

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 1964

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Industry Conference to deal with accidents in the electrical industry? If so, what is the reason for the exclusion of members of the Electrical Trades Union from this committee?

(2) What was the reason also for excluding representatives of the Electrical Trades Union from the Standing Committee inquiring into the Electric Light and Power Regulations?

Answers:—

(1) "There has been no technical committee formed by the State Electricity Commission to hold an enquiry prior to the projected industry conference which has been called to further consider the matter of safety in the electrical industry. As the Honourable Member has already been informed such enquiries are conducted into each electrical accident at the time it occurs. The Commission is fully constituted and expertly staffed to undertake these enquiries and it does not form committees for such purposes. However, I understand from the Commissioner for Electricity Supply that representatives of a number of the separate Electric Authorities which operate in Queensland, and who are as seriously concerned as we all are with accident prevention, will be meeting on safety matters as well as some other matters concerning Electric Authorities prior to the meeting with all sections of the electrical industry. The question of exclusion of members of the Electrical Trades Union therefore does not arise."

(2) "I am not aware as to precisely what committee the Honourable Member has in mind. However, I am advised that a committee was established by a conference of Regional Electric Authorities in April this year to consider Regulations and By-laws in relation to model By-laws produced by the Electricity Supply Association of Australia. The Commissioner for Electricity Supply has informed me that the Commission has, and will, at all times call into conference all sections of the electrical industry, either together or separately, to consider the problems of the industry with which it is concerned, and also supports the establishment of representative advisory bodies, where considered desirable, to deal with particular matters of general interest. Examples of this are the Approvals Examining Advisory Committee which advises the Commission on the approval of electrical appliances, the Queensland Electrical Education Council which deals with matters of electrical safety, and the Queensland Sub-Committee of the Standards Association of Australia which advises the Commission on the interpretation of the S.A.A. Wiring Rules. All sections of the electrical industry including the Electrical Trades Union are represented on these committees."

TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER, 1964

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

QUESTIONS

PECUNIARY INTEREST OF TOWNSVILLE ALDERMEN IN SUBURBAN INVESTMENTS PTY. LTD.—Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

(1) Is he aware that a company called Suburban Investments Pty. Ltd. was recently registered in the Supreme Court, Townsville, with a capital of £50,000 and that four Townsville City Council Aldermen, Messrs. Smith, Davis, Bourke and Breinl are directors?

(2) Will he have inquiries made as to whether this company will finance, at a profit, the development of the 143 acres to be leased by the Crown to the North Queensland Golfing Association, following a recommendation by the Council?

(3) Is the action of these four aldermen a contravention of the relevant section of the Local Government Act, which prohibits a member of a Local Authority from using his position for pecuniary gain?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) "No."

(3) "The Honourable Member might examine the provisions of the Local Government Acts relative to such matters."

ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION REPRESENTATION ON TECHNICAL COMMITTEE, ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY.—Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Industrial Development,—

(1) Has a technical committee been formed by the State Electricity Commission to hold an inquiry prior to the projected

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Co-ordinator-General of Public Works for the year 1963-64.

Commissioner of Police for the year 1963-64.

Committee appointed to Examine the Efficacy of the Apprentices and Minors Acts.

FORM OF QUESTION

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) having given notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member's question does not appear to be in order.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Mr. HOUGHTON (Redcliffe) (11.9 a.m.), by leave: In "Sunday Truth" of 25 October, there was featured an item headed, "£110 on Drilling and £2,500 for Directors", quoting my name and also publishing my photograph.

I wish to inform the House and hon. members that this statement is untrue, and I now give the actual facts. On 29 July, 1963, I was appointed a director of Standard Gas Pty. Ltd. I paid £50 for 50 fully-paid-up £1 shares. On 30 July, 1963, the annual general meeting of Standard Gas Pty. Ltd. was held, and Messrs. L. G. Neill, William White and I were appointed directors. It was resolved that it become a public company, that the capital be increased from £75,000 to £125,000, and that the £1 shares be divided into shares of 5s. each.

On 9 August, 1963, the company was registered as a public company, and on 16 October, 1963, the company issued a prospectus. However, on account of the poor response it did not go to allotment and all moneys were refunded. I hold 200 5s. shares and have never received any dividend on those shares from either the private company or the public company. I have never received any director's fees or any other payment or benefit of any kind whatsoever, either from the private company or the public company.

PETITION

TRAINING AND WAGE RATES OF APPRENTICES

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.12 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present a petition signed by 10,908 members of the trade union movement praying that, as an urgent need and in the public interest, there be a total abolition of compulsory night-time training of apprentices in Queensland, replaced by appropriate day-time training, and that, in relation to living standards, wage rates of pay be

increased to stated percentages of the tradesmen's rate of pay during five years of apprenticeship.

Petition laid upon the table and, on motion of Mr. Duggan, read and received—

"Petition

"To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland in Parliament assembled—

The humble petition of the undersigned in the State of Queensland respectfully sheweth:—

1. That there is an urgent need, and it is in the public interest that there be total abolition of compulsory night-time training of apprentices in Queensland—with the substitution thereof of full day-time training to cover all such theoretical and practical training required during all years of apprenticeship.

2. That there is an urgent need, and it is in the public interest for an increase to be made in wage standards of apprentices in order that they may be better able to meet normal living costs, and therefore that apprentices' wage rates should be increased to the following percentages of the tradesmen's rate of pay, as endorsed by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (A.C.T.U.); viz.,

1st year—from 30 per cent. to 45 per cent.

2nd year—from 37 per cent. to 55 per cent.

3rd year—from 47 per cent. to 65 per cent.

4th year—from 67 per cent. to 85 per cent.

5th year—from 83 per cent. to 95 per cent.

"Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your Honourable House of Parliament will take necessary steps, in the current session of Parliament, to so amend the Apprentices and Minors Acts, 1929 to 1959, to include the foregoing principle of full theoretical and practical day-time training for all apprentices and the percentages of the respective tradesmen's rate of pay as set out above.

"And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray."

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CAIRNS

DEATH OF MR. G. W. G. WALLACE

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received from the Registrar-General a certified copy of the registration of the death, on 12 October, 1964, of George Walter Gordon Wallace, Esquire, lately serving in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland as member for the electoral district of Cairns.

SEAT DECLARED VACANT

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

“That the seat in this House for the electoral district of Cairns hath become and is now vacant by reason of the death of the said George Walter Gordon Wallace.”

Motion agreed to.

DATES FOR BY-ELECTION

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that the dates in connection with the issue of the writ for the election of a member to serve in this House for the electoral district of Cairns will be as follows:—

Issue of writ—21 January, 1965.

Date of nomination—28 January, 1965.

Polling day—27 February, 1965.

Return of writ—26 March, 1965.

JURY ACTS AND ANOTHER ACT
AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Dr. Delamothe, read a third time.

TRUSTEES AND EXECUTORS ACTS
AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. P. R. DELAMOTHE (Bowen—Minister for Justice) (11.15 a.m.): I move—

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

Hon. members will recall that the purpose of this Bill was outlined at the introductory stage as being the enabling of additions to be made from time to time to the list of investments authorised for trust funds and the assisting of the Public Curator and other persons becoming personal representatives of deceased persons who were trustees of land.

There is already power in the Public Curator Acts for the Governor in Council to add, by Order in Council, to the list of investments authorised for the investment of the Public Curator Common Fund, and the amendment proposed in the Bill now presented for its second reading is to make it possible to add by Order in Council to the list of investments authorised for all trustees.

With regard to the representation of deceased trustees of land, the power proposed to be given to the Public Curator and other personal representatives by this Bill is only the power which for more than 40 years it was thought they had.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.16 a.m.): We voiced some of the possibilities that might arise from this Bill and I think, with some

slight reservations, hon. members agreed that some amendments were desirable. However, on further examination we are a little concerned about the power vested in the Governor in Council to extend the list of various investments. We think that the Minister might have given us some of the possibilities in greater detail. I indicated in a general way that I thought the Executive Council may not accept the Treasury's advice to extend the list of various investments. I do think that the Minister might give us illustrations, or some explanation as to what the possible extension of this provision might involve. He went to some pains to mention the short-term money market and we remember that the Treasurer introduced a Bill empowering the Treasury to invest in the short-term money market. The Treasurer was able to indicate to us then that it was a modern practice by which the State was able to avail itself of a substantial volume of funds that were lying idle for short periods and use them to advantage for short periods. We were told that it was in the interests of the Treasury, and of the State, to utilise such funds to earn interest rather than allow them to remain idle in their respective accounts. The Minister also indicated that in New South Wales and Western Australia, action had already been taken to amend the law to provide that the short-term money market would be an authorised investment for trustee companies and he also indicated that such a proposal was contemplated in Victoria.

I think the principal point exercising the minds of members of the Opposition is that this Bill has not been amended, as far as investments are concerned, since 1924—40 years ago. Consequently, there does not seem to have been a need for very much movement in that period and we can visualise all sorts of situations that the Governor in Council might have to deal with if authority is given, without application being made, for the declaration of a particular form of investment as being one that comes within the ambit of an approved investment. I am sure that the Governor in Council will act only on the advice of the officials, and that normally should be a good enough safeguard. At the same time, this amendment gives a pretty extensive power. I am not against such a power being exercised by the Governor in Council when there is a repetitive process going on—I do not think it is desirable that every three months or so a Bill should be introduced to say that a particular investment is an authorised investment—but it appears that for 40 years there has not been a need for this authority.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DUGGAN: If this Bill provides for investment in the short-term money market, is that not enough power, without this added power being given to the Governor in Council? I think that the Minister inferentially, if not directly, indicated that harbour

boards may have become an approved investment. They at least have some statutory authority, and their loans are guaranteed by the Government. There may be others that have the financial backing of the Government and no doubt would qualify as being gilt-edged securities, making it permissible for trustees to invest in those particular funds.

Before we deal with the individual clauses of the Bill, I should like the Minister to give us some outline of how far this particular power is likely to extend. In its present form it could possibly encompass situations and companies that may not be as sound as the ones we have had in mind over the years. I know that the Minister will conscientiously and premeditatedly make a recommendation to the Governor in Council not to invest if there is some measure of doubt about it. That is the only sensible thing that any Minister would do. Large sums have been lost by well-intentioned people in the past on projects that were thought to be financially stable, and that in many cases were vetted by some of the banks.

On one occasion the Reserve Bank gave approval to loan funds being made available for the development of particular projects, and in some cases they proved to be not profitable, and losses were occasioned by the Reserve Bank as a result. Within the ramifications of the Reserve Bank there would be involved lending procedures and practices far more extensive than are envisaged by a Bill of this kind. I am merely pointing out that even with the financial competence and conservative regard that bankers have for the protection of their assets, mistakes can be made.

It is desirable that this particular provision should be narrowed a little, or that we be given some definite indication that those types of investment are likely to increase at much more regular intervals than has been the case in previous years. That is the only point I wish to emphasise in the second-reading stage.

Certain matters will be elaborated on by other members on this side of the House. I know that the hon. member for Baroona wishes to say something on those matters. Unless we get the assurance it will be incumbent upon us to register opposition to the clauses covering this matter.

Mr. HANLON (Baroona) (11.24 a.m.): I share the concern voiced by the Leader of the Opposition in regard to the amendment to Section 4 of the Trustees and Executors Act, not so much at its not being a justifiable amendment where on numerous occasions it is necessary for various Ministers to bring Bills before the House year after year to provide for some comparatively minor administrative or machinery provision that could well have been catered for by an Order in Council, subject to the usual opportunity for debate in the House. Such a practice would save the expense and time of bringing individual

Bills before the House as has happened over the years in isolated cases. In this instance the very fact, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, that the list of approved investments has remained virtually unchanged since about 1924 indicates that, up to the present at any rate, there has not been any necessity to make extensive alterations to it by the introduction of Bills to amend the Act. This is the first amendment in almost 40 years that can have any real effect on the list.

It may be that the advent of the short-term money market has brought a change of attitude towards this type of investment. It is true that there are new opportunities now available for investment of trust funds, and there should be no opposition to investment in the short-term money market. I do not, however, think it beyond the capacity of the Minister, his advisers, or the Parliamentary Draftsman to draft an amendment referring specifically to the short-term money market. I think that a similar provision is, or will be in the future, contained in the Treasury Funds Investment Act and Acts governing superannuation schemes such as those covering officers of Parliament and public servants. I do not think there should be any difficulty in framing an amendment to permit investment of Treasury funds specifically in the short-term money market.

I feel that unless the Minister is able to indicate forms of investment other than the short-term money market, the proposed extension of the list goes much beyond what Parliament would be justified in granting. It is proposed to amend Section 4 by adding, "in any other manner from time to time approved by the Governor in Council . . .". That, to my mind, leaves the opportunity for investment quite unlimited, if approved by the Governor in Council.

To make my position quite clear, I, in common with the Leader of the Opposition, do not feel that the Governor in Council would extend the list other than in a wise and careful manner. In spite of that, Parliament cannot say, "No Governor in Council in the future is ever going to be silly enough to extend the list in an irresponsible manner. We will therefore give him power to extend it in an irresponsible manner if he wants to, because we know that there will never be one who would do such a thing." I do not believe that any Governor in Council would act in an irresponsible fashion under a clause such as this one. The way in which the power is granted does, however, permit of its irresponsible use if anyone was sufficiently foolish and reckless to act in such a manner under the guise of an Order in Council, on the advice of the Government of the day.

I feel that the Minister has not given the House the full explanation of these matters. He did refer to the short-term money market, and, in concluding his remarks on the introductory stage, said that this is a general Bill that does not alter in any way the type of investment to which trustees and executors

are restricted. If to the long list of investments already approved in the Act are to be added others "in any other manner from time to time approved", it can hardly be said that that is not an extensive alteration to the list of investments that have been permitted up till now.

I do not propose to take up the time of the House any further at this stage. I should like to hear what the Minister has to say, because it may indicate that our concern is not warranted; but if he does not convince us by the arguments that he puts forward, we will have an opportunity of dealing with the matter in greater detail at the Committee stage when the relevant clause is under discussion.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (11.31 a.m.): It is a pity that the Minister did not take the House into his confidence and give at least some guide as to the arguments that were put to him when he was invited to bring down this amending legislation.

I do not agree entirely with the suggestion of the hon. member for Baroona that the Bill may obviate the need to bring down a measure providing, say, for an extension of the list of investments in which trustee companies are allowed to invest. In my opinion, there is danger in this Parliament's conceding such powers as the years go by. The hon. member for Baroona pointed out that no amendment of the principal Act has been brought down for 40 years. If that is so, although there have been many Governments, with varying ideas, in office during that time, none of them has seen fit to alter this particular principle as it relates to what might be described as private trustee companies. Apart from anything else, when the Minister brings down a Bill such as this, hon. members have an opportunity to debate generally the functions of trustee companies, and we do not get very many such opportunities. The more amendments that we accept of the nature now proposed, the fewer opportunities Parliament will have to discuss the principles surrounding not only the particular amendment suggested but also the general functions of companies such as these. I am opposed to it for that reason—that it takes away from the Parliament a right that it would normally have. If any Government during the past 40 years had thought it desirable to bring down a proposal similar to this, Parliament would have had an opportunity of discussing the functioning of private trustee companies generally.

It is not enough for the Minister to say that, simply because it is contained in the Public Curator Act, that is sufficient justification for extending the provision to the operations of other trustee companies. The Minister knows very well that the Public Curator Office comes under the jurisdiction of himself, as Minister for Justice, and there are so many facets of its administration that I have not the slightest doubt that the

Public Curator, before attempting to widen in any way the scope of his investments, would consult somebody in higher authority.

Some of the dangers that I see in the proposal may be only imaginary. But does that matter? If we do not allow our imagination to run away with us from time to time, there will never be anything new to debate. How did hire-purchase companies become as fantastically strong as they are today? Only because Sir Arthur Fadden, who was then Federal Treasurer, brought down in Parliament an Order in Council exempting hire-purchase companies from the operation of the Banking Act and, secondly, because he amended the Banking Act to remove control over the investments of private banks in sources other than those usually approved by the authorities at the time. As a result of that action, banks and other companies were given an open go to invest their funds under all headings. Who knows? Even under this Bill, some trustee companies may seize the opportunity of investing in hire-purchase companies. Some of them may be good investments, where the banks themselves are controlling the investment and putting their own capital into hire-purchase companies; but this loose method of simply saying that the Governor in Council shall be authorised to extend the provisions in any direction that it sees fit sounds too wide to me. In any circumstances, I am not in agreement with the principle because it takes away one of the few rights—rights that are diminishing so rapidly in this Parliament—for Parliament to have a say on matters relating to administration generally.

I know there are many matters that can be dealt with by way of Order in Council, Proclamation, Regulation, and so on, and Parliament has, over many years, provided for them in various enactments. However, there is always the danger of a Minister taking along to his Cabinet advice that suits his particular point of view and, simply because it suits his particular point of view, proceeding to persuade the other members of Cabinet that it would be a very good move. I know that the Minister feels that he would not be a party to giving approval to invest funds held by private trustee companies under any heading that would result in the estate suffering.

Mr. Aikens: He may not always be the Minister for Justice, and his party may not always be the Government.

Mr. WALSH: If they continue to go the way they are going now they may not be the Government for very much longer. That is the important aspect for the Minister to consider. He should take notice of what is being said and what is going on outside. Of course, so long as they get the support of the Australian Labour Party they will be all right.

Mr. Davies: That is a ridiculous statement.

Mr. WALSH: They have done pretty well up to date.

I think the Minister knows my views on this matter well enough to realise that I do not get up and argue these matters unless I feel I have some very sound justification for doing so. I think the Minister now knows that I am still opposed, as I indicated at the introductory stage, to the principles he has enunciated.

Hon. P. R. DELAMOTHE (Bowen—Minister for Justice) (11.38 a.m.), in reply: I will attempt to allay the expressed worries of the previous speakers. I thought I had made myself clear at the introductory stage by pointing out that under the Trustees and Executors Act the investments authorised for the investment of trust funds are mainly laid down. We in Queensland have done that by legislation. In New South Wales, for example, it is done by Rules of Court, not by statute. As I say, in Queensland, for trustees generally—the Public Curator, private trustees and trustee companies—the authorised investments have been laid down in the Act.

Since 1915 there has been provision in the Public Curator Act for adding to the Public Curator's permissible investments, and that power has in fact been exercised on three occasions between 1915 and the present time. To show hon. members the care with which that Order in Council provision has been made, I instance firstly the Order in Council of 12 November, 1920, which covered the investment of Public Curator funds on the security of perpetual lease. I do not suppose there is any hon. member here now who was here in 1920.

On 22 December, 1960, an Order in Council authorised the Public Curator to invest in the short-term money market. We would all recall that. By Order in Council dated 18 January, 1962, the Public Curator was authorised to invest in debentures issued by the Queensland Housing Commission. Although the Public Curator Act authorises the use of this Order in Council provision, it has been used carefully and with due regard to not going outside the type of investment which is authorised generally. We have exactly the same thought in mind with regard to this amending legislation to enable the procedure of Order in Council to be used rather than having to come to Parliament with a Bill every time we want to add an extra authorised investment to the list. The Bill merely enables an addition to be made to the list by Order in Council rather than our having to come along with an amending Bill each time.

Mr. Walsh: Will you give us reasons for it, and tell us where the proposal came from?

Dr. DELAMOTHE: In fact, nothing is proposed to be added at this stage. Because approval for investment on the short-term money market has been granted generally

through many statutes it is felt that it is most desirable to add investment on the short-term money market to this list—

Mr. Hanlon: That can be done under this Bill?

Dr. DELAMOTHE: No, the Bill merely enables the Government to add to the list by Order in Council. It does not specify that it enables it to add specifically to the list any particular form of investment. An Order in Council will have to be tabled. I could have amended the Trustees and Executors Act by adding that as a form of investment. It has not been decided yet whether it will be added. With changing times, and quick changes in the financial set-up of the country, probably there will be other forms of completely authorised and completely safe investment that will come along more rapidly than in the past. It will avoid the necessity of having to bring down a Bill simply for the sake of adding an extra form of investment. The type of authorised investment is clear—investments which are guaranteed by the Government. It is not envisaged that anything outside of that type of investment will be added to the list. This Bill merely enables consideration of a particular form of investment that may come up. I previously cited the short-term money market as one example of the new type of investment that will come up. There will be others. This method will be convenient and speedy, and it will not rob Parliament of its powers of review.

Motion (Dr. Delamothe) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of s. 4; Authorised investments—

Mr. HANLON (Baroona) (11.46 a.m.): I listened with interest to the Minister's reply to the points that were raised. However, I am still concerned about this matter. It is not that I do not accept unreservedly the Minister's explanation about the example of the short-term money market. We indicated at both the introductory and second-reading stages that investments in the short-term money market would certainly not be questioned. However, it is proposed to extend the present list by adding the words—

"In any other manner from time to time approved by the Governor in Council by Order in Council published in the 'Gazette';"

That means exactly what it says—in any other manner at all. It is not necessarily restricted to the example of the short-term money market as given by the Minister.

Section 4 of the Trustees and Executors Acts already provides—

"In addition to any investment of trust funds authorised by any other Act, a trustee may, unless expressly forbidden by the

instrument, if any, creating the trust, invest any trust funds in his hands, whether at the time in a state of investment or not, in manner following, that is to say:—”

I will read the list of investments already approved in the Act. They are so wide as to virtually cover every form of gilt-edged investment in this State and all over the world. The section continues—

(a) In any of the parliamentary stocks or public funds, or Government securities of the United Kingdom;

(b) On real or heritable securities in Great Britain or Ireland;

(c) In the stock of the Bank of England or the Bank of Ireland;

(d) In any securities the interest of which is for the time being guaranteed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom or of the Commonwealth of Australia or of any of the Australian Colonies or New Zealand;

(e) In debentures or securities of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia or of any of the Australian Colonies or New Zealand;

(f) On real securities in Queensland;

(g) In any of the stocks, funds, or securities for the time being authorised for the investment of cash under the control or subject to the order of the Court;

(h) In debentures or other securities charged on the funds or property of any Local Authority in Queensland;

(i)—

(A) On any interest bearing term deposit in any bank; or

(B) On deposit in any Savings Bank, authorised under Part II of the Commonwealth Banking Act 1959 (including any Commonwealth enactment in substitution or amendment thereof) to carry on banking business in Australia or established by any Commonwealth Act, and, in each case, carrying on business in Queensland for the time being.

(j) In debentures and stock issued by the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board pursuant to the powers contained in ‘The Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Acts, 1909 to 1923’;”

Clause 2 of the Bill reads—

“Section four of ‘The Trustees and Executors Act of 1897’, is amended by inserting after paragraph (j) the following paragraph:—

‘(k) In any other manner from time to time approved by the Governor in Council by Order in Council published in the ‘Gazette’;”

Under Section 4 of the Trustees and Executors Act a trustee may, unless expressly forbidden by the instrument—that is, the instrument of trust—if any, creating the trust, invest any trust funds in his hands, and so on. It is the width of the authority to be given that concerns me, not, as I have already

said, that I consider the Governor in Council would use this power irresponsibly and allow unwarranted investments by trustees. We can examine these matters only on the basis of what we are asked to do, and we are asked to give the Governor in Council this blanket authority to approve these alterations in any manner at all. The list as it stands, which I have read, is very extensive, so much so that it has been found unnecessary over the years to vary it in any way. The Minister pointed out that the Order in Council provision already exists so far as the Public Curator is concerned, but on only three occasions since 1915 has it been found necessary to vary the Public Curator’s rights of investment under that provision. I cannot see as yet that the amendment could not have been drawn to provide for investment in the short-term money market instead of this blanket provision to allow any form of investment whatsoever approved by the Governor in Council.

Then, if something did arise later on, it would be necessary for the Minister to bring down another Bill, but there is no indication as yet that there will be available to trustees a multiplicity of new avenues of warranted investment. It is possible that there may be others coming up in the next decade. The Minister does not indicate that. He has no example in mind that would not be covered by the specific addition of the short-term money market opportunity to Section 4 of the Act. It means that we will now have this brought about by the Governor in Council.

At one stage the Minister said that there is as much debate on an Order in Council as on a Bill. That is not correct. The debate on an Order in Council is restricted to one hour. If the Minister had added to this list by Order in Council and the Order was duly tabled, objection could be taken and the matter would have to be debated—but only for that comparatively short time. It does not give the same opportunity for debate as the various stages of a Bill.

I agree with the Minister that an opportunity is given to Parliament to disallow an Order in Council. But we know what happens with these things. If an Order in Council is issued after the December adjournment in a year before an election, Parliament does not meet again until perhaps August of the following year. Therefore, the provision would be effective from December to August, because until such time as Parliament disallows an Order in Council any action taken under it is valid. We cannot undo what has been done during that period. Investments would have been made, and by August the following year the issue would be cold. The Opposition of the day—it may not be a Labour Opposition, so politics might not necessarily enter into it—could raise an objection, but by that time it would have gone cold and in the meantime advantage would have been taken of those investments.

For those reasons I am concerned at the fact that the Minister has found it necessary to give to the Governor in Council such a wide authority by extending the Act in the manner indicated in Clause 2 of the Bill.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (11.53 a.m.): In this case the Minister is a doctor, and anybody who has known him for many years could say that he is adopting a real bedside manner in trying to impress the hard, seasoned political warriors in this Chamber that this is a simple amendment. It is nothing of the sort.

I still want to know who made this proposal, and if any pressure was brought to bear on the Government by sources that would be interested in investing large sums of money under many headings. I am not prepared to take it as an ordinary approach where suddenly it has been discovered that we must have this particular amendment to enable trustee companies to function efficiently in the interests of those whose funds they are investing.

Mr. Aikens: Didn't you get the big bundle of stuff that was sent around?

Mr. WALSH: I got it, and I would say that generally it was explanatory and informative to every hon. member. I did not accept everything in it, but it contained information and we can always learn.

There was a golden opportunity for the Minister to incorporate in this amendment a principle whereby the investment of these funds should be within this State. That matter has been brought to the notice of the former Minister for Justice, who is now the Minister for Industrial Development, in this House on previous occasions. It has been drawn to his attention that in Victoria legislation specifically provides that trust funds can be invested only within that State. Has the Minister for Industrial Development any doubt about that? I found from attending meetings of the Loan Council that funds controlled by trustee companies in Victoria can be invested only in Victoria.

Under legislation introduced some time ago, it can now be said that the real control of at least some trustee companies in this State has now been transferred to New South Wales. Although it may be said that one trustee company has on its board two directors from Queensland, it will be seen that trust funds of this company will be invested outside Queensland if better returns are offered elsewhere. If the right of trustee companies to invest is to be extended, the first obligation of this Parliament is to ensure that the Minister or the Governor in Council shall determine from time to time that priority should be given to investments in Queensland.

I am sorry if the Minister has reasons for not telling the Committee why this proposal has been introduced after the list has remained virtually unchanged for 40

years. Quite obviously the Minister does have reasons for not informing hon. members. The amendment reads—

“In any other manner from time to time approved by the Governor in Council by Order in Council published in the ‘Gazette.’”

We have all heard people, when endeavouring to make comparisons, refer to something as being “as wide as the ocean”. This amendment will make the section of the Act not as wide as any one ocean but as wide as all the oceans put together. The amendment grants to the Governor in Council the right to extend the list in any direction and in any manner thought fit.

The Public Curator Act was brought down in 1915, and it is now 1964. In the 49 years that have passed since the introduction of that Act there has been no necessity to alter the list of investments permitted. It is 40 years since Section 4 was amended, yet suddenly the Government now finds it necessary to alter it. This action appears to me to be just as suspect as was the bringing down of an amendment to the Banking Act exempting hire-purchase companies from its provisions, thus allowing those organisations to run riot in the financial community.

Progress reported.

At 12 noon, in accordance with Standing Order No. 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES— THIRD AND FOURTH ALLOTTED DAYS

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1964-65

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

CHIEF OFFICE

Debate resumed from 22 October (see p. 968) on Mr. Munro's motion—

“That £194,569 be granted for ‘Department of Industrial Development—Chief Office.’”

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (12.1 p.m.): In the few minutes remaining to me I wish to deal with only three points.

The first is the glib claim of the Minister and the Government that they are encouraging industry to decentralise itself in Queensland and encouraging other industries to come to this State. That is an idle claim, because, with few exceptions, industries that have gone to North Queensland could be said to have gone there accidentally. Their presence in the North is completely fortuitous; they went there by their own decision and were not drawn there by any act of the Government. The figures contained in the report of the

Director of Industrial Development indicate clearly that the Government's alleged ambition in this respect has been unsuccessful, because the net value of production for 1962-63—these are the latest figures provided in the report, so I must be pardoned for not quoting later figures—for cities south of Rockhampton is £124,000,000, whereas for cities from Rockhampton north, including Rockhampton, it is a mere £15,000,000. This is a clear indication of the Government's complete failure to attract industry to North Queensland. I am taking round figures, of course, but of the £124,000,000 to which I referred, about £105,000,000 is related to the Brisbane metropolitan area.

The second point, with which I wish to deal briefly, relates to industrial relations and industrial harmony. It might be an appropriate time to deal with the dispute at Mt. Isa, but it would be impossible for me to cover that subject in a few minutes. Again I say that the Government has failed in the field of industrial development because of its unfair and harsh industrial legislation. The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act was completely emasculated by this Government in many ways and certain time-honoured principles were removed. It can be said truthfully that, because of the change in that Act, there is more widespread industrial unrest in the State than there has ever been before. It is not without significance that the present Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act was conceived and framed by Mr. Peter Connolly, Q.C., a former member of this Assembly and a very skilled lawyer, who is now appearing for Mount Isa Mines Limited and asking the court to implement the provisions that he wrote into the Act and directed the Government to apply.

My final point relates to restrictive trade practices. If we are to encourage further industrial development in Queensland, we must take some action to curtail restrictive trade practices. Apparently it is still proposed by the Federal Government to introduce legislation to safeguard Australian industry in this regard. I hope it is effective legislation. From all accounts, the measures proposed by Sir Garfield Barwick were somewhat desirable. Sir Garfield Barwick himself, in an address to one of the last law conventions prior to his elevation, or at least his removal, to the High Court bench, said that for Commonwealth industrial legislation controlling restrictive trade practices to be effective there must be complementary State legislation. These were his words—

“My audience, however, will have noticed that in my Parliamentary statement I indicated that complementary legislation by at least some of the States was contemplated.”

So far as I know, there is none contemplated by this State. There should be.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (12.6 p.m.): First of all, as far as I possibly can, I want to congratulate the Minister for mentioning, on the introduction of his Estimates, something that should have been very apparent and obvious to all, namely, that you just cannot get industry to a State or to any particular part of a State simply by indulging in generalities. That point was very well made by Dr. Summerville, Queensland's Agent-General in England, in his report to this Parliament with regard to efforts that are being made in Great Britain to bring industries out to Queensland. He said that industrialists are not interested in generalities. They want facts and figures with regard to the sources of supply, manufacture, facilities, and all the other things that interest them in their desire to invest in, or in their investigations with regard to, a particular industry.

Mr. Coburn: That is what I did in advocating iron and steel works for Bowen.

Mr. AIKENS: That is so. Those people are not interested in generalities. I want to say—and I know this is causing the people of North Queensland considerable concern—that in the last 12 months or two years it would appear that Central Queensland is beginning to boom industrially and from the point of view of development, whereas North Queensland seems to be marking time.

Those of us who live in the North and who are interested in the development of the North have been assured that this is primarily because the Government is antagonistic to the People the North Committee who, to be quite candid, have conducted a destructive campaign of carping criticism of Governments, both State and Federal. They have never put forward one sound, sensible, constructive proposal, either to this Government or to anybody else. On the contrary, they have virulently attacked the Government in a carping, destructive manner. We have been assured that the stagnation that is occurring in the development of North Queensland is caused primarily by the Government's antagonism and antipathy to the People the North Committee and their carping, destructive attitude and approach.

I should like the Minister to deal with that point because it is giving us in the North some concern when we read that Central Queensland can get anything it wants from this Government and the Federal Government. Huge industries are being established in Central Queensland. The alumina plant, for instance, should have gone to North Queensland and been established in Bowen if all were given their rights, but everyone knows that the Government, at the present time at any rate, is concerned only with the development of Central Queensland as against North Queensland. Naturally, of course, the Government gives No. 1 priority to the south-eastern corner of the State. Central Queensland is getting what is left over and North

Queensland, for the last couple of years, has got nothing. I think the Minister should clear that point up.

There is another very serious matter that affects the establishment of industry in North Queensland and I want to make this considered statement: any industry that is established in North Queensland, or any industry that proposes to establish itself in North Queensland, can rest assured that this Government will do all in its power to strangle it.

Mr. Windsor: I don't believe that.

Mr. AIKENS: The hon. member for Ithaca does not believe it. I am glad that he made that interjection because he is in exactly the same line of business, in his private and business capacity, as a firm I intend to mention.

I hope that time will permit me to deal with the greatest obstacle that stands in the way of the development of North Queensland, or, for that matter, the development of Central Queensland. The greatest single obstacle that stands in the way of our development is the State Stores Board and the policy of this Government—it is exactly the same as that of the previous Government—to load the dice for the supply of all Government goods against northern manufacturers and northern suppliers. The dice are so heavily loaded that anyone who establishes industry in North Queensland knows that he has to be something right out of the box in order to get even a moderate share of the Government's trade and the Government's business.

I will deal with a particular case and again make some reference to the hon. member for Ithaca, who is in exactly the same type of business as these people. I propose to read a letter I received from this firm recently—Brambles Engineering (N.Q.) Pty. Ltd. It will be remembered that I asked the Minister for Works a question about certain steel portal frames that had been used on the Ross River High School and the Pimlico High School. The Minister blandly told the House, and the world at large, that these frames were purchased in Brisbane and sent at the taxpayers' expense all the way to North Queensland to be used in these two northern schools. I asked him a further question as to whether the tenders for these portal frames and other fabricated steel work were advertised in any other media than the southern Press. He just as blandly said he thought they were advertised sufficiently well. I sent this all on to the manager of Brambles Engineering, Mr. Dobson, who, like the manager of any other North Queensland industry, is deeply concerned about the way the Government is loading the dice against established North Queensland industries, and will load the dice, of course, against any industry that proposes to go there. Mr. Dobson wrote to me on 24 September. I sent him the Minister's reply but I did not elaborate on it. I cut it out of Votes and Proceedings. I sent it to him as it was printed by the Government

Printer. I asked him for any comments he would care to make on it. I will not read all the letter but it is here and available for anyone who wants to read it. I will read the relevant portion, as follows:—

“Commenting on the answers provided by the Minister for Works I feel confident that tenders were not invited in North Queensland papers for these two particular jobs. I am also under the impression that during the last 12/18 months a large contract may have been let by the Department of Works in the Brisbane area to cover Queensland school portal frame requirements for a period.

“Naturally under these circumstances, even though public tenders may be called, North Queensland Companies would be eliminated as the majority of the requirements would be for the Brisbane area, and on this basis the freight from Townsville to Brisbane would make us uncompetitive.

“Frankly if the correct consideration had been given by the Department, tenders should have been called in North Queensland for the supply of local requirements.

“When all said and done the total cost of the two North Queensland schools' portal frames was £4,396, and this to my way of thinking is a fair size steel fabrication contract in North Queensland, as on a general average projects in the North, as you know, are usually somewhat smaller than those in the South.

“We are definitely competitive with Southern companies and just as a matter of interest we have recently quoted the lowest price for a fair size structural steel job in Gladstone in opposition to Brisbane companies.”

There is a firm that can quote in competition with Brisbane companies—probably including the company of the hon. member for Ithaca—for a big steel job in Gladstone, which, of course, is being let by a private instrumentality. But it is not given the opportunity to quote in competition for work being done by this Government and materials bought by the State Stores Board and by the Department of Works.

If that is not a damning indictment of Government's strangulation policy as applied to industry in North Queensland, I do not know what is. It is in this letter from the manager of Brambles Engineering (N.Q.) Pty. Ltd. I can tell the world, and of course, Mr. Dobson, the manager of Brambles Engineering, whom I will send a cutting from my speech. Tenders called for jobs in North Queensland are never advertised in North Queensland. Even big earth moving contracts in North Queensland, big fencing contracts, or any big job at all done by the Government in North Queensland is never advertised in North Queensland papers. These jobs are never advertised through any advertising media in the North.

I can remember that on one occasion I wrote to the Premier on this subject and criticised his Government for not advertising northern jobs in North Queensland papers and through other North Queensland media of advertising. He wrote back and said that the policy of the Government was to put its advertising in "The Courier-Mail", which has a State-wide circulation. Any North Queenslander who wants to tender, even for a little earth-moving job in his own area, has to go to the local newspaperman every morning and buy a copy of "The Courier-Mail". If he does not, he does not know that these Government jobs are open and that tenders and quotes are being sought for them. I have not the slightest doubt that the same system operates in the Central Queensland area.

Mr. O'Donnell: It gives the Brisbane newspapers a circulation advantage over the local papers as well.

Mr. AIKENS: Of course it does. That is true. I thought the Premier would have had an article put in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin". I ask the Premier in all fairness, if the Government is interested in the development of North Queensland, at least to advertise local jobs in the local Press.

I am very glad that the Minister for Primary Industries is in the Chamber because a particular job I pinpointed on that occasion, which I took up with the Premier, was one in the Hinchinbrook area. There is a little local paper circulating in the Hinchinbrook area called the "Herbert River Times", or "Thunderer"—

Mr. Row: It is "The Herbert River Express." Give it its right name.

Mr. AIKENS: "The Townsville Bulletin" circulates in the Hinchinbrook area and I suggest to the Premier that if there is an earth-moving job or any other Government contract in the Hinchinbrook area, tenders be called for it in the Ingham paper and the Townsville paper in addition to "The Courier-Mail". Of course, the Premier wrote to me and said he would see what he could do about the matter. I have no doubt that the Premier was quite honest in telling me that he was going to see what he could do about it, but there has been no alteration; we cannot get past the bureaucrats here in Brisbane, or the State Stores Board. They would get an intimation from the Premier that he thought they should advertise in the northern papers, and, to use a vulgar term if I may, they would probably wipe some part of their anatomy with the Premier's letter of request.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order!

Mr. AIKENS: After the first series of questions I asked about Brambles Engineering, I asked a further question of the Minister for Works, and he was good enough

to answer it on 22 October. In his answer he admitted that the dice are loaded against the North Queensland manufacturer and the North Queensland supplier. I took the answer from the Votes and Proceedings on the table so that there would be no error. This is what he said—

"Structural steel-work other than portal frames for schools is usually obtained on a supply and erect basis. Portal frames are obtained for State-wide usage and delivery to store in Brisbane is specified. Northern firms should quote for delivery as specified."

These portal frames and other prefabricated steel work, and anything else that the Government requires in all its instrumentalities throughout the vast area of this State are advertised in "The Courier-Mail" and I assume, because there appears to be no other mode of advertising favoured by the Government, that when these things are advertised, tenderers, or those submitting a quote or an offer of contract, must deliver the goods here in Brisbane. Even if they are in North Queensland and tender to supply prefabricated steel for North Queensland, they must quote on the basis of delivery in Brisbane. That gives some indication of how the dice are loaded against North Queensland firms.

The second part of the answer commences—

"When materials required for Northern schools are obtained from Southern Queensland firms the freight to the job sites is borne by the Department."

There is an admission by the Minister for Works. Recently, £4,000 worth of prefabricated steel portal frames were required for the Ross River High School and the Pimlico High School. Tenders were called, if they were called, in "The Courier-Mail" only. Brambles and other North Queensland firms who wanted to tender for the supply of those portal frames had to tender "Price delivered at Brisbane." They had to deliver the portal frames here, and if their tender had been accepted they would have had then to pay the freight on those portal frames from Townsville to Brisbane, because those portal frames, according to the Minister, were for State-wide use. After the freight all the way from Townsville to Brisbane had been paid to get the portal frames here, delivered in store in competition with Brisbane firms, the Department of Works or the State Stores Board would discover that many of those portal frames were required back in North Queensland, maybe even as far away as the area represented by the hon. member for Tablelands. Then the department would pay the freight all the way back from Brisbane to North Queensland in order to get the portal frames to where they were required.

All the Brisbane firms—including, I have not the slightest doubt, that of the hon. member for Ithaca, who was interested in it—merely tender for this steel work—

Mr. WINDSOR: I rise to a point of order! I inform the hon. member that Windsors do not do structural steel work.

Mr. AIKENS: I accept that explanation. I know that they do excellent steel work in other regards. I have been to the hon. member's factory, and I commend him. In view of the fact that he started to pick at me as soon as I began speaking, I naturally assumed he had a financial interest in what I was about to say. If the hon. member for Ithaca does not tender for these things, in all common sense he should have kept out of the debate and should not have tried to buy a fight in the early part of my speech.

The southern firms, of course, knowing they only have to supply at the store, can afford to quote a cut-rate price or bed-rock price, and they deliver to the store. Then, when the Department of Works requires all these portal frames or other prefabricated steel in North Queensland and other far distant parts of the State, it pays the freight on all those frames and all that steel work and all other types of material that go from Brisbane to the North, to the West, and to the central area.

How can northern firms possibly compete when that policy is adopted? It is the same policy as was put into operation by the previous Government. When there is talk about Socialism and the need to steer clear of Trades Hall influence and that sort of thing, this Government is doing exactly what it condemned the Labour Government for doing. I am not going to mention again the brilliant speech made in this Chamber on one occasion by the Treasurer, when he was a member of the Opposition, with regard to a refrigerator that was sent by the State Stores Board from Brisbane to Dalbeg, near Ayr, and what occurred.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order!

Mr. AIKENS: The Treasurer, in Opposition at that time, condemned it. He said that it was a rotten and putrid thing—if he used those words. He did not use those exact words, but words that were similar. He said, "If ever we become the Government we will see that things required in the North are bought in the North." Like hell they do! This Government is doing exactly the same as the Labour Government did.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order! I have given the hon. member a great deal of latitude in this debate. Most of his criticism so far has been of the Department of Works. I ask him to deal with matters concerning the Department of Industrial Development.

Mr. AIKENS: I am rather amazed at your ruling, Mr. Hodges. Of course, I have to abide by it. I am proving my point, I

think, to the satisfaction of everyone else who is listening. How can there be industrial development in North Queensland if the Government itself will not patronise northern industries? There is the point. Not only will the Government not patronise northern industry; it has set out to follow the line of the Labour Government by deliberately strangling it. I think I made that point when the Chairman of Committees was in the chair, and you, Mr. Hodges, may not have heard it.

When speaking of the establishment of industries, the private investor is told by the Government, "Go north, young man," or, "Go north, old man," or "Go north, middle-aged man, and establish your industry there. If you are mug enough to do that, we will do all we can to keep Government trade away from you. We won't give you any Government trade. You can scratch what you can from private enterprise, but woe betide you if you look for Government trade."

I think I have a passing knowledge of the English language and what words mean. I cannot, however, understand what the Minister for Works and Housing meant when he said in the final part of his reply to my question—

"Landed costs of materials are borne by the Department whether supplied by a Southern Queensland firm or a Northern firm."

What does he mean by that? After having told me that northern firms must tender for delivery at the Brisbane store or depot, what is meant by the last part of his answer? Does he mean that there is another little perk that we know nothing about given by the Government to Brisbane firms?

I shall now deal with a matter to which I have referred previously, and which I think has also been mentioned by the hon. member for Townsville North. I refer to a paint manufacturing firm that established itself in North Queensland. First of all it was known as the Tip Top Paint Company; it is now the Walpamur Co. (N.Q.) Pty. Ltd. One has only to go to North Queensland to get some idea of the struggle that this company has to sell paint to the Government for North Queensland jobs. I shall tell hon. members what happens.

The Government decides that, say, 5,000 gallons of paint are needed for work in the North in the year 1964-65. Tenders are called for that paint delivered at the Brisbane store. The Walpamur company must tender on that basis, which means that to its price must be added freight on 5,000 gallons of paint from Townsville to Brisbane. Its price might then be 1d. a gallon higher than that quoted by a southern firm.

The State Stores Board and the Government will then say, "We have to buy Bink's paint because they have quoted a price 1d.

a gallon less than that quoted by Walpamur at Townsville." They then go to all the trouble and expense of invoicing Bink's paint into their store, invoicing it out to the Railway Department, and sending it all the way to Townsville. Everyone knows how high handling costs are these days. At Townsville the paint has to be invoiced into the depot there, and then delivered from the store to the job. Although I am referring to the position at Townsville, the same thing applies in the whole of North Queensland and all other country areas.

The Walpamur company will quote a price for paint delivered on the job in quantities required by the job. For instance, when the school at Railway Estate is being painted, as I have heard from the Minister that it is going to be, if the painters require only four gallons a day, that amount will be delivered to the job each day. The State Stores Board, of course, will say, "We cannot do this. Bink's paint costs 1d. less in the store at Brisbane, and we would have the Auditor-General on us like a ton of bricks if we accepted a tender at a price higher than that for Bink's paint."

Walpamur paint, of course, would cost less. I have had it calculated that it costs up to 7s. a gallon to receive paint into the store at Brisbane, move it from the store to rail, transport it to Townsville, offload it from the railway into the store at Townsville, and then deliver it to the job. Handling it costs the Government 7s. a gallon, yet if a northern manufacturer quotes a lousy 1d. a gallon more than a southern firm, he does not get the contract. Here, then, is an opportunity for the Minister for Industrial Development, a former Minister for Justice, to dispense justice. All I want from him is the justice for North Queensland industries that we have not been getting in the seven years since the Government came to office, and which we do not look like getting in the next seven years. Of course, the position would not be altered if we simply changed the Country-Liberal Government for a Labour Government, because Labour Governments were just as bad in their time.

(Time expired.)

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Industrial Development) (12.31 p.m.): I think it might be convenient if I take this opportunity of clearing up one or two of the points made by the last two speakers. In doing so, I should like to emphasise that the Estimates under consideration are those for the Department of Industrial Development, which include a section dealing with companies and commercial Acts and the separate Department of Electricity Supply. It has become the practice in this Chamber to show a good deal for forbearance and to give a considerable degree of latitude in debate, particularly to speakers from the Opposition benches. But I want to make it clear that, even though a particular speaker may devote almost the whole of his time to

discussing matters that come within the administration of the Premier's Department, the Department of Works, and the Department of Education, it does not mean that I am going to disturb the orderly procedure of the Committee by continuing the discussion of matters that do not come within the administrative responsibility of my department.

Mr. Aikens: As they say in Toowong, you are going to run up a funkhole.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MUNRO: In the light of the interjection, perhaps it might be as well for me to proceed to make some comments on the contribution of the hon. member for Townsville South and to reply to those matters which, either directly or indirectly, do concern the administration of the Department of Industrial Development.

The hon. member made some rather wild general statements. He suggested that the Government is loading the dice against North Queensland and is strangling industry in North Queensland. He suggested that our policies have caused stagnation in North Queensland. I am rather surprised that a man with the intelligence of the hon. member for Townsville South should adopt that line of attack. Sometimes one can say things in this Chamber that are untrue and get away with them because they are things that people do not know about; but how absurd it is for a person from North Queensland to come into this Chamber and say that industry in North Queensland is being strangled or that there is stagnation there. The plain fact is that North Queensland is enjoying a degree of prosperity that is quite unprecedented. Although the Government does not claim full credit for that—I must concede that some favourable influences have been at work outside the scope of the activities of the Government—we do say that the present unprecedented prosperity in North Queensland has come about very largely as a result of the efforts of the Government.

Mr. Aikens: It is happening in spite of you.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Townsville South has had an opportunity to speak.

Mr. MUNRO: Thank you, Mr. Hooper. I am always grateful for interjections that help to illustrate the point. The hon. member for Townsville South talked about stagnation in North Queensland, and when I pointed out what is public knowledge—that in North Queensland there is now a state of unprecedented prosperity—he more or less conceded the point. He changed his ground and said, in effect, that the state of unprecedented prosperity in North Queensland has come about despite the actions of the Government. If that is so, the hon. member for Townsville South should crave your indulgence, Mr. Hooper, and ask permission to withdraw about 85 per cent. of his speech, because he

spent most of the time talking about this state of stagnation. As I say, that just does not exist.

I do not want to take up too much time on this point. We have only to keep in mind the tremendous development of Mount Isa, the rebuilding of the Townsville-Mount Isa railway at great cost, the great development of the bauxite deposits at Weipa, the building of the beef-cattle roads, the success of the tobacco industry and the wonderful prosperity of the sugar industry in North Queensland to know how completely absurd it is to talk about stagnation in the North. Of course, as the hon. member knows, the broad policies of our Government are strongly in support of doing everything that we can to develop North Queensland, but not to the exclusion of other areas. We want to develop Central and Western Queensland as well, and by and large we are doing that reasonably successfully.

The hon. member for South Brisbane dealt with a somewhat similar matter but in more general terms. He charged the Government with not being successful in its policy of decentralisation.

Mr. Bennett: I quoted figures from your report.

Mr. MUNRO: Probably the hon. member for South Brisbane may not have been in the Chamber on Thursday last when I made a very full reply to suggestions that the Government had not been successful in the implementation of its policy of decentralisation. It would not be fair to other hon. members to go over all that again but I may point out that I did say that the problem in relation to decentralisation at the present time is not so much a matter of taking actions that are effective in causing decentralisation as one of resisting the world-wide trend towards centralisation. Without going over the matter in detail again, I merely mention that in speaking on that subject on Thursday last I pointed out that, in resisting the trend towards centralisation, Queensland has been more successful than any other State in Australia and more successful than most countries in the world.

Mr. Bennett: You have no figures to support that claim, have you?

Mr. MUNRO: I suggest to the hon. member for South Brisbane that he have a look at a few of the simple population statistics of the capital cities and provincial cities. Every seventh-grade schoolboy knows that of the mainland States of Australia Queensland is the only one with less than 50 per cent. of its population in the capital city.

Mr. Aikens: Will you tell us why the population of Brisbane is increasing faster than that of any other city in the State?

Mr. MUNRO: That is a world-wide trend. It is happening in most countries in the world and is a result of a trend towards large-scale industry.

Mr. Aikens: I thought you were going to decentralise industry.

Mr. MUNRO: I repeat what I said, namely, that we are more successful in this State in resisting the trend towards centralisation than they have been anywhere else in Australia.

Mr. Aikens: Is that why you strangle firms like Brambles?

Mr. MUNRO: I wish the hon. member for Townsville South would not adopt the attitude of holding up a piece of paper and waving it. Let him listen to the argument I am putting forward.

Notwithstanding this Government's policy of decentralisation, with mechanisation and automation there are many industries that can be conducted on an economic basis only in large centres of population. That is a problem not only in relation to decentralisation in Queensland; as I have pointed out on other occasions, it is one of the problems in bringing industries to our State. We are at a disadvantage compared with Sydney and Melbourne. Even Sydney and Melbourne are at a great disadvantage compared with London, Detroit and other large overseas centres.

Mr. Aikens: But you are going to ensure that Brisbane is the only large centre of population in Queensland.

Mr. MUNRO: I think I have devoted quite sufficient time—possibly too much—to the hon. member for Townsville South.

Although he had only a short time available this morning, the hon. member for South Brisbane raised one or two matters of very considerable interest. Here again I would class them as being only indirectly associated with the responsibility of my department. However, as they are indirectly associated with it let me say that I take a very keen and active interest in them. The first point the hon. member for South Brisbane mentioned—although he did not put it this way, or did not use these terms—was the importance of good employer-employee relations. I agree that that is a tremendously important point if we are to successfully promote industrial development in our State and if we are to provide good government that is fair and just to all within the State. I do not want to go into any detail; I merely point out that what, more than anything else, is likely to destroy good employer-employee relations and retard the development of this State is disregard of the laws of this State. At the present time by world standards we have a very good system of industrial conciliation and arbitration. I would say that the people who are most responsible for difficulties in attaining and maintaining good employer-employee relations are those who attempt to flout the law of the State, or who attempt to flout decisions of tribunals functioning in accordance with the law of the State.

The hon. member for South Brisbane raised another rather interesting point when he referred to the proposed Commonwealth legislation to deal with restrictive trade practices. He quite rightly recognises that any law to deal with this matter must be basically a Commonwealth law. I am very familiar with this problem, of course, because I gave quite a lot of attention to it when I was Minister for Justice and took part in quite a number of discussions on it on an interstate basis. The reason that no one State can effectively deal with this problem—particularly one of the smaller States in the industrial sense—is that the restrictive trade practices which are harmful almost invariably are of either an interstate or Australia-wide character. The Commonwealth Government presently has this problem under consideration and it is proposed to introduce legislation.

The hon. member for South Brisbane said that he had not heard any statement that Queensland would be prepared to introduce complementary legislation. When I was Minister for Justice I made it very clear when speaking on behalf of the Government, and I make it clear again, that it is the desire of the Queensland Government, if and when the Commonwealth Government brings in legislation to deal with the problems of restrictive trade practices that are harmful to the community, to examine that legislation very closely. We will study the methods the Commonwealth Government proposes to use, and if the legislation can be regarded as good legislation in this State I feel sure that we will do legislatively anything that is required to complement the Commonwealth legislation.

Just before the conclusion of the allotted time on Thursday last, the hon. member for South Brisbane made one other point when I think he may not have chosen his words quite as carefully as he should have. He referred to my overseas visit and said, "A close perusal of the report prepared after his trip overseas shows that the Minister did not appear to achieve very much." I do not really think he intended to refer to a "close perusal" of the report which I submitted to Cabinet after my return from my overseas trip. I give him the benefit of the doubt. I suggest that if the hon. member for South Brisbane saw that report he would find it very interesting indeed, and he would have a completely different opinion. He would also have a completely different opinion if he had an opportunity to peruse and examine the 134 interim reports prepared either by me or by the Director of Technical Services, who was with me during part of the time, which we have submitted to the department for consideration and which will form the basis of subsequent action on a number of matters.

Mr. Bennett: Don't you think you should have printed the report that you made to Cabinet?

Mr. MUNRO: No, I do not think so at all. My report contains the names of quite a number of industrial organisations. It also

mentions people's names. To a much greater extent the same comment applies to the interim reports, nearly all of which relate to some particular organisation. Those are not matters that should be published in the Press. The hon. member for South Brisbane is a little rash in arriving at his conclusions. I am sure he would not ask a court to arrive at a conclusion in that way on matters that it has not seen.

Mr. Bennett: No. In court I would call for the document to be produced in evidence.

Mr. MUNRO: The hon. member would be entitled to question in court, but even in court there is still a question as to whether a document will be produced because there is such a matter as privilege in relation to certain types of documents that are of a confidential nature.

My final point is very important. It concerns a matter that arose during the course of the debate on Thursday last. I am referring to it again because I consider it to be extremely important. Statements on it that are not very well informed have been made in the Press and they convey the wrong impression. For that reason I propose to make some further remarks about what are colloquially called "V.P.I." poles. This concerns the safety of workers. I am sure that hon. members will forgive me if I use the short term "V.P.I." poles during the remainder of my remarks.

The use of vacuum-pressure-impregnated poles, which are generally referred to as V.P.I. poles, is a relatively new development in Queensland, but treated poles are used elsewhere in Australia and overseas. The treatment enables to be used as poles timber which otherwise could not be used for this purpose. With a growing shortage of higher-class timber poles the treatment of poles is therefore making a valuable contribution to the best use of Queensland's timber resources. However, it has been found that the preservative used has the effect of making the pole conduct electricity, at least while it is newly treated. In this regard it is in much the same category as a green pole which has not dried out.

In view of this, any risk likely to arise in carrying out work on V.P.I. poles (which could arise in the event of an insulator breaking down at the top of a pole) has been recognised, and in October, 1963, the State Electricity Commission requested all electric authorities to treat these poles in the same manner as steel poles, and to use the same precautions in working on them as must be used on steel poles.

Mr. Sherrington: It is also true that that information was not conveyed to the employees of those authorities.

Mr. MUNRO: The employees of those authorities are not running the affairs of those authorities.

Mr. Sherrington: Their lives are at stake, and they should be informed.

Mr. MUNRO: I might say that some of employees of those authorities, or some of the organisations representing them, have made many wild statements in the Press without making any inquiry of me as to the true position. I do not want to add fuel to the fire, but the hon. member for Salisbury knows that, quite unjustly, he accused me of negligence in this matter when there was no cause for such an accusation. I suggest that the hon. member for Salisbury would be wise if he did not interject. I want to make a calm and reasoned statement. I do not want to be tempted to indulge in personalities.

A series of tests has been undertaken with a view to determining over a period the characteristics of V.P.I. poles and these are still proceeding. Pending the outcome of these tests, and also the meeting of representatives of the electrical industry on safety which has been called for Tuesday, 3 November, the State Electricity Commission has now requested electric authorities to introduce some additional precautions where these are not already being taken. They include arrangements for all V.P.I. poles to be tested for conductivity prior to work being carried out on them, and linesmen will not be permitted or required to work on them unless the results of the tests are satisfactory.

Mr. Houston: I suggest that the result of that test be made known to linesmen so that they also know.

Mr. MUNRO: I am now making a public statement on this subject. Hon. members will realise that the question of making detailed information available to employees in particular areas is a matter for the authorities themselves.

In addition, care is to be taken to test electrically all new extra-high-voltage insulators which are to be attached to wooden poles, and also to test similarly, prior to their use, all extra-high-voltage insulators returned from dismantled lines or which, due to their time in store or for any other good reason, may be suspect.

Arrangements have also been made for electric authorities to refrain from attaching extra-high-voltage insulators direct to V.P.I. poles unless additional insulation to the satisfaction of the State Electricity Commission is provided at the point of attachment. These measures have been taken to ensure a maximum degree of safety pending the outcome of tests and of deliberations within the electrical industry on the whole matter.

Mr. Sherrington: Isn't that exactly what I have been asking for?

Mr. MUNRO: It is, to some extent.

Mr. Sherrington: Why don't you be truthful and admit it?

Mr. MUNRO: What I am stating is largely what has been in operation for a considerable time, particularly since October 1963.

Mr. Sherrington: It has not been in operation, and you know it.

Mr. MUNRO: It is quite correct that these clarifications that I am now making are very much along the lines of those that have been suggested.

Mr. Sherrington: Why don't you be truthful and say they are exactly the same?

Mr. MUNRO: If the hon. member for Salisbury is prepared to say that the explanation that I am now making covers exactly what he regards as desirable, I am more than happy to know that that is the position.

The Commission has also further directed the attention of electric authorities to the necessity for always providing and retaining a ladder against each pole, and a safety box at the foot of each pole while a linesman is working aloft.

Mr. Sherrington: Are you prepared to incorporate that in the regulations?

Mr. MUNRO: I think I have explained that we are looking very closely at the regulations and at other suggestions made to obtain the greatest possible measure of uniformity in the regulations for application throughout the State.

The necessity of providing safety equipment and seeing that it is used has also again been emphasised. It is of some interest to note that information from the Hydro-electric Commission of Tasmania, where similarly-treated poles have been widely used, indicates that, although there are some 16,000 poles in service, there are no known instances of electric shock due to leakage currents through impregnated poles in that State. No additional precautions are laid down for working on impregnated poles, and it is not normal practice in Tasmania to increase the insulation value of a high-tension line to reduce the possibility of high-tension leakage in the event of the failure of one element. I mention these particulars concerning Tasmania because in that State there has been fairly lengthy experience with the use of these poles.

Mr. Houston: You must also realise that different timber is used in Tasmania and that working conditions—concerning workmen sweating, for instance—are completely different.

Mr. MUNRO: That is so. I recognise that and know that it is also recognised by the expert advisers who are giving this matter consideration in Queensland at present.

Perhaps I can sum up by saying that, as far as Queensland is concerned, the industry is taking special precautions and these will continue till the whole question has been satisfactorily settled.

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

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (2.15 p.m.): In speaking to the Estimates for the Department of Industrial Development, I should like to refer first to the closing remarks of the Minister, in which he pointed out that there is a pattern of centralisation throughout the world. I wondered whether the Government, and the Minister in particular, was going to use that idea as an excuse for not continuing the policy of decentralisation. I hope that the Minister has no idea of hiding behind the centralisation taking place in other countries to such an extent that the Government's so-called decentralisation policy will suffer.

In some instances it is difficult to decide where the sphere of influence of the Department of Primary Industries ends and where that of the Department of Industrial Development begins. I find it particularly difficult because the electorate that I represent is mainly rural and produces primary products and is far distant from Brisbane. I am not going to use the term "North Queensland" in a general way; I am going to refer to the Tablelands area to pinpoint a part of the State that has been starved of industrial development for many years and is still being neglected by the present Government.

The very life-blood of industrial development is power, and a large proportion of the power used in North Queensland is generated at the two hydro-electric stations, one at Tully Falls and the other at the Barron Falls, in my electorate. It seems strange that power produced in the Tablelands electorate should have to travel so many miles before it is used to establish and continue industrial development in other areas. I know that it must be used in this way, but I stress that areas very close to the source of power are being starved of development. It is similar in some ways to producing bananas in a certain area, sending them to Melbourne, and then finding that they can be bought more cheaply in Melbourne than on the farm on which they were grown. That is often held up as an example of a ridiculous state of affairs, and I say that the state of affairs in my electorate in relation to power is equally ridiculous. The only two major industries in my area that use electric current generated by these power stations are the two tin dredges in the Mt. Garnet area. For many years the one owned by Tableland Tin Dredging N.L. was the only one there. Originally they generated their own power, then they used power from their own coal-fired power house, using coal from the Mt. Mulligan mine, and they are now using power from the Tully Falls power station.

This type of revolution will continue, and it will not increase the population of the area that I represent. That is why I opened my remarks by saying that the Minister appeared to be endeavouring to find an excuse for the Government's failure to implement its decentralisation policy in the

fact that experience throughout the world showed that population was moving towards more centralisation.

When particular projects are in hand small periods of boom occur but later on the affected areas return to normal, the population dwindles, the few small shops that were opened while the workers were there close, and life returns to what it was prior to the project being commenced. When one considers the number of occasions on which this has occurred one cannot help but wonder what planning is being done for the further development of the supply of electricity in the North. I know that plans have been in hand for some considerable time for a Herbert River hydro-electricity scheme and I ask the Minister to give it very earnest consideration. When it is instituted I earnestly hope that some of the power generated will be used by secondary industry or some other type of industry that will have been attracted to the area. I use the word "attracted" deliberately, because the Government has it within its power in various ways, to actually attract industry to the North, to mention but a few by way of grant, by way of subsidy, or by the provision of essential amenities. In Brisbane, amenities such as roads, water supply, electricity and shipping facilities are all provided, and the way is thus made easy for industry to be established and to remain there.

I hope that the Herbert River scheme, which must eventually be undertaken, is hastened, and that some of the power that is thus produced will be channelled into industries in the area. Secondary industries are urgently required in that part of the State. I am not suggesting that one part of the State should be regarded as more important than another, but hon. members have frequently heard it said that we must populate the North or lose it. There is no better way of populating it than to provide the people living there, and their children, with something to do. I make an especially strong plea on behalf of the children, because at the present time 80 per cent. of the children who receive their secondary education in the Tablelands electorate have to go anything from 300 to 1,000 miles from the electorate to obtain suitable employment. As a result, the population of that area is decreasing, a state of affairs that could be overcome by the establishment of some worth-while secondary industries in the area.

However, coupled with the establishment of such industries must be the consideration of ways and means of disposing of their products. One of the most essential needs of industry, whether it be primary or secondary, is a suitable market for its products. Some time ago the Minister for Primary Industries promised to meet a deputation to consider the matter of markets for primary products in my area. Most of the produce from Tablelands consists of vegetables, fruit and other rural products which cannot be sent long distances to

market. The only way in which it can be successfully taken to distant markets is to can it, and that brings me to my main point. It is necessary to process these commodities to enable them to be stored and to reach overseas markets.

The growing of vegetables on the Tablelands could well prove the saviour of that area. The Premier will know the facts placed before him in 1963, when he met a deputation in the area, after which he set up a committee to investigate the position. The deputation told him that they wanted some alternative crop. They mentioned sugar, and I mention it here again today. Vegetables are being grown there in quantity at the present time, but all too often they are ploughed back into the ground. That should never happen. The climate there will grow potatoes all the year round. Beans, peas, cabbages, cauliflower—indeed, all vegetables required—can be grown in that temperate climate, but they cannot be transported to the coast because of the hot, humid conditions. For the same reason they cannot be transported by ship to the islands. It is no use sending refrigerated cargoes to New Guinea or Malaysia only to find that as soon as the produce is taken out of refrigeration it deteriorates too rapidly to be of any value. Canning is the answer to the problem. That is one secondary industry that should be attracted to and assisted in the Tablelands area.

Without saying that the ginnery should be established in the Tablelands area, I do believe that we have the potential for the growing of cotton in the Gilbert River area. I have asked the Minister for Primary Industries several questions on this matter, but he has evaded the real issue. Cotton is brought all the way from the Ord River district to the ginnery in Rockhampton, many thousands of miles further than should be necessary. Excellent cotton is grown in North Queensland. There is no need for further expense in building dams because the river sands up there are loaded with water. It has been proved that cotton can be grown there, and the establishment of a ginnery in the Far North would be the making of that area for the growing of cotton. It would help to meet the cotton requirements of the Commonwealth. At present Australia produces only 20 per cent. of the cotton she requires. I draw the Minister's attention to the need for these two forms of industrial development—the establishment of a cannery to can fruit and vegetables, and the establishment of a cotton ginnery further north than Rockhampton.

In the Budget debate I referred to the Clausen shipping line. At that time I said that the Clausen shipping line, a Danish company, was used in preference to a well-known Queensland shipping line—John Burke Ltd. In "The North Queensland Register" of 3 October it was announced that the larger of the two Clausen shipping line's vessels, the "Clara Clausen", is expected to sail for

South America and will not be available in Australia until early next year. This is the shipping company that is getting a subsidy of £120,000 every three years.

I wonder whether the Minister for Industrial Development has considered the expenditure necessary to bring stock from these far-flung areas to the abattoirs. I understand that this is where the link lies with industrial development. A huge amount of money is spent on transporting stock but there is no guarantee of continuity of service. The shipping company can say, "There are richer fields in South America; we will be back some time next year." I do not think that is good enough. Some provision should be included in the agreement to ensure that the company does the job it is supposed to do.

The Clausen line has another ship, which is going to Manila. What will happen to our abattoirs? Will they be starved for cattle? Will they be dependent solely on rail transport, or will they have to depend upon the old method of droving stock overland? It seems that it is the same old picture again; certain industries will be starved because of inadequate planning and planning for the use of one branch of transport at the expense of the others. The Clausen line has been treated very liberally but it is treating us very shabbily.

The Minister and the hon. member for Townsville South both referred to freight charges. I honestly believe that freight is the biggest obstacle in the far distant parts of Queensland. When the Normanton school was built—it is quite a sizeable building—freight alone cost £18,000. The building of these amenities must receive assistance from the Government because they must not be second-class. They must be just as good as their counterparts in other parts of the State. A freight charge of £18,000 for one building is exorbitant. The private individual trying to compete in the far-flung parts of the State is a long way behind scratch. As one hon. member pointed out, when he produces the article he sometimes has to compete with people right on the spot who have no freight problems. Therefore, those in the far-distant parts of the State are at a decided disadvantage.

I come now to the prawn survey in the Gulf of Carpentaria. I notice that this has been played down a little. The hon. member for Sherwood gave us some facts concerning the industry which he read from some fishery journals but I am looking at it from a more practical point of view. These people have transported large quantities of equipment to the area in the hope that the prawning industry is a satisfactory venture and that they can continue in it for a long time. However, we have been unable to get any co-operation from the Treasurer; we have been unable to gain assistance for these people to make it worth while. I am not asking for a great deal of help from him. In his capacity as Treasurer he is also in charge of the Department of Harbours and Marine, yet he will not assist one place in

the Gulf. I hope the Minister for Industrial Development will stress to him the urgency and the necessity of assisting the prawning industry venture to make this a liveable area and to ensure that the prawners are not forced to stand out to sea at night because of the impossibility of finding moorings. Navigation lights are non-existent. One could go to any part of the Gulf coast and unless one was very fortunate one could run on a sandbank and be stuck there and pounded to pieces. The same circumstances exist right along the coast. If the Minister for Industrial Development would recognise the feasibility of the little things we could help these people greatly and make their lot much easier. I am sure he would try to get the Treasurer to assist if he knew what was required. It is the same old story of getting something away from Queen Street and the centralised areas along the coast in order to assist the people in the Outback. Anything that is done to assist will be worth while. I know it would be appreciated by those people, and that it is long overdue.

I conclude by saying that the three things required for that area are: a canning factory on the Atherton Tablelands, a cotton ginnyery somewhere along the northern coast, and assistance to the prawning industry.

(Time expired.)

Mr. RAMSDEN (Merthyr) (2.35 p.m.): The overall problem of industrial development in Queensland is one of great magnitude. This State occupying as it does an area of some 667,000 square miles, with some 3,236 miles of coastline, offers a challenge to any department purporting to bring about industrial development. From the border of New South Wales to the most northern point of the State is some 1,300 miles. The greatest width of the State from east to west is 900 miles. That means that 22½ per cent. of the area of the Australian continent is within the State of Queensland, but we have only one-seventh of the Commonwealth's population inside our boundaries. When the last census was taken, in 1961, Queensland's population was 1,500,000, and the Commonwealth population was 10,500,000. So we have nearly one-quarter of the Commonwealth in area, with only one-seventh of the population to develop it. This State must have industrial development if the raw materials of the richest mineral State in the Commonwealth are to assume their rightful place in the economic life of the nation.

Some concept of the size of Queensland is gained when we realise that from Brisbane to Townsville is approximately as far as from Brisbane to the Victoria border, and that from the Queensland-New South Wales border to the Torres Strait Islands is roughly the same distance as from Brisbane to Hobart or from Brisbane to Milford Sound, in the South Island of New Zealand. It is therefore a task to fire the imagination—the industrial development of Queensland under circumstances such as this.

Mr. Sherrington: Grade V Social Studies.

Mr. RAMSDEN: I am glad that the hon. member realises which class he is in. I deliberately worded it so that he could understand it.

I congratulate the Government on its decision to set up the Ministry of Industrial Development. No doubt many of us in the last year had some slight criticism to make of various aspects of the new department. Of course, one does not expect a brand-new department to be perfect in all aspects right from the word go. Experience in the field of government in every democratic country in the world shows that as time passes new angles and new facets are incorporated into the existing order of things so that the needs of the changing world can be fulfilled. I have no doubt that as time goes by the Department of Industrial Development will expand its interests and influence to meet whatever industrial changes the future of this great State demands. I have great confidence that the present Government, which had the foresight to establish such a department, will have the necessary understanding to meet these challenges as they arise.

May I once again suggest to the Minister, and to the Government, that some consideration be given to a proposal which I made in my Address-in-Reply speech in 1960. I commend that speech not only to the Government as a matter of policy but also to Sir David Muir and his administrative staff to see whether any suggestion to assist in industrial and State development might not now have much more to commend it with the spread of industrial potential to other parts of the State. Let me say once again that in 1947 the Government committee of the Bureau of Industry developed a plan for the regional development of Queensland on the basis of subdividing the State into some 25 divisions. However, the Labour Government of the day did not see fit to proceed with the proposal, and it lapsed. I believe that had the Government of the day acted in accordance with that committee's idea, Queensland would have benefited industrially in subsequent years to a far greater extent than it did.

I again urge the Government and this department to study my adaptation of that developmental scheme as I propounded it in 1960. I do not intend to repeat what I said then. I do suggest, however, that a State Development Council, constituted as I urged in 1960, could meet, say, three times a year under the chairmanship of the Director of Industrial Development. Such a council could bring first-hand knowledge to the Minister, the Government, and the Department of Industrial Development in the matter of priorities—self-imposed and accepted priorities—for industrial development not only for the capital city of Brisbane and the provincial cities but also for the far-flung parts of the State. In other words, it would at the same time ensure that every part of the State would be properly considered, and

Queensland could look forward to a planned scheme of industrial development over the next decade. Such a scheme would give the necessary impetus to real decentralisation, and would surely encourage rural and industrial development in provincial regions away from the capital cities. The Zones Development Council would work under, and in close co-operation with, the Minister for Industrial Development. I make no apology for asking the Director and his staff to study what I had to say, which appears in "Hansard" of 15 September, 1960.

As I have on previous occasions spoken of the need to set aside and reserve the 10,000 to 12,000 acres of open land on both sides of the river east of Brett's wharf for future development of the industrial port of Brisbane, I should like again to reiterate my thoughts on that subject. I believe that such a move would ensure that in the next 10 years the lower reaches of the river would become the port of Brisbane and would be as important to the commercial and industrial life of Brisbane as is Fremantle to Perth. Here again I plead with the Minister for Industrial Development and his Director to study this area to ensure that Brisbane will not in future become harbour-locked, as is every other capital city in Australia. I repeat that visitors to Brisbane and industrialists from other States all envy Brisbane because it is the only capital city with sufficient open land round the port area that can be reserved for future planning and port development as the city develops.

Let me say again that the trade lines of Australia are changing fast. Brisbane used to be the back door to Australia. Fremantle, Sydney, and Melbourne were the ports of entry to Australia for the European trade from the Old World. Nowadays we have a host of new customers ready to trade with us if we seize the opportunity offering. The teeming millions of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Japan have empty stomachs which must, and can, be filled with Queensland grain and other Queensland products. With proper trade development and processes of education that are gradually changing the culinary habits of these people, Brisbane ceases to be the back door to Australia and becomes the front door for these teeming millions of potential customers. With proper planned development of the port of Brisbane, we can seize the opportunity presently being offered to build a future that will be the envy of every other capital city port of Australia.

I urge the Minister for Industrial Development to get his departmental officers and outside experts to study this very important matter of the planned development of the port of Brisbane. Truly this is above all a matter of more concern to the Department of Industrial Development than it will ever be to the Department of Harbours and Marine. The department should do everything in its power to develop the port, and I suggest to the Minister that the most effective way to do this is to excise the proposed port area from the Greater Brisbane area.

There can be no future for the port of Brisbane whilst it is merely the Cinderella area of the 385 square miles that constitute the city of Brisbane. As long as the port area is left to the devices of the Brisbane City Council (whatever its political persuasion) there will never be any incentive or money to develop the port. But if the Minister and his department can prevail upon the Government to set up an independent port authority for Brisbane, consisting of, say, a Government representative, a local-authority representative, a representative of shipping interests, a representative of the Chamber of Commerce, a representative of the Chamber of Manufactures, a representative of the stevedoring industry, and a representative—I will concede this to hon. members opposite—of the Waterside Workers' Federation, with the necessary statutory powers to make charges, raise loans, grant site approvals, to purchase services such as gas, light, water, sewerage—in fact, to do all things relating solely to the development of the port of Brisbane in the same way as a local authority does for its town or city—then I believe that the Department of Industrial Development will have done a magnificent job of laying the foundations for the greater industrial development of Queensland in general and of Brisbane in particular.

Now let me turn my thoughts to the question of electrical safety, which has been receiving a great deal of publicity of a critical nature from the hon. member for Salisbury. We have heard about the Government's alleged neglect of the public safety in regard to electricity. I do not know what the answer is so far as it affects the working of men on high-tension wires outside; I do not know whether there is an answer.

Mr. Sherrington interjected.

Mr. RAMSDEN: I wish the hon. member for Salisbury would listen. He may learn something if he does.

I bring to the notice of the Committee the fact that there is a safety protector pack made and constructed only in Queensland that is approved by electric authorities and meets the requirements of the Queensland Factories and Shops Act. This protector pack gives unparalleled protection in domestic and factory installations.

Mr. Houston: Are you a shareholder?

Mr. RAMSDEN: No, I am not a shareholder. If I had as much money as the hon. member has, I would be.

The pack is claimed to have been tested and proven to isolate any fault in .03 of a second. Unlike most safety packs, which have only one outlet, this protector pack has six outlets for either 2,400-watt or 3,600-watt output. It can be attached to a home or factory switchboard at a very economical cost. For the ordinary household set-up up to 60 amps, it can be installed for as little as

£50, which is a small price to pay for absolute family safety. On the factory or industrial side, a three-phase installation can be protector-packed for £85. That is with circuit breakers, but if fuses are substituted the cost is £10 less.

Let me emphasise that this protector pack is made by Soden in Queensland, and as far as I know it is the only product of its kind in Australia. It incorporates the Heinaman earth leakage relay and circuit breaker. This breaker system has been developed to provide the householder or factory worker with an unparalleled degree of safety against the hazard of electric shock. It operates on the current balance principle by switching off the electricity supply automatically if a leakage current to earth occurs that is greater than the lethal charge for human beings. This could be a major safety factor in private homes, and I suggest that house-builders should attempt to persuade their clients to incorporate this safety factor, and householders, particularly those with under-the-house hobby rooms, could be encouraged to bring such safety devices into operation in homes already occupied.

The system is very valuable in that the relay will disconnect the supply when, firstly, someone receives a shock or, alternatively, a faulty appliance is switched on or an appliance develops a fault while operating, or when the house wiring becomes faulty. This is an insurance that householders, particularly those with children, should strive to achieve. The hon. member for Salisbury, who has been interjecting constantly, could well apply his missionary activity to this campaign for greater safety in home and factory.

The final matter on which I want to speak this afternoon was brought before this Chamber by the hon. member for South Brisbane when, before lunch, he mentioned the Mt. Isa dispute. He asserted that this Government has failed in its duty in regard to this dispute. The hon. member forgot to tell the Committee, or perhaps he was not brave to tell us, that the Australian Workers' Union, under Edgar Williams's leadership, has been sabotaged right, left and centre and that the new "take-over officer" at Mt. Isa is known by various names, namely, Eugene Markey, Patrick Mackie, and Maurice Patrick Murphy. Take your pick; they are all one and the same person. If the hon. member for South Brisbane wants to tell the public of Queensland who is sabotaging the miners at Mt. Isa he could start off by pointing the bone at the right person.

I quote from "The Worker" of 26 October, 1964, as follows:—

"It is in the best interests of Australian Workers' Union members that everything be done to take the matter at conflict between the Union (on behalf of its members) and Mount Isa Mines to its final conclusion, and to test out if the matter can be won through by law.

"The meeting on Sunday, October 25, was properly called by the A.W.U. However, it was not held in conformity with the Rules. The actions of the meeting in not accepting recommendations from the District Secretary were unconstitutional. The failure of the meeting to be carried on in accordance with the Rules makes any decision of the meeting unconstitutional.

"It has been expected that there would be some latter development at Mount Isa, following a move about 18 months ago by the Seamen's International from its headquarters in New York making representations to the Branch Secretary, E. Williams, that Mr. Eugene Markey—now known as Mackie—be employed as Union Organiser by the A.W.U.

"Subsequent to this, Markey—now known as Mackie—ingratiated himself with a certain group in Mount Isa, and attempted to have himself elected on to the Section Committee.

"The Queensland Branch Executive of the Australian Workers' Union, following the application on behalf of Mr. Mackie—Markey about 18 months ago made exhaustive enquiries from the time Markey (or, as he is now known Mackie) was born in 1914, before he went to Canada, and his career in Canada as organiser of the Seamen's International.

"Following this complete enquiry it was felt that he was not eligible to take up any official position in the A.W.U., let alone on a Section Committee.

"Contacted today, Monday, October 26, Mr. Williams said it was not the first time a motion of no confidence had been carried on him at Mount Isa. He had come to regard such as a vote of appreciation, in that he was doing his best in the interests of all the members.

"However, any individual case would be considered on its merits, and would be looked at very carefully. The legal fight by the Union against Mount Isa Mines Limited would be carried on to its fulfilment.

"'Markey-Mackie—is not an official, in any degree, of the A.W.U., and by his actions will indeed find it difficult ever to attain to such,' Mr. Williams said.

"Mr. Williams said at this stage he was depending on newspaper reports, and had little further to say, other than that he would await official advice from Mount Isa; which would be carefully considered.

"As to any action taken by Mount Isa Mines Limited, this would be looked at very carefully as to what could constitutionally be taken by the Mines as it affected, or could affect, the Union, its officials and its members.

"He further added . . . 'As to purported statements that bush lawyers at Mount Isa were speaking of success along certain

lines, then it may be that certain bush lawyers are either speaking to their own interests or have not given full consideration to law, which has been very deeply investigated and clearly considered by the Union. Any moves against the interests of the Union and its members, by the Mines, by a dissident factor, or even by a break-away group, will be resisted with all the resources of the Union."

I should like now to put on record a few comments on what Mr. Edgar Williams says in "The Worker", and also on what the hon. member for South Brisbane did not tell the Committee this morning. This same man is Wesley Bredemus, now known as Mackie. He was born in Rangataua, New Zealand, on 30 October, 1914. According to my information, in 1950 he lived at Macleay Street, Potts Point, Sydney—a most unusual place for a man of his political calibre to live. I will not go into his personal appearance other than to say that he has two cauliflower ears and a broken nose, and his left thumb and left index finger are partially missing.

He left New Zealand and went to Canada, where he was prominent around Quebec. My information shows that he was convicted of peddling narcotics, and was also charged with and convicted of being in possession of illegal weapons. In Mexico he was charged with and convicted of loitering with intent to commit a felony. He was deported from Canada to New Zealand in 1959 because of charges of peddling narcotics and possession of illegal weapons. In 1949 he was a stowaway on a ship to Australia, and at that time he was an illegal entrant into the country. Whether he has legalised his position in the meantime, I do not know.

In 1949 he was charged in Brisbane and convicted of being in possession of stolen property. In 1950 he had some association with the Painters and Decorators' Union. About that time and after that time he was around Herberton for some years. In New South Wales he has convictions for breaking and entering, assault, indecent behaviour and false pretences. That is the man over whom the hon. member for South Brisbane thinks the Government has let down the miners in Mt. Isa. That is the man who is leading the strike on behalf of all decent unionists and who is trying to split the Australian Workers' Union in two!

I say these things because I believe them to be true. I believe that the public at large should be told the truth about the breakaway movement in Mt. Isa.

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) (2.58 p.m.): I sincerely hope that the Department of Industrial Development can develop considerably the expansion of secondary industries in this great State of ours. I will refer quite briefly to the speech of the hon. member for Merthyr. In the early stages he made some rather distinguished contributions but unfortunately in the latter

stages he let his enthusiasm get away from him by referring in an un-Christianlike manner to a person whose name was not mentioned in the Chamber by the hon. member for South Brisbane. For that, he should be severely chastised.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Maryborough is persisting in talking across the Chamber! I ask him to discontinue his behaviour or I will have no alternative but to deal with him. It is most discourteous, particularly when one of his own members is speaking.

Mr. BROMLEY: I believe the hon. member was merely answering interjections from the other side.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BROMLEY: On Tuesday of last week the Minister furnished me with a great deal of detail, for which I am grateful, in answer to a series of questions I directed to him on what I consider to be the great amount of monotonous advertising connected with the flotation of State Electricity Commission loans. I know from his answer and the tabled departmental reports that approximately £31,224,500 has been raised by the Commission since 1957: This, together with the money raised from 1952 to 1957, when the Commission was given legal power to float loans, represents a tremendous sum.

I fully appreciate the tremendous job done by the Commission for electricity development in this State. It is most important. However, I must comment on what appears to be a reckless waste of public funds in securing loan funds from the public loan market. I refer again to the apparently extravagant advertising that has taken place in recent times.

The recent flotation, which has now closed, was No. 35 and it appears to me that the lavish newspaper advertisements which appeared for the previous loan, No. 34, floated in June and July, after the first few days were tremendously monotonous and merely a repetition of the same type of advertising. It struck me at the time that if this type of advertising was indulged in in Queensland—for that matter all over Australia—the publicity bill must be enormous. That was one of the reasons that prompted my series of questions. We must also bear in mind the cost of supplementary radio and Television advertising. From my knowledge of loan issues and public notices, I know, as everybody else knows, that loan issues from time to time are fully underwritten by some major sharebroking firm. I fully accept that, and I appreciate that of necessity reasonable advertising costs have to be incurred to satisfy underwriters, and sub-underwriters for that matter, from the point of view of holding support for subsequent flotations.

With regard to Loan No. 34, which had a publicly-stated target of £2,750,000, I calculated that publicity costs must run to

at least £20,000. From subsequent figures supplied by the Minister my estimate may be out, but I was truly amazed when the Minister informed me that for Loan No. 35, which required the raising of £2,250,000, £30,000 was budgeted to cover costs of all advertising. However, when the Commissioner announced that Loan No. 34 was only 60 per cent. subscribed—£1,650,000 out of a total of £2,750,000—I thought in retrospect of the apparent extravagant publicity costs for such a result. Still, in thinking back, I thought this was the usual approach to this type of public loan raising until I saw the newspaper advertisements for the Brisbane City Council loan of £2,250,000, which was floated after State Electricity Commission Loan No. 34. I thought, judging by the size of the daily notices for that loan, which were not in the same category as those for the State Electricity Commission loan, that the costs would be approximately half those for the State Electricity Commission flotation. Subsequent press notices were to the effect that the Council's loan was 53 per cent. subscribed direct from the public. The underwriters in both cases would have called on the sub-underwriters to meet the balance up to the face value of the issue, and thus, by comparison, the council could be in pocket, on my reckoning, approximately £10,000 because of lower publicity costs.

The Minister said that only seven out of 19 public loans raised by the Commission since 1957 have been filled by public subscription. I think that bolsters up my argument about advertising, and the monotony of it.

When the State Electricity Commission's Loan No. 35, with a face value of £2,250,000, was advertised, I wondered whether the advertising would be reduced to fit in with the lower target. On going through the various advertisements I noticed that the first big notices, after a couple of small preliminary ones, were full-page spreads in "The Sunday Mail" and "Sunday Truth". I made it my business to inquire the costs of those advertisements, and found that it would cost approximately £600 for an advertisement the size of the one in "The Sunday Mail". That is a terrific amount of money.

I still kept an open mind on the matter, and watched the series of advertisements that followed. They were just as monotonous. I have them here. We see the same thing day after day. "Invest in Electricity"; "Invest in Electricity". The same advertisement appears the following day—"Invest in Electricity". Then there is "Support the State Electricity Loan". It is like a street sign that we see day after day. It is not long before we take no notice of it whatever. Compare those with other advertisements. I have one here by the Bank of New South Wales. It is rather striking and attractive. There is not much of it, but there is enough to meet the eye of anybody wishing to subscribe. I have another, by the A.N.Z. Bank, of the same type. They are as effective as any other advertisements I have seen.

The Minister should investigate the amount of money being spent on advertising these loans. I realise that we must spend a reasonable amount to attract the attention of prospective new subscribers and to satisfy the demands of the underwriters and the sub-underwriters, but it should be at a lower level than it has been.

Newspaper companies give advertising firms a rebate of approximately 10 per cent. of regular advertising costs. I believe that this percentage is not a bad game to be in. The Minister assured me in answer to a question that the percentage given by the State Electricity Commission to commission agents averages 7½ per cent. If that is correct, the firm handling the advertising would receive anything from £16 upwards out of every £100 raised. On a sum of £20,000, for instance, the amount would be well over £3,000. Allowing for £400 or £500 in wages and other costs that this firm would probably have to meet out of its own pocket, the commission on each public loan would be about £2,700. This would increase if the loans were for larger amounts. On a loan of £25,000, I estimate that the amount payable to the advertising firm would be approximately £4,000 or more, less about £500 for wages, etc., leaving £3,500.

That is received, of course, for only about a month of advertising. The advertisements are repetitive and monotonous. I have great admiration for the Commissioner for Electricity Supply. If he was not a man of drive, we could be pardoned for thinking him guilty of complacency in allowing this type of monotonous advertising to continue. I appeal to the Minister to look into this matter and see if the advertising can be improved in some way. Day after day these advertisements appear, all, with the exception of the top parts which are slightly different, being virtually the same. I believe that the Commissioner should say, "We will bury these advertisements and get some new type of publicity. Perhaps that would help to boost our public loans." I believe that what is done now is a waste of public funds.

In answer to my question, the Minister said that £30,000 was provided to cover the cost of Queensland and interstate advertising for Loan No. 35, with a total raising of £2,250,000. I cannot understand why the Commissioner allows this advertising to continue for month after month and year after year. I believe that he should look into the matter and make some arrangements for more attractive advertising.

Because of the very large sums of money spent on advertising State Electricity Commission loans, I think that some competition could well be introduced. I believe that the Government, in its anxiety to assist private enterprise, could call tenders for this type of advertising. There may possibly then be greater competition which could help in the more effective filling of the loans.

The prospectus for Loan No. 34 reveals that net conversion of £887,000 was included in the total of £2,750,000, and the prospectus

for Loan No. 35 shows that £1,031,000 net conversion was included in the total of £2,250,000. Surely the holders of securities in the loans for which conversion was offered would not require lavish advertising notices. I should imagine that the logical thing to do would be to send them special letters. I know that they do receive special communications inviting them to convert their money into new loans. The same remarks would apply to people who had subscribed to previous loans, and I am sure that there would be a large number in this category during the Commission's 12 years of floating public loans.

It would be very interesting to subtract the number of previous investors in State Electricity Commission loans who re-invested in Loans 34 and 35 from the total number of applicants, because this would show the number of completely new investors, those who were investing in a Commission loan for the first time. It is well known, of course, that persons with money falling due for repayment are invited to re-invest it in the new loan, and unless they need the money urgently, most people do convert. Therefore, I believe that a good deal of money is wasted in advertising. If advertising costs were set off against the total number of new subscribers, I think it would be found that the cost relating to each new subscriber would be nothing short of staggering. As I said, the same type of advertising is used day after day, and I believe that a saving of public funds would result from an investigation of the relationship between the number of new applications and the money spent on advertising.

Finally, I sincerely wish the Department of Industrial Development success in the future. If the officers of the department are allowed to go about it in the correct way, I believe that they will do a very good job. I hope that the department will not prove to be top heavy with high-ranking officers and will assist the development of not only secondary industries but also primary industries in this State.

Mr. DUFFICY (Warrego) (3.17 p.m.): I had no intention of taking part in this debate until the hon. member for Merthyr referred to the industrial dispute at Mt. Isa. I make it perfectly clear that I have no intention of defending Mr. Mackie, the gentleman who was attacked by the hon. member for Merthyr. I do not know him, and I know very little about his history.

Now that the subject of the dispute at Mt. Isa has been introduced, let me say that the Government should hang its head in shame in this respect, and I am very surprised that any member of the Government parties should introduce the subject in this debate. Let us consider the question logically and not descend to personalities. Whether some person in Mt. Isa is not all that could be desired, or whether his past record is not all that could be desired, is

not important. As I said, I do not know the gentleman referred to by the hon. member for Merthyr, but I do know something about the cause of the present industrial trouble at Mt. Isa. I think the Minister would agree that the employees of Mount Isa Mines Limited are not in a position at present to benefit by arbitration. This Government says it supports arbitration—that it agrees with the principle of arbitration—but it could not tell that to the men in Mt. Isa because the men simply would not believe it. If the Government claims that the principles of arbitration apply to men working in Mt. Isa today, that claim is not correct.

Mr. Aikens: Aren't the A.W.U. officials asking them to go back to work so that they can go to the Industrial Court?

Mr. DUFFICY: I am making my speech; the hon. member can make his if he wants to.

Under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act as it now stands the Industrial Commission has a perfect right to reduce the lead bonus. Under that Act, introduced by this Government, the Commission could reduce the bonus to 10s. a week, or to nothing if it felt so inclined, but having reduced it to, say, 10s. a week it then has no right, irrespective of the price of lead on the world market, to increase it.

The lead bonus at Broken Hill at the present time is somewhere in the vicinity of £12 or £12 10s. a week. The lead bonus at Mt. Isa, if I remember correctly, is at present £8 a week but the price of lead on the world market would justify its being not less than £12 a week. The only reason the men at Mt. Isa are not receiving an additional £4 a week is that the Industrial Commission—or the Court, whichever you like to call it—has no power under the Act introduced by this Government to grant an increase.

Those who read the newspapers would know that recently the Australian Workers' Union applied for an increase of £4 a week for their members employed at Mt. Isa. The Commission said that, in effect, it was an application for an increase in the lead bonus, and under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act it had no right to grant the increase. The anomaly of the position is—don't let anybody tell me that this Government supports arbitration—that if the company made an application for a decrease in the lead bonus tomorrow and the figures supported the application, the Commission could grant a reduction of £4 a week or completely eliminate the lead bonus if the figures justified its doing so. On the other hand, irrespective of what the figures might justify, the union cannot obtain an increase, simply because this Government included in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act a provision that took that power from the Commission.

If we are going to have arbitration, at least let us have a tribunal that will give a decision on the facts, not one that is restricted by the Act of this Government which prevents a decision being arrived at on the facts.

I am absolutely amazed that the hon. member for Merthyr should introduce this matter and boil the whole matter down to an attack on an individual. Let me make it quite clear that I do not know the individual concerned. I do not know whether the hon. member was justified in attacking him; I do not know his past history. But at least I do know the history of this dispute. I know that this Government knew at the time the clause was inserted in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill that it was giving a bonus to Mount Isa Mines Limited. I do not know what political pressure may have been put on the Government by the company to have that clause inserted. I know that the Government felt completely guilty because it did not have the intestinal fortitude to oppose the hon. member for Burke in the last election. It could not justify its action to the workers in Mt. Isa, so it could not go before the people there by opposing Mr. Inch.

I hope that the Minister will answer me on this point. If he wants industrial harmony in Queensland I suggest that he allow the Industrial Court—the Industrial Commission as it is now called following the division of the old Industrial Court after the passage of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill with its resultant detrimental effect on the workers—to function to settle disputes and to arrive at a just wage for men working in industry. If the Minister can prove to me that the present arbitration system in Queensland allows a properly constituted legal tribunal to give a correct and completely final decision on the present dispute at Mt. Isa, I should be very surprised. Despite the fact that all the figures and facts support the case for an increase of at least £4 a week to the men in Mt. Isa, they cannot obtain that increase. They could not obtain it even if the Commission favoured it because of the legislation this Government introduced. Such an increase would constitute a bonus, and under the present Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act the Commission has no power to grant a bonus. If that is arbitration I am just not here.

The Commission can arbitrate on behalf of the employer. If the employer can state a case for a reduction in the lead bonus the Commission has a perfect right under the Act to reduce the bonus. But having made that reduction—even if it were £4 a week—if in 12 months' time the figures indicate that an increase of £8 a week should be granted, the Commission cannot increase the bonus above the figure to which it was previously reduced. If that is the Government's idea of arbitration it certainly is not mine. It certainly is not the opinion of the men in Mt. Isa today.

Without going into the rights or wrongs of the dispute—I do not do that because I leave it to the union to decide—I would say that on the very facts adduced in this Chamber and on the legal interpretation of the section of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act that I mentioned, the men in Mt. Isa today are entitled to think that they are badly treated and unfairly treated in receiving less than they are entitled to because of the action of this Government in introducing that legislation.

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Industrial Development) (3.30 p.m.): It is perhaps rather unfortunate that, in the course of this debate today, as I pointed out earlier, so many of the points that have been raised, although quite interesting, have not related to the administration of the Department of Industrial Development. It is a pity that hon. members who have the opportunity of raising these points at the proper stage fail to do so. As I indicated this morning, as far as practicable I have avoided commenting on matters outside the responsibility of my department, but at times statements are made which call for reply, and on this occasion I will reply to some statements made since I spoke just a little time before the luncheon adjournment.

As a matter of convenience I think I should first make some brief comments arising from the somewhat intemperate remarks of the hon. member for Warrego.

Mr. O'Donnell interjected.

Mr. MUNRO: There may have been other intemperate remarks, also. I accept that point.

I wish to make it very clear that what I say now is off the cuff and that I am dealing with broad principles. I am not in any way attempting to deal with precise points of law, which, obviously, I could deal with only if I had the time and the relevant statutes available. The raising of these controversial matters in the eleventh hour of the debate does not give time to look up and quote the relevant provisions of the statutes.

The hon. member for Warrego made two main points. He said firstly that the employees at Mt. Isa are not in a position to benefit from arbitration. That is just not true, as I think he will realise upon reflection. Then he suggested that the Government does not support the principle of industrial arbitration. Well, of course, that is not true either.

Mr. Donald: You do not practise it.

Mr. MUNRO: Of course we do. In Queensland, by and large, we have a very sound system of industrial conciliation and arbitration. I do not claim that this particular statute, or any other statute, is perfect. We are always learning from experience and I hope we always will. If it is

pointed out to me at any time that a particular statute, such as this, may be improved, I am prepared to consider it. The thing which is wrong, and which will spell ruination for everybody concerned, is to have people who lack a full sense of responsibility adopting an attitude of causing industrial turmoil and, as it were, not only rebelling against the democratically-elected Government of the State and taking action which is contrary to the principles laid down by the competent tribunal but also, in effect, acting contrary to the advice of their own tried and experienced trade union leaders. That is the important point. I am not speaking as an expert on industrial conciliation and arbitration, and I do not usually make this claim. But, as the hon. member on the front bench of the Opposition saw fit to interject I now say that I probably have had more hard, practical experience in matters of employer-employee relations and industrial arbitration than the majority of the members of this Parliament. I do not speak without experience; I speak with a certain measure of restraint because it is not my particular responsibility, and it is not my place to make announcements on Government policy in such matters.

Speaking from memory—and it is difficult when one is speaking about a statute introduced some time ago, and one which is outside one's own administrative responsibilities—the hon. member for Warrego claimed that what the men at Mt. Isa are looking for is a just wage. Under our existing arbitration law they are fully entitled to a just wage, fixed through the proper procedures of arbitration. But if what they are looking for is something more than a just wage—in effect, a share in the profits—any question of employees in a particular industry being entitled to a share in the profits of that industry is a matter for those controlling the affairs of the industry in question. One can visualise all sorts of problems that would arise if we had a general tribunal making determinations which would have particular application to one industry.

Mr. Houston: Don't you think that all wage structures are based on economic circumstances at the time in the industries concerned?

Mr. MUNRO: I do not know that I would use the precise wording of the hon. member. I am inclined to agree that in broad principle, spread over the community, all sections of the community are entitled reasonably to share in any prosperity of the State, or any prosperity above the average; but you will not get that by one particular section of the community attempting to hold the whole of the community to ransom. That is what happens when you have direct action.

Mr. Houston: Was there any weakness when the Commission determined the bonus?

Mr. MUNRO: Yes, there was, definitely. The weakness was that the Commission had such powers that large-scale industries were not prepared to come to Queensland and operate under conditions of that kind. The law that was in force prior to the Act of 1961 was defective in certain respects. I do not claim that the present law is perfect, but there was definitely a need for the type of amendment which was made at that time. The result of the policy of direct action adopted by the men at Mt. Isa—or any other men who take direct action—is the destruction of the means of producing wealth, and, if we destroy the machinery for producing wealth in the community, we hurt and harm almost every member of the community. That is why I say, in relation not only to this industrial dispute but to any other industrial dispute, that the men concerned would be acting more in the common interest if they adopted the more reasoned policy of stating their case to the appropriate tribunal. If the hon. member for Bulimba, or any other hon. member on his or this side of the Chamber, feels that there are any points on which improvement could be made, he has the opportunity to put forward suggestions, which I have no doubt would be considered. I do not propose to spend very much time on that subject because quite a few other points to which I wish to reply have been raised.

The hon. member for Tablelands made quite an interesting contribution, although he did cover quite a few points that were discussed on Thursday and, to some extent, this morning. He expressed the hope that there would be no cessation of the Government's policy of decentralisation. I can give him that assurance. The policy of the Government is decentralisation as far as is practicable. Anything that I have said about decentralisation does not indicate in the least a weakening of Government policy on this matter. I do, however, believe in being a little realistic. I have no great sympathy with anyone who paints glamorous pictures of what can be done in decentralisation when everyone knows, from the hard facts of economic life, that the general trend world wide is in the other direction.

Mr. Houston: If you could read some of the statements made by your colleagues over the years, you would be blushing.

Mr. MUNRO: No. Statements by my colleagues have merely been similar to those that I have made. Although we believe in decentralisation, we are a little apprehensive of the tendency, not only in Australia but all over the world, towards the development of large aggregations of people in capital cities. We think that this development has many weaknesses and that with a country as large as Australia, perhaps we would have better types of people if they were more widely distributed.

Whatever we may think about it cannot alter the hard fact that industry on a large scale is nowadays carried out on a basis very

largely of mechanisation and, to some extent, of automation. At least it has a basis of planned production and for this type of industry to be economic and successful it must be conducted on a large scale. This cannot be done in isolated centres.

Apart from the considerations I have just mentioned, there is the cost of transport. The hon. member for Tablelands mentioned freight charges and said that the Government should do something about them. No matter what is done about them, it will still cost a lot of money to transport goods from Brisbane to the Tableland, or from the Tableland to Brisbane. The cost will be still greater if they are to be transported from, or to, Sydney or Melbourne. Those are hard facts, and, no matter what is done to meet the position, somebody has to bear the cost. Do not think that the Government can simply say, "We will subsidise this and that." Subsidies cannot lightly be granted for a long period; someone has to meet the cost of them, and they become a charge on the community.

The hon. member for Tablelands also expressed some quite interesting thoughts on the development of his area of North Queensland, and he made a plea for cheaper power. Whilst I am quite in sympathy with his broad objective, I must say that his line of reasoning was quite erroneous. He suggested that, because we had two sources of hydro-electric power in the far northern part of the State, we should proceed on the broad principle of using in the Far North the power that is produced there. Of course, anyone who has an elementary knowledge of the economics of the production of electric power knows that in a country with only limited potential for the production of hydro-electric power and with cheap coal enabling power to be produced very cheaply in thermal power stations, as in Queensland, the best results are obtained by having a grid system under which the thermal power stations bear the base load at a very low cost and the hydro-electric power stations, which have a greater degree of flexibility, assist with the peak loadings. With the grid system, which is the system at present in operation in the northern part of the State, a much cheaper and more efficient supply of electric power is obtained than if hydro-electric and thermal power stations are kept in separate compartments. The answer to the point made by the hon. member for Tablelands is that, if we accepted his suggestion, electric power in his particular area would cost a great deal more than it costs now. Furthermore, pursuing the same thought, he can look for additional benefits in his area in the relatively near future when we bring into operation the comparatively large new thermal power station that it is to be constructed in the Collinsville area.

Mr. Houston: But hydro-electric power is cheaper than thermal power.

Mr. MUNRO: Not necessarily.

Mr. Houston: According to the reports, it is.

Mr. MUNRO: It depends largely on the method of calculating the cost. If the hon. member analyses it more carefully and compares the actual power generated as distinct from the capacity, he will find that there is a weakness in his argument. There is not the slightest doubt about the general principle that where there are both hydro-electric and thermal power stations, the best results are obtained by having a grid system and interchanging them because of their characteristics.

Mr. Houston: Tasmanian electricity is cheap because it comes from hydro-electric power stations.

Mr. MUNRO: The circumstances in Tasmania are very different from those in Queensland.

The hon. member for Merthyr referred, among other things, as did the hon. member for Tablelands, to the objective of spreading industrial development to other parts of the State. That is one of the Government's objectives, and in relation to it, of course, we do have regional advisory committees. I have with me the report of the Director of Industrial Development for the year ended 30 June, 1964, in which he makes reference to regional advisory committees and says—

"Requests received for direct Departmental contact from country and provincial centres have increased considerably. As a result, an extension of the area covered by Committees coming under the scheme of 'Advisory Committees' has been necessary."

He goes on to say—

"Chambers of Commerce and Development Associations in different areas have sought information. These organisations are doing similar work to the 'Advisory Committees'."

"A number have undertaken a survey of their area using as a base a questionnaire supplied by the Department. When these surveys and a larger, more detailed one being carried out by the Hunter Valley Research Foundation, are completed, comprehensive data on a large area of the State will be readily available."

I make that quotation just to indicate the point that we are, in fact, doing quite an amount of work for decentralisation through our regional advisory committees.

Of course, as was quite natural, the hon. member for Merthyr continued with a plea for the development of industries on the north and south banks of the lower reaches of the river. There again, whilst I appreciate his thoughtfulness in putting that forward, I am able to say that action is already being taken by the Government on those lines. We are already moving to acquire or make available for industrial purposes suitable land on the south bank of the river in the vicinity of the new Ampol refinery and, as a result of our negotiations also, the Commonwealth Government has agreed to the release for industrial purposes of an area of Crown land

near Cairncross Dock. Again I mention this point to make it clear that the Government is quite alive to the importance of these matters and is taking the appropriate action.

The only other matter of importance was raised by the hon. member for Norman, who, if I heard him correctly, accused the Government of reckless waste of public funds and extravagant advertising. He gave us much detailed comment about certain advertisements and, in effect, suggested that the advertising by the State Electricity Commission was monotonous. Generally, I took it that what he was endeavouring to establish was that the policies of the Commission in relation to the raising of State Electricity Commission funds were not effective. In the few minutes available to me I think it will be very helpful to us if we have a look at some of the background of this tremendously important work of raising for Queensland the vast sums that are required for the rapid development of our system of electricity generation and transmission. I suggest that this whole matter must be considered in the light of requirements for the electrical development of the State as a whole.

Mr. Bromley: I did not say anything against development of the State. The commission is doing a tremendous job for the State.

Mr. MUNRO: I am pointing out the vast sums that are involved and, in the few minutes available to me, I want to give some indication of our objectives, and of how successfully they have been pursued. In the financial year 1951-52, when the State Electricity Commission first approached the public loan market, the annual capital expenditure on electrical development in those areas of the State where the Commission is directly responsible for loan raising, amounted to £3,721,000. By 1963-64 the figure had risen to £7,097,000. The estimated requirements for the current financial year total £7,894,000. Another interesting fact is that the aggregate of capital expenditure in those areas between 1951-52 and 1963-64 was approximately £75,000,000. The most important point to note is that, even with the relatively lower annual rate of expenditure in the financial year 1951-52, very serious difficulties arose in meeting capital requirements. In fact there was a period of great stress during that year when claims for progress payments by contractors engaged in the erection of new power stations and other important works had accumulated and there were no funds to meet them. I give that background because, if we have established a fairly complex procedure to ensure that we obtain the capital funds we require, I assure hon. members that it has been done because from experience—sometimes rather bitter experience—it was found necessary.

In 1951-52 there was a serious risk of default in payments against contractual commitments and, unfortunately, at that time there was a general slowing down in activity. It was in the light of that experience that the commission was charged with the specific

responsibility of raising these funds. I could say a good deal about this but the important point is that the advertising policy of the commission was directed towards this end. An examination of the commission's advertising throughout the whole period will make this clear. It will show that its advertising, including interstate advertising, has been designed to promote an interest in Queensland as well as financial support for a particular Queensland loan. As an indication of some success in this, I mention the willingness of underwriters to support State Electricity Commission loans, as measured by the amount of underwriting offered, which has increased from £500,000 for a single loan in 1952 to £4,575,000 in 1963. The point I make is that, notwithstanding the criticism of the hon. member for Norman, this policy has in fact succeeded.

Mr. Bromley: We are not getting enough public money.

Mr. MUNRO: We are getting quite a lot of public money as well. Let us consider the basic objectives. The basic objectives are more power and cheaper power. To get them we must have more money. At the present time we are building new generating units more quickly than ever before in the history of the State. The cost of this advertising may seem high, but it is dwarfed into insignificance by the tremendously large amounts involved. Let me give one very short example and I will conclude on this point. The proportional cost of agency fees, taken on a percentage basis declined from an average of .085 per cent. over the period from 1951-52 to 1956-57 to an average of only .054 per cent. over the period 1957-58 to 1963-64. There is a lot more in this very important matter of financial management than appears from the type of a particular advertisement or from what might be paid to a particular advertising agent. I pay my tribute to the Commissioner for Electricity Supply and those advising him and assisting him for the very excellent job that is being done in receiving those funds that are so urgently required for the development of our State.

At 4 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 14 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for the Department of Industrial Development.

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

Department of Industrial Development—		£
Chief Office	194,569
Balance of Department, Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account	4,863,168

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (4.1 p.m.): I move—

“That £2,143,327 be granted for ‘Department of Primary Industries—Primary Industries.’”

The Department has also made provision for an expenditure of £3,639,049 under Trust and Special Funds, Schedules B and C. The principal items for the Trust and Special Funds comprise £944,913 for the Stock Fund, £87,025 for the Stock Diseases Compensation Fund, £1,187,000 for the Sugar Bulk Handling Facilities Special Fund, £184,040 for the Sugar Cane Prices Fund, £162,380 for the Australian Cattle and Beef Research Fund, £96,384 for the Tobacco Research Fund, and £152,057 for the Commonwealth Agricultural and Dairying Extension Funds. A sum of £376,119 is included in Schedule C to meet the Government Endowment on Stock Assessment received for 1963-64 under the Stock Acts, 1915 to 1960.

The amount of £2,143,327 is sought from Consolidated Revenue Fund to meet the salaries and contingency expenditure of the department, the amounts being £1,539,017 and £604,310 respectively. The expenditure for the financial year 1963-64 was £2,061,301 which consisted of salaries £1,459,185 and contingency items of £602,116. The increase in salaries, namely, £79,832, is due to the expansion of activities of the department which necessitated the appointment of additional technical staff.

The contingency provision of £604,310 includes a special provision for the establishment and operative costs of a research station in the Fitzroy Basin and covers the wages, transport, maintenance costs and other requirements of the separate divisions of the department, the Government grants to various funds, etc., and the Queensland Agricultural Journal.

The amount being sought from Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year 1964-65 will, unfortunately, provide for little more than the bare necessities and will permit limited scope for expansion. I say “unfortunately” because there is a quickening of the primary industries that needs the stimulus of increased research and extension if it is to be maintained.

Millions are being fed into primary industry from public and private funds to open up new areas, to develop productivity all round, to remove some of the disabilities of inadequate transport and communications and to add security by way of irrigation. Yet all these activities, if they are to achieve the results we hope for, must be supported by research, investigation and advisory services. Both logic and tradition place the main responsibility for these on the Department of Primary Industries.

In addition, of course, the department has to provide protective services for the primary industries, in particular to prevent the establishment of exotic diseases of livestock. With modern methods of transport, this is a real danger.

At this stage I should like to refer briefly to developments in one of our most important primary industries—the sugar industry. On October 28 last year I presented to Cabinet the report of the Sugar Industry Committee of Inquiry which recommended, among other things, that an extra 150,407 acres be assigned, and that about 42 per cent. of the new lands should go to new growers. Once the Government approved these recommendations, the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board handled the allocation of new and increased assignments most expeditiously. By August, assignments establishing almost 1,100 new farms totalling about 62,000 acres had been granted, and 83,000 acres had been added to existing assigned land.

Thus the ground work has been laid for progressive increases in mill peaks up to 2,430,000 tons in 1970-71. The mills are busy tooling up to provide an expansion in capacity to meet the increased intake which will follow the harvesting of the new assigned areas. Tully mill directors have approved an expansion programme estimated to cost over £2,000,000. This is well above the average mill commitment that will be incurred, of course, but the industry is speaking in terms of investment of some £20,000,000 to £25,000,000.

Extra bulk-storage facilities are to be provided at Lucinda Point, Townsville, Mackay, and Bundaberg, and with the new bulk terminal at Cairns operating from this season the bulk-storage facilities at various points should keep abreast of demands. By the end of 1965, some £20,000,000 will have been expended on port terminal sugar facilities since the first installation was made at Mackay to handle the district's 1957 crop.

The Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, which receives an annual grant from my department, is faced with a substantial increase in demands on its services, both research and advisory, during the industry's expansion programme. The techniques of farming new areas most efficiently will need to be worked out as they have been for the long-established areas. Some of the new farmers have not been associated with cane-growing in a managerial capacity and will need guidance from bureau officers in certain aspects of cane production.

As the years go by the intricacies and the problems of marketing our primary products increase. The Marketing Branch has a variety of parts to play in assisting with the marketing of many important commodities. It has, for instance, to provide advice on legal and operational aspects of the activities of the 17 commodity marketing boards, the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing, and the Council of Agriculture.

In this connection, last year the branch was concerned in such matters as the transfer of the control of the Northgate cannery from the C.O.D. to the Cannery Board, the proposed amalgamation of the Central and South Queensland Egg Marketing Boards, discussions on stabilisation schemes for tobacco, pineapples, eggs, barley, and potatoes, the establishment of a grain terminal in Central Queensland, and the readjustment of milk prices in the Brisbane milk district.

An active part was taken by officers of this branch in interstate conferences on tobacco marketing, cotton marketing, and the development of the oil seeds industry.

Advice was sought from it on marketing aspects in the planning of regional development of the State, particularly with respect to irrigation projects and rural industries in Central and Northern Queensland. It is anticipated that work of this nature will expand in future.

Considerable assistance was given to the Brisbane Market Trust in the establishment of the new fruit and vegetable market at Rocklea which involved an overall expenditure of approximately £2,000,000. A new feature of Marketing Branch activities was the entry into market research.

Through financial assistance provided by the Banana Research Advisory Committee a study was made of the demand, supply, and price relationships on the Brisbane market with respect to bananas.

A survey investigating the margins prevailing in the distribution of fruit and vegetables is presently in progress and a start has been made recently on a comprehensive survey of the marketing situation for rural products in North Queensland. This survey is regarded as an essential preliminary to any plan for the development of the North.

As the availability of remunerative markets is proving to be a major consideration in the development of Queensland, particularly the central and northern parts, market research should be expanded as rapidly and as far as possible. The rate of progress in our primary industries would increase if the level of farm management kept pace with the great strides made by technology. The Economics Research Branch is contributing towards a solution of this problem in two directions—by economic research to provide data which will help farm planning, and by an extension programme aimed at improving farm business techniques.

Major research projects include a study of capitalisation on wheat farms, an economic survey of the peanut industry, and investigations into economic aspects of the dairying and pastoral industries.

An economic survey of the deciduous fruit industry in the Granite Belt, which was commenced last year, is nearing completion, and a report will be issued shortly.

A number of schools in farm and property management were conducted last year for extension officers and primary producers, and this important activity will be continued during the present year.

Farm management accounting is being actively encouraged through primary-producer groups and the accountancy institutes. A research committee in farm management accounting has been set up, comprising agricultural economists and accountants from this branch, the university, and the accountancy institute, and their report and recommendations are expected to be available before the end of the year. Farm management accounting has been a neglected subject in Australia, but the activities of the Economics Research Branch in this direction have stimulated interest among accountants and farm management workers in not only Queensland but other States.

An agricultural economist has been appointed at Atherton. The branch is already represented at Toowoomba, and further country appointments will be made as trained staff become available.

During 1963-64, despite difficulties in finance, equipment, and accommodation, the services provided by the Standards Branch in the fields of seed testing, seed certification, inspection and registration of agricultural requirements, and inspection of fruit and vegetables were maintained at a high standard. It is not expected that there will be any significant expansion in these services, but at least the status quo should be maintained in 1964-65.

The activities of the seed testing laboratory are highlighted by the number of tests carried out. They totalled 16,301, exceeding the previous year by 908 tests. This indicates that an increasing general interest is being manifested by the seed trade and farmers in seed quality as assessed by seed tests.

The laboratory is also engaged on work of an investigational nature designed to develop accurate but speedier seed tests for grasses and pasture legumes required for developmental projects. Some success has already been achieved, and a number of developments in seed technology are scheduled for later experimental verification.

The seed testing laboratory is taking a leading role in the testing of tropical and sub-tropical seeds introduced from many parts of the world for the improvement of tropical pastures.

During the past year complaints were expressed by trade and grower representatives on delays experienced in obtaining results of seed analyses. Some improvement has been effected in accommodating this activity and delays have been reduced considerably. We are, however, planning the establishment of a modern seed-testing station at Indooroopilly as soon as funds can be arranged.

Certified seed production was maintained at a satisfactory level. Of particular interest is the increase from 20 bushels of cowpea

seed in 1962-63 to 619 bushels last year. There was a reduction in certified sorghum seed due to adverse weather conditions and a shortage of foundation seed. The total quantity of seed certified during the past year was 48,177 bushels. The target to meet estimated demand during the coming year is set at the fantastic figure of more than 80,000 bushels.

A new development in Standards Branch inspection services took place during the year with the transfer of inspectors to Toowoomba and Rockhampton. These inspectors will undertake the dual responsibilities of inspection of fruit and vegetables and of agricultural requirements—seeds, fertiliser, stock foods, etc.—in these centres and surrounding districts.

Let me turn now to the requirements of the Division of Dairying. It is well known that the past few years have seen some marked changes in the dairy industry in this State. There was a further decline in the past year in the number of commercial dairy farms, this trend continuing on the pattern of previous years. Some of this decline can be attributed to economic factors within the industry, aggregation of farms, and diversion of land to other uses, though some of the reduction in the number of farmers may have been due to adverse seasonal conditions.

The total production of both butter and cheese was lower by approximately 1,000 tons than in the previous year. The dairy industry depends heavily on the Division of Dairying for technological advice and guidance in the many problems which confront it. The Field Services Branch has continued to serve the industry in this way, both on farms and in factories, and at the same time has carried out its work of implementing the legislation with which it is entrusted.

The level of dairy production in Queensland per cow per acre and per man-hour continues to lag well behind that of other States, particularly Victoria, and it is becoming increasingly obvious that more attention will have to be paid to extension work and economic appraisal of techniques in an endeavour to narrow the gap between knowledge and the application of practices leading to industry improvement. More research is needed on pastures, fodder crops, animal nutrition, and property management.

Surveys are being conducted to study the extent of copper contamination in dairy products that leads to deterioration, and also to study the extent to which abnormal milk caused by mastitis and other factors is important in the dairying economy of this State. Attempts will also be made to correlate the incidence of abnormal milk with various factors involved on farms.

A number of surveys and investigations have been completed on the break-up of dairy farm income, the importance of sire

surveys, bulk farm milk collection, use of whey for irrigation, and the gravimetric testing of cream supplies.

The quality of dairy produce in this State has been kept at a high level in so far as cheese and market milk quality is concerned. However, due to factors associated with dairying in a tropical and subtropical environment, the quality of the cream for butter-making is not as high as is desired. Approximately only one-half of the butter manufactured in this State each year is of choicest quality. This is one of the major problems facing the industry, and much work is being done, and still remains to be done, in an attempt to remedy the situation.

New dairy foods offer a means of providing alternative uses for dairy products. Export markets are now well supplied with butter and cheese, and there is a need to find alternative outlets for dairy produce in new food forms.

The department's Dairy Research Branch has taken an active part in the development of such products. Production of butter-oil free from weed taint has followed research by the department. This is helping to expand sales of butter-oil in many countries. The removal of weed taint from cream for butter manufacture will solve a problem of considerable economic importance to the dairying industry of Queensland.

Good progress has been made in finding uses for butter-fat and milk protein in dairy foods other than butter and cheddar cheese. A re-combined flavoured milk concentrate has been developed on a commercial scale. Other new dairy foods being developed include flavoured butter-fat spreads for use as toppings, frostings, and cake fillings, either in liquid form or as dry-mixes, and savoury spreads. Experimental work has led to the commercial manufacture of half-a-dozen different varieties of cheese. These include the Dutch types and blue vein. The achievements in developing methods for the local manufacture of these cheeses have placed the cheese industry in a strong position to meet the threat of increasing imports of fancy cheese and have also given it the advantage of considerably higher local prices for these products. Research studies of off-flavours in cheddar cheese indicate how manufacturers can avoid these defects. Studies and advisory work in the packaging of cheese have enabled manufacturers to utilise fully modern packaging techniques. This ensures that cheese is displayed to advantage in the modern self-service stores, now accounting for a proportion of local cheese sales.

Bacteriological research with cheese and butter has indicated how the flavour of these products can be further improved. High chemical and bacteriological standards are being demanded by some overseas purchasers of dairy produce, and the laboratory control schemes of the branch are helping to achieve this objective. These schemes are also aiding

the further improvement of market milk quality for human consumption and ensuring a high quality product to far-western areas of the State. The supply of good quality cheese-starter cultures with control of bacteriophage in cheese factories has helped to raise the quality of Queensland cheese to high levels, with consequent economic benefit to suppliers of factories.

The research work outlined will be continued and the laboratory quality-control services intensified to assist the dairying industry in the attainment of the highest standards of quality and production of dairy produce. The State Government has contributed to the future welfare of the dairying industry by providing funds for the new dairy research laboratories and pilot plant at Hamilton at a cost of £219,000. Completion of this building will enable dairy scientists to expand their research into the development of new dairy products, and quality problems of dairy produce. Plans of a laboratory for Malanda in North Queensland have been completed and it is hoped the building will soon commence.

The Division of Plant Industry makes the greatest demand on Consolidated Revenue. But so great are the services provided by the Division that it could not possibly even mark time without considerable support from industry funds. From the operations of the Agriculture Branch alone, one can select a number of situations that are crying out for greater attention. Firstly, in the Central Highlands region, based on Emerald, agriculture is expanding at a rapid rate. There are possibly 400,000 acres there that could be put under the plough with virtually no clearing costs. Technical assistance on an increasing scale is necessary if the development in this area is to go forward without undue reverses.

Secondly, brigalow development projects in Central Queensland are increasing the demands on advisory staff for property planning and general routine extension work. Pasture and crop experimentation has to keep at least abreast of development, and staff has to be provided at the new brigalow research station.

Thirdly, interest in water harvesting is increasing the demands for advisory services. Fourthly, irrigation schemes are calling for more departmental services. In the Mareeba-Dimbulah area, for instance, crop and pasture potential on soils not suited to tobacco has to be investigated. Likewise, in the Mary and Upper Condamine Valleys some guidance on the use of land not previously irrigated has to be given to landholders.

The matter of pasture improvement has been discussed recently in this Chamber. I want to reiterate that pasture improvement is accepted as a most important feature of the department's work. The fact that we have something like 40 agrostologists working from the Gulf to Cunnamulla and from Cape York Peninsula to the South Coast makes this

very clear. Much has been achieved; much remains to be done. We have in mind for the current year an increase in pasture and fodder crop research in the Cloncurry, Mackay and Emerald districts. Pasture investigations on the Atherton Tableland will be intensified.

Elsewhere, work will go ahead to the limit of available funds. One need only look at the Cooroy area to realise that from a small beginning it is possible to make a big difference in a short time. Here, a small team has tested out various pasture legumes, devised methods for their establishment on weed-infested, difficult country, and seen thousands of acres go down to these legumes. The success of departmental plant breeders needs no stressing. Spica wheat has been a top ranker for years.

The hybrid grain sorghums have made a big impact on the industry in an amazingly short time. But in making new varieties available, the department builds up extra work for itself, particularly in seed certification. The proportion of the cotton crop grown under irrigation jumped to 9·8 per cent. last year, compared with an average of just over 7 per cent. for the three preceding years. More significant than this, however, were the high yields obtained under irrigation, substantial areas yielding between 2,000 and 3,000 lb. of seed cotton per acre. The average yield of 1,600 lb. under irrigation was about five times that under rain-grown conditions. This once again emphasises the fact that the main place of cotton is as a major enterprise under irrigation rather than a sideline to other forms of production. Efforts to underline the importance of irrigation in cotton production will be continued in this season's extension activities, in addition to the plant breeding and agronomic research programmes.

There was a steadying of the rapid rate of expansion of the tobacco industry last year. A total planting of about 15,000 acres, subject to revision, has been reported by the Government Statistician. Plantings in the previous season totalled 16,346 acres. Production in the past season was about 17,500,000 lb. of leaf due to good yields per acre and the application of improved growing techniques.

The average price of about 130d. received at the Mareeba sales was about 1s. a lb. down on the two previous seasons, while at the Brisbane sales, which included some Northern New South Wales leaf, the average price was also down about 1s. a lb. About 9 per cent. of the Queensland crop offered for sale was unsold—in all, close on 900 tons of Queensland and Northern New South Wales leaf was passed in or obtained no bid.

Grower organisations are very anxious to have a stabilisation scheme for the Australian tobacco-growing industry based on marketing quotas, and my department is backing their efforts in this direction. However, details of the scheme need careful scrutiny by the

Commonwealth Government and the State Governments of Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales.

Important points to be settled are, first, the quantity of leaf that would be supported by the Commonwealth Government under a stabilisation scheme and, second, grade descriptions, the types of grades to be placed on the sale floors and minimum prices attachable to those grades. Agreement has not been reached on these points but I am hopeful that a reasonable arrangement will be made between growers, manufacturers, and the Commonwealth and State Governments in time to enable a stabilisation scheme to operate before the 1965 tobacco sales. My departmental officers will give every assistance to achieve this objective.

For the current year the Horticulture Branch has programmed almost 200 projects, covering plant breeding, nutrition and growth studies, irrigation trials, propagation and root-stock trials, weed control, fruit and vegetable packaging, and so on. Looking at last year's achievements alone, one can anticipate very worth-while results from this year's programme.

Four special lines of pineapples out-yielding ordinary lines by five tons an acre were released for regional testing. A new chemical for forcing flowering in pineapples has been found to be more effective than the standard treatment. A new fertilising schedule for papaws has promoted earlier cropping. Two stringless varieties of beans were released to the industry. Fruit-thinning trials in apples have demonstrated the superiority of a new chemical.

Expanded programmes have been put into operation at several horticultural research centres, and additional equipment and facilities are needed to fully implement these programmes. Substantial direct grants from the fruit and vegetable industries greatly assist in the provision of finance for the acquisition of facilities. But valued as these are, they are a long way from meeting the needs of the Horticulture Branch.

During the year 1963-64 there was a substantial expansion in soil conservation activity in all the State's agricultural areas and, of the total of 3,361 farmers now undertaking this work, 477 initiated programmes for the first time during the year.

Intensive soil conservation measures were applied to 56,275 acres of eroded cultivation land, an increase of 44 per cent. over the figures for the previous year. About 250,000 acres of the State's eroded cultivation lands have now been protected by the installation of intensive measures. However, a recent assessment has shown that 2,300,000 acres of existing cultivation lands still require protective earthworks. Hence there is an urgent need to step up the application rate to about 270,000 acres per year, thus enabling existing erosion to be dealt with in a period of 30 years, and providing for the mitigation of

erosion on some 200,000 acres of new cultivations being developed each year. This assignment would involve a quadrupling of the present application rate and would require a very substantial increase in staff and facilities.

During 1964-65 the aim of the Soil Conservation Branch is to encourage 600 landholders to commence soil conservation programmes on their properties and to extend work on at least 2,500 properties now co-operating with the department. It is proposed to expand extension services so that soil conservation plans can be completed for at least 100,000 acres of the State's farmlands and so that intensive soil conservation measures will be applied to at least 70,000 acres of eroding cultivated lands. None can deny that the State's soil resources are basic to the welfare of our people. Historians of the future may well judge the skill and wisdom of the present generation on the manner in which it has managed development and conservation of our soil resources. The expanding agriculture of the State is making increasing demands for surveys of soils to assess their potential for development, and this job falls largely on the department's chemical laboratories. Attention will continue to be focused on the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation areas. Other surveys will be made of selected parts of the Fitzroy and Burdekin River basins.

A close study is being made of the flood plain soils of the Lower Burdekin, which represent an extensive area of potentially irrigable soils. Because of their difficult physical condition, however, they present special problems in cultivation and irrigation.

Mr. Coburn: They are tending to overcome that now.

Mr. ROW: Yes, that is so.

Until these problems are solved satisfactorily it will not be possible to utilise these lands economically under irrigation.

Arising out of recommendations of the Atherton Tableland Inquiry Committee, investigations on plant foods in maize soils on the Tableland are to be intensified, and chemists will play an important part in this work.

Also, an expanded programme of research into problems of tobacco nutrition is planned for the Mareeba district, and, at the Tropical Agricultural Research Station at South Johnstone, studies are to be made of the phosphorus requirements of tropical legumes on which permanent pastures in the northern coastal regions are based.

The relationship between the plant food status of soils and the uptake of nutrients by the wheat crop is to be investigated at the Queensland Wheat Research Institute, Toowoomba, with a view to obtaining a better knowledge of how to manage soils to obtain high yields of good-quality grain.

A protein survey of wheat from Central Queensland during the 1963 season showed that the overall quality of grain from this area was particularly good. Some flours were of very high quality. The figures are most encouraging and compare very favourably with those for the best wheats of the Darling Downs.

A free advisory service on soil and water problems is provided by the department's chemical laboratories for primary producers, and the fact that the chemical laboratory tests thousands of samples each year indicates that this service is appreciated by farmers.

Increases in staff in recent years and a gradual improvement in facilities have enabled the expansion of various important aspects of plant disease investigations. Research into diseases of wheat, tobacco, maize and cotton has been recently stepped up and a team of plant pathologists at Indooroopilly is intensifying investigations into a range of serious virus diseases.

In addition to the central pathology laboratories in Brisbane, there are now seven laboratory units in country areas providing a direct service to farmers as well as conducting research into local crop problems. Plant pathologists are also actively co-operating with plant breeders in the search for disease-resistant plants. Such biological research is often tedious but some noteworthy advances have been made in recent times. A dipping treatment for beans developed by the department has virtually eliminated a serious post-harvest disease of the pods. The fungicidal spray programme developed for tobacco is offering worth-while control of the dreaded blue mould. A disease-resistant cowpea variety bred in Queensland, and now in commercial production, performed creditably in a season when older varieties were badly diseased.

The testing of bacterial seed inoculants for tropical legumes and the tackling of various problems associated with their use is playing an important part in the development of these important crop and pasture plants. Important advances were made last year by the Entomology Section in pest control in crops. There is very much more to pest-control study than the simple testing of insecticides in the field. A great deal of basic information on the pests themselves is required and its collection is a long-term project.

Such things as the inter-relationships of different insects affecting the one crop, the factors that determine the abundance of insect pests, tainting and other damage to crops, and insecticide resistance, all require detailed study over a long period. Important results are emerging from these basic studies. These now have to be related to the economic problems.

The department has the responsibility for fauna conservation, and over recent years has been building up a worth-while programme of investigations into the habits, distribution, and other factors of marsupials, wild ducks, broilgas, and eastern swamp-hens in particular.

Also, surveys of the kangaroo and crocodile skin industries are in progress, and the mapping, listing, and grading of fauna sanctuaries is proceeding in a systematic way. I feel that public appreciation of Governmental efforts in these fields is developing.

The Botany Section of the department has made some very important brigalow studies over the past few years, and the results have been of considerable value in planning the future development of brigalow country. Current research is being concentrated on developing methods for controlling suckers on land that has been mishandled or where unfavourable seasonal conditions have produced heavy regrowth. Limebush, which is so troublesome in the South-west, is also being studied with a view to devising control measures.

Research at the Food Preservation Research Laboratory is playing an increasing role in the development of food industries in Queensland, and a Food Processing Advisory Committee has been formed to ensure good liaison between research personnel and the commercial food processors.

Much valuable information has been obtained on the storage behaviour of the major fruits grown in Queensland and their processing characteristics. The keeping quality of apples has been considerably extended by improved methods of storage, and this should help to extend the marketing period of the increasing apple crop in Queensland.

Brown rot, which causes considerable losses in peaches, has been controlled by hot-water treatments.

The waxing of bananas, which has been developed at Hamilton, is now being used successfully on a commercial scale and investigations are in progress at the new markets at Rocklea on the commercial ripening and transport of bananas in fibre-board cartons.

Experiments conducted on pineapples from specially selected planting material have yielded much favourable information which should be of assistance in the future production of canning pineapples in Queensland.

Following investigations over the last five years into the suitability of peas for processing in Queensland, an overseas company is now growing peas in this State on a commercial scale. Technological advances of commercial importance have also been made in the processing of strawberries, macadamia nuts, ginger, beetroot, citrus, and pineapple products. Special equipment is to be installed at the laboratory to investigate the rapid freezing of foodstuffs with liquid nitrogen and the production of freeze-dried foods.

The contingency provision under the heading Division of Animal Industry refers to Consolidated Revenue only. Several important developments affecting the livestock industry have imposed additional demands upon the Division of Animal Industry. With the ever-increasing threat of the introduction of foot-and-mouth disease by migration and aerial transport, the expansion of our disease-control services by the appointment of additional veterinarians to the more remote areas and the strengthening of our laboratory-diagnostic services become matters of national urgency. The importance of our quarantine service in protecting our meat exports, worth £70,000,000 to this State, needs no emphasis. If foot-and-mouth disease happened to enter this country, our export outlet to the United States of America could be removed immediately.

As aids in preventing the introduction and establishment of exotic diseases, a virus-isolation building has been constructed at Oonoonba, Townsville, and veterinary officers have been stationed at Thursday Island, Mt. Isa, and Julia Creek.

The increasing value of livestock is imposing an ever-increasing demand upon our veterinary officers and inspection staff to provide information relative to diseases causing herd wastage, such as mastitis, cattle tick and tick fever, leptospirosis, and infertility diseases.

Our husbandry officers are in increasing demand to make property visits and attend meetings, schools, and field days on a wide range of production and husbandry problems. There is an increasing demand for information on lot feeding, supplementary feeding of young stock, and drought feeding.

To keep abreast of the needs of the livestock industry, husbandry research is being undertaken at the Animal Husbandry Research Farm, Rocklea, on drought-survival rations and the feeding of grain with various levels of urea and vitamin A supplement. Studies are in progress at Swan's Lagoon and Toorak Field Research Stations in relation to breeding problems associated with beef cattle and sheep in northern areas.

Divisional funds, supplemented by the Australian Cattle and Beef Research Committee grants, have allowed of satisfactory progress in the establishment of facilities at Swan's Lagoon Cattle Field Research Station in the Burdekin River basin. However, those at the Toorak Sheep Field Research Station in the Julia Creek district still present a difficulty because of shortage of funds.

Livestock producers and field research stations rely heavily on the biochemical services of the division in connection with studies on carcass composition, ruminant digestion, protein intake from pastures, supplementary feeding, ensilage quality, trace elements, and drought feeding. Because of an ever-increasing demand for these services, the

accommodation for the biochemical laboratory at the Animal Research Institute now falls far short of requirements.

New tick fever research facilities are being developed on a property adjoining the Artificial Insemination Centre at Wacol. Post-graduate study and research have been responsible for new developments in the preparation of a standardised tick fever vaccine that is sent out in a chilled state packed in specially designed insulated disposable containers. This technique is expected to dispense with the need for the less reliable "bleeders", as it will be possible to deliver vaccine in suitable condition to any part of the State. Further vaccine production and immunisation studies will be undertaken at the Tick Fever Research Centre at Wacol.

It is anticipated that ten scholarship holders in veterinary science will graduate this year. There are also three due to graduate in science and take up positions in the Division of Animal Industry. Some will be posted to country centres for training under experienced veterinary officers and will ultimately be appointed to centres where veterinary services are now inadequate. Others will be posted to the Animal Research Institute, Yeerongpilly, and to the production branches of the division. On the debit side, however, there has been a loss of experienced veterinary officers.

One pleasing prospect for the year ahead is the return from overseas of a number of specialist officers who have been undertaking post-graduate studies leading to higher degrees. They will return to pathology, husbandry research, and veterinary services branches.

In addition, three senior officers of the Division of Animal Industry have made, or are making, special overseas study visits. One was concerned with post-graduate training in the recognition and control of exotic diseases; another with artificial insemination and animal reproduction; whilst the other undertook a tour of the United States and Canada seeking information that would assist the poultry industry of this State in its development.

The broiler industry is expanding at a rapid rate and is a challenge to this department in meeting the increasing demands for information regarding feeding and genetics. In Queensland last year over 7,000,000 broilers were produced. Seven years ago the figure was 700,000, which shows the tremendous increase that there has been in this activity.

For many years serious cattle losses have occurred in coastal areas from Maryborough north from a disease generally referred to as "coast disease". Similar losses occurred in some inland areas, particularly the Alpha, Clermont, Charters Towers, and Mount Isa regions. Research work by departmental scientists has revealed that the cause of these losses is botulism. There are a number of different strains of the botulism organism,

and the vaccine previously available in Australia did not give protection against the strain involved in these cases. Arrangements were made firstly for importation from South Africa of vaccine to give protection against this strain and subsequently for its manufacture by the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories. There has now been widespread adoption of vaccination in affected areas, with satisfactory control of losses from this disease.

Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia is now rarely seen in Queensland. No clinical outbreaks have been recorded for three years. A few isolated pockets of infection appear to remain on some of the larger properties where the husbandry leaves a good deal to be desired. Careful examination of lungs and the testing of blood provide evidence of properties where infection still exists. Control measures instituted on these infected properties will lead to the eventual eradication of the disease.

The study of virus-like infections in livestock is assuming importance with the adoption of tissue-culture techniques. Until recently, most material for the virus study (isolation) had to be sent to the C.S.I.R.O. Parkville Laboratory in Victoria. However, with the establishment of a virology unit at the Animal Research Institute, this State is taking steps to be as self-sufficient as possible. The mucosal disease virus, which causes heavy losses in feed-lot cattle in the United States of America, has been isolated at the C.S.I.R.O. laboratory from material sent from the Animal Research Institute.

There has been a very marked increase in the demand for artificial insemination services throughout the dairying district. Twenty-two co-operative groups have been formed to provide services in various parts of the State.

Through its artificial insemination centres at Wacol and Kairi the department supplied approximately 45,000 doses of semen during 1963-64, and the demand will be considerably greater in 1964-65. The department has also provided training in artificial insemination techniques for over 50 technicians employed in this field.

To meet the changes occurring in the system of stock slaughtering and meat marketing, a Meat Control Branch has been set up within the Division of Animal Industry. A close liaison is being maintained with the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry to help ensure a uniform standard of hygiene at all export meatworks. This demand has aggravated the acute shortage of veterinarians in rural areas.

From the long-term viewpoint, the demand will have the effect of raising the previously accepted standard of country meatworks. Voluntary grading is now in operation in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Townsville, and Ipswich, representing 95 per cent. of the requirements for local consumption. Between

40 and 70 per cent. of beef for local consumption is graded "Choice" or "Prime", the percentage varying with seasonal conditions.

Let me deal now with research stations. The research-stations set-up within my department is much more complex than that within the sugar industry because of the need to serve many primary industries. There are some 23 research stations operating now, some dealing with particular problems, such as wool or tobacco production, and others catering for the wide needs of mixed farming districts.

Since the first State experimental farms were established in 1889, field stations of various types have contributed immensely to the development of particular areas and industries. I have already mentioned some of the more recent results of research at some of the stations, and representations that have been made for the establishment of new stations indicate the value that primary producers set upon these stations. But the fact remains that research stations are costly to establish and maintain. Quite a few of our present stations lead a hand-to-mouth existence because of shortage of funds, and it is not realistic to think of setting up new stations except under special circumstances.

These circumstances exist in the case of the new brigalow research station that has been established to serve the Fitzroy Basin brigalow development scheme. This scheme involves the expenditure of many millions of pounds in securing more intensive development of several million acres of land. There is no doubt that this venture in development is soundly based, but there are many aspects of production that need further investigation. The brigalow research station will serve this purpose.

Another important point in the brigalow country is soil conservation, and a feature of the preparatory work on the station has been the establishment of defined catchments for water run-off studies. Problems of pasture establishment, crop growing and animal husbandry will also be under constant investigation.

One further aspect of the work of the department which deserves special mention is its role in relation to planning for future development of our land resources. This is a field of activity which is not the sole prerogative of any one department but calls for co-operative work between a number of State departments, as well as some Commonwealth departments and organisations.

Sound planning for future development requires the services of soil scientists to give an assessment of the capability of various classes of land for development; the services of agricultural scientists to indicate the most suitable techniques of production, the problems which may be encountered, and the yields which may be obtained; the services of engineers to provide information on the provision of facilities for irrigation and

transport; and the services of economists to advise on the economic aspects of production and the prospects of marketing increased output. It also involves consideration of land tenure and land settlement and problems of transport, processing and shipping of rural products, as well as the problems of financing development.

During the year officers of the department have continued to co-operate with officers of the Department of Lands in the planning and operation of the Fitzroy Basin brigalow land development scheme. To this end we have now appointed a number of extension officers to Theodore and have also provided staff and facilities at the Brigalow Research Station. We have undertaken, in co-operation with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, investigations into proposed irrigation projects on the Burnett River, Nogoa River and Broken River. We have instituted with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission further investigations into irrigation in the Mareeba-Dimbulah, Collinsville and Emerald areas.

We have recently commenced, in co-operation with the Division of Land Research and Regional Survey of the C.S.I.R.O., a project related to future land use in the Fitzroy Basin region of Central Queensland. That Division has now completed regional surveys covering the whole of the Fitzroy Basin. The present project will collate information available from these surveys, together with information on existing land use and information provided by research. The objective of the project is to determine the most suitable forms of future land use for the various types of land in this region.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (4.53 p.m.): First of all, I should like to point out to the Minister, through you, Mr. Hodges, that owing to the unavoidable absence of the Leader of the Opposition, as he is attending an official function, he asked me to speak first in this debate. The Minister will naturally be pleased to hear the contribution of the Leader of the Opposition as soon as he returns.

As the representative of a metropolitan electorate, I do not set myself up as an authority on matters concerning land and primary industries. Fortunately, the Opposition has many members who are well versed in this phase of activity and will in due course take part in the debate.

Naturally, as a Queenslander, I am interested in the development of primary industries because they form the basis of our economic pattern. They did in the past; they do now; and I believe they will be our mainstay for some years to come.

I think it is appropriate to say, as I have said in the past, that it is necessary for us not only to improve our primary industries

so that we can compete with overseas production but to experiment and improve our means of production and our means of marketing. The cost factor is very important, but I believe that it is also essential to seek ways and means of turning our primary production into secondary production and of achieving systematic co-operation and co-ordination between our primary and secondary industries. Ever since I became a member of this Parliament it has worried me that far too often the products of our primary industries, including those concerned with agriculture, livestock and mineral resources, are leaving our country in their primary state.

It is with considerable interest that we look at the matters covered by this department and try to analyse them. What I am most concerned about at the moment is the annual report of the Queensland Meat Industry Board. As you know, Mr. Hodges, the Brisbane abattoirs is in my electorate, as are Borthwicks meatworks and many other meat establishments, including bacon factories. Many of the people I have the privilege to represent rely on the abattoirs and other meatworks in the area for their livelihood. On those establishments many families depend for their maintenance and future welfare. In turn many shopkeepers, dentists, doctors and others rely on them for their livelihood.

I am sure that the Minister will agree that this year's annual report of the Queensland Meat Industry Board is not a very happy one. In it the board stresses many problems. It is not for me to tell the board how to overcome those problems, particularly as we know that an investigating committee has been appointed. I hope the committee has matters well in hand and is looking at the problems from all angles. However, as the representative of these people I feel that I should have a few words to say on this subject. I make it quite clear that it is not my intention to say anything personal against either present or past members of the board if some of my remarks are by way of criticism. Indeed I believe it is the privilege of anyone to draw comparisons and offer constructive criticisms when they are warranted. It is a straightforward report. Those responsible for its compilation have set out many facts and matters of general interest. Some of the statements are worth recording because they show what the board is thinking and that it is aware of the problems.

On page 2 the report states—

“The Board is currently confronted with substantial capital expenditure to effect alterations for reasons of safety in its aging buildings and to provide additional services to conform to the requirements of the United States Department of Agriculture, in order to continue processing meat products for the North American trade for operators using the Brisbane Abattoir as a service works.”

On the same matter the following statement appears on page 7—

“The result of the survey showed that if the entire building block was brought up to standard by repairs to all visible defects, and a progressive repair programme carried out for structural safety over a period of three to five years, the entire structure should have a useful life of 15 to 20 years.”

Taken together those two statements show quite conclusively that the building requires considerable improvement. I have had the privilege many times of visiting the abattoirs and moving through the works.

There is one section known as the tank house, where the by-products and fertilisers are finally obtained. The structure of this building is certainly in very bad condition. I do not say that the management does not know about it because the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works has pointed it out, and the board is taking the necessary steps. However, I trust that it will get on with the job immediately and have the matter rectified. It is essential to have this type of process carried out because as the balance sheet shows, the processing of offals and the obtaining of the fertilisers are a contributing factor in determining whether the abattoir makes a profit or a loss in its operations. We cannot allow the present conditions to continue. We must make money available so that the Brisbane Abattoir Board or the Queensland Meat Industry Board may get loan money. This problem cannot be handled piecemeal. It must be tackled immediately, and a new section must be built. I know that in certain quarters it has been suggested that a new abattoir be built. I do not think that is justified, or necessary, because there are many buildings, such as the meat hall, the office buildings, and many of the cold and chilling rooms, which are in good condition and have many years more service in them. However, the buildings that need attention need it urgently. I urge the Government to make money available to the board if the board has not sufficient resources of its own to carry out the work.

So far I have been speaking entirely about economic angles, but safe working conditions for the men employed there are even more important. The Minister will agree that when men believe there may be danger to their welfare they will not put the same concentration and effort into their work as when they believe everything is perfectly safe. That applies to every type of work or industry. Engineers may say the conditions are quite safe but the men themselves are concerned about them. Possibly this building should be demolished and a new one erected purely on the safety angle.

The balance sheet has some remarkable features. This year there was a deficit of £28,631 10s. 3d. in the domestic operations while export (including canner) and interstate showed a deficit of £92,950 19s. 1d.

Those are substantial losses. Last year, the deficit in the domestic operations was £52,205 4s. 6d. and in export, £36,154 10s. 9d. To go back another year to get the complete picture—for the year ended June, 1962, the domestic operations showed a surplus of £5,954 0s. 7d., while the export (including canner) and interstate had a surplus of £11,375 3s. 9d.

Those figures give the picture of the abattoirs over three years. I could go back even further but I think the Minister will agree that, up till about 1962, the abattoir could operate as a financial concern showing a profit. I do not think it was ever intended that the Brisbane Abattoir should be other than a service works whereby the producer or purchaser of the livestock could have the stock processed or made ready for consumption; I do not think it was ever intended that it should be a large profit-making concern.

Profits made at a public abattoir mean an increase in the price to the consumer of the goods produced. I am not concerned so much with profits as with the deficits. We cannot stand by and approve an increase in deficits particularly when the board says that in addition there will have to be a substantial increase in expenditure. The board gives a clue to the reason for the deficit on page 5 of its report, where it says—

“In 1960, consequent upon representations from the trade, and in the public interest, the Board conceded trading rights to all licensed export works, including bacon factories and boning rooms, to dispose of, within the Metropolitan Abattoir Area, prescribed meat cuts derived from export carcasses. Since conceding such rights, the trade has increased on a large scale and has been of a substantial economic advantage to such works in the merchandising of export cuts whilst cattle values continue in excess of export parity on a carcass basis.”

The Government gave the board power to extend to those other works permission to supply the Brisbane market. We have to consider that the prices charged by the Brisbane Abattoir—that is, the charges made for killing and dressing meat, and in many cases, putting it in the cold store—are based on the number of cattle, sheep, and lambs that go through the works. If anything is done to reduce the number going through the works, naturally the amount charged per head becomes a wrong basis on which to charge. That is exactly what happened on this occasion. When the board allowed these other works to sell on the Brisbane market parts of the beasts that they themselves were killing, naturally fewer were killed and processed at the Brisbane Abattoir, and therefore a loss was sustained. That can be seen in clear perspective, without working on actual numbers, from the deficit on the export side of the balance sheet. There we find, with other works starting up at various

places in and around Brisbane, the truth of the old saying that you cannot kill the same beast twice. Beasts that are killed and processed in other areas are not coming to the Brisbane Abattoir.

An Honourable Member: Don't you think it is a good idea to have other meatworks around the place?

Mr. HOUSTON: There is a certain amount of logic in having a local abattoir at the point of production. I see nothing against that at all. It is quite true to say that, as time goes on, as modern machinery becomes available, and as refrigeration methods improve, those things will happen. On the other hand, can the Government allow a works such as the Brisbane Abattoir to be so cut off from its supply that it will obviously become an uneconomic and bad proposition? We must remember that most of the private companies are not particularly interested in whether they supply the Brisbane market, the interstate market, or the overseas market; all they are concerned about is making a profit. Perhaps one can agree with a private company adopting that attitude, but it is completely wrong to put the Brisbane Abattoir in jeopardy by allowing other works to be set up.

Mr. Sullivan: Some of those works claim that they can put meat on the Brisbane market cheaper than the abattoir can.

Mr. HOUSTON: I think that is most important, and I am glad to have that interjection. The only factor to be considered in the price of meat, so far as the Queensland Meat Industry Board is concerned, is the processing costs. After all, the Brisbane Abattoir at no stage owns the beasts; all that it does is process them at a cost prescribed in the schedule. Even with the latest increase imposed in August of this year, the Brisbane Abattoir treats cattle as cheaply as they are treated anywhere else in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Row: Cheaper.

Mr. HOUSTON: I thank the Minister for that.

A Government Member: They lose money doing it.

Mr. HOUSTON: My time is restricted, as all hon. members realise, and the hon. member who interjected can make his own speech. I am not endeavouring to be critical. If I wanted to criticise, I could spend two hours doing it. I want to make a constructive contribution dealing with an organisation that is meeting a public need.

Anyone who says that meat can be produced at a lower rate than the processing charges imposed by the Brisbane Abattoir is telling an untruth. All that the abattoir does is process meat at set figures. To give an example, the charge for slaughtering of beef cattle, including all the bits and pieces, is 36s 6d. a head. That is the only charge

imposed, and no other slaughtering establishment could do the work at a cheaper rate. The abattoir, as a unit, cannot then be blamed for increases in meat prices or variations in the prices charged here and somewhere else.

It is true, of course, that other establishments, which are purely and simply meatworks, can make book entries to show that they can do some part of the processing operation at a cheaper rate. The abattoir therefore has to be viewed as an establishment providing a service to the people.

In my view the only way it can continue is to have those parts requiring maintenance brought up to date. I feel that boards in previous years have not paid enough attention to the maintenance of buildings. No doubt it is very satisfying each year to be able to say, as was done in 1962, that a surplus was shown in some sections. However, it is little use having a surplus this year, next year, and perhaps the year after, if eventually there has to be further expenditure to bring the works up to date. It is also true that this plant has been established for many years; I forget the exact number.

Mr. Row: Over 50. It was built in 1914.

Mr. HOUSTON: For exactly 50 years the plant has been in operation, and it is only natural that parts wear out and techniques change. If charges are to be kept stable, as they are being, ways and means must be found of stabilising the number of cattle treated at the abattoir. I know that some time ago it was made mandatory that all cattle, sheep, lambs, and other beasts sold on the Brisbane market pass, when treated, through the Brisbane meat hall. That provided work for those working in the meat hall, but it has not produced the number of stock necessary to maintain the low cost of treatment. Graziers and others associated with the industry must accept their responsibilities. Unless they do, they will eventually be the losers.

As time goes on, the board, in its own interests and in the interests of others in the industry, will have to undertake an advertising campaign to foster the use of meat and meat products. Probably the greatest example of advertising to foster the use of a primary product is to be found in the tobacco industry. Possibly the contribution of tobacco growers to this advertising campaign is small, but tobacco manufacturers spend hundreds of thousands of pounds annually in advising people to smoke this or that brand of tobacco. The Butter Marketing Board advertises to foster the use of butter, and butter has not nearly as many competitors as has meat.

A check will disclose that the consumption of meat products, whether beef, mutton, veal, or lamb, per head of population in Queensland, has not kept pace with the increase in population. The meat industry should be worried about this, but apparently it is living in a fool's paradise and thinking,

"We have the American trade. We can kill and sell every beast we produce," and taking no great interest in the future. I could be completely wrong in my assessment, but the signs certainly do not indicate that industries associated with the production of animals are taking any real steps to develop future markets. One would have thought that the consumption of meat in its various forms would have increased in proportion to the increase in the standard of living over a period, but it has not. If people required more meat, it would be necessary to process more. The pattern in the Brisbane area is apparent from the number of animals killed at the abattoirs for domestic consumption.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WHARTON (Burnett) (5.18 p.m.): I am very pleased to associate myself with the Estimates for the Department of Primary Industries. They are of importance to me as well as to the State. I compliment the Minister upon his presentation of the facts and figures relating to a department that has ramifications extending over the length and breadth of the State and upon which the economy of the State largely depends. I pay a tribute, too, to the Director-General of Primary Industries, Mr. Sloan, and his departmental officers, for the work they have done.

There are now 3,500,000 acres under crop in Queensland, and it is estimated that in 10 years' time 10,000,000 acres will be under crop. Therefore, I think we can look forward with confidence to the future of primary industries in this State.

I am particularly interested in the work of the department because the electorate that I represent covers almost every aspect of primary industry—sugar-growing, tobacco-growing, cotton-growing, grain-growing, dairying, and cattle-raising—and a new industry, Queensland-nut-growing, is developing there.

Mr. Sherrington: It is a pity you have not got a railway line.

Mr. WHARTON: Hon. members opposite cannot think of anything but railway lines. I am speaking of the Department of Primary Industries, and I am speaking particularly of a new industry in my electorate—the production of Queensland nuts. It is rather interesting because they are being grown in an area which, at first appears to be wallum country on which one would wonder whether anything could be grown. The interest being taken by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in the project is to be applauded. The planning has been long term as it will take probably 15 years to get a return. One must admire the work of the company and others who have sufficient faith in this new primary industry to develop such an area. It will create a new interest in an area that was more or less neglected, being little more than wallum country, particularly nearer the

coast. It is served by fairly good roads. I compliment the department on the part it has played in helping to develop new strains and in propagating trees to enable the project to get under way quickly.

The sugar industry is a vital one in my electorate. It covers a very large area of the Burnett and it is expanding, and there is no question that it will play an increasingly important role in the area. The sugar terminal, of course, has been expanded to cater for the increased sugar production.

We have a research station near Bundaberg which plays a very important role in the sugar industry. I suppose its work is not particularly noticed in other parts of the State but I can assure you, Mr. Hodges, that its work is appreciated in that area because it has played a vital role in the introduction of new cane species, in the growing of seed, and with fertilisers, that help in the growing of sugar.

We are concerned in my area with the tobacco stabilisation scheme. It is important not only to Bundaberg but to Miriam Vale, which is a non-irrigated area producing very good tobacco. Bundaberg, of course, is irrigated. Tobacco is very widely grown in this area and the growers are producing leaf of a very good quality as was demonstrated at the recent Brisbane Exhibition.

Mr. Hanson: Tom Craig?

Mr. WHARTON: Yes. I feel that these people should be commended for their efforts. The tobacco industry is important not only to the Burnett area but to the whole State. Some men in the area are producing the best-quality tobacco in the State.

I am not suggesting a royal commission because I do not think royal commissions achieve a great deal. We have had findings from royal commissions in the past but nothing seems to have been accomplished. On the other hand, I think a stabilisation scheme, such as is proposed by the Minister at Commonwealth level, is urgently needed and I do not think it is beyond us. The growers are generally agreed on the proposal to restrict production to meet national requirements and I think on that basis there is some future for negotiations with the tobacco buyers in an attempt to reach a reasonable agreement by which we can fill the market and not have 9 per cent. of the crop left unsold.

It is admitted that there are difficulties in the production and marketing of tobacco but, if the growers agree on the production basis, stability may be achieved on that point and it then should not be difficult to reach agreement with the buyers of tobacco on some overall stabilisation scheme. Every effort should be made to achieve this because, after all is said and done, the industry is needed not only in Queensland but in Australia and, if it is needed, it should be as stable as we can make it, because no industry is prosperous if there are many people in it who are not doing so well.

Mr. Davies: They are not satisfied with what the Government is doing.

Mr. WHARTON: I am not at all critical of what the Government is doing. Negotiations are in progress with the Commonwealth Government concerning a stabilisation scheme. I am a little concerned that we still are not getting there. Speaking on behalf of my growers, I express concern. If you are going to plan production you have to plan it now. It is no use planning it when your crop is ready for sale next year.

Mr. Hanson interjected.

Mr. WHARTON: I know that the Minister is playing his part in these negotiations. There is no point in worrying about a stabilisation scheme once the market is flooded. With primary production we have to plan for the future and, with tobacco, we must apply whatever restrictions are necessary before there are too many growers in the industry. If we can do something about it very soon, we will not have the problems in the 1965 marketing season that we have had in the past.

Mr. Davies: Do you think they should increase the percentage of Australian tobacco in cigarettes?

Mr. WHARTON: I should think that would be a matter to be considered at Commonwealth level. I do not think any contribution by the hon. member for Maryborough would help the situation very much at all. I am talking about tobacco. There is not much tobacco grown in his electorate. Let him leave it to the fellows who know something about it—the men who grow the tobacco and have to sell it.

There has been a fairly substantial increase in cattle production in my electorate as the result of grain feeding and the introduction of better pastures. A great deal of work has been done in this field. Submissions have been made from people in the Bundaberg area to the Meat Industry Inquiry Committee about the establishment of an export works in that city. I emphasise the importance of an export works. Although I agree that the home market is the best market, we have to find markets for our surpluses. It is difficult to regulate our production to the home market. The export market for beef is very important not only to the beef-cattle industry but also to the dairying industry, which depends a great deal on the sale of dairy beef on the United States market. I realise that the United States people say that they do not want to import too much meat and accordingly put restrictions on it. I appreciate their point of view and it is up to us to comply with their requirements. The greatest boost the beef industry ever had was when we were able to sell on the United States market. We should do all we can to encourage exports to the American beef market and any other market we can obtain.

We have seen extensive expansion in vegetable production. I was very pleased to hear the Minister speak of the work being done with frozen peas. From my association with the Queensland Cold Storage Federation, I know of the plant that has been set up to treat peas on an experimental basis as a new industry for Queensland. This has proved very successful, and the production of peas for the frozen market has exceeded production per acre in New Zealand.

Mr. Davies: Are you satisfied with the price the farmer is getting for his peas and beans?

Mr. WHARTON: I note that I am always asked whether I am satisfied. Nobody in this world is satisfied and, to hear the hon. member, I doubt very much whether he is very often satisfied. It may be possible to please some of us but it is highly improbable that we could please the hon. member for Maryborough.

I am very pleased that there is to be expansion in the vegetable industry. We want to hold what we have. Some new industries may bring development to the district and, with primary industries, that is what we should continually strive for. I am pleased that the department is keeping that aspect in mind and I compliment it upon its activities and its endeavours in the research laboratories.

The dairying industry is somewhat in the doldrums.

Mr. Davies: What is the reason for that?

Mr. WHARTON: I should say that the real reason is that the Labour Government gave the O.K. for margarine to be used freely; it gave an open go to butter substitutes.

Mr. O'Donnell: That is unfair criticism.

Mr. WHARTON: I do not think it is unfair. I do not think the hon. member would know the difference between fair and unfair treatment.

There has been much progress in refrigeration. Farm refrigeration is most important because it has the greatest effect. I again compliment the department and the Butter Board on the activity in providing small units, and for demonstrating small types of dairy refrigerators. Here again, the departmental officers and dairy officers are playing a vital part in bringing to the notice of the farmers, by demonstration, the advantages of refrigeration on the farm. I cannot over-emphasise the importance of refrigeration. Very little can be gained from producing a good article if it is to be allowed to deteriorate under our tropical conditions before reaching the factory.

The department has done a wonderful job in encouraging the production of hybrid sorghum seed in our area. It seems to be growing in popularity. We must remember that better crops and greater production

mean a more economic return to the farmer. We must foster and encourage these projects and I congratulate the department upon its activities in this field.

While we appreciate what the department is doing we realise that the finance available to it is limited. I sometimes worry when I see the shortage of departmental officers in all the fields of endeavour that should be pursued. We need a stock inspector at Biggenden, and a soil conservation officer in the area around Gayndah, because they represent important aspects of our livelihood. I emphasise the work that is necessary—

Mr. Hanson: You won't get them while you have the Liberal industrialists running the country.

Mr. WHARTON: I do not know. When I think about Gladstone and what we have there, and when I think how generous the industrialists are up there, I do not know what the hon. member means by "Liberal industrialists". I do not know how he applies his remark to this debate.

The stock inspector plays a very important role and most of us appreciate the work that is done. The officers of the department are always on tap. However, a stock inspector costs very little compared with a veterinary officer, and I believe that putting a veterinary officer in the field and taking away many of the services of the stock inspector does not benefit the industry. I appreciate that the stock inspector may be used in some other field, and that is fair enough, but, whilst we have a stock inspector in the area, he is useful; he is used well, and his services are available to the dairy farmer or the primary producer at minimum cost. In that particular field, the veterinary officer seems to have been given a franchise for all the work he is entitled to do.

I am concerned about rising costs in primary industry. There seems to be a general tendency to buy as cheaply as possible. People concerned with merchandising, the big chain stores, and the small stores, are demanding the cheapest article. The primary producer is not able to pass his costs on. Primary production is faced with high costs and has no way of recouping them. The Government should encourage and foster better and more economic production.

I turn now to pasture research. Pastures are possibly the most important of all crops. They are a long-term programme. Although they fluctuate with seasons, they do not fluctuate as other crops do. We are going places with pastures, but we are not going fast enough. The research station at Brian Pastures is doing a wonderful job.

Mr. Davies: The Labour Party established it.

Mr. WHARTON: We hear a lot about the Labour Party. I could write a book, not about what the Labour Party has done but

about what it has left undone. I am talking about action. There has been a lot of action at Brian Pastures. I commend the officers there, and I mention particularly Neil Young, Ross Humphries, Norm Fox, and Allan Ross. The leading lights in the department came from that area. The research station is doing a grand job. The problem is to extend the knowledge coming from it. The station has shown us how to improve our pastures with legumes, particularly lucerne. It has assisted the beef-cattle industry and the dairy-cattle industry. On my own property I have applied some of their methods and I know the advantages to be gained. Before we establish more research stations, we should learn more of the work being done there and extend it to our primary industries in order to derive the full benefit from what has already been done.

A lot of work has already been done in clearing and ringbarking, and we should extend that progress by improving our pastures. We have read a lot about centro, para, and other grasses which have to be cultivated. Brian Pastures has developed a short-stemmed stylo, which is a winter-growing legume. A few acres of it has been planted amongst spear grass. Today one can go there and see that at least a chain from the fence, this stylo has taken hold in the spear grass. Pastures are costly to establish and work, and the net return from them is not so great. However, when we have a legume that will spread through spear-grass country without any attention, such as that necessary, for instance, with Townsville lucerne, we have something valuable. When its growth is extended in the spear-grass country, we will really get somewhere. It will be an economic proposition.

The simplicity of treating timber by spraying the bark with hormones instead of ringbarking will also be appreciated. This economic method of treatment is being developed at Brian Pastures and will be of great benefit to landholders.

My final thought is that what is most necessary for progress in pasture improvement and development is an adequate supply of seed. Seed seems to be in short supply and it is fairly expensive. People in my organisation are encouraged to grow certain crops on demonstration farms, and this type of thinking could well be extended into the field of pastures to give growers the opportunity to provide many seeds for the department. This would greatly increase the quantity of seeds available, which I think is most important. If men who are prepared to do this obtain the necessary seeds and know-how from the department, something will be achieved in pasture development. Seed production will be increased, so that cheaper seeds will be available.

Mr. Tucker: Do you think the Government is doing enough to make seeds cheaper?

Mr. WHARTON: Yes.

Much of the country round Bundaberg and along the coast is wallum country, in which botulism is a rather serious disease. The feeling among the men in this area is that strain D is the answer, not strain C. If scientists are able to develop something better than strain D, it will be an important achievement.

I believe that this land should be made available to those who are ready to develop it and keen to do the job themselves. If they are given this opportunity they will, with encouragement and advice, obtain results fairly quickly.

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (5.44 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the frankness of his speech today, and also the frankness of the report that he has presented to Parliament. I say in all sincerity that it is unusual to find a Minister saying that he is dissatisfied with what the Government is doing in matters concerning his department. I do not intend that remark to be in any way detrimental to the Minister. To me it indicates that the hon. gentleman has his feet on the ground. He must realise the importance of the post that he holds.

I do not know whether it has ever been brought home to hon. members that there are 420,000,000 acres of land in Queensland and that up to the present we have put under the plough only 3,500,000 of those acres. Over the last 10 years there has been an increase of approximately 1,000,000 acres in the area under crop and with the development of the State in the last two years we have seen the area under crop increase at an accelerated rate of approximately 200,000 acres a year. That development by the primary producers of the State is something of which we, as Queenslanders are proud. If we go back through the history of our country, we find that our first settlers were on the land. The land was their future, and they stuck to their task nobly. Today we have this progress of which we are so proud, and Queensland, as you know, Mr. Hodges, carries Australia on its back from the point of view of the economics of credits overseas.

It is very interesting for people to take up a report such as this and examine it thoroughly, because it brings home to them the difficulties of the past, the present, and the future. The Minister has been honest enough to state that there is a constriction of funds, which necessarily has curtailed progress. He also has told the Committee that there is a staff shortage, and this means a contraction of activities at a time when expansion and extension are both needed. Today we are spending from Consolidated Revenue less than 1 per cent. of the value of Queensland's primary production, and even if we include moneys from the Trust and Special Funds we are not spending much over 1½ per cent. I do not think that any business enterprise would progress on a shoe-string budget such as that. We

find, as a consequence—the Minister admitted this today—that there is to be constriction and curtailment.

I know very well that the report states that last year £4,150,650 was expended, excluding what was spent on sugar bulk-handling facilities. But I am sure that the primary production of Queensland last year was valued at more than £250,000,000. I am also sure that research work that is needed cannot proceed because neither the buildings nor the facilities for research are available. As I said, the State's production is worth at least £250,000,000. We are holding back with projects still in the minds of people but not yet in the planning stage because we realise that the money is not there to allow us to proceed.

I congratulate sincerely the officers of the Department of Primary Industries. They have indeed a task before them, and we know that it is a threefold task. I would put it this way: it is within their sphere of activity to consolidate production methods, to ensure the conservation of soil, and to experiment with varieties and thus improve varieties of every possible crop that can be produced in our State, always knowing that as new country is opened there are further problems to face.

Throughout my electorate—and throughout Queensland—we have dedicated people in the Department of Primary Industries, not simply working the ordinary hours according to Public Service regulations but spending full days and into nights and week-ends consolidating their work, to which they are dedicated.

As the Minister for Education is in the Chamber I should like to say that these officers also contribute a great deal to adult education in this State. Wherever they go, and in whatever activity is of interest locally, they endeavour to conduct a field day. What could be more educational than a practical demonstration of the work that the primary producer is doing?

I should like to mention a subject on which the Minister dwelt, namely, the conservation of soil. We have heard people intimately connected with the Darling Downs bemoaning the soil erosion problem that has arisen in that area. We know very well that the Darling Downs has been under production for a long time but I should like to put the point to the Minister that in the Peak Downs area, or the Central Highlands area of Queensland, which the Minister forecast would, in the not so distant future, have 400,000 acres under crop, there is an opening up of country and the soil conservation experts should be on the job now and doing something to prevent, in 50, 60 or 70 years' time, some expert from bewailing the damage that was done in the past. Here is the opportunity to keep this soil erosion in check from the inception, on country that has been converted from grazing to agricultural activities in extensive areas.

I put that to the Minister because I think it is an important point. We must not allow these matters to get away from us. Throughout history we have always done that. We have bemoaned what happened as the result of neglect by our predecessors or ancestors. We blame them for a great deal. I think it is incumbent upon us not to blame so much the people of the past but to ensure that the people of the future do not lay the blame on us.

I appreciate, too, when I read this report, the ups and downs of the various items listed. Last year—I say this with a great deal of regret—Central Queensland and parts of the Burnett district were faced with the results of very serious drought conditions. It will take many years for some people, particularly in the cattle areas, to repair the damage caused by that drought. It is a problem that this Government must face up to. I am not saying that we have faced up to it sufficiently in the past. As the present time we do not give sufficient financial assistance. We should be thinking in terms of more than £300 for a dairy farmer. Certainly some consideration has been given to the grazier but I do not know how the provision of £400 can be considered sufficient assistance to a grazier who has lost thousands and thousands of pounds through drought. I do not know how £400 will maintain the nucleus of a herd at any time. There has been a tremendous drop in the production of grain sorghum in Central Queensland. When we have such a drought and find that the crop is down 40 per cent. we must consider the people concerned with its production.

If the Minister went through my electorate he would be greatly surprised at the number of share farmers who are already contributing to the development of the Central Highlands. It will be realised that we have two aspects to primary industry development, particularly in grain growing. That country even now is experimental country, and we have yet to estimate fully the amount of research work that has to be done by departmental officers, the amount of difficult work that has to be put in by individual farmers or share farmers, and the colossal debt that must fall upon their shoulders to supply the plant to convert what was once grazing country into what in the future, in the main, should be an agricultural project of great dimensions. Of course, the introduction of grain sorghum was only a start in this wonderful development. Then came the experiment with wheat. Some have tried safflower, rape, and so on. Today there is a variety of crops in my area, and departmental officers are assisting and advising wherever they possibly can.

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

Mr. O'DONNELL: I have some comments to make concerning sorghum and wheat. The hon. member for Condamine had a point the other day when he referred to freights.

Mr. Sullivan: I usually do.

Mr. O'DONNELL: The hon. member had better not say too much or I might detract from what he said.

An approach should be made to the Minister for Transport to give some consideration to the reduction of pool freight rates. In Central Queensland in particular, where the grain industry is starting to gain some impetus—we hope it will be the granary of the future, superseding the Darling Downs—further encouragement is needed at this stage. We have great hopes for sorghum. At present it is used for stock feed, but its use could be extended to human consumption. With the development of the beef-cattle industry and lot feeding, I hope we shall see many acres of the Central Highlands growing sorghum. It will assume a very important part in our economy.

I repeat that I admire the Minister's frankness. The departmental report contains a reference to the future of the cotton industry and the Minister should be commended for his political and economic honesty. The report says—

“It would be a blow to the prestige of the State if we were to take second place to another State after pioneering the crop and giving it 40 years of intensive scientific investigation.”

In that paragraph there is a recognition that the Labour Government did something for the cotton industry and there is also a realisation that, if we are not very careful, we will lose our position as a cotton-producing State, to New South Wales in particular. After repeated representations over the years, not only to this Government but also to other Governments, there is at last some move in the Emerald district to establish pilot farms to test the various soils there and their possibilities under irrigation. That is a move in the right direction. The production of irrigated cotton in the Emerald district would give a great impetus to the district as well as to the industry. It would also help the beef-cattle industry because, associated with cotton production, we would have irrigated pastures. We know very well that we need closer settlement, with irrigation wherever possible.

I said earlier that we are appalled at the niggardly amount spent on the development of primary industries in this State. It may be that we are overcome when we hear the sum of £11,500,000 mentioned for providing a dam such as the Nogo Gap project. In our stage of development we may think that is a considerable sum of money and that other fields require finance as well. However, it is regrettable that we did not take the plunge long ago in this matter. This subject was commented upon in an announcement in the Emerald Press when it was said that it should have happened 20 years ago. Of course, 20 years ago would have put us back in the war years, which would not have been a very favourable period for talking about development. We have spoken about

the Nathan Gorge dam for many years. In our school textbooks years ago it was incorrectly referred to as being actual fact.

The Minister has shown that he is conversant with these matters. He said that from irrigated areas the average cotton production is 2,000 lb. to 3,000 lb. an acre whereas from areas dependent on rainfall it is only one-fifth of that amount. We must face up to the future. We must be prepared to spend large sums of money to provide irrigation not only for this generation but also for future generations. That is why I criticise the amount of money allocated. After all, anything we do in the field of primary development is for the benefit of future generations as well as the present generation. Surely some of the debt incurred in such an investment should be passed on to them. If we look at it that way, I feel sure that we will be prepared to spend larger sums of money. If we are to be niggardly and keep to less than one per cent. of Consolidated Revenue, we will get nowhere.

The last matter to which I refer is the development of veterinary services. The Minister expressed the hope that ten fellowship students would graduate this year. The obtaining of veterinary officers is an important question. The hon. member for Burnett thought that a stock inspector in certain areas could fulfil the duties as efficiently as a veterinary officer. I doubt that in many ways. If possible, we should have the more highly qualified officer.

I do not think the hon. member for Gregory would disagree with me when I suggest that to overcome the shortage of veterinary officers we should introduce a flying veterinary service in the outback areas. It is very important that the people who live in those isolated areas should be able to refer to an expert when their valuable stud stock is in danger from disease. Any saving in that regard is a saving to the State as well as to the person. A great deal of money has to be spent outside our State on the introduction of stud stock.

(Time expired.)

Mr. SULLIVAN (Condamine) (7.24 p.m.): I enter this debate as one who has been associated with the land all his life. I realise the responsibility that lies on the shoulders of the Minister for Primary Industries and his departmental officers. I congratulate the Minister on the manner in which he presented the Estimates of his department.

Mr. Sherrington: What favour are you looking for?

Mr. SULLIVAN: That interjection is typical of that side of the Committee. I give credit where credit is due.

No doubt a great deal of work went into the preparation of the Estimates so ably presented by the Minister. They set out, in fact, what the department and its officers have done during the year and what they

expect to do in the foreseeable future. I compliment the officers of the Department of Primary Industries, particularly Mr. Sloan, who has so recently been appointed Director-General. I congratulate him on his appointment and commend the Minister on his choice. I am sure that those who listened with keenness to the Minister's presentation of the Estimates are very appreciative of what these officers are doing for primary industries throughout the State.

These are the first Estimates presented by the Minister since assuming the portfolio, and I feel that the primary producers of Queensland are very fortunate in having in it a man who has applied himself to the duties of his high office in the manner in which the Minister has. We know that his background is the sugar industry. He grew up in it and has an intimate knowledge of it. I am quite sure, however, that anyone listening to his presentation of the Estimates today would have been unaware of his specific rural background. I feel that in the short time in which he has been in Cabinet he has become very conversant with all phases of primary industry. I am sure that even his most ardent critics, if there are any, will agree with that statement.

Recently headlines in "The Dalby Herald" and the Sunday metropolitan Press announced that the conference of the rural committee of the Australian Labour Party had been taken into the heart of an agricultural area. There is nothing wrong with that; indeed I commend them for so doing.

Mr. Davies: It is the farmers' party.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The hon. member for Maryborough refers to the Australian Labour Party as "the farmers' party". After having taken their rural committee to Dalby, where all sorts of promises were made as to what would be done if they were returned to office, there was in the Chamber this afternoon the amazing spectacle of—

Mr. Duggan: As a matter of fact, that conference was not a policy-making body at all. It was only a recommending body.

Mr. SULLIVAN: This afternoon, when the Minister for Primary Industries spent more than an hour on the presentation of the Estimates of his department, there were never more than eight members of the Opposition present. The hon. member for Bulimba did his best and, in doing so, admitted that he knew little of agriculture or the Department of Primary Industries. If the Leader of the Opposition was engaged in attending some official function, at least the Deputy Leader or some other senior front-bench member or someone who knew something about primary industry should have been present to listen to the Minister.

Mr. Duggan: The function I attended was sufficiently important to have five Cabinet Ministers attend it.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I do not think that excuses the Opposition for having no more than eight members present to listen to the presentation of the Estimates of this important department, especially when they travel round the State telling the people what they will do if ever, by some freak accident, they become the Government.

We heard the hon. member for Maryborough say by interjection, "We are the farmers' party." I was sitting on my front veranda at home reading "The Sunday-Mail" the morning after that conference, which received headlines in the newspapers. I was having a cup of tea, and I had with me my mother, who is 82 years old, and five of her friends, who are all in their 70's. I have never heard so much laughter from senior citizens as I heard on that occasion. The main reaction to the report in the newspaper was, "How long do they think our memories are? Do they think we have forgotten the 'Stand and Deliver Act' and what they promised to do for dairymen?"

Labour Governments were in office in Queensland for 30 years of my lifetime, and I have been a dairyman all my life. I challenge hon. members opposite to stand up in this Chamber and tell us something about what they did for dairymen. During the last Federal election campaign, Mr. Calwell said that if an Australian Labour Party Government was elected it would reduce the subsidy to dairymen. In spite of this, members of the Australian Labour Party in the Queensland Parliament are going round the country telling people what they will do for dairymen. In my first speech in this Chamber—it is recorded in "Hansard"—I said that I hoped hon. members opposite would become a strong Opposition. How in the name of heaven they can become a strong Opposition if they are not in the Chamber to at least listen to what the Minister for Primary Industries intends doing in the coming year and what the department has achieved in the past year, I do not know.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SULLIVAN: It is all very well to go round saying what they will do; the example should be set in this Chamber, and I think many people will agree with me on that point.

I have no criticism to make of the hon. member for Barcoo; I agree with some of the statements that he made in his contribution to the debate. He supported the opinion that I expressed during the Budget debate—I am pleased that the Minister for Transport and the Premier are in the Chamber to hear this—that wheat freights in Queensland are too high. I reiterate that, and I am glad to see that it has attracted the interest of the Minister for Transport, who is taking notes. I am quite pleased to have the support of the hon.

member for Barcoo, because he represents an electorate in which agriculture is increasing, as he outlined to the Committee, and the wheat-growers are very concerned about high freight rates.

By a strange coincidence, I had the pleasure of dining tonight with an elderly gentleman who came to Queensland after farming in New South Wales for 70 years. One of the questions that I asked him during dinner was, "What was it that prompted you to come to Queensland?" His answer was, "I farmed in New South Wales for 70 years. I have been here for seven years. When a Country-Liberal Government took office in Queensland, I packed up and came to Queensland."

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SULLIVAN: My next question was, "Well, Bill, have you been disappointed? Do you feel that you are better off under a Country-Liberal Government in Queensland than you were under a Labour Government in New South Wales?" He said, "Good God! I thought you would give me credit for more sense than to ask me a question such as that." That was the reply of a very genuine man who farmed for 70 years under Labour Governments and who has been here for seven years under a Country-Liberal Government. He gave me some very interesting figures on costs that I should like to quote.

Before dealing with costs, I wish to commend the Wheat Research Institute in Toowoomba, under the directorship of Mr. Tom McKnight, for the work it is doing to assist wheat-farmers. This institute is financed by a voluntary levy but I feel that wheat farmers could be more generous in the levy they contribute. I have often talked this matter over with Mr. Harold Merson, who is very well known to many of us as chairman of the committee which administers the Wheat Institute, and he feels that farmers could well give consideration to being a little more generous.

The institute does a good deal of research into the breeding of better types of wheat. The gentleman from New South Wales to whom I referred previously told me that one of his sons took a sample of wheat in the growing stage, which he estimated would yield 20 bags to the acre, to the Wheat Institute last week and, whilst it was not discernible with the naked eye, it was revealed that some rust was breeding in the wheat. It was wheat from the Warra area. The Minister for Lands knows the area well. It is highland scrub land, which grows the best wheat in Queensland.

The fact is that rust was breeding in this wheat and it is now feared that wheat that it was thought might produce 20 bags to the acre may not, if weather conditions suit the breeding of rust, have a header in it at all. It is to be hoped that as time goes on research by the Wheat Institute will get to the bottom of the cause of rust in wheat.

I am sure that wheat farmers will agree that if the time ever comes when a means is found of resisting rust in wheat many of their problems will be solved.

At the present time we have a crop of wheat which it appeared would result in a record harvest for Queensland, but with the inclement weather, which lends itself to the breeding of rust, unfortunately quite an amount of wheat in some of the main wheat-growing areas will be very seriously affected by this disease.

Mr. O'Donnell: The big problem seems to be that it is inconsistent in its attack.

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is quite true. Frequently a grower does not know when he has a crop of wheat. That is one of the problems associated with wheat-growing. The Press will often report that it looks as though there will be a record crop, but the costs associated with wheat-growing are something that we should examine very closely.

I think the Minister for Primary Industries will be alive to his responsibilities in this regard. I have mentioned in this Chamber previously that freight costs on a 10-bag crop of wheat are £3 5s. an acre. Figures from the Agricultural Council, quoted by no less a personality than the President of the Grain Growers' Association, Mr. Gordon Todd, reveal that capital cost per acre of growing wheat efficiently, with the machinery required, is £14 an acre. Recently I was talking to a wheat-grower at Marnhull who had ordered a shed for the bulk storage of his crop. As hon. members will realise, bulk storage is only in its infancy in Queensland and growers have only been given a quota of their crop. If a crop goes ten bags per acre it means that over half of the crop is required to be stored on the farm and this particular farmer, who is growing 550 acres, told me he was building a bulk shed 60 by 40, which would cost him £1,000. That means another £2 an acre.

The gentleman from New South Wales to whom I referred earlier told me that his nephews recently built a drier to dry the moisture out of their wheat. It is their own invention. The materials to build it cost £800, so there is another £1 or 30s. an acre. In wheat-growing the costs mount up very quickly. I know that the Minister realises his responsibilities to those associated with primary industries and anything he can do to bring down their costs will be appreciated by the farmers generally.

It may be said that it is a hobby-horse of mine but I again say that wheat freights are too high. I will continue to press this matter until I am able to convince those who make the decisions on freight charges. Without a doubt freights are one of the heaviest costs to the wheat-grower.

People associated with land industries—grain-farmers, dairymen, graziers and others engaged in other avenues of primary industry—are now very aware of the many services

available to them through the Department of Primary Industries. Many of them are making much better use of those services than they did previously. I think that has been brought about by the leadership of the late Hon. O. O. Madsen, when he was the Minister in charge, and the present Minister since he assumed office. I know that in my area many people are making use of the various services.

The hon. members for Burnett and Barcoo referred to the need to further increase soil conservation activities. I have always maintained that it is the obligation of the man who derives his livelihood from the soil to ensure that when his span of life ends, or when he has finished with the land, he passes it on to his successor in better condition than when he took it over. Soil conservation practices play a very great part in assisting the farmer to do that. The land on the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range scours very easily but because of its undulating nature it lends itself to soil conservation. I am very grateful to the previous Minister for appointing a soil conservation officer at Jandowae, and farmers in the area are making full use of his advice.

Mention has been made of legumes for black-soil areas. At present the only legume we have that is suitable for black-soil areas is lucerne. Any research into the development of legumes for black-soil areas should meet with the support of hon. members on both sides. Any expenditure on such a research programme would always have my full support. Once the Rhodes grass goes out of the brigalow country the way to build up the soil structure is to plant grain crops for four or five years and then rotate them with lucerne to build up the nitrogen content. In that way we bring it back into first-class agricultural country.

Time is getting short and I wish to use the last five minutes allotted to me to answer criticism recently levelled at me. As we are debating these Estimates I think I am quite in order in answering the criticism levelled at me by a certain person after I referred—

Mr. Graham: Male or female?

Mr. SULLIVAN: The hon. member will find out.

In a previous debate I referred to certain injustices done to the pig producers of this State in criticism offered by a certain person. Mrs. Horan, president of the Queensland Housewives' Association. By way of interjection, the hon. member for Rockhampton South says he admires my courage. I do not think it is courage at all; I think I have a responsibility. I think I am correct in bringing this matter into the debate because subsequent to my criticism I received a telephone call from Mrs. Horan. She told me that when she went to meet the Premier to discuss this matter she went with the full

blessing of the Australian Primary Producers' Union. If she went along with the full blessing of that body, I think it was incumbent upon them to acquaint her with some of the elementary principles concerning bacon-curing. When Mrs. Horan rang me to take me to task for my criticism I said to her, "Are you aware of the shrinkage that takes place in the process of curing bacon?" Her answer was—and I will give the exact words—"Well, Mr. Sullivan, I don't believe that." When I pointed out that I had recently sent a pig to a bacon factory to be cured, that it had dressed at 126 lb. but weighed only 94 lb. when I got it back, her comment was, "Mr. Sullivan, you must be a big boy now." I asked her what the inference was and she said, "You did not get your own pig back." I said, "Are you suggesting the factory was dishonest?" She said, "Yes, I am." I told her that before it went in I had branded it with my own brand, which is a diamond, and that it was tattooed by the trucking agent, and that when I got the carcass back, it had those brands on it.

I charge the Australian Primary Producers' Union with not acquainting Mrs. Horan of the facts concerning the shrinkage that occurs in bacon-curing. She may have gone to the Premier fully expecting to do something for the housewives, but she placed all the blame on the bacon factories. She maintained that there was a ring within the bacon factories that could not be broken and that she would not rest until she had broken it; she maintained that they were getting all the profits. I said to Mrs. Horan, "Remember, there are two middle-men. There is the bacon producer, and the consumer is at the other end of the line, but between them we have the processor and the retailer." She would not have it that the retailer was getting too much.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (7.49 p.m.): This is the first occasion on which the Minister has had the privilege of presenting his Estimates to the Assembly since he became a member of the Cabinet and his presentation of them has been very comprehensive. As the previous speaker said, he has had a lifelong association with the sugar industry. His statement on the Estimates revealed that the department has diverse activities. I am sure that during the last 12 months he has realised—and he will realise it more in the years to come—that he is charged with the responsibility of administering a very important, if not the most important, department in this State. I do not suppose any other industries have played such an important part in the development of this country and in opening up the vast areas in this State.

It is significant that in presenting his Estimates the Minister referred to lack of funds. The hon. member for Barcoo said something about that. It is significant also

that in the report of the Department of Primary Industries there appears this statement—

"Financially, it was a tight squeeze to accomplish what was done. The contraction of funds was felt all along the line and contributed much more than staff shortage to contraction of activities that might usefully have been expanded."

That is quite true, and it applies to many departments administered by the occupants of the Treasury benches. As particular significance has been given to the Department of Primary Industries, and as it plays an important part in the activities of this State, I feel that there should be a general overhaul, and that funds should be made more readily available to this highly important department.

The Liberal Minister for Industrial Development, who introduced his Estimates last week, was reported in 1962 in the "Queensland Country Life" as saying that Queensland was no longer dependent upon primary production. He was certainly taken to task for the use of those words. At the end of the financial year in which he made that statement, the gross value of primary production in this State was £300,792,000 of a total production of £476,090,000. That statement is indicative of the grave discrepancy that exists politically between the two factions that form the coalition Government. On the one hand there are Country Party Ministers and members who should be discharging the responsibility of assisting the man on the land and those who pay allegiance to primary production in the main. On the other hand there are Liberal Ministers and members who are not so much concerned with those factors, and consequently are prone at times to make statements such as that made by the Minister for Industrial Development. This was the case of a Queen Street "cocky" trying to introduce his ideas of what the State will be moulded into. When he was introducing his Estimates the other evening, I revealed that when asked whether he thought Queensland would become the greatest industrial State he said "Poppcock". If we turn back the pages a little further we will find that, to a degree, he wants to dispense with primary industry. I have not a dossier on him: I simply say that statements like that are absurd and should not be allowed to pass without comment.

I pay a tribute to the staff of the Department of Primary Industries. Nowhere could one find more devoted public servants than those who occupy important positions in this department. They are highly qualified, and I go so far as to say that I think they are much underpaid. They work long hours in carrying out their duties, and I have everywhere found them regarded very highly for the wonderful service that they give. In virtually every branch of primary

industry, whether it be poultry raising, fruit-growing, beef-cattle raising, or dairying, they are ever ready to offer their advice. I heartily congratulate every one of them.

Statements have been made concerning the lack of funds available for this department. There are, for example, not enough stock inspectors throughout the State. When one of them takes his annual leave, he is usually not replaced during his absence. Instances of that are found everywhere. Although I sincerely hope that this will not happen, there could be, for example, an outbreak of pleuropneumonia during the absence of a stock inspector. Although I know that this disease is well under control, such an outbreak could occur. There would then be no stock inspector present to offer advice and acquaint the department with the outbreak. These matters may be only small, but they should not be overlooked by the department.

I notice that the Minister referred to the dairying industry and spoke a little of the way in which the aggregation of lands and adverse seasonal conditions had affected it. Certainly it is true to a point that a number of tinnerns have in recent years gone to the American market from herds of dairy cattle. That is not without significance and could lead to depletion of dairy herds. At the same time, this industry has suffered a lot, and I was particularly displeased by the remarks of the previous speaker. In the main, I am annoyed by the general trend of thought, particularly in Government circles, that we in the Australian Labour Party do not care for the dairyman.

Mr. Sullivan: We have proved it.

Mr. HANSON: The hon. member interjects and says, "We have proved it." This idea has been sold to the people falsely and, I maintain, for very crude and definitely illegitimate political purposes. I wish to participate in this debate to prove that the Australian Labour Party has over the years assisted the dairyman, and assisted him very much. If there are people in any area, particularly that of the hon. member for Condamine, who pooh-pooh the suggestion that we are interested in dairymen, let me state that dairymen are, in the main, battlers, and we are interested in all battlers. The Australian Labour Party was formed to try to help the battlers, whether they were in the dairying industry, on railway construction work, on road construction work, or in any other industry. I do not think it is right that the hon. member should say, without a proper knowledge of the facts, that politically we are not interested.

Mr. Sullivan: Here is your chance. Tell us something that Labour did.

Mr. HANSON: I think the hon. member for Condamine has good hearing. He should listen occasionally to a few words of wisdom and truth.

I was sure that this criticism of the A.L.P. would be the tenor of the hon. member's remarks, so I decided to do a little research during the suspension of the sitting for dinner. I did it not only so that I would be able to reply to the hon. member but also to explode the theories that exist in the minds of other members of the Government parties.

In 1942—I do not know whether the hon. member was then on the land—

Mr. Sullivan: No, I was up in New Guinea.

Mr. HANSON: Many other people were there, too. In 1942 the Commonwealth Government, in an attempt to stimulate production in the dairying industry and at the same time prevent any undue increase in the price to the consumer, announced an interim subsidy to the industry of £2,000,000 per annum to date from 1 October, 1942. This was the first time—a Labour administration was in office—that any significant subsidy was given to dairymen. Before that there was the Empire plan, or the Paterson plan, and not one helping the dairyman very much.

When giving the subsidy dating from 1 October, 1942, the Government decided to appoint a special committee to inquire into the industry generally. Following on the report of the committee, it was decided to increase the subsidy and lift the average return to the farmer to 1s. 6d. a lb. of butter. This involved raising the subsidy to £6,500,000. It might not be much, but I think it proves that the Australian Labour Party was a little bit interested in dairymen.

From 1 April, 1944, the Commonwealth Government altered the basis of subsidy so that a higher rate was paid during the months of lower production, and this system continued until June 1947. A Labour Government was still in office. The total amounts paid out were £5,700,000 in the first year, £5,200,000 in the second year, and £4,813,000 in the third year.

In 1947 the Government went a little further and announced a five-year plan for the industry under which farmers would receive 2s. a lb. of butter. I can remember very well that a State election was held at about that time and that, although it was really a Federal matter, the plan was hotly debated during the campaign. The subsidy was to commence from 1 April, 1947, and there was to be an annual review in accordance with any movement in cost factors. The scheme covered all butter and cheese produced for sale either locally or overseas, and it covered other milk products, such as condensed milk. It is very important to note that it covered those other products. With yearly reviews, the price received by farmers rose steadily until, in the last of the five years, it was 3s. 6d. a lb. commercial butter. The subsidy increased from £6,000,000 in 1947-48 to £17,000,000 in 1951-52, the last year of the Labour scheme.

In 1952, as hon. members will realise, the Menzies administration was in power, and a new five-year plan was submitted. I repeat: in the last last year of Labour's plan, £17,500,000 was paid by way of subsidy. In 1952 the guaranteed price was not extended to any dairy products other than butter and cheese. That gets back to the point I mentioned a while ago. It was not extended to any products other than butter and cheese and the total amount paid by the Commonwealth was fixed at a specific amount determined by the Treasurer, being a figure not exceeding the amount appropriated by Parliament. Provision was made for the suspension of the bounty if at any time the maximum price for sales other than by a factory were not based on the price determined by the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture as the appropriate price for local sale by the factories. The guaranteed price was limited to butter and cheese consumed in Australia plus an amount of the butter and cheese exported equivalent to not more than one-fifth of the butter and cheese consumed in Australia.

For the year 1952-53 a price of 4s. 1·29d. per lb. commercial butter was determined but the actual return to the producer fell short of this figure because no bounty was payable in respect of any butter or cheese exported in excess of an amount equivalent to one-fifth of local sales.

The point I want to make is that, for the last year of our plan, £17,500,000 was made available and, if we look around a little, we will see that for the year 1963-64 the subsidy payable by the Commonwealth Government is £13,500,000. With inflation, £4,000,000 could be knocked off that. I firmly believe that, if the Chifley administration had remained in office, they would have met the cost of production to dairymen and assisted this industry that has developed and opened up vast spaces in this country, and I am sure that dairymen generally would have been very pleased.

The original subsidies to the dairying industry were provided by the Dairy Industry Assistance Act of 1943. The scheme covered a definite period. In 1947 another scheme was introduced, taking us up to 1952. In 1952 the Liberal Government passed a new Act, namely, the Dairy Industry Assistance Act of 1952, which replaced the Act of 1943.

Two long-term contracts were negotiated by the Labour Government with the British Ministry of Food for the disposal of dairy products. They were for the disposal of exportable surpluses of butter and cheese. The first of these was for four years from 1 July, 1944, and the second for seven years from 1 July, 1948. The second provided for an annual review of valuations with variations up or down not exceeding 7½ per cent. according to movement in the cost factors.

I think that is quite explicit. I have done a little research on this, and by revealing the figures to the Chamber I think I have

completely refuted the accusation that we of the Australian Labour Party have no regard for the dairymen. Of course we have! We have regard for anybody who has his back to the wall trying to participate in the development of this country and, at the same time, to enjoy some of the benefits of the industry in which he is engaged.

Two years ago, when introducing the agricultural Estimates, the Minister who was acting at the time said that he was concerned over Britain's entry into the European Economic Community. Politically, we have seen that dispelled and we know that there is no likelihood, at the present juncture or in the near future, of Britain's taking this action, but, in a changing world of politics where Governments and Government leaders fall—and it will not be very long here—there is a possibility that Britain will eventually enter the European Economic Community and that will be to the detriment of Australia's primary industries. I congratulate the people associated with the marketing division of the former Department of Agriculture and Stock for the wonderful work they have performed in collecting and collating information that would have been of assistance to our primary producers and our primary industries. I want to stress to the department, the Minister concerned and the Government, to bear in mind always that Britain's entry could happen. I urge the Government to be always vigilant and on guard to ensure that if such a state of affairs comes about it will not be a serious menace to our primary industries.

I pay tribute to the various officers of the Department of Primary Industries. I congratulate them for the excellent work they are doing in the field of pasture improvement. Many schemes throughout the State are being engaged in by the C.S.I.R.O. but our own local department is doing heroic work. Labouring under the difficulty of a serious lack of funds, many devoted people in the department are doing their utmost to assist in such fields as pasture improvement. It is not without significance that recently giant strides have been made in the elimination of weed taint from milk. I understand that the problem has almost been solved. This will be more or less a revolutionary step forward, which will gladden the hearts of many people. No-one likes to have his dairy products downgraded at the factory. The department has done wonderful work in this field and it will be of untold assistance to the dairying industry.

I wish to have a little to say about the Food Preservation Research Branch, which was established in August 1960. World-wide interest was and is being shown in the dry-freezing of various products. A considerable amount of papaw-growing is carried out in my area. In the Yarwun-Targinnie area a high-grade papaw is grown, a product that is much sought after at Northgate. These papaws come into season when pineapples are plentiful, and with pineapples they make a very good fruit salad that is greatly sought

after by the canning industry. I do not know whether much work has been done by the Food Preservation Research Branch on research into papaw production, but, in view of the great significance the papaw is playing in canning production at Northgate, I feel that it should try to assist this primary industry. The papaw growers are hundreds of miles from the canning centre. They suffer from the discrimination of the cannery, which is not to the credit of the people concerned. They are asked to accept a low base price for their product in order to satisfy the cannery's needs. All in all, they are not treated very generously. Only recently a meeting was held in Brisbane about green factory papaws, but not one grower from this area was invited. Prices for green factory papaws are nearly £10 a ton in excess of the low base price asked by the Yarwun-Targinnie growers.

(Time expired.)

Mr. RAE (Gregory) (8.14 p.m.): The portfolio under discussion is a very important one. I read the department's annual report with a great deal of interest. I listened carefully to the Minister this afternoon when he presented his Estimates to the Committee and dealt extensively with the activities of the Department of Primary Industries. I have heard many speakers put forward various thoughts and ideas concerning the primary industries of this State. In my neighbouring electorate of Barcoo—and in other electorates—there is country that commends itself for its almost fantastic future development possibilities.

Mr. Duggan: What about a few words about Tambo while you are on it?

Mr. RAE: The few words I have received about Tambo would be nothing to the many words of abuse which have come to the hon. gentleman over the years that he has been in Parliament.

When reading the department's annual report I must confess that I was somewhat surprised and disappointed at the discouragement in this message—

“Problems in the North-west

“The Department set out to deal with the problems of the region by establishing Toorak Sheep Field Research Station near Julia Creek in 1951.”

Hon. members can take it from me that the Toorak Sheep Field Research Station has been a very sad contribution from the point of view of people who expected so much from it. It really has not in any constructive or positive way lived up to the thoughts and hopes behind its establishment. I feel that today it is a relatively forgotten and useless organisation.

The report continues—

“Though numerous short-term investigations on a variety of subjects have been made, and main long-term prospects relate to reproductive capacity and adaptation of different types to the environment.

“The vagaries of the climate in the area have been reflected in the progress made to date.”

I say they certainly have been. If the Minister were to see the houses that the manager, his staff, and the research officers are asked to live in, he would well agree that the sooner he can get out of the place the happier he will be. There is nothing to attract or entice anyone to stay on Toorak.

The report continues—

“But other agencies have also been at play. The isolation of the station, . . .”

Of course it is isolated. Julia Creek is a long way out. It is not a very interesting looking place at the best of times.

This report on the problems in the North-west is really a discouraging series of chapters. It continues—

“No one has been happy about this state of affairs. District graziers have expressed their concern and the station advisory committee, which contains some graziers' representatives, is working towards improvement.

“It is natural for people in rather remote places to feel that theirs is a case of ‘out of sight, out of mind.’”

Remarks like that are a “shocker” to those who live in the area and who have given their lives in a desire to do something for the western part of Queensland and to bring about full development in the recognition of what can be done with that land if given a reasonable opportunity.

It is a pretty sad state of affairs to read the report that I have just quoted. It is not good enough. I realise that we have not the amount of money available today to do the many things that we, as a Government, are desirous of doing. The Minister and his officers are operating in a field which does not attract a large amount of money from Government revenues. The Government feels that other matters are more important. I agree that many of them are. It is not for me as a back-bencher to subscribe to or decry, without some degree of reckoning in my own thinking, the fact that these things are taking place. The Minister has said to me, “I can assure you that I just do not have that sort of money. I would like to have it so that I could develop, on profitable lines, the excellent ideas of the Toorak field station, but I simply have not.” Coupled with that is the fact that the department more readily subscribes to the development of the richer areas in the State where there is good rainfall, population, and arable land.

Many things basically are dependent on rain. In Julia Creek the annual rainfall is about 12 inches. That is not attractive to anybody carrying out any form of research. There are other parts of the State with adequate rainfall and good soil in which the trained and interested person feels there is a greater avenue of reward. The coastal

belt and the near-coastal belt are areas in which a good job can be done. However, it would be wrong to shut off the West, because it is a very important part of the State. There is no denying that for many years the State rode on the sheep's back when wool was tremendously important. By the same token our cattle, which were supplied to the coastal fatteners and to the markets in Brisbane and other parts of the State, were important. Looked at in that light there is a very real and essential need to recognise the problems of the West and either establish Toorak properly or abandon it.

In this delightful age of development for which the Government has been largely responsible, there has been a marked change. If we take, for example, areas on the eastern side of Blackall—those represented by the hon. member for Barcoo—there is attractive country that is not worth anything because it does not lend itself to the carrying of cattle or the prudent running of sheep to get a return from wool over a period of years. This is substantiated by the fact that the stock, because of the food content of the grasses and various other limitations, do poorly. The wool loses its value to a marked extent over a period of years because of the content of the soil and what it will grow. A spelled paddock can be most stimulating to the growth of wool the first year it is used. However, the next year, even if it receives the same amount of rain, it loses much of its value, and in the third year it is hardly worth stocking.

Fortunately, science has given to those who have lived and battled in these areas for years the knowledge required to grow grasses that enable them to turn off stock attractive to the markets. This is a remarkable change. It has been brought about by the work of officers of the Department of Primary Industries, and I congratulate them sincerely. That is why I say to the Minister, "Let us not stop now. Let us continue with a greater determination and recognition of this remarkable change, and grow with it."

I wish to deal now with the gidyea country. It used to be said of parts of it that the gidyea was so thick that a dog could not bark in it, which was quite right. Where there were formerly thousands and thousands of acres of country that one could not ride through, today heavy tractors with chains have pulled it all, and it has been sown, in some instances successfully, with various grasses. This, I might say, has all been done through the desire of owners, interested parties, or companies, to do something for themselves.

Mr. Hewitt: Which is too often forgotten later.

Mr. RAE: Yes, I quite agree. I hope that that is not going to be so now that I have made this speech.

These men have been responsible for great changes. I suppose I should not mention any more names since my head has of late been on the block. I should like, however, to mention MacNicol in the Blackall area, who has "pulled" approximately 40,000 acres of country at £1 an acre, burned it at £1 an acre, and sown it for another £1 an acre. These costs are approximate. He has really ploughed money into that place and has proved conclusively that the opportunity to obtain returns is there if there is determination on the owner's part, botanists, agriculturists, agronomists, and similar people are available through Government sources to disseminate the necessary know-how. In that area to which I have just referred there has been the most remarkable change in the last eight years.

When the Minister refers to these things in merely a few chapters, I feel that it is not good enough. The sterling work done by these people should have been given more realistic recognition. At their own expense they have increased the carrying capacity from 1 to 10 or 12 acres to 1 to 2½ or 3 acres. They are good, solid, useful people in the community; we must assist them as much as we can. They are prepared to buy costly grass seed and sow it, and they hope that rain will follow. Sometimes it comes; sometimes it does not. Some of them have been fortunate; others have not. I hope they will all be rewarded by seeing in their lifetime what a magnificent job they have done.

My point is this: if people are prepared to do this, surely we should appoint research officers out there to help, encourage and advise them and share their problems, of which they have plenty. There is a recurring growth of buddah bush and sandalwood and various other plants that come up when scrub is pulled at certain times of the year. If we are really interested in making a positive approach to research, this is one way in which we can show it, and both Queensland and Australia will gain as a result. I know that we have not many highly trained men, but at least some of them should be appointed to western areas.

Let me now get back to the work of the Toorak Sheep Field Research Station. I am sure that the original scheme was a very sound one, because in the surrounding country problems arise in the use of grasses as stock feed and also, more importantly, in relation to water that induces fluorosis in sheep and makes them unattractive to southern and eastern markets. The water problem is confined to the Julia Creek and Richmond areas, parts of the Hughenden area, and part of the Corfield-Kynuna area—the area round the research station. Much could have been done to overcome the problem of fluorosis, and continue research into lambing problems and stock husbandry problems generally.

Mr. Bromley: Why did you vote for the fluoridation Bill?

Mr. RAE: The hon. member is not a bad interjector at times, but he is very foolish at other times. I am saying something that should be of educational value to him.

Stock are very important to the people of Western Queensland, and the work of the Toorak Sheep Field Research Station could become very valuable if the department realised the contribution it could make to the welfare of people in that part of Queensland and took the job more seriously. Problems arise in connection with lambing, wool growth, teeth, and the general health of sheep and cattle, and they would give qualified men many hours of interesting work. To round off this specific thought, if these things that are so vital to Queensland are to be faced up to, it is up to the Government to accept its responsibility and do something about housing these officers pleasantly and comfortably in these rather remote areas instead of exhibiting this apparent unwarranted lack of interest.

I have not much time left but there are many matters on which I should like to speak. In my area, Mr. Henry Hobbs of Birkdale has a problem with pleuro. On the face of the evidence supplied by the department, I should say that it could—and I believe it intends to—apply a measure of restriction. I feel that it could reduce this rather remarkable sentence, as it were, to some more reasonable period. Sometimes when a member of Parliament is associated with a specific plea the department does not like it and applies its judgment absolutely because the man involved has sought to use political influence in having a rather difficult burden removed. He cannot sell his stock. He is very restricted in what he can do.

Mr. Row: He sells fats.

Mr. RAE: Yes, but he is restricted. My inquiries have shown very much in favour of Mr. Hobbs. If the Minister can convince me otherwise I will be happy to accept his ruling, but I am of the opinion that because I was personally concerned in this matter some penalty is being meted out to my friend. I do not know, but I hope not. This attitude could not be tolerated.

Referring briefly to a matter mentioned by the hon. member for Barcoo, who spoke very well in this debate, I noticed in "The Longreach Leader" that the United Graziers' Association, Central and Northern Division, is supporting a scheme as a result of which we may possibly enjoy the services of a flying veterinary officer. I hope this becomes a reality.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (8.39 p.m.): The Estimates of the Department of Primary Industries immediately put us on our guard because the Minister's first words were that they were barely sufficient to provide the necessities for 1964-65. Knowing that Queensland depends so largely on primary industries I should think it is a backward

move when at the beginning of the year the Estimates are only sufficient to provide bare necessities.

I know full well that every Minister would strive to get for his department as much finance as possible, but being realistic, since this country is so largely dependent on primary industries, I think quite an advance should be made on the allocation of money for this department. Buoyancy is indicated by a number of headings. One heading shows that the weather was patchy, but of course the department had nothing to do with that. The statistics listed show that production of most of the items mentioned increased. Then we come to the heading "Cropping expansion continues", followed by "Expansion in sugar", which shows that everything is going along nicely. But then we come to "Trouble in tobacco". That heading shows that tobacco is one crop that is not going along according to plan, or according to the plan that the growers would like. It states—

"In the heat and bitterness that flare up when hard-working producers find that their product is not wanted by consumers . . ."

That is not a very good start for such an industry, and people are beginning to wonder what is going to be the outcome of the negotiations for stabilisation. It is not my intention to try to forecast the outcome or to interfere in any of the arrangements that may be made, but I should like to draw attention to the slow and cumbersome methods that are being used in coming to a decision when it is known full well that the responsibility is merely being passed from one section of the community to another.

On 9 October, 1964, a meeting of Commonwealth and State Agricultural Ministers urged tobacco-growers not to expand their crops. The Ministers said that the growers should carefully review their growing programme for the next season. The State Ministers have agreed that the growers should reduce their production for the next season, but what about this season? The crop is already up about 2 ft. high. With the tobacco that has already been planted in the North this year's season will be just as big as last year's. Therefore we will have more unsold leaf, and a greater quantity will be hanging fire after the next selling season. A newspaper article that I have here says that the Ministers agreed that a stabilisation plan, if acceptable to all parties, was highly desirable. That is a statement that anyone could make. If we can get stability for any organisation, a crop, or anything at all, of course it is acceptable. Those people are meeting not simply to say that it would be acceptable, but to formulate plans to bring about stability.

In an article in "The North Queensland Register" of 23 October, 1964, reference is made to agreement among manufacturers and growers as to what limit should be put on production. So they are going to bring manufacturers in now to tell the growers and

the Government what limit should be put on production. The article states—

“The growers may be easier to persuade than the manufacturers, but neither side will give way easily.”

That is why the Government has been brought in. Surely to goodness the Government has the interests of the State and the tobacco-growing community at heart to such a degree that it will not allow the industry to wane.

The Minister mentioned the expansion of the Dimbulah irrigation area. We agree with that. Some of the land previously used for the growing of tobacco will no longer be used for that purpose. Fortunately it is situated near an adequate water supply. Almost anything can be done with soil that is near adequate supplies of water. I think the Minister realises that. It has been proved at various experimental stations, such as those at Parada and Walkamin. The soils are not first-class but water is available and the experts can determine what can be grown.

I should like hon. members to know that various terms are used in the tobacco industry that are likely to be confusing. The Minister and others have said that 8·8 per cent. of the crop was left unsold. That does not mean anything to the man in the street. If we say that 545 tons was left unsold from the 1963-64 crop or that there is 13,000,000 lb. of tobacco at present in storage, and if we bear in mind that 1 lb. of tobacco leaf, at a low average, is worth 10s. a lb., it means that £6,500,000 belonging to the farmers is tied up. The effect is staggering. We should remember, too, that this season's crop is as big as last season's. More unsold leaf will be added to that 13,000,000 lb. of tobacco. How can we get rid of it?

Mr. Row: That is what the manufacturers have bought and paid for.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: No. There is 13,000,000 lb. unsold.

Mr. Row: That is what they bought.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: No. There is 545 tons from last year unsold. That is 8·8 per cent of the crop. It will be a lot more than the Minister told us. This is only for one year and it has been going on for several years. After this year more than half the requirements for one year will be in store waiting to be sold, but will it be bought? As part of the stabilisation plan, what will happen to the tobacco in store? It has not been bought. I know that for a certainty.

In relation to the stabilisation plan, the growers have been asked to give some thought to limiting production. The growers' representatives say, “We will limit production to 28,000,000 lb. of tobacco leaf a year.” However, the manufacturers say, “We are not interested in that. We are interested in only 22,500,000 lb. of tobacco.”

There is a difference of almost 6,000,000 lb. of tobacco between what the growers want to grow and what the buyers want to buy. With that state of affairs it is easy to understand that neither side will give way. When we realise that each of these millions of pounds of leaf may be worth at least 10s., and perhaps a lot more, the effect is staggering. One buyer has threatened not to buy any Australian leaf. That is the bluff that is introduced and I do not like it. I hope that the Federal Government is strong enough to ban the importation of tobacco, which is the ultimate answer to all the trouble. That is the only answer that manufacturers will understand and it is needed to call their bluff about refusing to buy any Australian leaf. They have said, “We know that we will cut ourselves off from the concession that we are allowed but we will put the price on the cigarettes.” Once again the ordinary public will pay.

The public will be at the receiving end of this very shabby deal. The manufacturers go further and say that when they explain to the public why this has happened the public will lean towards them. There is an urgent need for speedy, definite action, with not so much of throwing the ball to the growers and saying, “You limit your crop and we will see whether the manufacturers will play.” The manufacturers will play only if they can get their pound of flesh, whereas the growers have to play in order to meet their bank commitments. The growers cannot say that they will not grow any tobacco this year. It is no use telling them to grow something else. Each barn costs £1,000, and some farmers have nine barns. There would be an average of six to seven barns on each farm. Tomatoes or carrots cannot be ripened in those barns. They are made only for the curing of tobacco. We have the country and water to grow the tobacco. In fact, everything is available except the market. A market is not available because the manufacturer is bluffing the growers as to what he wants, not what the Government wants. The Government, not the manufacturers, is running the country, and the sooner that is realised and something is done about it, the better.

The next subject I wish to deal with is the future of the cotton industry.

I mentioned this subject this afternoon and am pleased to be able to refer to it again tonight. This part of the report commences—

“Is cotton following in the footsteps of the banana and migrating to New South Wales?”

I think that the Minister would say yes. The reason that is happening is that New South Wales apparently has more country available near irrigation. There are areas in my electorate where irrigation can be provided for the growing of cotton. A farmer up there, using antiquated methods,

has proved that cotton can be grown successfully, and that he can sustain a family of eight on his farm. Everything is there for the production of cotton. If the Minister is worried about transport, what about the transportation of the Ord River cotton right around the northern part of Australia to our ginneries? I have seen photographs in the paper of cotton-picking machines that can be hired for use on 200 acres. This could be implemented in the area I have frequently spoken about, and the Minister knows only too well where it is.

A survey of this area was carried out by the Commonwealth in 1955. I have a map showing the survey of the Gilbert and Einasleigh Rivers, and how many hundreds of thousands of acres are suitable for cotton-growing. It also shows the course of those rivers, the sands of which contain sufficient water for irrigation. For six or seven months of the year those rivers do not run but the sands are saturated with water. It does not evaporate because it is not exposed to the hot sun. The only disadvantage that can be mentioned is that the area is too far from the market.

Mr. Bromley: The Minister has not cottoned on to it.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: That is right. I hope the Minister realises that the water is there. In fact, everything is there. There is a farmer in the area ready to give it a try. The Minister has said he has not sufficient finance. The people there would be only too pleased to prove what can be grown. I have doubts that the Minister has been to that area. It is well off the beaten track and I would not expect him to have seen every part of the State because he has not been a Minister for long. I advise him that cotton can be grown in those areas, so there should be no need for the query—

“Is cotton following in the footsteps of the banana and migrating to New South Wales?”

Coming closer to home, I refer to the growing of maize on the Atherton Tableland. I congratulate the members of the Kairi Research Station on the work they have done in identifying five strains that are resistant to rust. Here is the story of a problem that has been encountered with this crop in the last few years. Some people say that it has been caused by the formation of Lake Tinaroo. The Australian Labour Party can be blamed for the lake, but I do not think it can be blamed for the rust.

Workers at the Kairi Research Station are now making rapid progress, but is it fast enough? Here again speed is required, and the Minister has admitted that he could use many more research officers if he could afford to employ them. I suppose that is why he stated in his opening remarks that £4,500,000 is sufficient to supply only the bare necessities for 1964-65. This area wants a little more than bare necessities. I think it is high time the Government agreed with that statement

and saw the sense in making available a little more than has been granted in this Vote.

We have no trouble with the marketing of cotton, although difficulty is experienced in disposing of the tobacco crop. There is also no difficulty in marketing maize. Speaking of marketing reminds me that not so long ago the Minister was asked to accompany a delegation to New Guinea to explore new markets. I think that if it had been left to the Minister he would have agreed. Apparently, however, it was not the policy of the Government to allow a Minister to go with farmers to search for new markets in other places.

Mr. Row: Who told you that?

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: The Minister told me on the phone.

Mr. Row: I did no such thing.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: The Minister told me by telephone that he would be willing to go in April. The people concerned then received a letter saying that he would be unable to go.

Mr. Row: Because I had other commitments. That is why.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: I telephoned the Minister and I can believe my own ears. New Guinea is where the market was, and these people at that time were financing a visit by a delegation to that area and suggested that the Minister be asked to accompany them. Hon. members will remember that at that time the Minister for Mines and Main Roads was going to Japan to sell coal, and the Minister for Transport was going there to tell the Japanese how the coal was to be moved to the port. In the knowledge that Ministers were making these trips, I said, “I’m sure that the Minister for Primary Industries will associate himself with your delegation.” I telephoned him and he said, “I cannot go immediately but I could go later in the year.” That is the truth. Later a letter was received saying that he could not accompany the delegation, and the trip never eventuated.

These people were willing to contribute sufficient money to send representatives to New Guinea to obtain new markets for crops such as potatoes and other vegetables, eggs, pigs, pork, and indeed all other products of the Atherton Tableland. I thought they were to be congratulated on their initiative. I went to their meeting and commended them on the way in which each section was represented and on the agreement to send one farmer. The farmer’s name was Beattie, which shows that I am not simply imagining things. I was present at the meeting and got in touch with the Minister the following day.

Leaving marketing problems, I now deal with the production of sugar, which is another sore point on the Tableland. I shall never

cease bringing this matter to the attention of this Assembly because I think that it must eventually be realised that the Tableland is one of the places that can change over from the present dwindling dairying and farming pursuits to the more profitable and stable sugar industry.

I raise this matter principally because it has been played down. It is something that nobody likes to discuss. However, I know that the people who have the plots on the Tableland that the Minister saw will continue to improve them and increase their number. I hope that within three or four years there will be not eight or nine plots but 30 or 40, and when the c.c.s. is taken I am confident that it will be equal to, or even better than, that of cane in many other parts of Queensland. The area in which the Minister lives is very good for canegrowing, but he knows that there are many areas in Queensland that are on the borderline in the economic production of cane. If he is fair and honest, he will admit that the cane he viewed on the farm on the Tableland would more than hold its own with cane grown in his own area under similar circumstances.

This brings me to a problem that always comes to my mind when I speak of intensive farming—soil erosion. Although soil erosion on the Atherton Tableland is not as bad as it is on the Darling Downs and in other areas that have been farmed for a great many years, it is severe. In fact, there are instances in which virtually half a farm has been spoilt by erosion. I ask the Minister to bear in mind that any scheme implemented to prevent soil erosion loses its value unless every farmer along the particular line can be induced to play his part in it. The Minister will agree, I am sure, that if a farmer in the middle of the chain decides that he does not want to practise soil conservation, all the good is undone. Water is merely taken from one farm and channelled away, and the farmers who have practised soil conservation do not get the full benefit of their work. Occasionally when a person buys a farm and wants to exploit every inch of it, he levels off the contour bank. In my opinion, once a scheme begins it should be mandatory for each owner to allow soil conservation officers or departmental officers to visit the area frequently and see that all the contours are in order and that the soil is preserved in the way that was intended. What is the use of four farmers contouring their land and each losing five or six acres of growing surface when the fifth farmer plants every inch of his land and walls it up to prevent the water coming into it? It only provides a waterway beside his farm.

(Time expired.)

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (9.4 p.m.): I should like first to thank hon. members for their

contributions to the debate. The first speaker was the hon. member for Bulimba, Mr. Houston, who dealt with the Queensland Meat Industry Board and the report on the Cannon Hill abattoir. Its future will depend very largely on the report of the Meat Inquiry Committee, which we expect in the very near future. From the point of view of this Government I hasten to assure him that we have a keen appreciation of the value of the abattoir at Cannon Hill and the important part it has played in the stabilisation of the meat industry not only in Brisbane in regard to the price of meat but also throughout Queensland in regard to the price of cattle.

Firstly, it must be appreciated that the abattoir at Cannon Hill is almost 50 years old. It was built in 1914. It is an eight-storey building, of reinforced concrete construction. From time to time investigations have been made into its condition, and the realistic approach of the Government is evidenced by the fact that over the years quite an amount of money has been spent on it. From 1949 to 1964 a total of £2,620,301 was spent on maintenance, repairs, reconditioning and the replacement of equipment at the Brisbane abattoir.

Of some concern to hon. members, of course, is the fact that this year's operations at Cannon Hill showed a loss of £123,000. Some factors, of course, had a very big influence in bringing about that loss. If hon. members will bear with me I will detail them—

Firstly, there was the additional cost of extended operations of a second beef-slaughtering shift until February 1964, amounting to £10,849, during the protracted negotiations with the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union for the determination of an appropriate industrial working agreement, under the direction of the State Industrial Commission, to fully commission the "on-the-rail" system of dressing beef carcasses. The consequential delay in obtaining the operational cost of savings under such operations from October, 1963, to February, 1964, cost approximately £20,000. In addition there were—

Increased labour costs consequent upon marginal increases and three weeks' leave, plus relative on-costs;

Costs incurred conditioning the plant to conform to standards laid down by United States Department of Agriculture for the preparation of meat for the American market;

A buyer's market for by-products at depressed values in the early part of the year;

The consequential decline in the volume of slaughterings on cattle kill equivalent basis, resulting in operations being below the economic break-even from August, 1963, to April, 1964;

Cessation of operations occasioned by an industrial strike from 5 March to 20 April, 1964, contributing substantially to the overall decline in total slaughterings for the year;

The board's cash resources were reduced by the substantial expenditure on new, and replacement of, capital assets;

The board's cash resources were also depleted during the six or seven weeks' industrial stoppage, as the result of a continuance of expenditure on maintaining the general plant services and the public meat market, aggregating during the period some £60,000;

Following the resumption of operations on 20 April, 1964, the board's funds were further reduced by operating labour costs for some six or seven weeks, pending a return flow of income from service fees and charges, together with the sales of by-products.

However, I am very pleased to be able to tell hon. members that subsequent upon the operations of the board in the current year, the improvement is quite substantial and the state of the board's affairs as at 3 October, 1964, indicates that the board's bank overdraft with the Commonwealth Trading Bank of Australia has been reduced by £91,114, from £105,738 to £14,624. These factors are due to a very large extent to operational cost savings accruing from the "on-the-rail" system of treating cattle, a substantial increase in revenue from the sale of manufactured by-products, revision of fees and charges, and other matters which would add to the board's profits.

Cannon Hill kills for about 118 operators. It is one of the cheapest killing facilities in the capital cities. What will happen to Cannon Hill is largely a matter of what is recommended in the report of the Meat Industry Committee of Inquiry and Cabinet's subsequent decision. Personally I have a very great appreciation of the value of the Cannon Hill abattoir.

The hon. member for Burnett mentioned macadamia nuts which, of course, the C.S.R. Company is now investigating and growing for production. He referred also to tobacco, which I will deal with later. He referred to the possibility of the Bundaberg abattoirs being converted into an export works. Again, of course, that is entirely dependent upon the report of the Meat Industry Committee of Inquiry. I would inform him that as a district abattoir the Bundaberg establishment is going along carefully and particularly well. Under the chairmanship of Mr. McCracken the board is doing a particularly good job. The profit for 1962-63 was £966, and the net profit this year has increased to £7,345. My advice to the hon. member for Burnett is that they would be advised to remain as a district abattoir. Of course, the hon. member echoed the sentiments of my speech when he mentioned the importance of research.

The hon. member for Barcoo drew the inference that I was critical of the amount of money allotted to my department. Of course, most Ministers are. I was not actually critical; I was sounding a warning. With the tremendous rate of expansion of cultivation in Queensland, with 200,000 new acres a year being opened up, the department's allocation is quickly eaten up. Additional research and the expansion of the advisory service for people in primary industries are both essential.

The hon. member referred also to soil conservation. The soil is owned by the people who live on it, and farmers have a grave responsibility to the nation as the owners of their soil. It is their responsibility to conserve the soil and look after it. My officers in the Soil Conservation Branch are their advisers. I stress that the people who own the soil have a responsibility to conserve it and prevent erosion. Advice is always available to them. This work cannot be done without the complementary efforts of both farmers and advisers.

Mr. Bromley: Would your department be prepared to lend some of these men equipment to have soil conservation practices extended?

Mr. ROW: We are doing as much as we can with soil conservation now. We are extending it very rapidly.

Mention was made of grain sorghum and wheat and also of the need for more veterinary assistance. The hon. member mentioned cotton. I pay a compliment here to Messrs. Eggleston and Thomas, of Brookstead, and Mr. Brimblecombe for their wonderful work in the production of irrigated cotton. I attended a field day at Brookstead this year and was surprised at the amount of work that has been done in the production of cotton.

The hon. member for Condamine paid a compliment to the Wheat Research Institute. I have been to Toowoomba, as no doubt has the Leader of the Opposition, and I have seen the tremendous strides in the propagation of wheat, the testing of varieties and testing for control of diseases. I compliment the Queensland wheat growers on their contribution to the Wheat Research Institute in Toowoomba. I sincerely suggest to all farmers that they subscribe to the voluntary contribution. When one sees the tremendous amount of work carried out—it is being extended in co-operation with a fertiliser company on soil fertility studies on the Downs—one gets some idea of the great value of the work being done.

The hon. member mentioned costs. They are largely the responsibility of the farmer himself. He can cut his costs and work within his budget. Of course, we have an Economics Research Branch—a branch of farm economics—which is always available to

advise farmers, as far as possible. It is a newly established branch and we are trying to expand it.

I thank the hon. member for Port Curtis very sincerely for his congratulatory remarks on the work of the officers in the department. In the short time that I have been the Minister I know that they are dedicated men who do a tremendous amount of work and are available at all times to give advice. The hon. member referred to the possibility of the shortage of veterinarians and stock inspectors and he said that in the absence on leave of a stock inspector an outbreak of disease could be serious. He has only to telephone my department and we would have a stock inspector on the spot in a matter of hours to investigate any disease.

Mr. Tucker: How many veterinarians have you overseas at the moment?

Mr. ROW: We have Mr. Ryley.

Mr. Tucker: And Mr. Donaldson.

Mr. ROW: He is overseas, but he may not come back. Mr. Grant has just returned. Mr. Ryley will go on with artificial insemination.

Mr. Tucker: There are a number of them.

Mr. ROW: Yes, there are a few.

The hon. member for Gregory was somewhat concerned about the Toorak Field Station at Julia Creek. I assure him that I was concerned about it. I was there in May. Firstly, I express my appreciation to the advisory committee there. It works in conjunction with Mr. Bell, our chief sheep man, and Mr. Entwistle, the manager of the Julia Creek station. The hon. member expressed concern about the lack of development at Toorak Field Station. I am very happy to say that last year we were able to have an amount of £20,000 allocated from the Public Works Loan Fund for this station for repairs to the buildings following the fire in the dining room, kitchen, and married employees' quarters, meat house and laundry, and for the construction of a new residence for the manager. This year for maintenance expenditure we have £22,640, which includes £3,000 for irrigation and water supply, £2,500 for new sheep yards, and £1,500 for repairs to the bore. Salary expenditure will be additional.

I hasten to assure the hon. member for Gregory that I am indeed conscious of the value of the Toorak Field Station and the work it must perform in that huge area where there are so many sheep. Our experiments in feeding and genetics are very important. The hon. member referred also to Mr. Hobbs, whose area was quarantined because of an outbreak of bovine contagious pleuropneumonia. I have written to him on the matter, outlining the reasons for what was done. Hon. members will have appreciated

from my speech today how much I emphasise the need for the control of bovine contagious pleuropneumonia. It has almost been eradicated in Queensland for its control is contributed to by the five mainland States and the Commonwealth. The scheme is controlled in the field by my department. I am pleased to see that Western Australia and the Northern Territory are entering the field of control of pleuropneumonia. Many officers are transferred to the West during the droving period to inoculate travelling stock. Hon. members will realise the importance of containing in an area all cattle suspected to having pleuropneumonia.

The hon. member for Tablelands expressed concern at the amount of money allocated to this department. The amount drawn from Consolidated Revenue is not nearly as much as I would desire; like every other Minister, I try to get as much as I can; but having regard to the size of the cake, I suppose I got as much as I was entitled to. We are not altogether dependent on Consolidated Revenue. A large amount of money comes from trust funds and other forms of revenue.

Mr. O'Donnell: It is still less than 2 per cent. of the whole.

Mr. ROW: It is still not enough; I am aware of that. The hon. member for Tablelands mentioned tobacco. If ever anyone has taken an active interest in the Queensland tobacco industry I am that man. I was the Minister who started the move towards stabilisation. The hon. member must appreciate that there are three tobacco-growing States in Australia—firstly, Queensland; secondly, New South Wales, the northern part of which sells its tobacco through Northgate, and the southern part of Victoria; and thirdly, Victoria. Up till last year Queensland was the only State that had a tobacco leaf marketing board with any statutory authority. Last year the Victorian Government introduced legislation to establish a tobacco leaf marketing board. This year the New South Wales Minister for Agriculture will introduce similar legislation. The process of establishing stabilisation is not altogether the responsibility of this State: it is the responsibility of the three eastern States and of the Commonwealth Government. It would be entirely inadvisable for Queensland to introduce a stabilisation scheme without the support of those two other States and the Commonwealth Government. When we met on 8 October this year we discussed a stabilisation plan. The whole question of tobacco is one of supply, demand, and over-production.

Under the present Commonwealth Government percentage scheme manufacturers are obliged to blend 41½ per cent. of Australian leaf with imported leaf to qualify for duty concessions. That 41½ per cent. takes 22,000,000 lb. of green leaf.

Mr. Duggan: Don't you think the percentage should be higher?

Mr. ROW: Of course it should be. The percentage unsold in Queensland this year is about 9 per cent. This year owing to increased production in Victoria, which has grown like Topsy, the Australian crop finally has aggregated about 35,000,000 lb. So far manufacturers have bought about 31,250,000 lb. of that tobacco. By the time they finish negotiating sales, the figure will probably be about 31,500,000 lb. The manufacturers have offered to stabilise tobacco production on an Australian quota of 22,000,000 lb. of dried leaf, but when this quantity is deducted from 1964 sales there remains about 9,000,000 lb. Manufacturers held excess stocks of 5,000,000 lb. before this year's sales, which means that by the completion of the current sales they will hold surplus stocks of about 14,000,000 lb. dried leaf. The position facing growers in Queensland—and, indeed, in the other two States—is that next year, without any increase in the figure of 41½ per cent., the manufacturers need buy only about 9,000,000 lb. to qualify for duty concessions at the present percentage rate of 41½ per cent.

I hasten to assure hon. members that Cabinet and the Government are vitally concerned about this because, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, we have a vital stake in the Tinaroo Falls dam and in the welfare of the people of the area, whose economy is bound up with it. At present the main economic crop which can be grown in the area is tobacco, which explains why I am particularly interested in stabilising the tobacco-growing industry on a sound footing. I am not at liberty to disclose yet what increase I hope there will be in the percentage because it is still the subject of very active negotiation. I do assure hon. members, however, that it is very much my concern that an increase be obtained. We are unable to work without the assent of the Commonwealth Government and the acquiescence of the other two States.

Mr. Donald: Change the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. ROW: They would not then be any better off.

The hon. member mentioned the growing of cotton on the Gilbert River. I realise that cotton can be grown under irrigation in this area. If someone is willing and able to grow it there, let him try, if he can overcome the difficulty of transporting the cotton to the ginnyery at Rockhampton. That is the main trouble. The only two ginneries in Queensland are those at Rockhampton and Brisbane.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: Why do they bring it from the Ord River?

Mr. ROW: I do not know anything about the Ord River scheme. There are plenty of places in Central Queensland and on the Darling Downs that will grow cotton.

The hon. member referred to the growing of maize. If ever any officers have done a great job in this field, they are the men in my department who have been endeavouring to develop a hybrid maize on the Atherton Tableland.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: I agree with you.

Mr. ROW: Yes, I know. I pay a compliment to Mr. Martin, who is the main plant-breeder there. Recently we have been able to get a glasshouse at Kairi, which will expedite the development of a new rust-resistant maize hybrid.

The hon. member for Tablelands mentioned, I thought with some nastiness, the fact that I did not go to New Guinea in April. I had other commitments then. I was in New Guinea in July, as I knew I would be, and there an officer of my department made a survey of the marketing possibilities of New Guinea, in accordance with my promise to local people.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: But you did not go with the farmers.

Mr. ROW: I sent an officer of my department.

The last matter mentioned was the growing of sugar cane on the Atherton Tableland. As is well known, the sugar industry was recently the subject of a committee of inquiry. That committee made certain recommendations that were adopted by the Government. Among them was the recommendation that no new mills be built. Probably the Atherton Tableland could grow sugar cane just as well as many other areas do. I do not doubt that for a moment. However, the recommendation of the committee was that the economy of the industry would be best served if no new mills were built in Queensland while the existing mills had the capacity to crush all the cane at present being grown.

Mr. Duggan: What is the Government's policy on the growing of sugar cane in the Cooktown area?

Mr. ROW: The growing of sugar cane in that area is now the subject of experiments being carried out there by the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. We have plots up there on which about five varieties are being tried out, and that will be extended next year. We shall then have some idea of the sugar-growing potential of the Cooktown area.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.32 p.m.