

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 1970**

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**THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER, 1970**

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

**PAPERS**

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

## Reports—

Licensing Commission, for the year 1969-70.

Registrar of Co-operative and Other Societies, for the year 1969-70.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamation under the Radioactive Substances Act Amendment Act 1970.

Order in Council under the Medical Act 1939-1969.

Regulation under The Nurses Act of 1964.

**QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE****GRANTS TO TOWNSVILLE ORGANISATIONS  
FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

**Mr. Aikens**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

Of the \$486,288.46 granted by the Cultural Activities Section to organisations in less than two years, how much was granted to organisations in Townsville and what are the names of the organisations and the amounts granted to each and for what purpose?

*Answer:—*

“A total of \$1,227 was allocated to Townsville cultural organisations. The recipients were (a) Goethe Society, Townsville Branch; (b) Townsville Independent Players; (c) Vacation School in Art and Music, Townsville. The following amounts were allocated for purposes as shown, (a) Goethe Society, Townsville Branch, \$50—for text books and literature, in German; (b) Townsville Independent Players, \$500—to strengthen theatre in North Queensland; (c) Vacation School in Art and Music, Townsville, \$677.60—(adult education and university, combined venture). Every bona fide application from Townsville has been assisted to the maximum possible within available resources. In addition to the above direct grants to local organisations, Townsville benefited from the Government grant to the Eisteddfod Council of North Queensland, whose venue rotates to include Townsville, and in which most of the cultural organisations in Townsville take part. Similarly, the Arts Council of Australia (Queensland Division), Townsville Branch, ensures regular services to Townsville by the Federal professional companies and also the State professional companies:

Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Opera Company, Queensland Ballet Company, Queensland Theatre Company. Townsville also benefited from the Adventures in Music project conducted recently by Mrs. Mira Henderson. The Honourable Member's interest in cultural activities especially in the field of music, is acknowledged and appreciated."

#### POLICE INTERVENTION ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

**Mr. Aikens**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in *The Sunday Mail* of September 13, wherein it was reported that the Police Commissioner, Mr. Whitrod, had come to a mutual understanding with the Vice-Chancellor of the University that police would not enter the campus, without invitation, unless a serious crime such as rape or major theft had been committed? If so, as several Queensland Acts provide that police can enter any other private building, residence or area without warrant or invitation and make arrests, on whose authority did Mr. Whitrod grant special immunity to the University from the operation of these Acts?

(2) Because of the grave public disquiet about the University, will he instruct Mr. Whitrod to make himself conversant with Queensland law and get on with the job of enforcing that law without fear or favour?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "I have seen the article referred to by the Honourable Member. The Commissioner of Police has assured me that no arrangement has been entered into between himself and the Vice-Chancellor of the University in respect of the police entering the University when the police are lawfully entitled to so enter. Police will enter the University when they are legally entitled to do so. There are certain restrictions placed on the entry of police to the University by law and consequently police cannot enter the University at will but can only enter under certain circumstances such as to investigate a crime, to apprehend a criminal, under a warrant or summons or by invitation. The University is controlled by the provisions of *"The University of Queensland Act of 1965"* under which Act authority to deal with students or other persons committing different acts of misconduct designated in the Act is given to the University authorities. The Honourable Member can rest assured that the Commissioner of Police will ensure that the laws of this State will be enforced without fear or favour."

#### CASUAL RAILWAY FETTLERS, BLACKALL

**Mr. O'Donnell**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

(1) Are casual fettlers employed at the Blackall centre being dismissed as from Friday, September 18? If so, how many, for what reason and from what office did the direction come?

(2) In these circumstances of dismissal, have the employees been told that they will be put off and have they also been requested to sign papers of resignation although they do not wish to resign?

(3) Because of the unemployment situation due to drought conditions, will he have this action reconsidered?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 3) "Three temporary fettlers each with a short period of service are being paid off from Friday, September 18. These men were employed only for the purpose of making up lost time in gangs. The ganger erroneously used a standard form intended for use in the instance of men resigning from the service and on which are recorded the residential address of the employee resigning and the station at which it is desired payment be made."

#### BIBOOHRA STATE SCHOOL

**Mr. B. Wood**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) When will work be carried out at the Biboohra State School to remove a partition and so enlarge a classroom?

(2) When will a septic system be provided at the school?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "Plans for these works have been completed and estimates of cost are being prepared. When these are received, consideration will be given to approval of the works in the light of funds available."

#### HEARING AIDS

**Mr. B. Wood**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) How many companies are presently supplying hearing aids in Queensland and what training do the employees receive?

(2) Has his Department received many complaints of unsatisfactory hearing aids and of cases where aids have been recommended by companies when doctors have advised that they are of no use?

(3) Is any control exercised over the high price charged for hearing aids?

(4) If no uniform action for control of the supply of hearing aids can be agreed on by the State Governments, can his Department prevent abuses?

Answers:—

(1) "Information concerning the number of companies supplying hearing aids in Queensland is not available within the Department of Health. I would refer the Honourable Member to my Answer on August 21, 1969, wherein I indicated that the Department of Health does not exercise any control over the standard of hearing aids sold in Queensland or the qualifications of persons who supply and fit such aids.

(2) "No."

(3) "Price control does not come within the province of the Department of Health."

(4) "No."

#### ELECTRICITY TARIFFS

(a) **Mr. F. P. Moore**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

What are the rates of charges for electricity for industrial and domestic uses by all Regional Electricity Boards and the Southern Electric Authority?

Answer:—

"The rates of charges for electricity for industrial and domestic uses by all the Regional Electricity Boards and Southern Electric Authority of Queensland are contained in tariff schedules which are published in the *Queensland Government Gazette* and which I table herewith."

*Paper.*—Whereupon Mr. Rae laid upon the Table of the House the schedules referred to.

(b) **Mr. Wallis-Smith**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

(1) What is the basic net rate per unit of electricity supplied for (a) domestic use, (b) farm lighting and power, (c) commercial and industrial lighting and (d) commercial and industrial power and heating in cities, towns and shires covered by (i) the Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Electricity Board, (ii) the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board and (iii) the Cairns Regional Electricity Board and from what dates did each of the charges apply?

(2) Is any increase in tariffs anticipated in any of the areas and, if so, to what extent?

Answers:—

(1) "The basic net rate per unit of electricity supplied by the Wide Bay-Burnett, Capricornia and Cairns Regional Electricity Boards for the purposes outlined by the Honourable Member is contained in tariff schedules which are published in the *Queensland Government Gazette* and which I table herewith. The

dates from which each of the charges applied are stated in the schedules which are tabled."

(2) "The matter of any increase in tariffs is one for the Regional Electricity Boards to consider at their budget meetings. The Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Electricity Board has already adopted its 1970-71 budgets without increase in tariffs. The operating budgets of the Capricornia and Cairns Regional Electricity Boards are to be considered at budget meetings later in the present month."

*Paper.*—Whereupon Mr. Rae laid upon the Table of the House the schedules referred to.

#### SUSPENSION OF RAILWAY FIREMAN GERMAINE

**Mr. Bousen**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

(1) Was fireman Germaine suspended following a collision between two trains at Narangba on June 8?

(2) What charges have been preferred against him and, if no charges have been preferred, why is he still under suspension?

(3) As fireman Germaine is a married man with a family and has been deprived of his normal weekly income for the past three months, will he arrange for his immediate reinstatement?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2 and 3) "The circumstances surrounding this accident are at present *sub judice*."

#### ACCOMMODATION FOR HEAD TEACHER, MT. SURPRISE

**Mr. Wallis-Smith**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

As there is no possibility of obtaining suitable private accommodation for the head teacher at Mt. Surprise—

(1) Have plans been discussed for the building of teacher accommodation there?

(2) Will he give this project his early consideration in order to eliminate the unhappy circumstances which have prevailed during the terms of the past three teachers?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes. The construction of single teacher's quarters at Mt. Surprise has been listed with a high priority."

(2) "Yes. The site has been surveyed and plans are in course of preparation. Construction will proceed as finance becomes available."

## STANDARD OF HOUSING FOR ABORIGINES

**Mr. Wallis-Smith**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Conservation,—

Are new homes presently being built for Aborigines (a) ceiled and (b) lined? If not, will he have them ceiled, together with all houses previously constructed, and so bring the standard closer to that required by local government building regulations?

*Answer:—*

"Where local circumstances and conditions justify and warrant, and the type of modular construction ensures vermin-proofing, new homes are ceiled and lined. However, in some areas, particularly Torres Strait, single sheeting is used in the wall construction for vermin-control reasons. The Honourable Member is assured that wherever possible ceiling and lining of premises is favoured by the Department, and will be effected consistent with availability of funds and personnel."

## LOCAL AUTHORITY DIFFERENTIAL RATING SYSTEM

**Mr. Davis**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

Will he consider implementing a differential rating system in Brisbane and provincial cities?

*Answer:—*

"The Brisbane City Council and other city councils already have power to make and levy differential rates in that they are empowered to make and levy lesser rates on rural lands. City councils outside Brisbane also have power under the Local Government Act to make and levy separate rates on the rateable value of land in a benefited area to defray the cost of a particular function of local government. The conferring of a similar power on the Brisbane City Council would involve the passing of enabling legislation and, as the Honourable Member will appreciate, it would be improper for me to make any pronouncement thereon."

## MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION CERTIFICATES

**Mr. Davis**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

(1) Why is there a delay of up to three weeks for the return of registration papers and windscreen stickers from the Main Roads Department city office when payment is sent by post?

(2) Would a motorist be covered by third-party insurance in the interim where payment was sent before the registration due date and papers were returned after that date?

*Answers:—*

(1) "A delay of three weeks would be unusual for a normal transaction with everything in order. With the large and fluctuating volumes, average processing time would be seven to fourteen days. At the present time, certificates and labels are being despatched for mail receipts during the last week."

(2) "Yes, provided he has acquired a new Third Party Insurance Certificate if his notice to renew indicates the previous insurer has declined to renew his insurance cover."

## STAFF, POLICE DEPOT STORE

**Mr. Harris**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

With reference to the police depot store—

(1) How many police officers are employed and what are their respective ranks, salaries and duties?

(2) How many civilians are employed and what are their salaries and duties?

(3) Has a qualified tailor been appointed to the staff? If so, on what salary and what are his duties?

(4) Was the position of tailor advertised in the *Queensland Government Gazette* or newspapers and, if so, on what date?

(5) Have any tools of trade been installed to assist the tailor in carrying out his duties?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Six—1 Sergeant 1/C, fortnightly salary \$201.30. He is in charge of the Store and general supervision of staff and work. 1 Sergeant 2/C, fortnightly salary \$190.90. Clerical duties and enquiries, including applications for supplies and interviewing contractors. 2 Senior Constables, fortnightly salary \$175.60. Clerical duties in relation to issue of uniforms, etc. 1 Constable 1/C, fortnightly salary \$156.40. Clerical duties and handling despatch of all stores and checking property of members on transfer. 1 Constable, fortnightly salary \$137.30. Clerical duties in relation to stores."

(2) "Two. Weekly salary \$50. Employed as Storemen and Packers."

(3) "Yes. Weekly salary \$79.95. His duties relate to the inspection of uniforms in relation to the quality, workmanship and appearance."

(4) "The position for a tailor was advertised in the *Telegraph* on June 5, 1970 and in *The Courier-Mail* on June 6, 1970."

(5) "No."

ROUTE OF VIETNAM MORATORIUM  
MARCH

**Mr. Hughes**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) Has he fully considered the risk and inconvenience in granting a permit to organisers of the moratorium march to conduct a march through inner-city streets in Brisbane?

(2) Is he aware of the inconvenience to the public, the effect of re-routing public transport and the traffic chaos which will be caused by the issue of a permit for such a march in these streets?

(3) Will he give full cognisance to the pleas of Members of Parliament, organisations, associations and the public to refuse a permit for the march to take place in inner-city streets but allow it for streets in outer areas?

*Answers:—*

(1) "The matter of issuing a permit for a procession or a march in Brisbane is one for consideration by the District Superintendent of Traffic, Brisbane, and, before granting the permit in question, all factors were taken into consideration."

(2) "I am aware that inconvenience is caused to the public in any procession which covers inner-city streets. The permit has been issued for the moratorium march to proceed via Roma Street, left into Ann Street, right into Creek Street, right into Adelaide Street, and right through King George Square to the Roma Street Forum so as to cause the least possible inconvenience to members of the public."

(3) "Full consideration was given to all aspects of the matter and to the impact which would be caused by the issue of a permit."

FINES IMPOSED ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

**Mr. Hughes**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the fine of \$25 each imposed in the Magistrates Court on two students, namely James Barnard Prentice and Michael Marcel Thompson, for having caused damage, broken into public property and trespassed?

(2) Is he aware that in a recent case a young girl was convicted and sentenced to eight week-ends' gaol for stealing a pair of panties?

(3) In view of the grave disquiet by the public at the lawlessness of malcontents in the community who have shown little or no respect for person or property, will he call for the transcript of evidence and consider taking action to appeal against the inadequacy of the sentences of both Prentice and Thompson?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Yes."

(3) "These were offences under the Commonwealth Defence Act and the Commonwealth Crimes Act and were prosecuted by the Commonwealth Crown Solicitor's Office. The question of an appeal, if one lies, is a matter for the Commonwealth authorities."

ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRY BY AIR  
POLLUTION CONTROL COUNCIL

**Mr. Hughes**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a statement by Mrs. Judith Wright McKinney, President of the Queensland Wildlife Preservation Society, that the Society was pleased with anti-pollution trends in Brisbane and Ipswich?

(2) What assistance has been given to industry by the Air Pollution Control since enforcement of the Clean Air Act?

(3) What beneficial effect has this had in Brisbane and Ipswich in combating pollution of air and water?

(4) Are there obstacles to the effective implementation of the Act by Public Service machinery or legislation as outlined by Mrs. McKinney?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Yes."

(2) "The Division of Air Pollution Control is constantly in touch with industry offering advice and guidance."

(3) "There has been a general improvement in the matter of air pollution in the declared areas."

(4) "I have no knowledge of any obstacles which prevent the implementation of the Clean Air Act."

OFF-COURSE POOLS AND DIVIDENDS  
FOR T.A.B. INVESTORS

**Mr. Jensen**, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

(1) In view of his confirmation that dividends paid to off-course patrons by the T.A.B. are reduced by approximately \$500,000 per annum by merging with on-course operations and that advantage can be taken of the off-course patron by persons on-course, is this situation fair and reasonable to off-course punters?

(2) Will he examine the practicability of separating T.A.B. pool and dividends entirely from the on-course totalisator and arranging with the clubs to have T.A.B. agency windows clearly distinct and separate from the on-course totalisator to be available on-course for those who wish

to utilise them under the same conditions of race closing times, etc., as apply to T.A.B. agencies off-course?

*Answers:—*

(1) "The Honourable Member is under a misapprehension. I did not imply in my Answer to his Question on 16th instant that 'dividends paid to patrons are reduced by approximately \$500,000 per annum'. What I did say was that 'it is impossible to calculate the amount involved'."

(2) "No. The Government in establishing the T.A.B. indicated that it desired to combine racing interests and not to establish betting pools away from race tracks."

#### SCHOOL STUDENT ALLOWANCES

**Mr. Bromley**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

How much has his Department paid in student allowances for the education of pupils attending (a) State high schools and (b) denominational schools, for each denomination, in 1967-68, 1968-69 and 1969-70?

*Answer:—*

"Student allowances paid during the years mentioned were as follows:—

—	State High Schools	Denominational Schools and Grammar Schools
1967-1968	\$ 734,695	\$ 2,482,486
1968-1969	1,238,467	2,343,049
1969-1970	1,278,557	2,857,356

The above figures include Junior remote area allowances, Senior remote area scholarships, student allowances, text book allowances, tuition fees and per capita grants. Tuition fees and per capita grants are not payable to State high schools. The figures for each denomination are not readily available. In 1967-68 some second-term tuition fees were paid before June 30—hence the figure for that year was higher than that for 1968-69."

#### CONVALESCENT AND AGED PERSONS' HOMES

**Mr. Bromley**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) How many convalescent and aged people's homes are presently registered?

(2) Are all such homes operating licensed?

(3) What amount of subsidy is paid to these homes from (a) State and (b) Commonwealth sources?

(4) Are all homes receiving subsidy? If not, which are they?

(5) What inspections are carried out to see that (a) the standard of treatment is adequate and (b) safety features meet the necessary requirements?

*Answers:—*

(1 and 2) "The Health Act 1937-68 prohibits the operation of a convalescent home otherwise than under and in accordance with a licence. There are 93 convalescent homes currently licensed. The State Health Department does not license aged persons' homes."

(3 and 4) "The State Government pays no subsidy to private convalescent homes. Aged people's homes in receipt of a capital subsidy from the Commonwealth Department of Social Services are entitled to a State Government subsidy for furniture, furnishing, and equipment varying from \$400 to \$500 per person. Chronic sick hospitals under the control of church or charitable organisations receive a capital subsidy from the State Government of 50 per cent. of the cost to a maximum of \$2,500 per public bed. A maintenance subsidy of \$1.50 per day per person is paid for those patients not in receipt of Commonwealth supplementary benefit. I would suggest to the Honourable Member that he directs any question regarding subsidy by the Commonwealth Government to the appropriate Commonwealth Department."

(5) "The medical treatment of patients in convalescent homes is the responsibility of the patients' own medical adviser. Departmental officers carry out routine inspections to ensure the licensees adhere to the Convalescent Home Regulations. The licensee must satisfy the local Fire Brigade inspectors."

#### HOUSING COMMISSION RENTAL HOUSES, BRACKEN RIDGE

**Mr. Dean**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) What is the number of State rental homes in the Queensland Housing Commission area at Bracken Ridge?

(2) Are any of the tenants in arrears with their rent and, if so, how many and what is the total amount of arrears?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Seventy-five."

(2) "Computer statistics for week ending 13th instant, indicating accounts four weeks or more in arrear, include 11 tenants at Bracken Ridge. The amount now owing by these tenants is \$565.11 subject to any payments in transit."

## NEW CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC

**Mr. Davies**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) When plans for the new conservatorium of music have been completed, will they be available for inspection by the public and, if so, where?

(2) Has any request been made for an increase in the size of the concert hall? If so, what dimensions were suggested?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Normally plans of Government buildings are not made available for inspection by the public. If the Honourable Member so desires I shall be pleased to arrange for the Honourable Member or anyone particularly interested to view the completed plans in due course."

(2) "In early draft plans provision had been made for a concert hall to seat 606 persons plus a stage and other ancillary facilities. Financial considerations have necessitated the change in plans to provide the multi-purpose hall to which I referred in my Answer of the 15th instant."

## TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

**Mr. Davies** for **Mr. Baldwin**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) How many teachers in the (a) primary and (b) secondary sections of State education have no academic qualification beyond (i) Junior Public and (ii) Senior Public examinations?

(2) How many of the Junior entrants who continued to University study from 1965, completed the requirements for the A.Ed. certificate?

*Answers:—*

(1) "To obtain the information requested by the Honourable Member would require a special investigation involving diversion of officers from their normal duties. This action is not warranted. Nevertheless attention is drawn to the fact that all teachers who entered courses of teacher education following the Junior or the Senior examinations have subsequently undergone further full-time general and professional education."

(2) "This information is not readily available."

## ERROR IN QUESTION

**Mr. SPEAKER**: In view of the statement by the hon. member for Kurilpa that there is a printer's error in question No. 16, I point out that I have had handed to me the original question tendered by the hon. member. Subparagraph (3) of the question as printed in the Business Paper is worded exactly the same as the written original handed in by the hon. member.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

## AUSTRALIAN LABOUR PARTY AND VIETNAM MORATORIUM

**Mr. McKECHNIE**: I direct a question to the Premier, by withdrawing from the Opposition march tomorrow, has acknowledged the disruptive and disloyal influences associated with that march, would the Premier advise which political figures are still associating themselves and their political party with this encouragement to, and on behalf of, the Viet Cong?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN**: I naturally was pleased yesterday when the Leader of the Opposition intimated in this House that he agreed with me in the earlier statement I had made that no loyal Australian—

**Mr. HOUSTON**: I rise to a point of order. At no stage did I mention that I agreed with anyone, especially the Premier, in any statement that I made. The Premier is debating a matter that I raised in the House yesterday, which is contrary to Standing Orders.

**Mr. SPEAKER**: Order! If the Leader of the Opposition denies making such a statement, the Premier must accept his denial.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN**: Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition intimated to me that he was going to do exactly what I suggested to him when I said that no loyal Australian should take part in the moratorium march tomorrow. Naturally, I am very pleased. Of course, I am not in a position to say whether the attitude or agreement of the Leader of the Opposition and my attitude, as well as that of many other people, is also that of all members of the Opposition. As Leader of the Opposition, his decision should apply to all members of his party.

## POLICE INTERVENTION ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

**Mr. AIKENS**: I ask the Minister for Education: In view of the disturbing reply today by the Minister for Works and Housing to my question concerning the application of Queensland's laws, which appears to indicate that the University of Queensland Act overrides the provisions of the Traffic Act, the Health Act as it relates to drugs and many other Acts, which apply to all other persons, properties and areas, will he give serious consideration to amending the University of Queensland Act to remedy this intolerable situation and place the university on exactly the same legal level as any other buildings and areas in the State? Will he indicate that he will not be dissuaded from doing that by the pusillanimous attitude of the hon. member for Toowong?

**Mr. SPEAKER**: Order! The question is rather lengthy.



**Mr. FLETCHER:** It is rather a lengthy question. I will make sure of its text when I receive a copy of "Hansard" and will examine all its implications most scrupulously and with all the care that the hon. member would desire.

QUEENSLAND BRANCH, AUSTRALIAN LABOUR PARTY

**Mr. AIKENS:** I ask the Minister for Justice: Has his attention been drawn to an article in "The Sydney Morning Herald" of 22 August, 1970, headed "From the Other Side of the A.L.P.—Tom Burns", in which it is suggested that the Federal executive of the A.L.P. might move in to take over the Queensland branch of the A.L.P. after it took over the Victorian branch? If so, has consideration been given to the legal issues involved as they affect property, bank balances and other assets, and the way in which Mr. Harris, secretary of the moratorium committee, may be involved? If so, will he inform the House as fully as possible on the matter?

**Dr. DELAMOTHE:** Apart from reports in Sydney newspapers, a great deal of publicity has been given in the Press in Queensland and other States to the take-over of the Victorian A.L.P. by the Federal A.L.P. executive. I understand that one of the persons who took a leading part in this action is the president of the executive, Mr. Burns.

As to the possibility of similar action being taken in Queensland, one of the reasons given for the take-over of the Victorian A.L.P. was that its executive was reputed to have been under the control of a body of trade unions. In Queensland over 75 per cent. of the Q.C.E. is composed of trade unionists. In addition to being president of the Federal executive of the A.L.P., Mr. Burns is the paid secretary of the Q.C.E., so I think it would be beyond the bounds of possibility that he would sack his employers.

**Mr. Bennett:** Were you with the "ginger group" the other morning when they got stuck into "Chalkie" in his room?

**Dr. DELAMOTHE:** Be quiet.

**Mr. Houston:** Are these your opinions, or are they backed by fact?

**Dr. DELAMOTHE:** They are backed by fact, as the hon. gentleman knows.

With regard to Mr. Harris, it is obvious to all that he is acting as the front man for the Trades Hall in the moratorium. This Mr. Harris, who the Leader of the Opposition denies is a member of the A.L.P., was a member of the A.L.P. in New South Wales and, on his transfer to Queensland, he joined an A.L.P. branch in Brisbane.

POLICE INVESTIGATIONS, TOWNSVILLE CHILD MURDERS

**Mr. TUCKER:** I direct a question to the Minister for Works and Housing. What is the present position of police investigations into the horrible murder of the two little Mackay sisters of Townsville? Has any headway been made?

**Mr. HODGES:** We still have 25 detectives engaged in these investigations. They are pursuing leads that come forward from the public from time to time, but no definite headway has been made up to this stage.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I desire to direct a supplementary question to the Minister for Works and Housing. As 600 police officers are to be congregated in Brisbane tomorrow, 150 of whom are from outside areas, on the supposition that something may happen at the moratorium, and as \$10,000 is to be spent in this direction, why was not the same massive effort made to apprehend the Townsville sadist?

**Mr. HODGES:** First of all, I could say that there is a possibility that the number of criminals in the march tomorrow is greater. Apart from the 25 detectives that I have said are engaged in the Townsville investigations, the whole of the Police Force of Queensland, numbering more than 3,000, is watching for the person who perpetrated these murders. I emphasise that more than 3,000 police are watching for the killer, and 25 detectives are giving their undivided attention to the investigations.

FUND FOR VIET CONG SUPPORT

**Mr. MILLER:** I wish to direct a question without notice to the Minister for Justice. I preface my question by saying that, in the 9 September issue of "Tribune", the Communist publication, it is reported that a solidarity fund for unqualified aid for the Viet Cong has been launched in New South Wales with an initial contribution by the Builders Labourers' Union. Is the Minister aware of any such fund in Queensland and, if so, has any union contributed to it. Is this action in accord with the laws of this State?

**Dr. DELAMOTHE:** I am not aware of the newspaper reference, nor has the existence of a similar fund here been brought to my notice. Should it be brought to my notice I will certainly investigate its legality under the laws of the State and, as its objects would be directed to giving aid and comfort to the enemy, I would certainly bring the matter before the notice of the Commonwealth Attorney-General.

VIETNAM MORATORIUM MARCH

**Mr. HINZE:** I direct the following question without notice to the Minister for Works and Housing: Has the Minister's attention been drawn to page 3 of today's "Courier-Mail" where it is reported, relative

to a flagrant act of lawlessness by La Trobe University students, that police used batons to protect the rights of decent citizens, and that the officer in charge of police said—

“They needed what they got. They got some baton today and they’ll get a lot more in the future.”?

Will the Minister inform the House if it is intended to adopt the same attitude towards lawlessness in this State?

**Mr. HODGES:** First of all, I appeal to everyone taking part in the march tomorrow not to engage in any violence or property damage, because police have been issued with the necessary equipment to maintain law and order in this city. If there is any lawlessness or defiance of any lawful order, the police have been instructed to use all means within their power to maintain law and order. I again appeal to those participating in the march to make it peaceful, without any demonstrations at all, because police have been instructed to carry out their duties to maintain law and order.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! If the House continues with noisy interjections during question time, I shall have no alternative but to terminate it.

#### AGE STIPULATION, SECOND-CLASS ENGINEERS

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** I wish to ask the Minister for Labour and Tourism a question without notice. In view of the fact that, for the granting of a second-class engineer's ticket, the Machinery Department stipulates five years' apprenticeship and an age of 21 years, will the Minister consider rectifying this anomaly as the apprenticeship period has been altered and young men are now completing their training at ages between 19 and 20 years, in accordance with the lawful indentures already signed by them?

**Mr. HERBERT:** I shall have the matter investigated by the Apprenticeship Executive.

#### INVESTIGATION OF HEALTH PREPARATIONS

**Dr. CRAWFORD:** I wish to ask the Minister for Health the following question without notice:—

(1) Is the Minister aware of a preparation called Stratton's Rheumatic Powder (only one of many such preparations), which purports to achieve “remarkable results” in a series of diseases such as rheumatism, arthritis, sciatica, lumbago, etc.?

(2) Would he agree that powdered grass roots would be as efficient in the treatment of rheumatism?

(3) Does the Health Department make any real effort to perform a watchdog role to prevent misleading advertising, as with

this rheumatic powder, and with the so-called “orange” products discussed in the House by the hon. member for Landsborough?

(4) Will he consider reorganising this function of the Health Department so that it can provide a service comparable with that of the Food and Drug Administration service in the United States, bearing in mind that that department even prevented thalidomide from being sold in the United States?

**Mr. TOOTH:** If the hon. member will provide me with a sample of Stratton's Rheumatic Powder, I shall have it subjected to very careful analysis and provide him with a copy of the analyst's report.

With regard to advertising procedures, this matter falls within the purview of my colleague the Minister for Labour and Tourism, to whom I suggest the question be directed.

The question generally was very long and contained quite a lot of detail. If the hon. member cares to write me a letter about this matter dealing with all the other points that he has raised, it will be given careful consideration.

#### PRIORITY OF SCHOOL PROJECTS

**Mr. NEWTON:** I wish to direct a question without notice to the Minister for Works and Housing. In view of the number of projects for primary and secondary schools that are held over each year because of a shortage of finance, do those projects receive any priority in the new financial year?

**Mr. HODGES:** All projects are placed on the priority list by the Department of Education, and those carried over from one year receive consideration in the list for the following year.

#### SUBSIDY FOR TRAINING OF NURSES IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS

**Mr. MELLOY:** I ask the Minister for Health: In view of the fact that many nurses trained in private hospitals eventually help to staff Government hospitals, has he given any consideration to subsidising the cost of training nurses in private hospitals?

**Mr. TOOTH:** I have recently received some suggestions to this effect, but so far the matter has not received any great consideration. If the hon. member submits any views that he has on the matter, they will receive consideration.

#### ROUTE OF VIETNAM MORATORIUM MARCH

**Mr. HUGHES:** I direct the following question to the Minister for Works and Housing: In view of his answer to my question this morning, in which he stated that a permit has been approved for a moratorium march in the inner-city streets “so as to

cause the least possible inconvenience to the public", will the Minister consider altering the route to an area further from the inner city so that the march will cause the least possible inconvenience to the public?

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! That question appears to have been answered previously. However, I will leave it to the Minister in case he has anything more to add. I think the question is similar to one of which notice has already been given.

**Mr. HODGES:** In accordance with its policy, this Government never repudiates any agreement it has entered into.

**Mr. HUGHES:** I ask the following supplementary question of the Minister: In that case, will he assure Parliament and the people of Queensland that in future, in cases in which a permit is required for such forms of demonstration, which carry with them malcontents, a sense of lawlessness, and a stated intention to break the law, no permit will be given for such marches in inner-city streets?

**Mr. HODGES:** In reply to the first part of the hon. member's question, I point out that permits are never issued for demonstrations. However, all matters are taken into consideration before a permit is issued for a march in the city area.

#### FINES IMPOSED ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

**Mr. HUGHES:** I ask the Minister for Justice: In view of the fines of \$25 imposed by the court on university students Prentice and Thompson for trespassing and lawlessness relative to property at the Queensland University, and in view of the lawless actions of certain malcontents in the community who have shown no respect for property or persons, and having in mind the effect that this will have on the jurists of this State in dealing with similar offenders, will the Minister, as he has stated that this is a Commonwealth matter, take the matter up with the appropriate Commonwealth authority and request that an appeal be lodged by it against the inadequacy of the sentence?

**Dr. DELAMOTHE:** I shall be speaking with the Commonwealth Attorney-General tomorrow on another matter, and I will certainly pass on to him the substance conveyed in the hon. member's question.

#### CONSCRIPTION FOR WAR SERVICE IN VIETNAM

**Mr. BROMLEY:** I direct a question to the Premier. As one who sought and gained exemption from military service during the declared war with Japan more than 25 years ago, how does he now support the compulsory conscription of 20-year-old Australians for the undeclared war in Vietnam?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** As the hon. member very well knows—I made a statement to the Press on this subject—his question is entirely false and wrong. Because of that, I refuse to make any further statement on it.

#### HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES, CAIRNS

**Mr. R. JONES:** My question is directed to the Minister for Works and Housing. What is the reason for the delay in building Queensland Housing Commission homes on prepared lots at Cairns?

**Mr. HODGES:** As the hon. member very well knows, because he introduced a deputation to me several weeks ago when I explained that we have had difficulty in obtaining lots in Cairns, arrangements have been made for the calling for tenders for homes. One lot of tenders has been called but, as the prices were excessive, we called fresh tenders and these are now being processed.

#### COAL AND OIL SHALE MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

##### INITIATION

**Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Coal and Oil Shale Mine Workers (Pensions) Act 1941-1969 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

#### REVOCATION OF STATE FOREST

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Lands) (11.55 a.m.): I move—

"(1) That this House agrees that the proposals by the Governor in Council to revoke the setting apart and declaration as State Forest of:—

(a) The whole of State Forest 99, parish of San Jose, containing an area of about 1,600 acres—and,

(b) All that piece or part of State Forest 79, parishes of Eena, Sands and Whetstone described as portions 72 and 73 and areas 'A' and 'B' as shown on plans Mh. 297, Mh. 315 and FTY. 331 deposited in the Survey Office and containing an area of about 2,495 acres—and,

(c) All that piece or part of State Forest 6, parish of Shotover described as areas 'B' and 'C' as shown on plan FTY. 342 deposited in the Survey Office and containing an area of about 409 acres—and,

(d) All that piece or part of State Forest 154, parishes of Vignoles, Brigalow, Waggaba and Bulli described as area 'A'; as shown on plan FTY. 316

deposited in the Survey Office and containing an area of about 150 acres—and,

(e) All that piece or part of State Forest 151, parishes of Haly, Neumgna and Tureen described as areas 'A', 'B' and 'C' as shown on plan FTY. 407 deposited in the Survey Office and containing an area of about 3,720 acres,

be carried out.

"(2) That Mr. Speaker convey a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Lands for submission to His Excellency the Governor in Council."

Hon. members who have perused the notes and illustrating maps that I tabled with the formal proposal will be aware that this motion makes provision for the revocation as State forest and redesignation as Crown land of the whole of a small State forest between Rockhampton and Gladstone as well as parts of four other State forests, one located in the vicinity of Inglewood, one along the Expedition Range west of Baralaba and the others near Millmerran and the Bunya Mountains, respectively.

Before commenting on the reasons that prompted me to move the motion, I would like to say that all five proposals have the full support of the Conservator of Forests.

It is also appropriate at this stage to draw the attention of hon. members to the substantial increase that has taken place since the Government took office in 1957 in the total area of land permanently dedicated to the production of timber. When the Government took over, the total area of State forests was 5,026,626 acres. This area has been steadily and consistently increased over the years and now stands at just over 7,500,000 acres.

While this increase can be regarded as satisfactory, many more State forests are required to meet the growing need for timber products, and, with this in mind, the Conservator of Forests, in co-operation with the Land Administration Commission, is constantly examining new areas where the best future land use is considered to be the growing of timber.

At the same time, existing State forests are reviewed from time to time, and in cases such as those we are about to consider, where the land is better suited to purposes other than permanent timber production and the excisions proposed do not adversely affect the management or protection of the remainder of the State forest, revocation of particular areas is recommended.

To return to the proposals, the first is the revocation of the whole of a State forest of about 1,600 acres between Rockhampton and Gladstone. This State forest was proclaimed in 1915 to preserve a stand of spotted gum that was growing on part of the area. At that time the balance of the

reserve was covered with a low vine scrub. Over the years leases have been granted for grazing in connection with adjoining dairy farms, and scrub clearing has been authorised.

The Conservator of Forests decided to recommend the revocation of the whole area, after logging of marketable timber following on a joint Lands/Forestry investigation carried out in 1963 which disclosed that commercial forest occurred on only about 400 acres, while the greater part of the remainder of the area had been developed by the lessees as pastures or had been cultivated. The timbered section of the State forest has recently been logged on a clean-out basis.

The next proposal is for the revocation of about 2,495 acres from a State forest in the Inglewood area. The areas recommended for excision from this State forest formerly carried brigalow and associated scrub species. They have been leased for grazing purposes for over 30 years and, as the land had very little potential for forestry purposes, development to improve the grazing value has been permitted.

Of the total area recommended for excision, about 2,063 acres, being portions 72 and 73, Parish of Sands, is leased by Mr. J. D. Springborg, of Inglewood. He has developed the area by ringbarking and cultivation, constructed substantial improvements, including dwelling, sheds, yards, etc., and has enclosed the whole lease with dog and rabbit-proof fences.

The balance of the area proposed for excision is leased by Mr. E. T. Potter, of Yelarbon, who, likewise, has developed and cultivated his area and constructed a house, sheds, dam and fencing.

It was decided to recommend excision of this section of State Forest 79 following consideration of a report on a joint Lands/Forestry investigation of brigalow areas within State forests in this general vicinity. There is no marketable timber on the area of 2,495 acres which we are now considering and, being located on the external boundary, its excision from State Forest 79 will not adversely affect the management or protection of the balance of the State forest.

The next proposal provides for the revocation of about 409 acres from a State forest of over 70,000 acres situated between the Expedition and Shotover Ranges, some 40 miles to the west of Baralaba. The western boundary of this State forest follows the crest of the Shotover Range, except for a short distance towards its southern end, where it diverges to the east for about three-quarters of a mile and then recrosses the range in a south-westerly direction, thus excluding from the State forest some of the country east of the range and including some country to the west which is isolated by the range from the bulk of the State forest.

Former Penrose and Kulla holdings, which adjoin this section of the State forest, have recently been subdivided into selection blocks and, in surveying these blocks, it was found desirable to locate the common boundary along the Shotover Range. The Conservator of Forests has no objection to this boundary adjustment, and the approval of the House is now recommended for the excision of about 409 acres from State Forest 6, Parish of Shotover, to enable this proposal to proceed. An area of about 537 acres located to the east of the range, which was formerly part of Kulla holding, has been made available for addition to the State forest.

The next proposal recommends the excision of about 150 acres from State Forest 154. This State forest, which is part of a complex of State forests west of Millmerran, has, as part of its northern boundary, a common boundary with portion 1, parish of Vignoles. This portion is held as a special lease by Mr. and Mrs. T. E. Barkla, of Millmerran.

Following an application by the lessees for conversion of tenure, the Land Administration Commission approved the subdivision of portion 1, and the required surveys, including the common boundary with the State forest, were carried out. This survey did not follow the designed boundary of the State forest but traversed a fence along a road partly through portion 1, Vignoles, and then through the State forest.

**Mr. Tucker:** Have you any idea of the size of that State forest?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** The total area is 160,000 acres.

The line as surveyed encloses about 150 acres of the State forest in the subdivision of portion 1 and excludes about 510 acres from the former lease area. As the boundary as now surveyed is the logical one, in so far as it uses the access road as the common boundary, the Conservator of Forests raised no objection to the proposal that the area of about 150 acres be excised from the State forest.

The area of about 510 acres from the former lease area has been made available for addition to the State forest. So we are not taking everything away; we are giving something back. There is some marketable timber on the area proposed for excision, and the value of this will be taken into account when the freeholding action proceeds.

The final proposal covers the revocation of three patches of scrub totalling, in all, 3,720 acres from State Forest 151 in the parishes of Haly and Tureen with a view to their being added to the adjoining Bunya Mountains National Park.

State Forest 151, which has a total area of about 20,145 acres, is a mixture of scrub and open forest country carrying mainly forest red gum and ironbark.

It is situated partly on the eastern fall of the Great Dividing Range, with the Cooyar Range as its southern boundary. The terrain in the State forest rises gently from the foothill country into the lower slopes of the range, where it rises sharply, in broken and steep country, towards the crest, where it joins the national park. The scrubs in the higher country are in quite good condition, whereas those on the lower slopes have suffered from the heavy logging of hoop and bunya pine that was carried out on the more accessible areas.

It was on these latter areas on the lower slopes that two small hoop pine plantings were carried out, one area of about 50 acres in the mid 1920's, and one of about 300 acres in the late 1940's and 1950's. These plantations have shown sufficient promise to encourage further planting, in due course, when the more accessible State forests, around Yarraman itself, have been utilised.

It is the virtually untouched scrubs, towards the rugged crest of the range, which it is desired to add to the national park. Because of their height and their steep and broken nature they are of marginal interest only for the establishment of hoop pine plantations. The present boundary between the national park and the State forest is a straight line on paper, some distance down from the crest of the Great Dividing Range with these scrubs spilling over into the State forest.

The Premier, who regularly flies over this country, first raised the question of inclusion of these areas in the national park. He reported to me that these scrubs are a magnificent sight when seen from the air, and he expressed the opinion that every effort should be made to ensure that they were retained by adding them to the Bunya Mountains National Park.

As a consequence, I asked the Conservator of Forests to investigate, and he has now recommended that three patches of scrub totalling, in all, 3,720 acres be revoked from the State forest with a view to adding them to the national park. From the aesthetic and protection viewpoints they would be serving their best purpose as national park reservation. Since then I have had an opportunity of flying over the area and I confirm the grandeur of the view. It is magnificent. The hon. member for Somerset would know it very well. I can recall the Premier referring to it, on many occasions, as a green gem in that locality, and it certainly is when seen from the air. One wants to keep flying round in circles and viewing the area.

I am sure that present and future generations will acknowledge with gratitude the wisdom of preserving these scrubs within the magnificent Bunya Mountains National Park. I am sure I am expressing the view of many people when I say that. This is an area where my electorate joins that of the hon. member for Somerset, and I think we should

be commended for adding to this national park. If these lands are added, the area will be increased from 24,230 acres to 27,950 acres.

I consider that the actions proposed are in the interests of better land use, and I commend the proposals for the approval of the House.

**Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville North) (12.11 p.m.): I say at the outset that the Opposition will not be opposing this suggested revocation of certain areas of State forest. We have during the last week gone into the matter to the best of our ability, and we believe that what the Minister has put forward this morning is a desirable move. We take heart from the fact that the Conservator of Forests obviously has no argument with this proposal. It is always wise to take cognisance of his opinion on matters related to State forests.

It is not always easy for the Opposition to look at maps and know the exact areas involved, and I suggest to the Minister that when such matters reach the stage when he is preparing to bring them before Parliament, he allow a member of the Opposition to view some of the areas. Although it may not be easy to view all of them, it would be of assistance to the Opposition if the Minister, or some members of his department, were to suggest at an appropriate time that a member of the Opposition view some of the areas to be revoked. That would assist the Opposition to arrive at a decision in each case. Of course, not always would the Opposition agree that certain parts of State forests should be revoked and returned to the control of the Land Administration Commission. We would have to make a decision in each case.

We believe that there is a shortage of good forest land in Queensland. There always will be, I think, because vast areas of this State are dry and in the main desirable forest land is in the wet areas, which are very restricted in extent. The Opposition would, therefore, under normal circumstances, oppose any shrinkage of State forests. The Minister said that the area of State forests has increased from, I think, 5,600,000 acres to 7,500,000 acres over latter years. That is very desirable; we have no argument with it, and we believe that it should continue. It is the view of the Opposition that forests are very valuable assets, and it is unfortunate that long ago large areas of very valuable forest land in the Bunya Mountains were destroyed by unthinking people before anything was done about conserving it.

As I said, under normal circumstances the Opposition would certainly oppose any incursion into the forest lands of the State. However, hon. members on this side of the Chamber adopt a very responsible attitude to questions such as this, and they certainly do so on this occasion. I believe that in some

instances the Government has been irresponsible in dealing with forest lands, but in this instance cognisance must be taken of the fact that the Conservator of Forests acquiesces in the proposed revocations.

I remind the House that there have been occasions on which the Conservator of Forests has not acquiesced in, and has in fact been sternly against, the revocation of State forests. For instance, he was not in agreement with revocations of State forest in the area now under lease to King Ranch and in other areas round Tully, but his opinion was cast aside. In my opinion, it is very important that there should be agreement amongst those in authority as to whether or not something should happen. If they do agree, the Opposition will support the proposal put forward.

Turning to the areas mentioned by the Minister, State Forest 99, which is in the Parish of San Jose, apparently was reserved somewhere about 1915. The Minister stated that it contained an area of about 400 acres in which there was spotted gum, and that much of the remaining area was undesirable, being covered with vine and scrub, and not worth while commercially. This area is well known to me, and I agree that it is not very desirable forest land. It has been used for grazing for quite a long time under a special lease. I believe that it is very poor forest land, and the Opposition has no objection to its being transferred to the Land Administration Commission.

Again in State Forest 79, the Opposition agrees that the 2,495 acres involved have no value for forestry. As the Minister mentioned, 2,063 acres have been under a forest grazing lease to a Mr. Springborg since 1938, and 432 acres have been under a forest grazing lease to a Mr. Potter, also since 1938. The whole area is suitable for agriculture and grazing and of very little use for forestry. It appears that both Mr. Springborg and Mr. Potter have taken a risk, one might say, by erecting fences and putting other improvements on the land they hold under forest grazing leases. As they have done that at their own risk, the Opposition has no argument against these areas being revoked.

The area involved in State Forest 6 is 409 acres, and in State Forest 154 it is 150 acres. Again, the Opposition can see the reasons for these excisions. These State forests are large areas, one containing about 70,000 acres, as the Minister mentioned, and the other about 160,000 acres. It is quite obvious that boundary adjustments with adjoining areas would be needed when such huge areas are involved. In the case of State Forest 6, I can well see how an area of 409 acres could be needed in order to make a satisfactory boundary adjustment. In regard to State Forest 154, the Opposition again has no argument.

In State Forest 151, the Minister mentioned that 3,720 acres of scrub will be attached to the Bunya Mountains National

Park. The area is too steep for tree planting, and the Minister believes that it would be a very desirable addition to the national park. All members of the Opposition agree with that proposal. Although we may not know the area as intimately as the Minister does, and we have not flown over it, we have been there. We believe it is very desirable that it should be added to the Bunya Mountains National Park and preserved for the present people of Queensland and also for posterity.

Might I say that I consider it a great pity that the Government did not act similarly in the Cooloola area. The original application to the court for a mining lease in the Cooloola area was made in 1963. It was opposed by conservation groups in the area and, because of the pressure then exerted, the application was withdrawn. Instead of then acting, as it has today, on the advice of its forestry officer, who wanted the area declared a national park, the Government vacillated and did nothing about it. Had the area been declared a national park at that time, the controversy that has taken place since then and has now reached its peak would have been avoided.

The Government vacillated and procrastinated, but eventually it granted an authority to prospect in the area. As we all know, the existence of minerals was proved and mining leases are now being sought. I was astounded this morning to hear the allegation made by the hon. member for Clayfield that he and other back-bench members of the Government have been pressurised and virtually intimidated by some of these companies or their representatives.

**Mr. Murray:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. TUCKER:** I think that is a very poor attitude for companies to adopt. It amounts to a question of privilege, which could well have been raised by the hon. member. I am sorry that the hon. member and others who have been pressurised have been the victims of their own Government's vacillation and timidity.

**Mr. Murray:** I should not like to comment on that, but I agree with your previous remark.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I am saying this; the hon. member need not worry.

I congratulate the Minister on adding these areas of scrub to the Bunya Mountains National Park. I repeat that it is a great pity similar action was not taken in the Cooloola area at the time of the original application. Had it been taken at that time, Government back-benchers and Ministers would not be experiencing the pressures they are facing today.

Generally, the Opposition is in agreement with the proposal. We thank the Minister for giving us details of it, which has helped us to come to our decision. I again ask him to consider the submission made on behalf

of the Opposition, namely, that when these areas are coming up for consideration a member of the Opposition be given the opportunity to look at them so that he can supply the Opposition with relevant information.

**Mr. McKECHNIE** (Carnarvon) (12.24 p.m.): I support this proposal to excise certain fertile areas of land from the various forestry reserves. When I say "fertile", I am thinking of two forestry areas well known to me. I assume that in the case of the transfer to the Bunya Mountains National Park the soil would be fertile, but I am referring specifically to two forestry areas that are particularly well known to me. In these excised areas, no worth-while timber grows. A portion of the area is covered by brigalow-belah scrub, and another portion supports box and sandalwood forest.

I support the remarks of the hon. member for Townsville North that this land has been transferred to people who already hold leases over the forest areas. The three gentlemen who are known to me, namely, Norm. Springborg, Ernie Potter and Darcy Barkla, have held leases in that area, and the more fertile pieces of land are being transferred to them so that they can have even greater security of tenure and put the land to its best use. Norm. Springborg's land is quite satisfactory brigalow land. It has been fenced off and is good wheat-growing country. In fact, it has been growing wheat. Ernie Potter's land, in the Parish of Sands, is alluvial forest land and is an even better proposition in that it is adjacent to Macintyre Brook and is irrigable. In fact, it is irrigated by waters from Coolmunda Dam and is being put to its best possible use. It lies alongside the Cunningham Highway and is open to view. During the drought it has been irrigated and has brought a satisfactory reward to its owner and, in turn, to the State.

I commend the Government's action in placing the Lands Department and the Forestry Department under one Minister. I am prepared to admit that previously many difficulties arose and I, like other hon. members, found it difficult to overcome them. However, the placing of both departments under one Minister has lessened the problems considerably. The Minister and the officers of both departments are to be commended upon the co-operation that exists between them.

The hon. member for Townsville North referred to the size of the areas, and was told by the Minister that State Forest 154, Vignoles, contains an area of 160,000 acres. That forest is adjacent to even larger areas of forest. From memory, I think the Inglewood Shire alone encompasses 480,000 acres of ironbark and cypress forest, and that is only to the northern boundary of the shire. Beyond it, a belt of ironbark and cypress forest extends to the back of Millmerran and as far as Cecil Plains. The whole area is an important source of cypress in southern

inland areas, and, as Queensland exports annually to New South Wales approximately 22,000,000 super feet of cypress, the area is vital to the economy of that portion of the State. I am confident that the excision of the detailed areas will in no way lessen the production from the forests in question.

The hon. member for Townsville North referred to prospecting, particularly as it affected national parks. A good deal of forest area is held under authorities to prospect, but as those authorities relate only to oil prospecting it is extremely unlikely that the forests could suffer any damage. They are situated just east of the Moonie oilfield.

For some time—I do not know for how long—authorities to prospect have been in force and have been actively pursued, unfortunately with negative results. I can see no harm, in this instance, in the authorities to prospect. I support the excision of these areas from the forestry reserves, being fully convinced that no harm will be caused to the forestry lands of our State. I commend the Minister on deciding to excise these areas. As he knows, I have been making representations for some considerable time on behalf of my people in the two areas that are so well known to me—

**Mr. Tucker:** We suspected that you would have.

**Mr. McKECHNIE:** Thank you.

Other applications are pending, and I assure hon. members that in each case the land involved is known to me personally. In no way will the excision of the parcels of land detract from the forestry reserves. I am greatly concerned about forestry, because Inglewood, basically, is founded on the four sawmills in the area. Three of the mills handle cypress, with one part-time on iron-bark, and the other is the Government sleeper mill which operates in quite a big way providing sleepers for the Railway Department, and some are exported from this area to New South Wales. I will be at the sleeper mill in Inglewood tomorrow to investigate certain phases of production. Hon. members should realise that in my view it is vital to have the best land usage, keeping forestry well in mind.

It is desirable that small areas should have good, sound tenure and, after all, these are relatively small parcels of land—some of them are quite small—which must be fenced, at least with marsupial-proof fences. Part of this area is dingo country, with quite a lot of wallabies. There are very few kangaroos because, generally, the kangaroos are not greatly interested in this type of land; they prefer better land. It is also rabbit country. In the circumstances, the irrigated land particularly has to be netted so that it will be rabbit and marsupial proof. One of the farmers working this land will be producing irrigated lucerne, while the others will be producing grain wheat or green crops which

must be protected from the denizens of the forests that would otherwise have access to them.

I should emphasise that these are small blocks surrounded by large areas of forestry. The growing of green fodder on these small areas permits a higher carrying capacity of cattle on the forestry leases. I am sure that most hon. members know that cattle-grazing in these forestry lease areas is advantageous as it reduces the possibility of bushfire by curtailing the accumulation of dry grasses. Fodder-crop production in these areas permits better usage, pastorally, of the forestry area itself.

This proposal has everything to commend it. I can see nothing detrimental in it, so I have much pleasure in supporting it.

**Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (12.34 p.m.):** I wish to speak on aspects of this important matter that have not yet been referred to. Before doing so, however, I congratulate the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on the case he advanced on behalf of the Opposition. He presented his arguments well, and the Opposition did appreciate being given prior knowledge of these proposals by the Minister. The whole subject was outlined in the notice prior to our entering the Chamber today. This gave us an opportunity to engage in some research, and I know the Minister realises that sometimes I am not too bad at research work.

I also congratulate the hon. member for Carnarvon. I really believe that he should be appointed to the redistribution tribunal, because he has been so successful in excising unsuitable sections of our forests and having them incorporated in the properties of some of his constituents. If he is so successful in this field, surely his qualities should be taken advantage of. The final result of any redistribution under his careful supervision would be symmetrical electorates throughout the State. I am sure the Minister will convey my recommendation to the Premier.

I do not intend in my remarks to be critical on the serious points that I wish to raise. However, I am concerned to some extent at the effect that the Government's freeholding policy could have on forestry and the Department of Forestry's activities. I know that virtually all the choicest land in the State has been freeholded. In fact, I feel that in some areas there has been over-freeholding to the detriment of the valuable activity of forestry.

**Mr. Sullivan:** I do not agree with you, of course.

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** Naturally, I would not expect the Minister to agree with me. However, he has claimed credit for his Government for increasing the area under forestry by 2,500,000 acres in its 13 years of government. That is quite commendable. But I wonder how much good-quality



forestry country has been lost because of his Government's activities in extending freeholding.

**Mr. Sullivan:** Don't you agree—

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** I do not want to answer "Don't you agree" questions. I have told the Minister that before. It is a Com. approach, and I am absolutely opposed to Coms.

These questions are brought to my notice periodically, and the question that arises today is that in some areas there has been an effect on local employment—in the saw-milling industry, of course, which is dependent on the Forestry Department. In a sense, this has been brought about by the freeholding policy of this Government.

The most recent complaint I have received relates to spotted-gum country. I refer to State Forest 99, Parish of San Jose, which, as the Minister said, contains only 400 acres of this timber. However, it brought to my mind that spotted-gum country is one type of land that has been affected extensively by the Government's freeholding policy. Naturally, graziers are not vitally interested in forestry and the propagation of trees and, as a consequence, it is incumbent on the Government to retain sufficient spotted-gum country. This is only common sense. If it is not done there will be a deterioration in supply and, one could say, in other decentralised activities which are closely associated with the forestry industry.

It would be a wonderful life, in a sense, to be associated with the development of forestry. Anybody who goes to New Zealand cannot help but be impressed by the extent of forestry areas there. Although New Zealand is comparatively a small country, forestry areas dominate some sections of the countryside. That is what I should like to see in the better forestry areas of Queensland.

Those are the reasons why I raise this matter today. It should not be merely a propagation of the policy of freeholding for the sake of security of tenure. Whether that is a valid argument is open to debate. I think that even if one believes in freeholding, as the Government obviously does, some consideration must be given to retaining much of the country for forestry expansion.

I put that viewpoint forward today because, to my mind, a growth of 2,500,000 acres in the area of State forests is not sufficient. I think we can do much better than that in a much shorter time. I know that it is costly work, but in the long run the returns from it will be profitable.

I also wish to mention that in my opinion there is insufficient treatment in the present forestry areas. Much of the useless scrub and other timber should be removed so that full value can be obtained from the work and investment put into these projects.

Those are the points concerning State forests that I wish to put before the House. Let the Government be warned that blind adherence to a policy of freeholding could result in the loss to the State of valuable forest areas and the opportunity to expand in many aspects of the growth and development of timber.

The matter of national parks arose today. State Forest 151, containing 3,720 acres, is to be included in the Bunya Mountains National Park. The Minister took some time to say that from the air this is a very scenic area. I believe very much in national parks; I think they are excellent. However, I am worried about the attitude of some people towards them. I do not want national parks to be places where one sees at the entrance notices reading, "Hang your guns up here," and inside, "Keep your cotton-pickin' fingers off the exhibits". National parks should not merely be areas for people to walk through, or perhaps in some instances drive through, and look at. I should like the Minister to state to the House any knowledge that he has of the rights of scientists in national parks. Have they any scope for carrying out important research work in national parks? I say this because quite often I see in the Press pictures of pretty birds with, underneath them, the names of certain gentlemen who speak eulogistically of the habits of the birds. I have also heard a great deal of propaganda about the red kangaroo. But never do we hear much about the poor old wallaby. It is a forgotten animal.

What is perhaps even more important, I think there is much to be learned about insect life and its value in this State. I feel that there would be an opportunity for such research in national parks.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member is widening the scope of the motion by dealing with national parks. It deals with State forests, which are quite distinct from national parks.

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** I mentioned national parks to tie up a point.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I ask the hon. member not to enlarge on it any further.

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** I shall not enlarge on it any further. I know that provision is made for a scientific approach in State forests, but I do not know if such provision exists in national parks. As hon. members know, national parks are untouchable.

In conclusion, I point out to the Minister that I have asked only three questions. I would appreciate it if he would give me three answers.

**Mr. BLAKE (Isis) (12.46 p.m.):** In taking part in this debate, I am handicapped to some extent by not having personal knowledge of all the areas involved in the proposals. However, after making an analysis of the material available on the proposals, and

taking advantage of the combined knowledge of members of the Opposition relative to these areas, I believe that I have a fairly accurate idea of the purposes of the excisions and of the type of country involved and its potential for forestry.

I agree with other members of the Opposition that the move appears to be a progressive one, in line with present needs and in keeping with the sensible use of land. Honourable members on this side of the Chamber realise that there is a need to expand the production of the State forests, not whittle it away. It is obvious that that is not the purpose of the excisions, because the Minister has informed the House that the area of State forests is increasing continually.

But I remember that in an earlier debate—I have not the actual figures in front of me—it was pointed out that Australia imported about \$100,000,000 worth of lumber, and that imports of timber products in various forms were worth, I think, between \$200,000,000 and \$400,000,000. It would be easy to ascertain the correct figure. What I am endeavouring to establish is that the purchase of timber and timber products has a very detrimental effect on Australia's balance of payments and that it would be of great advantage, at least up to a certain point, if imports of timber could be reduced and the country's own timber resources increased.

I believe that, in the foreseeable future, timber will have a more assured market than any other primary product. Many people do not realise that, but an analysis shows that timber products will be needed for many years to come. It is unlikely that saturation point will be reached in the market for timber or that demand for timber will decrease.

It is very important that one should have regard for other industries when considering increases in production of timber and forest products. The amount of revenue derived from the soil is considerable, and it is the responsibility not only of the Government but of every administrative body to ensure that the land and various soil types are used to the best possible advantage. In doing that, an attempt must be made to sustain and, if possible, expand established communities and facilities, and ensure that decentralisation is a fact, not merely a slogan, as I am afraid it has been up to date.

In considering timber types we must have regard, of course, to the market requirements of, say, hardwood, the amount of hardwood available or likely to be available, and the utilisation of the suitable types of hardwoods and softwoods. With the use of more extensive drainage and fertiliser, large areas that were once discarded as unsuitable for the production of softwoods are now recognised as suitable, and the demand for softwoods is very great.

Through this knowledge a great area of land can be opened up for softwood production. These areas are coming into quite economical production. Having regard to the future necessity to expand, we must look closely at available soil types, to see if agriculture of a more intensive type could be undertaken. By "more intensive" I mean agriculture that gives greater production per year, that uses the greatest amount of labour, and that is the greatest consumer. These things are often overlooked in evaluating primary industry.

I suppose it would be fitting to refer to a situation of which I have personal knowledge, even though I do not have a great deal of personal knowledge of the areas under discussion. In the Isis district areas of land, which would possibly be some of the most fertile not only in Queensland but in the whole of Australia, have been planted for the production of timber. If we do not learn from mistakes made we are not carrying out our responsibilities. As some types of land that were once thought to be unsuitable for forestry have since been proved suitable, we want to ensure that no more of this land, which is suitable for agriculture and might be more profitably used, will be used for forestry purposes.

Until recently a committee in the Isis district has been studying the usage of land. I think it is called "The Isis Land Use Committee". It comprises representatives of the Department of Primary Industries, officers of the Lands and Forestry Departments, representatives of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, and, because of the area concerned, representatives of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. The growing of sugar cane is one of the purposes for which the land is being considered.

It is very important that no soil type be used for purposes other than that for which it is most suited, whether it be the growing of cane or timber, grazing or anything else, because the state of industry at any one time does not prove that land can be profitably used indefinitely for a particular purpose. Whatever the economics of an industry, there is only one truly economic way of utilising the land, that is, in accordance with its proven qualities and its proven best use. This is what we hope will be done in the Isis area. I am certain that this committee will succeed in its purpose, which is to have due regard paid to areas throughout Queensland.

I have personal knowledge of the area to be excised from State Forest No. 151, 3,720 acres, and added to the Bunya Mountains National Park. The Minister described the land as being too steep for tree planting, and I agree with him. In the past, certain areas were cleared of timber without regard to the slope of the land, with the result that erosion has occurred. It is wise to attach

this land to a national park, and I endorse the remarks of the hon. member for Barcoo, who said of national parks that a "hands off" attitude alone is not good enough and that botanical research should be carried out to preserve the parks for humanity instead of setting them aside simply for viewing. Of course, rules and regulations are necessary for the preservation of national parks. I am informed that under the present law honorary rangers cannot prevent certain areas from being denuded of elkhorns, staghorns and other botanical species.

The creation of a national park in this area would result in the land being put to its best use. Having regard to the work done by pastoralists and farmers in areas that have been excised, I support the contentions of other members of the Opposition who have spoken on the proposal.

**Mr. BALDWIN** (Logan) (12.57 p.m.): I do not oppose the proposed excisions. In the present situation it is impossible to oppose them. I agree with the comments of my colleagues on this side of the Chamber, and I should like to refer to one or two points made by the Minister and to certain implications contained in the first four sub-paragraphs of the motion.

I have said that it is impossible to oppose the excisions. I am reminded of the story of a robber who knocked down and robbed his victim, and, on seeing an onlooker, thought he had better give him his tramfare home. The robber said, "You won't oppose that, will you?" I feel like the onlooker; I could not oppose this.

The Minister referred to the fact that when his Government came to office an area of 5,000,000 acres was held in reserve for forest purposes, and that the Government had increased that area to 7,500,000 acres. Several observations can be made about his remarks. An obvious one is that if the Government continues to excise at the present rate, the remaining areas will revert to their 1958 sizes; so let us hope that additional areas will be included. The Minister said that they will be.

In defence of Labour Governments, I make the observation that the Minister has made an odious comparison. He has taken the situation as it existed out of its historical context and put it into the realm of irrelevancy. At the time referred to by the Minister certain areas of Crown land were so large and so close to the cities, where timber was required, as to make it totally unnecessary to go to the expense and trouble of surveying those areas for inclusion in forest reserves.

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

**Mr. BALDWIN:** As I was saying before the luncheon recess, the total area of suitable forest Crown land has been almost halved under the present Government. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out that it is becoming ever more necessary to include

additional Crown land in forest reserves as more forest is denuded for other purposes, specifically for overseas developers such as sand-mining companies and timber corporations.

The growing shortage of areas carrying usable forest is worrying the big timber companies, who see their source of cheap timber shrinking. Therefore, their representatives in Government must make other cheap sources available, which they do at the expense of the taxpayers.

The granting of grazing leases on what were once considered to be worth-while forest reserves seems contradictory at least—even condemnatory—of the previous decisions that placed them under reserve. The implication that I must bring out is that either the areas were not fit for reservation in the first place (and therefore it was a waste of public money reserving them), or they were good areas that were despoiled and then handed back under over-all cheaper conditions than the proposed receivers would have enjoyed had they been forced to purchase them outright or lease them under rigid conditions in the first instance. On either alternative the public has lost again but, as I see it, that is in keeping with most of the Government's actions that I have had anything to do with in the short time that I have been in Parliament.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON** (Salisbury) (2.18 p.m.): The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in his opening remarks on the measure before us, indicated that the Opposition had no serious objection to this proposal. That decision was arrived at after serious consideration by our relevant committees, and it is subscribed to by the Opposition generally.

In associating myself with this debate, I wish to make some brief comments on what is proposed. I will deal first with State Forest 151, and the 3,720 acres to be excised from it to become a part of the Bunya Mountains National Park. Naturally, I should be the first to applaud any action to supplement the meagre area of national park in Queensland. Without canvassing the matter too deeply, this State's area of national parks represents only .7 per cent. of its total area. Compared with national park areas in other States, Queensland has the smallest area of national park, even including the small State of Tasmania. It is indeed welcome to see that another 3,720 acres is to be added to our national park system. This applies particularly in an area such as the picturesque Bunya Mountains National Park.

A large part of the meagre .7 per cent. that I mentioned is a section of the Simpson Desert, which touches the borders of Queensland with the Northern Territory, South Australia and New South Wales. This indicates how necessary it is to add a variety of areas to our national parks. I look forward to the day when national parks will include areas of Mitchell-grass country and other

areas of great scientific interest. At present, most of our national parks are in coastal areas. There is very little brigalow and wallum land in national parks, but this will be added to when we finally win the Cooloola battle. We need a greater variety of national parks to preserve not only the botanical specimens but also the habitat of the various species of fauna that are indigenous to Queensland.

One of the reasons given for revoking State Forest 151, with an area of 3,720 acres, and transferring it to the Bunya Mountains National Park was that the area was too steep for tree-planting. I do not dispute this claim, because I am not familiar with the area. However, I think this brings into prominence the competition for land usage in this State. For instance, we have agricultural, dairying, pastoral, mining and many other industries competing for the use of land.

It is abundantly obvious that mistakes were made in bygone years when steep slopes were cleared for dairying, banana-growing, and so on. Those slopes became badly eroded because they were denuded of vegetation and became unstable. Many of them are admirably suited to the growth of timber, which would stabilise them and, in addition, give a boost to the timber industry.

A natural resources planning and utilisation committee should be set up to control land use. It could make a thorough examination of the whole of Queensland's physical resources and recommend to the Government the best use that could be made of those resources. This applies particularly to land usage.

Without transgressing too much, Mr. Speaker, I might draw the attention of the House to what happened to that great commercial timber, red cedar. As far back as 1880 cedar was commercially cut out of all the forests on the eastern seaboard, and the tragedy is that this valuable timber has been lost to industry. What makes the problem greater is the fact that cedar cannot be grown in plantations. Immediately attempts are made to do that, the tree is found to be prone to borer attack.

**Mr. Newton:** Those on the other side of the House wouldn't know what it was, anyway.

**Mr. Lickiss:** There are plenty of "borers" on your side.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** If some members want to make this a frivolous debate, I suppose that will satisfy their ego. I regard this as a very serious matter.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! If the debate does become frivolous, I think the hon. member has his colleague the hon. member for Belmont to blame for it.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** It is rather a tragedy that the only cedar growing in Australia today is that to be found in national parks.

Had our forebears given more thought to the planning of natural resources, the present position would not have arisen.

The other matter that I want to deal with concerns the area reserved in 1915 which contains spotted gum and vine scrub, and has been found unsuitable for commercial exploitation at present. It seems fairly obvious from the Minister's remarks that this land will be handed back to the Land Administration Commission to become, in all probability, grazing land. Unfortunately, I was not in the House when the Minister introduced the proposal. I hope that when this land is made available for grazing, or whatever it is to be used for, any commercial timber on it will be harvested. We would not want to see bulldozers and other mechanical equipment clearing the area willy-nilly, and in the process completely destroying commercial timber. That sort of thing has been going on elsewhere.

**Mr. Herbert:** You cannot bulldoze commercial timber off a grazing lease.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** Apparently the Minister has never driven a bulldozer. My point is that any commercial timber on this land should be removed and used. Whether it is knocked down by a bulldozer or burnt by a grazier, the effect is the same, and it is better to use a resource by harvesting it. If the timber is harvestable, and if it is possible to take it out commercially, now is the time to do it.

Reference was made to vine scrub. I am not particularly au fait with this area, but over the years a cry has gone up about commercial firms and other people who enter reserves and remove such things as ferns and staghorns. There have no doubt been many prosecutions of people for doing that. When this area is to be handed over for grazing, or any other use to which it may be put, would it not be sensible, if the land contains valuable horticultural specimens, for permission to be given for their removal before they are destroyed? I do not think it is good enough to say, "We will prosecute people who follow a natural desire to collect ferns and staghorns," if at the same time the use of the area is changed from forestry to grazing and, in the process, such specimens are destroyed.

I believe that that can be avoided in a sensible way. It would help also to mitigate the effects of the vandalism that has taken place in forests and scrubs over many years. People have a natural desire to remove Cooktown orchids and many other native orchids, and I think that could be prevented by taking the sensible course and removing natural resources of that type when land is being transferred to another use.

I wish to make one further point. When the areas involved in these excisions are handed over for development as grazing leases, no doubt the land will be cleared of trees, and so on. You have been very

tolerant with me so far, Mr. Speaker, and I think I would be remiss if I did not impose a little further on your tolerance and refer to the clearing of trees from leasehold land.

As hon. members know, the terms and conditions of leases permit the destruction of trees but stipulate that various things must be done when vegetation is cleared. They provide for the retention of certain trees on the banks of streams, dividing-fence lines, roads and so on. Although that is a very worth-while condition, it is not usually so worth-while in practice. I hazard a guess that if one drove through many parts of Queensland in which properties are held under leasehold, one would find that, in spite of the conditions attaching to permits to destroy trees, fence lines, streams, and so on, were completely denuded of vegetation.

Laws designed to preserve various portions of natural vegetation are laudable; unfortunately, it appears that they are never policed properly. Their implementation should be supervised adequately, and I urge the Minister to keep that in mind relative to the issuing of permits to destroy trees, particularly on leasehold properties. It is difficult to control the destruction of trees once an area becomes freehold, but while there is leasehold land in the State the laws applying to maintaining vegetation on the banks of streams and along roads and dividing fences, and so on, should be policed. If such provisions are included in the conditions of a lease, for goodness sake let us police them.

I conclude by reiterating that it is not the intention of the Opposition to oppose the motion.

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Lands) (2.34 p.m.), in reply: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and hon. members generally for their acceptance of the proposal. It was to be expected, I think, because there is no real issue at stake. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, proposals of this type do become a little contentious at times. However, in this instance the areas of land involved are not large and, in the main, the action is being taken because of the need to adjust boundaries.

The hon. member for Carnarvon told the House that the three parcels of land in his electorate are not suitable for the growing of timber but contain land that is valuable for development for agricultural purposes.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made the point that perhaps in future it might be possible for some member or members of the Opposition to be given the opportunity to inspect these areas. I have taken a note of his suggestion and I can assure him that, if it is possible, I have no objection to acceding to it. It is not always easy, because these areas are looked at over a period and they are scattered about. However, I am sure that, if members of either the Opposition or the Government

approach me or officers of the Forestry Department, they will receive ready co-operation. It might be the member for the particular district, or something like that. Officers of the department are always willing to discuss matters with members on either side and to give them any advice they are seeking.

Apart from myself, the hon. member for Carnarvon was, naturally enough, the only speaker on the Government side. He is personally interested as some of the areas in question are in his electorate and he has made representations regarding them on behalf of his constituents. He is naturally pleased that the matter has reached fruition.

The hon. member for Barcoo was very gracious in his acceptance of the proposal—with certain little stings in the tail of his remarks. I cannot agree with all that he said. He would not agree with me that the increase in the area of forest reserve is, to some extent, due to our freeholding policy. The matter can be argued, but I am arguing in favour of freehold. When somebody applies to freehold Crown land, public interest is examined before we allow the freeholding. This is the responsibility of the Conservator of Forests, the Land Administration Commission and the Minister. If we were not freeholding country, much of this land would still be Crown land and still would not be dedicated as State forest.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** It could be.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** It could be, but it would not be; let us face facts. I believe that the addition of 2,500,000 acres of forest reserve is the result of our freeholding policy.

The hon. member for Carnarvon mentioned the benefits flowing from having the two departments under the same Minister. I believe this to be so. I advocated it from the time I entered Parliament, not knowing that I would one day be the Minister. I think there is closer liaison now—not that the liaison and co-operation between the two departments was not close previously. However, nowadays, members of the Land Administration Commission and the Conservator of Forests and his officers sit down and discuss these matters around the one table. Because of this, I think we must get better liaison and co-operation, together with streamlining and quicker decisions.

**Mr. Sherrington:** Do you keep the table between you?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** We do not always agree—we are not built that way—but when we do agree we come up with a firm decision. With my officers there is not much necessity for thumping the table. They know where they are going and thrash these matters out.

One of the questions raised by the hon. member for Barcoo referred to spotted gum. Would the hon. member repeat his question?

**Mr. O'Donnell:** Some concern is felt in areas where spotted gum is prolific that the country is not being encouraged as it should be. That was the first matter. The growth of spotted gum raised questions in the minds of many people employed in the sawmilling industry.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** On Crown land it is necessary, before ring-barking, to obtain a permit. A permit to ring-bark is not given lightly, because the Forestry Department—

**Mr. O'Donnell:** My question refers to freeholding.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** Wait a moment. If there is timber growing on land it is necessary that it be protected; but in freeholding the public interest is kept in mind, and if it is considered that timber-growing is the best use to which land can be put, the Forestry Department will oppose the freeholding of a portion of the particular grazing selection.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** That goes back to the first point, that is, that the people think you should retain this area instead of freeholding it.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** That is right. The sawmilling industry and other factors are taken into consideration before an area is allowed to be freeholded.

**Mr. Jensen:** Then they cut sleepers out of the spotted gum, and the sawmillers cannot get decent timber for 10 years.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** When an area is freeholded the timber is paid for over 10 years, and it is the right of the property-owner to deal with the timber as he sees fit. In the first place, the Forestry Department looks at the area and its potential for growing timber. As well, the Land Court determines whether or not the public interest is being affected.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** The second point was that possibly forestry reserves are not treated well enough.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** You mean silvicultural treatment?

**Mr. O'Donnell:** Yes.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I suppose this can be argued, but here again we do our best with the financial resources available to us. I have had the privilege of examining and inspecting silvicultural treatment that has been carried out in various parts of the State. A good deal of work has been done, much is being done, and a good deal will be done. Silviculture is another field in which we are never satisfied and always aim at a higher goal.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** Finally, what are the rights of scientists in a national park?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I have been handed a note by the Conservator which says that permits are issued to scientists to conduct studies in national parks, and the Act provides for sections of parks to be declared as

scientific areas. I think it was in about 1968 that the then Minister, Mr. Richter, amended the Forestry Act to include this provision. Incidentally, we are about to declare Mon Repos Beach as a national park. The hon. member for Burnett is very interested in that area. It is a turtle rookery and part of it will be declared specifically for scientific purposes. It has been suggested facetiously that it be called the Claude Wharton Turtle Rookery National Park.

**Mr. Sherrington:** This is the national park that was announced three years ago and still has not been declared?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** It will be declared very shortly. Certain areas that are declared primitive areas are restricted to outstanding scientists only, and before they can enter those areas they must show that their work cannot be done elsewhere. The staff of the national parks section includes a fully qualified zoologist who engages in studies of native fauna.

The hon. member for Isis accepted the motion and spoke on its various aspects. The hon. member for Logan spoke briefly. I will have to read what he said, as I found it a little difficult to keep up with him. After I have read what he said, perhaps his message will become a little clearer.

I regret that I had to leave the Chamber while the hon. member for Salisbury was speaking, but I know his interest in forestry work, national parks, and similar things. I am gratified at the acceptance of the motion by both Opposition and Government members.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

## MARGINAL DAIRY FARMS RECONSTRUCTION SCHEME AGREEMENT BILL

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

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

Debate resumed from 15 September (see p. 647) on Mr. Sullivan's motion—

"That a Bill be introduced to ratify and approve an agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Queensland in relation to a marginal dairy farms reconstruction scheme."

**Mr. AHERN** (Landsborough) (2.47 p.m.): Quite a number of hon. members wish to comment on this legislation. Because I represent quite a few dairy farmers, I think it is important that I should deal with it as it embodies many principles which, in future, will appear more often on the Australian scene. I compliment the Minister on, and thank him for, the assistance he has given me in research work relative to this and other matters in recent times.

In broad principle, this scheme has been described as promoting co-operation between the Commonwealth and State Governments of Australia to permit the amalgamation of dairy farms, and primarily to assist in providing flexibility in our national resources. It has also been described as a reconstruction scheme, but I do not know that that is a very good term. I think it could be more properly termed a dairy industry amalgamation scheme, or a dairy industry reduction scheme, because it is certainly not a reconstruction scheme as such. It has been described, too, as a scheme to meet a special situation and, in that way, it is excellent.

In Australia today, without doubt the challenge of change is the greatest challenge facing agricultural institutions and Governments. This is the first effort of the Commonwealth and State Governments, at a realistic level, to tackle the very difficult problem of small farms. The Governments have displayed great courage in embarking on this scheme at this time. However, they have not done so without criticism. In this debate I have heard hon. members say that the Government's policy is, "Get big, or get out." That has certainly not been said by any member of the Commonwealth or State Governments; what has been said is that, realistically speaking, in today's situation internationally, and looking at the future, too, there is need to provide a climate within our agricultural industries that will increase unit-production size. The phrase "Get big, or get out," has never been used by the Government in this context. It has been used only by our critics on the other side of the Chamber, with no knowledge of the situation, in an attempt to make political capital out of it.

There has also been criticism from the Institute of Economic Democracy, to which the hon. member for Barcoo referred. It is unfortunate that the dairying industry in Queensland has been beset by people with odd economic ideas. I know of no other industry that has been badgered so much by the Social Credit or Douglas Credit people. Now we have the Institute of Economic Democracy advocating some mysterious economic theory of extensive consumer subsidisation which, if this country could afford it, would have serious side effects.

It has also been said in criticism of the Government that it has created this high-cost situation in Australia, and that therefore it is the responsibility of the Government to subsidise the industry out of this high-cost situation by providing across-the-board subsidisation. A dairy farmer has even told me that we ought to print money and pay it to dairy farmers. It has been argued that secondary-industry institutional protection in this country costs some \$1,200 million a year, and I have no doubt that it does.

**Mr. Hinze:** It is up to \$1,800 million now.

**Mr. AHERN:** As the hon. member for South Coast indicates, it is rising every day. I have no doubt that what he says is correct. However, I do not think that that argument is realistically relevant to the situation that exists in almost every agricultural industry today. It has been proved over many years, not only in Australia but overseas as well, that across-the-board subsidisation of primary industries creates more small-farm problems than it purports to solve. It must be borne in mind that this country has very limited economic resources to apply to this sort of thing, and we must be more realistic in future in seeking solutions to the problems that exist in our rural industries.

I was astounded to hear the Leader of the Opposition, just as I have heard the hon. member for Warrego, criticise this Government for not having done enough to find new markets for agricultural and dairy products, the clear implication being that this situation would not have arisen had more been done in this field. Critics of this type have no knowledge at all of the tremendously energetic work done overseas by the honourable John McEwen on behalf of this country. He has gone to the far-flung corners of the earth and negotiated reciprocal trade agreements. I doubt if any hon. member could name a country in the free world that has not been actively lobbied by Australian trade officials.

**Mr. Hinze:** Even tiny Peru.

**Mr. AHERN:** As the hon. member for South Coast says, even Peru.

This criticism also displays an ignorance of what the Australian Dairy Board is doing in South-east Asia, where tremendous technical problems exist.

**Mr. Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr. AHERN:** As the Minister has said, John McEwen has been described as the greatest Australian negotiator of this century, and I have no doubt that that is right. Even Australian Labour Party members in Canberra have not been willing to say, in the national forum, that John McEwen has neglected his duty in this respect; rather, they have tended to direct criticism in other directions, and I believe it to be very ill-informed.

The best advisers we can muster in this country and the most practical agricultural economists, having a knowledge of the world situation, have said that because of the present and likely international situation and because of the present and likely increased cost situation, production restraint must be a fact of life.

The problem of farm size must also be tackled here in Australia, as it has been in the major agricultural countries. I believe that the Government has by this Act met its responsibility to provide a climate in which the size of farms can be voluntarily increased. Up till now it has not been easy to obtain

finance for the purchase of properties. The traditional avenues of finance through trading banks have been very restricted, and the position is not going to improve in the future. The Agricultural Bank is not set up to provide such finance, and the Commonwealth Development Bank almost invariably says that it has no funds available for this type of amalgamation. The scheme under discussion will provide finance to meet a need for which no financial avenue has previously been open.

I also wish to say a few words about international problems. It is easy to look at things from one's own back yard and place the blame locally. The problem facing the dairying industry is primarily an international one. A tendency is developing in the international trading world which is constantly moving towards the creation of adverse effects on the export of our primary products. The blackest cloud on the horizon is Britain's clearly stated intention to join the European Economic Community which, having in mind the agricultural policy of the Common Market, will have disastrous effects on our exports of primary products. Although I speak only as a State parliamentarian, I wish to say a few words about the European Economic Community. I cannot for the life of me see why Britain is so hell bent on joining it. It seems to me that it will be the greatest body blow ever to the British Commonwealth of Nations, and will have very great implications politically in the world of tomorrow.

**Mr. R. Jones:** interjected.

**Mr. AHERN:** The hon. member for Cairns obviously does not know that both parties in Britain actively support Britain's entry to the Common Market.

It appears to me that there will be great increases in food prices in the United Kingdom following its entry to the Common Market, and I cannot for the life of me see that there are many benefits to be obtained. I believe that the United Kingdom will have to make substantial sacrifices in its political and economic independence that it has not been accustomed to doing in the past.

Should the United Kingdom decide to join the Common Market—and I believe that it is hell bent on doing so—it will be joining a group with a common agricultural policy that is now virtually annihilating world markets for agricultural products. When it joins, it will join a group that commands 40 per cent. of international trade. That is a very large group on the international scene, and the position must be compounded by the thought that this community is surrounded by completely unscalable tariff walls. It will be a group that is economically capable of driving all the others out of the residual markets of the world with predatory export subsidies. Common Market negotiators at present are trying to extend

the scope of the Common Market still further by associated agreements with such countries as Spain, Greece, Israel, Turkey, Austria and Yugoslavia, to a point where it will embrace 70 nations and command 50 per cent. of international trade.

When one has in mind the Common Market's agricultural policy, it can be seen that this will have a tremendous impact on world trade. It will, I believe, provide a catalyst for a greater movement in the world towards international trading blocs. The Comecon countries at the present time form a very tight international group. They trade with others only when it suits them politically to do so or if they desperately need the product or cannot do without it. There is a disturbing trend for the United States of America, South America and Canada to form a closely-knit association. This retreat into trading blocs has left Australia very badly out in the cold as far as its agricultural exports are concerned.

It was these clear facts of life in international trading that prompted the Government to be realistic about its policy relative to the dairying industry, to see the writing on the wall, and to say that some further restraint on the production of dairy products and some adjustments in the structure of the dairying industry in this country were both urgent and necessary.

It is often said that this problem is one of the Government's or the Country Party's making. I believe it can be stated clearly that the problem is an international one, beyond the control of Governments in this country. The Australian Government, on behalf of the country's agricultural industries, has fought hard right across the board to improve the situation of agricultural commodities. With the massive forces moving against it, its task has not been easy. The Right Honourable John McEwen has said that he will take the problem to G.A.T.T. and argue Australia's case as strongly as he can there. I have no doubt that he will, but the situation is still one that requires realistic people to see that some reorganisation in the dairying industry is sensible and necessary.

The economic situation in this country certainly has been produced by the Government. However, it seems to me that the Australian people as a whole are demanding a certain amount of growth in the economy, and increased costs are a part of that growth. They have been in the past; they are very likely to be in the future. Therefore, I think that governments must decide to make some compensation to rural industry for that growth.

The problem has been severely compounded in Queensland and other Australian States recently by drought, and the Government has been sensible in undertaking this adjustment. In fact, it has been inevitable. It might well have been done earlier, but it was resisted in certain quarters. I believe



it is necessary that it should be implemented now before the situation worsens, and I believe it should be stressed again that it is the policy of the Government to create a situation in which amalgamation can occur voluntarily, to provide a climate for amalgamation, and to provide a climate of flexibility, rather than compulsion, in the industry. No-one can object to that, and I know that many people in my electorate are awaiting the day when the scheme is proclaimed. They will use it, and use it to good effect.

The terms of the scheme have been outlined by the Minister, and I believe it is worthy of note that finance is being made available on very favourable terms indeed, the sort of terms that agricultural industries require in today's climate. The machinery of operation has been cut to a minimum, which is very sensible. I believe that it has every chance of working successfully, with red tape cut to a minimum.

Many people have said that this scheme is an assault on the smaller farms, that it is an assault on the family units of production in Australia. This is completely untrue. In fact, the opposite is true. I believe that this scheme will make it possible for the family unit to survive in the dairying industry in Australia today, and there is no doubt that this is necessary.

In his speech the Leader of the Opposition attacked the Government for not providing massive re-education schemes for those people who were allegedly going to leave the industry as a result of this scheme.

**A Government Member:** He said they were going to be forced out.

**Mr. AHERN:** Yes.

I want to deal with this claim because I know something about it. It was not only the Leader of the Opposition who spoke about it. Other hon. members opposite said, "What is the Government doing to re-educate these people and place them in some field of endeavour where they will be suited and into which they can fit naturally?" I take issue with the agricultural economists on this point, and in doing so I accept the situation as outlined by the Minister in his introduction. The Minister said that a massive re-education programme for dairy farmers—indeed all rural producers—did not appear to be as necessary as some people are saying.

On the completion of my university course in 1963, I was for some time employed by the university to follow up dairy farmers in the Boonah area—the Fassifern area—who, for one reason or another, had left their farms. It was my job to follow these fellows wherever they were and ask them had they had any problems in moving out of the industry, had they had any great difficulty in obtaining employment and had they had great periods of unemployment.

The situation was not nearly as bad as has been suggested by some economists. In fact, the Ipswich City Council, I was told on this occasion, had a standing order for dairy farmers who left their farms in the Boonah area, because they were good workers. They were Jacks of all trades and were genuine workers. There did not appear to me to be the problem that it was believed would arise. In fact, everyone I visited had no problems in this direction. Those who tried to re-establish themselves on the land certainly did, because they needed finance for some reason or another.

**Mr. Murray:** Where did they mainly go—to country towns or the city?

**Mr. AHERN:** They went to all ends of the earth. Some went to Ipswich, some to Brisbane; some went to institutions and some worked for shire councils. There was no specific pattern.

As my time is running out, I want to say that there is great merit in Australia at this point of time in both the Federal and State Governments convening special conferences for the prime purpose of establishing a small-farms policy across the board in this country. The United Kingdom has had a small-farmer policy—a substantial scheme—since 1959. The European Economic Community has had a scheme operating—not very effectively—for very many years. The problem of rural poverty in the United States has been tackled with a substantial plan. In Australia, the situation is not nearly as bad as it is in those countries.

I have some figures here that I should like to quote. In the European Economic Community, for instance, the problems are much more serious than they are in Australia. For instance, in Belgium the average farm size is only 66 acres, in France it is 115 acres, Germany 67 acres, Italy 44 acres, Luxembourg 107 acres, the Netherlands 71 acres, and the E.E.C. 71 acres. Their small-farm problems, with their peasantry and so on, are much more compounded than those in Australia.

In view of the problems arising from the drought and the imminence of debt-reconstruction problems, the time is ripe to bring the two together and evolve a small-farms policy in association with general rural reconstruction throughout Australia. The Federal Government would benefit a great deal from such a scheme. I know that tremendous problems would arise between Federal and State Governments in getting it off the ground and getting people to agree on the necessary machinery, but that machinery should be put in motion now. In overcoming the small-farm problem, a variety of Government departments, such as irrigation, labour, education, primary industries, Agricultural Bank, and so on, are affected.

Recently I heard of a proposal put forward in New South Wales to hire an independent consultant to look at policy

aspects. There is some merit in doing something similar in Queensland. I have received a quote from one man who is particularly up to date in this field, Mr. Jack Makeham. He is an expert on the changes in agriculture in Australia today, and would be prepared to look at policy matters at a minimal cost. It would take only eight weeks or so to advise the Government on what it could be doing, and I hope that the Minister and his colleagues will consider my suggestion.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. BLAKE** (Isis) (3.12 p.m.): I am sure that it is a matter of great relief to many members of the dairying industry that this Bill has at last come before Parliament. In talking to people engaged in dairying, I have found a great deal of cynicism that has been brought about by promises made by this Government and the Federal Government but not kept.

I do not think it could be argued successfully that any other industry has been subjected to as many pre-election promises and recommendations as the dairying industry. I can well remember the election promises made by the Country Party when it was in Opposition. Its members said that if they were elected to the Government benches they would provide every dairy farmer with a milk-chiller or a cream-chiller. As hon. members know, many slab-and-hessian dog-boxes still stand at the gates of dairy farms as mute testimony of this Government's lack of sincerity.

Almost every election campaign, including the most recent one, has spawned a dairy industry inquiry committee. Generally, the recommendations of such committees have been conveniently ignored. The most successful committee made 13 recommendations, of which only two were implemented. So much for the State Government, which always portrays, as did the hon. member who has just spoken, that the troubles in the dairying industry are those of drought and international markets, that they have not been encountered by other Governments and are the special preserve of this Government.

I shall now deal with the so-called sympathetic treatment of the dairying industry by the Commonwealth Government. Last year, cheese imports totalled 5,400 tons, representing 13 per cent. of the total Australian consumption. Imports this year are expected to increase to 6,500 tons. Many of the countries from which we take imports place restrictions on the import of Australian dairy produce. Recently Mr. Anthony, the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, reportedly said that at the present time Australia remains the only open market for cheese in a situation of world surplus and heavy subsidisation. That is a prime example—although we in Opposition recognise that there are industry difficulties and marketing difficulties—that there has set in a rot which,

in the dairying industry, could well have been slowed down, or obviated, if decent legislative measures had been taken early in the piece. If that had been done we would not have reached the abortive situation where the Minister says that although this may not be the answer to the industry's problems, it is an effort to do something constructive.

This scheme resulted from a recommendation of the Australian Dairy Industry Council in 1966 that funds should be provided by the Commonwealth to reconstruct uneconomic dairy farms. As it was an industry scheme, it must have great merit. I understand from the Minister's remarks that the first aim of the scheme is to permit low-income dairy farmers to leave the industry voluntarily and to receive a fair price for their properties, which in turn may be used to build up other marginal dairy properties. That is fair enough. The second idea is to diversify the pattern of land use from dairying to some other form of primary production where possible, practicable and desirable, but that leads us into a very complex field.

**Mr. R. Jones:** They will not walk out; they will be kicked out.

**Mr. BLAKE:** I heard an hon. member say earlier in the debate that the producers would not be kicked out of the industry; that they would go out quite voluntarily. That statement has a great element of truth in it, but it must be admitted that near-bankruptcy is a great persuader.

The financial position of dairymen and other primary producers is drastic, and we admit that the need for assistance is great. Opposition members realise that if the scheme is to have the best possible effect it must be implemented, but its effect must be looked at after it is implemented. We must look not only at the immediate result but also at the future effect on the industry, so that we do not create problems just as great, or almost as great, as those that we are attempting to solve.

As the Minister explained, the scheme will necessarily result in a smaller number of dairy farmers and fewer people in the industry. I do not imply that there is anything sinister in that. We must accept that if the market is limited and increased production is required to make a living, it is no use expanding production beyond reasonably established markets. The only effective answer, even if it is pernicious to the people in the industry, is the establishment of bigger units to share the available market, resulting in having fewer people in the industry.

If these people are to become redundant, it is necessary that they are not misguided about what we believe will be the result when the scheme is brought into effect. It has been claimed that very little training will be needed to have these people relocated or gainfully employed in other industries. This is true to a point, so far as retraining goes. However, there is more than retraining

required, because a good deal of preparation, finance and equipment goes into any business. Even though this might be understood by hon. members, it is the responsibility of the Government, and the departments concerned, to portray a realistic picture to the people in the dairying industry of the likely future capital and man-power needs.

Approximately 90 per cent. of Queensland dairy farms are classed as marginal, and I think that dairy farmers would be shocked to learn that nine out of 10 of them could eventually be displaced. If they are properly informed, it will lessen the futility of re-investment of capital and young man-power. I say "young man-power" because people with a tradition on the land often wish to stay on the land. It is no use having these people putting hard-earned money into, and retraining young people for, blind and abortive avenues of primary production under any Government, as would be the case if we did not instruct them fully on the true statistical position of how many could really expect to make a reasonable living in view of the trends in the market for primary products.

This, of course, should be the Government's responsibility. It is quite natural and understandable that a person who is busily engaged in trying to pin back an overdraft should not be expected to have the appreciation which legislators have of affairs confronting the country.

I think the Minister said that people who are to be displaced could use their land for other types of production. Surely it will not be a matter of switching, willy-nilly, from one type of production to another, without any planning or acceptance of responsibility by the Government. If this happened, it would be next to no time before other industries, and the people in them, would be as economically unsound as the dairying industry.

We must be constructive about this. I do not wish to detract greatly from the merits of the plan. However, we must look ahead, otherwise the beneficial effects will be only palliative and short lived. Mr. Anthony said that the Australian Dairy Industry Council's proposals are, firstly, an immediate stop to the development of new farms for dairy production, and, secondly, the immediate licensing of all dairy farms, with a provision that no new licences will be issued except by agreement of the Australian Agricultural Council.

Mr. Anthony went on to say—

"These are matter that fall within the jurisdiction of the States, and the responsibility for early action rests with them."

It has been said that there will not be a great need for retraining, resettlement, and possibly re-education, but all these things that have been enumerated, not only by me but also by previous speakers and the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, quite definitely point to the fact that it is

believed by State and Federal Governments that most of these dairy farmers will have to go. If that is the case, it is up to the Government to be realistic about it and let them know their chances of going and where they are going.

I have seen many people who made a great success of primary industry, re-invest their money and grow bigger and bigger, and then find themselves at the end of a blind alley—in a cul-de-sac—with nowhere profitable to go. If so many people are to be displaced, as it seems they are to be from all the talk of learned gentlemen in Government, the Government has to be realistic about it and see that they are not pushed into activities in which there is no future.

**Mr. Davies:** They are mostly in Queensland, too.

**Mr. BLAKE:** About 90 per cent. of Queensland's dairymen are in it. Over all, I think between 60 per cent. and 70 per cent. are considered uneconomic dairy enterprises, and 90 per cent. of those in Queensland. Possibly that position has been brought about by the unsympathetic attitude of the Queensland Government towards a recognition of the need for drought relief.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member for Maryborough is not in his usual place in the Chamber.

**Mr. BLAKE:** The extra indebtedness of Queensland dairy farmers over the last 13 years can perhaps be attributed to their unsympathetic treatment by the Queensland State Government. The need for drought relief was not recognised in time. If I remember correctly, the hon. member for Burnett asked in this Chamber if dairy farmers could have two months' issue of drought relief so that they could buy a reasonable amount of fodder while it was readily available, rather than have to take it monthly when it would be at an extortionate price and too late for the stock, anyway. Those were comments made by a Government member, not by me.

There is one thing on which I would particularly like some information. I may have missed it during the Minister's introduction, but I do not think he mentioned it. I refer to the possibility of businessmen who are not bona fide dairymen taking advantage of this situation to obtain finance for amalgamating dairy farms. I refer, firstly, to those who have acquired marginal dairy farms since the scheme was mooted in 1966, and, secondly, to those who might take advantage of easier finance to buy marginal dairy farms. I want to know if the Bill contains any retrospectivity provisions to deal with such situations and to ensure that there is no pirating of the scheme by Pitt Street farmers who might want to use the lower-than-average interest rates to obtain a killing by means of capital gains

and taxation concessions. That is one of the great banes and inflators of value that is helping to kill the man on the land today.

I am not blaming the State Government for this, but I do not think that someone who is making a fortune in a more favoured and more protected industry, whether he is a professional man or a businessman, should be able to lay out \$20,000 on rural enterprises and be in front tax-wise if he receives a return of only \$15,000. If he did not do that, he would have to pay taxation on his very high income and investment. Although this is not a State responsibility, investments of that type have been so damaging to primary industry that I urge the State Government to try, with all the vigour and authority that it has, to obtain a ruling on a Federal basis on that avenue of investment. It certainly has not been for the good of the rural community.

Mr. McEwen is concerned about the future fate of Australia's primary products in Great Britain if that country enters the Common Market. Hon. members have been told what a great negotiator Mr. McEwen is. It has been said that he is the greatest negotiator in the world. I shall not try to detract from him, but I do not believe that he is the greatest negotiator. I should say that there is a greater negotiator in Japan.

**Mr. Hinze:** What about the sale of Australian sugar to Japan? But for the success of "Black Jack" McEwen, we would not be selling sugar to Japan.

**Mr. BLAKE:** If it had not been for the Government that the hon. member supports, the growers would not have been producing it for three years, as Mr. McEwen said, for a price as if it were so much sand shovelled up from our beaches and shipped around the world. I do not blame the Federal Government for the situation, because Federal Ministers have said quite frankly in Queensland, when they have attended conferences here, that they were not consulted on the matter. If the hon. member for South Coast wants to buy into the argument, I will say that the State Government is to blame for the leanest period in the history of the sugar industry.

There is another aspect of that question to which I should refer. One hears about subsidies to primary industry. I read an article in the I.P.A. Review—I think that is what it is called; it is not an official journal, admittedly—which said that in 1968 \$28,000,000 was paid to the sugar industry in subsidies. In fact, it was a straight-out loan. It attracts interest, and it is being repaid beginning this year, 1970. If that is the way the Liberal Party and the Country Party—they run in double harness—try to depict a primary industry, I should say it is time that a full-scale effort was made to put the facts before the people. To call a loan that attracts interest a subsidy is denigrating primary industries.

I was talking earlier about Mr. McEwen and his alleged ability as a negotiator. Even if he is the greatest negotiator in the world, I do not see why he should be looked upon as a "loner", as the complete anchor, as the be-all and end-all of Australia's trade efforts overseas.

The Opposition believes that greater efforts should be made to establish trade posts throughout the world. It is no good assuming that markets are not available merely because someone else has them. One has to make the effort and go out and look for them. If the Government of Queensland intends to allow Mr. McEwen to do all the bargaining, it will be swinging all its efforts on one pivot, which is a very foolish thing to do. When the Government proposed to establish a trade office in Japan, members of the Opposition thought, "At last the Government is getting a bit of sense. Queensland will be competitive with the trade offices already on the job." But what happened? The Government backed out. It has accepted the fact that what markets the State has will be difficult to hold. Instead of saying, "We will grab more of this market," it intends to sit at home and allow the other trade offices to be on the doorstep when additional markets become available. It will end up, not in the ring, not in the ringside seats, but back in the bleachers.

I admit the merits of this reconstruction scheme and building small farms into bigger units. I believe that the dairying industry, in the state it is in at present, definitely needs this type of assistance—it needs the best economic assistance it can get—but it does not go far enough. When the scheme gets under way and it is found how insufficient and insignificant Queensland's allocation is, with 90 per cent. of its dairy farms classed as marginal, I hope that more money will be forthcoming from the Federal Government.

As I see it, the greatest need arising from this scheme is for the Government to be factual with those in the dairying industry. In other words, it should not keep pulling their legs and telling them that everything will turn out all right. All the statements and statistics that have come from Federal and State Ministers point to the fact that a large section of the Queensland dairying industry will be displaced, and I think the Government has to recognise that those in the industry must be made aware of this. I agree that it must be a voluntary scheme, so a proper picture of the position should be presented in order that our young people do not uniformly re-invest in and embark upon a type of production for which there might be no outlet.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. WHARTON** (Burnett) (3.37 p.m.): For several reasons, I should like to join in this debate. I have quite an interest in the dairying industry, not only on the production side but also on the manufacturing side through various board I represent, and in the people who will leave it. The scheme

will certainly benefit some people in the industry, but, like the person who sees his mother-in-law go over a cliff in his latest Jaguar, I have mixed feelings about it.

Although the scheme has much merit, there are some problems connected with it. One that concerns me, of course, is that there will be fewer people in country areas. Of course, this will happen in any case if people are influenced too much by A.L.P. policy.

**Mr. Davies:** Why blame us?

**Mr. WHARTON:** I must blame someone, because I have never heard a more pathetic speech in this Chamber than that delivered by the hon. member for Isis. I challenge him to obtain a pull of his speech and let every member read it to see if in the 25 minutes he held the floor he put forward one constructive suggestion for the dairying industry.

**Mr. Blake:** My time ran out.

**Mr. WHARTON:** Then I am sorry the hon. member did not get an extension of time.

**Mr. Davies:** We will take a stand against you next time.

**Mr. WHARTON:** I do not care who they stand against.

**Mr. Tucker:** On that same proposition you must be ashamed to read your speeches in "Hansard".

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! If the hon. members for Burnett, Maryborough and Townsville North desire to have a conversation, I suggest that they do so when the debate is terminated.

**Mr. WHARTON:** Thank you, Mr. Hooper. I accept the challenge. I issued the challenge, Mr. Hooper, and I am sure you do not mind because I want you to read the speech, too. At no time in the three elections I have contested has the Labour Party put forward a policy of assistance for the dairying industry. One can look at the higher wages, increased pensions and the other things it wants, but one will not find any constructive policy for the dairying industry. The hon. member for Isis indicated this. I ask all hon. members to read his speech in the paper—and I have no doubt that it will be reported in the Press—to see how many constructive suggestions he put forward to help the dairying industry. Members of the Opposition seem to be determined to "jazz around" in politics. They cannot get the A.L.P. out of their system. Let us think of the dairying industry and do something for it. That is why I am in this Chamber.

It is true that the Federal Government has provided the bounty and funds for devaluation, and has endeavoured to enter into trade agreements. It is true also that Australia imports a substantial quantity of cheese. But

that is done only to meet the public demand. We cannot stop people from buying cheese unless we impose an import tariff as we have on sugar.

Only recently I read in the Government Gazette that the hon. member for Isis was granted an increased farm peak, yet he wants to deprive the dairy farmer of the opportunity to obtain an extra quota for his butter. His attitude is typical of the A.L.P.'s policy, and if that policy has any influence on people, then God help the dairying industry. I would be failing in my duty if I did not put forward better suggestions than those that have been made. All the brains are not in the Cabinet. Surely back-benchers are capable of putting forward worth-while suggestions that will be of benefit to dairy farmers.

I agree with the hon. member for Isis that we should create additional trade offices throughout the world in an endeavour to sell our primary products. If we can produce the goods, we must get out and sell them. Australia has relied a great deal on the efforts of Mr. McEwen, who has done a marvellous job, but he will not live forever.

Nobody has claimed that the cane-growers received a grant or a subsidy of \$28,000,000. The A.L.P.'s claim that they did receive that amount by way of a grant is typical of the propaganda that that party tries to force down everybody's throat, and it is dished out particularly around Isis, Bundaberg and Maryborough. I rebut the claim by some people that the Government has subsidised the sugar industry. All the Government did was to lend the industry a certain amount of money. The Labour Party has tried to convince the public that the industry received a subsidy. In the past that propaganda might have won votes for the A.L.P., but it will not do so in future. Truth always prevails.

To return to the Bill, I remind hon. members that its aim is to assist the dairying industry. It provides for a voluntary scheme. At one time it was thought that any person could buy a marginal dairy farm; however, that is not so. Such a farm must be bought by a fellow dairy farmer, who is thus given the opportunity of establishing a more economic unit. By acquiring an adjacent farm he has a chance to do this. He will have a greater area of land on long-term finance. In spite of the ravages of drought and difficulties arising from low prices, the dairy farmer is one of the most efficient primary producers.

**Mr. Davies:** They are out on a limb.

**Mr. WHARTON:** I should think the hon. member for Maryborough will be out on a limb soon.

**Mr. Hughes:** What do you think of the view that dairy farmers should be phased off their properties and re-employed, and that Australia should import butter from New Zealand?

**Mr. WHARTON:** I did not want to go into that matter but, as an hon. member on this side of the Chamber raised it, I point out that, while many people do a great deal of thinking, others do not think at all. My thought is that that would be very good, but only for New Zealand. One of the best things we have done for our dairying industry is to prevent butter imports into Australia.

**Mr. Lickiss:** We have not allowed the import of sugar.

**Mr. WHARTON:** That is so; we have tried to protect the sugar industry. We have also tried to protect the dairying industry. Some people may wish to close down all the dairies and import dairy produce from New Zealand, but that would be very bad for Australia, particularly for Queensland.

**Mr. Hughes:** What about the economics of it?

**Mr. WHARTON:** Economics enter into everything. We either survive or fail, but what the hell is the good of economics if we do not have people.

This legislation has been introduced because we produce a great deal more butter than we have economic markets for. This year Australia produced 220,483 tons of butter, representing 12½ per cent. more than last year. Queensland produced 22,423 tons, or 17½ per cent. more than last year.

**Mr. Jensen:** Why are they producing so much?

**Mr. WHARTON:** Like a lot of people, they can be likened to the dog chasing its tail. If the hon. member would listen for a while, he would learn. I do not wish to be hard on him, as he is virtually my next door neighbour, and he is not too bad a fellow in many ways.

**Mr. Murray:** He belongs to the wrong party.

**Mr. WHARTON:** That is the main problem, but I cannot resolve that.

We must find an economic market. The problem is created by tremendous over-production in some of the other States. Queensland produced 22,000 tons, but we sold all that we produced and had to import more. We do not have a real problem because we eat the butter we produce and then provide a market for imports. Unfortunately, we have to accept an over-all, equalised price related to production in Victoria. At some stage we must control production in the dairying industry, as we do in the sugar, wheat, pineapple and tobacco industries, taking into account supply and demand.

The dairying industry faces a further problem that is created by a cheaper substitute product, which precludes a general

price increase in line with cost of production. Recently, the Labour Party opposed the Government's attempt to help the dairying industry by prohibiting the colouring of margarine. Opposition members said, "Let it go; keep the poor dairy farmer poor; keep him down." They thought that if the dairy farmer got poorer he might vote for them.

**Mr. Jensen:** The Victorian dairy farmer is very rich.

**Mr. WHARTON:** He would never vote for a political organisation that keeps the price of butter down. I know all about the Victorian dairy farmer and the butter industry in the eastern States.

**Mr. Davies:** They looked after their dairy farmers better than this Government did.

**Mr. WHARTON:** There could be no more irrelevant statement than that. How did the Victorian Government look after the dairy farmer? Did it give him some rain?

We are exporting large tonnages at 2s. and 2s. 6d. a lb. and this is reducing the over-all price considerably. In spite of the difficulties in the dairying industry, the overseas price of butter has risen recently by 33s. stg. a cwt., and we have just concluded the highest sales in the United Kingdom for some time. We sold 63,000 tons, in 1969-70 compared with 58,000 tons in the previous year.

There is no thought of kicking anybody out of the dairying industry. This is a voluntary scheme. It is a matter of agreement between the buyer and seller. If the seller asks too high a price, his neighbour will not purchase because he has to pay the amount back. This is not a kick-out scheme; it is a kick-on, voluntary scheme.

As the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha prompts me, it is designed, to some extent, to reduce output, and it must be designed to reduce exports. If it is uneconomic to export, we must consider our local markets and cut our cloth accordingly. If there are too many dairy farmers, they will produce more than market requirements.

In the same period, Queensland produced 22,000 tons. We consumed all our production and had to import supplies from Victoria. We certainly did not have any problem of over-production.

I believe that, when the quotas are set, Queensland will get its fair share. This will be done by agreement between the States. The States have agreed on other matters, and surely they can agree on this.

Nobody will be tied down to producing only a certain quantity. If a farmer supplied well above requirements, he would get a lower price under the two-pool system. Each farmer should have a share of the local market, and those who over-produce must accept the lower return from the export market.

The scheme has a good deal of merit. It is a voluntary scheme by which we are trying to assist people who are in an un-economic position. This situation also creates a problem for the factories. Factories cannot operate without supply, and country areas depend on the continued operation of their factories. We do not want to do anything that would upset factory employment and the farmers who supply the factories.

The hon. member for Warwick said on Tuesday that we do not want a drift from the land. The hon. member for Isis spoke about people finding other avenues of employment, and this does create a problem, whether they are employees or farmers engaged in primary production. We must ensure that every farmer gets an economic return from his farming pursuits.

**Mr. Jensen:** Advocate price control and these poor fellows might be able to live.

**Mr. WHARTON:** In some respects, that could have merit, but, if price control were applied, wage control would have to be applied. That is very important. Opposition members know it is true, but they do not admit it.

Increases in wages lift costs, and the farmer is priced out of his livelihood. I do not want to be too political, but I like to mix it a bit with the hon. member for Isis because he set out to mix it with us. The policy of the A.L.P. has had a great bearing on farmers' costs today. If wages rise by 10 per cent., 15 per cent., or 20 per cent., obviously costs must rise in similar relationship. Hon. members opposite advocate this policy all the time. We on this side of the Chamber agree that there should be decent wages and conditions, but, as I have often said, they must be related to costs generally. If hon. members on the other side want wages to be extravagantly high, farmers' costs must similarly be extravagantly high. Hon. members opposite must admit that wage increases have some effect on costs.

**Mr. Blake:** Your men are being paid too much?

**Mr. WHARTON:** Talk a bit of sense! It is silly to say that sort of thing.

I should now like to say something about returns obtained in the dairying industry. I do not want to be derogatory of the Federal Government, because it has played its part in providing butter subsidies to the tune of \$27,000,000.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** You mean the taxpayers have provided it.

**Mr. WHARTON:** Surely the hon. member for Barcoo would be prepared to share that cost with other members of the community. There has to be some taxation, and it has to be shared by all. I do not think that anyone in this Chamber would have felt the cost of the subsidies to the dairying industry. To

hear hon. members opposite talk, one would think that it tore their heart-strings to help provide that subsidy. What about subsidies to other industries—shipbuilding and other secondary industries? They receive very large subsidies. Did the heart-strings of hon. members opposite tear over those subsidies? No—because those industries employed a few men. We are all dependent upon one another.

**Mr. O'Donnell:** But subsidies are paid by the taxpayer.

**Mr. WHARTON:** Of course they are paid by the taxpayer. The hon. member is now having "two bob" each way. And he cannot do that in this place.

Apart from subsidies, there is a devaluation figure of \$19,000,000 which the Government has thrown in as well. The following is the break up of assistance:—

	\$
Butter . . . . .	37,200,000
Cheese . . . . .	4,300,000
Cheese—with a further appropriation later of	1,382,000
Skim Milk Powder . . . . .	1,804,000
Casein . . . . .	1,575,000

It is fortunate that all these items are now covered by equalisation agreements that permit stabilising operations to function.

The disposal position was somewhat in balance. Sales likely for butter were 102,000 tons for table use in Australia, 11,000 tons for manufacturing purposes, 67,000 tons on quota to the United Kingdom, with 39,400 tons available to markets other than the United Kingdom, and which includes the sale of butter oil. The attainment of these figures for production and sales would mean a carry-over of 3,100 tons.

I emphasise the amount available for the export market. It reduces considerably the over-all price, which naturally gives us concern. I have often said that I support subsidies, and I cannot turn my back on what I have said because I know that it is right. But I do not think that, as prices continue to rise, the whole cost can be met by subsidies. I think that some balance has to be obtained. The dairying industry cannot be subsidised to the last straw. Victoria is the State that can produce extra quantities of dairy products; we in Queensland cannot do it because of our climate. Why subsidise the dairying industry in Victoria at the expense of the other States? I think that that is the good thinking that guided the Federal Government in its decision to subsidise butter production and give an over-all bounty of \$27,000,000 plus devaluation, as long as production does not exceed 220,000 tons.

Mr. Coombs, General Manager of the Queensland Butter Marketing Board, who, like most hon. members, is very interested in the dairying industry, had this to say about the drift from the industry—

“If you leave the wide open spaces for the crowded city you would probably end up in a poorly paid monotonous job. Those of you who are over 35 years of age have little chance of higher employment. If you obtain sufficient money for your farm you may be able to buy a Sydney taxi; this is one alternative.

“Selling the farm, buying a home in the crowded city, shifting mother and the family to a new environment must be considered. Remember this—it takes one day to destroy a dairy farm but a thousand days to breed the cattle and build one up. Remember, whilst land prices show signs of improving long term, the value of the dollar is still going down like sand in an hour glass. Therefore the value of moneys received from the sale of your farm will lose value every year.”

Mr. Coombs also is concerned that if the scheme is taken too far and there is too great a drift from the dairying industry, it may be necessary, as the hon. member for Kurilpa said, to import some butter. The farmers and the farms are available. Surely dairy farmers should be given every encouragement to produce.

Mr. Coombs went on to suggest the amalgamation of properties.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. F. P. MOORE** (Mourilyan) (4.2 p.m.): I wish first to comment on the remarks of the hon. member for Burnett, who referred to the remarks of my colleague the hon. member for Isis, who preceded him in the debate. I should like the hon. member for Burnett to discuss with the hon. member for Clayfield a statement that that hon. member made about me in this Chamber recently. The hon. member for Burnett obviously has been playing with rats for too long and has got lice from them, because he made a lousy speech.

Getting back to the proposed Bill, it has been said that this is the moment of truth for the dairying industry. I think that the moment of truth for the industry came 10 years ago, because that was when the Federal Government received the McCarthy report on the dairying industry and, rather than accept recommendations that would have led to an improvement in efficiency and brought production into line with market realities, it accelerated assistance that encouraged the inefficient to stay and all to expand production. One finds that at present the dairying industry is being protected to the extent of \$90,000,000. I am not condemning that. However, as has been pointed out, that protection money comes from the taxpayers, and

in 12 years' time it could amount to \$1,000 million. I wonder whether Australia can afford that amount of protection.

Dealing with primary production in general, I believe that more research must be done into the marketing of primary products. I will give hon. members an example of what is happening in the sugar industry. Research centres are investigating better types of cane, but a new type of cane need not necessarily reduce the cost of production. The basic factor affecting primary producers today is the cost of production, and hon. members opposite have blamed the A.L.P. for increases in costs. I should like them to state which of the major primary industries, excluding the beef industry and the banana industry, are receiving less for their products than they did under former Labour Governments.

This is a very important point. The “buck” for this cannot be passed to the A.L.P. It has been said that Hawke is the back-breaker of various primary industries, and industry in general, because he will not negotiate with these people. Various factors affect the primary producer, but one of the most important factors affecting him, particularly the primary producer in the North, is anomalous freight rates.

As we have mentioned previously, 24,000 dairy farmers in Australia return an average net income of only \$2,000 a year. This has been the position during the entire lifetime of this State Government and the 20 years during which the Federal Government has been in office, so why has it been left until 1970 to come to this conclusion—to reach what we call “the moment of truth”? This action should have been taken many years ago.

Of the 24,000 farmers mentioned, according to the Minister, 9,000 are in Queensland, but I have not yet heard in this debate any definition of a “marginal farm”. In Western Australia a marginal dairy farm has been defined as one not capable of producing 12,000 lb. of butter fat in a year. The production level specified for an economic unit exceeds that level by only 25 per cent. That is to say, 12,000 lb. of butter fat is marginal, 15,000 lb. establishes an economic unit. In view of that, I should like to know from the Minister his definition of a marginal farm in Queensland, and how he intends to build such a farm up into an economic unit.

I have not many dairy farms in my electorate. They are mainly on the extremities of the electorate, on the upper reaches of the Palmerston Highway, but I think the matter is important.

On 27 May this year, Mr. Anthony was reported in “The Australian” as having said that the Federal Government could not continue to underwrite the average return on butter at 34c a lb. unless the industry took steps to restrict production.



**Mr. Hinze:** That would be sensible, wouldn't it? That would be a reasonable assumption, wouldn't it?

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** This, undoubtedly, is a reasonable assumption, but how long has it taken him to come to this conclusion? It costs \$22,000,000 to underwrite the production of butter at 34c a lb., plus normal bounties amounting to \$27,000,000, but we are told that at the moment production could increase from 220,000 tons to 230,000 tons. We are also told that the Australian and world demand could fall by a further 2,000 tons this year. This again presents a problem for the taxpayer. The underwriting figure could drop to 29c. Thus, we again reach the moment of truth. What are we going to do? This marginal dairy farm reconstruction scheme contains many pitfalls, and I again ask that certain facts be made known to aid us in our consideration of it.

Dr. Joan Tully, senior lecturer in agricultural extension at the University of Queensland, has warned that the social problems that will confront farmers affected by the scheme are important ones.

She said—

"The majority of farmers who could be expected to sell up under the scheme were men educated only to primary school level.

"They would have few skills other than farming. They have grown up in very small farming communities, in a very tight-knit circle.

"It would be difficult to set them down in urban areas and expect them to be satisfied."

Dr. Tully's warning must be heeded. She would not make that statement if she did not believe it to be true.

The population of the State's country areas has not grown; on the contrary, it has become smaller. A number of country people have migrated to the cities. The dairy farmers with whom I am associated could be absorbed into the State's northern towns, but what have those towns to offer to the dairy farmers and their families? I am aware of the problems that confront the dairy farmer. He has to work long hours and his work is arduous. Possibly that is why the hon. member for South Coast cuts such a fine figure!

A reduction in the number of dairy farms would result in diversification into other industries. Uneconomic dairy farms could be suited to beef production. In fact, in my electorate a certain number of former dairy farms have been put under beef. But what would happen if every dairy farmer turned to beef production? In North Queensland there is an outlet in the poddy-calf industry. A man named Blennerhassett, who lives on the Bingil Bay Road, outside El Arish, is raising poddy calves on a machine that has 40 teats, but, as the hon.

member for Isis has pointed out, the purchaser of a marginal dairy farm could be a businessman interested only in evading income tax. A number of dairy farms have been purchased by businessmen who reside in towns.

Government members have thrown the problems onto the shoulders of the trade unions, the A.L.P. and the farmers themselves. Once again they have passed the buck. The Premier, who performs many somersaults, did one of his best on the margarine issue. He tried to pass the buck onto the Opposition, but how could he when the margarine issue did not even reach this House? As I said, he has twisted and somersaulted for the last three years. He will continue to do so, trying to cast disrespectful allegations at the A.L.P. In the last two weeks he sent in his parliamentary colleagues with prepared speeches for publication in the Press. They did not make their speeches as we did; they read them and presented a lot of moratorium rot.

**A Government Member** interjected.

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** He made a statement that he had to get in quickly because of the absolute rubbish spoken by the hon. member. I repeat that, if Country Party people mix with rats, they will end up with lice.

I congratulate the Minister on the men selected to implement this scheme. I am sure that it will be carried out in all honesty under the direction of Mr. Heffernan of the Land Administration Commission, and the other gentlemen, whose names I do not recall at the moment. They will help the Minister to their utmost in implementing the scheme.

With those comments I conclude by asking the Minister to reply to the few questions I have raised so that I may pass the answers on to the people in my electorate who requested me to obtain the information.

**Mr. HINZE** (South Coast) (4.17 p.m.): I commend the Minister on the introduction of this Bill, and I am indeed pleased that the Department of Lands is to be responsible for its administration. We know that he has very efficient officers to administer this important Commonwealth-States agreement.

Why was this measure introduced? About four or five years ago those in the industry sought such a scheme when it was recognised that the dairying industry's economy was running down. They were looking for some means to assist those engaged in this wonderful industry. I say "wonderful", because no other industry has done so much to implement decentralisation in Australia generally. Yet, in those circumstances, we are talking today about assisting people to leave their properties because of an over-supply of dairy products throughout the world.

Today, the hon. member for Landsborough referred to the European Economic Community and the fact that very shortly Great Britain will enter it. Undoubtedly the greatest statesman in Australia, John McEwen—or “Black Jack”, if hon. members opposite wish to name him that way—told us bluntly that we had to put our house in order as we did not have very long to go. The United Kingdom now looks on Australia as a grown-up child and says, “Your mining industries must be in such a position that you can start to look after yourself.” Britain accepts that she has been our best market, but she must look after her own economy. We, as Australians and Queenslanders, appreciate her problems, and accept that very shortly we will have great quantities of surplus products, of which dairy products will be a part. That is why the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, Mr. Anthony, in consultation with the States, introduced this agreement, which has already been accepted by Western Australia and Tasmania. Those engaged in the industry in Queensland accept that it must become part of our economy.

As this scheme was sought in 1966, it can be appreciated that since then the number of dairy farmers in Queensland has decreased. In 1956-57, the Q.D.O., the statutory body set up to attend to the affairs of dairy farmers in Queensland, had 19,866 members. Since then there has been a steady loss of members, and in 1969-70 the organisation had only 8,688 members. This is bad. However, the economy of the industry is such that people cannot stay in it, and people have left the industry. In many cases they simply walked off their farms. The purpose of this Bill is to assist people who wish to leave their farms; there is no compulsion.

**Mr. Bennett** interjected.

**Mr. HINZE:** What about those who have already left? They have been absorbed by other industries in various parts of the State. I do not claim that this is good. I do not like to see people leaving the country areas. Being a good Country Party member, I want to keep as many people in the country as possible. I do not want urbanisation, where people are strangled every time they get in their cars and drive home, which takes hours. It is quite obvious that urbanisation is not good for Australia; but it has happened, and it is the duty of every member of this Parliament to do everything possible to keep people in country areas. This Bill is one way to do it. Instead of walking off their farms with nothing, people will receive something to rehabilitate themselves in another industry in a country town. That is the main purpose of this Bill. It will also stop over-production.

Queensland is not the State at fault. Victoria can produce dairy products reasonably cheaply, and Victorian production has continued to increase. Butter-production figures for the 10-year period from 1959-60

indicate that Victoria is the State to blame, and, from those figures, I quote the following:—

Year	Tons of Commercial Butter		
	Victoria	Queensland	Australia
1959-60	90,296	38,931	194,735
1968-69	126,138	19,232	195,944

The over-all Australian production did not increase, the Queensland production dropped by half, and the Victorian production increased by 33 per cent.

The Minister for Primary Industry had to say to this industry, “If you do not put your house in order, I will do it for you.” He laid it on the line recently. He said, “I cannot continue to go to the Federal Parliament and ask for a subsidy of \$27,000,000 and an underwriting figure of \$22,000,000 if you continue to increase production.”

This industry is no different from the furniture or vehicle-building industry. If the product cannot be sold, why produce it? With a world market that is over-supplied, we would be stupid to produce what is not required and will eventually be dumped.

The hon. member who just resumed his seat asked, “What is an uneconomic farm?” As can be appreciated, it is a very uneconomic farm that produces only a certain amount of milk or butter-fat.

It is asked, “What is an economic property?” It is one that produces 34,000 lb. of butter-fat a year. If that is converted to milk at 4 per cent., it represents 223 gallons of milk a day for 365 days a year. That clearly sets out the difference between an uneconomic farm and an economic one. Here we have a position where a person who so wishes can approach the Government, through the Minister, and say, “I do not produce the quantity referred to. I believe I qualify. I have with me a person who wishes to buy my property.” As I understand it, representations are made to the Lands Department; an officer will then inspect the property for sale; and a price will be agreed upon. I understand that the seller will put a price on his property, and, knowing that funds are available for its purchase, I think he should be able to expect a reasonable price. Under the present circumstances, he cannot do that. The person who wishes to purchase the property then makes a deal with the Government to take it over.

If I, for instance, apply to take over another property, I understand that it will be possible for me to obtain finance over 25 years at 5 per cent. interest, with no payments to be made for the first two years. That appears to me to be a pretty good deal. There is no restriction on the title. I understand that by way of release agreement I could then go to a bank and say, "I wish to develop this property. I do not want to put it to milk production; I want it for beef production or fat-lambs. If you do not want butter production, I can produce something else on the amalgamated property. This will improve my farming economy." Funds should then be available through ordinary banking channels to assist the development of the property. If it was large enough, it could even be developed for timber production.

The Minister also indicated that it was the intention of his department to produce a brochure explaining the scheme. That is something that I am sure is required. There are 8,800 dairy farmers in Queensland, and it will be necessary to get the story to them. It is understood that at present 90 per cent. of Queensland dairy farmers will qualify under the scheme, as they do not produce 13,600 lb. of butter-fat. That is certainly a low production. Even if only 50 per cent. voluntarily approach the Government, it will be much easier from the point of view of the Government and the farmers if they can be told, "Here is a brochure setting out all the conditions of the scheme."

The East Moreton District Council Extension Advisory Committee, which is part of the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation, is only too pleased to assist the department in this regard. We discussed the matter at one of our meetings recently, and it was decided that one of the things we were looking for was a brochure that we could send to farmers and that would show them if they were qualified to participate in the scheme.

Apparently funds, amounting to \$25,000,000 over five years, are to be provided by the Commonwealth Government. If that amount is divided mathematically between six States, it will be found that it works out at about \$1,000,000 a year for each State. If one divides that by even 50 per cent. of the farms—say, 4,000—only 50 farms would be able to participate each year. The scheme will not work that way, because, as I said earlier, 90 per cent. of the farmers in this State qualify and I believe that 90 per cent. of the farmers in Victoria do not qualify. Again, if \$25,000,000 over five years is not sufficient and the scheme is successful—I believe it will be—more funds will be available from the Commonwealth Government for this purpose.

I agree with other hon. members who referred to the fact that people who have not been trained to do anything but farm, and particularly dairy farm, are to be thrown

onto the labour market. Where do they go? Up to a certain age, they could be all right. But if they can be given a reasonable price for their small properties, so that they have something in their hip pockets, and they want to stay in the area, the Act should contain a provision allowing them to excise the house from the land and live there when the properties are amalgamated. It might be desirable to allow people to continue living in the country. If they were given a small amount of money for their property, they could perhaps take a job in a small town in a country area or engage in growing small crops or pig raising.

**Mr. R. Jones:** This will not be given to the railwaymen and the coal miners.

**Mr. HINZE:** I do not wish to create controversy in this Chamber. I believe that all hon. members approve of the scheme, and I have not heard any hon. member put forward a reasonable argument against it. All hon. members are concerned about the dairy farmers and the dairying industry. However, I was surprised to find last year, when there was a possibility that something could be done for dairy farmers in their fight against margarine, that the numbers could not be obtained. I thought that the A.L.P. would at least back the poor old cow cocky, but when the heads were counted I found that that was a lot of eye-wash. Hon. members opposite were prepared to use the dairy farmer as a political football.

**Mr. Baldwin:** We don't back monopolies.

**Mr. HINZE:** Never mind about that—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Ramsden): Order! I ask the hon. member to address the Chair. He can ignore hon. members on his right.

**Mr. HINZE:** I made a prediction 14 years ago at the Country Party conference in Rockhampton that some day production would have to be limited by means of quota control. That is exactly what is happening now. There is no doubt in my mind that eventually there will be farm quotas for butter production. There is general agreement between the States at this stage that they will accept State quota production, and the three stages are State quota production, farm quota production, and factory quota production.

Mr. Anthony, the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, has said, "If you don't come to some sensible arrangement, I will not guarantee any longer the figure of \$49,000,000". The 3c a lb. being paid for butter obviously would have to be reduced to something less if the Commonwealth Government was not prepared to underwrite it. Mr. Anthony has made the position very clear. Unless the State does something to assist the industry, there is a limit to the support that can be expected from the Commonwealth Government.

Section 92 of the Constitution raises problems between the States. The hon. member for South Brisbane will be able to discuss that subject. However, because of equalisation it is extremely difficult to get agreement between the States on this particular matter.

**Mr. Davies:** Which State is coming off worst?

**Mr. HINZE:** The hon. member knows as well as I do that this is a tropical State. He should know also that in the temperate climates of Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia butter-fat production per cow per annum is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times what it is in Queensland.

This is a difficult State in which to run a dairy. The dairy industry will accept this proposal—there is no doubt about that—but I am sure that it will insist on one condition, that is, that we cannot tolerate the importation of 6,000 tons of cheese into Australia while we are being told by the Federal Minister for Primary Industry to restrict our own production. While we are being told to do this, we are importing cheese from New Zealand.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Who arranged that?

**Mr. HINZE:** Never mind who arranged it. I am asking the Minister today to stop the importation of exotic cheese from New Zealand. The Downs Co-operative Dairy Association Ltd. has proved that it can produce all the cheese needed in Queensland. It produces a cheese of high quality. There is no doubt about the ability of Queensland factories to produce all the good cheese we need. I suggest to the Minister that if we accept this agreement, he should do something about stopping the importation of cheese. He will appreciate that this is hard to take while being asked to limit our own production.

I think I have made all the points I wanted to make. I have indicated that Australia's problem production occurs mainly in Victoria. As I say, if it was left to Queensland production, no problem would arise because we have not increased production commensurate with the increase in population. In fact, we have to import butter into Queensland. A few years ago we would not have believed that we would reach the day when we could not produce sufficient butter for Queensland's needs, but that day has arrived and the problem is accentuated by the prolific production in Victoria.

I have referred to the loss of farms in Queensland, even in the most favourable area in southern Queensland, which is that within a radius of 100 miles of Brisbane. This area has been referred to as the "milk market", and is generally regarded as possibly the prestige area in Queensland for dairy production. Yet it is in the same position as other areas, with farmers leaving the industry. I would not know the reason, but it is happening throughout the State.

I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill so ably presented by the Minister for Lands. I am quite sure that he, with the very capable officers of the Department of Lands, the assistance of the brochure I referred to previously, and the support of the statutory body, the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation, and its very extensive advisory committees, will put beyond doubt that this scheme will be brought into being. It will help those people who voluntarily leave the industry to leave it with something in their hip pockets and assist in keeping them in country areas instead of having them coming into the city and being jammed in traffic snarls and breathing polluted air.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Ramsden): Order! Before I call the hon. member for South Brisbane, I point out that I do not desire to compete with the rest of the Chamber. There is far too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr. BENNETT** (South Brisbane) (4.40 p.m.): Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. I know that the competition would be unequal if they took you on.

This moment is a very sad one for this Parliament and for the people of Queensland. They are faced with the reality that after 12 years of Country Party Government the State is forced to introduce legislation to drive people off the land.

**Mr. Hanlon:** It is a "dairying Dunkirk".

**Mr. BENNETT:** That is so. For many years to come dairy farmers and others will hold a memorial day on this date to bemoan the fact that the Government—a County Party Government as it is—was unequal to its task of fostering and encouraging the rural development of the State.

World-famous economists like Mr. Colin Clark have told us that both our State and our country, while under the control of Country-Liberal Governments, have been ruined for the sons of our soil. We can survive only by exploiting our mineral resources. The only primary industry that returns any profits at all is the meat industry. The sheep industry has been ruined and the sugar industry is almost bankrupt. The man on the land has no security and is anxious about his future. The Government, which allegedly treasures its reputation as a Country Party Government, has failed miserably to look after the interests of the sons of our soil. They are walking away from the soil sad and distressed and going to the cities.

Early this year the people of Australia witnessed the unprecedented spectacle of dairy farmers, jackaroos and others, who previously had supported the hon. member for Gregory and his Government, organising a moratorium march in Melbourne in order to attract the Government's attention to their plight and wants.

**Mr. Baldwin:** It brought results, too.

**Mr. BENNETT:** No doubt it was as a result of that march that the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme was introduced. Apparently the Federal Government takes notice of moratorium marches and acknowledges that the farmers were so incensed that they decided to leave the rural areas and move to what the hon. member for South Coast has described as the smog-laden city. Of course, the dairy farmers had no alternative; they had to convince both the Federal and State Governments of their necessitous circumstances.

The insincerity and hypocrisy of the hon. member for South Coast made me smile. On the one hand he praised "Black Jack" McEwen, and undoubtedly scarred the conscience of the Minister for Local Government when he rained encomiums on the leader of the Country Party in Australia, and on the other hand he proceeded to tell hon. members that one of the reasons for the ruination of the dairying industry was the importation of New Zealand cheese at low prices. I remind hon. members that the man who fostered and administered the importation of New Zealand cheese was none other than "Black Jack" McEwen, the great idol of the Country Party, who thus helped force the dairy farmer off the land. I know that the official attitude of the Country Party in the Federal sphere is that dairy farmers are merely parasites on the community and the taxpayers' purse. Some years ago the Federal Liberal-Country Party Government announced its policy of driving the dairy farmer off the land. "Black Jack" McEwen announced that cheese could be imported at a much cheaper price than it could be produced here because of our high costs of living and production.

**Mr. Hanlon:** The Country Party forced Bury out of the Federal Cabinet for saying that, and now they have promoted him again.

**Mr. BENNETT:** As the hon. member for Baroona said, Bury was forced out, but the Government was forced to replace him because it knew that he was telling the truth. People realise that the truth cannot be held down too long; the old expression that truth will out is still a truism.

Bury's expression has been adopted as policy by the Leader of the Country Party in Australia, who is determined that it will be carried to fruition. The end of the dairy farmer is being insisted on. The leaders of the Federal and State Country Parties had to make the shameful and shocking admission that farmers in New Zealand, a country not nearly as vast as Australia, a country that has not the resources that we enjoy, can produce cheese and dairy products considerably cheaper than we can, and that the Government is prepared to import these products and drive into the cities loyal sons of Australia who have worked all their lives on dairy farms.

Recently the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, Mr. Anthony, said, "The dairy industry was pursuing a senseless policy". On the one hand industry leaders say that they safeguard the interests of the man on the land, but on the other hand, when they get into Parliament, they castigate and criticise the men they are supposed to represent by saying that dairy organisations and their representatives are pursuing a senseless policy.

It is incongruous to note that we have in power Governments whose main idea is to foster the development and sale of Australian mineral wealth to overseas interests. They are prepared to sell out our natural resources in the mining world and they are prepared to sell out farmers who have tilled the soil for years and are now being shown no gratitude.

This scheme is designed ostensibly to help those who wish to be relieved of their obligations to dairying, but it is really a sinister and significant scheme to help big business—banks and finance and insurance companies—that cannot recover moneys from farmers who are plunged into bankruptcy. The Government is coming to the assistance again of the big financial institutions by providing at 5 per cent. interest money that normally, even through the Agricultural Bank, would cost farmers in other parts of the land 7½ per cent.

Previous speakers have asked why the dairying industry has been plunged into ruination. Costs have risen, mainly during this Government's administration, by the astronomical figure of 150 per cent. How can dairy farmers compete when the Government will not control prices and costs for the benefit of the ordinary person in the State? The dairy farmer has been forced, by unequal competition and ever-spiralling costs of production, to leave the land.

It is alleged that the purpose of this marginal dairy farms reconstruction scheme is twofold. Firstly, it is designed to enable the low-income farmer to leave his farm.

**Mr. Lickiss:** This question does not apply only to the dairy farmer.

**Mr. BENNETT:** That is right. It applies to all people who till the soil and those in general employment, who are also being fleeced because of the refusal of this Government and the Federal Government to introduce some sensible control over costs and prices. Those Governments just will not face up to reality.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Many primary industries which threw off at the dairy farmers are now joining the queue.

**Mr. BENNETT:** Of course they are. Unfortunately, it is only the section of the community that has the ear of the Government that gets any relief. In this case, the dairy farmers are fortunate. They are up to their eyes in debt, and the banks and finance companies do have the ear of the

Government and can assist and direct the Government to afford some relief in this direction. Of course, it is the ordinary worker who provides the funds for the scheme by way of taxation. He is the one who pays for it eventually.

Dairy farmers who leave the land are untrained and unskilled for any other avenue of employment. This applies particularly to the more elderly people. Let us face it: these days, people over 50 find it difficult to obtain manual employment. They are not trained for any other industry. So these dairy farmers and their families will come to the city after having to accept the grant made to them on the sale of their farms, and will become recipients of social service, while their land goes into the hands of big vested interests.

**Mr. Hanlon:** This is only decentralisation in reverse.

**Mr. BENNETT:** Yes, it is decentralisation in reverse. It is a typical example of the Government's policy to aid big business. The big southern firms have taken over most of our big businesses. Now our land will be sold to big company interests, and the little family unit will be forced out of business.

The second objective of the scheme, allegedly, is to diversify the pattern of land use. It will be interesting to see how that works in practice. I read the Minister's speech with interest. The Bill gives him vast powers to decide who should get assistance under this scheme. Earlier, I asked by way of interjection what happens to the poor farmer who has already been driven out of the industry because of this Government's policy, but still owns his land. It is surely within the knowledge of the Government that many dairy farmers—and many other men on the land, as the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha said—have taken jobs with the Main Roads Department or local authorities, or have left country areas completely and come to the city. These people have been paying rates and taxes on their unproductive uneconomic units. According to the scheme, their land must have certain qualifications to come within the scheme. They are—

(a) It must be a rural property;

(b) It must have a minimum of 20 lactating cows.

That part of the scheme rules out the producer who is operating as a sideline. A man with courage and guts who is prepared to put up with drought, famine and the seasons; who is prepared to carry on in spite of an inefficient Government; who drives a bulldozer or who builds dams in the district; who grows some type of grain or, in the Near North, ginger or some other crop; will not qualify. He will not qualify because he has had the guts, the enterprise, and the enthusiasm to carry on in spite of the Government's inefficiency in

dealing with the dairying industry. He, a decent son of the soil with a ton of courage, is ruled out.

**Mr. Murray:** There's not much ginger grown these days.

**Mr. BENNETT:** If what happened to the "ginger group" when they saw the Treasurer last Tuesday morning happens too often, there won't be much "ginger" left in them, either.

There is under this scheme an insistence on a minimum of 20 lactating cows. And this from a Government that has been whingeing and crying about drought, and suggesting that it has some sympathy for the poor old farmers! What about the man who has lost his cows as a result of the drought? What about the man who has only skeletons left on his property? He will get no assistance at all because he does not have a minimum of 20 lactating cows.

Another qualification for a marginal dairy farm is—

(c) At least half of the gross income of the farm must be obtained from the production of milk or cream used for manufacturing purposes.

Again I ask: what will happen to the man who has already been forced into a city or town, and who cannot rid himself of his farm because nobody can afford to buy it as a unit without amalgamating it with some other farm? According to statistics, approximately 90 per cent. of dairy farms produce less than the stipulated production, and are therefore marginal. Is it not a shocking admission that the aim is to put 90 per cent. of dairy farmers out of business?

**Mr. Sullivan:** Your arithmetic is so wrong.

**Mr. BENNETT:** It is not my arithmetic. The Minister wants to be careful before he pokes his big skull into this argument. I am quoting from official documents.

**Mr. Sullivan:** I was always pretty good at mathematics, in spite of the fact that I am a poor old dairy farmer.

**Mr. BENNETT:** I see. Then the Minister should tell his departmental officers that he is better at mathematics than they are, because I am reading from a document that they have produced for distribution to applicants under the scheme.

**Mr. Sullivan:** It would appear that you are misconstruing it.

**Mr. BENNETT:** I shall quote it exactly. It reads—

"(d) The farm if used wholly for dairying, must be incapable of producing 13,600 lbs. of butter fat per annum. On this basis approximately 90 per cent. of Queensland dairies produce less than this figure and would therefore be marginal."

That is quoted from an official publication of the Minister's department. I suggest that the Minister read some of his departmental

material and not have his leg pulled so often by people who regard him as a dairying expert.

**Mr. Sullivan:** If 90 per cent. of farms are uneconomic and they amalgamate, there will not be 90 per cent. of farmers leaving the industry. Half of 90 per cent. is 45 per cent. You are so dull.

**Mr. BENNETT:** If the Minister likes to hurl personal abuse across the Chamber—

**Mr. Sullivan:** It is all right when you do it, but not when I do it. You are like Murphy's dog.

**Mr. Davies:** It is not much use quoting from official documents, is it?

**Mr. BENNETT:** No, but I should hope that there would be some degree of authenticity in an official document. As a matter of fact, I should like to get hold of the official documents showing what share interests the Minister for Lands has with his colleague the Premier in many mining companies. I certainly would use my mathematics then to work out what wealthy men there are in Cabinet.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BENNETT:** It is a pity that the Premier and the Minister for Lands do not contribute some of their vast wealth to the dairy farmers.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I should like the hon. member to get back to the motion before the Committee.

**Mr. BENNETT:** Yes, Mr. Hooper. Let me continue my reference to this official document, which has been published by the Minister's department.

I suppose the Minister is in a different category from other Ministers, because the scheme does not provide for any preliminary authority to enter it, as does, say, an authority to prospect. One has to be either in or out; one does not invest and then see which way one is going.

Before I come to the description of an economic unit, I might mention that the Government and the Minister claim that a statistical survey of the industry in Queensland shows that most Queensland dairy farms are marginal farms.

The man who will determine what is an economic unit for the purposes of the scheme will really be the Minister for Lands himself. This official document, which apparently the Minister has not read, says—

“An economic unit for the purposes of the scheme means a rural property which in the opinion of the Minister for Lands”—

I stress that—

“has the capacity to produce on the average per annum, under average efficiency in management, a level of production

which is or equivalent to 25 per cent. or more above the maximum level of production specified for a marginal dairy farm.”

Again it is related to the opinion of the Minister. Again one sees the avenues and the opportunities there for Cabinet Ministers of the type that are in power at present.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I hope that the hon. member is not imputing improper motives. If he is, I ask him to withdraw that remark.

**Mr. BENNETT:** Far be it from me to impute improper motives! I was not dealing with Comalco shares.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BENNETT:** Clearly the position is that the Minister's opinion is involved, and I think that is a rather unfortunate aspect of the scheme.

The hon. member for Isis, Mr. Jim Blake, is a very successful farmer and man on the land. If he needed any assistance under a scheme of this type, he would, because of his politics, get short shrift from a Minister of the type of the Minister for Lands. He would not receive any assistance at all. One will need to have certain qualifications, and perhaps make certain contributions, before the Minister will develop any interest in a scheme such as this.

**Mr. Murray:** He will have to guarantee at least that next year the Minister will get a cut from his cane farm.

**Mr. BENNETT:** I am not discussing mining interests, but if that precedent is followed I suppose all Ministers will have to get a cut somewhere.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BENNETT:** The official document that has been published states under the heading “Who May Buy a Marginal Dairy Farm” that if the amalgamated farm is to be used for dairying, the buyer is required to have held his land for a period of at least two years prior to the application. Again, I think that is an unfair prerequisite to benefit under the scheme. If a person has bought into a dairy farm and finds that conditions in the last two years have deteriorated considerably, as they have in this instance, then in all fairness that man, as he has invested his moneys in a bona-fide fashion, should be permitted to take advantage of the scheme.

(Time expired.)

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 5.6 p.m.