteem in which he was held because of his convictions was that despite his divorcement from the A.L.P. he was able to win the seat as an Independent and to be re-elected on the same basis at subsequent elections.

He took part in debates in this House regularly, concentrating his activities mainly on industrial matters of which he was well

qualified to speak because of his long association, in an executive capacity, with a large industrial organisation in this State.

For the things that he did in this House, for the contributions he made, for the esteem in which he was obviously held by the people in this community, we in this Parliament must record our appreciation of those events and qualities and express our sense of loss to his relatives.

On behalf of the Opposition I regretfully record in the pages of "Hansard" sincere sorrow at the passing of one who served this Parliament and the State with distinction.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South) (11.35 a.m.): I want to associate myself very sincerely with the sentiments expressed by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, sentiments which unfortunately are occasioned by the death of the late George Marriott.

I am not going to detail what I was up against when I came into this Parliament in 1944. With the indirect but very valuable assistance of the present hon. member for Burdekin I committed the unpardonable sin in the eyes of a lot of political party fanatics in that I won a seat that that party considered, by some divine right or other, as belonging to them. So that when I came into this Parliament I felt that the atmosphere—to put it lightly—was indeed very strained. Seeing that this is a motion of condolence I will not go any further than that.

Among those who also were in the position of being personally and politically untouchable was the late George Marriott. He had been a member of the A.L.P. and the trade-union movement since early boyhood. As a matter of fact he played a very prominent part in the establishment of the trade-union movement as we know it in Queensland today. At one time he was on the Board of Control of the Trades and Labour Council. He was even a member of the Q.C.E., the controlling body of the A.L.P. As has been mentioned, he was the A.L.P. member for Bulimba from 1938 until, I think, 1942, when, because of his sincerely-held convictions, he decided to leave the party. He was never expelled; he was told he should either come in or go out. If he came in he had to abide by some nebulous ruling given by the Federal Executive of the A.L.P.

**Mr. Walsh** interjected.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I thank the hon. member for Bundaberg, who himself was then a very prominent member of the A.L.P. Because of the late George Marriott's sincere convictions on this particular point he refused to go into the Caucus room but remained, right to the end of his days, just as strong and sincere a Labour man as he ever was although he refused to remain in the ranks of the A.L.P.

He stayed in this House from 1942 until 1950, when he was the victim of a squeeze between the Liberal Party and the A.L.P., coupled with the tremendous swing to the Liberal Party at that election, and he was narrowly defeated in that year.

It is rather ironical for us to consider that had George Marriott been a member of the A.L.P. today and had he held the firm and sincere convictions that he held when he decided to leave the party, he would be hailed as a hero in the A.L.P., because with the A.L.P. the political wheel has turned; those who were popular in those days are unpopular today, and those who were unpopular in those days are now popular. But that is the political game all over.

When I came into this House, more or less as a human pariah dog—or treated as such—I think there were at that time three members of the A.L.P. who were game to be seen speaking to me. Many spoke to me but they would make certain that no-one was watching them when they did. As a matter of fact, I used to have a little bit of fun with some of them. When I met them in the corridors or on the stairs I would say, "Quick, say 'good day' to me before someone sees you."

George Marriott was put into a room with me, or I was put into a room with George Marriott, in a corner of the corridors downstairs. It was the first time I had ever met him. He was a political godfather to me and a tower of strength in my first troublous years in this House. He taught me all the tricks; he took me under his wing. In his kindly, homely way he said, "I do not know what you think about matters, but you are here and it is my job to see that you get off at least to a reasonably good start."

If I were to live to 100 I would never be able to completely repay George Marriott for the many little kindnesses he showed me in my first turbulent years as a member of this Parliament. It is true, as the Premier said, that he was not numbered among the great orators that this Parliament has produced, but every time he spoke he did so with a simple, honest sincerity that carried his message far more eloquently, and far more convincingly, than could some of the great orators. The very basis of his character was simplicity, sincerity and honesty.

I also had considerable associations with him because, as the Premier said, he was interested in many community activities. I should say that his particular hobby—if it may be called such—was the child-minding centre that he and a few others had established at Bulimba. Whilst a member of this Parliament I was also for a time a member of the Townsville City Council, and the party to which I belonged was controlling the destinies of that city. When we decided to establish a child-minding centre I was deputed to make some inquiries as to how these

centres were conducted in Brisbane, and I frequently visited many child-minding centres, including the one at Bulimba. The child-minding centre that we established at Townsville is mainly the result of the conversations I had with the late George Marriott on the matter.

I suppose it is one of the unfortunate facets of human nature that when people are not continually thrown together—as we were when we were both in Parliament—there is a tendency to lose touch and drift apart. Although I kept in touch with George Marriott for several years after he was unfortunately defeated in 1950, I did lose touch with him. I think I should pay a compliment to the Minister for Primary Industries because when I came to Brisbane for the opening session of this Parliament in August the Minister told me that he had received a message that George Marriott was in a nursing home in a Brisbane suburb—I think it was Coorparoo—and that he would be only too happy to make his car and chauffeur available to drive me out so that I could see George Marriott.

I thank the Minister for Primary Industries for letting me know that George was there and for providing facilities for me to visit him. I went out and spent some time with George and we talked over old happenings. Although he was then failing in health, as the Leader of the Opposition said, nevertheless he looked as if he would live for some years. I promised that I would visit him regularly and I sincerely meant to keep that promise. A few mornings later I was very distressed to receive a ring at Marr's guest-house, where I stay—I have never stayed at the Lodge for reasons which I have explained to this House very lucidly from time to time—from his daughter, who told me that her father had passed away. I expressed my sincere condolences and promised to do what I could if there was any help or assistance I could render.

In the passing of George Marriott I personally lost a very good and firm friend. He was one of the old type of Labour men; one of the type that, unfortunately, is passing away; one of the type that apparently does not seem to be catered for in the A.L.P. today. He played his part nobly and well in building the trade-union movement and the A.L.P. into what it is today. I do not know whether or not they sincerely regret his passing; that is a matter for them and their consciences. I at least sincerely regret his passing. That is why I associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.

Motion (Mr. Nicklin) agreed to, hon. members standing in silence.

## SUPPLY

### COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT— RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

(Mr. Campbell, Aspley, in the chair)

Debate resumed from 24 September (see p. 532) on Mr. Hiley's motion—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1964-65, a sum not exceeding £1,716 to defray the salary of Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor.”

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.45 a.m.): Before dealing with an examination of the Budget proper, I should like to deal with one or two minor matters; minor in the sense that they do not affect the economy of the State as a whole. I feel that they could more appropriately be dealt with at this stage.

Hon. members may recall that during the Address-in-Reply debate the hon. member for Greenslopes seized the opportunity of dealing with a matter related to the Lowood hospital. I preface what I have to say by mentioning that I think it would be a retrograde step if hon. members in this Assembly were denied the privilege that is accorded them under the Standing Orders of being free from action outside this House when, in the discharge of their public duties they raise matters that could link them with litigation if the same things were said outside; provided always, of course, that the intention behind the deliberations in the Chamber are in the public interest and for the public good. If that protection was not afforded hon. members, we would be denied from time to time the opportunity of dealing with matters of great public moment.

I wish to remind the Chamber, and have recorded in “Hansard”, that on that occasion, namely 15 September, the hon. member for Greenslopes said, amongst other things—

“I do not in any way wish to make this political or to snipe at the Australian Labour Party, but the heading of the article is ‘Hospitals Lip Service’ and it reads, ‘Lowood delegate, Mr. Walters, told the conference that the present Government was only paying lip-service to the free hospitals scheme in Queensland’, and so on. Mr. Walters went on to say that this Government was doing nothing about free hospitals in the area he represented. I want to throw that charge back in Mr. Walters's teeth because yesterday I had a phone call from a lady who was the matron of a private hospital in Lowood in 1955 and 1956. It is anybody's guess who was the owner of the premises! It was none other than Mr. Walters himself. An approach was made to the then Labour Government to have this private hospital revert to a cottage hospital. The request was turned down. I will mention the matron's name because she has given me permission to do so. She is well known

to me and was well known to the late Dr. Noble after he went to Cleveland in the 1930's—Matron Deighton. She leased these premises from Mr. Walters. Mr. Walters said that he did not want them to continue as a hospital. He said he would rather turn the premises into flats than have them as a hospital, either private or public.

"I say this only for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition. I am sure he would not want these false claims put before him by a member who attended his conference. This is factual. I challenge any hon. member to ask the Minister for Health a question as to whether representations from Lowood were made in the time of the Hon. W. M. Moore, and whether they were turned down because they did not want a small hospital there. This is the same gentleman who has condemned this Government because we have not instituted a cottage hospital. While she was in Lowood, Matron Deighton averaged two patients a month. She lost £1,500 on her business efforts there.

"Opposition Members interjected.

"Mr. HOOPER: She is telling the truth. I challenge hon. members who are so loud in their interjections to do something about it. Then we will see what Matron Deighton will do about it. She will stand up to it. If Mr. Walters has been pulling the wool over the eyes of the A.L.P. he is certainly not pulling it over the eyes of the people in Lowood. They are absolutely ashamed of what he has done by trying to make political capital out of what he himself was opposed to. He stated quite clearly at that time that he would rather see those premises converted into flats than used as a hospital. The reason the A.L.P. did not institute a cottage hospital system was that they never believed in it. It was against their policy. Mr. Walters, who was a delegate at one of their recent conferences, has really tried to pull the wool over their eyes. Matron Deighton asked that these facts be aired in the House. I congratulate her for doing so and for her stand in this matter. In this way a few home truths can be put before the members of the Opposition who were so one-eyed as to accept this gentleman when he was opposed to—"

The hon. member's time then expired.

As the hon. member for Greenslopes invited us to lay a few home truths before this Assembly, I now quote some relevant extracts from a letter that I received from Mr. J. W. Walters, the person referred to. He states—

"1. I have never at any time held any financial interest in the Lowood Private Hospital. The hospital premises are owned by Mr. John Samuel Walters, Church Street, Lowood (previously a Liberal supporter, now determined to support us).

"2. Sister Deighton (not Matron) from whom Hooper obtained his information made a sudden departure from Lowood. Her departure was planned to take place under the cover of darkness—however, she was intercepted.

"3. Sister Deighton, at the time of her departure, had incurred an indebtedness to the extent of £415 11s. 8d. for rent due on the said premises. She is currently employed by the Main Roads Department in Brisbane.

"4. Sister Deighton rented the said hospital property by way of lease on a nominal weekly rental of £3 10s. 0d. The hospital was fully furnished and partly equipped by Mr. John S. Walters and included living quarters for Sister Deighton and her two children.

"5. Sister Deighton did not inform Hooper truthfully regarding the reasons for her departure when she claimed she was averaging only two patients per month.

"6. After Sister Deighton's departure, she refused to transfer the hospital licence and held out for excessive consideration. Her attitude considerably delayed the re-opening of the hospital.

"7. Eventually, Mr. John S. Walters was able to re-open the hospital under the control of a Sister O'Connell and in order that Sister O'Connell be given every assistance, Mr. Walters refrained from accepting rent for a period of six months.

"8. A proposal to convert the Lowood Private Hospital to a cottage type hospital was never made. An attempt to convert the existing hospital to a community hospital was made. Apparently, Hooper, due to his lack of intelligence, does not understand the distinction.

"9. Owing to insufficient public support, the proposed Community Hospital never became a reality. The monies so subscribed were offered to Mr. John S. Walters in lieu of loss of rent. He declined the offer and suggested the amount held be donated to the Lowood Branch of the Q.C.W.A. and that organisation was extremely grateful to receive it.

"10. Ultimately, due to lack of adequate finance, the hospital closed and eventually was converted into flats.

"11. I further point out that as the town of Lowood has been without the services of a permanent medical practitioner for nine months an approach was made by the Lowood Branch of the A.L.P. to the State Department of Health for assistance. The reply from that Department contained the information that the present Government could not meet the requirements of the Public Hospitals in Queensland for Medical Officers and therefore could not assist us but suggested we approach the Australian Medical Association (Q'land Branch), Kelvin Grove, Brisbane."

I think it only fair to say these things because they refute allegations made against a person well known in Lowood in an attack made under the privilege of a parliamentary speech to which the person concerned has not the opportunity to reply. The alleged facts ventilated by the hon. member for Greenslopes are palpably untrue and were made, I suggest, for the purpose of attracting some odium to Mr. Walters. I want to indicate and have permanently recorded my belief that attacks of this kind should not be made, and I regret very much indeed that the hon. member, either unwittingly or premeditatedly, saw fit to launch an attack with what now appears to be not a bomb but a very damp squib.

There has been considerable discussion here of the proposed shipping service to Thursday Island and the Gulf ports. The hon. member for Tablelands has had quite a lot to say on this matter, and in this debate he will amplify considerably some of the general remarks that I have to make.

For the information of hon. members, I should like to refresh their memories by pointing out that on 9 September I asked the Premier whether he would agree to have an examination made of the general position of providing for the sea transport of goods in the areas affected—the Gulf ports and Thursday Island—and that the Premier, in quite a long reply, declined to accede to my request. He stated that the fears were completely groundless, and, because of the apparent importance to himself and to his Government of this matter, he replied at greater length than is customary.

His reply claimed very great prominence in the newspapers, and, following its publication, I received a letter from a director of the company concerned. It is a copy of a letter forwarded to the Premier after the statement that he made on behalf of the Government in this Chamber, and this is what Mr. McGrath had to say—

"Dear Mr. Nicklin,

"Re Shipping Service to Cape York,  
Thursday Island and Gulf Areas

"In connection with the above subject and a question asked of your good self in the House this morning, we have been given to understand that the attached represents the actual text of your reply."

Attached to the letter was a copy of the reply that the Premier gave in the House. He went on to say—

"Now, Sir, we know you to be an honest and honourable gentleman, one who would not deliberately mishandle facts, and we are therefore taking the liberty of drawing your attention to some glaring inaccuracies in your reply.

"To keep our reply concise, we will deal with your reply paragraph by paragraph."

I shall not take up the time of the Committee by reading the paragraphs of the Premier's reply; they can be found in the "Hansard" for that particular day.

Mr. McGrath continued—

"Paragraph 2. Whilst it is a fact that the Keith Hollands Shipping Company will have two vessels based on Cairns, it has yet to be proved if the number of services will be doubled. You mention that a new and regular service will be provided to points such as Cooktown, Portland Roads, Marina Plains and Red Island Point.

"Cooktown. We have provided a 4-weekly service from Brisbane to Cooktown with transshipment at Cairns. Because of lack of water in Cooktown Harbour all cargo shipped from Brisbane and/or Townsville was transhipped at Cairns at a loss on each ton. Hayles Limited have provided a twice per week service from Cairns to Cooktown, whilst in addition there is a regular road transport service.

"Portland Roads. Has been serviced by 'Waiben' once every four weeks and by the 'VFC2' operating out of Cairns to Weipa fortnightly.

"Marina Plains has been catered for twice per month by the 'VFC2' and as required by the 'Melita' (Bert Cummings). We would point out that the 'Katoora', because of her draft, will not be able to service this point and we doubt if the 'Maluka' will be able to do so either—both roadsteads can only be serviced by very shallow drafted craft.

"For your information we enclose a page from the 'Torres News' which you will notice carries an advertisement relating to the service provided by the 'VFC2'.

"Paragraph 4. Your statement 'On the West Coast, the points regularly serviced by the old Company were Normanton, Burketown and Mornington Island, the service approximating four visits per year.' It is quite apparent that you have been misled by your advisers as under the term of our contract we have been servicing the three points mentioned twelve times per year or every four weeks (the contract actually specified not less than ten trips). One service a year has been omitted and this during the wet season to permit the Gulf vessel to be surveyed.

"We feel that grave injustice has been done our Company for the statement to be made that the new service will provide a twice a week call as against once a quarter.

"In addition to the ports of Normanton, Burketown and Mornington Island, we have serviced Weipa, Aurukun, the Mitchell and Edward Rivers as and when required and Karumba.

"Mornington Island. As for the Government having steps in mind that will ensure a far greater frequency of service at no added cost to the Mission, we would agree to the possibility with the qualification that there must be some considerable cost to the Government by way of extra transport



costs. Incidentally, we delivered to Morn-  
ington Island direct as an additional service  
—it was not included in our contract.

“Sir, we do feel that the criticism in  
paragraph 8, viz. ‘There are no grounds  
for fear except by those interests who will  
lose their protected and privileged position’  
is rather unfair. We presume the statement  
refers to this Company whereas the parties  
mainly concerned are the merchants and  
consignees in the areas which will be  
affected.

“Finally we would respectfully challenge  
the correctness of the last sentence ‘Some  
areas will now receive a transport service  
who previously had no transport service  
at all’.

“Reverting to Thursday Island, we have  
provided a four-weekly service all the year  
round. In this trade where the regular  
vessel has been withdrawn for overhaul  
a substitute vessel has always been  
provided.

“On our present bookings there is  
irrefutable evidence merchants and other  
consignees are stocking up.”

Before dealing with a later letter from Mr.  
McGrath on this subject, I should like to  
point out that on the occasion of the  
second-last trip to Thursday Island by the  
“Waiben”, I think for the first time for very  
many years the company was unable to  
accept all the cargo offering because of  
the panic buying by people in the North who  
were anticipating an inability on the part of  
the new contractor to provide a service as  
satisfactory as that previously given by  
this company. Indeed, it is more than  
passing strange that among those who  
increased their orders was the State Govern-  
ment itself. The State Stores had a con-  
siderable quantity of desks and other school  
equipment to be sent to Thursday Island and  
they tried to get them on this vessel. Supplies  
of coke for Thursday Island Hospital were  
well above their normal volume because of  
apparent fears that the same service would  
not be provided in the future. As a result,  
we had the spectacle of the “Waiben” being  
obliged to leave in Brisbane a considerable  
volume of cargo that it could not convey to  
Thursday Island because of overloading.

I think this provides irrefutable evidence  
that those who are close to the position,  
those who are on the site, not only have  
some doubts but have grave fears about the  
ability of the Government to provide this  
service. What is more, the head of the  
State, who had the opportunity by virtue  
of his position of contacting responsible  
members of his Government and the Public  
Service to seek information, used his  
position, prestige and authority in this  
Chamber to give a considered statement of  
Government policy on this matter, which  
affects so many hundreds of people, a state-  
ment that was inaccurate in very many  
instances.

I think it is time that a protest was made  
at this indifference on the part of the  
Government in simply shuffling off people  
who have provided a service to the State.  
The Premier said premeditatedly that the  
only persons concerned were those who had  
a self-interest—namely, the shipping line  
concerned. Why should they not have a  
self-interest when they have hundreds of  
thousands tied up in a service that they have  
been operating for about 80 years, employ-  
ing Queensland personnel and using funds  
provided very largely by Queensland share-  
holders? Why should they not be concerned  
about this matter? The Government does  
not seem to be at all concerned about giving  
it away, virtually to a southern combine,  
namely, Thomas Nationwide Transport, which  
is the real owner of the Hollands shipping  
service, to provide an inferior service to the  
areas concerned.

Despite the responsibility of the Govern-  
ment in this matter it seems to me that they  
have not planned this operation as well as  
they should because, in addition to the  
letter which I have just read, I am in  
receipt of a further letter, dated 17th  
September, which is subsequent to the  
other one and which contained a copy of  
a letter, under date 16th September, sent  
by John Burke Ltd. to the Chairman of  
the Carpentaria Shire Council, Normanton,  
and the Chairman of the Burke Shire  
Council, Burketown, which reads as follows—

“Re Shipping Service to Gulf of Carpentaria  
Ports

“As you are aware, the ‘Waiben’s’ last  
sailing from Brisbane to connect with  
‘Korara’ for the usual Gulf of Carpentaria  
Ports will be from Brisbane, Saturday,  
17th October.

“Notwithstanding numerous statements  
that have appeared in the local and  
Northern press, attributed to Cabinet  
Ministers stating that Hollands will be  
providing a more frequent, a better and  
cheaper service to the Gulf, we cannot  
get any details of this service.”

After all, if these things are so good and  
have been planned, why cannot somebody  
find out about them?

The letter continues—

“As any service to the Gulf operated  
by Hollands will depend on a rail connec-  
tion Brisbane to Cairns, we have phoned  
the Railway Department approximately  
twice a week for some months in an  
endeavour to obtain details of the arrange-  
ment. It appears that to this day at any  
rate no decision has been reached so,  
in other words, Hollands has got nothing  
by way of a concrete proposal to service  
the Gulf when we leave off.

“Yesterday the Merchandise Manager of  
a northern house approached Hollands and  
is alleged to have been told that at this  
juncture Hollands did not have a con-  
tract with anyone and therefore was not  
in a position to give freight quotations

to anyone. He said that he hoped to be able to convey goods from Brisbane to Normanton for £18 and from Cairns to Normanton for £15. This is rather interesting as, in view of the present concession rail rate Brisbane to Cairns being £10, he will have to find someone to cart for him from Cairns to Normanton for £8.

"It appears that he is negotiating with Burton Bros. for transport from Cairns right through to Normanton but as yet he has no contract with them.

"It is also understood that there is no proposal yet for delivery to Burketown and the suggestion is that Burketown can arrange to collect their goods from Normanton.

"Apart from our Company's own particular interest, we are naturally concerned that no satisfactory arrangements have been provided for the Gulf.

"It was because of the foregoing that we wired both Shire Council Chairmen today as under—

'View Waibens last sailing from Brisbane seventeenth October and failure Government or Hollands to announce details alternative service to Gulf suggest you use every means your disposal press for announcement of the better service promised'.

"As regards Mornington, there is the suggestion that a boat will be located at Normanton to service Mornington but frankly we cannot see this being an economic venture.

"Our information is that during the wet season the Cairns/Forsyth portion of the road and the Croydon/Normanton section are untrafficable.

"Frankly, we think it is about time that the people of the Gulf rallied together and took some action to have the position clarified.

"As regards our own Company, we would still be interested in continuing a service to the Gulf of Carpentaria if such was economically possible but without some form of subsidy we cannot continue to run."

Since those announcements we have heard that the company proposes to dispose of its vessel, so we are losing a very well-known vessel that has been providing a service for a number of years. In contrast to what the Queensland Government claims it is doing, and has failed to do satisfactorily, the Western Australian Government is giving incentives and encouragement to shipping operators in that State to service the Gulf ports from Western Australia. It is possible that with this encouragement we will be losing trade from Brisbane and the intermediate ports to Cairns that should be retained for this State. When we consider the amount of goods traffic now being lost by the railways because merchants in Victoria and South Australia are using the road from South Australia for entry into Queensland through the western portion of this State, we

realise that the Queensland Government certainly is not acting up to its responsibilities in this matter.

I will now deal with some matters which I think are very important. I preface my general remarks by saying that we looked to see whether we could concentrate on one or two particular matters that seemed to us to be crying out for some comment from responsible members on this side. But we find that there are so many aspects of Government administration that can be dealt with as the Treasurer would expect on an occasion such as this that it will be necessary for various Opposition members to deal with different facets of Government administration. Therefore there will be a very wide debate on industrial matters, some aspects of the cost of living, hospital administration, railways, industrial unrest, education, land matters—indeed, the whole field of Government administration very properly can be brought under review in a debate of this kind.

Particular speakers will deal with matters that I have raised in a general way, including the recent decision to close certain suburban police stations which, unquestionably, was very hastily conceived and was done in a very surreptitious manner while Parliament was in recess. This is a decision which affects a great number of people. All I want to say in a sentence or two on this matter is that this increasing trend towards centralisation is something which should be examined very carefully by the Government.

I admit that in these days of greater mobility there is a need for the flexible operation of the Police Force. The present Commissioner of Police has built up, or endeavoured to build up, an image of the policeman as being the friend of every adult and every child in the community, a person who can be approached on all occasions with confidence, a person who would be helpful to them in many ways. Instead of the policeman being the bogey of the small child—as was the case many years ago when parents foolishly tried to frighten their children by saying they would hand them over to a policeman—Commissioner Bischof, as did other commissioners before him, has tried to remove that image and has spent a great deal of his time and directed a great deal of publicity towards that end. With all these modern methods, desirable in many respects though they may be, I do not think there is any substitute for the homely advice and local knowledge of the local policeman. A knowledge of likely trouble spots, and of people who could cause trouble, is the best possible means of maintaining discipline and order in the community. Whilst we might say that in a period of change many customs, habits and systems may be reviewed or altered in major respects, I think this is a retrograde step. There are at least three hon. members on this side who will speak at length on this matter, namely, the hon. members for Baroona, Bulimba and Nudgee, so I will not transgress on what they may wish to say.

**Mr. Murray:** Does the hon. gentleman suggest that the policeman on the traditional beat, as we always knew him in the past, is of more value to the community than mobile police?

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I have said on numerous occasions that, apart from the police on actual traffic control in Melbourne and Sydney—a.d., because of the great amount of traffic and the large number of pedestrians, there are mounted policemen, and so on—one sees scarcely any other policemen on city streets. I have also said there are too many policemen in the city of Brisbane who are virtually onlookers. I do not know of any capital city which has so many policemen virtually on hand as at Queen Street, or any of the other major crossings in the city. I think there could well be a reorganisation at those points. I believe that the more the Public Service trend towards centralisation develops the more we will get a demand for superintendents. There is too much centralisation with too many tall poppies at the top. I realise the good work done by the Police Force. I have not had occasion to quarrel with the general work done over the years, nor has any hon. member on this side. We all appreciate the good work done by the force. However, this move is not in the interests of the public.

I do not want to spend a great deal of my time in dealing with this matter, or to detract from what hon. members who are so closely concerned with it may say. At the same time, I do not want this matter fobbed off on the basis that the only people who are concerned are the hon. member for Nudgee, the hon. member for Bulimba and myself. Such an approach would be nonsense when we know that protest meetings are being held and petitions freely signed by members of responsible organisations and other people in the community. If the Minister wants to preserve the image of co-operation between the police and the public he should say, "I will listen to all these approaches." It is then his prerogative, and the prerogative of the Government, after hearing all points of view, to decide what will be done in the matter. Surely that is the right approach.

If it is desired to create respect for the functions of the police and establish their responsibility to the public, and the responsibility of the public to the police, the least the Minister can do is to display an attitude of co-operation instead of trying to be smart and passing these matters off as if they were of no importance.

The Budget is perhaps the only single document which sets out, in a compact but comprehensive form, the financial and economic developments and trends which have taken place in the previous 12 months, and the short-term predictions made for 1964-65 and beyond. What are the chief claims made by the Treasurer for his Budget? He makes many claims. As I pointed out, a Budget is really a recital, as one would expect, because that is where we hope to find all the

information contained. This Budget does not depart from any major pattern of policy in that regard. It would be remiss of the Treasurer if he were not to include in the Tables information regarding the Government's policy as reflected in its financial operations—so the Budget does this. He would be an unusual Treasurer if he did not seek to use the financial picture to bolster the Government's case in trying to create the image outside Parliament that the present situation in Queensland is the result of the able and progressive policy designed by the Country-Liberal coalition Government.

**Mr. Windsor:** Don't you think that is right?

**Mr. DUGGAN:** No, I do not think so at all.

What are these claims? The Treasurer may say that I have left out other important claims, but at the end of his Budget he summarises the following:—

(a) The Budget provides no new or additional taxes;

(b) It provides for a year of increasing economic activity; and

(c) It is a development Budget—it is an education Budget.

There are, of course, supplementary claims that have been lumped together. We have the annual airing of the Mount Isa railway project, the development of Weipa, the export of coal and the development of our port facilities. These things are very desirable, and I suppose we should not expect the Treasurer to deny himself the opportunity of bringing them forward from time to time; but in each Budget, in the policy speeches of the leaders of the coalition Government and in the spate of propaganda that flows from the Public Relations Bureau, these things are presented as being new developments and things that are current in only the last financial year, when in actual fact they are aired annually.

The Treasurer is not one of those who are handicapped by the inability to use the appropriate phrase. He gives expression to his sentiments and to his thoughts. He concluded his statement on an almost dramatic, optimistic note by saying—

"The value of the development undertaken by the State will endure. Great new industries and additions to existing activity will shortly be adding their throbbing output to the economic life blood of the community. The years of waiting and planning are ending. The years of dramatic growth and expansion are now with us."

They are very fine-sounding words, and the Treasurer must have got healthy satisfaction when he was dictating them to those responsible for compiling this document; but they are part of a pattern that has flowed from Government spokesmen for a long time. On 11 May, 1960, Mr. Morris said—

"Queensland no longer lies dormant, but is a giant wakening and flexing its muscles."

On 5 May, 1960, Mr. Nicklin said—

"We have brought a new outlook, a fresh approach to the Government of Queensland and its problems of development, and, under the stimulus, incentive and drive we have imparted, the State's progress in all its phases has been accelerated to top gear."

I suppose the Treasurer can see that the margin of speeds in top gear is very great, so he can say, "We are in top gear, but we are not at the maximum speed in top gear." He can use the defence, "The State is not moving forward in low gear; it is not moving forward in second gear; and"—listening to some Government spokesmen—"it is not in reverse gear—it is in top gear, accelerating the development of the State."

Of course, I am also mildly amused by reading the Treasurer's report on the development in our primary industries. He said that one or two of them had been adversely affected by drought. I have found that when this Government has been faced with a deficit it has attributed that deficit to the dry seasons. This is the first occasion on which the Treasurer has deplored wet conditions for their effect on revenue. He says—

"Racing revenues were slightly less than expected. £1,293,576 was received against the estimate of £1,400,000. This was attributed in part to the abandonment of meetings early this calendar year due to wet conditions . . ."

On this occasion we have the spectacle of wet weather contributing to the slight decline in Government revenue, whereas on most other occasions drought conditions have been responsible.

**Mr. Bromley:** The only trouble is that they cannot handle the going.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** It is a wet track.

I mention that in passing, and I am merely pointing out that it is a new twist on what I have been listening to for a number of years. We now find that the "wet" has been invoked as a reason why revenue was not £100,000 more.

There are some general questions that we may well examine to ascertain whether this Budget is very much different from others. No-one can truthfully deny that we are living in buoyant times. No person with any sense of responsibility would be foolish enough to claim that the economy generally is not buoyant. We all know that it is. What annoys me, however, is the Government's constantly emphasising that this state of buoyancy is the result of Government policy and nothing else, and is peculiar to Queensland. Whenever the Australian Labour Party takes part in a by-election or a general election, Government spokesmen quote figures and say, "The A.L.P. spent this amount up till 1957 on roads, hospitals, education, railways, and so on. We have spent ever so much more, so we are consequently a better Government."

As I have said so frequently, if one goes back to the earliest days one will find invariably, with one or two exceptions, that each budget makes provision for expenditure greater than that provided in the previous one. There are several reasons for this. They are increased population, increased need for development, and at times, as now, a depreciation in the value of money. Projects started today do not provide any more facilities than those provided for much lower sums of money seven or eight years ago. One is led to believe that because a building costs £300,000 today compared with £200,000 seven years ago, better management is reflected. Of course, all that is indicated is the inflation that has taken place. I exempt the Treasurer, in a general way, from responsibility for inflation, except as I shall qualify later when I refer to the cost of living. This inflation is typical of the Australian economy, and that of the world generally. I am not saying that it is peculiar to Queensland.

"Jobson's Digest" stated in an editorial only last week—

"Make no mistake—the only thing wrong with business at the moment is that it is too good. This may sound a paradoxical remark, but we must avoid a situation where over-prosperity triggers off a dangerous round of inflation.

"We cannot live simply for the present. Much of our well-being can be traced back to the tremendous level of export earnings from wool, metals, sugar, wheat, meat and other primary products.

"Crop failures overseas and the running down of stocks are partly responsible for the buoyant level of demand. But when conditions return to normal, our ability to maintain sales will depend on being able to compete price-wise."

We of the Opposition have been saying that for some time. We have said many things that have been "rubbished" from time to time.

Some of my colleagues and I made speeches earlier in which we referred to the problem of foreign investment in this country and the need for greater Australian participation. The Treasurer rejected the submissions that I made on that matter as recently as when the last Budget was before the Chamber, or the one before that. We now find that on Saturday night the Prime Minister, who is Australia's arch Conservative, said in a speech in South Australia that he hoped overseas investors would take some cognisance of the need for Australian participation. That is something we have been saying for seven, eight, or 10 years.

When we made suggestions concerning the selling of wheat to Russia and Red China, we were told, at that time by the D.L.P. in particular, that we would be trading with our enemies. There is no reluctance by the present Government to facilitate in every possible way visits to Peking and other places

for the purpose of selling our products. When it comes to selling something, the politics of the country concerned become a different matter. However, if one passes within a few yards of a Communist one can bet his last sixpence that it will be noted and in due course his photograph will be published or his name used as being in some way connected with a conspiracy designed to undermine the democratic foundations of this country. When Sir William Gunn goes to Red China and technical officers are sent to set up spinning mills to assist in the sale of wool, and when technical and selling officers of the Australian Wheat Board go to these places, it is regarded as good business.

**Mr. Ewan:** You are not really objecting to that, are you?

**Mr. DUGGAN:** Yes, I am being objective, because, as I have said so many times before, trade, except where artificial or legislative barriers are erected, will go wherever it can command the best prices. It is not concerned with politics, race, or colour. I am confident that if the hon. member who interjected had a choice between selling his wool to local buyers at a price of 60d. or 70d. a pound and selling it to the Communist regime in Red China at 80d. a pound, he would bend over backwards to sell it in Red China.

**Mr. Ewan:** You are not really objecting to that principle, are you?

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I do not wish to spend a great deal of time on that subject.

Let me deal now with the Budget generally. As I said earlier, the Treasurer has had the benefit of a very big injection of funds from various quarters. For instance, in the Summary of Commonwealth Payments to or for the States, a document released by the Commonwealth Statistician under the authority of the Federal Treasurer, we find that the following increases have taken place since 1957-58:—

	£
New South Wales ..	65,000,000
Victoria ..	48,000,000
Queensland ..	35,000,000
South Australia ..	14,000 000
Western Australia ..	33,000,000

And so it goes on. If we look at the Treasurer's Financial Tables, we will find reflected in them the increase that has taken place, and much of it, of course, is due to the increase in taxation during this period. I shall come back to that considerable increase in taxation in a few minutes.

Certainly we are at a disadvantage compared with New South Wales because of the operation in that State of poker machines, which, I think unfortunately, exact a heavy toll from the people of that State. I do not like criticising a Government of the same political kidney as my own party, but I think poker machines have got out of hand and that the New South Wales Government is

on a tiger and does not know how to get off. In fact, even the Liberal Party in New South Wales has not agreed to abandon poker machines, although it has certainly prescribed increased denominations, and so on, to deter ordinary people from putting 1s. or 6d. into them.

**Mr. Hughes:** You would not support them here?

**Mr. DUGGAN:** No. I do not think it is good for the community to have poker machines. Of course, I am not a gambling man or a betting man, and obviously my views are not shared by very many people in New South Wales because the patronage of the machines indicates that they are a popular feature of certain social and club life in that State.

Now let me examine for a moment the increase in taxation to which I referred earlier. The Treasurer and the Premier have been at pains from time to time to point out that, because of our inability to persuade various Commonwealth administrations to match the requirements of Queensland, we have not received the per-capita grants that they felt we should in comparison with the other Australian States. The Treasurer attributes this to two main factors: firstly, that aborigines are not counted in the census for taxation reimbursement purposes, which is a valid point; secondly, that there is some inaccuracy in the compilation of the census, which I do not altogether accept, although he can point to the fact that there has been some adjustment.

**Mr. Hiley:** Three consecutive censuses.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** If similar action were taken, I think it would probably apply equally to other States, because in a country where so many people are moving about and there are so many seasonal workers it is very difficult to get a clear picture of the actual population of any State at a given time.

**Mr. Hiley:** Except that Queensland is the only State that has been consistently underestimated.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I am pointing out that that is a factor to which the Treasurer has drawn attention.

The other major point he makes, of course, is that we did not press our claims for loan allocations to the extent we should have on the formula and that we got less than we should have. The Treasurer has been able to point out with truth that Queensland's share of the Australian total has been gradually but progressively increasing. I was not very intimately concerned with these matters at Commonwealth level except at one particular conference when the then Premier was absent. I was not a Treasurer at any stage so that I would not have the same opportunity of discussing these matters on a negotiatory basis with Commonwealth officers, but it has been charged against former Labour administrations that we did not put forward as many

propositions or, in other words, that we did not overload our demands as the other States obviously did. I think that, rather than that being a matter for criticism of the administration, it is something in their favour.

Because of shortages of labour and materials it was not possible at the time to undertake certain projects, and the States that did spend their resources to the utmost contributed in no small way to the inflationary trends of the period. Against that, the prudence of the Queensland Labour administration during those years resulted in this State not paying as much interest per capita as some of the other States. The Treasurer uses the argument that we should have developed many projects a little earlier, but because of our prudence we did not load the public debt of this State to the same extent as did some of the other States.

There has been an increase in taxation. The figures I have here relate only to 1962. The Treasurer will have later figures. I took these from the last Commonwealth Year Book and they show that from 1957 to 1962 taxation per head of population has increased in Queensland by £4 1s. I must confess that with the exception of South Australia it was lower than for the other States. The picture will be altered substantially by the figures for the last two years but taxation per head is certainly less in Queensland, particularly when one considers the size of this State and its situation. I think this State's public debt is being serviced more economically than those of other States because of the prudence exercised by former Labour Treasurers in this State. That is a point that should be borne in mind when all this credit is being claimed.

I wish now to deal with the claim that this is an education Budget. Great stress has been laid by this Government on what is being done in the field of education. I must confess that some worth-while things have been done in this regard. That cannot be denied but, against that, the Government is trying to create the general feeling that what is happening in the field of education in this State is again something that has not been paralleled elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

In policy speeches by Liberal and Country Party leaders since 1960 there has been constant reference to secondary education and to expenditure on our universities in contrast to what was spent per head of the population by Labour when it was in power. They do not point out that in regard to the provision of primary classrooms the figures show a retrogression in many years since this Government has been in power compared with the final year of Labour rule, namely, 1957. True it is that there has been a very marked expansion in the provision of secondary schools, but that has been a feature of the post-war period in every country in the world. We are now listed as 20th in the nations of the world in expenditure per head of population on education. Despite what we are doing

in this country we are lagging very greatly behind other countries in the provision of university and technical education facilities for the young people in our community.

I drew attention in my last policy speech to the important fact that whatever the deficiencies were in our education system in 1957—I admit that I think much more could have been done much earlier in the field of education—they were not as marked as they have become since the advent to office of this Government. According to the Commonwealth Grants Commission Report the expenditure on education per head of population in 1956-57 was lower in Queensland than in any other State. For that, of course, we were roundly condemned. Indeed, when I heard these figures quoted for the first time I felt I had to get my thinking cap on to answer that sort of criticism. I found it was true.

In the earlier period we were lagging very greatly behind the other States. For instance, in 1956-57 New South Wales spent £10 2s. 11d. per head of the population on education, compared with £8 1s. 3d. in Queensland. Every State spent more per head of population than did Queensland in 1956-57. What were the deficiencies in 1956-57? We were spending £2 1s. 8d. less than New South Wales, £1 15s. 4d. less than Victoria, £1 10s. 2d. less than South Australia, £3 11s. 10d. less than Western Australia and £4 15s. 2d. less than Tasmania. But in 1961-62 the position deteriorated until we were £3 16s. 2d. behind New South Wales—£1 15s. 0d. worse off than when Labour left office; we were £3 7s. 5d. behind Victoria, roughly £1 12s. 0d. worse off after this Government had been in power for five years; we were £3 16s. 2d. behind South Australia; we spent £4 13s. 3d. per head less than Western Australia, and £5 8s. 9d. less than Tasmania. In every case during this period, when the Government is making such extravagant claims about its education policy, we have gone further back compared with what the other States spent on education.

Let us take a look at what is happening with the provision for this year in what the Treasurer frankly declares to be an education Budget. The Estimates show that this year there will be an increase of 11.9 per cent. on the estimated expenditure for 1963-64, or a 7 per cent. increase on the actual expenditure last year when more was spent than the estimated amount. In Victoria this year there will be an increase of 9.5 per cent.; in Tasmania the increase is 9.3 per cent. But in New South Wales, a Labour State, the increase this year is 18 per cent.

How can the Treasurer say that this is primarily an education Budget, flaunting the increase over last year before the public as an indication of the earnest desire of the Government to make up for its deficiencies in so many directions, when our percentage increase on education is only on the same

level as the non-Labour States and indeed very much below the provision made for the adjoining Labour State of New South Wales?

**Mr. Murray:** Perhaps New South Wales is catching it up in one hit because an election is coming on.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I would remind the hon. member for Clayfield that when there was no election in New South Wales—in 1960-61—expenditure on education per head of the population in that State was £14 13s. 11d. as against £11 5s. 5d. in Queensland. So it does not appear that elections are responsible for their figures. In 1961-62 their increase per head was higher than Queensland's. Consistently, right through the piece, you will find that the New South Wales Labour Government has been spending more on education per head of population than has Queensland. It has been mindful of its responsibilities year by year. Whether or not there is consideration of an election pending, I do not know. Because of a long association with the Federal Liberal Party the hon. member should be an expert on what Governments do when elections are pending, because no Government promised more at election time than the Menzies Government—of which he was a member for a short period—and no Government repudiated its promises more quickly after an election than the Government of which he was a member for such a short period.

While on the subject of education, I wish to deal with expenditure on universities. It can be said that 18.3 per cent. of the increase in the New South Wales Estimates this year covers universities, about which we hear so much. It is rather interesting to point out that, whatever representations flow from this State to the Commonwealth—and I do not know what they are—page 42 of the 1964-65 edition of Commonwealth Payments to or for the States shows that in 1963-64 contributions by the Commonwealth for specific purposes of a revenue nature for universities were: £1 1s. 11d. for New South Wales; 15s. 11d. for Victoria; 16s. 8d. for Queensland; £1 3s. 2d. for South Australia; £1 0s. 5d. for Western Australia, and 17s. 6d. for Tasmania. Those figures show that, with the exception of Victoria, Queensland is in the worst position. In relation to payments for specific purposes of a capital nature we find that Queensland is well below the other States, the figures being as follows: 9s. 2d. for New South Wales; 16s. 3d. for Victoria; 7s. 4d. for Queensland; 12s. 7d. for South Australia; 14s. 10d. for Western Australia, and 11s. 4d. for Tasmania. The average is 11s. 8d., as against the Queensland figure of 7s. 4d. The picture is repeated throughout the other tables, which time prevents me from reading. They may be found on page 43. I will not deny the Treasurer an opportunity to deal with them in his reply.

As to hospital expenditure, the Queensland expenditure for 1964-65 is estimated to increase by 4 per cent. over last year's figure. In Victoria the Estimates provide for an increase of 7.7 per cent.; in Tasmania there is provision for an 11.3 per cent. increase, and in South Australia there is to be a 13.6 per cent. increase. All these matters are merely setting the pattern or the trend of the time. All these allocations are being increased in the other States.

Unfortunately, I do not have access to documents as has the Treasurer. He intended to say something about the phenomenal increase in savings bank deposits in Queensland compared with those in other States. The only books that we had were the Monthly Review of Statistics, which contain the latest figures. They show that since 1957 the increase in savings per head of population in Queensland was £28. This is supposed to indicate the degree of prosperity in the State. However, in New South Wales there was an increase of £253 per head, while in Victoria the increase was £175. In South Australia, for some inexplicable reason, there was a decrease of £68. However, these figures do not support the general story that prosperity in Queensland is as marked as the Treasurer is prone to mention from time to time.

I should like to move on to the industrial discontent that is prevailing in Queensland at present. It might be said that an attempt is being made by the left-wing unions, through threats, stoppages, and dislocation of industry generally, to obtain from employers—because there is a shortage of skilled personnel—wages which will not be awarded by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. This industrial discontent is something that should cause any responsible Government a good deal of concern, but, quite frankly, I do not think that the Government cares very much about it. It is prepared on this occasion, as it has been on very many others, to ride out the storm. Indeed, when action is taken we find that the Minister for Transport wants a trial of strength and threatens to use the resources of the Government against the railwaymen. His remarks, of course, apply to the railways, but other Ministers also have a responsibility to the working community.

I want to point out that one of the reasons for this industrial discontent is the uneasiness in the minds of trade-union leaders about the fact that Queensland is dropping behind other States in two ways. Firstly, we are not sharing in the average earnings per employee to the same extent as are employees in other States. I drew attention to this fact in some figures I gave some time ago when I pointed out that the earnings of male employees per head in Queensland were about £2 a week lower than the Australian average, and that the cost of living had shown its greatest increase in Queensland during the six years that this Government has been in power.

No large industrial group wants to commit its members to senseless displays of strength. After all, who are these people who make up the segment of industrial life of the community? There is management on the one hand, but I do not know what remuneration those people receive because it is a matter of arrangement. On the other hand, except for particular agreements entered into between contracting parties, there are the workers, and the pattern has been to leave matters affecting them to the Industrial Commission.

I do not want my remarks to be misconstrued, but the Public Service recently had a substantial increase, and no doubt the Public Service were able to point to a disparity between rates in Queensland and other States on a "like with like" basis. The fact remains that there were no very long negotiations in this matter—there was no occasion for expressing resentment against the pattern of the increase—but there seemed to be a willingness on the part of the Government and the Public Service Commissioner, acting with the full approval of the Government, to meet the public servants, so that by virtual agreement the salaries over a wide range of classifications in the Public Service were increased. What makes the ordinary working man in the community so resentful is that, in contrast to that attitude, the Government refuses to meet him. The Government is entitled to say that it is not prepared to meet employees, except, perhaps in the case of the Public Service or the Police Force. A few minutes ago the hon. member for Clayfield referred to things being done in New South Wales on the eve of an election. In this State major increases were granted to public servants, the police and employees in the Department of Education on the eve of the last election.

The granting of three weeks' annual leave was an abomination in the industrial picture. The Government sent an advocate into the Industrial Commission to state that it should be granted—and this was immediately before an election. I do not find all the economic disarray and disorder in the community as a result of three weeks' leave being granted, which the Government predicted would be the case if Labour introduced it legislatively. The Government did it surreptitiously and for electioneering purposes.

This Government has issued a direct challenge to the ordinary worker in the community, who has been beset by the granting of higher wages to public servants. Over the years, successive Governments, including this Government, went into the Industrial Court to state, "We give you statistical evidence regarding the movement of wages and prices in our economy, and we leave it to the Court to give its determination." On the occasion before last, when an application for an increase in wages was made, the Government, for the first time, intervened actively as an agent, and pleaded for a 4s. increase in the basic wage. The Commission granted an increase of 14s., which shows what it thought of the Government's submissions. The employers' representatives said they did not

feel that the Commission's decision was unreasonable, and that none of them could quibble with or argue against the increase of 14s. They said that 10s. would not be a fair increase, whereas the Government said the increase should be 4s.

This Government took from the workers at Mt. Isa the right to have bonuses increased by the Industrial Commission. The company at Mt. Isa is earning tremendous profits. I say, again for the record, that this a company that was helped by guarantees by a Labour Government, and the Opposition at that time, in a reflection of the political thinking of those now on the Government side, criticised the Labour Government for gambling on a hole in the ground. The company was given freight concessions and helped in every possible way over a period of time. It is now making very large profits, and its 5s. shares are at one of the highest premiums on the share market today. Despite the issuing of bonus shares and so on, the 5s. shares of this company now stand at approximately 43s. or 44s., even though they have declined recently because of the decision of the workers not to proceed with contract work.

Undoubtedly the Government has decided to have a head-on collision with the workers. In today's Press we find that fines amounting to £4,400 have been imposed on 12 railway unions. If that is not an invitation to these workers to accept the challenge of the Government, I do not know what is. In my view, nothing is more calculated to destroy the Industrial Court than the imposition of such severe penalties. The court was given this power by legislation inspired by the then Minister for Labour and Industry and Deputy Premier, Mr. Morris, and approved by the Government.

What has happened in Victoria? In this State, neither the Premier nor any other responsible Minister would consent to an interview with union leaders on industrial matters. Does anyone believe that men with families and hire-purchase commitments fine themselves £4 or £5 a day in stoppages unless they feel that there is some justification for them? It is all very well to point, as the Minister for Transport does, to trade-union leaders and refer frequently to Nolan, Egerton, Macdonald, and so on. Some members of the Liberal Party say that there are 68 delegates to the Q.C.E., each of whom is either a Communist or is Communist-controlled or inspired. That is filthy, lying propaganda, and it is used all the time in an endeavour to have the public think that Nolan, Doyle, Devereux, and others are the real fomenters of trouble. As a matter of fact, a reading of the Press indicates that leaders of the trade unions and the A.C.T.U. are fighting a defensive battle to have their authority accepted by the rank and file who believe that their demands are not being pressed firmly enough.

A wage increase of £1 a week was granted recently, and price rises immediately absorbed it, despite the fact that it was granted on the



evidence of present and not future costs. Only the other day another application was made for an increase. The Commission, and even the employers, agreed that there have been price increases justifying some movement in the basic wage, but it will have to wait till the September cost-of-living index is known.

Where is it all going to stop? What did Mr. Bolte, who is the most arrogant Liberal Premier in Australia, do? Because of the force of public opinion, with people marching in their thousands and protesting against inadequate wages, taxation increases, increases in the cost of living, and other matters, Mr. Bolte realised that he had some responsibility for the industrial wellbeing of his State. Without reference to any industrial tribunal, he agreed to wage increases costing approximately £2,100,000 a year.

This Government will not even agree to grant an interview to responsible members of the industrial community. Its answer is, "Go to the Industrial Commission." What is getting everyone angry is the discrimination that the Government shows in the treatment of its friends. To meet their wishes, it will bend in any direction. Towards the great mass of ordinary workers, whether they be railwaymen, waterside workers, or employees of Mount Isa Mines Ltd., its attitude is entirely different. Then we see the provocative flag-waving by the Minister for Transport, who says, "Have your railways. If you want a trial of strength we will throw open the roads to the road-transport operators." He says that only when it suits him, of course. He criticised the road-transport operators for suggesting that they should take advantage of the courts to contest the validity of certain legislation. Now we find him using road-transport operators for the sole purpose of bringing railwaymen to their knees because he knows that they will be unable to meet their hire-purchase commitments, and so on.

**Mr. Hughes:** You do not suggest that he should agree to their sabotaging the country's welfare?

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I am saying that the position has become ridiculous when the Commission can say to certain unions, "Unless you can come to the Commission with a predetermined agreement with the employers, we will not ratify any increases," and on the very same day that it rejects their applications grant increases to public servants. Let me make it quite clear that I am not criticising the public servants. They have been able to satisfy a sympathetic Government of the merits of their claims, and I do not think that a Labour Government would have been less sympathetic to them. There is no reason why public servants in Queensland should receive less than their counterparts in other States doing similar work. However, my point is that there should not be any discrimination, and the Government is creating an atmosphere of discrimination. If it is good enough to enter into negotiations with a section of

white-collar workers, it ought to be good enough to say, "Let us have a look at this position." The Government was not backward in taking from the Commission the right to increase the lead bonus. It did not say, "Leave it to the Commission." It said to the Commission, "We give you power to decrease the lead bonus but not to increase it." In spite of this, the Government now talks about leaving the matter to the Commission. In my opinion, these things call for condemnation.

The Government has not taken any action to control prices. How many times have we heard the Minister for Industrial Development, who was in the Chamber a few minutes ago, say that the free operation of private enterprise will enable him to keep prices at a reasonable level? Yet the worker is being hurt all along the line by increases in the cost of living. I again refer to Bulletin 41 of 1964 issued by the Bureau of Census and Statistics—the figures are the latest available—which shows that, based on 100, the following increases have taken place in the cost of living in the past seven years since the Country Liberal Government came to office in Queensland—

Sydney	11.6
Melbourne	13.1
Adelaide	12.4
Perth	10.9
Hobart	12.5
Brisbane	17

The Government does nothing because it wants to protect its friends. How can we have industrial peace if on one hand it wants to regiment employees and on the other it does not take action to keep prices down? I think there is a considerable body of opinion in the industrial field that there should be some stabilisation of costs in order to prevent inflation. Pensioners and people on fixed incomes are hardest hit by inflation. Some people can pass on cost increases; those on fixed incomes cannot. I think it would be of advantage if something were done at a Commonwealth level along the lines of pegging profits, and so on, if wages are to be pegged.

Is there a different Liberal philosophy in Victoria? Did the Victorian Liberal Premier, Mr. Bolte, say, "I am not going to interfere in this matter. It is strictly for the court."? No. He said without any hesitation that the Government would interfere.

**Mr. Pizzey** interjected.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** It is a pity that the Minister for Education was not here when I dealt with education. He was not shown up in a very good light, despite all the flapdoodle that we hear from time to time. In his absence, I pointed out that when we left office in 1957 we were in the unfortunate position of spending less per head on education than any other State Government. The Minister has used that fact. But

since he has been Minister for Education, Queensland has gone back further than any other State.

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

**Mr. DUGGAN:** At the luncheon break, which always seems to come at an unfortunate time when one becomes a little bit impassioned in making a point, I was concluding my general remarks on the present industrial discontent and some of the reasons for it. It is not much good directing attention to this situation without making some constructive proposals. It would take too long to outline all the steps necessary to achieve some worth-while results in this direction, but principally I made the point of the disinclination of the Government to see what can be done instead of issuing, through some of its Ministers, ultimatums and challenges of a trial of strength. I contrasted that attitude with that of the Liberal Premier in Victoria. I also said that the time was opportune for us to examine the overall cost structure. I think the Treasurer has indicated in the Budget that there is need for price restraint because he realises, as I think all important people do, that if we are going to strengthen our economy in the difficult, competitive times ahead, we must be very conscious about increasing our cost structure.

The mere increasing of wages, followed by a corresponding increase in the cost of living, is not necessarily the solution. We have seen in France the chaos that occurs with constant increases in wages followed by astronomical increases in the cost of living. That situation has also obtained in other countries in the world and we do not want to see it obtain here.

I suggest that the workers of Australia and of Queensland would be conducive to some restraint on their demands if sacrifices were being accepted by other sections of the community. It is not enough to say merely that the reimposition of price control is a solution. We think that is necessary as the facts prove that in those states where there has been virtually unlimited decontrol the increase has been greater than in States where some restraint is still exercised—notably South Australia, where there has been some slowing down in the inflationary spiral.

I think workers would be inclined to accept the situation if comparable sacrifices were made by those earning profits and dividends. But there are certain other measures to be taken. Time will not permit of my dealing with them but I do not want the Treasurer to assume that I do not think they are important. After all, Government policy and employers' action alone cannot promote the industrial well-being of this State. There must be a desire for co-operation and understanding, and a willingness to accept the burdens imposed on us to develop this country. I am arguing that when the Government shows a disposition to

assume its responsibility in this regard it will secure better results than are evident at the present time.

I think I should say at this stage that the Treasurer had a surplus last year but has budgeted for a deficit of £500,000 on this occasion. He may say that he is in good company because all the other States are doing the same thing, but in his reply he may be able to make some observation on one point. It used to be thought desirable Government economic policy in times of prosperity to budget for a surplus and in times of economic difficulty to budget for a deficit. That policy seems to have been thrown overboard not only in Queensland Budgets but in the Budgets of other States as well. I should be interested to hear the Treasurer's comments on that point. I have the feeling that Budget deficits have been perhaps designed to strengthen the bargaining powers of the various States when the uniform taxation agreement comes up for review in the near future.

I feel that there may be compelling tactical reasons why the States are budgeting for deficits, namely to increase their bargaining powers at the conference table when this agreement is renewed. Be that as it may, it seems to be a reversal of form in these times of so-called unprecedented prosperity to be budgeting for a deficit when we have a shortage of skilled personnel and shortages in so many other categories, and when prices are increasing.

Most of the favourable results in the Budget have been brought about by the improvement in railway finances. No-one is more cognisant than I am of the difficulties of operating that very important State instrumentality. There are several reasons why this improvement has taken place. Much of it has been brought about by the closure of unprofitable branch lines, although that was done at the expense of the convenience of people in various parts of the State and at the expense of the development of the State. The closure of branch lines was very strongly resisted by present Government members when in Opposition, but it is now being done as a deliberate plan to assist the State's finances. Since 1957 there has been a big reduction in the number of personnel in the department. At 30 June, 1957, the staff numbered 29,823 whereas at 30 June, 1963, the number was 26,581, a reduction of 3,242. Since then the number has dropped to 26,487 as at 30 June, 1964. That reduction in staff represents a very considerable saving. Goods traffic has increased 16 per cent.

The increased utilisation of diesel-electric locomotives has further helped to improve the position. In this direction this Government is merely carrying on the policy laid down at the time we left office when we had about 58 or 60 diesel locomotives. The fact that diesel locomotives constitute only about 14 per cent. of the total locomotive strength and yet last year carried 63 per cent. of all traffic is an indicator of how economic it is

to use this new motive power for the conveyance of goods over the railways. Other factors responsible for the improvement in railway finances are the improved seasons, the increased metal won at Mount Isa, increased coal traffic and the movement of cattle throughout the State. All these things have contributed to the more satisfactory financial position. But I have a feeling—and it is shared by many railway people—that lots of economies are being effected, the undesirable features of which are not readily apparent. If you close down a school or a hospital, for example, the impact of that decision is felt immediately and there is a great outcry by the people concerned about being deprived of that service. If you prolong the 20-year working life of a diesel locomotive for, say, three or four years, nobody realises just how uneconomic it is to have that prolongation until replacement or repairs become necessary. The same principle applies to the painting and repair of buildings.

The deterioration or neglect that is gradually going on is not readily apparent. That is one of the problems we met as an administration after the cessation of hostilities. During the war it was not possible to provide for many of these things so that in 1945 we faced the situation of having about 30 per cent. of the locomotives out of commission because they had been run into the ground during the war years. We had something like 14 or 15 per cent. of carriages out of use and I think that applied to about 15 per cent. of our wagons. It is not economic for any organisation to have so much rolling-stock out of commission. By the injection of new rolling-stock it was possible for us to gradually rehabilitate our railways and improve our track.

All these things are reflected to some degree in the present position. There has been a further injection of capital and, of course, interest has to be met on that. The net deficit on the operations of the railways is less this year than it has been for some time. I can only hope that that will continue. However, there is a grave shortage of tradesmen in many of our workshops. Many of them are leaving to take up positions outside. Again the impact of this is not readily apparent at the present time but it is a liability and an obligation which the administration will have to face up to in the years ahead.

I have only five or six minutes left. I do not wish to do the Treasurer the discourtesy of not dealing particularly with some of the very important matters raised in the Budget. I have raised some particular matters but there are many others I should like to have dealt with, such as the increase in the cost of houses. I am greatly concerned about the denudation of our forests and the increasing need to import large quantities of timber from abroad, and I am also concerned about some aspects of our industrial development. However, I deliberately refrained from touching on this subject as I will have an opportunity to deal with it when the relevant Estimates are before us.

The Treasurer asked for some restraint; restraint has to be applied by members of the Government as well as those to whom the advice is offered.

The very bountiful seasons we have had—with some exceptions in various isolated pockets of the State—together with the increase in prices brought about by the facts I have referred to, make the economic outlook fairly good. I believe that our grain crops will be sold profitably. The increases in tin, lead, zinc and mineral sands prices are indicative of a buoyant and prosperous year. Despite all the talk about prosperity in the sugar industry, we have seen how dramatically the whole situation can change in 12 months. A little while ago the price of sugar on the overseas market was over £100 a ton but it is now in the vicinity of £40 Australian or £33 10s. sterling. There has been a big drop in price within a few months which no-one could foresee. Heavy expenditure is being incurred in the sugar industry. I am glad that the Minister for Primary Industries is present. I was in the North a few months ago and I found that people were determined to spend because of the high price being obtained for sugar. They were not concerned with costs. I talked to one well-sinker who told me that two years ago it was a question of "How much will it cost?", whereas now it is a question of "When can you do it?" There is no question of price at all.

Those are facts with which the Treasurer should be concerned. We have to consider the trends in overseas markets. I have some interesting figures concerning industrial development and the development of our exports overseas. Things are taking place dramatically, and agreements are being entered into; all these matters may have a very big impact on a primary-producing State such as Queensland. The economy of the State is buoyant. However, there are some aspects of Government policy which concern me. For political reasons the Government has been extolling the benefits flowing to the people of Queensland purely as a result of the Government's policy. However, in my view, and in the view of all Opposition members, they are the result of circumstances entirely beyond the Government's control. They are characteristic of the Australian economy, which we say is reflected in so many other directions. I pointed out, in the particular cases where the Government claims credit, such as education, hospitals, and so on, that whilst we are certainly doing a great deal of valuable work, it is no more valuable, and certainly less massive in character, than in various other States of the Commonwealth.

If we are to survive as a young nation, confronted with so many perplexing problems now threatening, and dangerous problems in the North, the successful use of brain-power is an essential prerequisite in this period. The Government now realises that we have not sufficient skilled labour and is sending deputations overseas to recruit it. We pointed this shortage out several years ago. Skilled

labour cannot be recruited overnight because there is an overseas shortage. Even if it could, we would add to the inflationary spiral in providing houses and other ancillary requirements. Consequently, that would not help us overcome all our problems.

There are problems confronting every State and we must realise that a primary-producing State like Queensland is dependent on overseas prices, which fluctuate. Because of our peculiar problems we face difficulty in developing our secondary industries on a comparable basis with Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia, so I believe that we must concentrate on the things we can do, and can do well. We must make the best possible use of our educated people and thus make up in quality of contribution what we may perhaps lack in numbers.

I have a minute to go, Mr. Campbell, and I want to thank the Chamber for the reception I have been given in dealing with the Treasurer's Financial Statement. I have placed my remarks in a general way before the Treasurer for his consideration. He will find that in our examination of the Budget we realise the problems confronting him. We hope that on this occasion he will not lean towards the attitude that our remarks are purely critical. But we will not engage in any approbation of the Government; it has its own members to do that sort of thing. I am quite convinced that when this debate concludes, the Treasurer will have much to say in defence of his record Budget for 1964-65.

**Mr. HUGHES (Kurilpa) (2.31 p.m.):** I have given a good deal of consideration to the Financial Statement, and I must congratulate the Treasurer because he has presented us with a Budget that tends towards the development of Queensland. As the Leader of the Opposition has just said, Queensland is a State with buoyant prospects. I believe that where we have this degree of buoyancy we have to take cognisance of all factors in giving effect to our desires to continue with the industrial and cultural advancement of this State. I believe that the Budget as presented portrays the advancement of Queensland during the next 12 months.

I wish to deal rather fully with the free hospital system and some other aspects of community life, and in particular I should like to deal with a matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition, namely, industrial discontent. It seems rather hard to imagine that we would have any real degree of industrial discontent in a State that has not only a buoyant economy but also a high standard of living. Whilst these are desirable features of any social system there will always be some demands for a greater measure of justice and fairness, and when these matters are treated in their proper perspective objectively, they should be listened to. When trade unions put forward cases objectively and with purpose, I believe it is the responsibility of those in authority to listen. I believe that problems can best be solved by conciliation

and arbitration, the system which we on this side of the Chamber uphold. I do not think that this gives a licence to union leaders to incite others to carry out irresponsible acts and to hold the country to ransom. I do not think that that does any good for the unions concerned.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke to a greater extent about employees on wages who are committed to hire-purchase and other repayments finding themselves bereft of income and their families suffering. Sometimes I believe that these hardships are self-imposed. I have seen waterside workers, and similar employees, holding illegal stop-work meetings on some occasions, and of course they are penalised for that, apart from the loss of pay. Arbitration is not a one-way system; there must be conciliation by both sides. A system of go-slow tactics, rolling strikes and other types of strikes brought on to cause embarrassment is not a proper way of doing things. I am sympathetic towards those who have a take-home pay of £15 to £18. I think that those employees form the majority of our working population. I feel sympathy for them, because even with the last increase, the basic wage amounts to only £15. I understood that the Commission granted that increase because of the buoyancy of the economy and its ability to bear such an increase.

That increase was followed by a number of price rises in various commodities. It seems to be a rather invidious situation when the worker is granted an increase, because the economy of the country can stand it, and then has it whittled away by devious means. Not only are there price rises; taxation is deducted, and even union fees are raised. I have not the report with me now, but I read in the journal of the Miscellaneous Workers' Union that they, too, had jumped on the band wagon and increased fees. Where is it to stop? There must be some responsibility shown in this matter.

**Mr. Newton:** There is no conciliation; it is all arbitration.

**Mr. HUGHES:** It is not for us to sit in judgment on the matter of conciliation between the parties. I believe that there is responsibility among employers, and I hope that Ministers also bring conciliation to bear in administering their departments. I believe that much can be done by solid men logically facing facts across a table. A lot of good can come from discussing things in such an atmosphere. Maybe there will be disagreements, but I see no harm in such discussions. I hope that such a system is applied not only by employers but also by Ministers of the Crown.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke of what other States were doing in relation to the cost of living. There is a consumer-price index for Queensland, and it can be compared with that of other States. I do

not know if this is always the best way to look at the matter. I sympathise with the workers who have to go to the Industrial Commission for wage increases. No doubt there are many ways in which this procedure could be streamlined. For example, when there is an increase in the standard meal allowance, I understand that each union has to lodge an application for it. It is a standard amount covering all unions generally, and I feel that ways and means should be found of cutting red tape, reducing costs, and facilitating arbitration procedure. I believe that these things should be done to stabilise in some way not only the economy but wages and costs generally.

The cost of living and the consumer-price index is something of which I, with a number of people, have been making a careful study since the hon. member for Belmont took such an interest in this matter. I think he should be commended for it, although I do not agree with the figures he quoted in his speech. He said that it required £14 a week to keep a family of three in things used in the kitchen. I, and a number of other people who have studied the matter, have found that it costs far less than that. It has to, because it could not cost more out of a take-home pay of £15 to £18 a week. I think that many women do a wonderful job to keep the house going, and pay rent and electricity bills, provide footwear, haircuts, clothing, education expenses, and fares, out of such a sum. I do not know how they do it on this take-home pay.

**Mr. Newton:** I did not include rent in that.

**Mr. HUGHES:** That is right. The hon. member confined it to food, and this did not include fish. I think he should pay some attention to his statistics. If it were not possible to do it on £14 a week, there would be many unclothed people in the community and many children unable to get to school.

**Mr. Windsor:** Some would have more if less were spent on booze before the pay envelope got home.

**Mr. HUGHES:** The hon. member may be correct. That is a family matter. However, I think the only way in which many families can survive is by the women going out to work and supplementing the budget. I know that "one man, one job" is union policy, but I think many unionists are forced to seek additional jobs to supplement the family income and meet the family's needs. Those are my personal views on the matter.

**Mr. Newton:** You should be on this side of the Chamber.

**Mr. HUGHES:** Perhaps I should be, but members of the Country Party and the Liberal Party are able not only to take an interest in their jobs but also to speak as their consciences dictate, and I am on the side of the worker.

**Mr. Newton:** The more you say, the more you are backing up my argument.

**Mr. HUGHES:** That is all right. If we could add more weight to the argument to which we are jointly subscribing, I think the workers would get a better go. While hon. members on this side of the Chamber show that they are concerned with the problems of employment, the basic wage, take-home pay, and the welfare of employees generally, I think the community will respond and continue to return a Country-Liberal Government. We have earned our position as a government.

**Mr. Windsor:** We have done more in seven years than they did in 30 years.

**Mr. HUGHES:** As the hon. member for Ithaca says, we have done more in seven years than Labour did in 30 years. The records prove that. Gone are the slums at Victoria Park perpetuated by Labour Governments. What do we find now? Beautiful homes in beautiful suburbs. What a blot on Labour's administration was the Victoria Park housing camp.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr. HUGHES:** I know that hon. members opposite hate to be reminded of these embarrassing things. At the appropriate time the community said, "We have had enough of your maladministration", and, as the hon. member for Ithaca said, in the last seven years the people have appreciated the skill and wisdom of the Ministry and the initiative brought to the job by members on this side of the Chamber and have returned us to office. We have earned our place.

**Mr. Graham:** If it were not for Mr. Gair and Santamaria, you would not be there. You can thank "Santa".

**Mr. HUGHES:** The hon. member is filled with chagrin. Let us leave Santamaria where he belongs. We were returned without his aid; we were returned on merit.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr. HUGHES:** I had the best win in Brisbane at the last State election. I suggest that the hon. member who keeps interjecting should contest the seat against me.

Let us return to what the Leader of the Opposition said. He referred to the importance of education and said that expenditure in Queensland in 1956-57 was lower per head than it was in other States. He painted a dismal picture from a rather morbid point of view of education. A comparison would be odious to hon. members opposite, I know, but I suggest that they look at the buildings that have been provided by the present Government and the improved curriculum and teaching methods. I remind them, too, that we do not have quotas at our university.

**Mr. Houston:** I would not boast too much about that.

**Mr. HUGHES:** We can boast about it. I am not unmindful of the possibility that more space will be needed to cope with the tidal wave of students now coming through our schools and university as a result of the very high birthrate in the post-war period, and I agree that there may be a need to alter the system because of this. However, at the moment university students are enjoying every possible facility, and they should continue to do so.

**Mr. Houston:** Who started the university? Labour!

**Mr. HUGHES:** What about the universities in States where Labour Governments are in power? Quotas are applied there. The Queensland University is not merely the preserve of the rich or socialites. It is open to the children of any man who desires to have them educated properly. We believe in this, and expenditure on education increases year by year. It is to be increased this year by £2,500,000, and I ask hon. members to compare the facilities existing today with the ill-kept, dirty classrooms that existed under Labour administrations.

**Mr. Houston** interjected.

**Mr. HUGHES:** The hon. member went to school, and so did I. I know he will agree with me that in the classrooms today there is dignity for the individual and that students are given every opportunity to learn in surroundings that suit their needs. In this regard, provision for hostel accommodation at the Blind and Deaf School is up by £6,500. That is a typical example. I believe we have the answers and that the parents of this State will not give credence to the morbid point of view put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. They know the incentive is there and their children are being educated to a stage where not only the parents can be proud of them, but the State as well. We can be justly proud of this accomplishment.

There are one or two aspects of the Financial Statement on which I should like to make some comment. The first relates to the Department of Local Government. I notice that there has been an increase in the number of staff as well as a £23,000 increase in the amount budgeted for the Valuer-General's Department. This appears to me to be empire-building in the Public Service. Hon. members have heard me on this subject before. Personally, I should prefer to do away with this department altogether and allow the valuation of land in local-authority areas to be undertaken by the authorities themselves, who this year will be called upon to pay a £14,000 increase in cost. The hon. member for Townsville South agrees with me, as does the hon. member for Redcliffe. I see nods of approval everywhere I look and I am quite sure that if a poll of members were taken on such a proposal it would be carried almost unanimously. In addition, I think the local

authorities themselves want it. They are paying for the services provided. With the exception of the rabbit tax and one or two other small matters in which the Government is concerned the Valuer-General's Department provides, I estimate, 98 per cent. of its service solely for local-authority valuations. I think the local authorities would not only prefer to do the job but would do it with more local interest and knowledge and more satisfaction to the whole community. I hope that this will be the last time I see expenditure for this section in the Treasurer's report on the Department of Local Government.

I have not the time to go into these matters at length; I can touch on them only briefly. I now make some observations relating to traffic matters. I feel that motor-vehicle parking meters are essentially a local-authority administrative responsibility in which I believe local authorities have proved their interest and in which they have done a good job. There is no cavilling at that. The Traffic Engineer's office is the only section in the Budget in which there has been a decrease in staff, from 35 to 29. Its appropriation has been reduced from £81,500-odd in 1963-64 to £71,700-odd, a decrease of almost £10,000 in a field which I believe we cannot do without and in which I should like to see a greater degree of interest. The volume of traffic on our main highways is such that, if we do not take steps now, we will find ourselves in the position in which the authorities in London found themselves in years past when traffic almost came to a halt. We must face up to the fact that a survey is presently being undertaken. Of course, I do not know that a survey would produce any better results than could be obtained by any one of us using common sense. I may be wrong in that assumption, but I feel that we are not approaching this problem in a manner that will produce the utmost in traffic facility with safety for both motorists and pedestrians. Firstly, I believe that we should hand over parkatareas to the Brisbane City Council, which controls parking meters in the inner city area. Last year this Government, which is so generous to the local city council, handed over £6,000,000 in loans and subsidies to the Brisbane City Council—a higher amount than ever before. If we are to continue this system of subsidy for such works as the widening of arteries and the truncation of corners, the council is the appropriate responsible body because it is a constructing authority. As a Government, we are not equipped to do these things. The Main Roads Department has certain equipment but it is used on main roads away from the city.

The Minister for Main Roads should take a second look at this matter. If it is to be the policy to continue to denude the department of staff and pare the department's maintenance expenditure, I believe there should be a conference with the

Brisbane City Council, related to the present survey being undertaken, to enable the council to take over in a widely extended field the provision of traffic arteries, which the ever-increasing volume of traffic demands. Recently I have asked questions in this Chamber about the widening of Fairfield Road. If the council continues with its present plans it will be goodness knows how many years before the road is widened or there is any new road to take the increased volume of traffic to and from the new markets area. Surely we do not have to wait for deaths and injuries from traffic accidents before the council does the job.

**Mr. Newton** interjected.

**Mr. HUGHES:** There are many roads in a similar condition. Irrespective of the political colour of the council, there has always been a limitation on the amount that can be spent in this direction.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr. HUGHES:** Hon. members opposite should not start waving political flags. I could talk for hours about the city council. I was an alderman for six years. Maybe the C.M.O. did not do all it could, but it did not blow out the council's brains by sacking its technical officers. It did not sack 2,000 workers. It did not put people with families on the breadline. "The friends of the worker," my eye! If Labour members put themselves behind an X-ray they would see something that would make them shudder for the rest of their lives. They should hang their heads in shame. The hon. member for Belmont has excited me to the extent that I must remind him of some of his party's acts of maladministration. "The friends of the worker," they say! All that the workers could come home with were long faces and empty pockets. Maybe with our extended education programme and the expenditure of many more millions of pounds, in time we will be able to educate the people so that instead of getting about 60 per cent of the votes we will get 90 per cent.

There are many things I could inform the Committee about. The council has never recovered from Labour's maladministration. Any man of decency, integrity and dignity who desires to serve the community thinks firstly, secondly, thirdly, fourthly, and fifthly, and then does not go to the council anyway. If I were the hon. member for Belmont I would retreat as gracefully as possible after being torn to shreds on that point.

**Mr. Bennett** interjected.

**Mr. HUGHES:** It is nice to see the hon. member for South Brisbane in the Chamber. I was sorry he was not here to back me up for a new Victoria Bridge. I hope that in his speech he will suggest we give more money to the council and get another bridge.

Let me deal with the railways. Here is a flower that the Treasurer can wear with more pride than the one which presently adorns his buttonhole. The Minister for Transport would have every justification for presenting a budget with pride because he has been able to achieve a state of administration whereby there is a difference of only £30,000 between expected revenue and expenditure. We must remember the millions of pounds that went down the drain owing to the maladministration of a political party wedded to a socialistic form of enterprise as distinct from a free-enterprise system which must give service and pay its way.

The Minister closed some branch lines, but he has been able to present figures to the Chamber of expenditure and revenue which reveal that, instead of several million pounds being lost, the books are almost balanced, and we can put that money into free hospitals and other facilities which are a credit to the State. I believe there is an obvious need for at least two new hospitals in Brisbane.

**Mr. Bennett:** They tell me you spoke up for Jack Aboud last night.

**Mr. HUGHES:** He is a spent force.

The submissions I desire to make on behalf of our citizens deal generally with hospitals. My call is for a new hospital to meet the urgent need created by the spectacular increase in population and development on the south side of the river. There has been a tremendous population explosion with the siting of new residences, and the great industrial developments will throw a greater strain on an already over-taxed Princess Alexandra Hospital. The Government should pursue a searching fact-finding survey, in co-operation with the authorities concerned, to ascertain our hospital needs now, and in the future, and the type, location and size of a new hospital. Time should not be wasted, because if the Government were to make a decision now it would be five to seven years before the hospital was established. Plans should be well publicised so that we may get the advice and help of all interested parties. I believe that action should be taken now. I am not suggesting that absolutely nothing has been done. There have been advances in medical science as well as in the free-hospital system. I know that certain research may take a long time. Even though research is continuing, there is need for a positive plan and approach to hospitals. Even if approval was given immediately, much time would elapse before a hospital was functioning. We must remember that time is one thing that we cannot manufacture. We cannot turn back the clock. Once time is lost it is gone forever. We should take action now rather than later, when we will regret that so much time has passed.

**Mr. Bennett:** Tell us about Opal House in your electorate.

**Mr. HUGHES:** I will not mention Opal House. I will be kind to the hon. member and not mention it. I have been a supporter of Opal House, even though it is not in the Kurilpa electorate. It is in the electorate of the hon. member for South Brisbane, but that hon. member is not aware of it. It requires the help and assistance of every responsible member of the community. I hope the hon. member for South Brisbane is supporting it.

Much has been said about the free-hospital system, and I intend to deal with it in much broader detail.

**Mr. Newton** interjected.

**Mr. HUGHES:** I will tell the hon. member in good time.

The growth of population and medical advances, show the need for a more active and positive planning for new hospitals in the immediate future. The social and economic situation suggests that representatives of voluntary organisations, the Government, and businesses, must be prepared to make major and positive moves in the hospital field in the next few years. World authorities believe that the best hospital system is based on 7.5 beds per 1,000 people. On the basis of a population of 1,000,000 we should have 7,500 beds in Brisbane to cope with our needs in future years. Although we have a considerable number of beds in the community, they are overtaxed at the moment.

The Minister for Health, in a statement in "Sunday Truth" of 14 September, said that this Government is not simply paying lip service to the system of free hospitals; it is extending it. That is absolutely true. In 1957 there were 10,550 hospital beds in Queensland. Now there are over 12,000, whilst the number of patients treated rose from 194,068 to 213,410. The Canossa Hospital has 180 new beds, and the Mt. Olivet Hospital also has a large number of new beds.

A greater degree of eagerness is being generated in the private sector of the community in building hospitals. I feel that this ties in to a great extent with what I am about to say. There is a need for dovetailing our reserves with Governmental planning. We should retain this hospital system. This also should blow away the myth that we would throw overboard the free-hospital system. We have not done so. We have administered the system on a basis that has been acceptable to 99.9 per cent. of the community. That stimulates the benefit to the hospitals. The Princess Alexandra Hospital has about 640 beds. I have had some personal experience with that hospital; I have visited my wife there and I have also visited friends on many occasions. I believe that the service given by that hospital is not only one that is appreciated by the public, but in the main it is also a good system. Maybe it will never be perfect. It is always

subject to human error, the same as anything else. Doctors do make mistakes. In fact, my wife has received a better service from public hospitals than she has from some private doctors. Whilst we may have some complaints, out of the probable 213,000 cases treated the number of complaints would represent probably .005 per cent. We seldom hear about patients who have had their limbs or lives saved by the wonders of surgery and the miracles of medicine performed daily in our hospitals. A knowledge of these things would quell any singular discontent that is raised. I have a feeling that it is raised more for political purposes than in a genuine desire to have remedial action taken for the benefit of our hospital system. Is any system that is organised and controlled by man perfect?

At Chermiside we have a cardiac unit that has been in existence for only six months. There, people who almost die by virtue of surgery live again. Tremendous miracles are being performed there and in other hospitals daily, and I pay tribute—I believe well-earned tribute—to many of our doctors. My wife is presently an inmate of the Chermiside Chest Hospital, and I have been able to make a comparison between it and some other hospitals. I think that that hospital would stand up to many in the world. I have not travelled the world, but I have done a tremendous amount of reading in preparing this speech. I have read about the World Health Organisation in Geneva and the various health authorities in England, America and Europe. I have also spoken to people who have travelled the world. I say that our Chermiside hospital compares favourably with any hospital in the world, not only in the manner in which it is conducted, but also in relation to the medical marvels that are performed there daily. These are the things we must pay tribute to.

I have read the annual reports over the years of the Princess Alexandra Hospital. We find from the statistics that in 1959-60 total in-patients were 21,177, and in 1963-64 they were 25,491. Out-patients attending clinics and casualty department increased from 176,330 in 1959-60 to 224,513 in 1963-64. Those figures indicate how taxed have been the facilities of this hospital. I believe that on many occasions it has overcrowded wards because there may be an epidemic of urti or some other infection in the community, and the hospital suddenly is faced with a flood of in-patients. It is not geared to take them. There is growing suburban development and a population explosion on the south side, together with great industrial development. Companies are moving to Rocklea and the new markets have been established in this area, with the attendant possibility of industrial accidents further taxing the facilities of the hospital.

**A Government Member:** What about motor-car accidents?



**Mr. HUGHES:** Yes, and also motor-car accidents, which are increasing because of the growing volume of motor vehicles using a roadway system created 30 years ago and unable to cope with present needs.

Because of these things the Princess Alexandra Hospital is overtaxed and frequently has overcrowded wards. However, in spite of this I do not think that anyone has gone without the medical treatment which he may have needed.

Statistics contained in the annual report of the Princess Alexandra Hospital show yearly increases in the X-ray department. The record for 1962-63 states—

“Nearly 1,000 separate examinations were handled each week and every day 500 films were sorted, checked and diagnosed.”

The annual report of the hospital states—

“Breakdowns in vital X-ray equipment were a weekly occurrence because of the severe work load.”

The total number of patient visits, excluding micro-radiography patients, was 43,237. The total of micro-radiography patients was 26,144, making a grand total of 69,381. The total number of exposures for 43,237 patient visits and for 47,258 examinations was 122,468. Although these figures may tend to bore some hon. members, I think it necessary to state them to develop my submissions.

The work of the hospital is reflected in the summary of work undertaken by the pathology department. The figures are as follows:—

Bacteriology	190,378
Biochemistry	72,643
Haematology	151,903
Singual Pathology	34,538
Morbid Anatomy	18,916

#### Opposition Members interjected.

**Mr. HUGHES:** I point out that I am not speaking of “morbid” members of the Australian Labour Party.

The breakdown of the equipment under severe work loads is outlined in the report. I do not think that this is any reflection on the administration of the hospital. The equipment was designed and installed to cope with the needs of a hospital of a certain bed number and size, and is now providing medical services for a greater number than was envisaged in the original design.

**Mr. Bennett:** Do you say that the accommodation is overtaxed?

**Mr. HUGHES:** On many occasions, yes. This is caused, for example, by a virus infection raging in the community. That can happen in any hospital in the world. We should now be planning for the building of new hospitals in the immediate future.

I think that it is to the credit of Dr. Powell and his staff that they have been able to cope, with such little complaint, with

the call made on the hospital by the public. Complaints would represent approximately .005 of the hundreds of thousands of cases treated. Little is heard of the medical marvels that are accomplished. I know that the kitchen probably could not cope with an increase in the number of beds, quite apart from the capacity of the X-ray department and the operating theatre. I am not going into detail on this subject; time will not permit me to do so. However, instead of planning to extend the Princess Alexandra Hospital from 646 beds to 1,000 beds—I have had an opportunity of looking at certain plans—I think we should build smaller general hospitals to treat both in-patients and out-patients farther out in the community. The hon. member for Belmont will take greater interest now, because I believe that there is a need for a hospital to meet the requirements of the residents of Wynnum, Belmont, and Mt. Gravatt, where the population has increased considerably through the work of the Housing Commission. There should also be a hospital in the Inala or Oxley area, and probably one on the north side.

**Mr. Dean:** There should be one at Sandgate.

**Mr. HUGHES:** I have not studied the north side. The hon. member can put forward whatever case he sees fit. I am putting a case for the people of Kurilpa and the people of the south side generally. The hon. member for Sherwood has taken a great interest in hospitals and has been able to secure some hospital facilities in his electorate, but we need more hospitals with a capacity of 300 to 400 beds.

In my opinion, there is justification for requesting the Government to appoint a survey and research team to plan the siting and building of new hospitals to cater for the developing needs of the community, both now and in the future. Unless action is taken now, I am sure that we will live to regret it. The economics of the situation are probably the most important factor, and I think I should say something about costs. The daily cost of in-patient care, as shown in the annual report of the Princess Alexandra Hospital, has risen from £4 2s. 7d. in 1959 to £5 1s. 8d. in 1963-64, and this excludes the cost of interest and redemption that should be added. The total cost of treating an in-patient has risen from £68 11s. 11d. in 1959 to £77 16s. 1d. last year. The average cost of out-patient treatment is £3 12s. All these things should be borne in mind when we wonder why it is difficult to maintain a free-hospital system.

It really comes back to wise and capable administration. Queensland's free-hospital system is the envy of all other Australian States, many of which have problems relating to hospitals that they have not been able to overcome. When I hear the crying and wailing at the wall of hon. members

opposite about the closure of a branch line from Bullamakanka to Woop Woop that may be losing £10,000 or £15,000 a year and is being replaced by a more modern service that will provide better facilities for the community, I wonder why they do not remember the cost of our free-hospital scheme. I ask them this question: would they rather have schemes to which they are socialistically wedded, including non-paying branch lines, or a free-hospital scheme? The choice has to be made in the light of the economics of the situation.

**Mr. Newton:** It has not assisted the pensioners.

**Mr. HUGHES:** The pensioners get free passes. They have received more generous treatment from this Government than they have ever had before. When pensions were reduced, they were reduced by Labour Governments. If the hon. member will accept a word from the wise, he will do much more listening and less talking. This is about the third time this afternoon that he has had to hang his head in shame.

In relation to hospital costs, let me quote from the annual report of Prince Henry's Hospital, Melbourne, for 1963-64. It says—

"For too long the financing of public hospitals has not been looked squarely in the face. It has always been recognised, and accepted, that efficient forms of private enterprise are good for the economy of the country and its people, and no one has ever yet claimed that a private organisation hampered by a lack of funds is an efficient organisation. But public hospitals are expected to maintain and even increase efficiency by the adoption of all the latest techniques and advances of medical science and still cope with mounting bank overdrafts.

"Some day the problem will have to be resolved. Why not now?"

"The community served by the public hospitals—and it consists of the bulk of the entire population—cannot escape its responsibility in this direction. Everybody wants a first-class health service, and a first-class service can never be provided—ad infinitum—at 'cut rates.' One way or the other, be it by the direct method of higher fees or the indirect method of taxation, the cost of the first-class service demanded can only be met by those who want the protection of that service, and that means all of us."

Here in Queensland we enjoy a hospital system which is the envy of all other States in Australia, yet I believe it is hampered to some extent by this economic influence and background.

**Mr. Walsh:** Getting back to private enterprise, do you think that private doctors should build their own hospitals?

**Mr. HUGHES:** If they wish to do so there is nothing in the constitution to prevent them. More hospitals are being built, but I found from personal experience that I could get better treatment from some doctors in the free-hospital system than from some G.P.'s. I will not mention names; that is my personal opinion. However, if they want to do it as a business enterprise they should dovetail their activities and costs with those relating to the general overall plan in the community.

Some people are making a profit out of being in hospital. If they are in a medical benefits fund and one of the family goes into a free hospital bed maintained and paid for by this State they often make a profit from the medical benefits payment.

**Mr. Bromley:** You have been wrongly informed there.

**Mr. HUGHES:** I am not wrongly informed. Many of my friends have had that experience. I know of one person in Kurilpa who got a cheque for £100 after being in a free hospital bed.

**Mr. Bromley:** How long ago?

**Mr. HUGHES:** Not very long ago. As recently as five days ago I heard of one cheque for £26 for 22 days spent in a public hospital bed. Why doesn't the hon. member get his facts straight before he speaks? That is why he goes wrong so often. There should be re-thinking in this regard. I do not think it is right that a person should make a profit as a result of being in a public hospital bed that is paid for by the State. Possibly it is a form of insurance purchased by the insurer, but I feel that that money should go into the hospital system. However, that is something for other authorities than myself. That is a mere passing observation.

I think there is good reason for retaining the free-hospital system. One of the great institutions of our society represents both a problem and a promise. It is the general hospital. The fine general hospital with its almost incredible scientific and human resources has the ability to perform miracles which not so long ago could not even be fantasied. The Director of the Montefiore Hospital, New York City, Dr. Martin Cherkesky, said—

"The developments in biochemistry, automation, electronics, telemetering, miniaturisation, and so on, will produce great boons for mankind. I have touched on the promise; what then is the problem? There are really several problems. The quality of all general hospitals is not equally good, and there are far too many that do not even meet the minimal standard for accreditation."

He said that in 1960 there were 1,500,000 admissions to accredited hospitals in the United States. That year 40 of 46 proprietary hospitals in New York City were unaccredited.

The matter of where hospitals should go and the services they are to provide should dovetail in with an overall plan. Certain minimum requirements should be met. I will not go into this matter at length as time will not permit me. As many of these hospitals are teaching hospitals, unless they dovetail in and provide proper and necessary services I believe they would leave some vacuums in growing communities. The example I have given should be a recommendation in itself for the continuation of our free-hospital system.

As one looks at the developments in medicine it is clear that the general hospital, which already is the hard core of medical care, will and should become even more the centre for all medical-care services—preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic—whether they be public or private medical services. The complexity of medicine, the costly instrumentation and facilities needed, and more importantly the demands for trained and skilled personnel, make the hospital the right locale for all kinds of medical-care services. I am wedded to the system we have. I am putting forward these submissions because apart from the out-patients' treatment which should be made available at some of our hospitals I believe there is a need at the Princess Alexandra Hospital for a maternity section to cope with the local need, even though the Mater Hospital provides a wonderful service. There is certainly a real need for a children's hospital to be associated with the Princess Alexandra Hospital. If there is to be on the part of the department this policy of extending our hospital buildings I believe they should be extended along the lines I have suggested to provide the maximum facilities and services to the community generally.

**Mr. Aikens:** Have you discussed this with the Minister for Health?

**Mr. HUGHES:** I hope he reads and puts into effect what I have suggested to meet the needs of the community. If he does that I think we will all benefit.

I believe that the role of all health expenditure in the whole economy is shown by relating the sum of capital development and current operating expenditure on health services to the gross national expenditure of each country. It is obvious that a hospital can only give service within the limits of its budget. It is obvious that from time to time hospital boards' budgets have been pruned. Whatever the form of governmental intervention, the obvious trend is for more of the taxpayers' money to be used directly in the financing of medical-care programmes. This was emphasised in the report I read to the Chamber.

I spoke earlier about the need of the private sector. This applied in England in the pre-nationalisation of medicine days. The need was felt but there was no demand. In Queensland, however, the need appears to have settled to a known regular rate. In the picture of the iceberg of disease, the line

between the unfelt need below the surface and the overt demand above the water level is not sharp and clearcut because there is an irregular and varying band of need which is felt but is not translated into a demand. As I said in the first few words, this was seen within the first few years of the health service in England when the need for treatment, which had been previously held back by financial barriers, was released. With the removal of any economic hindrance to medical care, these pent-up demands settled down into a fairly steady annual rate.

I quote now from "Studies in the Spectrum of Medical Care", which states—

"The burden of chronic sickness in later life is reflected in the consultation rates for men over 45 which increased by half, and which for women over 65 were twice as great as for men under 45. The cost for these elderly women was three times as much as for children up to age 15."

In North America, it is suggested in the "Lancet" that house calls have declined by over 40 per cent. in the past five years, and that one-third of those house calls were unnecessary. A rather pithy comment of American opinions can be found in these examples—

"Modern medicine cannot be practised from a little black bag."

"If the patient is too sick to leave the house he should be in hospital: if he is not that sick he should make it to the office."

More children's diseases are being treated at home rather than in hospital as in days gone by. Sanatoriums and tuberculosis clinics have less and less demand on them because of science and medical skill. I am relating all these facts in support of the argument that we should get on now with the job of surveying and planning to extend our hospital system by building two new hospitals, one in the immediate future on the south side to cater for the local need which has manifested itself and also to cope with the growing demand which the industrial development on the south side will precipitate to tax and strain the existing facilities of our hospitals.

In providing these new hospitals we must provide for children's sections and also for outpatients care. There is an opportunity for us to study what has taken place overseas. Current emphasis in California on regional planning for hospitals has grown out of stresses which have come from rapid advances in medical science coupled with particularly rapid population growth. They had their problems in this matter, too, because in the metropolitan Los Angeles area, from 1950 to 1961, 97 new hospitals were built. All but eight of these were smaller than 150-bed hospitals and all but 19 were smaller than 100 beds. I believe that this experience applies equally to Queensland. Let us not have another Princess Alexandra Hospital extending to

1,000 beds. Let us have an atmosphere or personality about our hospitals. To my mind, keeping them as 1,000-bed hospitals makes them impersonal. Those are the hospitals where there can be administrative failure, where there can be a lack of service. This is displayed to a great extent by having too big a hospital with too many staff.

**A Government Member:** Don't you agree with centralisation?

**Mr. HUGHES:** I agree with meeting the needs. They will not be satisfactorily met by another Princess Alexandra Hospital. The needs will be more adequately met and we will give better service to the public by going out in the suburbs and building two or more hospitals.

**Mr. Davies:** What is the maximum size for these hospitals?

**Mr. HUGHES:** Who can say? A good basis is 7.5 beds to each 1,000 of the population. It appears that a 600-bed hospital is an ideal size to administer. The Princess Alexandra Hospital systems are taxed to the fullest extent in the X-ray department, the operating theatres and the kitchens. Let us build hospitals of the 200/300-bed type rather than the 600-bed type. In that way we will not only provide for the medical needs but will also prove that we have a heartfelt appreciation of the problems. In order to have an effective hospital we must act now because an administrative decision does not mean that overnight we will have a functioning utility. We have to get on with this job now. I am not saying that nothing is being done. Undoubtedly research is being undertaken. I am sure that all the authorities concerned with this problem see the need in the immediate future for publicising a plan that calls for general community comment on the needs not only now but also in the future. I could quote Dr. Harvey Cushing, a pioneer surgeon and philosopher of medicine, who spoke of the "personality" of the hospital. To get the best in service, courtesy, and consideration, besides the surgeon's knife there must be "personality" in a hospital, and that will come, in my opinion, only by establishing smaller types of hospitals. Let us heed these words. Let us do something now.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville North) (3.31 p.m.): One of my first reactions when I received the Financial Statement and the Estimates of the Treasurer in presenting the Budget was to look immediately to see whether provision had been made this year for a child welfare and guidance clinic in Townsville. No provision has been made this year for the establishment of this very necessary adjunct to the Townsville Hospital. I emphasize "very necessary", and I have been advocating the establishment of this clinic since I entered Parliament in 1960. To date I have done so without avail.

In May, 1963, a child guidance clinic was opened in Toowoomba. I have no argument with that, because I am in complete agreement with the establishment of these very desirable amenities anywhere outside the metropolitan area; but, representing Townsville North, I am also very interested in seeing that we get those amenities in the North. At the opening of the child guidance clinic in Toowoomba in May, 1963, the then Minister for Health, Dr. Noble, stated—and I quote from the annual report of the Welfare and Child Guidance Clinics for the year ended 30 June, 1963—

"Similar units to that being built at the Brisbane Children's Hospital would be constructed at Toowoomba, Townsville, and ultimately at Rockhampton."

That was in May, 1963. Another year has passed, and we seem to have got no farther in this direction. Now the Budget shows no provision again this year, so, unless something extraordinary happens in the next few months, it must mean that we have another year with the lack of this very much needed clinic in Townsville.

My voice is not the only one that has been raised on behalf of the children of North Queensland. In about April or May of this year a number of public-spirited citizens in Townsville banded together to point out the very strong need for such a clinic in Townsville. The guiding light was Dr. Vic Henry, a child specialist in Townsville. He is a very humane and dedicated man, and he, with others, pointed out the great necessity for having a child guidance and welfare clinic in Townsville. So great was their advocacy that they were able to convince the Mayor of Townsville of the need for supporting any moves to establish a clinic in Townsville, to the extent that he convened a public meeting on Tuesday, 2 June, 1964. That meeting received tremendous support from all sections of the community in Townsville. A representative committee called the Townsville Child Guidance Committee was set up. It was representative of the whole community. A petition was circulated, and 3,000 public-spirited Townsville citizens signed it. This work was done by community leaders, doctors, clergymen, magistrates, police officers, social workers, representatives of the Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association, the Crippled Children's Association, and women's organisations. There were also many others. There was tremendous support from the community in Townsville for the establishment of a welfare and guidance clinic.

This petition was presented to the Minister by a delegation on 3 July, 1964. The Rev. John Sabel, Dr. Vic. Henry and Mrs. Allen came to see the Minister and presented this petition to him on that date. We have no argument with the way in which they were received. The Minister received them well, listened to what they had to say, and complimented them on its presentation. He then, of course, said that shortage of staff was the

restraining force and that for that reason a clinic would not be established in Townsville in the near future.

I do not believe that the Government has made every possible effort in this direction. It is all very well to say that there is a shortage of staff, but year after year passes and surely this shortage is going to be overcome at some time. We were prepared to accept that perhaps that might have been the position a couple of years ago, but when years pass we become disturbed and feel that the Government is not making the efforts that it should in this direction.

I am going to support that statement by referring to a report that I have here. Brisbane is much better served with welfare and guidance clinics than is any other part of the State. I have here the annual report of the welfare and guidance clinics for the year ended 30 June, 1963. It reports on the operations of a number of centres in Brisbane. Mention is made of the Mary Street Welfare and Guidance Clinic. On the inside the Brisbane Children's Hospital Child Guidance Clinic is referred to. There is then a reference to the Woolloowin Children's Home and the Wilson Youth Hospital Out-patients' Clinic. On the back is mentioned the number of out-patients attending the Wilson Youth Hospital, and there is also reference to services provided to kindergartens, churches, homes, etc., and to teaching activities.

It then says with a certain amount of pride, as well it might, that interviews in the Brisbane area totalled 18,940. Psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, medical consultants, speech therapists and occupational therapists carried out a grand total of 18,940 interviews during the year ended 30 June, 1963. It will probably be a larger number this year. The point that I make is that those interviews were in an area with a population of some 750,000 people. There are in the North, speaking of North Queensland and not merely the area around Townsville, approximately 250,000 people. It is therefore reasonable to say that if similar facilities had been available in North Queensland, particularly in Townsville, 6,000 to 7,000 interviews would have taken place.

If almost 20,000 interviews have taken place in the Brisbane area out of a population of 750,000, then, statistically speaking, I think my argument is reasonable that if the facilities had been available in the North, about 6,000 to 7,000 interviews would have taken place there. The children in North Queensland are no better and no worse than those in any other part of the State—I think that is a fair submission—and if this is the scope of the work undertaken by the guidance clinics in Brisbane, I think it is reasonable to submit that a similar need exists in Townsville and in North Queensland generally.

At present we have in Townsville and North Queensland only a few people trying to cope with this problem on a part-time

basis. I have mentioned Dr. Henry; Dr. Richards is another psychiatrist; Dr. Scott at the university has also given of his time in trying to assist young people. But the task confronting them at the moment is obviously beyond them, and it should not be forgotten that the facilities in Brisbane about which I spoke a moment ago are 1,000 miles away from North Queensland. This obviously isolates very effectively the majority of the children in the North who need help.

Statistics prove that there must be a certain percentage of children who need help, but many of them are economically isolated right from the start because of the money required to meet travelling expenses and the cost of accommodation in Brisbane. No one can convince me that it is true to say, "These facilities are available in Brisbane, they should be used by the children of North Queensland." I think I have demonstrated convincingly that ordinary working-class people cannot afford to bring their children to Brisbane, and, as there are no facilities available in Townsville, they have to make do as best they can.

If facilities are necessary in Brisbane—I believe they are, and I believe that those involved are very dedicated, hard-working people making a worth-while contribution to the welfare of the community—why should we not have them in the North? It is the conviction of the people of Townsville and North Queensland that this is a long-standing and urgent need. We believe that if the Government thinks that the problem of child delinquency should be tackled, this is one useful way of tackling it. I say quite frankly that I believe it is an indictment on the Government that it will pander to one part of the State—the report to which I referred shows the number of facilities available in Brisbane—and do nothing for the other parts. The Government has ignored the needs of distant areas of Queensland, and I believe that these facilities are so urgently needed in the North that the Government should provide them, even if it is at the expense of some other project. I say very sincerely that if we can set one child's feet on the right road we will be repaid adequately for whatever we may expend.

**Mr. Hughes:** Although it may be desirable—I admit that it is; they should have it—you must admit that this is a fairly recent development in Brisbane. Give them time.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I want these facilities in the North, and I think I have demonstrated to the hon. member for Kurilpa that this has been going on not for one year but for quite a few years. I am arguing that if it is available here it should be available up there. If doctors are available in clinics in Brisbane, why should we not get them in the North? Why should one part of the State receive all these facilities while the rest of the State receives none? Surely there should be some equitable distribution in these matters, even if they are comparatively recent.

How stupid of the interjector! I suppose he is the kind of fellow who would say of penicillin, "It is only a recent innovation. We should get it in Brisbane but do not let the rest of the State have it." It is the duty of the Government to see that these facilities are available to the whole of the people of Queensland and not just to one section of them.

I am very pleased to have received that interjection because it highlighted what I was trying to say and obviously shows the thinking of the Government and its members in these matters. The hon. member for Kurilpa will probably hang his head and go outside just as he claimed a moment ago the hon. member for Belmont should do when he interjected while the hon. member for Kurilpa was speaking.

We would be adequately repaid for our endeavours if we could put even one child's feet on the right road, and if we could do something for children before they reach the stage where they cannot be redeemed. Of course, once they reach that stage the only thing left is to put them away in some gaol. But if we do something for them early we can do much to assist them. What member on the Government side would assert that I am wrong in saying that we should get this facility in the North?

We have already raised a considerable sum in the North for sub-normal and crippled children. Quite recently we conducted an appeal for sub-normal children and I received a letter some days ago stating that at that time it would appear that the sub-normal children's centre in Townsville would receive something like £8,000 from the appeal. It is no good saying that we are not prepared to help ourselves in these matters. We are.

Many young people would benefit if we could have established in Townsville or elsewhere in North Queensland a welfare and guidance clinic. I should say Townsville would be the appropriate place because it is the heart of North Queensland. It is about time the Government pulled its weight and provided this service.

I wish to speak again today on the recent cane assignments. It will be remembered that I attacked the issue of these assignments during the Address-in-Reply debate and the Minister, in reply, virtually intimated that everything in the garden was rosy. If he believes that, he is completely off the beam and does not know what is going on in his own electorate or in any other part of Queensland.

I was attacked by the hon. member for Whitsunday on this subject. I am not complaining, because that is his prerogative. He attacked me for daring to criticise prematurely the specially appointed experts. Surely criticism on a factual basis to remedy injustice to applicants, caused by preference being given to unworthy applicants, is not premature. Just as he attacked me, he cannot deny me the right to attack him. I

mentioned nothing about the Proserpine area nor did I mention the hon. member, but if he is prepared to go into the ring and break a lance I, too, am prepared to enter it and break a lance with him. He took me to task by asking what I knew about sugar. Apparently he said that I was not born on the land. But neither was he. His father was a railway engine-driver, and a very good one. Therefore he cannot say that he was born and bred on the land. In any case, that is all irrelevant when one is trying to remedy an injustice. Does he mean to say that nobody should rise in his seat unless he is an expert on the business before the Chamber? If that were so, many members on the Government side would never rise because they are not experts on anything.

After all, this is an industry which was sponsored to bring about northern coastal settlement, but now the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board is permitting the acquisition of cane farms by large interests. Those with an already huge assignment have been given more. They do not really need these bigger assignments.

The hon. member for Whitsunday can be included in this criticism for allowing these big interests to grow bigger. In his own area of Proserpine the big interests have taken over to such an extent that there are now 100 fewer suppliers to the Proserpine mill than five years ago. That shows how these big interests are taking over, contrary to what we believe should have been the plan to settle the coastal areas of the State. He would have been better off looking after the roads in his area. I think they are the worst roads between Coolangatta and Cooktown. Rather than attacking me he would have been better off co-operating with his shire council in doing something about his own area.

Since I spoke here last on this subject I have travelled many hundreds of miles and spoken to scores of people about the new cane assignments. I want to be responsible about this. I say quite frankly that there are those who had no possible chance of an assignment in the first place but who want to yell "stinking fish" because they missed out. I try to be responsible when I meet these people and point out that the reason they missed out is glaringly obvious.

I have heard many allegations about rorts and rackets and maladministration within the industry, particularly in connection with the recent assignments. I want to be charitable this afternoon. I firmly believe that the whole matter was badly handled by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. Surely the investigating committee should have been told to work to some plan when they went out to investigate. Surely that is a reasonable submission. If you were given a job to do by some authority, Mr. Baxter, would you not ask those who sent you out how you would work? Possibly you would ask whether you would work on a points system, allotting so many points for this and so many points for that.

I do not think there can be any argument about this. Surely some method should have been laid down by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board for this investigating committee. Some weeks ago I asked the Minister whether that was so. I asked whether there was in fact a points system that they worked to. Did they allot so many points for suitability of the land, so many points for the fact that the land was close to transport, so many points because the applicant had a title to the land and so many points for the fact that he had capital available? Surely it should have been decided by some system such as I have outlined. I cannot see that anyone could argue against my submissions.

As the hon. member for Whitsunday said, there were some 3,000 or 4,000 applicants for these assignments. I have letters confirming that statement. Only 1,000 of the 3,000 applicants could be successful. How were the 1,000 determined? If some method was laid down, surely the investigating committee was not so lucky as to be able to pick out the 1,000 immediately and discard the others. Surely it is reasonable to think that about 1,500 would come into the category laid down. I ask how the committee could pick out the 1,000 from the 1,500. I asked the Minister if they had a ballot, and he said they did not. That leaves a doubt as to how they eventually arrived at the 1,000. I asked if the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board accepted the recommendations of the investigating committee and the Minister said that it did not do so in all cases. This is in "Hansard" for everyone to see.

Why wasn't there a ballot? When we are on a touchy subject in our committees we submit to a ballot so that later on the claim of "racket and rot" cannot be made. Why is that not done by those who are supposed to know the industry backwards and to understand the people involved and their heart-burnings? That would have been the fairest system. It would have removed any doubt.

The hon. member for Whitsunday said that only one applicant in three or four was successful. That appears to be true from all the correspondence I have received and from the replies from the Board. I cite the hon. member's case as a perfect example in Whitsunday. Although only one in three or four was successful, both his son and his son-in-law were successful. I am using that as an example because, after all, he started it. I am showing why the people in his area immediately raised their eyebrows and started getting worried. They said, "Many of us were not successful. How could he take two tricks out of two?" I am not making any allegations. I am only using his argument against himself and pointing out how this has been brought on his head by the maladministration and stupidity of the Central Board. If there had been a ballot, nobody could have pointed a finger at him had he been successful. People would have said, "He was lucky; just like winning the Casket." He

must understand that, because of this present stupid method—I am not saying how it was done—these charges are laid, and that is why people look at him. I am not saying that anything improper took place. I am merely using his case as a perfect example of maladministration and stupidity in handling this matter.

**Mr. Camm:** You are not using me. You are relying on the privilege of this Chamber to use the members of my family. You keep out of this. If I start on your family you do not know where I will finish.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I do not remember the hon. member rising to his feet when a question was asked by the hon. member for Aspley about Mr. Bromley's mother. He was silent on that occasion. What is wrong with him now? Doesn't he like it when he gets a taste of his own medicine? This is only an example of what I am talking about. If he elects to shut his eyes and ears to what is being said that is his lookout. I am using this case as an example to show why everybody in that area is disquieted and disgruntled by the fact that this was not done in a correct, proper and equitable manner. If the hon. member is going to argue about it, good luck to him; I cannot help it. There are others in the Proserpine area who are in the same position. Others have written about their sons and nephews not getting assignments, but they say, "My land was better than theirs; I was closer to transport than they were; I have the capital and title. Why didn't I get an assignment?" I cannot answer that question because I was not able to find out from anybody concerned what principles were laid down in the granting of assignments. When the Central Board continues to do that type of thing, there must be this feeling of disquiet everywhere.

At the invitation of the Home Hill branch of the Australian Labour Party I visited that area last Thursday and moved through it. There would be many in this Chamber who know of these cases because they were submitted through the various Ministers to the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. There are men like Caspanello, Papale, Jack Davies, Mr. Oates, Mr. Klaka and Mr. Kelly.

I had only one day in which to get around these places, but in many cases I found that the land surrounding these areas was growing sugar cane. In the case of Jack Davies, he had a beautiful flat piece of land, with the tramway running right through the centre, and on each of his boundaries there was sugar cane, yet he was not able to get an assignment. When I asked him why he could not get an assignment he said, "I don't know. I cannot find out." How, then, can anybody talk to that fellow in a reasonable way and say that it was right to knock him back when others around him have been given assignments?

I was also taken past places where men with peaks of 8,000 tons have been allowed to go off their properties and grow on other

assignments five or six miles away. There are others with peaks of that nature who have been given extra assignments. How can one explain that sort of thing? Why would anybody want an 8,000-ton peak to live, and why would the Central Board give extra assignments to a man with an 8,000-ton peak? As I have said, I believed that the idea behind the expansion in the sugar industry was to bring as many settlers as possible into our coastal area. How could that be achieved by granting another assignment to a grower who already has a peak of 8,000 tons?

There are other cases I could mention. I went farther up the Burdekin to a place that was 10 miles away from the nearest transport. I have no argument with this man, who was fortunate in being granted an assignment; but 10 miles means a long haul to the nearest tramline. At the same time, somebody else five miles from the tramline is told that he is too far away. The fellow next door to the man who was 10 miles away was told that he could not have an assignment because he was too old. This is the sort of thing that goes on. If somebody from the Government likes to go around and examine these statements, he will find that they are true.

People have no appeal against the decision of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. The only person they can go to is their local member. They can ask him to raise the issue if he can, but he cannot do anything about it.

**Mr. Ewan:** They should go to the right member.

**Mr. TUCKER:** If they did go to the right member they did not do any good. I was not their member; I represent a city area. When they see things like that going around them, and when they cannot find any reason why they have not been granted assignments, having tried time and time again, can anyone blame them for being discontented? They then find that the man next door, who has not been in the industry, does not belong to it, and has only an option on the land, is given an assignment. I am possibly repeating myself, but these things have to be repeated.

I speak again about the Clairview land. I remember the Minister's saying that sugar-cane will grow on any land, and could be grown even on the floor. I have no argument with what he said. I do have sufficient knowledge to know, however, that it will not grow in a swamp. The Minister said on that occasion, "You could drain it." This brings me to my next point.

At Home Hill and other areas in Queensland land is being sold for £100 or £120 an acre. That has to be paid out before a house or shed is built and machinery is purchased. The more I look into this matter the more convinced I am that to take up a cane farm with a peak of 1,200 tons one must have £25,000 before one can start.

If my facts are correct, the Agricultural Bank will lend about £8,000 to a person with a peak of 1,200 tons. Where does the other £17,000 come from? These are facts, and I do not think they should be laughed at.

Many settlers who are being allowed in are completely out of their depth financially. If the Agricultural Bank says, "We will lend only £8,000 on a peak of 1,100 or 1,200 tons," they must be completely out of their depth, and at the first decrease in the overseas price of sugar most of them could well walk off the land. It could then revert to those who advanced the money in the first place.

Another iniquitous thing that I discovered was that many of the assignments have been granted on seven-year leases. Nobody knows what will happen at the end of that time with regard to the assignments themselves. Does it mean that those who have leased the land for seven years will walk into some sort of bonanza in seven years? It appears to me that that could well be so.

On the previous occasion I produced a piece of clay to demonstrate that it came from land that was obviously in a swampy area. I still hold that view. Although I was criticised for a while in the Ayr district, people later came to me and said, "You are right on the ball in this matter," which I knew I was in the first place because I was guided by people who understand this subject. The hon. member for Whitsunday said that he did not know where this area was and he had never seen it. That is his fault. It is there, and there are people who will allow him to see it if he cares to go there.

I consider that these things should be brought to light. There are other areas in which no assignments have been granted. I am thinking of Upper Murray, near Tully. This is a wonderful area and was recommended long ago as suitable for sugar-cane growing and the erection of another sugar mill. This area received nothing at all. In other areas, in which the land is completely unsuitable, supporters of the Government appeared able to say, "You go in there and I will guarantee that you will get an assignment." That is how it appears. In actual fact, assignments were granted. That is the position in Home Hill and Ayr, and people there will know of whom I am speaking. These people are paying highly inflated prices. It may cost them £25,000, because they will need 100 acres if they are to drain the land, and they will face extinction with the first drop in world prices.

Let us understand, Mr. Campbell, that before this gambling with the sugar industry—I believe it is gambling—one-third of our sugar was disposed of on the home market, one-third at a guaranteed price within the British Commonwealth, and one-third on the world market. Very soon half our sugar will be on the world market and subject to world market price fluctuations. Hon. members opposite cannot say that that is



not correct. If the price of sugar on the world market plunges sharply, the impact is much less when only one-third of Australia's sugar is sold on that market. That is why I say there is gambling with the industry. I suppose calculated risks have to be taken sometimes.

**Mr. Aikens:** The world price does not affect cane grown within the peak. It applies only to cane over the peak.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I will agree that the world price does not affect sugar within the peak, but many of these people are given not only a peak but also an assignment on acreage. They will buy the necessary machinery to get that area under cane, and they will acquire possibly 100 acres where previously they may have acquired only 60. Because it is bad land, because it will need drainage, furrows between every 12 rows, big headlands, places to build a house and sheds, it will mean 100 acres at £100 an acre, perhaps more. It is obvious that they will have to undertake financial obligations right over the top of their heads, and they will be in dire straits as soon as the price tumbles. They have worked out that they will be able to meet their commitments on the basis of what they have been assigned and what they will be allowed to grow, but if the price plunges, as my colleague from Townsville South said—

**Mr. Aikens:** Anything they grow above their peak will be affected by the world market prices.

**Mr. TUCKER:** That is the way they are working now, because they have to on the basis of £25,000. None of us needs to be a financial genius to realise how seriously they are in jeopardy when they are borrowing to that extent. The Government could well find, as it did in other instances, that these people will have to walk off their properties if there is a sharp fall in the price of sugar on the world market. I hope there is not.

The Central Sugar Cane Prices Board can refuse a person the right to sell within an area. It can say, on a sale from A to B, "We will not allow it because we believe the price is inflated." Surely, then, it should have the same sort of say in a case where a person comes into the industry at what is apparently a grossly inflated price. As I said earlier, the Agricultural Bank will lend only £8,000 on the peak, and if the experts there say that anything beyond that is a bad risk, who will carry the extra burden required to get the growers started?

Only recently one of the farmers showed me a new tractor. It could pull a ripper, and I think someone told me in this Chamber that that is the way the ground is cultivated. It cost about £4,000, and I suppose he paid for the tractor, the ripper and other implements in the expectation of an assignment that he did not get. He had held his land for years and years. It did not

cost him £100 an acre; it probably cost him £10 an acre, perhaps less, when he bought it. He was not given an assignment, but assignments were given to those who were paying £100 or £150 an acre for land. Why was that man not given an assignment? It was not on the score of economics or finance, or because he did not have transport; the line ran right past his door. People who had owned land for years and years were excluded; others who had options on land at greatly inflated prices received assignments.

What do hon. members read into that? What would any thinking man read into it when, in fact, people can take options at £100 an acre on bad land and be given a cane assignment overnight? Many people would say that they read into it rorts and rackets on the part of these people and that they have got at somebody to ensure that they can sell land at that inflated price. I do not know whether or not that is true but I have been unable to find anybody, including the Minister, who can say why and how any particular decision was arrived at.

If the central Sugar Cane Prices Board cannot give reasons for its decisions, then some doubt must remain. The Board has not at any stage given reasons as to why they arrived at any decision, and I do not see why they should not have done so if the matter has been handled openly and they had nothing to hide. Why cannot they tell these people exactly why assignments have been refused to them?

To quote another instance, one man took me onto his land, which was almost completely surrounded by cane assignments, and by growing cane, except that there was a road on one side of his property. I said to him, "What was wrong with this?" He said, "They told me that the soil was crook." yet one could have taken a shanghai and fired a stone into the cane growing all round it. Hon. members on the other side interjected a moment ago and said, "You can grow cane on any sort of land now." Yet this man was told that his soil was "crook".

Many other people have looked into this matter. I have many letters downstairs. I have only a few here which I chose at random, but they all tell the same story from all that section of Queensland from Mackay north. No-one has been able to get any reason for refusal. These men look at their good land on which they are refused assignments and, at the same time, see assignments being given on bad land purchased at inflated prices and they are asking what is being done about it. Why should they not do so? I believe this matter should have been handled as it was always intended to be handled. In many cases the Government could have done something about it. There is available in these areas a lot of Crown land that is eminently suitable for cane growing. Had this been made available it would have blocked these inflated

land prices. It would have stopped speculating in land at £100 to £150 an acre by people who have no chance of success. The Government could have opened Crown land for this purpose. The hon. member for Mourilyan and others know that there is available any amount of Crown land that could have been opened and balloted for. The Minister for Primary Industries knows there is any amount in his area, but all that has been done is to allow the rich to get richer and the big man to get bigger.

**Mr. Aikens:** I was told that the local committees had to make their recommendations on the bases of four grounds: (1) suitability of the land, (2) adequate water, (3) adequate finance, and (4) the experience of the applicant.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I agree with that. I heard that on occasions, too. But when you talk to the people who were knocked back, the first thing you find is that they have complied with everything the hon. member for Townsville South mentioned, and more. Every one of them who asked me to look at his land complied with those conditions, so what does one say to men like that—ordinary, decent farmers? What does the hon. member for Whitsunday say to them when they show him land that has not those desirable qualities but on which assignments were granted?

It is stated, "Production in the industry is such that we cannot gamble; we must have them all near transport." Yet I can go 10 or 15 miles away from transport and find assignments being granted. I should like to know why we are not consistent in these things? Why should we not have utilised this opportunity to open up new Crown lands and to ballot for them as we did long ago in settlements which have been eminently successful? Then everyone would at least have felt satisfied. If I could say to a man, "You went into the hat but did not come out," he would say, "Just too bad." But now he says to me, "I was not in the race in the first place. I didn't even go into the hat. I didn't have a chance." By using the method suggested 1,500 people could have qualified out of 3,000—possibly more—because many people in the industry and connected with it would know what was necessary. If in fact 2,000 qualified, why were the 1,000 brushed aside?

**Mr. Murray:** Screening first and the ballot afterwards, you suggest?

**Mr. TUCKER:** Yes. I agree that there could be screening. There would be some with no hope at the start. When I first spoke I said that I wanted to be responsible in this matter. I realise that there are men with an axe to grind who can suck you in. But if there are responsible men in the community who can point out these things, I say there should be a screening. Then those who comply with all the rules and regulations should go to a ballot. If that had been done it would have removed the feeling that now

exists throughout the State. As I was prepared to do the other day, I am prepared to speak for these people today. It is the only way they have of getting this matter aired. They made inquiries but were merely told that they were not successful. I have letters saying that some people went to see their solicitors—

**Mr. Aikens:** The worst thing in the world is to go to a lawyer.

**Mr. TUCKER:** That was their remedy; they thought it was the correct one. After inquiries were made on their behalf they knew no more than when they started. Even though I do not know a great deal about sugar I can see that some of the things they were told were clear stupidity. How can these people be expected to have faith in an industry that is run in such a manner?

I conclude on this note: all this criticism has been brought on the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board by its own actions in the granting of these new cane assignments.

**Mr. BEARDMORE** (Balonne) (4.23 p.m.): I should like to direct my contribution to the Budget debate to irrigation, which is so important to the progress and economic development of our wonderful State.

We, as a Government, have a great responsibility to see that the rain that falls on our catchment areas is made use of and is not allowed to run to waste. Even if there is no immediate return, irrigation potential, when developed, must play a major part in increased production, which this State needs if we are to hold our place in the world's markets for primary produce and establish economic stability. It is a matter for regret, of course, that finance for irrigation projects is more or less part of any Government's spending allowance shared with other equally important Government departments, and there never seems to be enough money to go round.

It is to be hoped that with the State's apparent productive capacity it could be expected that more money will be available for irrigation, but time is a very precious factor and the need for irrigation expenditure should not be tied to the State's ability to find the necessary money. It should be approached on a national basis, and the Federal Government should be asked to finance irrigation projects which would most certainly add to the State's productiveness and monetary gain.

I mentioned the irrigation farms at St. George during the Address-in-Reply debate. Reverting again to the irrigation position as it affects cotton-growing at St. George, I point out that already there is sufficient land served by the present channel system at St. George to provide from 6,000 to 8,000 acres of cotton. All that is required is additional water. Having in mind that cotton is a payable crop, previous experience has enabled growers to deal with the many pests operating against a

successful crop. Further encouraged by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the C.S.I.R.O., who have reported favourably on the climatic environment for cotton at St. George, it seems that with the advent of the crop from a farm operated by Canadians it is quite possible that the erection of a cotton ginny is justified.

I also drew attention to the fact that the population of St. George alone increased by 31 per cent. in the years between 1954 and 1961, an increase contributed to, to a great extent, by the 20-odd irrigation farms established adjacent to the town. How much more could we increase our population if more and more irrigation areas were made available. Irrigation, wherever it might take place in Queensland, is of major importance and, instead of having the watersheds of our major river systems run to waste in times of flood, and finding after a short period that there are water shortages in our inland in particular, surely it is imperative that prompt action be taken, by every means possible, to rectify this sorry position.

There is no doubt that Queensland suffers from too few irrigation projects when we view those remarkably productive schemes in southern States, quite possibly helped by greater rainfall. There would be few better catchment areas than Queensland possesses. The Condamine-Balonne River basin has an estimated catchment area of 29,000 square miles above St. George.

Another somewhat happier position is also apparent in Queensland in that our inland rivers are diverted from the coast by the Great Dividing Range, north to south, over thousands of miles, thus providing immense quantities of water for use through irrigation channels for many more thousands of acres of naturally dry but good soil capable of much greater usage for sheep, wool, cattle, cotton and other forms of primary production upon which our inland towns and the State generally depend so much for increased population and wealth. Too few people, I feel, realise the tremendous possibilities our inland rivers possess in this respect.

The Condamine River basin, which commences above Killarney and traverses country northerly and as far west as Injune and Mitchell, has a tremendous watershed which supplies 34 major creeks together with the Maranoa River, which joins the Balonne River 18 miles north of St. George. This river rises at Killarney, and is known as the Condamine for hundreds of miles. It is known as the Balonne from its junction with Dogwood Creek, 40 miles above Surat. Thus it may be readily realised by hon. members what huge quantities of water pass by St. George and go on through western New South Wales in the Darling River, and finally into the sea to be wasted.

Surely this heaven-sent opportunity for irrigation is a challenge to our initiative to develop this, a natural heritage, rather than

to be idle onlookers while much of the water from this big watershed runs to waste through an otherwise comparatively dry, vast sheep and cattle country.

The Balonne Shire Council, with its central offices in St. George, realising the urgent necessity to supplement the only major weir between Killarney and the New South Wales border in South-west Queensland, recently carried a resolution requesting the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply and the Department of Primary Industries to take steps to investigate the possibility of building another weir 15 miles above St. George, where there is a satisfactory rock foundation on a site where water can be channelled by gravitation via a natural watercourse into Thurraggie Lagoon, which could serve approximately 40 to 50 additional irrigation farms in proximity to those already established. At the same time, water could be released for requirements downstream in times of need, which do not occur very often. There are many other suitable sites on other streams higher up the river where, in the same watershed, smaller weirs could be established in order to replenish weirs further down the stream as required.

The present weir at St. George has proved its worth in no small way, but the problem of releasing sufficient water for grazing properties and the town of Dirranbandi lower downstream in times of dry weather needs to be overcome. Farms with irrigation require sufficient water to be fully productive in this highly developed irrigation project.

As I have said, money is the keynote of the whole business. It is important that we have sufficient storage capacity in our inland area to provide some semblance of security for our primary products and for the more rapid advancement of this State.

Nothing could bolster our primary production more than the supply of ample water. We have the know-how to achieve all this, and we have a competent staff, headed by Commissioner Haigh, which can be depended upon to carry out major water-conservation projects. I appeal to the Treasurer and the Minister for Conservation, and, through them, to the Government as a whole to give very serious consideration to what I have said and to make money available for another major weir on the Balonne River, from which, I am sure, Queensland will benefit greatly.

**Mr. Mann:** They won't give you the money.

**Mr. BEARDMORE:** We can only hope that they do.

I should like to have something to say on the very wonderful job being done by the Department of Health, especially in relation to hospitals. Four years ago the Surat public hospital was destroyed by fire and now in its place stands a 16-bed modern brick building that is a credit to the Department of Health and a very wonderful comfort to the people of that district.

When I became the member for the Tara district I was astounded by the decrepit, out-of-date, and totally unsuitable buildings that served as a hospital in that town. These hospital buildings were erected in a water-course, which resulted in their becoming completely surrounded and partly submerged whenever there was a flood in the creek caused by rain that fell on the higher ground. This was known to happen as many as four times in a year.

The then Department of Health and Home Affairs, headed by the late Dr. Noble, decided that a new hospital must be built, and plans were prepared for a new brick hospital. Today a 24-bed hospital is nearing completion. I had the honour of laying the foundation stone of the building some months ago, and it is expected that the Minister for Health will officially open this £140,000 hospital before the end of the present year. We look forward to the visit of the Minister to Tara, so that the people living there will have the opportunity of thanking him personally, and, through him, the Government, for its understanding and help.

**Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) (4.34 p.m.):** The Financial Statement introduced by the Treasurer on this occasion would give one the impression that the prosperity of Queensland has never been at a higher level.

**A Government Member:** That is correct.

**Mr. NEWTON:** It may be what the hon. member thinks.

A careful examination of the Financial Statement leaves much to be desired. We find that since 1961, when the people of Queensland cast their votes against the Commonwealth Government for the raw deal the State of Queensland was receiving, certain changes have been made in the Government of this State. In the first place, we saw the battle between the defeated Federal members and members of the Government occupying the Treasury benches in Queensland. The Government was accused of not putting Queensland's case properly before the Loan Council. Since taking my seat in this Assembly in 1960, I have witnessed on many occasions the Premier and the Treasurer taking substitutes with them to meetings of the Loan Council. Sometimes it was the Deputy Premier who went, and at other times it was another Minister.

We find today in the Financial Statement, because the Government has pressed its claim further since it was attacked in 1961 by its defeated colleagues, special repayable assistance grants made to the State. On going through the Financial Statement we find that, whereas this started with probably only one or two projects, there are now quite a number covered by special repayable assistance grants and others are contemplated. It seems to me that these debits could, over a period of years, become numerous. Unless the grants received are able to establish new industries in the State, and these industries

are able to meet what the Government expects of them, it will be a sorry state of affairs for Queensland in the near future.

It is quite easy for the Treasurer to introduce a Financial Statement of this nature. We must, however, look very closely at the position to make sure that we are not caught in the years to come because of things now being done here. For instance, on the first page of the Financial Statement the Treasurer refers to many industries to support what he claims to be the prosperity of the State. I listened with interest to the speech of the hon. member for Townsville North, in which he indicated quite clearly what could happen in the sugar industry. The same thing applies to the meat industry.

The Treasurer, also on the first page, refers to the building industry as an indication of Queensland's present prosperity. I do not disagree with that; it could be correct. Let me say, however, as one who has been engaged in industry since 1947, that I have seen this happen before. There have been many boom and bust periods in the building industry. At the present time, because of the carrying out of a number of commercial projects, there is no doubt that the building industry is prosperous. There is also great development taking place in the building of homes.

Here again, we all know that there are many avenues for the raising of finance to build homes and commercial buildings. If this supply of finance is cut off, industry faces another bust, and the building industry, which plays a very important role in the State, will deteriorate again to the state in which I have seen it since I became a member of Parliament in 1960. The Budget speaks of prosperity in Queensland, but those factors must be taken into consideration.

The Treasurer mentioned that although it was estimated originally that the Mt. Isa railway project would cost £30,000,000 it is now expected that it will cost the Government only £26,300,000. This does not really surprise me, because since becoming a member of this Assembly I have taken the opportunity of seeing the construction work in progress. The Americans have shown us an entirely new method of laying railway lines, and no doubt the project will be concluded well ahead of schedule because of the use of highly-mechanised plant. Not very long ago we were faced with a very serious problem of unemployment in Queensland, and one would have thought that some of the money loaned to the Government for the Mt. Isa railway project could have been used to overcome the problem. However, it was not, and we find now that this is merely one of the projects implemented by the Government that will impose a heavy burden on the people of Queensland because the money for it has been provided by means of special repayable assistance.

If we go a little further, we see that the Treasurer, who has been in charge of the State's finances since the Government took

office in 1957, is now surveying every possible avenue to obtain more money from the Commonwealth Government. He mentions particularly reimbursements to the State on the basis of population, and he refers to the amount that would be received if full-blooded aboriginals were taken into consideration. I do not disagree with this. I think it would be a very good thing if we could give to the aboriginal people in Queensland full voting rights, make available to them all the other amenities that are enjoyed by white citizens, and receive in return from the Commonwealth Government an amount per head that would enable us to do something for them in their particular sphere.

The announcement relating to lump-sum payments and weekly payments under the Workers' Compensation Act will be received by the trade-union movement as something that should have been implemented a long time ago. It is good to know that, in future, increases in the basic wage will automatically flow into workers' compensation payments instead of an amending Bill having to be brought before Parliament. I have been a member of this Assembly since 1960, and with the exception of the amending Bill setting up the Cardiac Board, the only discussions we have had on the Workers' Compensation Act have related to increased lump-sum and weekly payments. I hope that other amendments will be made to the Act from time to time, because hon. members on this side of the Chamber have many suggestions to make for the improvement of the Act. We usually make them at the introductory stage of amending Bills, and if we do not make them then the only chance we have of making them is in the Budget debate or the Address-in-Reply debate.

I hope that the Treasurer will at some stage elaborate on the expenditure on ship-building facilities at Kangaroo Point. We are led to believe that the whole of the port of Brisbane will move towards the mouth of the Brisbane River. I think those reports are authentic. It is also indicated that the tugboats at the A.U.S.N. docks at Petrie Bight will be eventually moved and the whole of the shipping at present calling at the port of Brisbane will be concentrated at wharves in the vicinity of Hamilton Reach. If we are going to spend public money assisting people like Evans Deakin & Co. Pty. Ltd. to extend their ship-building yards we will have the responsibility of making sure that the river is kept clear from Kangaroo Point right down to the main shipping area so that any large-size ships built at those yards can be moved to the mouth of the river.

I am very pleased to see on this occasion mention in the Financial Statement of Commonwealth assistance for education in this State. Ever since I have been a member of this Chamber I have spoken strongly on this matter and I have been asked by way of interjection from the Government side how the Commonwealth could provide

this assistance. I have indicated that there were two important fields in which such assistance was required. The first was in the building up of our universities to a stage where we could be sure of turning out all the professional men required by the State. The second was in doing something in the secondary schools for those school-leavers who require technical education. It is very heartening to me to read in the Financial Statement that the Commonwealth Government, in conjunction with the State Government, has at last realised the importance of making this money available and is prepared to play its part in making these educational facilities available for children passing through Junior and Senior stages but who do not wish to go to university. They will in future have facilities available to them to go through the technological field and further their studies in that direction and become assets to the State.

One of the main matters on which I wish to speak today is the Treasurer's clear indication in the Financial Statement that increased salaries have been granted to members of the Public Service, the Teachers' Union and the Police Union. It is well known to hon. members on this side that most of the increases granted to these people were arrived at by agreement with the Government before the cases reached the court. I have no objection to that. I think conciliation is a great thing, provided it does not apply to only one section of the community.

I have here a letter which I received from the Metal Trades Federation, of which Mr. Jack Devereux is the secretary. He is a very good tradesman and a highly respected trade unionist, and he points out the discontent amongst members of his union in Government and semi-Government departments at the point-blank refusal of the Public Service Commissioner to meet and consult with them on the question of increased wages. I emphasise this point because later on I intend to have quite a bit to say about the shortage of skilled tradesmen in this State and the role that has been played by the present Government since 1957.

In the letter that I received from Mr. Devereux he points out quite clearly—

"This question in regard to the wage rates of Governmental and semi-governmental employees has reached such a stage in view of the refusal of the Public Service Commissioner to confer with the Unions, that at a meeting held on Wednesday, 9/9/64, the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

"This mass meeting of employees of Government and semi-Government establishments express their dissatisfaction with the replies of the Public Service Commissioner in refusing to meet the Unions in relation to the question of wages.

"The Metal Trades Unions in their negotiations with the Metal Trades Employers, who have since paid increases of 42s. 6d., 27s. 6d., 21s. 3d., endeavoured to have the increases brought about by award variation.

"We declare our determination to continue our campaign for wage increases no less favourable than those paid in the industry.

"We direct the unions to again request the Public Service Commissioner to confer with the Unions and we seek the assistance of the Premier in our endeavours to confer on the wage question."

When I look at what can be done with the Public Service section of the community and realise how the Commissioners, the Ministers, and others holding responsible positions in the departments would be fully aware of what is going on, I fail to see why the physical workers and the skilled tradesmen of this State cannot be met in similar circumstances to discuss this question. It is up to the Government to meet these unions. When you look at the unions that make up this group you realise the importance of meeting them and having their wage increases considered.

Over recent months much has been said about the shortage of skilled tradesmen. A number of parents whose children will be leaving school at the end of this year have telephoned me regarding certain statements made by the Ministers of the Crown. I refer to a statement by the Deputy Premier, who is the Minister for Industrial Development, in the presence of the Premier and another Cabinet Minister, when they were launching the second State Government-sponsored campaign to sell Queensland-made goods and to boost employment. After the Premier had completed his part of the official function the Deputy Premier said that Queensland was missing out on a large share of additional prosperity because it was not more highly industrialised. He said that of the 29,000 children leaving school this year, about 2,500 would go to the university, the teachers' college, and into professions, leaving 26,500 seeking work. That statement appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 21 April, 1964. The parents of school children have become very concerned. Previously I have said that about 22,000 children have left school each year since this Government took office in 1957. The Deputy Premier's figures for the year 1964 proved this to be correct.

Parents of children leaving school are concerned about a further statement by the Deputy Premier which appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 24 September, 1964, headed—"More Skilled Men Needed". The article reads—

"Queensland's apprenticeship system has not turned out enough skilled men to supply the needs of some trades.

"Deputy Premier and Industrial Development Minister (Mr. Munro) said this last night.

"Mr. Munro, who returned last month from a world tour, was addressing a public meeting in the R.S.L. Hall, Toowong."

This was his answer to the problem—

"This is the Government's immediate problem and we must look outside Australia for skilled tradesmen."

This is a very sore point with parents of school children because again and again, whenever the Government has been faced with this problem, the first thing that has been said is, "We must look outside Australia for skilled tradesmen." I will put other statements before the Chamber as I continue because different statements have been made, and much worse statements have been made by the Deputy Premier than on that occasion. I repeat that parents are very concerned about these statements when they know that their children are leaving school this year and will be looking for jobs.

I have asked many questions this year about apprenticeships in the various Government departments. Only the other day I asked the Premier two questions. One answer was in favour of the Government when he pointed out to me that of 15 projects under construction at the university 11 were being built by day labour. That is a credit to the Government. On the other hand, the number of tradesmen to apprentices employed over the years is not a credit to the Government, considering the number who could be training in this field.

The university buildings would be the best training ground for apprentices in the building trade. Since this Government has taken office there has been no departure from the normal pattern laid down for the architectural construction of the buildings. We find the following pattern in the employment of apprentices—

Year	Apprentices employed	Apprentices permitted to be employed
1957-58 ..	8	20
1958-59 ..	12	40
1959-60 ..	9	23
1960-61 ..	11	36
1961-62 ..	11	33
1962-63 ..	13	24
1963-64 ..	13	32

I must be fair and say that in the electrical trade the number of tradesmen employed on the site compares reasonably with the number of apprentices.

We on this side of the Chamber believe that most of the problems associated with the shortage of skilled tradesmen lie in the failure of the Government to encourage school-leavers to take out apprenticeships in this State. When hon. members on this side of the Chamber send school-leavers to the various departments to take up apprenticeships in the skilled trades their experience has

been that appointments are made on the basis of a Junior pass. The highest standard of Junior pass is necessary; school-leavers with an ordinary Junior pass are rejected. What has been the result of the policy that is applied in Government departments? The employers seized on this system adopted by the Government and did the same thing in their own industries.

We on the Opposition side feel that the introduction of daytime training, as referred to in the Financial Statement, is a move in the right direction, but it is a move that should have been made long ago by this Government if it fully realised its responsibility in providing skilled tradesmen in this State. Since the Government took over control of the Treasury benches in 1957, and since I became a member of this Assembly in 1960, we have heard a great deal about all the new industries it was going to bring to this State. If the Government does that, it should face up to the responsibility of seeing that apprentices are being trained not only in its departments, but also in the outside industries.

One particular reason for apprentices not continuing with their apprenticeships is the low wages paid to them. Taking my own industry, the building industry, as an example, the wage of a first-year apprentice is £6 a week; the wage of a second-year apprentice is £7 a week; and the wage of a third-year apprentice is £9 a week. The first three years of any apprenticeship are the most important years. During that time the apprentice either settles down to his trade and adapts himself to it or he becomes discontented and gives it away. One of the things that cause discontent among apprentices is the low rate of pay they receive during the first, second and third years. We find—and it can be proved—that students passing through secondary schools, most of whom leave with a Junior pass or the Junior standard, seek white-collar jobs. That is easy to understand because they can enter those jobs on a wage of something like £8 a week, which is better than the wage paid to those who enter a trade. Unless something in addition to the introduction of daytime training is done, I am very much afraid that we will not attract the school-leavers into trade apprenticeships. Today there is a shortage of skilled tradesmen in most of the highly-skilled trades. There is no excuse for this, because for quite a long time the Australian Council of Trade Unions has stressed to the Governments of Australia the importance of ensuring that an adequate number of apprentices is trained each year to meet the requirements of industry. The Queensland branch of the Trades and Labour Council has taken this matter up with the Government.

One of the trades that is faced with a shortage of skilled tradesmen today is the electrical trade. It is a very important trade and it is one that is growing every day. Because of the highly mechanised techniques

being applied today, there is a greater demand for electrical tradesmen in Queensland than ever before. In the metal industry again we find that there is a great demand for fitters and turners, boilermakers and blacksmiths, members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union. There is also a demand for members of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association, without whom the large industries in this State could not operate. We find similar demands for iron workers, sheet-metal workers and moulders.

When we speak of oil refineries, not only building workers are employed but members of the Electrical Trades Union and unions covering the metal trades. The same applies in the building trade. There is a shortage of bricklayers, carpenters and joiners, wood machinists, and also of plumbers, painters, and plasterers. Again this is a result of the Government's not facing up to its responsibilities in this matter.

I indicate quite clearly that this is not the fault of the trade unions or the group apprenticeship committees. They have advised the Government through the State apprenticeship executive. On this body there are, representing the unions, Mr. Milliner, secretary of the Printing Industry Employees' Union, Mr. Devereux, secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and, lately, Mr. Dawson, of the Building Workers' Industrial Union. They are all men very skilled in tradesmanship, and all are very concerned about the entire apprenticeship system, whether as members of the group apprenticeship committee or the executive committee.

It is a lot of bunkum to say that the unions have not endeavoured to assist the Government or employers to train more apprentices. My experience as a member of the group apprenticeship committee is that when an employer applies for an apprentice in a particular industry the committee looks at the number of tradesmen that he employs. It is true that the ratio is one apprentice to two tradesmen, but I indicate quite clearly that I do not know of any group apprenticeship committee that does not consider allowing an extra apprentice to an employer who employs five tradesmen. The fact that he has five is taken into consideration, and his number of apprentices may be lifted to three. The committee has even allowed one apprentice to one tradesman in the case of an employer who is known to be reliable and who spends part of his time on the job.

These things are very important. It is the responsibility of the Federal and State Governments to carry out their works on the day-labour principle and train their full quotas of apprentices. There would be no shortage of skilled tradesmen if this were done by both Governments.

Much damage to the apprenticeship system in this State has been done by piece-work. This is now getting a firm grip on many industries here, and certain action by the Government has helped it to expand in these

fields. Let me make it clear that those working on piece-work are not at all interested in employing school-leavers and training them in the various trades. A worker on piece-work puts his head down and another part of his body up and goes flat out to get as much as he can for himself and his mate. He is not concerned about anybody else. We say that stop-gap and supplementary training schemes do not provide an adequate supply of tradesmen for the future of Queensland.

Let us have a look at the position in other Government departments. The latest move by the Government has been to set up a committee of three Ministers to investigate the position. Those who have been appointed are the Deputy Premier (Mr. Munro), the Minister in charge of migration (Dr. Delamothe), and the Minister for Labour and Industry (Mr. Dewar). I am very surprised that the most important member of Cabinet connected with the apprenticeship system, the Minister for Education, is not on the committee. It may be said that the Government's policy of changing departments from one Minister to another is the reason for this. If it is, in my opinion it reflects no credit on the Government. When Labour was in government in Queensland, the education of our children at the primary and secondary levels and during their apprenticeship all came under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Education, and in my opinion—I am sure it is shared by many of my colleagues on this side of the Chamber—apprenticeship rightly belongs to that portfolio.

Members of the Opposition also have grave doubts about the time that the three Ministers on the committee will be able to give to the problem, which requires urgent consideration. The Minister for Justice is faced with difficulties relating to amendments of the liquor laws that he proposes to bring before this Assembly, and the number of letters and deputations that he will receive in the near future will leave him little time to devote to the affairs of the committee. What took place here this morning indicates clearly the problems facing the Minister for Labour and Industry in connection with the closure of police stations throughout Queensland. Hon. members on this side of the Chamber gave notice of many questions on that subject, and I have no doubt that Government members could ask many questions, too, if they wished to speak up. In my opinion, therefore, the personnel of the committee leaves much to be desired.

It is interesting to note that the Minister for Education, who always tries to beat the gun, announced on 22 September, before the Treasurer presented his Financial Statement, that daytime training would be instituted and that technical training centres would be set up in various suburbs. This is a very good move, but because of transport difficulties, I question the wisdom of choosing some of the suburbs mentioned. I hope that this question will be given earnest consideration if colleges are built in outer

suburbs, because parents have been greatly concerned about the time taken by apprentices to get to technical colleges and then, after completing a two-hour course, the time they have to wait at bus stops for transport home. I believe that this is one of the factors that has reduced greatly the number of apprentices throughout the State. Because of escapades in which youths have been concerned in the metropolitan area, it is well known that innocent students waiting at a bus stop on their way home from technical college have been questioned by police as to why they are standing in a particular spot. Fortunately, they have been able to indicate to the gentlemen in question that they have attended college and are on their way home. In relation to this matter, a statement was made on 3 October by the present Minister for Works and Housing. At least he is a little more genuine in his approach and not so cold-hearted as others. He said we have to go outside the State and get skilled tradesmen from overseas. He said—

“To cope with the situation, we must attract a large number of skilled workers from southern States and overseas.”

Let us examine his first statement in which he said that it was a well-known fact so far as Victoria and New South Wales are concerned that the payments received by tradesmen are much higher than those received in Queensland and the position had been reversed. I doubt that we will ever attract tradesmen from the southern States where over-award payments are much higher than those received in Queensland. The same remarks apply to conditions. Agreement by conciliation with employers in those States is easier than it is in this State. While their award payments are higher they will not leave those States to come to Queensland. Not only are their award payments higher, but their over-award payments are £2 or £3 over the award.

**Mr. Davies:** This is a low-wage State.

**Mr. NEWTON:** That is true. In addition, employees and employers in those States meet every 12 months to decide what will be the over-award payments in the various industries.

Turning now to the department administered by the Minister for Works and Housing and previously administered by the Treasurer, I should like to deal with contractors for the Queensland Housing Commission. I have here a list of contractors that was supplied to me the other day, a perusal of which shows that many builders who would be employing a large number of tradesmen are employing no apprentices at all on Government jobs.

Turning to the Department of Works, although more tradesmen are employed now than prior to 1957 when the Australian Labour Party was in office, a shocking state of affairs is evident in the training of apprentices. When 1,500 tradesmen were employed



in various trades the number of apprentices employed was only 329, and it must be remembered that the Apprenticeship Act allows one apprentice for every two tradesmen and even three apprentices for five tradesmen. One does not need to excel at mental arithmetic to see what has been happening in the Department of Works since 1957 when this Government took office. It has a shocking record in the training of apprentices.

In the Queensland Housing Commission in 1957-58, 230 tradesmen were employed and only 47 apprentices were being trained where there could have been 115. In 1958-59, 212 tradesmen were employed and only 34 apprentices were being trained when there could have been 107. In 1959-60, 20 apprentices were being trained for 203 tradesmen. There could have been 101. So it goes on until in 1963-64 we find 41 apprentices being trained for 179 tradesmen whereas there could have been 89.

Taking the position further to the Department of Primary Industries where day-labour personnel are employed, in the electrical trades the position is fair, the number of apprentices training to the number of tradesmen being reasonable.

When we consider the number that could have been trained in particular fields in the building section, going right back since this Government took office we find that eight, nine and, in one case, 14 extra could have been trained in the various fields. One of the worst departments I can name is the department under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Health. We have a job to the value of £500,000 being built by prison labour. No training of apprentices will be carried out there. The same remarks apply to the day-labour projects on hospital buildings. We have seen the shocking state of affairs that occurs with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. When this Government took control of the Treasury benches 2,000 personnel were working on day-labour projects where they had their own workshops. Their children could have been trained on the various projects to do a skilled job, but what has happened? Day labour has almost completely fallen by the wayside and the work has been handed over to contract.

We have a similar position in the Main Roads Department. In the Main Roads workshop at Nundah apprentices could be trained in every section—as painters, carpenters, metal workers or anything else. There is no need for me to talk about the Railway Department. Surely every hon. member has been through the various workshops under the jurisdiction of that department and knows quite well the machinery in the shops and the number of apprentices who could be trained there. There again this opportunity is not being taken.

We feel that some proposals must be made to meet this problem. Whenever we make speeches about the Government's policy the

attack from the other side is that we have not put forward any proposals to help overcome the problem. We say that the Government should take action to end the boom-slump nature of the industries and to provide for their steady growth. What I have experienced since I have become a member of Parliament has been shocking. I have seen many people, including tradesmen, unemployed in this State. The problem could be overcome by making sure that there is a steady growth of all industries with a regular flow of apprentices being trained in the various trades. We say that by legislative and other action the Government should bring an end to the piece-work system in the building and other industries, and that the employers should also be called upon to abolish piecework in this State. This is something that needs to be done if we are to train the number of apprentices that are required.

We suggest that an appeal be made to employers to provide openings for apprentices in all trades and that the Government should carry out its jobs using the day-labour principle, and train the full quota of apprentices that it could train on those jobs. We suggest that where Government contracts are let they should be let to the tenderers with the best record of training of apprentices, and the contracts should stipulate that apprentices be employed on appropriate jobs. Without fear of contradiction I say, as I have said before, that if you look at all the contracts that have been let by the present Government I will guarantee that in some cases you will find that not one apprentice is employed on the job.

It is well to remember that each year thousands of young people offer themselves for apprenticeship, but private employers and the Government do not provide nearly enough apprenticeship openings in the various trades. If the principles I have referred to are carried out, the shortage of skilled tradesmen confronting the Government will be overcome. If they are not, I fail to see how the Government can attract the necessary apprentices to ensure that there is no shortage.

Another matter which affects the people in my electorate is the system in operation at the Central Technical College. In some of the higher fields of study at the Technical College I understand that previously, on completing a five-year course, a person received a diploma which enabled him to get a job either in outside industry or with the Government. I understand that previously, people who passed their examinations and received a diploma had rights equal to those enjoyed by people who attended the university and eventually got a degree. However, that is to be changed under the new syllabus. People who have a Junior pass and have undertaken this highly skilled course at the Technical College are concerned that the Government's policy will be that highly skilled positions in the various Government departments will be available only to those with university

degrees. People who go into various departments with a diploma will be only assistants to the university graduates.

I raise these matters because quite a number of people who have just about completed a five-year Technical College course are very concerned. They believe it will affect their professional status after they receive their diploma.

During the Address-in-Reply debate I spoke about the very difficult conditions experienced by those on the basic wage. I received some very good letters from people, both in the metropolitan area and throughout the State, congratulating me on raising this matter and telling me how difficult it is to exist on a basic wage of £15 a week. I also received a number of letters from the various unions that have to put the facts before the Industrial Commission when a basic wage case is under consideration. These letters indicate quite clearly that they are pleased with the submissions that have been made on this matter. If these people are to get justice, it is obviously high time for an investigation such as was conducted by previous Governments when we had the Piddington Inquiry and the Harvester Inquiry. Whilst the findings of one of those inquiries were not accepted by the Government, the others were. That indicates quite clearly to me the necessity for another investigation of that nature.

The hon. member for Kurilpa has had quite a lot to say on this subject. I think he is one Government member who indicates quite clearly that he has some sympathy with a number of matters raised on this side of the Chamber. He clearly indicated again today that he felt it was the responsibility of Ministers to conciliate with the various unions on wages and award conditions affecting their members. He pointed out that Ministers sometimes meet union representatives and that sometimes the representatives are not quite happy with the results of their interviews. I want to point out quite clearly to the hon. member for Kurilpa and other members on the Government side of the Chamber that many deputations from trade unions wait on Ministers of the Crown and they do not always go away with the results they expect to achieve, but at least the Ministers do have the courtesy and decency to meet them.

These things are of great importance today if we are to get the best out of conciliation and arbitration. It is all right for an hon. member to get up in this Chamber and say, "I believe in conciliation and arbitration." The trouble is that he is not always sincere when he says that, because many people believe in arbitration but not in conciliation. If there was more conciliation when these matters go before the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, they could be handled more easily than they are being handled today. It is high time that the Government had a look at this problem.

The hon. member for Kurilpa mentioned the Estimates for the Department of Railways, and he took me up the wrong way when I interjected and said that pensioners living in areas where branch railway lines had been closed are suffering great hardship. I was referring particularly to the closure of the railway lines to the Gold Coast and to Cleveland. Pensioners used to travel to the city from those places on rail passes from the Government, but today they have to pay 9s. to get from Cleveland to Brisbane and return. They cannot get out on the week-end at all. When the railway was operating at least they had the opportunity. The same remarks apply to the Gold Coast.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (5.33 p.m.): It is my considered opinion that to elaborate to any great degree on the various Estimates is not possible owing to the limited time at my disposal this afternoon. I shall, therefore, content myself by referring to only certain items. It is unnecessary for me to elaborate on them to any great extent because the Leader of the Opposition made a wide and intelligent survey of the Budget as a whole, and to try to follow him would only entail tedious repetition.

Before I make particular reference to any Votes, I think I should say that many of us are guilty of not giving credit and paying tribute not only to the staff of Parliament House, but also to members of the Public Service generally. I do not think that we always realise the good work that they do, and the great service that they render the State. When at times we find ourselves confronted with certain problems, we are given advice and the guidance necessary to enable us to work successfully here and worthily represent our constituents.

I may be accused of digressing to a certain extent, but I intend to take advantage of the opportunity now afforded to pay a compliment to certain members and sections of the Public Service. At the same time, I feel sure that many hon. members will agree with me in the remarks that I shall make. I am not going to refer to particular officers because of their classifications in the service, but because of the dedicated work that they do for us and for the State as a whole.

Under the heading of "Legislative Assembly" I feel duty bound to pay a tribute to the work of The Clerk of the Parliament, Mr. Dunlop. I am sure that all hon. members agree that the way in which he carries out his duty is exemplary indeed. Mr. Dunlop meets us all on an equal footing. I have gone to him many times for advice and have received it expertly and in a very efficient manner. I pay him a compliment, and feel sure that it will be echoed by all.

I pay a similar tribute to his staff. All are most approachable and most helpful when any advice is sought. All hon. members, I feel sure, will agree that it is only right and proper at times to show our appreciation to Mr. Dunlop and all members of his staff.

Moving down the Vote a little, I come to the correspondence room. Again, I have nothing but praise for the typists' section. I might add that I have never visited the correspondence room in the entire period in which I have been here. I have had no need to go there; either a typist has come to me to get my work, or I have sent it down. Many times I have had no indication of the particular typist who carried out my work, but I now pay to the senior typist in charge of the pool and the other typists a very high compliment on the standard of work performed.

The Parliamentary reporting staff is also deserving of recognition. I also place on record our appreciation of the job of great magnitude carried out by them. I sometimes think that they must be approaching geniuses in the way in which they take down speeches and reproduce them in the way in which we read them next day. I am sure that many of us feel very flattered indeed when we see well-formed sentences and correct grammar in the reports of our speeches. I feel sure that no hon. member will disagree with what I have said about the reporting staff of this Parliament. I pay them a compliment.

I warned that my speech may be a rather rambling one. Coming closer to the actual Chamber, I deal now with the staff in the refreshment room. I feel that recognition should be given to them, and, to my way of thinking, the new supervisor is giving very good service. I have heard no complaints about the way in which Miss Glennie conducts the refreshment room; rather have I heard much praise for her and her staff. All the waitresses she has are very efficient and do a very good job, and I compliment them, also.

I hope that the Treasurer will give deep consideration to the suggestion I am about to make. I have not used my preliminary complimentary remarks as a lead-up to this, although I admit that the Treasurer could well be excused for becoming rather suspicious. When one hears tributes at the start of a speech and a smooth beginning, one can be excused for thinking that they are leading to something else.

**Mr. Murray:** Are you sure that you are not heading that way?

**Mr. DEAN:** No. I assure the Treasurer that I am a long way from what I want to say finally. In the Estimates there is an item "Air transport of country members." I do not want country members to think that I wish to deny them this privilege; in my opinion it should be extended to some extent in their case; but metropolitan

members should also be given air transport to enable them to visit projects of importance in the State.

**Mr. Hughes:** To see what we are talking about.

**Mr. DEAN:** Yes, to know what we are talking about. I think we would then have a better appreciation of the magnitude of the projects.

**Mr. Davies:** Why not all members?

**Mr. DEAN:** I am coming to that in a moment. We should then be able to make more constructive criticism and suggestions for the progress of Queensland. Consideration should be given to providing all members with a certain number of flights each year; I do not mean an unrestricted number. Once or twice each year members should be given an opportunity to fly to some part of the State and have a look at development that is taking place. I make that suggestion for what it is worth. It is really a matter for Government members because they have the opportunity to take some positive action on it, and I appeal to them to confer with the Treasurer and the Premier and see if this privilege can be granted to enable us to do our job more fully.

In the Estimates for Premier and Department of State Development there is an item that has interested me for some time—Agent-General for the State. I am not quibbling about the cost of the Agent-General or of the administration of the Agent-General's office. However, from time to time I have heard criticism from people coming to this country, not of the personnel of the London office but of the general information that is given to them. They believe that they are not given sufficient information about what they should expect when they arrive in Queensland. Many of their complaints relate to housing problems, and people from England have complained bitterly to me and said they would not have come to Queensland if they had known it would be so difficult to obtain a home in which to settle their family. They claim that incorrect information is given to them; that they are told they will have no difficulty in finding a home and settling into a suburb and becoming part of the community. The main criticism that I have heard from newcomers from England is that the information given to them at Queensland House is inadequate. I raise the matter in the hope that, when it is being considered in other quarters, some consideration may be given to the procedure used in disseminating information to people intending to come to Queensland, because it is very important that they should know what conditions are like in this part of the world. The Public Service Commissioner's Department is deserving of commendation. In the Public Service Commissioner we have an officer of high repute and integrity. My remarks in regard to Mr. Fraser have equal application to other senior officers.

**Mr. Bromley:** He is one of the best public servants we have ever had.

**Mr. DEAN:** That is true. When one approaches Mr. Fraser one gets the utmost co-operation and consideration of the problems placed before him.

The Director-General of Industrial Development is an officer who is thoroughly trained and is trying to do something for this State. I hope that in his search for areas for industrial development he will take full advantage of the lands available in and around Brisbane. In my electorate much land is available for industrial development and I hope in the near future consideration will be given to the development of land on the banks of Cabbage Tree Creek as this would have an immense influence upon the development of the town of Sandgate as an urban area.

I pay tribute also to the Director-General of Education and his staff for their work. From time to time I have problems of an educational character that demand their attention and the benefit of their knowledge is always readily given. I have no hesitation in saying that I get the utmost co-operation from them. I think every member of the Committee will agree that in their approaches to these officers—from the senior officers right down to the most junior—full co-operation is freely given.

Whilst on the subject of schools, the State High School in Sandgate would be considered to be one of the best in the State as to site and construction, but the existing toilet facilities have been worrying the staff and parents for some time. I sincerely hope it will not be long before a more adequate septic system is installed so that the school can be conducted without the terrible tanker system that daily operates from that school. It is a terrible system. I repeat that it is a very fine school and its principal, Mr. A. Vise, is a very fine teacher. I do not think it is fair to him or to the staff generally, or to the pupils either, that they have to put up with this obnoxious tanker system. In a school of this size such a system presents a particular problem.

Some people might say that sewerage will be installed in Sandgate in the near future, but I do not think that we can expect the whole of Sandgate to be sewered within the next five years. So I think some immediate consideration must be given to relieving the school of this obnoxious problem.

I should like now to make some reference to the musical side of education. There appears to be a great weakness in the system of musical instruction in our schools. I am not casting any reflection upon the teachers or the musicians who teach the children, but somewhere along the line there seems to be a weakness or a missing link because immediately children leave school they lose interest in music. Some consideration should be given to investigating or inquiring into the

system of teaching music in State schools. Greater benefit should be flowing from the system of musical education than we are getting.

**Mr. Hughes:** Generally speaking, don't you think that Queensland schools rate second to none in the Commonwealth?

**Mr. DEAN:** I am not speaking about the school curriculum but about teaching the art of music. For many years it has been my privilege to be connected with the musical life of this city. Closely allied to that interest, I have been a member of various committees in control of concerts and the musical culture of Brisbane. I have discussed with my colleagues on those committees why we are not getting the flow of students at opportunity concerts in the City Hall. We are getting very few from the schools taking the opportunity of obtaining concert and platform experience. I do not know where the weakness lies, and I have come to the conclusion that there must be something wrong with the system. Some time ago special teachers were brought out from Great Britain to teach stringed-instrument playing. The string section has always been weak. However, this teaching has now terminated in many schools. I do not know why, but evidently interest has waned. School children should be encouraged in musical appreciation by helping them with the purchase of instruments and the maintenance of them.

There is something wrong with the set-up of the Conservatorium of Music. I do not mean that there is anything wrong with the director. I know Mr. Jones very well—he is a close friend of mine. But there must be something wrong with the policy laid down by the Government for the conservatorium to follow. Since it was established some years ago only one musician has been turned out to join the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. Unfortunately the conservatorium is not fulfilling the purpose for which it was established. In the past when mention was made about the shortage of musicians in the Queensland Symphony Orchestra it was said that we would always have a shortage while there was no Conservatorium of Music to call upon. Although we have had it now for some years, to my knowledge only one musician from the conservatorium—a clarinet player—has joined the symphony orchestra.

**Mr. Pizzey interjected.**

**Mr. DEAN:** One of the reasons many do not join is that they are not turned out from the conservatorium to join. One of the reasons for southern musicians not joining is that the salaries are not good enough. It would take me all night to go into the set-up of the A.B.C. and its salaries. No doubt the Minister knows that the base salary of the average musician in the orchestra is about £25 a week. There is an A.B.C. loading rate, but it is not extended to all the players. It is only by favour of the A.B.C. if they like

a particular musician or think he is worth it they give him the extra loading, but there is no compulsion to give it to him. There are many problems associated with musicians. This is a very serious matter: we make a fairly generous grant to the orchestra, as does the Brisbane City Council, but at the moment the committee controlling the orchestra is very concerned and its members can see more difficulties in the future.

**Mr. Pizzev:** Quite a few go overseas when they finish with the conservatorium so that they may gain more experience.

**Mr. DEAN:** Not too many go overseas; only some of the younger ones. I believe they should be able to reach a fairly high standard of efficiency here, without going overseas. In fact, they should be able to reach a high standard of efficiency before contemplating overseas travel.

One of the main troubles is that the base salary is quite inadequate. We can liken it to the salaries in industry. The payment of a fair and decent remuneration is the problem that the Government must face. No-one can deny that tradesmen are well and truly behind compared with the salaries received in some dead-end callings in industry.

I again express my appreciation for the work done by our various hospitals boards, superintendents and others in a supervisory capacity. I have known Dr. Pye for many years. He has given great service to the State. He has very high qualifications and great experience. He is a humane administrator and his method of handling staff is to his credit. He deserves every commendation for the job he does and it is not an easy one. It calls for a man with qualifications and ability, and that he has these qualifications is ably demonstrated by the length of time he has been superintendent of the North Brisbane Hospitals Board.

I know there is a remote possibility of a hospital being established in the Sandgate electorate. At this stage I think I should give expression to the wishes of the people in my electorate by saying that they would like a first-class medical clinic. Many people believe that it would fill the main requirements of the medical attention required as we are only 10 or 11 miles from the city. Other than at peak hours it does not take long to transport a patient from Sandgate to the General Hospital. As with other outside areas, the peak hours cause the trouble. I emphasise that a clinic is of great importance to Sandgate.

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

**Mr. DEAN:** Mr. Campbell, in speaking on the great work that is carried on at "Eventide", Sandgate, I should like to pay my respects and compliments to the manager and his staff. The job they do is of great importance and is greatly appreciated by the majority of people who reside at "Eventide". As hon. members know,

managing an institution of that magnitude is not an easy task. The institution caters for about 1,000 people representing all sections of the community, whether they are suffering from old age or infirmities. Chronic cases are taken as well, which is more than can be said for some private institutions and convalescent homes. Such places have a choice of the people they take in. Chronic cases are catered for at "Eventide", and are well looked after; the manager welcomes them. He feels he has a responsibility as a public servant to look after these people, and I think that he and his competent staff should be commended for the work they do. On the engineering side we have Mr. Jackson who has been with the institution for many years. He came across to Sandgate from the original home at Dunwich, and plays his part very fully in the maintenance and administration of the engineering section. For a long time he has been responsible for the beautification of the whole of the grounds at "Eventide", and he has been ably assisted by the Government Supervisor of Gardens, Mr. Bull. The gardens at "Eventide" are a credit to the people who look after them and they cast a very favourable reflection on the institution. They attract a lot of attention from time to time and quite a number of tourists who visit Sandgate are impressed by them. Many favourable comments are made about the institution's gardens.

I should like to bring before the Chamber a subject of very great importance—or perhaps I should say grave importance. I refer to the mentally-handicapped people of our community. I know that the Government does a lot to assist those who are, unfortunately, mentally handicapped, but I should like to stress the importance of a little more effort on the part of the Government in regard to the many young children who are mentally handicapped. We are informed by statistics that the percentage of mentally-retarded children in Australia is the same as it is in America. Three per cent. of the children born in Australia suffer from some form of mental retardation. This matter is becoming increasingly important, for we see in news items from time to time that the incidence of these abnormalities is increasing. It calls for the greatest effort the Government can make to bring about the highest degree of comfort for these unfortunate people. Children, in particular, claim special attention, and there are in the community people who devote their time to the relief of them. They are, however, restricted by their limited means of raising finance and providing amenities, particularly buildings to house them.

It was my privilege in the early part of this year to have a conversation with Mrs. T. S. McConnell, Principal of the Bowen House Centre at Bowen Hills, prior to her leaving for overseas to represent the Queensland Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association at the International Conference on

Mental Health which was to be held at Copenhagen. From my conversation with Mrs. McConnell and on information gained from reading of her work in this field, I pay a high compliment to her and her staff on the magnificent job being done at this centre.

The centre provides, in particular, training for sub-normal children and adolescents aged from 6 to 18 years of age who are resident in or near Brisbane. The work done is really outstanding, and I know that some hon. members have paid a visit to sections of this institution. One of the newest additions is Schonell House, which caters to a specialised degree for many of these youngsters. I commend to hon. members a visit to the institution so that they can see for themselves the work done for these unfortunate children.

The children at Bowen House come from all over Brisbane and from the homes of the rich and poor alike. They are the children of professional men, businessmen, tradesmen, and those in all other sections of the community. One child in every 100 families, I believe, is sub-normal. That is a very high percentage. Perhaps in the future, science may discover means of reducing the incidence of mental retardation in children. At present, the community is confronted with a rapid increase in mental retardation.

According to the figures that I have before me, there are in Queensland at present 1,200 sub-normal children between the ages of 6 and 16 years. In conversation with Mrs. McConnell, she has told me that one of her most cherished desires and hopes is the establishment of a nursery for the very young. She looks forward to the day, which she sincerely hopes will not be long in coming, when the means will be found of establishing a nursery at Bowen Hills, or somewhere nearby, for the care and early training of infants.

I am informed that many of the infants brought to the institution are the children of parents who are in indigent circumstances and who have found the burden of looking after them in the home almost unbearable. Of course, as these children grow older, the burden becomes much greater. That is why I think the Government should give a definite lead. As I said earlier, I know that the Government does a certain amount. However, these matters should be kept in their correct perspective. However, what has been achieved here in looking after these unfortunate people falls far short of achievements in a similar field overseas. No society can afford to forget that it is the duty of the authorities to provide or secure suitable training and occupations for mentally-handicapped persons, and occupations are very important. No matter how small the task may be, these people should be encouraged to do something that will occupy their time instead of just sitting or lying around and becoming completely useless. I am sure that all hon. members will agree with me that whatever success we can achieve is well worth while.

The problem has concerned me for some time, because as I have travelled round my electorate I have found many parents who have had the great misfortune to have a mentally-retarded child. Their main concern is not so much for the present—it is great enough—but it is the future that worries them. Many times parents have said to me, "What will happen to my daughter or son when I pass on? Where will they go eventually?" We all know that at the moment most of them can only be committed to an asylum or an institution. But with an extension of the work that is now being done—I refer particularly to the work at Bowen House Centre—I think we can at least give many parents who have mentally-retarded children some hope that their children will pass the remainder of their days in peaceful surroundings and be looked after in a kind and humane way.

In doing this, the Government and the people of Queensland will only be carrying out their obligations within the framework of the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations General Assembly. I believe that the problem of mental retardation among young people, particularly among infants, ranks very high indeed with the United Nations, because not only do they have regard for the rights of the physically handicapped, but they also lay great stress on the rightful place of the mentally-retarded child in society and our responsibility to it. To make it quite clear, Article 5 of the declaration lays it down that the child shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by its particular mental condition.

In my opinion, the Government should accelerate its present programme of providing institutional accommodation for these people so that their parents can make the provision for them to which I have just referred. Facilities do not exist in the ordinary family home today to cope with such a grave problem. Those over the age of 16 years, who are really out of the child stage and are capable of doing certain types of work, should be assisted, where possible, by being placed in employment. As we know, that is done at certain levels at present, and I have found that in Scotland this particular problem is viewed so seriously in the community that an Act of Parliament has been passed which provides that people are employable up to a certain stage. The law in Scotland is that all employers with 20 or more employees must employ a quota of 3 per cent. of registered disabled persons in this particular category. If they are employable and can make some contribution by way of gainful employment, the Government insists that they are duty bound to put on such persons and give them an opportunity. I feel that if something like that can be done in Scotland it can also be done in this State to help mentally-handicapped people, and legislation introduced to provide industrial opportunities for them—

**Mr. Dewar:** It needs much more than legislation. Your Government passed the Backward Persons Act in 1938 but did nothing about it.

**Mr. DEAN:** I am not concerned about what the Minister calls "my Government". I did not happen to be in the Government at that time. That is many years ago and we do not want to live in the past. I am not condoning what was done years ago. I am concerned with the present and the future, and I feel that we could do much more than we are doing today if we want to build ourselves up in the eyes of other countries in the world that are trying to do the right thing by mentally-handicapped people.

**Mr. Dewar:** More has been done in three years by this Government than was done over a period of 100 years previously in Queensland.

**Mr. DEAN:** If we are going to rest on what is done or not done the main sufferers will be the people themselves. We are not concerned about the whys and wherefores of what has or has not been done; we are concerned about what is being done and what must be done now.

We want more special schools for mentally-defective students. I have spoken on this particular subject before. These people should not be subjected to the inconvenience of having to mix with ordinary children attending ordinary schools. We have had experience in our Opportunity Schools with many of these unfortunate people, especially young people who are growing up. They may be retarded to a certain point, but at the same time they are sensitive and they know that the reaction of the average, normal child is not always favourable to them. As a matter of fact, I know of students who have been very uncomfortable and unhappy indeed because of the attitude towards them of other students.

Another vital facility that is required is a well-equipped occupational centre to provide not only training but recreation for these people. I form that opinion from information I have gathered from overseas. The occupational side is attended to and at the same time sporting activities and pursuits are brought to these people.

Many voluntary organisations and associations are doing very good work in this field, but I feel it is too big a job to be left entirely to such organisations. The problem has grown to such magnitude today that it has got beyond the voluntary worker. As much as we need the voluntary worker and as much as the voluntary worker can help in future activities we see the need to speed up our interest and our assistance to these people, to give them the buildings to work in and the instructors to help them live the happiest life possible in their particular circumstances. I feel that it is a statutory duty of our educational authorities

to provide these occupational centres. Of course, the same old cry of lack of money will be raised again. Nevertheless, the money can be found; it is found for other things and I feel it should be found for this very vital problem.

I also consider that these occupational centres should be attached administratively to the special schools, but in separate buildings so that they are well apart from one another. At the same time use should be made of the staff on an interchange basis without the need to have specially trained staff in each department. This would mean that we could transfer staff from one centre to another, each being within reasonable distance of the other but far enough away that fraternisation could not take place between the two groups of children. Literature from overseas shows that many countries practise this. They have these schools within a reasonable distance of each other so that they can make full use of the teaching staffs. Speaking for myself, and I think every hon. member must have had some experience of this, I find that in some homes these unfortunate children are well looked after, but in others, where the living standard is not what it might be, if there is any neglect at all unfortunately the neglect first affects the retarded child. If the Government could relieve parents of this responsibility in their homes and place the children in the correct environment in properly constructed buildings it would be carrying out a Christian duty. It would relieve the parents of the drudgery associated with the care of those requiring specialist attention and consideration and give the children an opportunity of being looked after by properly trained staff.

In stressing the need for residential schools, I would wish to carry this facility a little further by recommending that it be extended beyond childhood, especially when it is no longer possible for interest to be shown by parents who find it virtually impossible to care adequately for their grown-up son or daughter. That naturally brings me back to an earlier statement I made—the fear in the hearts of parents about what will happen to their son or daughter when they themselves are no longer here. They worry whether the child will be just thrown into an institution to pass its time away under conditions that certainly would not carry with them any degree of comfort.

In my opinion the State has not made the progress it should have made in carrying out its duty to provide or secure the provision of suitable training and occupation for mentally-handicapped people over the age of 16 years. With the establishment of such schools it would be only a matter of time before these children were accepted into the community. Even should it mean increased taxation commitments I can think of no parent who would object to paying a little extra if he knew that some other parent unfortunately placed with a mentally-retarded child would get the benefit.

I know that this is a subject with very wide ramifications, and I have touched only briefly on a matter of such great importance. I realise, as I am sure all hon. members do, that the Government must accept its responsibility and do something quickly for these unfortunate people.

**Mr. SULLIVAN** (Condamine) (7.40 p.m.): I enter this debate to support the Financial Statement so ably presented by the Treasurer and I do so with a feeling of satisfaction, as would all members of the Government. I apologise for not being here earlier in the day to hear the speech of the Leader of the Opposition in order to gauge the tempo of the debate from the other side of the Chamber. However, I have listened very attentively to the speech of the hon. member for Sandgate, and one or two other Opposition members, and I believe that the debate will prove to be very temperate. That is how it should be when so much development is taking place in the State and the employment position is possibly better than it has been for many years.

In his summary the Treasurer stated—

“The Budget contains no new or additional taxes.

“It provides for a year of increasing economic activity.

“It is a development Budget—it is an education Budget.”

**Mr. Duggan:** You had better not say that because you will be accused of saying nothing. That is the term I used this morning.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** People throughout the State, irrespective of their political views, must welcome a Budget that can be summed up in such a way.

**Mr. Lee:** It is bulging with progress.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** The interjection by the hon. member is a very apt one. Possibly it is as good as the Treasurer's comment.

I enter this debate on its first day because I was unable to participate in the Address-in-Reply debate. If I am in order, I should like to compliment the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I have read their speeches and I think that the Government and the Chamber will be much richer by their entry into Parliament. I am sure most hon. members opposite will agree with that statement, because in the short time those two hon. members have been here they have proved themselves to be worthy representatives of their electors, as well as likeable pals.

Earlier in the afternoon I listened with keen interest to the hon. member for Balonne. The very difficult conditions and drought-stricken areas in his electorate are responsible for my late arrival today, and I wish later to refer to the development of a road system in my electorate. I was detained because of a flooded creek. At the approach to it there were 2,700 drought-stricken sheep which are agisting on the main stock route

between Dalby and Jandowae. They came from the drought-stricken area just south of Tara. The sheep were in the middle of the road because of the very wet conditions and I had to sit there for an hour and help the drover get them across.

In introducing the Budget the Treasurer referred to the possibility of a record wheat crop this year. I am pleased to be able to tell him that during last week, when we were in recess, because of bounteous rains over the whole of the wheat-growing areas of the Darling Downs, there is every indication that we will have a record wheat crop this year; that is provided the weather clears up now and we do not get any rust into the crop. The wheat farmers, the dairy farmers and the graziers are very jubilant, in spite of what Opposition members said at the rural conference of the Australian Labour Party.

**An Opposition Member:** They always have something to put up with—rust or something.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** That is part and parcel of the lot of those associated with the land. I think most hon. members in this Chamber realise that these people are prepared to meet all the challenges. Whilst their income is never secure until it is in the bank, that is one of the risks they are prepared to take.

Referring to my support of what the hon. member for Balonne said about the need for more finance for irrigation projects, I think he dealt with matters in which we are interested, but he did not enlarge sufficiently on what irrigation has done for a very young industry in Queensland. I refer to the prime lamb industry. As the hon. member for Balonne said this afternoon, it has been proved that, with the assistance of irrigation, prime lambs can be reared in the St. George area. Any hon. members who have taken the trouble to watch the sales at Cannon Hill over recent months will find that prime lambs from farms in that irrigation area have topped the market on many occasions. At the present time the industry is enjoying high prices, which have been brought about by the high prices enjoyed by lamb-growers in the southern States. A study of “Country Life” will show that prices in South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales are as good as, if not better than, prices in Queensland. That is having the effect of confining southern lambs to their own markets. In recent years we had deflated prices in those localities with a consequent influx of lamb into Queensland so that our market was flooded and the farmer had to accept pretty low and unprofitable returns for his lambs.

Realising the problems that exist in the prime lamb industry, members on this side of the Chamber have discussed them in our committee on primary industries with the Minister for Primary Industries, the Premier and other Ministers. As a result of these discussions the Government has set up a full and searching inquiry into the meat industry



in Queensland. I took the opportunity of sitting in at one of the hearings of the Committee of Inquiry (Livestock and Meat Industry) at Dalby. I feel that the committee is very capable and that when its report is made available it should be of great assistance to the Government. I look forward to the presentation of that report at an early date. The various primary-producer organisations went to a considerable amount of trouble to put evidence before the committee of inquiry with a view to assisting it and, in turn, hoped that their recommendations would be acceptable to their particular industries.

**Mr. Hanson:** Are you worried about the decline in domestic consumption of lamb?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I would not think that there is a decline in the domestic consumption of lamb.

**Mr. Hanson:** There was a decline from 43 lb. to 41.2 lb. in the 12 months to June, 1963.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** At a sale at Cannon Hill recently Mr. Frank McMahan, who would possibly know more about the meat industry than any other person in Queensland, told me that, if the right type of lamb is produced and marketed at Cannon Hill, there is room for 10,000 to be consumed in Brisbane alone. Some of these figures that are read and quoted from time to time are often misleading. I am speaking about the development of a young and growing industry, and I feel that it behoves all of us, whether we be Government or Opposition members, to do all we can to assist it.

In advocating that more money be made available for irrigation, the hon. member for Balonne is playing an important part in assisting growers in the St. George area. I read only this morning that the construction of the second stage of the Leslie Dam has been deferred. There is, no doubt, a good reason for it. We are looking forward to the completion of the first stage. My colleague the hon. member for Warwick and I have often discussed this subject, and we are very aware of all the benefits that the dam will bring to farmers who avail themselves of this water along the valley of the Condamine River. There are farmers in the Brookstead and Cecil Plains areas who are growing cotton in a highly mechanised manner. They have proved over the last two or three years what a profitable crop cotton is when grown under irrigation in this district. I think that the future of cotton growing in this area is assured, provided water is made available.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. McEwen, made a statement when he was in Chinchilla at one time that he was amazed at the fertility of the soil in the Condamine River basin. Speaking to a man who was once a neighbour of his in Victoria or southern New South Wales, he said that once this

water is harnessed the possibilities of the Condamine River basin could surpass those of the Murray River valley.

Returning to the Financial Statement, the Treasurer stated that this is a Budget for development and education. This debate provides an opportunity to point out what has been achieved in our own areas. If we feel that we are lagging in some respects, we have an obligation to draw the Government's attention to that fact.

It has been said on many occasions that the Government has done a magnificent job in the provision of education facilities throughout the State. I think that is acknowledged by all. I recall vividly the words of the hon. member for Gregory when he commended the Minister for Education and the Minister for Works on the magnificent job that they have done in taking education, particularly secondary education, to the far-flung areas of the State. Let me support the hon. member and tell him what has been done in my area.

Within the boundaries of the Condamine electorate secondary education is available to about 99 per cent. of the children, and it is within reach of their homes because of the school transport system introduced by the Government. This is an important factor with children in this particular age group under present conditions. There is no doubt that people are grateful for it, because I have been at functions where the Government has been lauded not only by its own supporters but also by people who are known to be supporters of the Australian Labour Party. They are very fair people who give credit where it is due.

I have not had an opportunity of talking with the Minister for Education this afternoon, but I should like to point out that I have one small problem at Chinchilla, where he has done a magnificent job in recent years in building a secondary school. A domestic science wing and a manual training block are needed urgently there. I admit that these facilities are available at the primary school; but it is almost a mile away, and 20 minutes of the period is taken up in walking to and from it. I have before me a letter from the Minister for Works and Housing in which he states that one new general-purpose classroom, one locker room, and one dressmaking room, will be provided in the new wing.

When I was in Chinchilla on Saturday last, I discussed this problem with the principal of the school and members of his committee, and I was asked to impress upon the Minister for Education and the Minister for Works and Housing that it is imperative that a kitchen block be included in that building for the beginning of the new school year. If it is not, girls attending domestic science classes will still have to walk to the old primary-school buildings and waste 20 minutes that should be used in cooking. I draw that matter to the attention of the Committee, and I shall take it up with the Minister for Education at the first available opportunity.

Other than that, I have no complaints. I believe that we can be proud of what has been done in the field of education. The high school at Jandowae is running very smoothly and growing in strength from year to year. From Bell, I have a letter asking me to extend an invitation to the Minister for Works and Housing to officially open the Bell High School when he attends the speech night, which I think is on 6 November. I shall be very pleased to extend that invitation to him, because in the short time that he has been a Minister of the Crown he has shown a very sincere understanding of the problems associated with his responsibilities. In addition, he has brought to the departments under his control a practical knowledge of what is required, and I forecast a very bright future for him in the long life of this Government.

Before leaving what has been done by the Department of Education, I think that the Government deserves a great deal of credit—this has been at the suggestion of the Minister for Education—for making a subsidy available to small country towns, through local authorities, for the building of swimming pools. We at Jandowae will benefit from the subsidy. As Jandowae is only a small centre we found it difficult to build a swimming pool, but the decision of the Cabinet to grant a £5,000 subsidy, or gift, towards the construction of a swimming pool has made it possible for us to have one.

I commend the people of Jandowae and district who donated £5,500 as a straight-out gift within three months when they knew we were going to get the subsidy plus the Treasury subsidy of 25 per cent. We are looking forward to having a swimming pool next year, when we will be able to teach our children to swim in their early years. I express the gratitude of the people of that area to the Government for its understanding, and for the contribution it made.

I have spoken before on the subject of hospitals in my area but I feel that the progress that has been made bears repeating. My only regret is that on the occasion of speaking to this Budget the man who was responsible for doing so much, the late Dr. Noble, is not here to receive my personal thanks. There is no doubt that the people of that area, as in many other places throughout Queensland, have much to be grateful for to the late Minister, Dr. Noble, for what he did in the establishment of hospitals. Only a very short period prior to his death he came to Jandowae at the invitation of the hospital board and performed the official opening of the maternity wing. We now have at Jandowae a small hospital which is equal to anything in Queensland for a town of that size. It is worthy of the people of the district and something they deserve. Whilst we had to be patient and wait a long time, it is there now as an established fact and will serve the district for many years.

Similar remarks apply to Chinchilla. Additions have been made to the Chinchilla Hospital and, whilst on a bigger scale than the Jandowae Hospital, that town has a hospital worthy of the people of the district.

We are looking forward to the commencement at an early date of the new maternity hospital at Dalby. Although that hospital is not within the boundaries of my electorate it will serve many of the people who live in it. It is something that has been needed for many years. Plans are now being drawn up for an early start on it, and again it will be something that will be worthy of the town and district.

I refer now to the development of our main roads system. I merely want to submit what after all has been common knowledge over the years, namely, the development that has taken place in the lifetime of this Government under the drive of the Minister for Mines and Main Roads. What is being done throughout the State is, to some extent, being done within the boundaries of the Condamine electorate, though we have a problem there in that we are within the south-western division of the Main Roads Department area. The Moonie Highway is within that division and a great amount of money has been spent on it. I have no objection to that because, with the development of the oil wells at Moonie, it was essential that a bitumen road be pushed through to that area. The Warrego Highway is a top-priority road and there is 18 miles of it within the Wambo shire still needing new construction and bitumen-sealing. At the present time six miles adjacent to Warra are near completion. It is the intention of the Main Roads Department to push on and complete the other 12 miles. According to a letter I have from the Shire Clerk of the Wambo Shire Council that will be completed by the end of next year.

The allocation of money to top-priority roads is having the effect of delaying the bitumen-sealing of other roads. We have some important roads in the Wambo shire which will suffer as the result of the money being spent on these top-priority roads. Just after the war, when agriculture extended in these black-soil areas—I might mention that in excess of one-third of the State's wheat is grown within the boundaries of the Wambo Shire Council—the council of the day embarked on a policy of giving everybody a gravel road. I felt at the time that it was a very good policy. If people are harvesting grain during the wet weather they need a gravel road to get their produce to the rail-head.

I think everybody agreed that the policy adopted by the Wambo Shire Council at that time was a very good one. However, if because of the need to construct these top-priority roads the sealing of other roads in the area is delayed, all the good work done by the council and the Main Roads Department on these roads will suffer. The Main Roads Department should give very serious

consideration to the allocation for the Wambo Shire Council. Any money that has been expended on the Moonie Highway or the Warrego Highway, other than on roads which had priority under the five-year plan of the Wambo Shire Council, should not be a charge against its allocation and so interfere with the construction of these other roads. I refer particularly to the Bunya Highway through Bell to Kingaroy, to the boundary of the Kingaroy Shire Council. That road serves a very rich dairying, mixed farming and wheat-growing area. With the heavy traffic that uses it, it is very difficult to keep it in good repair. It will always be difficult to keep in repair until the alignment is changed and it is straightened and bitumen-sealed. It is a very important link between the Darling Downs and the South Burnett.

The other road I refer to connects that road with Cooranga North and Jandowae. Again, with the traffic on that road it will be difficult to keep it in good repair until it is bitumen-sealed. That is one matter I want to take up at an early date with the Minister for Main Roads. During the parliamentary recess I had the opportunity of talking to people who were not just looking after their own interests but were really concerned with development. They were very keen that this matter be given very serious consideration.

While speaking of the responsibilities of the Minister for Main Roads I refer to a problem associated with the axle loading of stock transports. In recent weeks we have talked about this matter and, at the suggestion of the Premier, with the support of my colleagues, the hon. members for Warwick, Carnarvon, and Balonne, we have been able to bring some genuine transport operators—men who are endeavouring to assist the Main Roads Department, men who realise that money is being expended for their benefit and who want to operate within the law—to Brisbane to discuss the problem with the Minister for Main Roads and his Commissioner. I think that is the right approach to this problem and some good should come from it. I am very grateful to the Minister and his Commissioner for the very good hearing they gave the transport operators and my colleagues on that occasion.

As I live in, and represent, a primary-producing area, I think I should say something about the Department of Primary Industries and what it has done to assist the man on the land. The services available to the man on the land are of great benefit nowadays. The man on the land is becoming more conscious of the work done by the various officers and of the services that are available.

I mentioned to the Minister today a little problem which was brought to my attention during the recess when I was having soil conservation work done on my property. The officer pointed out to me that he was having difficulty in covering his area because

of the mileage limit that is imposed. If these services are to be readily available it is important for the department to seriously consider a more liberal mileage. I could draw a parallel by saying that if a dairy officer goes out to inspect an area he can go from farm to farm, but a soil conservation officer may be in one area today and 25 miles away tomorrow.

**An Opposition Member:** A greater allowance?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** No, not a greater allowance, but a greater distance that they can cover. They may be tied to 5,000 miles or 6,000 miles, yet travel 8,000 or 9,000 miles.

**Mr. Wallis-Smith:** You think your Government does not sufficiently appreciate the value of soil conservation?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** No Government has done more than this Government in soil conservation work. Only the other day the Minister for Lands said that the time has come to be courageous and compel people to enter into soil conservation even if they do not want to.

Much is being done and I commend the Wambo Shire Council for what it is doing. The Jimbour Plain is as flat as the floor of this Chamber. It is good wheat-growing land but we have soil problems there. Much of the water coming from the Great Dividing Range originates within the Wambo shire area, entering the Condamine River and terminating its flow within the Wambo shire area. One of the top engineers from the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply has been made available to the Wambo shire, which, with the Condamine River Trust, is tackling this problem as a whole, instead of piecemeal. That is the only successful way to handle soil erosion problems. It has been stated authoritatively that, with a major flood, 5,000 acres of arable land is lost to cultivation on the Darling Downs. We cannot afford to allow that to continue. I know that much work is being done on the Southern Downs to solve this problem. Possibly the problem is greater there because of the more rugged nature of the country. We just cannot afford to allow that kind of situation to continue. The responsibility is on any man associated with the land to ensure that when he is finished with the land he hands it on to the next generation in better order than when he received it. I think the farmers are becoming more conscious of that and that the know-how of the officers of the department is being availed of more and more. For that reason I make this appeal for consideration to be given to granting greater mileages to those officers in their work.

**Mr. Walsh:** Are you looking after the railway fitters out there, too?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I am told that they have never been better looked after, so that answers the hon. member's question.

**Mr. Walsh:** I thought you might have forgotten the real workers out there.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** Aren't the farmers the real workers?

I wanted to speak on the private members' motion introduced by the hon. member for Gympie and seconded by the hon. member for Whitsunday, but it was at a time when we had the transport operators in Brisbane discussing problems with the Minister for Main Roads and his Commissioner.

I wish to draw the attention of the Chamber to what I consider is a matter of necessity. I feel that the Dalby Hospitals Board and the Department of Primary Industries could work in close co-operation in establishing a research station for the development of various legumes to be grown in black-soil areas. At the Jubilee Hospital in Dalby there is a farm run very efficiently by Mr. Gallagher. It is primarily a dairy farm. I understand that the Dalby Hospitals Board has had discussions with various officers of the Department of Primary Industries about establishing a close liaison between the two. If such a farm can be established it will be of great value in discovering what legumes are suitable for these black-soil areas. After all, if you want a legume in a particular black-soil area, it has to be bred in that black-soil area. I feel that if the two bodies work in conjunction it will be of great benefit to farmers in the whole of the area. It is something I shall endeavour to take up with the Minister for Primary Industries, and perhaps the Minister for Health, at an early date.

In the Financial Statement the Treasurer has made reference to the improved finances of the Railway Department. That is something we are all very pleased to see, and, in spite of criticisms that have been levelled at the Minister for Transport about the closing down of certain branch lines, it is a great thing that the finances have improved to such a degree.

The Treasurer mentioned the great contribution the wheat industry in Queensland is making towards the improved finances of the Railway Department. I would be failing in my duty to my constituents, so many of whom are wheat-growers, if I did not at this juncture make a plea to the Treasurer and the Premier to give consideration, before the Budget is introduced next year, to the granting of some concession to wheat-growers and other growers by way of reduced freight charges. It would give some relief to that industry.

The freight on wheat is 2s. 1½d. a bushel. That might not sound much, but on a 10-bag crop of wheat it works out at £3 5s. an acre. Where wheat is harvested in November, the ground ploughed and planted in perhaps May of the next year, I, as a wheat farmer, feel sure that I could work the ground for less than £3 5s. an acre. The Railway Department, in hauling the wheat from Dalby, Warra, or wherever it may be, to Brisbane,

Warwick, Toowoomba, or wherever it may be wanted, is getting the same amount per acre. I feel that the freight rates are excessive. They are higher in Queensland than in other States.

**Mr. Walsh:** Tell us how much it would cost by road.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** The hon. member for Bundaberg can work that out. I am speaking of rail freights. If the hon. member wants to speak of road transport, he has the opportunity during this debate.

I propose to refer to a statement by the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. McEwen, when he opened the Victorian Dairy Farmers' Association conference in Victoria in May 1964. He said—

"Thirdly, we want a profitable dairy industry as part of a decentralisation objective. This is something Australia must have if this country is not to remain as it is today, the most urbanised country in the whole world. Decentralisation is not merely putting a factory in a country town. The most natural form of decentralisation is to make the land industries more profitable, more attractive so that more people are able and willing and anxious to engage in them and sustain decentralisation."

I believe that we, as a Government, have a very grave responsibility to keep our young people on the land. Under our present education system they are able to obtain a higher standard of education than formerly, and it is imperative that they be retained in primary industry so that there will be young men and women trained and educated sufficiently well to be leaders in the industry.

My brother gave me these figures yesterday, and he is a man whom I can trust.

**An Opposition Member:** Do you reckon?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I do. He grew 570 acres of wheat last year and his freight bill was £2,100. I would not ask for legislation to cut an area of 600 acres in half, making 300 acres a living area. I believe that the wheat industry has found its living area, which is 600 acres. However, when £2,100 goes out in freight alone, I feel that this could become two living areas for a father and son or two brothers if worked in conjunction with one plant. It is absolutely impossible within the financial structure of the wheat industry for a farmer to set up three or four sons on separate farms and equip them with the machinery necessary to work them efficiently.

I feel that giving concessions is one way in which we, as a Government, can do something worth while to assist in keeping these young men on the land. The Premier is going to the Tara area at the week-end, and the young men there may possibly put the same thing to him. These are young lads who are associated with the industry and they do not want to leave the land. We have a responsibility to play our part in

keeping them there. A man with three or four sons often educates them and then finds that they have to look for some other form of livelihood. We are opening up land and throwing it open for ballot, and I do not know of anybody better to keep on the land than those who are reared on it. Of course, I do not want to deprive the man who wants to go onto the land of the opportunity of doing so. If he wins a ballot, good luck to him. But if we can get lads who have been reared on the land to stay on it, I think we shall be meeting our responsibilities.

So much for that. Again I appeal to the Premier and the Treasurer, through you, Mr. Baxter, to consider during the coming 12 months, before the next Budget is brought down, granting some freight concessions to wheat-growers.

In the time left to me, I wish to say something about the development of the brigalow lands in the Fitzroy Basin. During the recess between the February and August sessions of this Parliament I took the opportunity of going there and having a look at what is being done, and I give full marks to the Department of Lands and to those people who have been successful in drawing blocks for the job that they have done in such a short time. There is no doubt in my mind about the future of the brigalow country, and I believe that the people I met are well equipped to develop the land and have the courage to make good settlers.

There are many problems associated with the development of brigalow country, and I am afraid that I do not agree with the condition that the brigalow scrub be got rid of in the first three years. I believe that the Department of Lands has, even at this early stage, applied that condition somewhat elastically, but I think it is incumbent upon me to bring before the notice of hon. members what I saw.

When a big area of scrub is pulled, as it has been by some of the settlers, they seed it, and if they run into a dry period and do not get a strike with the grass, they are in real trouble. I refer particularly to young Staines, a Jandowae lad, who provided us with accommodation when we were there. He has done a magnificent job, as far as he can from his own point of view. He has pulled in the vicinity of 3,500 acres of scrub, burnt it, put up 20 miles of fencing, water points, a house, turkeys' nests, and water round his yards. He seeded the 3,500 acres but did not get rain; now the suckers will come. That is where the problem lies. I have always said that we should hasten a little slowly in developing brigalow country, and I have quoted this example before. I took the Minister for Lands out and showed him a property 60 miles north of Chinchilla where I think a man is going about it in the right way. He has pulled 500 to 600 acres each year and grassed it, and in the five years that he has been there he has got 2,500 acres of Rhodes grass established.

**Mr. Murray:** Does he take it to the plough?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** No, he has not ploughed any of the country yet. No doubt he will in the future. His idea is that if he runs into a dry season and does not get any grass up, he has only 500 acres of suckers to clear.

**Mr. Tucker:** When we suggested this, you called us knockers.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I did not. I have advocated this policy all through. I do not mind being charged with something I have said.

The problem is there and we have to face up to it. At one particular place, the Americans came with great crushers pulling the scrub. They contracted to pull it but one of the machines broke down so they crushed the lot. They made a very hot fire of softwood scrub all chopped up, so hot that I honestly believe—and so did this young fellow's father, who has had a long association with the land—it interfered with the structure of the soil and it will take a long time for it to recover. Nevertheless, I think the country has a great future.

**Mr. Walsh:** What is the carrying capacity when grassed?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** About one beast to eight acres in the country where I was. That would be stocking it fairly well in good seasons.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** It is being opened in lots of 6,000 to 8,000 acres as a living area.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** That is what these blocks are being cut up into. There are some areas of 17,000 acres.

**Mr. Murray:** I think the hon. member would agree that as grass pastures such a property you would probably get down to at least one beast to four acres, would you not?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** Not safely. I would not like to stock it to that extent—that is, taking the seasons straight through. In lush seasons, yes, but I would not like to stock it at a beast to four acres all the way through.

**Mr. Murray:** That is with legume pastures?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** Yes. As time goes on these fellows will be doing crop-fattening and other things to carry them through.

Time is pushing on and I think the criticism that has been levelled at this Government over the introduction of the Totalisator Administration Board should be commented on. I wish to do this because the first T.A.B. office I visited was in the Treasurer's own area of Coorparoo. It was on the morning of Melbourne Cup day last year. I apparently had something to collect. After having heard the criticism that has been levelled at the Government and after having seen the report of T.A.B., it amazes me that people should be so foolish as to utter such statements.

**Mr. Sherrington:** You must be a big winner.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** Apart from that, I do not look at everything from the point of view of my own personal gain. Let us be sensible about this. On that morning I thought nobody knew who I was, but a woman who was a friend of my wife said good morning to me and introduced me to several other women there. I asked them, "Is it a fact that this T.A.B. is making you people punt more?" They said, "No, that is not so at all." In the majority, these were people who did not want to go to the races and who preferred to put their bets on and then go to a football match. Prior to the introduction of T.A.B., if they did not have access to an S.P. operator hiding around some corner, they had to go to the races and they invariably "did" a lot more money than they intended to. As this woman said, "We go down on Saturday morning and place our bets. We go down and do our shopping on Monday morning and if there is anything to collect we collect it." What better and more sane way than that is there of having a little punt?

**Mr. Tucker:** How do you account for the fact that over the last three months £1,000,000 more was bet than in 1963?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** It could be that many fellows who bet S.P. around the corner have been put out of the game. I think the Treasurer might agree with that, but how does anybody know what betting went on under the system of unlicensed bookmakers? I shall quote a case just to give an indication of how much money was in it. Twelve years ago a fellow only 12 months older than I left Jandowae a very wealthy man although he had never done a day's work in his life. He got all that money out of S.P. betting and paid no tax whatever on it. We collect the tax now and those who pay just taxation may be left alone a little because we get it from the T.A.B. and the S.P. man has been put out of business.

For the life of me I cannot understand why anyone objects to the T.A.B. The Dalby Race Club was almost insolvent 12 months ago but now, because of the reimbursement in excess of £1,000 this year, it is racing once a month, increasing its prize money and providing an amenity for those who like that type of sport.

**Mr. Bromley:** You said a minute ago they did not like going to the races.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** Who?

**Mr. Bromley:** The people out there.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I think the hon. member is a little bit dejected after the gruelling he got last week. Apparently his hearing is affected.

It is a pity I do not have longer to do so, but I want to come to grips with Mrs. Horan, the president of the Queensland Housewives' Association, over the attack she made on the price of bacon. I feel that she has done an injustice to bacon producers throughout the State. I do not mind anyone making a statement as long as he or she tells the whole truth. Mrs. Horan made a statement which was headlined in either "The Courier-Mail" or the "Telegraph" that bacon was selling at 13s. a lb. Bacon was selling at 13s. a lb., but it was in  $\frac{1}{4}$ -lb. pressurised packs, with all the fat cut off it. However, at the same time as that bacon was selling at 13s. a lb., bacon was available to the housewife in Brisbane for 9s. 2d. a lb.

**Mr. Walsh:** Still too dear.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** We have no time to argue whether it was or not. If some hon. members opposite and Mrs. Horan were to do what some women on the land do to assist their husbands—doing it willingly and loving every minute of it—

**Mr. Walsh:** The producer is not getting it.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I believe the Premier's answer was the correct one when he said that the law of supply and demand dictates the price of any article. Let us have a look at the headlines in "Queensland Country Life" of 24 September—"Serious Queensland Shortage of Beef Cattle." There is a shortage of beef, and if there is a shortage you have to pay for it. You do not hear people complaining about the price of some luxury commodity that can be bought on hire purchase. I do not say, of course, that people should not use hire purchase.

I would be lacking in my responsibility to the pig producers, and to myself because I produce a few, were I not to ask that the whole story be told when people make charges of this nature. On the front page we read about beef being dear in Queensland but if we turn to the back page we see that steers were selling in Brisbane at 215s. a cwt. when at the same time in Adelaide they were selling at 235s. to 250s. a cwt. Prime yearlings were selling at Cannon Hill at 215s. to 225s., and in Adelaide at 240s. to 285s.

**Mr. Hughes** interjected.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** Can the hon. member answer this one: if bacon is dear why is it that you can stand in some smallgoods shops and see women come in and buy wrapped bacon for 6d. a half lb. or 1s. a lb. dearer than unwrapped bacon rashers? Unwrapped bacon rashers are just as good in quality as those that are wrapped. Why pay an extra 1s. for wrapping?

(Time expired.)

**Mr. O'DONNELL** (Barcoo) (8.41 p.m.): I do not think anybody has ever misunderstood my remarks about rural sections of Queensland, particularly those in my own electorate. I am an advocate of decentralisation. During the Address-in-Reply debate I mentioned certain matters which I think are harmful to this most important policy. Any sane Government must realise the basis of decentralisation, particularly in the western portion of the State. I am very concerned about the effect of the policy of the Main Roads Department in my area. During my early days in this Chamber I was impressed by the need for roads and I was also concerned about the conflict of ideas expressed by Main Roads Department engineers and council authorities. I know very well that councils, at that time were, and still are, eager to build up their day-labour force because in many centres in the rural parts of the State road-building is the only industry. We have seen vast changes in the activities of people engaged in the pastoral industry. Those who have been to the West know that some wives and families are living on the coast while the husbands go to the pastoral lands to carry out seasonal activities. This is not good for rural Queensland. Road-building is a very important industry, there although some people do not realise it.

Two or three years ago the Main Roads Department adopted a new attitude to councils. The councils approached the department for an extension of day-labour work because they thought that they had the right to expand their activities in road construction work. I was very interested in this matter because I realised that road construction was important. Whenever progressive measures are discussed, not only on a State basis, but on an Australian basis, road construction is of vital concern. Stabilisation experiments were used by the department as an excuse with those local authorities that wanted more work to build up the local labour force.

My first experience with stabilisation was in the Gregory electorate when I accepted an invitation to inspect the construction of a section of road from Ilfracombe to Isisford. I can say that I was very impressed. However, there is a natural feature on that road which is relatively convenient in that there is sandy loam available for road construction. I followed up with some queries on the success of the strip from the small town of Ilfracombe down towards Isisford, but I could never obtain the cost per mile from anyone. I was usually given the answer that the Main Roads Department was very satisfied with the experiment.

Further experiments were made with black soil, particularly outside Barcaldine. There were two 5-mile stretches and, if my memory serves me correctly, they were given to two different contractors. Those two stretches over black soil turned out to be costly failures. As a matter of fact, both contractors received additional contracts to

repair the roads after their initial contracts had been concluded. I was unable to find out the additional cost of the repair work.

Another section was attempted down on the Blackall road, in the Blackall shire, and on this occasion the work of repairing the damage was not given to the contractor. Consequently, I was able to discover that the repairs cost approximately £30,000 for 5 miles. That included gravel. Hon. members can see that those experiments, particularly in the black-soil stretches, represented double the cost. We know that had stabilising been a success it would have given us an answer to speedy and efficient road construction, but on the black-soil stretches it has proved costly because the initial work deteriorated as a result of some engineering error. Perhaps the original formula was not the correct one, or perhaps the natural features caused the failure. At any rate, the failure had to be repaired and at additional cost.

The Main Roads Department has now reverted to the orthodox method of road construction, but today a different excuse is given to the local authorities. It is no longer the excuse of specialised work requiring specialists and special equipment; it is the need for speed, the need for urgency, in road construction. As a consequence, the local authorities will not be receiving anything like the quantity of work they would like to receive from the department to increase the local work force and so build up the local towns. This is of great concern to me, and I know very well that it is of great concern to the local authorities, especially in the Central West. Every opportunity of building up local industry must be availed of, otherwise we shall find a slow but sure shrinkage of those settlements.

I am really concerned with the fact that although the department is reverting to orthodox methods of road construction it is not giving the councils a better deal. Road construction is very costly. I know, for instance, that there are four miles to the east of Barcaldine, towards Jericho I think, that will cost £43,000 to construct. That work is to be done in the next financial year by the Barcaldine Shire Council. There is a cost of £43,000 for four miles, because of the difficulty of the terrain. We can therefore understand that road construction is expensive. However, the private contractors are receiving most of this work, and it is my opinion that, although the Government advocates private enterprise and is carrying out its policy by constructing sections of road by tenders from private contractors, it is now falling down in this aspect because it has not realised that it has run out of contractors. Consequently the tenderers are going to suit themselves.

To take an illustration from some notes that I have made, I think that it is the plan of the Main Roads Department to complete the section of the Landsborough Highway

between Barcardine and Longreach by December, 1965. In so doing, two contracts are involved. One is for 14.8 miles in the Barcardine shire, for which tenders were called on 26 September and will close on 1 December. For that stretch of road there will probably be two tenderers, they being Teitzel and perhaps Zaanend. For the other stretch of 17 miles, which is in the Ilfracombe shire and the Gregory electorate, the contract has already been let to Teitzel. He is at present operating between Emerald and Rockhampton on the Tolmes, the last section of that road to be completed.

We therefore see the policy failing because the Government is not helping decentralisation by allowing local authorities to build up their local labour forces, and is not succeeding in obtaining competitive tenders because tenderers are in short supply. Those two points, I think, are very important. I regret that I have to speak in this way because, as I have said, roads in Australia are important items. If we had had success from the stabilisation method, we would have had speedy and efficient construction. There may then have been very good reason to allow local authorities to stick to the work on their own roads. The policy followed today is, with other tendencies, contributing to a departure from the decentralisation that is so urgently desired.

Like a bolt from the blue we heard the other day a statement which caused consternation in Brisbane and obtained headlines in the Press. It concerned the closure of certain police stations in Brisbane. That this proposal was kept so well under cover indicated to me that the Government realised that there would be a good deal of comment and criticism if what was going to happen had been made known to the people. So it was allowed to come quickly in the hope, I suppose, that people would be too stunned to object before its implementation. To my mind, some people within the department have incorrectly advised the Minister, and he, in turn, has passed the incorrect advice on to Cabinet.

However, many hon. members representing metropolitan seats will deal with this matter, and I wish to deal with another aspect of police administration. It has concerned me greatly because, as we all know, from time to time the administration has to take disciplinary action against some of its officers. We know, too, that people who live in the country get to know their police officers very intimately. As a consequence, they have varying ties of friendship or ties of enmity, if I may call them that, with them and, of course, points of criticism of the administration.

Towards the end of last year there were certain activities by the licensing squad in the west of Queensland that resulted in at least two bookmakers being proceeded against. They had been operating illegally, and because in the eyes of the Government their

illegal actions would have more importance when they were competing with the Totalisator Administration Board, there were bound to be repercussions. As a result of these activities, an inspector of police, a sergeant in charge of a four-man station, and a policeman in charge of a two-man station that is an overtime station and a C.P.S. office, were transferred. I want to tell you what happened to these three officers, Mr. Baxter, and ask you whether you think what happened was fair. The inspector was transferred to Brisbane. He would lose only his western allowance. The sergeant in charge of the four-man station was also transferred to Brisbane, and he would not lose anything other than his western allowance. After a short period in Brisbane, this officer who had received a disciplinary transfer—that is obvious; one does not have to be Sherlock Holmes to work it out—received his long service and good conduct medal and recently was promoted to sergeant first-class. The third man, who also came to Brisbane, lost £260 a year overtime, plus his C.P.S. allowance. I ask you, Mr. Baxter, whether you consider that those three men were treated equally. I think you would agree that the third man did not receive fair treatment. As I said, the transfers arose from one activity that occurred in the area, that is, permitting illegal bookmakers to compete with the T.A.B. Hon. members can understand that it is a matter of some concern.

But that is only a small item compared with the latest one. Recently the police station at Springsure was declared vacant. In other words, the officer-in-charge was under disciplinary transfer, which he received on 24 September. This is one transfer that I think is, to put it mildly, over the fence. Nobody made a written complaint against that officer. The Commissioner of Police said that he had a quarrel with the local council. The council did not make any official complaint to any officer superior to him in the Police Department, or to any member of Parliament. It is important to realise that today in that town there exists the original of a petition containing 400 signatures, a copy of which I presented to the Minister in charge of police, asking that that officer be retained there because in the estimation of those people he has done a good job.

The point is that somewhere along the line somebody has advised the Minister wrongly. Into somebody's ear some individual poured a story which was passed on to the Minister in charge of police. In this instance I should say that he has been wrongly advised not from inside, as he was over the closure of the police stations, but from the outside. In other words, this transfer has political significance, and in that town and district at least two men are under suspicion.

I repeat that the council as a body denies that officially it took any action against this man. Therefore, as I pointed out to the



Minister in a letter that I wrote to him, we have two aspects of the matter. If it was a dispute with the council that caused this transfer it must have been a councillor who has done this, but this policeman also has difficult duties and from time to time he has to investigate the cattle industry. I can tell hon. members that there are many touchy people in that industry, and if they know their way around they are very quick to take umbrage and pass complaints on to certain sources, sincerely hoping that a meddling officer will be removed to farther fields.

I repeat that this is a case where the Minister in charge of police has been wrongly advised from outside. I state emphatically that he knew of this transfer on 24 September because it would be fresh in his mind as I had made my representations to him, and he was in possession of the copy of the petition. Yesterday I received a letter from him in answer to a letter addressed to him a week ago. He was, I reiterate, familiar with the case because the transfer was made public on 24 September.

This is what he said—

“I have to acknowledge your further personal representations on behalf of residents of the Bauhinia Shire, objecting to the transfer of Sergeant R. Lindores from Springsure.

“Your present request has been noted and I shall write again to you concerning this matter as soon as practicable.”

As I have illustrated in the first instance, after the raids took place on the illegally operating bookmakers we had an unfair transfer and this is obviously more so. If we are going to have police officers, teachers and other responsible public servants throughout the countryside placed at the mercy of a single person who happens to have political influence we shall not have a very happy State. I ask the Minister in all fairness to reconsider this transfer. I contend that one person's opinion is worth nothing against the expression of opinion of 400 people. I challenge anybody to go through that list and tell me who could be coerced into signing a petition of that nature in that centre. The people there feel that this is a case where an injustice has been done.

I ask the Minister to go into the matter more fully to ascertain the real reason for what happened. If he is not prepared to disclose the real reason why this man is being transferred—the reason given to him directly or indirectly—he is being unjust. This officer will move on to his new station as an object of suspicion to his superior officers. Not only will he lose his overtime—this is an overtime station—which means a penalty of about £5 a week, but he will also lose his prestige in a community that he has served well for many years. I do not think

I can add any more to that plea. In addition to the criticism that is going to be levelled at the Minister in the next week or so over his unwise action in closing police stations in and around Brisbane he will have to face the fact that in the short space of time of less than 12 months we have had these instances of unfair treatment meted out to responsible police officers.

In the second instance, I think all the circumstances surrounding it would be of great concern to the Police Force as a whole in this State and also to other public servants in positions of authority. If we are going to talk about honesty of Government we must be very careful that politics do not enter into appointments or promotions merely to serve the interests of a few.

I want to pass on now to something that has worried me for quite a time. I do not want to bring up the whole subject of the closure of railway branch lines but merely the closure of one. We had our pioneers in the past. Governments had rightly conceded that these pioneers should receive as much assistance as possible from the State. We have heard an hon. member tonight asking for assistance for the wheat industry. He was complaining about railway freights. He wants, as he says, assistance for his industry. There is one railway line in Queensland marked for demolition next year which could be of assistance to primary producers who are about to pioneer a new section of this State. I refer to the Roma-Injune railway line. I am particularly concerned about this line. I have to say one or two things tonight which will affect some hon. members who are not in the Chamber but who were here earlier today. However, one hon. gentleman who is concerned is here. I refer to the Treasurer. I opposed the closure of this line immediately the list was published. As I pointed out, it is of particular importance to the brigalow lands development. It was said to be losing £62,000 a year. Everyone who knows the district knows that the line is only 62 miles long and I do not know how that figure could be arrived at. I do not see how it can possibly be correct, but that was the loss debited to it.

I have a very interesting letter which shows how people can turn their backs on an unsympathetic Government. It is from the Central Coastal Graziers' Association of Queensland and it asked me to meet a deputation from the Association on 16 April at Springsure. On that same day, at Springsure, the civic centre was opened, and the Treasurer was present to perform the official opening. These people were so concerned that their deputation was not to the Treasurer but to me because they knew I was sympathetic. However, after meeting the deputation, at the function that night I spoke to the Treasurer, who, to my surprise, was sympathetic. He also said that he would

address himself to the Minister for Transport on the matter. When I made representations to the Minister for Transport, what did I find? This is a letter from him—

“Cabinet’s decision in February, 1964, was to the effect ‘that on the Roma to Injune Branch the Railway Department discontinue other than vital expenditure. That the Main Roads Department be requested to hasten improvements so that a reasonable all-weather road be available from 30/6/1965. That rail services of the Branch discontinue on 30/6/1965 or earlier should the Main Roads Department consider that prior to that date the road is reasonably all-weather.’”

That was Cabinet’s decision and the Treasurer must have known it at the very moment he was being sympathetic to me. If he had told me of Cabinet’s decision I would have appreciated it because I went to the trouble of preparing a long case.

In the last paragraph of his letter this is what the Minister for Transport said—

“Whilst I appreciate the points raised in your representations, such development as outlined by you was considered prior to the Cabinet decision and it was decided that transport from the area would best be served by road, and, consequently, that portion of Cabinet’s decision relating to the approach to the Main Roads Department was so embodied in the resolution.

“Planning along the lines outlined in the Cabinet’s decision is proceeding.”

My voice did not go unheard, although the hon. member for Roma did not do anything to help. This line is in his electorate and it should have been his interest, even though the Arcadia section of the brigalow lands development scheme is in my electorate.

**Mr. Ewan:** What date is that letter?

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** 2 April, 1964.

**Mr. Ewan:** I was in it three months before you even thought about it.

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** I discussed this matter with the hon. member for Roma, and he told me that the Roma people wanted the line closed. He was emphatic that road transport, which apparently operates extensively in the Roma district, will more than compensate for the closure of the railway line. Those were his exact words. Consequently, I can tell hon. members that the graziers in the Roma district have changed their minds.

**Mr. Ewan:** Oh, rats!

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** If the hon. member for Roma wishes to go to the United Graziers' Association office, he will find that their representations included a comment from the graziers in the Roma district. At that time the matter was raised at graziers' meetings and the hon. member for Roma was in attendance. It was some consolation to the graziers at that time to know that £290,000-odd was going to be spent on that road, but

somebody who had wisdom said, “If you want to make it an all-weather road you will have to spend £500,000 and it will take at least 10 years to do the job.” I advise the hon. member for Roma to take a walk down to the U.G.A. office and read the letter that was sent to the Minister for Transport. That railway is most important to the people on the land—and I am not worried about their politics. People in the Arcadia region will be fighting a solid battle to get on their feet. If these people do well in that area, it will not only be a cattle area but it will also be a grain producing district. The only outlet will be through Injune, and that will all be to the benefit of the hon. member for Roma if he does the right thing. If the Government does not do the right thing, these people will not forget it. After all, the pioneers of the past were given railway lines in days when money was very much harder to find than it is in these days of prosperity. The Treasurer is allowing for a deficit of £500,000, and that is exactly the cost of that road. We are certainly not going to get that road by 30 June next year, and these people will have to pay the piper because no road-transport operator is going to take his vehicle over almost untrafficable roads unless somebody pays extra for this rather doubtful practice. If somebody driving over a good road quotes 6s. a mile, he will probably want 1s. or 2s. a mile extra, which is going to be paid by the primary producer. They are the people for whom the hon. member for Condamine was barracking tonight: the grain-growers and the wheat-growers, who want reduced freights for their crops. As well, we want an all-weather road constructed by the Government of today, because if the railway goes who is going to put it back again? The people who go into that country have a big enough load around their necks now. Anybody who is going into that brigalow area really has the job in front of him.

Again we have heard from the expert on brigalow tonight. He spoke about clearing 500 acres a year. That was a commendable approach. I am glad the Minister for Lands is here, and I am repeating this for his benefit. The hon. member for Condamine told us about clearing small sections at a time, but the brigalow development scheme could demand the clearing of up to 2,000 acres of brigalow a year. This condition is printed on the lithographs. These people have an enormous task, and it is the responsibility of the Government to give them the amenity of rail transport to help them over their early difficulties. I asked in my representations that the railway line be left there for 10 years; I did not ask that it be left for ever. I did not get much encouragement from the hon. member for Roma, and I was very disappointed in the Treasurer's attitude.

I must now mention something that happened only yesterday. Because of an electrical fault at the Blackall State School, 11 classrooms were lost by fire.

**Mr. Bromley:** They do not supply fire extinguishers there, either.

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** That is not the point I want to raise now. One report states that the electrical fault was in the staff room and another states that it was in the ceiling. The fire developed so quickly that the building was in flames in no time. Eleven classrooms were lost.

I now want to bring to the attention of hon. members, if they do not already know of it, the wonderful gesture of the people of Blackall. The Blackall Show Society has made available its buildings for the use of the children. The two large pavilions will take eight grades. The tennis club house will take two grades, and the secretary's office will become the head teacher's office. Another building will become the staff room. That is a generous gesture. All that the Department of Education is asked to meet are running costs. The children have been taken into the showground and set up in classes there. I think that that action should go on record.

I was telephoned this morning by Councillor Greenhalgh, Chairman of the Blackall Shire Council, who informed me of these arrangements. That is why I mention them tonight. He asked me to do one thing, and that was to approach the Minister to see if the showground and its buildings could be returned to the show society by next March so that the society can proceed with its annual programme.

I point out that the loss of the 11 classrooms will be very costly indeed. Replacing them will mean an expenditure of at least £60,000. It is important to realise that at least the education of the children will be uninterrupted. I have had the greatest co-operation from Mr. Guymmer, the Director of Primary Education. He spoke to me and guaranteed that furniture and other requisites would be rushed to Blackall. The Acting Regional Director, Mr. Reithmuller, has already visited the town. Mr. Parker, the Works Department supervisor, has also been there. Everything is under control so far as the Department of Education is concerned. This goes to show very well to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Works what efficient officers they have. I could not let this occasion pass without bringing to the notice of all hon. members this fine gesture by the Blackall Show Society. When it is known that the society is prepared to go unrewarded and accept from the department only the actual running costs associated with the buildings and the grounds, I am sure that appreciation will be expressed by one and all.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.27 p.m.