

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 5 MARCH 1974**

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[HANSARD]

*Legislative Assembly*

SECOND SESSION OF THE FORTIETH PARLIAMENT

(Second Period)

**TUESDAY, 5 MARCH 1974**

Under the provisions of the motion for special adjournment agreed to by the House on 12 December 1973, the House met at 11 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. W. H. Lonergan, Flinders) read prayers and took the chair.

## ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr. Speaker—

Gift Duty Act Amendment Bill;  
Stamp Act and Another Act Amendment Bill;  
Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act Amendment Bill;  
Land Tax Act Amendment Bill;  
Succession and Probate Duties Acts Amendment Bill;  
Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement Bill;  
Coal and Oil Shale Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment Bill;  
Special Gem Claims (Evidence of Payment of Rates) Bill;  
Police Act Amendment Bill;  
Art Union Regulation Act Amendment Bill;  
Court Funds Bill;  
University of Queensland Act Amendment Bill;  
Educational Memorial Funds Disposal Bill;  
Public Service Act Amendment Bill;  
Factories and Shops Act Amendment Bill (No. 2);

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act Amendment Bill;  
Fire Brigades Act Amendment Bill (No. 2);  
Currumbin Minerals Pty. Ltd. (Transfer of Treatment Plant) Bill;  
Liquor Act Amendment Bill;  
Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment Bill;  
Local Government Act and Another Act Amendment Bill;  
Townsville City Council (Sale of Land) Bill;  
Censorship of Films Act Amendment Bill;  
Veterinary Surgeons Act Amendment Bill;  
Pyramid Selling Schemes (Elimination) Bill;  
Criminal Code and the Justices Act and Another Act (Stock Offences) Amendment Bill;  
Real Property Acts Amendment Bill;  
Dental Act Amendment Bill.

## ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL

JUDGE FOR 1974

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt of a letter from the Honourable the Chief Justice intimating that the Honourable Mr. Justice W. B. Campbell would be the judge to preside at the sittings of the Elections Tribunal for 1974.

## PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamations under—

Irrigation Act 1922–1973, the Water Act 1926–1973 and the Irrigation Areas (Land Settlement) Act 1962–1972.  
Factories and Shops Act 1960–1973.

## Orders in Council under—

- Workers' Compensation Act 1916–1973.
- Racing and Betting Act 1954–1972.
- The Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Limited Agreement Act of 1957.
- Water Act 1926–1973 and the Irrigation Act 1922–1973.
- Water Act 1926–1973.
- Irrigation Act 1922–1973.
- River Improvement Trust Act 1940–1971.
- Harbours Act 1955–1973.
- Queensland Marine Act 1958–1972.
- Beach Protection Act 1968–1972.
- Factories and Shops Act 1960–1973.
- Co-operative Housing Societies Act 1958–1973.

## Regulations under—

- Public Service Act 1922–1968.
- Workers' Compensation Act 1916–1973.
- Main Roads Act 1920–1972.
- Water Act 1926–1973.
- Irrigation Act 1922–1973.
- Harbours Act 1955–1973.
- Queensland Marine Act 1958–1972.
- Apprenticeship Act 1964–1972.
- Construction Safety Act 1971–1973.
- Factories and Shops Act 1960–1973.
- State Housing Act 1945–1973.
- The State Transport Acts, 1960 to 1965.

- By-laws under Harbours Act 1955–1973.
- By-laws Nos. 1041 to 1044 under the Railways Act 1914–1972.
- Notification under the Tow-truck Act 1973.

## QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

## OFFICIAL AEROPLANE, FLIGHTS TO KINGAROY

**Mr. Houston**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

Of the flight numbers listed in the return of flying hours and miles logged by the official aeroplane, which of these numbers represent flights to or from Kingaroy?

*Answer:—*

“As Premier, I am not accountable to the Leader of the Opposition for my movements. I regard the continuing attack on the purchase and use of the Government aircraft as sheer hypocrisy by the Opposition Leader and his party. When I see how the A.L.P. in Canberra uses V.I.P. jets as taxicabs although it owns T.A.A.; how it charters Boeing 707's at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars, when it owns an international airline, QANTAS; how the Prime Minister and Ministers take up to forty of their personal staff and advisers with them; how the Prime Minister takes

his daughter and Ministers take their families on trips at the taxpayers' expense, all without a word of criticism or complaint from this Opposition Leader or his offiders, then I brand their carping about the use of the Queensland Government aircraft as hypocrisy. I intend to treat all their future questions exactly the same way.”

## SECURITY IN RAIL CARRIAGE OF MAIL AND VALUABLES

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

(1) Is he satisfied with the existing security arrangements within the Railway Department in relation to the carriage of cash, Her Majesty's mail and other valuables by train and, if so, have the travelling public and railway employees adequate protection?

(2) If not, will he have the matter fully investigated with a view to revising the existing system?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) “The security arrangements are considered adequate.”

## RAILWAY CARRIAGE-CLEANING STAFF, MAYNE

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

(1) Is he aware of any selective recruitment of the carriage-cleaning staff within the Railway Department at Mayne?

(2) Is there an acute shortage of staff in this section but applicants are told that no vacancies exist?

(3) Is preference granted to male or to female applicants?

(4) Are female staff threatened with night work or shift work when they seek improved working conditions or lodge other complaints concerning their duties?

(5) Are staff who leave given favourable re-employment opportunities in preference to others applying and, if so, do records disclose the maximum number of any individual's re-engagements?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 5) “Males are preferred for this work, and there is no shortage of carriage cleaners at present. The rate of pay for a female carriage cleaner is the same as for a male carriage cleaner, being based on equal pay for equal work, which involves shift and night work. Any employee who leaves the Department and makes application for re-employment has his application considered on its merits.”

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### SHORTAGE OF RAILWAY REFRIGERATED WAGONS

**Mr. CASEY:** I ask the Minister for Transport: Is there a shortage in Queensland of railway wagons known as "cool cars", which are used for the transportation of perishable foodstuffs? Is it true that because of this shortage perishable foodstuffs are not being accepted by the Railway Department for consignment to Mackay and other northern areas? As the immediate waiving of road transport fees is of no assistance because the Bruce Highway is cut by floods on both sides of Mackay, will he arrange a reorganisation of priorities for the use of "cool cars" so that the supply of perishable commodities to North Queensland can be maintained?

**Mr. K. W. HOOPER:** There has been a shortage of refrigerated wagons, caused principally by delays in the return of these wagons as a result of flooding. For that reason the department has been obliged to give priority to the carriage of perishables such as fruit, vegetables and smallgoods. However, it is proposed from tomorrow to accept consignments of Easter eggs for northern areas.

### COMPREHENSIVE HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE POLICY, STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE

**Mr. TUCKER:** I ask the Treasurer: In view of the way in which State Government Insurance Office profits are being amassed and invested in the private and business sector of the community, in contrast to the original concept of the role that this office should play in the community, why cannot these investments and assets be marshalled and liquidated by it with the object of offering to the general public, at a reasonable premium, a comprehensive household policy covering all contingencies and by such a lead forcing other companies to follow suit?

**Sir GORDON CHALK:** The question is, in my opinion, based on a false premise. First of all, the funds of the State Government Insurance Office are an accumulation of policyholders' money, and they are invested for the purpose of appreciation in value in the years to come. To say that the State Government Insurance Office is making a profit is not entirely correct. In the field of workers' compensation alone, the State Government Insurance Office last year lost approximately \$5,000,000. In its general operations it gives a return by way of bonus where there is profitability.

It is not a question of utilising funds in the manner indicated by the honourable gentleman because, if one did that, one would be placing those funds in a risk position, which I believe would not be in the best interests of the policyholders of the State Government Insurance Office.

### INCREASED CHARGES BY QUEENSLAND TURF CLUB

**Mr. TUCKER:** I ask the Treasurer: In view of the decision of the Queensland Turf Club to increase the fielding charges levied on bookmakers, and also to increase various other charges, and again in view of the special assistance granted to this and other clubs by special grants for increased prize money, will he ensure that the punting public obtains some benefit from these proposed increases—for example, by insisting that the Queensland Turf Club provide a covered betting ring?

**Sir GORDON CHALK:** It has not been the practice in southern Queensland to provide a covered betting ring.

As to the charges proposed by the Queensland Turf Club, I will be meeting representatives of the club and the bookmakers' co-operative on Thursday afternoon. It is true that there has been an increase in costs, both in the operations of bookmakers and of racing generally. I have some very interesting figures to produce to this deputation indicating what have been the holds of bookmakers over the past three months compared with the same months in 1971 and 1972. I have other very interesting figures as to the holds by the T.A.B. in the same periods. It is true that costs have risen; it is equally true that this dispute should never have arisen but should have been a matter of discussion between the Queensland Turf Club and the bookmakers without prior announcement of it.

### PREMIER'S INSPECTIONS DURING FLOODS

**Mr. BROMLEY:** I ask the Premier: In his trip by aeroplane around Queensland during the floods, which main cities and townships did he see and at which places did he land? Did he use the official aeroplane on all sections? If not, whose aircraft did he use and who picked up the tab for that portion of the trip?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** As I understand it, the honourable member has asked a question in relation to the use of aircraft during the flood period. Is that correct?

**Mr. BROMLEY:** Would you like it again? Will I repeat the question?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** No, but I do not know the purpose of the question. I flew considerable distances in the official aeroplane to all flood areas of the State—to the North-west, the South-west, the central area, the Gold Coast, and Ipswich. Other than this, I flew in an R.A.A.F. helicopter on several occasions in the immediate area. I do not know of any other reason the honourable member has for asking his question. I cannot recall using any other aircraft. As Premier, I acknowledged my responsibility for seeing where help was necessary and for making it available. I am sure the honourable member for Mt. Isa will agree that this was worth

while, for in his electorate a lot of interest and activity was initiated in the cartage of food and other supplies and the transportation of people. Of course, other Ministers travelled around the State at the time of the flood.

**A Government Member:** Did you see Gough?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I did not see Mr. Whitlam.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** The Premier did not answer my question.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has answered the question.

#### PREMIER'S INSPECTIONS DURING FLOODS

**Mr. BROMLEY:** I direct a further question to the Premier: As the devastation due to the flood was so dreadful—as he has already intimated—why did he not land his plane at Karumba and Normanton? Was this because he was too scared? I remind him that reporters from the Australian Broadcasting Commission and other television channels went up there.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Of course, the honourable member lives in Brisbane and would not be aware of the situation that existed in very many areas throughout the State. I point out to him that it was a tremendous flood which covered a substantial portion of this State and extended for hundreds of miles into the South-west.

I went there while the worst weather of the cyclone was being experienced, when torrential rains of 10 to 11 inches fell every night. We flew through weather of this type for hundreds of miles with floodwater like a sea beneath us. Apparently the honourable member is not aware of the fact that ours is a land plane which cannot land on water. The people to whom he referred went there long after we did, when weather conditions were suitable, even ideal, for aircraft landing.

#### NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR FLOOD-RELIEF FUNDS

**Mr. N. F. JONES:** I ask the Premier: On 27 January it was alleged that the Press in Queensland and other States asked the Premier to head a national campaign appealing for funds throughout the Commonwealth of Australia for flood victims in Queensland. We have been informed that the Premier's answer was, "No", because of the problems that were associated with the appeal following the Killarney disaster. Will the Premier deny or confirm these allegations?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The honourable member speaks of allegations. No allegations are entailed; a clear-cut situation exists. The Government has certain responsibilities that it faces up to in helping people.

**Mr. Davis:** Ha, ha!

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I do not know what that noise was, but I know that it came from the other side of the Chamber.

Of course, over the years the traditional way of raising funds has been for local authorities—including the Brisbane City Council—and other bodies wishing to make appeals, to enter the field and appeal to the public for donations. That has largely been the Government's attitude and policy over the years, and it is a very satisfactory way of raising funds. Here I wish to pay a tribute to the very many people who responded so generously to the Lord Mayor's appeal, the appeal chaired by Sir Thomas Hiley for flood victims throughout the State as a whole, and appeals by many other organisations. We, of course, appealed to the Commonwealth for assistance.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** You got it, too.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes. As I have said many times, the Commonwealth Government followed a pattern exactly similar to that set by the Federal Liberal-Country Party Government some years ago in Tasmania. We are very appreciative of that fact, and so are the public of this State.

#### PETITION FROM CAIRNS REGIONAL ELECTRICITY BOARD ACTION COMMITTEE

**Mr. R. JONES:** I ask the Premier: Has he received a petition circulated, and forwarded to him, by the Cairns Regional Electricity Board Action Committee and containing 11,132 signatures of citizens seeking retention of the regional electricity authority centred in Cairns? If so, has an acknowledgment been forwarded to that committee?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The letter and the petition could be in my office, but they have not yet come to my attention. I know that the committee has written to me, and various members have been in touch with me on this issue from time to time since my visit to Cairns and discussions with them, and also following the visit of Mr. McKechnie, the Minister for Local Government and Electricity. However, I have not seen the details of the petition to which the honourable member refers.

#### DEATH OF MR. E. J. GAVEN

##### MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

**Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier) (12.10 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

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

"2. That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the widow and family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution,

together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss they have sustained."

It is with deep regret that I move this motion of condolence following the death of Eric John Gaven. The late Mr. Gaven died, after a short illness, in Southport on 18 January 1974 at the age of 68. He was active in public life for some 32 years before his retirement in 1966 as Country Party member for South Coast.

Mr. Gaven was a councillor of the former Nerang Shire in 1935 and was elected first chairman of the newly constituted Albert Shire Council in 1949. As many people would know, he played a very prominent part not only in his local authority but also in the Local Government Association of Queensland. In 1950 he retired as chairman of the Albert Shire Council to contest the former State electorate of Southport, and thus began a career in this Parliament which lasted for some 17 years. The name of his electorate was changed from Southport to South Coast prior to the May 1960 general elections, and in this seat the late Mr. Gaven retained the support of the people of the area until his retirement in 1966.

Mr. Gaven was a former Temporary Chairman in this Legislative Assembly and, for a time in the early 1960's, acted as Chairman. When parliament resumed after the May 1960 election, Mr. Gaven was nominated for the Speakership but deferred in favour of David—now Sir David—Nicholson, who retained that honoured position for a record term before he retired as Speaker of this Parliament in 1972.

The late Mr. Gaven was an outspoken opponent of increases in land valuations on the Gold Coast in the 1960's, pointing out on one occasion that the increases there were nearly nine times that approved for Brisbane. This probably demonstrated the value of the Gold Coast as a tourist area.

I am sure his passing will be mourned by all members in this Chamber who knew him during his 17 years as a State member, and also by the very wide circle of friends he made not only in the South Coast electorate but in many other parts of Queensland. It was because of his interest in the development of the Gold Coast that the bypass road linking the Pacific Highway with Nerang and Broadbeach was named the "Gaven Way". His name, activities and interests are perpetuated in this way.

On my own behalf and on behalf of the Government and all members of Parliament, I extend sincere sympathy to Mrs. Gaven, her two daughters and their families.

**Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK** (Lockyer—Treasurer) (12.13 p.m.): As I have said on many occasions in this Chamber, it is regrettable that generally one of the first matters that come before us on returning to

this House after an absence is a motion of condolence to the relatives of a deceased member or former member.

On this occasion the Premier has paid tribute to the late Eric Gaven. I want to associate members of the Liberal Party and myself personally with the Premier's expressions of sympathy. Eric Gaven's death came as a tremendous shock to me because I had been in his company, at Sir Reginald Swartz's residence, only two nights before he passed away. I well recall some of the conversation he had with me that evening about things he proposed to do, which, I believe, would have been for the benefit of the community in which he lived. I cannot help feeling that Eric Gaven had no thought or realisation then of how close his end might be.

It is true, as the Premier said, that during the period he served in this Parliament and in local government he was prepared to express himself in a forthright manner and to back his remarks with action. It was because of this that he earned the high esteem in which he was held by the community in which he lived. Because he was unable to do some of the things that I know he wanted to do, his passing, in addition to being regretted by many people, will be a great loss to the community generally.

He left this House of his own free will, believing that he would be able to enjoy his retirement. And he was a man who enjoyed life. No matter where he went, but particularly at sporting functions, he entered into the true spirit of the activity in which he engaged. I join with the Premier in expressing sympathy to his widow and family.

**Mr. HOUSTON** (Bulimba—Leader of the Opposition) (12.16 p.m.): On behalf of the Opposition, I join with the Premier and the Deputy Premier in this motion of condolence to the widow and family of the late Eric Gaven. Many honourable members had the privilege of knowing Eric, who, I think it would be true to say, was highly respected and well liked by members on both sides of the House. He had the happy knack of fitting in anywhere, and he became one of the main stars at social functions and football gatherings as well as in serious discussion.

I think it would be true to say that Eric Gaven was not given the opportunity of fully displaying his talents. Many people believe that at some stage he should have been appointed to Cabinet. However, that matter was not in our hands. As both the Premier and the Deputy Premier have said, he was a very forthright man and one who fought for what he believed. The Opposition joins with the Government in expressing regret and sorrow to his widow and family.

Mr. HINZE (South Coast) (12.18 p.m.): I wish to join with the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in this motion of condolence to the widow and family of my predecessor in the South Coast electorate, the late Eric Gaven. He was very well known to me for many years. As the Premier has said, he involved himself in both local government affairs and State politics for a period of 32 years, which is a long time in anyone's life.

I remember Eric as a very close personal friend. He was directly responsible for the lifting of the building restrictions that were imposed in the Gold Coast area during the years of World War II. Since the restrictions were lifted tremendous development has taken place on the Gold Coast. He was also responsible for the building of the first hospital on the Gold Coast, which has become a landmark in the area.

The Premier has referred to the Gaven Way. As members pass through this Parliament, all they leave behind them is a memory. Those of us who have the privilege of driving along the Gaven Way thereby are given the opportunity of remembering Eric.

I join with the previous speakers in offering condolences to Belle Gaven and her daughters in the passing of their husband and father, who was a great Queenslander, a great "Gold Coaster" and, to me, a great personal friend.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

#### PROPOSED MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

QUEENSLAND FLOOD; STATEMENT BY  
MR. SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that the Leader of the Opposition informed me this morning that he was going to move for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 137. I should also like to inform honourable members that the Premier spoke to me at about 7.45 a.m. and told me that he intended to seek leave of the House to move a motion without notice, relative to the flood in Queensland—a motion similar to that of the Leader of the Opposition, for which I commend the honourable gentleman.

I hope that honourable members will agree to the procedure I propose to adopt. The Premier's proposed substantive motion would give more members an opportunity to speak. Under Standing Order No. 137, members other than the mover and the Minister can speak for only 10 minutes, and because of the limitation of time for such a debate very few speakers could take part in it. Under the Premier's motion honourable members would have more time to debate the matter. I think that is desirable and I am quite sure honourable members will approve

of this procedure. I again commend the proposed action by the Leader of the Opposition.

#### QUEENSLAND FLOOD

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (12.22 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"(1) That this House places on record its deepest sympathy to the families and relatives of those Queenslanders who died in the flood from December 1973 to January 1974; and its sincerest gratitude to the Police, the Armed Services, the Civil Defence Force, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Red Cross, the community and voluntary services, and the thousands of volunteers who did so much, often at the risk of their own lives, to help other Queenslanders.

"(2) That this House expresses its thanks to the people and Governments in Australia and overseas who sent messages of sympathy and who donated, so generously, money and materials to help Queenslanders in distress due to the flood."

I have moved this motion both to give thanks where they are due, and to enable each honourable member, if he desires, to voice constructive criticism and make suggestions for the improvement of the Queensland Emergency Service.

As honourable members are aware, following the flood, a number of reviews were set under way, but the Government feels that it is proper that the opinions of the House be heard. I give an assurance they will be recorded and given serious consideration.

I hold here in my hand a police file. It is marked, simply, "Cyclone Wanda, Brisbane, January 24 to January 31, 1974." With it is another file. This one is marked, "Cyclone Una—running sheet for the period from December 18, 1973, to January 21, 1974". The sub-title tells the story—

"A summary of operations embracing the Rockhampton-Wowan area; Sarina area; Thargomindah-Quilpie area; St. George-Thallon-Dirranbandi areas and the commencement of operations in the Longreach area; Hughenden-Richmond area and the Normanton area."

These files are set down in message form as the events they cover happened. They are terse; they make inquiries; they demand answers; they call for help and they record the help that was sent. Both files were compiled by men whose main concern was the great and continuing emergency they, and all of us, were facing. I urge every honourable member to read them—and I shall seek leave to table them to enable honourable members to do so—because, hour by hour, these files record in its most graphic form the heroism; the courage; the tragedy; the self-sacrifice; the shortcomings; and the

human weaknesses; but, above all, the magnificent will of the people of Queensland in what will go down in history as the "Great Flood".

No area of Queensland escaped, and no Queenslander will escape either the direct effect of the flood or its aftermath. Some areas today are still experiencing floods and, ironically, one of them is the Sarina-Marlborough area where it all began in December.

I had intended to outline the story of the flood in detail but this would, I believe, take up too much of the time of the House. Instead, I propose to table two reports compiled by the Police Commissioner, Mr. Whitrod, for the Co-ordinator-General and head of the Disaster Relief Organisation, Mr. C. N. Barton. These reports are exceptional documents providing a comprehensive record of the flood and to make them as widely available as possible I will seek leave to table them.

The main question arising from the flood is not the cause (we know the cause) or what was done (because we know that, also) but what will be done to meet similar disasters in the future.

When I opened the 1974 Flood Disaster Seminar at the Executive Building on 15 February last, I said to the assembly of experts—

"It is pointless to try to assign blame. No-one is blameless. Recriminations are useless. Criticism is sterile unless it is constructive criticism aimed at evolving a better system to meet future emergencies."

I went on to say—

"In the same spirit, the Queensland Government, the Commonwealth Government and the Brisbane City Council are agreed that people, not politics, are the paramount concern".

It is in the same spirit that I make this statement.

Let me at the outset express on behalf of the people and of the Government of Queensland the deepest sympathy to the families and relatives of the Queenslanders who lost their lives in the flood.

We all express sincerest appreciation to the Police, the Armed Services, the Civil Defence Force, Government departments (both State and Federal), the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Red Cross, the community and voluntary organisations and the thousands of volunteers who worked, often at the risk of their own lives, to help others. We wish also to express on behalf of Queenslanders gratitude to the people and Governments in Australia and overseas who gave so much in money and materials to Queenslanders in need after the flood.

I have criticised the Federal Government in the past when I have believed it was warranted and undoubtedly I will do so in

the future. However, I believe also in giving thanks where thanks are due. I have done so to date and will restate them in this House to go on the record. The Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Barnard), the Federal Treasurer (Mr. Crean), Dr. Patterson, and other Commonwealth Ministers and their departments have not hesitated, and their help has been generous.

I saw the report of a remark the other day that the Federal Government was only doing what other Federal Governments have done in the past. I think that that is a grudging attitude and I again express thanks on behalf of the Queensland people and their Government for both the financial assistance and the spirit of co-operation displayed by all levels of Government involved.

It is perhaps unfair to mention particular groups or individuals, but I should like to name some as a tribute to all the other acts of bravery, devotion to duty and self-sacrifice that are unknown except to those concerned. I pay a very special tribute to the Air Force, Army and civilian pilots who saved many people from certain death, often in flying conditions of the worst kind. As I said to the honourable member across the Chamber in reply to a question, the floods in the south-eastern part of the State were tremendous. So indeed were the floods in the south-western and central portions and the north and north-western parts of the State. They were of a magnitude that I regard as indescribable. As I have indicated, many people were rescued by these pilots in extremely dangerous weather and flood conditions.

It is an act of courage to commit oneself in an aircraft with only basic instrumentation and navigation aids to flying through torrential rain and storms knowing that to become lost, or to have the base strip become unavailable for landing, could be fatal.

The honourable member for Mt. Coot-tha (Mr. Lickiss), although shocked, burned and thrown into the water when an amphibious vehicle came into contact with high-tension electricity wires, dived back into the water a few moments later to save another man.

In Ipswich, three other members of this House—Mrs. V. Jordan, Dr. Llewellyn Edwards and Mr. Evan Marginson—worked for those in distress in a manner which many people have brought to my attention. I pay a tribute to them also.

At Emergency Service Headquarters, the Police Commissioner (Mr. Whitrod) and Chief Superintendent (H. Low) supervised operations that saved hundreds of lives and worked almost continuously for days on end arranging food and other essentials for Brisbane and other cities and towns throughout the State.

Another incident demonstrated how Queenslanders rose to the crisis. The light-house vessel "Cape Moreton" was holding



by its anchors in the flood-swollen Brisbane River when a cable became fouled. The ship's first mate, Mr. Matthew Carrell, without hesitation swung on a rope to reach the anchor chain, and then, hanging suspended only inches above the raging river, worked to clear the cable. His comment afterwards was, "The job had to be done".

In human and economic terms, the flood presents a grim picture. A total of 28 people died—15 in Brisbane and 13 elsewhere in the State. Damage is estimated to exceed \$100,000,000. The floods affected some 15,000 homes, ranging from minor damage to total loss.

Stock losses, particularly cattle, will run to thousands of head. One property in the North-west lost its entire herd of 28,000 prime cattle, and this at a time when supplies are already very scarce. Many graziers, already trying to rebuild flocks and herds after years of drought, will find it hard to get replacement stocks.

The sugar harvest has been hard hit by the prolonged wet weather. The mining industry has suffered loss of exports. Mount Isa Mines Ltd. has had to stockpile one month's production. Several of the Central Queensland open-cut mines were flooded and four mines on the West Moreton field were closed following flooding. Walkers Limited at Maryborough have closed their shipyard. Hundreds of businesses have lost stock and equipment in the floods, adding to existing shortages of goods and materials.

Damage to Commonwealth and State Government facilities such as railways, roads and buildings, and to local authority facilities such as roadways, water supply and sewerage installations, will run into many millions of dollars. Restoration of the Mt. Isa railway line alone will be a major cost.

An illustration of the magnitude of the disaster is the amount of aid paid out so far by the Commonwealth and State Governments. Since the end of the flood, grants totalling \$4,573,181 have been paid out for the relief of personal hardship and distress. There has been a total of 5,675 applications made for aid for repairs and rebuilding, and grants so far total \$7,708,882. Another \$646,350 has been approved in loans for the rehabilitation of small businesses.

Figures are not yet available for aid for primary producers, but over a very large part of the State they have suffered unbelievable losses. This disaster following drought conditions that so many have had to contend with for so long is indeed a very devastating blow to them, and indeed to the economy of the State and the nation.

The amounts I have cited exclude the cost to both Governments of caring for flood refugees, of transportation of evacuees, and of freighting food supplies to many areas. The full story of this aspect of the crisis is outlined in the Police Commissioner's report. However, let me take just one

example. In the North-west alone, aircraft involved in rescue and supply work included four R.A.A.F. helicopters, six private helicopters, three R.A.A.F. Caribou aircraft, two R.A.A.F. Hercules aircraft, one Army helicopter, one Army Porter aircraft, and many private aircraft on loan, as well as charter aircraft from T.A.A., Ansett Airlines, Bush Pilot Airways, Lanham Airways and Carpentaria Airways.

The Queensland Emergency Service had its beginnings in the storm that devastated Killarney in 1968. Out of that storm grew the organisation that faced—and, I believe, met—the greatest crisis and test any emergency service could ever be called on to endure. The first real test of the organisation came with cyclone Althea, which wrecked most of Townsville.

The basic system is that of regional committees, headed by the police superintendent of the particular district. The service is co-ordinated through a headquarters in Brisbane. The lessons learnt from cyclone Althea had their own test in the Brisbane tornado.

When information was received that flooding was imminent in certain areas of Brisbane, the emergency operations room set up at Police Headquarters went into action. When it was fully operational, there was a senior officer—either the Commissioner or an Assistant Commissioner—on duty at all times, assisted by an inspector and two other officers who maintained a watch on the situation and were responsible for receiving reports and maintaining situation and resources boards. As well, there were a number of police telephonists, including four Civil Defence personnel, manning six direct lines and two extensions. Liaison officers for the Press, Civil Defence, the Army and the Brisbane City Council also were on duty in the operations room.

In the room itself was a map of Brisbane showing the flood-prone areas and also maps of other parts of the State, and situation boards upon which the situation in various police divisions was shown. Resources boards showed the availability of boats and fuel, road conditions, and available vehicles and manpower.

The emergency operations room is part of the normal police operations centre. This meant that communications also available for the control of operations throughout South-eastern Queensland and the rest of the State consisted of three telephone switchboards and six consoles, in addition to four metropolitan radio channels and one country radio channel, plus telex facilities. A running-sheet was maintained at all times. This is the log-file to which I have referred and which honourable members will have an opportunity to study.

In addition to the main emergency operations room at Police Headquarters, a number of smaller operations centres were set up at various police stations in the worst-hit areas.

A point has been raised about radios. This has already been considered by the Co-ordinator-General and the Government has before it a recommendation on the supply of more radio transmitters to police stations.

One feature of the flood was good communications throughout. Mr. Brian Hocking of the Royal Flying Doctor Service commented on this during the flood seminar in these terms—

"A remarkable feature was that Superintendent Low at any time was able to pick up his phone in Brisbane and contact his officers and stations throughout the State at any time. This is due to the P.M.G. having replaced land lines with microwave relays."

Other radio networks, such as those of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs at Thursday Island, were available and were used. I think it would be duplication to try to put in a similar network; nevertheless, the point about radios has been noted and is being considered as a way of improving access to the existing networks.

As the flood situation developed in these areas, the police stations normally under the control of a sergeant were placed under an inspector who went to the area and remained there to direct operations. By the height of the floods, the police had an inspector reporting on the hour from each centre. The duty of these inspectors was to direct the flood emergency operations in each area and to co-ordinate the rescue groups. Civil Defence personnel were represented at headquarters and all suburban centres.

During and after the floods I flew over Brisbane, Ipswich and the Gold Coast to assess damage. I flew also to Ipswich for talks with the Acting Treasurer, Mr. Hayden, just as I went into the south-western, central, northern and north-western parts of the State.

**A Government Member:** Very much appreciated, too.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I thank the honourable gentleman. Other Ministers, both State and Federal, as well as members of this Parliament and local authorities were active.

Apart from the initial evacuation of flood victims, it soon became apparent that a huge restoration and rehabilitation task faced Queensland. As well as offers of financial and material help, messages of sympathy were received from all parts of Australia and overseas. Her Majesty the Queen sent this message:

"I was very distressed to hear of the casualties and damage caused by the floods in central and eastern Australia. Prince Philip and I send our heartfelt sympathy to all those who have been affected by this disaster".

The Queen and Prince Philip later made a donation for flood victims in Queensland.

Other messages included one from His Royal Highness Prince Charles, the Commonwealth Government, the British Government, the House of Commons, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and the New Zealand, Fijian and Jamaican Governments.

Another message of particular interest to Queenslanders was from our neighbours, Papua-New Guinea, on the eve of independence. It was sent by the Minister for Defence and Foreign Relations, Mr. Maori Kiki, and it read:

"In the absence of the Chief Minister, who I feel certain would have communicated with you during these difficult times, I wish on behalf of the people and Government of Papua-New Guinea to express our sympathy to the people of Queensland during the present troubles caused by flooding. We extend to our nearest overseas neighbours our sincerest condolences."

Mr. Speaker, what Queenslanders want to know is: in view of these terrible floods and past disasters such as cyclones Althea and the Brisbane tornado, what is being done to meet future disasters? I shall deal briefly with the steps being taken.

An expert review of the Emergency Service's operations during the Brisbane floods is under way. All organisations involved during the emergency attended and their recommendations will be put to a similar conference shortly. I table its first report.

The Co-ordinator-General, Mr. Barton, is conducting a State-wide review of the Emergency Service. Comments and suggestions have been invited from interested organisations and the public and will be considered in his report. The findings and proposals will be made public.

The future role of the Civil Defence Force is under consideration with particular emphasis on converting it into an emergency force and updating its training and equipment.

A top-level Flood Rehabilitation Co-ordinating Committee has been set up on which Dr. Rex Paterson represents the Commonwealth; I, as Premier, represent Queensland, and the Lord Mayor, Alderman Jones, represents Brisbane.

Committees are in operation to handle: applications for relief of personal hardship; aid for repairs and rebuilding; co-ordination of offers of material help such as clothing and furniture for flood victims; and aid for small businesses and industry to re-establish flood-damaged premises and machinery and social problems.

Appeals established by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, local authorities throughout Queensland, and the State Government so far have received donations from throughout Australia and from overseas totalling more than \$3 million. People have once more demonstrated their readiness to help others in time of distress.

The Agricultural Bank is administering a scheme for aid to primary producers for restocking and similar purposes.

The then Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Barnard), Mr. Crean, Dr. Patterson, the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr. Hodges) and I have visited flood areas throughout the State to assess problems on the spot. Unlike some of our critics, we went when the floods were at their height and the weather at its worst; but the criticism is understandable when people are in shock and under stress.

Following a conference I chaired with insurance companies' representatives on 7 February last, the State Insurance Commissioner, Mr. Rutherford, is carrying out an investigation into flood insurance throughout Queensland. We initiated this step immediately. The situation is not quite as reported in the Press this morning which implied that it was something that has just been started. I am afraid that the editorial was a little astray in that Mr. Rutherford's findings are expected soon.

I feel I should make some further comment about the flood.

There has been criticism that a state of emergency was not declared. As honourable members would know, it was completely unnecessary.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** You did it to protect a handful of footballers.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I will explain that for the honourable member's benefit. He is evidently unaware of the nature of the machinery of these measures. The Commonwealth had made available all required help, financial and through the Armed Services and Commonwealth departments, as far back as the floods at Rockhampton on 18 December. Police and the Emergency Service had all the powers necessary to carry out their functions.

A state of emergency sounds dramatic but it would not have produced one more helicopter, one more pound of food or any more men or materials than we already had and were using. Everywhere, people were out to assist us. It was quite different from the Springbok tour, when people were trying to hinder us. As the honourable member has made this interjection, I think I should remind the House of the difference between an emergent state, which enables us to call on the Commonwealth for assistance, and a state of emergency, which is used mainly in industrial situations such as the Springbok tour, the Mt. Isa strike, and the 1946 strike by railwaymen, meat workers and waterside workers in the term of the Hanlon Government.

**Mr. F. P. Moore:** They handled it better than you did.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The honourable member certainly did not do anything to help. Rather, he did everything to hinder.

The third situation is declaration of a disaster area such as in Townsville after cyclone Althea or in Brisbane after the tornado, when buildings have been flattened and have to be rebuilt before they can be reoccupied. It has been suggested that we could have called a moratorium on hire-purchase companies and building societies. Again I explain to honourable members that I have taken certain action in this regard in consultation with some of these people and they have readily agreed, as announced in the Press, to give a rest period of some six months or more to enable people in difficulties through the flood to meet their payments.

**Mr. Newton:** They ought to, too; they only just bumped the repayments up.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I do not know whether they put repayments up, or what they did; but they have given this undertaking. Only yesterday I again checked on this issue and again received the same assurance.

Another criticism has been of the means test on aid for personal hardship. Many people confused this with aid for repairs and rebuilding, although it had been stated and published that aid for rebuilding and repairs was a separate issue that would be announced when the terms of Commonwealth assistance were known.

Many people thought that because they were ineligible for personal assistance they were ruled out for repairs. Nothing could be further from the truth. The aim of the means test was to ensure that the aid went to those who needed it most and urgently—namely, pensioners, families and others on low incomes.

The aid was intended to enable them to carry on temporarily by replacing basic essentials such as food, clothing, bedding and cooking utensils. Mr. Barnard and the Federal Treasurer (Mr. Crean) endorsed this principle but agreed to increase eligibility.

The formula applied to aid for repairs and rebuilding also was agreed on during these talks. I feel that it meets the needs of most people. It must be remembered that, unlike homes destroyed by cyclone Althea or by the Brisbane tornado, most of the homes affected by the flood were still habitable after immediate clean-up and repairs.

The idea of a national disaster fund has been mooted, and I believe it should be seriously considered. Australia is prone to fire, flood and drought. Obviously, a disaster on the scale of the floods is beyond the resources of any one State. The Commonwealth, which commands the nation's finances and resources, is the body which must supply the funds for aid and rebuilding. This the Commonwealth has done, as I said before.

However, I also believe that, as a nation, we must not come to the situation where a custom develops of "Leave it to the Government".

The principle should remain that a responsible citizen is expected to look to his own welfare as far as possible, with the State assuming responsibility for people such as pensioners or where a disaster is beyond the capacity of any individual to cope.

Forecasting of future disasters is one of the matters examined by the disaster seminar. The Weather Bureau already has announced, as outlined in the report that I shall table, how it intends to alter its system of flood forecasting.

Another claim, and one made this morning by a member of the Opposition, has been that "the Queensland Government tried to claim credit for all the assistance".

Attention was drawn to an advertisement setting out where help was available. There was no intent to claim all credit, and publicly and repeatedly I have thanked the Commonwealth for its assistance.

Over all, I believe that the Queensland emergency service functioned efficiently during its greatest test. There were shortcomings in equipment and methods, but they must be contrasted to what was achieved. Let us criticise—but let us also give credit where it is more than due. The shortcomings will be rectified as far as is humanly possible. All constructive suggestions will be considered.

I am pleased to see that the Commonwealth plans to establish a national emergency authority. I am in favour of national training and standardisation of equipment.

I believe that Mr. Barnard's approach is the correct one—that of each State having its own emergency service suited to its particular needs, with the Commonwealth backing it up with funds and the facilities of the Armed Services. What form the Queensland emergency service takes will depend on the report of the Co-ordinator General.

However, we must remember that Queensland is prone to disasters, particularly cyclones and floods. Every city between Cooktown and Mackay has been destroyed at least once this century by cyclones. The 1893 flood and the 1974 flood demonstrate that no area is proof against disaster. No one could have predicted the 1974 flood nor how prolonged and widespread it would be.

But we can plan to meet a similar disaster in future and to mitigate its effects, and this is what we are doing.

If disaster strikes again, we will be ready. I lay on the table the files previously referred to.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the files on the table.

**Mr. LICKISS** (Mt. Coot-tha) (12.53 p.m.): I rise to second the motion. In a flood disaster that is unparalleled in the history of this State in terms of extent and effect, it is little short of a miracle that the loss of life was comparatively small.

The Premier has detailed the extent of the flood. Brisbane, Ipswich and the Gold Coast fared badly, and the flood havoc in these centres of population increased the risk to human life and property, but we should not forget the problems of Karumba and the inundation of large tracts of our rural areas.

This is a time when one can be proud to be a Queenslanders and an Australian. The response in terms of assistance rendered by members of the community, many of whom were themselves directly affected, to their fellows in need of help is legend and will be recorded in the annals of Queensland's history.

The response and action by the various authorities and services in the face of this disastrous flood emergency on a scale unknown to us here in living memory can only be described as magnificent.

Like many honourable members, I saw the proficiency, efficiency and dedication of the Queensland Police Force as it rose to the occasion. I extend thanks to the Civil Defence Organisation. Its members went into action immediately the emergency arose. Under difficult circumstances they performed in a splendid manner.

The Armed Services, with typical military precision, played a wonderful role of medical and emergency evacuation, and maintained communications and food-supply lines when all other physical means of communication and transportation were cut. Hospital and ambulance services, service clubs, the Red Cross, and men and women in the street rallied to the call for assistance. All are worthy of our heartfelt praise.

I believe it will be agreed generally that the Government of Queensland whose State was devastated in part, the Federal Government, with its ready assistance when the impact of the disaster was felt, and local government bodies all took vital initiatives which helped to reduce the risk to, and the loss of, life and property.

Local, interstate and overseas contributions to flood victims are well recorded, and I believe we should express our appreciation to those who assisted the Queensland Government in rehabilitation and relief. Queenslanders will thank them all for the assistance rendered in their great time of need.

The occurrence of such a disaster, unfortunately, leaves in its wake a tremendous sense of loss and sadness caused by the loss of life. Statistically, we can say in retrospect that it was a miracle that the loss of life was comparatively small. We all regret that there was any loss of life at all. Some persons lost their lives as a direct result of accident during the flood conditions, and others who would not have been physically endangered by the disaster lost their lives as a direct result of their efforts to aid victims.

May I here place on record the names of Captain Ian Kerr, of the Australian Military Forces, and Corporal Neville Hourigan, of the Citizens' Military Forces, who both volunteered for duty in rescue operations, and owing to a tragic accident made the supreme sacrifice. We can replace property but not lives—and this is Queensland's greatest loss.

In seconding the motion moved by the Premier, I extend our deepest sympathy to the relatives and friends of those who have lost their lives as a result of the flood disaster. And, if I may be permitted, I extend our special thoughts and deepest sympathy to those who lost loved ones in the service of the community. They shall not be forgotten.

We learn from experience and derive strength from adversity, and the community generally will gain new values from what has happened. While in no way detracting from the emergency and relief operation in which Government authorities and people from all walks of life rose to greater heights, I believe that, through the knowledge we have acquired we will be able to develop techniques, organisation and expertise and so handle more efficiently an emergency of this magnitude should one occur by act of God, in the future. Let us hope and pray that it will not, although, unfortunately, a projection of history indicates that it will occur again. I support the motion moved by the Honourable the Premier.

**Mr. HOUSTON** (Bulimba—Leader of the Opposition) (2.15 p.m.): Naturally, the Opposition supports a motion such as this, because the loss of life and devastation were certainly felt by all sections of our community. I pay tribute to the thousands of Queenslanders and people from other places who helped to overcome some of the suffering experienced by many people in our community.

Unfortunately, many people built homes in areas considered safe from flooding, but time has shown that this was not so. As a consequence, they lost their homes, furniture and personal belongings. Although many of those things can be replaced, several lost items, particularly those of a personal nature, could not be replaced at all. One heard many stories of personal losses such as wedding photographs and photographs of deceased relatives and children. No matter how much money or sympathy is given, items such as those can never be replaced.

I make special mention of the Armed Services for the magnificent job they did. I think I should make the pertinent point that if proof were needed that we are part of Australia and that we should never regard ourselves as a separate entity, it was provided by the operations of the Armed Services. After all, if it had not been for the activities of the R.A.A.F. in the early stages and the Army in the latter stages, the State would

certainly have been in a very sorry plight. Those people who advocate secession should alter their ideas and thoughts.

I pay tribute to the Queensland Police Force. Many police officers worked long hours. I do not know the rostering system that was adopted; but, from my inquiries, I found that some police officers were required to work tremendously long hours, and did so voluntarily, while others were not called upon to work for the maximum amount of time they were prepared to give. This is one facet that the police administration might investigate. I know that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will have something to say about police communications, particularly in the outlying areas.

The Civil Defence Organisation did a magnificent job, considering the small sum of money allocated to it in Budgets over the years and the lack of training provided for the great bulk of people prepared to give their time to civil defence. I repeat that those people did a magnificent job and no praise could be too high for the men and women who gave that service.

The various service organisations, through their members, were able to rally support not only in terms of man-power but also in terms of vehicles, equipment and money. Those of us who moved round the various areas noticed Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and members of other youth organisations giving their support and doing whatever they could to assist. Naturally, the public at large, when asked to help in cleaning up, did so in magnificent fashion. I do not think that anyone could quibble with their activities.

Certainly this great response was marred a little by the few who saw fit to take advantage of the situation. I do not think that this type of activity could be stopped completely, although I believe that steps could have been taken to make it easier for the authorities to act against offenders. I shall have more to say about that at a later stage.

As the Premier said, it is regrettable that 28 people lost their lives during the flood. I do not know at this point of time whether all their deaths can be attributed to the floods, but if only one person lost his life through flooding it is very sad and to be regretted. The devastation, costing in excess of \$100,000,000, was certainly the worst that the State has ever known.

But the disaster does not stop there; it carries on further. In Ipswich, the closing of the mines is not only an economic blow to those who operate them but a tremendous blow to those who rely on mining for their livelihood. Perhaps a bigger loss for the men and women associated with the mining industry will come from consideration of the use of coal in the future and the development of a powerhouse and other industrial establishments in the Ipswich area.

In the consideration of employment as a whole, the floods certainly affected a tremendous number of people. I believe that credit is due to the Commonwealth authorities for very quickly making unemployment benefits available to those in need of them.

The effect of the flood on primary production is another great worry to all. Although implements can be replaced in a reasonably short time if they are available, livestock cannot be replaced overnight. In primary production, therefore, there is not only financial loss to the persons concerned but an over-all loss of production.

In secondary industry, in addition to the great loss to the owners of various establishments, there are the shortages that will eventuate. This is one of the problems that will be felt for many months, and perhaps years, to come. Of course, in many cases shortages bring about excessive prices, and give the unscrupulous the opportunity to capitalise on them. It is therefore necessary, I believe, to make sure that primary industry is put back on its feet, and to take action to allow secondary industry to become operative to provide employment and to ensure that shortages are eliminated.

The floods did not happen overnight. Although the Premier said that he has tabled a dossier for the records, I think something should be recorded in simple terms. Let it be recalled that the first minor flooding of this series of floods was reported in early December, and it affected the far western rivers. On 11 December, heavy flood rains were reported between Cardwell and Cairns. Between 17 and 20 December, cyclone Una crossed the coast south of Townsville, bringing local flooding to the North Queensland coast and major flooding to the Central coast. On 28 December, a monsoonal trough crossed the State's northern half, bringing major inland flooding. On 5 January, a tongue of the trough moved into the State's south-west corner, bringing more flood rains. On 20-21 January cyclone Vera was located in the Coral Sea and brought more showers to the coast before moving eastwards.

So, up to 23 January, the major part of the State had been affected by monsoonal rains and by cyclones and was in fact in a very sorry state. Yet there was no great activity at that time. One would read reports in the newspapers about flooding, but one could not find evidence of any great activity on the part of the State Government. In fact, it was then that one began to notice reports that people in the areas affected by floods were to be treated in exactly the same way as those who had been affected by earlier floods had been treated—wait till it was all over, then offer them some minor relief.

However, on 24 January cyclone Wanda crossed the coast near Gympie, and on 25 January Brisbane was deluged before Wanda developed into a rain depression. There were floods and gale-force winds.

I should like now to turn to the difference in attitude once Brisbane was hit. As a representative of a Brisbane electorate, I was very pleased to see the activities when Brisbane was affected. But the tragedy was, of course, that other parts of Queensland were affected long before that and no great activity took place. In fact, it would be true to say that never before was so little done by so many Cabinet Ministers. Queensland now has a record number of Cabinet Ministers, but their activities during the floods were rather minor in comparison with the devastation that took place. The people who live outside Brisbane can be thankful that Brisbane was affected by flood. If it had not been, they would not have fared any better than the victims of the Townsville cyclone or the cyclone that hit Brisbane late last year. I wonder how those people felt? They were virtually asked to capitalise themselves, and they received very little assistance from the State Government after the cyclones hit. Honourable members who represent them know full well what I am speaking about.

Let me now move on to the question of relief. It is true that there was really no talk of flood relief until after Brisbane was affected. In fact, the first real activity occurred on Sunday, 27 January, when Mr. Morrison, on behalf of the Federal Government, came to Queensland, toured the Brisbane area, and saw what the problems were. As a result, he was able to report back to the Federal Government, and action was then taken. Other Federal Cabinet Ministers very quickly were on the scene so that the Federal Government had first-hand knowledge of exactly what was going on.

The Government of Queensland did not ask for any financial assistance prior to Mr. Morrison's visit to this State. It suggested that there would be flood relief on a dollar-for-dollar basis. When Mr. Morrison spoke to the Premier, he pledged, amongst other things, that the Commonwealth Government would meet the cost of flood relief on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

However, taking the over-all picture, one found that there was no great activity on the part of the State Government relative to planning for the future. Many statements were being made. Again I say that at that point of time there was a lack of real leadership from the State Government. In fact, one could say we were virtually operating on the generosity and good will of the citizens of this State rather than on a lead from the top.

Moreover, some of the warnings that were given to the people about flood levels were inaccurate. Certainly they were not related to people's homes. One of the unfortunate situations that developed during this time was that radio stations and the news media generally were giving flood levels at the Port Office. Account was not taken of the fact that the average person would not

understand exactly what was meant by the river height at the Port Office. Certainly the media reported that floodwaters were coming down; but the fact is that a river height registered at the Port Office at a certain time will be reached earlier upstream and later downstream. I had the misfortune of seeing people downstream from the Port Office watching the water rise. Once they were told by the media that the peak had been reached at the Port Office and passed, they felt that everything was all right and went away to help others. Of course, within an hour the water in their area rose an extra four or five inches, flooding their carpets and everything else. So they were misled by the statement. Therefore, I would suggest that if this happens again the Government should make sure that, whenever times of flood heights at the Port Office are given, they are given as well for areas that are likely to be affected so that it will be clearly understood that an emergency will arise there.

The main point I want to make in my speech today is that I firmly believe that a state of emergency should have been declared in Queensland.

**Mr. R. E. Moore:** What good would that have done?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I will tell the honourable member if he will just keep his big mouth shut and listen for a while. The whole attitude of the Government changes with the circumstances. As has been said on many occasions, when the Springboks came here the Government was very quick to bring out the Queensland Government Gazette Extraordinary of Wednesday, 14 July 1971, to allow them to play football.

**Mr. R. E. Moore:** We were threatened.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** No-one was threatened. It was in the Government's imagination.

That Queensland Government Gazette Extraordinary stated—

"Whereas by 'The State Transport Acts, 1938 to 1943,' it is amongst other things enacted that where at any time it appears to the Governor in Council that any circumstances exist or are likely to come into existence within the State or within any part of the State, whether by fire, flood, storm, tempest, act of God, or by reason of any other cause or circumstance whatsoever whereby the peace, welfare, order, good government, or the public safety of the State or any part thereof is or is likely to be imperilled, the Governor in Council may, by Proclamation published in the Gazette, declare that a state of emergency exists in the State or within such part of the State as may be defined in such Proclamation."

Surely no-one would argue that there was not a state of flooding throughout the whole of Queensland. As I said before, the floods

really started early in December and progressively covered the whole State. By 25 January, when Brisbane, Ipswich and other areas were affected, there was a flood situation in the whole of Queensland. Let there be no doubt about that. Therefore, I believe that a state of emergency should have been declared.

**Mr. R. E. Moore:** What more could have been done?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I will tell the honourable member now, if he keeps quiet for a moment. If the Government had declared a state of emergency it could have immediately taken over all the vacant houses, motel rooms and hotel rooms required to make sure that people affected by the flood had available to them immediately clean beds, washing facilities, toilet facilities, and all the other necessities for clean living. Only under a state of emergency could the Government go to a person and say, "We are taking over your vacant furnished home." It could have gone to motel-owners and said, "You have eight vacant motel rooms; we are taking them over."

But the Premier and his Government were more interested in letting these people depend on charity. They did not care whether the children of people who had lost their homes had anywhere to go; they were left to rely entirely on friends, relations and acquaintances.

On the Saturday after the floods 140 vacant furnished houses and flats were advertised in the Brisbane Press. Why not take them over? The owners could be given a fair rent, of course—their property should not be taken over for nothing—but, had the Government taken these places over it could have made sure that the people immediately had a clean bed and clean surroundings for their children. They could have been housed there instead of being left to fend for themselves. This would have been positive action. Other steps, too, could have been taken.

There were many complaints over the radio about the number of sightseers, but the Government pussyfooted around, saying to people, "Please don't come down here." Louts in speedboats were racing around in floodwater causing waves to break into homes. Fools in motor vehicles were driving through areas where water was almost into homes, again causing waves to break into homes.

Had a state of emergency existed, these people could have been dealt with severely and urgently. But the Government did not want to do that. Members opposite regard a visit by a football team as being far more important than looking after our own people. This is reprehensible particularly when the law of the land lays down what can and should be done. I do not make any apologies for saying that I believe a state of emergency should have been declared.

Now let us look at the generous offer of help that the Government made in the first instance when it was depending upon its own resources: it put a means test of \$140 a week on people without taking any account at all of their fixed commitments. This was an arbitrary amount. The Government went into a state of panic. It realised that something had to be done urgently, and came up with this scheme of giving aid only to people earning under \$140 gross a week or having less than \$1,000 in the bank. No account was taken of the fact that a young person would have time to recoup \$1,000, but that an old couple who spent the \$1,000 they had put aside for the latter days of their lives would be left with nothing. And what chance would they have to recoup their expenditure?

**Mr. R. E. Moore:** That was an interim proposal and you know it.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** It was not; it was put into effect.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Windsor is interjecting too often.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** It was put into effect and many people in this community will substantiate that, when they went to get help, they were turned away because they were receiving \$150 gross a week and had \$1,000 in the bank.

**Mr. Frawley:** What would you have given them?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** First, we could have put these people in houses, and all that would have been required then would have been food and clothing. As has been pointed out, the other problems that were developing could then have been looked at.

Many persons could be earning \$140 a week gross and yet have entirely different commitments. Many families today live right up to their income, particularly young married couples and some not so young. They believe they have reasonably good work prospects and can afford fixed commitments. Consequently, they take on hire-purchase commitments. Their situation changed immediately they had no money available, but the Government said to them, "You have been spending all your money. You are not going to receive any aid because you are earning such-and-such an amount." When the Federal Government came into it we saw a difference.

**Mr. Porter:** The difference was that we had to impose a means test.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is not right. The means test was a carry-over from the previous Federal Government.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Too right it was. There was a carry-over from the Townsville floods, and the dollar-for-dollar was a carry-over from the Liberal-Country Party Federal Government.

I turn now to another aspect of the situation. This morning the honourable member for Everton asked a question about collections for flood victims. The State Government was not interested in collecting money to assist them.

**A Government Member:** How do you know?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Will you deny it?

**Mr. K. W. Hooper:** The Premier did, didn't he?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** No. Does the Premier now deny that he told officials of other Governments that he did not want their money?

**Mr. Bjelke-Petersen:** You are right off the track now.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Let us get this very clear. I say to the Premier that he told senior officials in other Governments that he did not want them to collect money for flood relief in Queensland.

**Mr. Bjelke-Petersen:** I never said a thing about it to any of them at all.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Is the Premier claiming that he did not say that at any time?

**Mr. Bjelke-Petersen:** I had never spoken to any other officials about it.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Hadn't the Premier spoken to members of other Parliaments or to any senior officials?

**Mr. Bjelke-Petersen:** No.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** In the light of that reply I should like to read the following letter, dated 29 January 1974 and addressed to a Mrs. Jackson, who has given me authority to quote it—

"City of Melbourne  
Town Hall,  
29 January, 1974.

Mrs. Jackson,  
21 Davis Street,  
North Carlton, 3054.

Dear Mrs. Jackson,

The Lord Mayor (of Melbourne) wishes me to thank you for your suggestion and interest concerning a flood relief fund for the victims of the Brisbane floods. Immediately after I had mentioned the matter to His Lordship he spoke with the Deputy Premier and with Sir Philip Jones of The Herald, and he was advised that the Premier of Queensland, while being most touched and appreciative of offers of help from other States, has said that as the Commonwealth Government has already



promised so much in the way of relief funds there is no need for any other form of assistance.

I assure you, madam, that my Lord Mayor is most grateful to you for your very compassionate suggestion.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) G. Ashley-Brown Commander,  
Secretary to the Lord Mayor."

It is apparent that either the Premier of this State or the Secretary to the Lord Mayor of Melbourne is not telling the complete story. I do not wish to use unparliamentary language.

**Mr. Porter:** Are you offering a letter like that as evidence?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I certainly am. Why would the secretary to the Lord Mayor of Melbourne write in those terms if the contents of the letter were not true?

**Mr. K. W. Hooper:** The Premier has denied it.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Then he has a quarrel with the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, the Deputy Premier of Victoria, and Sir Philip Jones of "The Herald".

However, in the light of the decision of the Premier of Queensland not to launch a State appeal for flood victims, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane stated that he would do something to assist the people of Brisbane, and he initiated an appeal. Similarly, the Lord Mayor of Ipswich launched an appeal.

**Dr. EDWARDS:** I rise to a point of order. The Mayor of Ipswich did not initiate that appeal. It was started by the Ipswich Disaster Fund Committee, not the mayor.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to accept the honourable member's point of order.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Of course I will accept it.

**Mr. MARGINSON:** I rise to a point of order. I ask the honourable member for Ipswich to retract what he said. The Mayor of Ipswich commenced the appeal and chaired the first meeting.

**Dr. Edwards:** The meeting was held, but the mayor did not move the motion initiating the appeal. It was moved by Mr. Hayden and seconded by me that the assistance fund be established.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The Mayor of Ipswich did something positive, as did the Mayor of Maryborough. I have named the three people who started the initial appeals. The State Government then realised it was out on a limb. It realised that only after organisations and firms came to the party and donated substantial sums. The State Government should have initiated an appeal for money at the outset, even if it gave the

funds to the shires and councils for distribution. This was a State disaster, and the Premier and other members of the Government said that it was a disaster.

**Mr. Neal:** You, too, are one.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Unlike the honourable member, I am at least able to present some evidence to this House.

**Mr. Frawley:** Tell us about your dry-footed federal leader.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I will certainly tell the honourable member something about him.

**Mr. Frawley:** Where was he?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Never mind about where he was; let us look at some of the things that happened. It is about time we faced a few of the facts.

**Mr. Herbert:** Where were you?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I was chasing the Minister up, to make sure that he did his job.

The position is that Mr. Whitlam had a standing commitment with heads of State in other nations. We all know that the Federal and State Liberal and Country Parties wanted international trouble. They are not concerned about international peace, international trade or international good will. While these parties were in power in Canberra they did everything possible to isolate the nation and make it completely dependent on America for its existence. Australia became a different nation as soon as the Labor Party came to power.

Mr. Whitlam had these standing obligations. What could he have done by coming to Brisbane at that point in time? He sent up a senior Cabinet Minister, Mr. Morrison. I know of no time after his arrival that the Premier, the Deputy Premier or anyone else told him that Mr. Whitlam should come up.

**Mr. P. Wood:** The Premier at no time demonstrated dissatisfaction.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Not once. Mr. Whitlam landed here on his way back to Canberra. If the Premier thought that he was wrong, why did he go down to the airport to meet him?

**A Government Member** interjected.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I and other members of the Labor Party believe that Mr. Whitlam was entitled to go overseas. He sent his senior men to Queensland. When Mr. Whitlam went overseas he left behind him his Deputy Prime Minister who was Acting Prime Minister.

**Mr. Hodges:** Where was he on 26 and 27 January?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** He was in Australia. Where was the Minister? I know where he was. He was not running around the State seeing what he could do. He was at his own headquarters, and I am not criticising

him for that. Mr. Whitlam was at his quarters getting ready for his overseas tour. What did he do? He sent up Mr. Morrison, a senior Cabinet Minister, as his special adviser. When he came here the Government told him certain things and he faithfully outlined to Canberra what he had been told. If the Government had not thought he was entitled to know certain things, it would not have told him. It should not be forgotten that Mr. Uren and Mr. Johnson also came up, and that Mr. Hayden, the Acting Treasurer, was in Queensland.

The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Barnard) and the Treasurer (Mr. Crean) were also here. When they arrived, the whole pattern of flood relief changed. From that point of time money became available. The Federal Government will pick up the tab for nearly \$100,000,000. In the circumstances, it is quite happy to do it, and no-one is arguing about it. But I have become sick and tired of the propaganda that the Government tried to put out on this matter. When Mr. Barnard and Mr. Crean visited Queensland, certain arrangements were made. A full-page advertisement was inserted in the Press and more than half of it, instead of telling people what they were entitled to, was simply propaganda disseminated by the Queensland Government. There was not one mention of the Commonwealth Government. As I said, more than half of the page was taken up with Queensland Government propaganda. It reads—

“Queensland Government Flood Relief  
Brisbane and Ipswich  
Householders:

If you need help or advice following the flood, this is where to get it from the Queensland Government.”

**Mr. Porter:** What is wrong with that?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** It was not coming from the Queensland Government at all. The Queensland Government had already spent its \$2,000,000 prior to this flood.

**Mr. Porter:** Federal money does not belong to us?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The Queensland Government is getting far more than it put in. The Queensland Government and the Queensland people are getting far more out of it than they put in. The honourable member thinks that every penny Queensland puts in should come back to Queensland. The cost of looking after Commonwealth services, such as the Armed Forces, should be paid for out of somebody else's money. All that is important is that it does not come out of our pocket!

Compare the present aid with the ungenerous amount the Liberal-Country Party Government paid out following the Towns-cyclone and other cyclonic tragedies. It was nowhere near as much as the present Labor Government is providing. The terms and

conditions of the present loans are the most generous that have ever been applied following any national disaster.

**Mr. Porter:** The scheme is not as good as the Tasmanian one.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Of course it is. It is better than the Tasmanian one.

**Mr. Porter:** There was no means test in Tasmania.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** You introduced the means test. Let there be no doubt about who introduced the means test, because you did.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The insurance companies, as a whole, have played a shocking role in this matter. They have used every means at their disposal—I am not claiming that the means were illegal—to make sure that they do not in many instances, have to pay for the damage.

Many people have storm and tempest cover. The relevant clause in State Government Insurance Office policies reads—

“Storm and/or Tempest—Damage caused by or as a direct consequence of Storm and/or Tempest and/or by water or rain entering the Building through an opening in the wall or roof, provided that such opening was caused by or as a direct consequence of Storm and/or Tempest.”

The clause then excludes many things, and continues—

“Storm and/or Tempest means ‘a violent atmospheric disturbance accompanied by high wind, rain, snow or hail, but does not mean persistent bad weather, nor heavy rain, nor persistent rain by itself!’”

Because there was persistent rain, everybody who had storm and tempest cover could be ruled out.

**An Opposition Member:** It was an act of God.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** It does not say that. It virtually does, but not exactly. People only find these things out when they are in trouble. The S.G.I.O. also provides rain-water cover in these terms—

“Damage caused by rainwater entering the insured building or entering the building containing the property insured by this policy.”

**Mr. Porter:** Did you complain about all of this last year?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Yes, and I have complained about it for a long time. In fact, I have often called in this House for a complete review of some insurance activities in this State, and the State Government is the body that registers insurance companies in Queensland. After all, I believe that insurance companies have an obligation to the community as a whole. I believe that when this great disaster happened, they should

have met the claims made upon them wherever humanly possible. I mention one case to show how niggardly insurance companies are. The house is low set. Previously floodwater had been underneath it but never before had it entered the house.

(Time expired.)

**Hon. J. D. HERBERT** (Sherwood—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services) (2.56 p.m.): When this debate was initiated by the Premier, he started it with what I thought was the tone that the House would follow; that was a non-political analysis of the situation.

**Mr. Bousen:** How naive can you be!

**Mr. HERBERT:** I admit that that might be naive, because one would not expect much more from the Labor Party than we have so far received from the Leader of the Opposition. The incredible thing is the behaviour of Labor in Government and in opposition. We have listened to the Leader of the Opposition saying that the Government should have requisitioned every unoccupied house in Queensland, and every motel room, and put homeless people in them.

**Mr. Houston:** I said, "enough of them."

**Mr. HERBERT:** In Amberley there were 50 unoccupied Housing Commission homes. At the height of the flooding, the Minister for Works and Housing asked the Federal Government to make these homes available for homeless people at Ipswich, and the Federal Government refused the request. Those 50 houses at Amberley are still unoccupied; they are kept for the use of the Armed Forces. The Government asked for them to be made available in an emergency, and they were refused. The Federal Government had 50 empty homes available in Ipswich—an area that was really hard hit—and they remained empty. They still are empty.

So much for what Labor in office would do here. Those homes were available, and they remained without a soul in them.

Today, I want to make a few comments about the area that I have the honour to represent in the House. Unfortunately, it contains the areas worst affected by the flood. This is to be expected, because it follows the river bank from Jindalee to Chelmer. Two-thirds of the Sherwood police area went under water. If anyone had told me that I would see floodwater in my street a mile from the river, I would have thought him mad. But it happened. What was even more tragic locally was that most of the area was cut off for several days. There is very little pictorial record of what happened but we can see now the damage that was done.

A number of things that have to be considered emerged from the floods. Quite obviously the information on the 1893 flood

and subsequent floods was quite inaccurate. In some places, the 1974 flood rose above the 1893 pegs, and in others it was well below them. Some people who were granted flood insurance because they were above the 1893 pegs subsequently lost everything. Others who were refused flood insurance because they were below those pegs were not affected. Either those pegs were put in the wrong places or the topography and river flow have changed. What has to be done is to make sure that on this occasion the pegs are placed at the right levels. Already in my area voluntary organisations are making sure that the exact limits of the flood at its height are known.

Another thing that must be corrected is the silly business of announcing over radio stations Port Office water heights. As a matter of fact, relying on that information cost many people in my area their entire houses and contents. They heeded the Port Office heights. Anyone with knowledge of the subject realises that the Port Office heights are recorded subject to tides. In the upper reaches of the river, the tides had very little effect against the roaring flood. A Port Office height of 22 feet does not mean a thing at Jindalee or Chelmer. Many people found that out when they were told that the river level was dropping. It was in fact dropping at the Port Office because the tide was running out in the lower reaches; but it was rising farther upstream. People who started to move stopped when they heard the report that the river level was dropping. This situation has to be corrected. It is to be hoped that it never happens again. But we have to make sure that, if it does, readings are available for places that are easily recognisable by the majority of the people involved—places such as College's Crossing, the Jindalee Bridge, the Indooroopilly Bridge, the mouth of Oxley Creek, the Fig Tree Pocket bend. People must be told what the height is at these places and what it is expected to reach.

In the general area of Chelmer and Graceville, entire suburbs went under. For those honourable members who know the geography, I point out that between the Oxley Methodist Church on Oxley Road (which is nearly a mile from the river) and the river itself, every house went under, and that created a tremendous problem. However, the mouth of Oxley Creek presents a problem in itself. Because of a rock bar on the downstream side of the mouth, the mouth of that creek actually faces upstream. Flood current running downstream creates a dam, and quite apart from water in the creek, rubbish in particular cannot get out. In the catchment area of Oxley Creek are sewage farms, B.A.L.M. Paints, scores of industrial undertakings, the Brisbane Markets, and experimental farms—all sorts of undertakings that create a tremendous amount of pollution in the area. None of that pollution could escape; it all remained in the area

because of the mouth of the creek and because the Brisbane City Council had built a very large rubbish dump on the bank of the creek by Pamphlett Bridge. As I said, it made a very effective dam and kept tons and tons of sludge in people's houses. Anyone who has had the unfortunate experience of shovelling out a house in which there is a foot of sludge covered by a foot of raw sewage will know what I am talking about. That is what the people in that area had to put up with. It was a tragedy of the first order because in many instances they are quite incapable of handling the problem by themselves.

One aspect that has not received the recognition it should is the part that the church organisations in the area played. I am not writing down what anyone else did, but it was quite obvious in my area that church organisations provided the backbone of the work-force. The very first representative of an organisation whom I saw during rescue operations—it was at 2 o'clock in the morning—was a Salvation Army officer driving a truck with tea on board. We have no Salvation Army Corps in the Sherwood electorate. I do not know where that man came from, but there he was at 2 o'clock in the morning with tea when it was needed. Subsequently all the churches provided a tremendous number of workers, possibly because we were using church halls.

There was a silly idea of requisitioning motels. When people are stuck on an island and cannot get off, they are not likely to go looking for motels. In this instance, what we were looking for was somewhere to get people out of the wet, and the church halls in the area were the major centres. There were centres at the Methodist Church at Graceville, the Methodist Church at Oxley, the Anglican Church at Sherwood and the Catholic Church at Corinda. Possibly one of the reasons why so many people gave assistance was that their own churches were involved. Nevertheless, they deserve some recognition, and the Rev. Ron Butler-White, who is the Methodist parson at Sherwood, worked many days and nights without a break, then continued on for many more days and nights with only a few hours' sleep until the problems had more or less resolved themselves.

Another problem that existed in the area—it must be rectified—was non-recognition of the Civil Defence uniform. Many people went round in overalls, particularly at night, waking people up to warn them and were chased away by irate householders who thought they had no right to do so. The position became so bad that it was necessary to send police officers round to do the work—in the circumstances a waste of effort—because people would not heed warnings from persons in overalls whom they had never seen before. Some move must be made to educate people to recognise the Civil Defence uniform in times of emergency.

The major problem was that this occurred at night. Heavy rain had fallen in the area before, and Civil Defence personnel were going into streets that had never been flooded before in their history and telling people to go out into the rain because their homes were about to be flooded. In many cases the people waited till the person warning them had gone and then forgot about it.

Possibly one of the most remarkable features of the flood was the way people came to help. This is supposed to be a materialistic age, but at the Graceville Methodist Church on the Saturday after the flood 1,200 people called to offer their help to people in trouble whom they had never met before. This does not include the thousands who came to help friends, relatives and workmates, which might be expected. People came with their own materials to offer help to anyone at all who was in strife. My goodness, that help was needed! I might mention that two of those I saw on that day who were helping were the Hon. Fred Campbell and Mr. Bill Hewitt, the member for Chatsworth. They came from their own areas into an area that needed help. They will both have a go at me afterwards for mentioning it, but it is a fact that they were among those who came to help. As a matter of fact—and I am sure he won't mind my saying this—Fred is not a young man, yet he shovelled all day. He felt the better for it at the end of the day, I believe.

In many ways, we were lucky because the Meals on Wheels have a fully equipped kitchen in the Anglican Church at Sherwood and they were able to meet the immediate rush of hundreds and hundreds of refugees. Subsequently the Methodist Church at Graceville installed a kitchen and we prepared up to 800 meals at a sitting. The problems that existed in that area were extreme, because it was probably the only area in which entire suburbs went under. In many other areas there was always somebody up on a hill or somebody adjacent who could help.

**An Opposition Member:** What about Rocklea?

**Mr. HERBERT:** Rocklea is in that general area. I am referring to the basin of Oxley Creek. I would consider that to be the area that requires the greatest attention in any investigation that takes place as a result of this flood. Something has to be done about the Oxley Creek basin, because that is where the major pollution took place; it is where the major disaster occurred. At the Graceville State School 75 per cent of the children were from flood-affected homes. At the Rocklea State School the figure was 90 per cent. So it was not just a few people on the fringes who went under, as happened in some other suburbs. In the area I am speaking of, whole suburbs went under. Some people had to walk a mile from the back of Chelmer to get a drink of water while they were attempting to clean out their

houses. Obviously, power, gas and telephones went. At certain stages reticulated water went as well. That compounded the problem.

A lot of peculiar stories appeared in the newspapers during the floods. There must have been one or two people with phones who fed them through, and I hope the stories were accepted at face value, because they were quite ridiculous. Jindalee was one of the areas that suffered a great deal of misrepresentation. Honourable members would have read a story in the Press about the one taxi driver who was the only contact between Jindalee and the outside world. I was in contact with Jindalee the whole time. The estate office there was open, manned, operating and in contact with the outside world continuously. Jindalee itself, of course, was cut off. One could get there by boat only. All sorts of sensational stories circulated. There was one about people shooting looters. Some people in Jindalee would like to meet the individuals who starred in the picture and gave the story. There were stories about bread being black-marketed in Jindalee. In fact, bread was given away in Jindalee, so anyone who paid black-market prices at that time would have been quite stupid. Bread and milk were available free.

However, there is now one problem in Jindalee to which I cannot see the answer. It concerns people who in the evening of their lives put every penny into the building of beautiful homes, because they realised that, under the means test for the age pension, if they put everything into their homes they could have a beautiful home in beautiful surroundings and for the rest of their days draw a pension to meet the cost of food and rates. For many of them, everything was going beautifully. Came the flood; the beautiful home and the beautiful surroundings were gone and they were left—many of them in their seventies—with nothing. They had only the shell of the house—no interior, no furnishings, and all the pictures of their kiddies and their other keepsakes gone. These old folk have come back, taken one look, accepted their inability to cope and just pulled down the shutters. We are going to have to care for a lot of them in an entirely different situation because of their inability to face the emotional problem involved. Unfortunately, many come within this category.

Then there is a different group entirely. When the first pay cheque came after the flood many husbands did not take it home. Nothing was left at home. They had lost all their clothes, but they left mum and the kids to handle the problem on their own. We have a name for animals like that. But they exist, and they showed up. It may have been that the home was almost at breaking point before the floods. Nobody could be sure of that; but many husbands took the opportunity to leave their families in the lurch. I have a few of those problems to deal with at the moment.

My real sympathy goes to the old people who, even with the complete restoration of their homes available under the present scheme, are unable to face up to the situation.

Eventually, when we get rid of all the problems associated with human suffering, we have to do something about aquatic sporting clubs. The Indooroopilly Canoe Club, which has produced Olympic champions, had \$40 to pay off its new clubhouse when the flood hit. It now has a concrete slab and the road above it collapsing. Carrington Boating Club disappeared, and everyone knows what happened to the rowing clubs. Fortunately, many of them got their material, craft and equipment out, but their headquarters have gone. We will have to look at this situation in the future.

In this review I suggest that we look at the amelioration of a problem which could occur again. This flood came down the Bremer River. I do not know what effect the Wivenhoe dam, if built, would have had on this occasion but it certainly would not have helped Ipswich. So we have to look to effective measures for the headwaters of the Bremer in case a similar incident occurs again. The building of the Wivenhoe dam must be expedited to give the general Brisbane area some semblance of protection from catastrophic rains, because they will come again.

I would like to have a piece of the people who have gone around my area saying, "It is going to happen again in March, so do not get your houses fixed." Many people believe that sort of rumour. Of course, the problem is that nobody in his right mind can say that it will not happen again in March, because it could. But people are going around saying that it will happen and that it has been forecast. Others are ringing me up and saying, "I want a house somewhere else before the flood comes." They simply accept the story as being true. So we have to do something to offer the people of Brisbane protection from this possibility. This can be done by dams in the upper reaches.

More importantly, a complete engineering survey of the Oxley Creek area must be undertaken—from Inala right through to its mouth—and this must include the removal of the obstructions at the mouth and a look at the rubbish tip next to Pamphlett Bridge which was re-opened to take a lot of the flood-damaged material from houses in the area. Admittedly, it was an urgency operation but it has now put an additional six feet onto the wall of the dam.

Many of these areas were flood-prone before but the waters ran quickly away. In many cases the council has installed a small drain pipe and covered it with earth. On this occasion the water could not escape and was left to evaporate, leaving all the muck behind. The major difficulty in that area has been

cleaning the mud out of yards once it had been removed from the houses in the first place.

In many other areas it was a quick flash-flood which did a tremendous amount of damage; in this area it was not a quick flash-flood but a quiet bank-up. I watched it from my veranda and it came up silently. There was not a ripple on the surface of the water but it rose at an alarming rate. People could not get out of the area because it is flat. Once there was six inches of water outside a home—and this occurred with most people before they realised what had happened—they could not get vehicles in or out but had to sit there and watch everything go under.

A better record of available boats should be kept. A tremendous number of boats were scattered around. People who had all sorts of private "flivvers", came out and helped. However, they were not organised and no rescue scheme was implemented in the area. The matter was left to boat owners who volunteered to render assistance. In an emergency of this nature more attention should be given to organising private boats into a fleet that could provide assistance. Without the voluntary work that was done by a very large number of people, numerous tragedies would have occurred. There were many near misses—I suppose it is fortunate that they were near misses—and if the water had risen at a faster rate some people would certainly have lost their lives. If more boats had been available, more personal belongings could have been saved.

Later in the year when the flood problem has been more or less ironed out, it is the intention in my area to call a meeting of all the welfare organisations with a view to forming an auxiliary to the Civil Defence Organisation. I intend to chair such a meeting at some time in the late spring, before the rains come next year, so that boats can be organised and all householders in the area can be provided with information about flood heights as well as places at which they can be secure above any floods that might come. I know of one family who moved their furnishings three times before they finally lost them. Each house to which their belongings were moved in turn went under. Householders must be provided with information that will let them know that in one shift they can move their possessions to land that will remain above flood level.

The flood was something that no Government could have avoided, and I therefore deprecate any attempt by any political party to try to make political capital out of it.

**Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville West) (3.18 p.m.): As the Leader of the Opposition has said, the Australian Labor Party agrees to the motion before the House. It is tragic that a number of people lost their lives in the floods, and to their relatives I and all other members of the Opposition express our deepest sympathy. It is also tragic, of

course, that such a great number of people lost their homes and possessions. Last month I flew over a large area of North Queensland to observe the damage that had been caused. In some places it was not possible for the aircraft to land, so that all we could do was look down from the air and observe walls and roofs of houses scattered for miles along the banks of rivers. I flew over many homesteads that will need to be completely rebuilt. To the owners as well as to the people who worked at those homesteads, the floods were a tragedy.

Many persons were forced to leave all their belongings behind. One youth told me that he had to leave his saddle and all his clothes behind while he helped an old man ascend a hill from which they were later plucked by helicopter. That youth was left only with the clothes that he stood in. Of course, similar stories can be heard over the entire northern and western areas of the State.

Perhaps the greatest loss suffered by people is the destruction of their treasured possessions, such as photographs and family heirlooms, which cannot be replaced. I think both the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Tourism have referred to this point. No sum of money will compensate a person for these irreplaceable things.

I, too, wish to pay a tribute to our Armed Services, particularly the R.A.A.F. In operations based at Townsville its Hercules and Caribou aircraft transported huge quantities of supplies to flood areas. On many occasions its helicopters were used to pluck people from rooftops and bring them to safety. The presence of the R.A.A.F. in the North, and the fact that helicopters could be stationed at Hughenden, Julia Creek, and elsewhere in the area served by the railway line, made possible the rescue of many people. I venture to say that, without the Armed Forces, the total of persons who lost their lives would not be 29, which is terrible enough, but a very much higher figure. I have never seen such a flood in the Gulf country, nor have other citizens much older than I.

The Army did wonderful work with its vehicles and the troops did a magnificent job. But the front-line people in any emergency are the police. We may talk about the Civil Defence organisation—and I honour its members—the R.A.A.F. and the Army, but personally I believe that in an emergency the first thought that comes to a person's mind is, "Where is the nearest police station and the nearest police officer?" When anyone needs help, he turns first to a police officer, and that is what happened on this occasion.

I should like to mention specially two inspectors in the northern part of the State. Firstly, I refer to Inspector Brady of Townsville, and secondly to Inspector Chippindall of Mt. Isa. On many occasions these men worked round the clock to ensure that they were on the spot when decisions had to be made. Although the R.A.A.F. was prepared

to send out its helicopters and planes, it required an O.K. from these inspectors before it would do so. Their role was vital in determining priorities in the North.

I believe that not only these two men, but all of the police officers in the northern and western parts of the State should receive special mention. Police officers manned the police stations. Sometimes they had to travel by four-wheel-drive vehicles—or other means of transport—to rescue people and bring them to safety. I pay a high tribute to the members of the Police Force in the northern and western parts of the State. They did a truly magnificent job.

We should not forget the ordinary, independent, determined people—the pioneers in the northern and western areas. There were many unsung heroes and heroines in the last two months. These people, who have been through many floods, are not easily flurried. They are now prepared to go back, and are determined to re-establish themselves. When I move around these areas it is marvellous to meet these people and find that they are undeterred. Meeting them evokes the feeling that, as they have such an attitude, we must do something about assisting and rehabilitating them. It is strange to think that from the air many areas still present a picture of turgid brown water beneath the treetops. A long time will pass before the water drains away.

**Mr. Hodges:** Areas that, from the air, are apparently drying out are still swampy.

**Mr. TUCKER:** That is so and, flying towards the setting sun, it is possible to see, from the aircraft, that areas thought to be drying out are still quite swampy beneath the treetops and they will remain swampy for a long time.

Like the Leader of the Opposition, I believe that many people displayed tremendous qualities of leadership in this crisis. However, I do not believe that, on this occasion, that can be said of the Premier. He accused the Opposition of deliberately playing politics in this regard. I do not think we tried to do that at all.

**Mr. Frawley:** Of course you did.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I suppose it could always be argued that way. But let me say that if we had not gone to these areas—if we had sat at home and had not moved out to see for ourselves—the cry would have been that we were not concerned about the people and did nothing. On the other hand, the moment we moved outside our own electorates and displayed concern, we were accused of playing politics. The Opposition simply cannot win with people like the honourable member for Murrumba.

I am prepared to go out and try to see as much as possible for myself, and be criticised for doing it, because I would rather be able to speak in an informed way than rely on

Press reports. We have heard a Minister's claim this afternoon that the media misrepresented the situation in the Brisbane area. Those words are not mine; they came from a Minister of the Crown. Like other people, I was prepared to go out and have a look for myself so that I could speak in an informed way. Perhaps Opposition members were not able to do the job properly, but they did it to the best of their ability.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, while the Premier claims that the Opposition was playing politics, it is obvious that the Government was doing that very thing in Press advertisements. In many areas I visited, people drew attention to Press advertisements giving the Queensland Government credit for the assistance being given. As has been said often, it is possible to fool some of the people some of the time. Many people knew that the Australian Government had come into this scheme in a massive way. Those people looked for fair play and asked why both Governments were not referred to in the advertisements. Although the advertisements were corrected subsequently, nevertheless they referred only to the Queensland Government in the first instance. I was sorry to see that, and I deprecate the fact that it was handled in that way and that something had to be done to correct it. It was distasteful political chicanery to slant advertisements so as to give the impression that the State Government was the only body involved.

The Leader of the Opposition has canvassed the question of declaring a state of emergency and I do not intend to say more than that I agree with what he said.

The Premier spoke about cyclone Althea. Many other honourable members and I sat through the hours when cyclone Althea almost blew Townsville apart on Christmas Eve, 1972. Our constituents suffered great loss and damage, but they did not receive help in the restoration of their homes similar to that being given to victims of the recent flood. I have no argument with the restoration of flood-damaged homes. I am glad to see it happen. During the time of cyclone Althea, there was a ruthless means tests and an unsympathetic Federal Tory Government, and certainly those affected by that cyclone were not accorded the generosity that exists at the present time. There is generosity on this occasion because the present State Government realises that all it has been asked to pay is the first \$2,000,000. For everything else, the Federal Government will pick up the tab.

I think it is only right that the Premier should say today that the Australian Government has come forward in a decent way, and that he should express his thanks to it. I was very pleased to hear him say that. The generosity that exists today in the restoration of homes is the generosity of the Australian Government. I want to make sure that that goes on record. Because of

the attitude and outlook of the Australian Government, much more generous terms have been made available to those needing help. I only wish that those same generous terms had been extended to those who suffered in cyclone Althea.

**Mr. R. E. Moore:** Quite a number of those were covered by storm and tempest insurance, whereas the majority of those who have suffered now are not covered by flood insurance. There is a difference.

**Mr. TUCKER:** There was the same old cry about storm and tempest insurance, and people had to fight insurance companies just as hard then as they are fighting them now. Let there be no doubt about that. Insurance companies tried to find a way out. Following cyclone Althea, people had to fight just as hard for storm and tempest cover as people are fighting today for flood cover.

I am thinking of the statement made by the Premier some time ago that Queensland should secede from the Commonwealth. I wonder what would have happened if this State had taken his advice.

**Mr. R. E. Moore:** We would have more money than we have now.

**Mr. TUCKER:** If that is the case, the Premier is strangely quiet at present about the Australian Government. This is the first time that I have come into the House and not heard criticism of Gough Whitlam or somebody in the Australian Government—this great “centralist” Government! The lack of this sort of criticism in the last few months has been rather refreshing, and one does not need to look far to find the reason for it.

**Dr. Scott-Young:** He has made such a mess of the country so far that he could not fail to give us money this time.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I do not think the Premier is taking any risks of not getting this money, and therefore he is keeping quiet. Apparently he can be bought on some matters. He is fully aware of the enormous financial assistance of the Commonwealth Government, and he knows that his Government could not survive without it at this moment. Restoration of the Gulf area, too, will take place in the course of the next year. I shall deal with that later.

It could be said that what is happening now is proof of the bigness of the Australian Government and its leaders, who have been so trenchantly criticised by members of the Government. The Premier and his Ministers are prepared to put their criticism aside when an emergency such as the present one exists and the Australian Government comes forward saying, “We are prepared to give an open cheque for the restoration of Queensland.”

**Mr. Row:** So they should.

**Mr. TUCKER:** So they should. But, quite frankly, this is the first time that a Federal Government has ever done it. Cyclone Althea presented a classic example of what I am saying.

During the course of the last month or so, I have endeavoured to make some constructive criticisms when I have made inspections of flood-stricken areas. For the most part, they have been sarcastically rejected by the Premier. I put forward what I thought at the time. Some of the things that I said might have been wrong, but they were put forward quite respectfully and with the thought that something might be gained from them. Each time I received a sarcastic reply from the Premier. Nevertheless, I am not daunted. I put forward similar suggestions again today.

When it becomes necessary to fly food into an area, I believe that the people who determine what food shall go in the aircraft should put through a telephone call or a radio call to the wholesalers and the shopkeepers in the area so that they may quickly establish what is needed and what should be given priority. Doubtless the honourable member for Mt. Isa will enlarge on this matter—I shall just touch on it—but the first food-lift into Mt. Isa contained hundreds of pounds of tinned corned meat. An aircraft can carry only a limited poundage, and that item took up space in the aircraft. It was necessary to take food to Mt. Isa, but hundreds of pounds of tinned corned meat were taken there when hundredweights of the same commodity were held in warehouses in Mt. Isa.

Again I stress that I am not putting that forward as criticism. I think it is possible that we could all fall into a trap of that type. However, I think it is a pity that something like that should happen simply because someone has not thought of ringing the shopkeepers and wholesalers in the area, who could say, “In a year we carry so much of this or that. In wet weather we carry so much of this or that. We need so much of this or that food.”

**Mr. Hodges:** I agree with your point relative to Mt. Isa, but Inspector Chippindall covered areas outside Mt. Isa, too.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I do not think Inspector Chippindall was involved in this. I do not wish to get anyone into trouble. As I said, I think I could have fallen into the same trap if I had been in charge.

Although the citizens of Mt. Isa had been without fresh milk for about three weeks or a month because the road and the railway line had been cut, there was no powdered milk in the first air-lift of food. Apparently people in Brisbane were not aware that milk could not be sent in to Mt. Isa. They did not think that people there had to rely on powdered milk. Therefore, the first air-lift



into Mt. Isa did not contain any powdered milk, although it was the first thing that was needed. The situation was rectified later.

If thought were given to matters such as that, people would not become frustrated. I believe that it could be an understandable human error.

**Mr. Hodges:** Reports that we received earlier indicated that there were ample supplies of powdered milk at Mt. Isa.

**Mr. TUCKER:** That may be so, but the situation changes rapidly when roads are cut. Although airliners are still moving in and out, they can carry only limited quantities of food. I do not believe that at any stage the people of Mt. Isa were completely without powdered milk, but I mentioned powdered milk only as an example.

While I was in the Mt. Isa area, and later while I was in the Gulf area with the honourable member for Cook and the honourable member for Mt. Isa, I was able to speak to many police officers about another submission I made later. I do not want anyone to think for one moment that I do not believe that the police did a wonderful job. They did an outstandingly good job, and I think that, without their efforts, many people would have died. However, they had to use all sorts of communications, and I mention this matter in the hope that something will be done about it.

When I was in Mt. Isa, I watched Inspector Chippindall working with only one telephone. I know that he also had wireless communication, but calls from all sorts of places were coming through that one telephone in his office. One moment it would be Rockhampton calling, with someone there wanting to argue that flour supplies should have been bought in the Rockhampton area. The very next moment Boulia or some other town would be on the line. That phone was crammed all the time; nevertheless, it was working.

**Mr. Hodges** interjected.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I am not reflecting on him. He is a very good officer. After watching that operation, I believe that something should be done to improve communications.

The other point I make is that all police stations should have transceivers. Perhaps a better model may be coming forward; I do not know. There is a very effective unit available at the present time, which costs in the vicinity of \$1,000. I know it is effective, because people in some areas of the Gulf were able to talk to Brisbane direct. Therefore, I believe that the Minister should strive to provide every police officer in an isolated area, particularly in the Gulf, with one of those transceivers. He should also be supplied with a battery, although he may be able to use the battery of the police car. He could also be supplied with one of the small Japanese battery chargers.

Those transceivers would ensure that the police had their own adequate communications. I know they had their own landlines, but there were times when some places were out of communication. I know that radios of the Flying Doctor Service were used. On occasions radios of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs were also used, and quite effectively. If the police officers had their own means of communication, they could then hook into the others I have mentioned, thus making them more effective and more efficient. This would avoid the frustration they feel in having to go elsewhere to find out whether messages had been sent.

**Mr. Hodges** interjected.

**Mr. TUCKER:** Will this hook-up be completed very soon?

**Mr. Hodges:** I hope so, yes.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I am very pleased to hear that, because it is vital to peak efficiency of police officers, particularly during emergencies. Some of the leading citizens of Normanton said that during the evacuation of that town they were out of communication and were not quite sure when the next aircraft was coming in. People were waiting up on the aerodrome for the next aircraft of any kind to arrive.

**Mr. Hodges:** I heard a similar complaint in Normanton, but we here knew more about Normanton than did the people in Normanton.

**Mr. TUCKER:** That is the point. It is not very satisfactory for the people concerned. If one understands people and man-management, one should be able to tell the people on the spot what is going on. One of the worst things that can happen to people who are herded together in such conditions is to be out of touch and therefore unable to learn exactly what is happening. I will not go any further into that because the honourable member for Cook, no doubt, will talk about it a little later. I have put forward those suggestions because I think we should be able to upgrade our communications in that area. I thank the Minister for his information about the transceivers.

Let me also suggest to the Minister for Mines and Main Roads that he give consideration to the matter of motor vehicle registration fees in the Gulf. In areas around Karumba and Normanton people who own motor vehicles obviously will not be driving anywhere for a long time. If one flies over the Cairns-Georgetown-Normanton road and many other roads in that area, one sees the washouts and the damaged bridges. In that area it will not be possible to drive motor vehicles over any distance for a long, long time. The Government should take cognisance of this and should say to people who have motor vehicles in the area and who will be

forced to re-register them, "There will be only a nominal fee until such time as the roads are again trafficable."

I hope that the roads are quickly made trafficable, but, because of the amount of money and equipment involved, I am afraid that the work will take a considerable time. I ask the Government to give consideration to this matter of motor vehicle registration fees. I know that they cannot be waived altogether, but on Magnetic Island, which I used to represent in Townsville North, motorists were charged only half the registration fee because there were only about 7 miles of road on the island. I think this is a matter worth thinking about in relation to the areas I have mentioned.

Let me again touch on Karumba. The devastation that could and can be seen there is heartbreaking. The honourable member for Cook and I spent the best part of two days walking around what used to be the roads in Karumba and seeing for ourselves just what had happened in that area.

**Mr. Hodges:** It is terrible; it is like Surfers Paradise.

**Mr. TUCKER:** One cannot credit that these were once the roads serving the buildings in the town. In many cases it would seem that they must have been creeks running through the centre of the town before the flood. But those of us who had seen it previously know that this is not so.

The aerodrome on the point has been cut off from the town. I do not blame the Premier for not landing there. It presents a woeful sight.

**Mr. R. E. Moore:** He did not have an amphibian; that is why he did not land.

**Mr. TUCKER:** That remark rather shows that the honourable member has not been in that area. One could quite safely land at the aerodrome, but it was cut off from Karumba as the road was completely washed out. To get from the aerodrome to Karumba, one has to go to the end of the point and take a boat up the flooded Norman River, a journey that takes about 30 minutes. It may not be a dangerous one today, but some time ago, especially at night-time, which is when we negotiated it, it certainly was. At that time the aerodrome was isolated and was not a very effective means of entering Karumba. One could almost describe the town as being completely cut off, although this was not quite so.

If my estimation of quantities is correct, I would say that the fill necessary to restore the streets, at between \$2 and \$3 a yard, will alone cost \$1,000,000.

I again pay a tribute to the local people, who were on the job immediately. While we were there, they were not sitting down crying. They were back on the job and were trying to establish some sort of communication within the town itself. Mr. Bob Mostyn

of Craig Mostyn was one man who was prepared to move very quickly in an endeavour to restore some communication in the town. This is where I believe we could have helped. Mr. Mostyn chartered a barge from Cairns and brought earth-moving equipment from Phillips Constructions into Karumba at his own expense. The cost of chartering that barge was \$18,000, which is a large sum of money. It shows how these people are prepared to help themselves. They are well aware that the prawning season is almost on them. They have to get their works moving again in order to help themselves.

I must not forget to mention Dr. Rex Patterson, who visited the area and spoke with the local residents. He was in close communication with them on the matter of reconstruction.

As I say, the barge was chartered from the Mason Shipping Company at a cost of \$18,000. The usual freight rate on goods transported into the area by the company is \$32 a ton, so it is easy to visualise what the people of Karumba, Normanton and other Gulf townships will be up against in having goods carried to their areas. If it was possible for Mr. Bob Mostyn to charter a barge to transport heavy equipment to Karumba so that quantities of shell grit could be brought in from the pits to help restore the centre of the town, it was possible for the Government to have done likewise.

**Mr. Hodges:** The Government has agreed to subsidise any freight beyond the normal freight rates.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I think that is a fine gesture, and I hope that the Minister for Transport will subsidise freights to Julia Creek so that goods can be transported along the beef road from Julia Creek to Normanton. After all, that road will be the first one to be opened. If freight can be landed in Julia Creek from Townsville at a cost of \$14 a ton, the carriers in Normanton could transport it to their town at a cost similar to the figure I have mentioned. I hope that the Government will examine the subsidising of freight rates to ensure that the people who have already suffered will not be required to shoulder an additional heavy burden.

**Mr. Hodges:** It will take quite a while to get through to Normanton, won't it?

**Mr. TUCKER:** I do not think so. However, my colleague the honourable member for Cook will deal with that aspect.

During our visit our attention was drawn to grave shortages of aviation and motor fuel. A vessel named "Dundas" was due to arrive with a cargo of fuel, but prior to its arrival one of the vital links in communications in the North-west was cut. I am referring to the small private planes and helicopters, which did yeoman's service in rendering aid to a tremendous number of people. Owing to the shortage of aviation fuel, they were grounded. A cargo of 50 44-gallon drums

of fuel that was brought to Normanton was condemned because the date beyond which the fuel would deteriorate had expired.

Another step that should have been taken was an indication to shire councils as to the expenditure that they could incur. Without such knowledge, the councils are completely inhibited. I say this because on one occasion I sat in at a round-table conference and heard the shire councillors claim that they did not know what they could spend in Karumba and what sum would be allotted to them. We were told that the Etheridge Shire Council, which has its headquarters at Georgetown, suffered damage amounting to \$250,000 to its roads. Under the present arrangement the council will be required to provide \$50,000 to repair that damage, and it is beyond its financial capabilities to do so.

Before I conclude I wish to refer to the setting up of flood-reporting stations on the various Gulf rivers. On two great rivers, that is, Gilbert and Einasleigh, there is only one flood-reporting station. The surrounding homesteads, stations, small townships and the shire council have no earthly idea what is happening when these rivers start to flood. My colleague the honourable member for Cook will no doubt refer to the Norman and Flinders Rivers, for which no real warning was given. The establishment of flood-reporting stations on these rivers should be seriously considered because a warning is essential so that people may know when to evacuate. The provision of these stations would negative rumours such as the one that a wall of water 10 ft. high was rolling down the Norman and Flinders Rivers.

Georgetown has an all-weather landing strip, but the paradox is that the town is cut off from the landing strip by Sandy Creek, a small creek which, on this occasion, flooded continually for months. A causeway crosses the creek, but people could not get across it to the landing strip.

(Time expired.)

**Dr. EDWARDS** (Ipswich) (3.56 p.m.): I have great pleasure in participating in this debate to bring to the notice of this Parliament and the people of Queensland the fortitude, courage and determination of the people of the city of Ipswich, which became so evident during the recent devastation and destruction in the flood that inundated the city of Ipswich over the Australia Day week-end.

This flood, which was the worst to hit Ipswich since 1893, rose to a height of 64 feet at the David Trumpy Bridge and remained at that level for at least 24 hours. Some 34 homes, mostly in the electorate of the honourable member for Ipswich West, were washed away, and I am informed that 1,674 homes in the Ipswich area had water into the living sections. I am informed also that, within the boundaries of the city of Ipswich, some 3,500 homes, involving

approximately 15,000 people, were evacuated. As well as this, our industries were seriously affected, with four coal-mines completely flooded and thereby closed. The losses in industry amount to approximately \$4,000,000, and probably 500 people were left jobless immediately after the flood. Many of these people have been able to gain employment locally, or in industries in other areas. A quarter of the shopping and business area of the city of Ipswich was inundated, while nearly all of the Goodna shopping area, in the Wolston electorate, was damaged. A caravan park in that electorate was washed away completely. I am informed that over \$1,000,000 was paid out by the Ipswich Court House in immediate relief after the flood.

My city was a devastated, destroyed city, without power in most areas for 48 hours, while in other areas power was off for up to seven days. We were completely isolated from Brisbane, Toowoomba and other centres for approximately four days, except for helicopter entry. It has been estimated that between \$3,000,000 and \$4,000,000 will be required to restore services such as roads and sewerage, and approximately \$10,000,000 will be required to repair damaged homes and replace those destroyed in the Ipswich area.

I am also informed that it will cost \$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000 to restore mining, industrial and other business activities within the city. Yet, in the midst of this tragedy, the people of my city showed a fine spirit of courage, optimism and co-operation. It is beyond description. I am sure that the honourable members for Ipswich West and Wolston will totally agree with me on this point about co-operation and co-ordination.

The evacuation of some 15,000 people, and many business enterprises was undertaken with the co-operation of the whole of the city, in most difficult and dangerous circumstances, over three days and two nights. Many folk assisted people in lower areas only to return to their own homes to find inundation occurring at such an unbelievable rate that often complete loss of furniture, bedding, clothing and personal effects resulted.

Therefore, during this debate, it is absolutely essential for me to pay tribute firstly to the people of the city of Ipswich—to those who suffered in the floods, to those who opened their homes (and these were numerous; at every centre we had lists of people who were willing to accept other people into their homes and most of us had people in our homes for a number of days), and to those of all ages who assisted with the evacuation. I was privileged to have with me a group of young people who worked day and night helping to shift people from many areas in my own electorate.

I believe that the people of Ipswich are unique people of rare and unparalleled value. Without exception, the way Ipswich

people co-ordinated and co-operated in a true family spirit was something which has gained the admiration of every one of us who observed what was going on within my city. This has been of value and we are very proud to be part of this great city and numbered among these great people.

I also pay a tribute to the Police Force, from Inspector McCarthy and Inspector Gorman down to the newest arrival at the Ipswich Police Station. Their assistance was of great value and their co-operation was something that had to be seen to be believed. I saw police officers off duty spending all of their time in boats collecting people and their belongings and shifting them to other centres, and then resuming their eight hours of duty as police officers within the city of Ipswich.

I pay a tribute to the permanent army officers, the R.A.A.F. and the helicopter units and crews. I express a special word of appreciation for the helicopter people. They made numerous trips to and from Brisbane and other areas under very difficult conditions. On a number of occasions these men transferred seriously ill people to Brisbane, where they could be given special treatment.

I also say a word of appreciation to the Citizens Military Forces which played a tremendous role in the operation. I mention men such as Captain Kerry Brown and Ross Cruice who led the C.M.F. in a tremendous amount of work during the evacuation and the days that followed.

The Civil Defence Organisation also played an invaluable role in the city of Ipswich and I record their efforts under the leadership of Fred Thompson, Len Coulson and many other people.

Operation clean-up was unbelievable. People from all occupations, professions, ages, and walks of life co-ordinated to clean mud from homes and grounds. The assistance of radio station 4IP, Ipswich, was deeply appreciated during both the flood and operation clean-up. I pay tribute to the hundreds of Ipswich people and the outsiders who poured into Ipswich to assist our people. I instance the 12 Inglewood men, who live in the electorate of the Minister for Local Government and Electricity, who came down with their own equipment, including an end-loader, bulldozer and hand pumps, as well as their own food and bedding. They camped in the drill hall in Ipswich and spent a whole week cleaning some of the worst areas in my city. To these men we pay tribute. The reason they came was that they, too, had suffered tremendous destruction during the 1956 flood which affected Inglewood.

I pay tribute to Bob Tait and his group of men, and the men from the Apex Club who came down and worked so hard in such an unobtrusive manner. I pay tribute

to the service clubs in Ipswich, Ipswich Community Aid, Red Cross, Scouts, Girl Guides, the medical and nursing professions and the many other groups who took part in a very co-ordinated and outstanding manner.

Although I would like to mention many others, I give credit to one particular firm—Action Realty. This company lent its fleet of vehicles, radio communication network and staff so that the whole clean-up programme could be co-ordinated in a wonderful manner.

**Mr. K. W. Hooper:** The Rev. Eric Moore did a very good job.

**Dr. EDWARDS:** He was also very active and I intended to mention him shortly.

Kerry Fitzgerald stepped in and co-ordinated all of the services. I am sure that the honourable member for Ipswich West would join me in my feelings for this man. His work was of great value in this aspect of co-ordination and co-operation. The local newspaper, "The Queensland Times" played a very important role and my thanks go to it as well.

The Minister for Transport mentioned the Rev. Eric Moore. I do not think words can express my gratitude to him personally for the way in which he took over so many activities. His assistance in co-ordination has been such that words are inadequate to express the gratitude of the City of Ipswich to him. He has worked day and night. At 3 a.m. on Sunday, when the flood was rising at its highest rate, I met the Rev. Eric Moore down at Basin Pocket shifting some people from their home. This is an indication of the work done by this man for the City of Ipswich at this time.

I feel it essential also to mention the gratitude of the City of Ipswich to the council and to the mayor, who played a tremendous role in the city.

**Mr. Marginson:** You tried to discredit him a while ago.

**Dr. EDWARDS:** I take strong exception to that interjection. I had no intention whatever of discrediting the mayor. I brought that matter up because the facts were not correctly stated by the Leader of the Opposition. The facts of the matter were that Mr. Hayden rang me on the Sunday evening, as he rang the honourable member for Wolston and also the honourable member for Ipswich West. He asked me whether I would attend a meeting to consider a way of co-ordinating services and bringing means of assistance together for the people of Ipswich. I accepted that invitation, and he told me then that the mayor would chair the meeting.

At the meeting, many ways in which we could assist the people of Ipswich were discussed. One thing discussed was the setting-up of a fund to assist the people of Ipswich, not only in this disaster but in any future disasters. The mayor chaired the meeting. Mr. Hayden and I moved that the Ipswich

disaster fund be set up, exactly as it has been set out by the Local Government and Justice Departments. This fund was set up, and it will be a continuing fund. The mayor of the day was elected as one of the trustees, as were the city administrator and the local magistrate of the day.

I pay very great tribute to the mayor of the day, Alderman Hastings, and I believe that we must get the facts straight. I am placing the facts correctly on record. I challenge the honourable member for Wolston to deny any of the facts as I have presented them. I have spoken to the city administrator since the honourable member for Wolston brought this matter up, and the facts are as I have stated them. I challenge the honourable member to present them in any other way. I again place on record in this House that I am not deprecating the work of the mayor of this city. If the honourable member for Wolston takes it that way, he is absolutely incorrect. What I took exception to was the incorrect statement of the Leader of the Opposition that the Mayor of Ipswich set up the fund. The fund was in fact set up by the citizens of the City of Ipswich, and the mayor of the day is one of the coordinators. I want to make that fact quite clear. Again I pay a tribute to the work done by the mayor.

**Mr. Marginson:** You are splitting straws.

**Dr. EDWARDS:** I am not splitting straws; I am relating the facts. If the honourable member would do a little more work and get to know the facts, I would not have to tell this story.

I want to pay a tribute now to the city administrator (Mr. Milton), the city engineer (Mr. Abyss), the deputy city administrator (Mr. Smallwood), and the deputy city engineer (Mr. Gamble). I also pay tribute to the city health inspector (Mr. Barclay). The dedication of these men and their staffs in every part of their activities, and even today, is outstanding, and I hope their efforts will be appreciated by the city, and by members such as the honourable member for Wolston, who obviously cannot get his facts correct. Despite the devastation, the clean-up and the health programme which followed were undertaken, and little or no increase in disease occurred in this city. I pay tribute to these people for this achievement. I have checked with the hospital and the medical officers in my city, and I have found that there has been no increase whatever in the incidence of disease. This is a tremendous tribute to city officers, and I commend them on it.

I should also like to make it known that the people of Ipswich appreciate the visits made by Cabinet Ministers, and also the lengthy visit by His Excellency the Governor (Sir Colin Hannah). We were able to discuss the problems fully with these people. The Minister for Justice was able to be in the city three times. The Minister for Transport and the Premier were there, as were

also the Minister for Lands and Forestry, the Minister for Works and Housing, and the Minister for Education. I could continue to speak of the co-operation received from Ministers of the Government. We were able to discuss the situation also with the Governor, who spent three hours in our city. We were able to bring to the notice of these people at first hand the problems of the Ipswich area. Great co-operation was received from officers of the Premier's Department, the Health Department and other Government departments. I pay tribute to them.

On many occasions during the flood and the days that followed, it gave me tremendous pleasure to ring Dr. Livingstone, who at that time was acting Director-General of Health and Medical Services and receive advice from him on certain aspects of health care that were needed within the City of Ipswich.

I also pay tribute to Mr. Paul O'Gorman, who is sitting in the lobby today. His co-operation has been outstanding. He came to Ipswich a week or so ago and spent the whole afternoon there and gave us a great deal of information about the way in which his committee is assisting people in the city and throughout the State. We are very fortunate that Mr. O'Gorman has been able to spend so much time with us and to assist us so greatly, and the speedy way in which he has answered correspondence and telephone calls from Ipswich is a tribute to his efficiency.

Similarly, both Mr. Keith Spann and Mr. Brian Pendrigh of the Premier's Department have been very co-operative.

The people of Ipswich still face tremendous problems. They have shown outstanding courage. They have tremendously big hearts, and their lives are slowly returning to normal. However, they believe that many people outside the city of Ipswich did not realise, and possibly do not realise to this very day, the extent of the devastation, destruction and suffering that occurred in their city. Of course, my opinion of the attitude of the Australian Government in donating \$250,000 direct to the Brisbane fund almost a week before giving anything to Ipswich and, again, by not including Ipswich in discussions when the Prime Minister visited Brisbane while the mayors of Brisbane and Gold Coast were present, is well known, and I do not wish to say anything more about that.

There are lessons to be learnt from this flood, and I hope that every effort will be made to collate all available information. I suggest—I think it has been suggested already—that the Premier continue to obtain information and details from all the people affected by the floods throughout the State. I believe that all the facts relative to problems of evacuation, methods of evacuation and the problems that have faced people when they have returned to their homes

should be collated to provide a very valuable record of this tragedy that has affected the whole State.

The co-operation of all concerned, from the Australian and State Governments down to the citizens of my city, has been the basis of our viability and recovery, and I pay tribute to everybody concerned in it. There will be much criticism and many questions will be asked relative to the flood, but this flood had to be seen to be believed. The rate of rise was almost unbelievable, and some reports have indicated that the flood rose by 7 to 8 feet in one hour in Ipswich. In my opinion, all concerned made every possible effort. Personally, I am still amazed that only one person lost his life in the Ipswich area.

I pay tribute to the late Noel Stretton, who lost his life during the flood. He was the manager of one of the local pharmacies in Ipswich. Despite the fact that he was on holidays, he went to help staff members evacuate the pharmacy. Unfortunately, he drove into a flooded area and lost his life. To his wife and family, I extend my deepest sympathy and express the tremendous respect I had for this man because of my professional relationship with him over many years. Our city will certainly be the poorer for his passing.

I hope that this devastation will never be repeated. I am proud to represent part of the great city of Ipswich.

**Mr. Marginson:** And always remember that it is only part of the city.

**Dr. EDWARDS:** If the honourable member for Wolston is not proud to represent the city of Ipswich, or part of it, I am. I pay tribute to, and am conscious of, the greatness of Ipswich and the people who live there.

The problem that faces Ipswich in the future is the effect on industry within the city. That effect is very widespread. The closure of the coal mines has meant unemployment in the mining industry, and this has caused great uncertainty to many people and to many families. I believe it is absolutely essential that a full survey of the mining industry be carried out urgently to ascertain its future. The need for such a survey has been emphasised by the effects that the flood has had on the collieries.

As I have said on earlier occasions, stable long-term contracts are needed, and now is the time to underwrite such contracts for the Ipswich area so that new mines can be developed to use the large coal reserves and replace those affected by the flood. This is no mean task and I urge the Government to undertake this programme immediately for the benefit of the Ipswich area and the State.

I also refer to Scotts' foundry, which is in my electorate. It has been completely devastated, and I pay a tribute to those people for the way in which they have set

about rebuilding the foundry and for getting the plant to the stage where 36 men can be employed instead of simply losing their jobs.

**A Government Member:** It is a very worthwhile industry.

**Dr. EDWARDS:** That is so. It is a very big industry, and one of which the Minister is fully aware. I pay a tribute also to other industries such as Hancock Brothers Pty. Ltd., who have lost a tremendous amount. Through the assistance of this Government, they have been able to resume their operations and get back into production fairly quickly.

I would like to pay a tribute also to the Minister for Transport for his part in the operations of Project Help and for his co-operation with the Rev. Eric Moore in the Ipswich Community Aid. We have been assisted a great deal by this work.

Another factor I wish to mention relates to the damage to schools in my electorate. Two of them were damaged, one seriously. I pay tribute to the Department of Education and the Works Department for the way in which they have assisted these schools to get back to normal. I know that the honourable member for Ipswich West also has in her electorate schools which have suffered damage. However, the way in which the Works Department and the Department of Education have co-operated in bringing these schools back to as normal a condition as possible as quickly as possible is something for which we must pay tribute.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have much pleasure in being associated with the motion before the House. In this flood we have seen exhibited by the Ipswich people a tremendous spirit, a spirit with which I am proud to be associated, and a spirit which I trust will continue to get these people back to normal circumstances in the very near future.

**Mr. DAVIS (Brisbane) (4.17 p.m.):** It is my pleasure today to have the opportunity of speaking on the very important issue that is before the House. In particular, I wish to refer to the flooding in the area with which I am vitally concerned. Few members in this Chamber have spoken about flooding more than I have over the last five years.

Most noticeable about this flood has been the attitude of the Premier. I certainly do not want to get political in this debate, but I must contrast his stand in 1974 with that in 1972. Cyclones Emily and Diana in 1972 affected the same areas as were flooded in January 1974—that is, Windsor, Swan Hill, and Wilston. Of course, Northey Street was again badly affected. The only difference between the recent flooding and that in 1972 was about an extra two feet of water in the houses. A house flooded to a depth of 10 feet is not much more seriously damaged than one flooded to 7 or 8 feet. In 1972, the Queensland Government under the leadership of the same Premier, refused

pleas for assistance in respect of the damage done by the floods in January and March of that year.

**Mr. Hinze:** What about Clem Jones?

**Mr. DAVIS:** If the honourable member waits, he will hear everything he wants to hear about this. In 1972 the situation was much the same as it was in January of this year. The same areas were covered, but perhaps one or two more houses were flooded this time.

**Mr. Hinze:** They are low lying.

**Mr. DAVIS:** Yes, they are low lying; but it seems strange that between 1930 and 1967 there was no flooding in this area. Between 1967 and 1972 there were three floods. Now there has been another one this year.

Let us look at the situation as it applied in 1972 and compare it with that in 1974. As I said, mainly the same houses were involved. In many instances, exactly the same persons were involved. In 1972 they applied for assistance in the same way, except that they went to the Valley Police Station, but they were refused. They were refused any assistance whatever by this Government. When flooding occurred on Friday 25 January this year the Premier went to the corner of Northey Street and Bowen Bridge Road and was interviewed by a television reporter. I saw the film later. When asked whose responsibility it was that so much flooding occurred—it was only occurring in Brisbane creeks at that time and there was no problem in the Brisbane River—the Premier, in his usual statesmanlike fashion said, "It is the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council. It has nothing whatever to do with us." In reply to the same interviewer he said, "Many of these people should be covered by flood insurance." Those were his words. He should know, or he should have been advised, that no homes in that area can be covered by flood insurance because the insurance companies will not insure them. There are 750 of them in that neck of the woods and even if the people concerned had the money to insure them against flood they could not obtain the cover.

That was the Premier's attitude on the Friday. He was going to adopt an attitude similar to the one he had adopted in 1972 and try to duck out of assisting anybody. Then on the Sunday and Monday the flood involved many other areas, which made him completely change his attitude. It was the first time that people in my area had received any form of assistance at all and I should like to correct a few false impressions about the area. One never reads about anything but Northey Street and everybody gets the impression that only Northey Street floods.

**Mr. Hinze:** Is Northey Street in your electorate?

**Mr. DAVIS:** It is.

**Mr. Hinze:** What are you doing about it?

**Mr. DAVIS:** I have been trying to get a flood mitigation scheme implemented there so that that area, including the Albion Park trotting track, can be saved from flooding so that millionaire sportsmen here who race trotters will not have their entertainment interfered with.

Not only Northey Street is affected by these floods as the general public seems to think. In that area of Swan Hill there are over 10 streets containing more than 150 houses. Following the creek further up into Wilston another 20 to 30 houses are involved and at the back of the creek towards Mayne railway yards and further on another 100 houses are involved. So a very considerable area is subject to flooding and we are concerned about what is going to happen in the future. It is all very well for members, including the Premier, to stand up and speak about improvements in the Civil Defence Organisation, police facilities and other organisations involved in rescue work. In 1972 in this Parliament I gave some examples of what occurred in my area alone and it could have been a classic blueprint for future flood activities throughout the metropolitan area. I have stated before in this Chamber that in 1972 there was no organisation for rescue work in this city. The arrangements, which have not changed for a number of years, were that the inspector of police would be the person in charge. In some instances such a police officer would have no more idea of rescue work than I have of flying. I approached the Premier and various Ministers, including the Minister for Works and Housing, and I was met with the usual mucking around between them. The situation has not changed. The Government had the blueprint for a flood-mitigation organisation that would have meant something to the area, but it failed to take advantage of the information at its disposal.

The present system of issuing weather and flood warnings leaves a lot to be desired. After the 1967 flood an engineer compiled a report entitled "Hydrology without Tears", published in 1969. I believe that the report should be circulated to all Government departments. It highlights the fact that there is no efficient warning system in existence. Anyone who contacts the Weather Bureau during prolonged periods of heavy rain is told that in the creek areas of Brisbane slight flooding might occur. In the recent floods, on the Sunday after the rain had ceased, Civil Defence organisers went round and told residents in the areas near Enoggera, Breakfast and Ithaca Creeks that the Brisbane River would reach its peak at midnight and that the height at the Port Office was expected to be 22 feet, with the result that the water level in the areas near the creeks was expected to rise by another seven feet. If the rise of seven feet had occurred on top of the flood peaks reached on the Friday and Saturday, half of the area occupied by the Royal Brisbane Hospital would have been under water.

The serious flooding that occurs in the Enoggera Creek and Breakfast Creek area has been brought to the attention of the people of Brisbane. What is going to be done for the local residents? Since 1967, four major floods have occurred in the area. Is the Government content to wait until a flood-mitigation scheme is implemented? In the light of the wrangling and political somersaults we have seen from the Government in blaming other bodies for flooding we cannot be blamed for believing that even if such a scheme is commenced tomorrow it will be at least four or five years before it comes to fruition. So I ask: what will happen to the local inhabitants in the meantime? Will they be wiped just as they were wiped by the Premier in 1972? Will the area be allowed to become depressed so that the real-estate "sharks" can move in during the nights after floods and offer to purchase houses at half their value and later rent them out for as much as \$20 and \$30 a week? I know of one real-estate agent in the Swan Hill area who has purchased more than 40 houses and rents them to tenants. Whenever a flood occurs and the tenants leave he moves in after the water has subsided, cleans the houses out, and starts all over again. As this area will not be insured by any organisation we should have some sort of insurance scheme under which assistance can be rendered so that arguments will be avoided about Jack getting between \$400 and \$500, Bill getting \$350, and someone else getting nothing.

**Mr. Hinze:** You are talking about a national insurance scheme.

**Mr. DAVIS:** If it is to be an Australian insurance scheme I am all for it, but I am concerned about what may happen before it gets off the ground. If we were to suffer a flood next week have we the Premier's assurance that these people would be assisted in the same way? I am interested in this in the light of the Premier's statement in 1972, in which he said that the only reason these people did not receive any financial assistance was that it was not a disaster area—because he did not declare it one. As he did not declare it a disaster area he could not claim Commonwealth assistance for it.

It is useless to run away from this problem because it will exist until something is done about it. It is about time the Premier came up with a plan for rendering assistance rather than resorting to a hand-me-down, cap-in-hand approach to charitable institutions.

**Mr. Hinze** interjected.

**Mr. DAVIS:** It is all very well for the millionaires living on the flash Gold Coast canal estates. These unfortunate people are only battlers. They cannot go to the sales and pay \$11,000 for a pacer; they cannot afford to pay \$16,000 at the yearling

sales for a filly by Better Boy. They have only their houses, which have received a terrible hammering from four floods. They do not know whether they should sell their houses to sharp real-estate agents for a third of their value or wait until a flood mitigation scheme is under way. They are only asking for a fair go. But for the magnitude of the recent floods which prompted the Government to get off its rear, these people, as in the past, would not have received a brass farthing in compensation.

I say to the Premier, without any political motive, that I believe that these areas will continue to be flooded. I do not refer only to my own area but to other creek areas. These people have to be looked after. There must be planned assistance, not only by way of flood mitigation, but in other forms so that these people do not have to approach the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Salvation Army, or other bodies which did a mighty job, and ask for a handout. These people are Queenslanders, and if we say, "We are all for Queensland", let us help them out in the future.

**Mr. HINZE** (South Coast) (4.34 p.m.): It is fit and proper on the first sitting day of this Parliament after the worst disaster the State has ever known that the Premier should move the motion which was so ably seconded by the honourable member for Mt. Coot-tha, and that we should express our gratitude to those people who did so much work during the disaster period.

I agree with some of the statements made by the honourable member for Brisbane. I believe that we should do something about getting a national insurance scheme under way. After every disaster, whether it be flood, bushfire, or drought, we say that we should have a national disaster scheme. However, after a month or two sentimentality is forgotten and we completely and conveniently forget all about it. On this occasion I can only hope that the severity of the recent disaster in Queensland will force the Commonwealth, the State of Queensland, and all other States to get together to knock some sort of compulsory national insurance scheme into shape.

I am very pleased that this opportunity has been afforded us to debate this disaster. The Premier moved the motion. Opposition members have entered the debate and it has been kept on a very high plane. I hope it will continue in that fashion. It is not for me to criticise the Commonwealth Government, and I am pleased that Opposition members have not offered too much criticism of the Queensland Government. Had they done so, I would have had to reply but, as they have kept the debate on a high plane, I propose to follow suit.

**Mr. Aikens:** Having said that, you have nothing else to say.



**Mr. HINZE:** The honourable member for Townsville South will have his opportunity later and we will hear what he has to say.

Firstly, I commend the Premier, who very quickly went to the four corners of this vast State.

**Mr. B. Wood:** He sought every ounce of publicity.

**Mr. HINZE:** The honourable member charges that the Premier was seeking cheap publicity. He ought to be ashamed of himself. I am trying to keep the debate on as high a plane as possible, and the honourable member alleges that the only reason the Premier travelled throughout this vast State was to gain cheap publicity. That is not becoming of the honourable member. It is not his best form. I realise he slipped up. I am quite sure that he did not mean it and that it was a slip of the tongue. I am prepared to accept it in that way.

**Mr. Aikens** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Townsville South must not interject from other than his usual place in the Chamber.

**Mr. HINZE:** We should congratulate the Premier and all Commonwealth Government Ministers who visited the area and sat down with him and the Treasurer and nussed out ways of providing assistance as quickly as possible to the various areas of the State.

Let us put the record straight. While I have been a member of this Parliament, I have not heard any reference to the possibility of a flood anywhere near as bad as the 1893 flood. We all believed that such a flood could never occur again.

**Mr. B. Wood:** No.

**Mr. HINZE:** We did. We honestly believed that, because of the dams we have built, we would never see a repetition of the 1893 flood. I can remember my mother talking about that flood. I thought such a flood was a thing of the past. Of course, we have since learnt a lesson. Circumstances can arise and put us in a worse situation than existed in 1893. We now know that, in the future, we could get something worse still. Heaven knows we hope we do not.

In my area, some 2,000 people were evacuated from the canal estates. I was proud of this area in my electorate. While in public life, I took some part in assisting in the development of that area of flood plain behind the Gold Coast. Because of the terrific rainfall in the catchment areas of the Nerang River, the homes belonging to these people were flooded. This situation will have to be corrected. These problem areas must be looked at. Model tests should be conducted. Flood-mitigation schemes should be introduced. Then the people who come to Queensland and settle in this area will know that this danger does not hang over their heads.

For many years, the Gold Coast beaches have suffered from erosion. We have consulted experts and studied the Delft Report. We know what we can do. It will cost some \$20,000,000 to correct the problems and ensure that we do not receive bad publicity every time there is a bit of a blow, particularly at Kirra and Palm Beach. We hate the idea that every time there is a bit of a blow like cyclone Pam, television crews race down to the coast and photograph me, the mayor, or somebody else standing on a rock somewhere so that it can be published in other States to indicate the erosion that is taking place on the Gold Coast beaches.

People in Victoria and other States like to play this up. They like to indicate that the Gold Coast beaches are gone. This is not the case. Out of our 21 miles of beaches, possibly only half a mile is eroded and we know how to correct that problem. We have the plans approved. We have a scheme to pump sand from the ocean and the Tweed River. The Premier has successfully negotiated an agreement with the New South Wales Government to pump some 500,000 tons of sand from the Tweed River to restore Kirra Beach. It is known that there are companies interested in doing this work, and I understand that tenders have been let by the Gold Coast City Council for the pumping of sand to Palm Beach. It is well known that protective works can be undertaken that will eliminate these problems, and I feel that possibly they should be given further consideration by the Commonwealth Government. I want to keep the debate on as high a plane as possible, so I merely express the hope that the Commonwealth Government will accept that the only area affected by cyclone Pam was the small corner of my electorate.

We claim that we are entitled to special treatment. If an approach were made to the Commonwealth Government on the basis of 40 per cent of the cost of the work to be paid by the Commonwealth, 40 per cent by the State Government, and 20 per cent by the local authority—which is all it could afford, anyway—it might be said that this would establish a precedent for the provision of assistance of this type elsewhere throughout Australia. But that is not the case. No other area extending over 21 miles earns so much revenue for the State and Federal Governments as does the Gold Coast of Queensland. There are thousands and thousands of miles of coastline around Australia that would not earn 20 cents. We therefore believe that we on the Gold Coast are entitled to ask the Commonwealth Government to have another look at our request for reasonable assistance. The ratepayers of the Gold Coast would then readily accept the undertaking of this huge task of protecting the beaches, because they are a national and State asset. I am quite sure that there are responsible Commonwealth ministers who appreciate the position. Senator Ron McAuliffe is an

A.L.P. senator who lives at Currumbin. He sees the problem, and he would be prepared to give support to the local authority in representations of this type.

From low-lying areas and the canal estates, 2,000 to 3,000 people were evacuated. It is distressing, particularly to pensioners and other aged persons, to have to evacuate homes during the night. Every half hour there is the hope that the rain will stop, that the waters will recede, and that it will be possible to stick it out. But finally it has to be accepted that, for the sake of safety, houses must be evacuated.

I give my congratulations to Police Inspector Barnett, and to all his officers and Civil Defence personnel in my area. Not one life was lost, and this is something to be proud of.

We have now passed through this period, and we have to learn lessons from it. The Advancetown dam will hold back a huge quantity of water and, by means of a bypass canal through the back of Benowa, water will be channelled to the Broadwater where it will get away quicker. Flooding will therefore not occur again in some of the recently flooded areas. There are many ways of overcoming these problems, but the problem is finding the necessary money. I return to my original thought that the Commonwealth Government should have another look at this proposal because the State has indicated that, if the Commonwealth will meet 40 per cent of the cost, it will do likewise, leaving 20 per cent to be found by the local authority.

In addition to the problems encountered on the beaches and in the canal estates, the farming community in the Gold Coast hinterland was badly hit. Primary producers suffered loss of stock, which will put them in a bad position for the coming year. It can be taken for granted that milk supplies will be short. This morning I received a reminder from a feed merchant informing me that the price of fodder has increased to \$90 a ton. The producers of necessary commodities such as milk will find that the prices of products necessary for their production will continually rise. It was most upsetting to read in the Press the other day that the Federal subsidy on superphosphate was to be withdrawn.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Talk about flood relief.

**Mr. HINZE:** Never mind what I am talking about. I am talking about the plight of farmers in my area. I do not wish to take exception, but a Commonwealth Government that would take away subsidy at this time would not be right in the head.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I advise the honourable member for Archerfield and the

honourable member for South Coast that they should confine their remarks to the motion now being debated.

**Mr. HINZE:** He upset me.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I know that the honourable member is very sensitive, but I ask him to come back to the motion before the House.

**Mr. HINZE:** Having suffered as a result of the floods that have occurred, the farmers now have to meet the high cost of wages and salaries and of the commodities they use in trying to produce food for the people of Queensland. The Government in Canberra has taken away free milk for school-children, which has cost the dairy industry \$12,000,000 a year, and it is now taking away the subsidy on superphosphate. I suppose it will soon threaten to take away something else. It seems to have a hell of a hate for primary industries in Australia today.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the honourable member for South Coast to come back to the motion. If he does not, he will have to resume his seat.

**Mr. HINZE:** I am pleased that politics have not been brought into the debate, and I am very pleased to be able to keep the debate on a high plane.

I congratulate all those who were associated with the work that was undertaken during the flood in my area—people such as Meals on Wheels and the police. With so many waterways down there, the police found themselves without a boat. I wish to make representation from the floor of the House to ensure—

**Mr. D'Arcy:** The Minister took it away.

**Mr. HINZE:** The Minister did not take it away. We have had a very bad disaster on the Gold Coast, and we must learn from our mistakes. If something is wrong, we must discuss it and advise the various departments concerned. There is nothing in Australia to compare with the Broadwater, yet the police have no boat. That is not a fair go.

A liquor licence has recently been granted to a tavern on Tippler's Passage, which I think is in the electorate of my friend and colleague the honourable member for Albert. With the granting of that licence some small problems probably will arise, and the only way of getting to Tippler's Passage is by boat. I understand that a 12 to 14-foot aluminium boat and a 20 h.p. motor have been ordered. That is not good enough. I hope the Minister will see that something better is provided—something more in keeping with the Gold Coast—in which police officers can travel when problems such as those to which I have referred arise. I suppose the boat on order would be all right to use if one wished to go fishing for bream in a mill pond. However, the trip from Southport to South Stradbroke Island

can be a little rough at times, and I do not wish a situation to arise in which police officers going into the electorate of my colleague the honourable member for Albert to pick up someone could get into trouble on the trip across. I think the Gold Coast is justly entitled to something better. I suggest the provision of perhaps a 15-foot boat with a couple of 50 h.p. motors. It could skim up and down the Broadwater and save lives, and it should, of course, be fitted with radio so that the police can be in constant touch with any problems that arise throughout the area.

Earlier in the debate the honourable member for Brisbane referred to a national insurance scheme. Why is it, Mr. Speaker, that for a short time after every disaster there is talk of a national disaster relief scheme but, strangely enough, none is ever put into effect? I can understand it to the extent that if I am living on top of a hill, I will not want to pay a premium for flood cover.

**Mr. Jensen:** It is just like the national health scheme. You do not want to put that into operation.

**Mr. HINZE:** We must let the people know what is involved. Since the recent disaster, people have complained to me that insurance companies are not playing the game. I was somewhat critical of the insurance companies. I said, "They are not playing the game. They are not pulling their weight." I do not know of any profitable insurance company, except perhaps the State Government Insurance Office, which has workers' compensation business. For most of them, I understand, it is just not a proposition. Their investments in land, buildings, and the like keep them in business. If they relied solely on insurance, most of them would go broke. That is why I say there would have to be a national insurance scheme, supported to some extent by the Commonwealth Government. These disasters do not happen regularly. Tasmania had its fire disaster some five years ago, and nothing since. We have had our flood disaster. It would be most unusual if another disaster followed immediately. That is why I believe there would have to be an over-all national insurance scheme.

I do not want to waste any more time on this, because much better brains than my own, of course, will have to give consideration to it; but I do support the proposal. I hope it is possible to work out a scheme acceptable to the States and the Commonwealth. It would need to be based on compulsory contributions. In that way everybody would feel that he had protection from the effects of disaster.

I took the opportunity of travelling through the various flood-affected areas of the city of Brisbane because I wanted to improve my own knowledge of the devastation. It would have been all right to say, "Yes, I have my own problems in my own electorate", but I travelled around Fairfield, Graceville, and

other areas and I was really stunned. I accept the fact that the city of Brisbane had a hell of a time. I am prepared to commend Lord Mayor Clem Jones and everybody else who did so much during the flood period to try to lessen the burden on those flood victims who had to leave their homes. It is a terrible thing when a person loses in a flood his life's savings and so many things he holds dear.

**Mr. K. W. Hooper:** The people on the Gold Coast were magnificent in their donations to Project Help in Brisbane.

**Mr. HINZE:** I thank the Minister for his comment. I know that it actually happened. That sort of thing does happen in times of disaster. Tasmania was the State that helped us most, because it, too, had suffered a disaster.

**Mr. Jensen:** A good old Labor State.

**Mr. HINZE:** I do not know whether it is a Labor State in fact. For the time being Mr. Reece may be the Premier, but not for very long. The honourable member should not refer to it as a Labor State. He should give Tasmanians credit for some intelligence. We should be very proud of the fact that they came to our assistance in the ordeal we suffered.

**Mr. Jensen:** Don't you think we should have a national health scheme as well?

**Mr. HINZE:** Where has the honourable member been? If there is any disaster in the House, it is the honourable member for Bundaberg. I think I have said enough to indicate that I am proud of the fact that our Premier brought this matter to the floor of the Parliament today. It has given me an opportunity to congratulate and commend the people who have assisted by giving so much of their time voluntarily in my area. As I say, I support any national insurance scheme that might be proposed. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion introduced by our Premier.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Cook) (4.55 p.m.):** Many words have been used in telling stories of the big floods in devastated areas and these stories have been eagerly sought by many people as their only link with friends and relatives in far distant parts. It was rather sad to hear the Minister say today that to his knowledge many of these reports were exaggerated or entirely false. I think we should ensure in future that authentic reports are given once, twice or three times a day by people upon whom we can depend for an accurate and truthful account. It is very worrying for people who do not know just what is happening to their loved ones and friends to read in the Press statements which later prove to be exaggerated or, as the Minister said today, entirely false.

I do not want to put extra responsibility onto people such as the police. They have plenty to do already, but I am wondering if

members on both sides could not be alerted daily on what is actually happening in their areas. Later, I will pay a tribute to people who actually did this in regard to my electorate. I greatly appreciated being able to pass on authentic news to people who sought it from me.

The people in North Queensland do not refer to the calendar in the same way as do people in the rest of the State. In North Queensland an event is said to have occurred either before or after the "wet". No-one mentions months or dates. Even Ministers when answering questions will quite often say that a certain project will start after the next "wet". In the North, the "wet" is with us every year. It is a time of the year when transport and building stops and frequently it extends over many months. The normal "wet" is not to be compared with the floods experienced over the last year.

Because of their structure, some roads go out with the first storms. They may then be patched up and one or two truckloads will pass over them, but, with the next storm they go out again. When the monsoon comes, the roads stay out of commission for months. Last year the "wet" continued until March. After March there was a drying out period of two or three months. The storms came again in November and were followed by the floods in December. One can realise why transport by road was available for only a very short period.

Road haulage is not as cheap as sea transport. In areas without all-weather roads that are served by road transport, supplies, which should be built up during the dry season to carry the areas over the wet season, are not sufficient. Rail transport in this area is virtually nil. Admittedly, it has been used to move many thousands of cattle and large tonnages of supplies, but only over short distances, and road transport has to take the supplies from the railhead to outside stations.

As I said, sea transport is the cheapest form, and in this field again this Government matched its folly in pulling up railway lines when it killed the very important and dependable sea transport firm of John Burke by engineering a move to another firm that has since let it down badly. This was done at the expense of the people of the Gulf towns of Normanton and Karumba, so that the only method they have left is air transport and nothing could be more expensive than the transportation of food and other supplies by air.

All-weather air strips are available at Normanton, Croydon, Kowanyama, Georgetown and Karumba, but, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has said, the use of those at Georgetown and Karumba has been halved because they have been cut off from the towns that they serve, in the first instance by a flooded causeway across Sandy Creek, and in the other by an inundated road.

I urge the Minister for Mines and Main Roads to have the one-mile section of beef road between East and West Georgetown completed to provide an all-weather link between the township and the airstrip and to bypass the Sandy Creek section with a bridge.

The cost of foodstuffs transported by air is phenomenal. I doubt whether any honourable member's wife would be forced to pay as much as \$2.50 for a 7½ lb. pumpkin. Yet that is the price of a pumpkin that is transported by air at a freight rate of 28 cents per kilo. That is a classic illustration of the high cost of food in the Outback. For the greater part of the year many people, such as the residents at the Kowanyama Aboriginal Community, depend for their supplies on air services. Therefore, the Government should step up its works programme to bridge the creeks that become flooded and raise the level of the roads in the hundreds of square miles of flat country so that in the event of flooding they can be kept open for a longer period.

The entire area between the Gilbert and Norman Rivers, which are approximately 150 miles apart, was covered by a sheet of water as late as 14 days after the flood peaks had occurred. In an area such as that huge stock losses occurred. There is very little raised land to which the stock can go, and on the few areas of high land that are available the stock found their path blocked by fences.

I notice that the Minister for Primary Industries is in the Chamber. Through him I would urge the Agricultural Bank to provide loans to graziers to erect fences. I suggest that property boundaries and fenced areas should be set out with an eye to future disasters, such as floods, that might occur so that cattle would not be prevented from reaching high ground. I saw great numbers of cattle herded together along fences and unable to break through. Anyone who has seen a barbed-wire fence in flood-time would know that once it becomes entangled with debris it forms an almost impassable barrier.

Throughout the State many unusual incidents occurred. On my visit to Kowanyama to attend the opening of a school, I was handed a telegram from the Minister stating that he could not attend the opening because of a "state of emergency". I had heard such a great deal of talk here about there being no state of emergency that I wondered whether there was something wrong with our communications.

I sent a telegram to the Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs, telling him that I wanted some bread sent to Kowanyama, where there were 600 people. They were unable to bake bread because there was not one dry stick of wood within 20 or 30 miles of the community. That would never be thought of in towns where

the baker and the butcher call. Last week, I found that at Edward River there were only three killers left in the pens. The surrounding country is inundated, which means that they will be short of meat. Different parts of Queensland suffer from different problems. It is very hard to remember them all and make provision to cope with them in the future.

I thank Inspector Ronald Trost, who was relieving in Cairns during the flood, for the work he did. He was continually available and was very helpful in giving information on what was happening. As the honourable member for Townsville West said, he kept the planes and helicopters moving. When they were not in the air, they were being loaded. I well remember asking him for a diversion of food to Croydon. He had a plane loaded for Weipa because the people from Karumba were being evacuated to that town. They were still in the Gulf and were experiencing very difficult conditions. The inspector told me what to do. The Leader of the Opposition took up the matter with the Co-ordinator-General in Brisbane and the plane was diverted to Croydon. That proves how important it is to have a man at the head who knows how to issue commands and control people. He was able to quickly switch a plane-load of 6,000 lb. of food from one area to another.

I now wish to commend those responsible for the evacuation of Normanton. However, I believe that, as a Parliament, we should keep in mind the very serious and urgent commands that are given about evacuating towns. Often there is a certain amount of panic. In a town like Normanton, with 500 or 600 people, certain people are members of the Civil Defence Organisation. I wonder if the training of these people is such that they will be accepted by the people and command their respect, and if it includes the methods of communication at their disposal. Some families that were ordered out early in the morning were still there late in the evening. While the very best was being done in the way of transport to Cairns or Mt. Isa, families were separated. It is terrible to think that in such times children are sent to one town and their parents to another.

The Normanton evacuation was not like those on the Gold Coast or in Brisbane, where people could come back and look at their houses next day. They were taken 500 miles away and were told, "We will tell you when you may return." I ask honourable members to visualise what it is like to be told at a moment's notice to leave home, to be whisked by aeroplane to a town 500 miles away, and then to be told when to return.

When I was in the North with my Deputy Leader, I was very pleased to hear the radio announcement by Rex Patterson that Karumba would be rebuilt. It gave these people a breath of hope and brought a smile to their faces. When we arrived there,

this feeling of hope was absent. One man lost not only his house but also his land, which was washed away. I shall be asking the Government at a later date to provide him with another piece of land. Every vestige of one person's belongings went down the Norman River.

Dr. Rex Patterson had been there early in the piece and had made some statements that the people did not like. He returned and thought it over. He knew they wanted something definite. At the round-table conference on the Thursday, it was obvious that there was a ray of hope in the minds of the people who, only a few days before, had been saying, "What is the use of asking for anything? It is only words and nothing will be done." It is wonderful to know that, with the prawning season commencing in the middle of this month, the industry will be geared to handle the catch.

Karumba people went by boat to Weipa. A young constable at Karumba should be given all credit for the way he handled those people. He got them onto the boats, which were overcrowded. Storms were encountered on the voyage. It was a very difficult situation. The operation was carried out without loss of life, and Weipa welcomed these people with open arms. I thank the people of Weipa very much. Their hospitality was wonderful.

The people from Karumba, unlike those in the grazing industry, had work to go to and wanted to return as soon as possible. They chartered planes and got back much earlier than the people of Normanton. This is where the aftermath of an evacuation becomes complicated. Men and women from station properties where there had been work and accommodation were brought back to Normanton, but there was no work for them. Some stations were not even occupied, so these people simply wander around Normanton using up the little money that they have and hoping they will not have to register for unemployment relief. They could quite easily have stayed in the accommodation provided for them in Cairns until their jobs were ready for them. This is where co-ordination is needed. People who have been evacuated are not quite sure of their jobs and accommodation so they return as soon as transport is available. The situation is a little different at Karumba because the work is right on the spot and 99 per cent of the people there are employed in the prawning industry.

It is to be hoped that the existing airstrip will remain there, because far more important things than shifting the airstrip have to be done at Karumba. I should like an all-weather road to be constructed between Karumba and The Point so that the 20 or 30 school-children can travel to school by road. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the trip up the Norman River from the airstrip to Karumba. It is not a safe or easy trip. The boats are not designed to carry passengers, and the conditions under

which these school-children travel from The Point to school are rather hazardous. Many people are considering the education of their children by correspondence rather than expose them to this risk. This is what is happening since the flood subsided.

The school should be raised because at least 3 ft. 6 ins. of water entered it. I would like the new school building to be completed as soon as possible. The new head-teacher, who has two new teachers as his assistants, must have thought it was impossible ever to conduct a school there. I am sure he hardly knew where to begin. When the honourable member for Townsville West and I walked through the school, we saw fishing lines everywhere. Over these lines the p. and c. association members had tried to dry out books. We tried to open books but we found they were absolutely useless. The p. and c. association had cleaned the floors and the rest of the school to a considerable degree, but the new teacher must still have thought, "This is an impossible task."

**Mr. Hodges:** They are raising the school building to 7 ft.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH:** That is very good news.

**Mr. Hodges:** The road from The Point to the school will be completed in the next nine days, and the children will be taken by road rather than boat.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH:** That's good representation for you!

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I will tell a story about that school. I went to Karumba Lodge on one occasion, and I saw a number of children running round in the bar. I know that they should not have been there, but they were there because their parents were there. I said to the proprietress at the time, Mrs. Alexander, who is still there, "How many children have you got here?" She counted them and said, "Eleven." I said, "Get me two more, and I will get you a school." Everyone who then came in for a beer was asked, "Can you get me some children?" Some of them said, "I'm getting a bit old, but I'll see what I can do." Now there is a school there with probably 70 or 80 children, and it will be looked after properly. I understand school started yesterday?

**Mr. Hodges:** Yes.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH:** That is good. It was a little late, but it started yesterday.

Here I pay a tribute to a Fokker Friendship load of Rotarians, who came all the way from the town of the honourable member for Mt. Isa and who formed themselves into a working bee. They shifted three toilets over the week-end so that there would be no health hazard to the children when they returned to school. The septic toilets

must be working, because school started yesterday. Everything will now be much better for everyone concerned.

**Mr. Hodges:** They were working last Friday afternoon.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH:** Then some good came out of the flood for the Karumba school.

The only other point that I wish to mention is the urgent need for an all-weather road between Karumba and Normanton. If the township of Karumba is to be persevered with in its present position, it will be the collecting point for catches of prawns and the distribution point for prawns that have been processed and are ready to be transported, mostly to overseas markets but some to southern markets. If they have to be flown out, their price will be prohibitive. The only way to get them out is by road. It is 46 miles from Normanton to Karumba by road, 56 miles by river, and 18 by air. I want to show to the House the urgent need for an all-weather road, not only to enable the product of the district to be sent out but also to provide access for the many people who are buying blocks of land in the area. They are coming from Mt. Isa and acquiring land at the mouth of the Norman River. Such a road would not only assist these people, but would prevent the spectacle in times of future flooding of the airstrip cut off from the town, a swollen river to be negotiated, schools closed, and the like.

I remind the House that in Normanton people are still providing housing for many of those who are unemployed and who are waiting to get back to properties in the hope that, perhaps next week, employment and accommodation will be available for them. The townspeople are doing that so that those who are unemployed will at least not have to pay high or exorbitant prices for food and accommodation.

**Mr. MILLER (Ithaca) (5.21 p.m.):** I thank the Premier for providing this opportunity of debating flood mitigation and flooding in Brisbane. It gives honourable members an opportunity of placing before the House many of the problems faced by people in their electorates when flooding occurs. I believe that there are deficiencies in the flood mitigation scheme and also in the flood-damaged-homes repair scheme, and I bring to the attention of honourable members some facts relating to the Ithaca electorate. Firstly, I give credit to the volunteers who came into the electorate and helped the unfortunate people there to overcome the problems that were facing them and to rehabilitate themselves in their own homes. There is nothing more pleasing to a person looking at a home that has been devastated by floods than to see a group of people coming into it to render assistance. I saw at first hand people with tears in their eyes as they watched people rushing

in to help them. So, on behalf of the people of Ithaca who were affected by the flood, I thank the volunteers who came from all over Brisbane to assist in the area.

Ithaca was affected by two types of flooding. The Torwood and Auchenflower area was flooded by the Brisbane River, and another area in my electorate was affected by rainwater following torrential rain in the catchment area of Ithaca Creek. If I may, Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal with those two floods separately.

First, I turn to the flash flooding that occurred in the Fletcher Parade area at Bardon. In my opinion, the problems that the people in that area face are man-made, not created by nature. It is a fact that, over the years, men in both the Brisbane City Council and the State Government have allowed certain works to take place that have caused flooding in that area. The filling of the banks of Ithaca Creek by the council is one reason why flooding occurs there. That should never have been allowed to take place, and I hope that the procedure is never followed again, because it has narrowed the creek considerably in one particular area.

The State Government allowed the Brisbane City Council to fill in a flood plain to enable the council to build a playing field for Wests football club. That used to be a flood-holding area; unfortunately, it is no longer a flood-holding area but is a football field. Certainly it is a wonderful acquisition for Wests football club, but it is no acquisition for the people who live along Ithaca Creek and who now realise that the area has gone and that what once was a very quietly flowing stream now becomes, in time of heavy rain, a raging torrent—a torrent that flows so swiftly that even a strong swimmer could not swim against it.

In addition, the engineers of the Brisbane City Council have allowed a water-pipe to be built across the creek some five feet above the bed of the creek. I say "five feet above the bed of the creek" because it is five feet above the bed when no silting takes place in the creek. But honourable members can imagine what takes place when silt comes down the creek. There is an area only about two feet high in which water can escape under the pipe.

Those two things have created a man-made flood problem for the people in the Fletcher Parade area at Bardon, and I want something done about it. Residents have complained about that pipe ever since it was installed across the creek. Now these people have faced seven floods in seven years, and I do not think it is good enough to allow the pipe to remain where it is. However, no assurance has yet been given to these people that they will be moved because they live in a flood-prone area. All the residents living along the

creek bank tell me the same story: this flooding did not take place before these works were carried out. Not all of these people could be wrong. They have dates and facts at their fingertips which prove that the works that have been carried out by the city council, and in some cases approved by the State Government, have been responsible for the flooding.

Under the flood mitigation scheme that is being carried out by the Brisbane City Council and the State Government, Ithaca Creek should have a retention basin built in its headwaters. In fact, the engineers have expressed a desire to have one placed there; but they have pointed out also that in accordance with a cost-benefit analysis they cannot recommend it. We are dealing with human beings and I am not concerned about a cost-benefit analysis. If the Brisbane City Council and we, as a Government, have been responsible for the flooding of this creek, then I want the Brisbane City Council and the Government to put a retention basin in there, irrespective of the cost-benefit factor. I do not care what it costs. We have been responsible for the flooding and we are responsible for the building of a retention basin. I also want the water-pipe removed from the creek. There is no reason why the pipe has to be 5ft. above the creek bed. I suggest that it is urgent that the Government have talks with the Brisbane City Council to ensure that this pipe is lowered beneath the bed of the creek. Everywhere else the water-pipe is below the creek bed, but at one point it was decided, because there was some rock in the area, to build it 5ft. above the creek bed. This is not good enough. If we cannot, as a Government, build a retention basin and if the city council cannot replace this water-pipe, then I want these people removed to higher ground at no cost whatsoever to them. Their situation was not brought about because they failed to use their intelligence. It was brought about by lack of foresight on the part of the State Government and the Brisbane City Council.

I hope that action can be taken along the lines that I have mentioned. The Lord Mayor said during the recent floods that Northey Street, Fairfield Road and Deshon Street were going to be recognised as flood-prone areas and the city council was prepared to exchange land for the land that had been flooded in these areas. I immediately wrote to the Lord Mayor, reminding him of the fact that in Ithaca we also have flood-prone areas. I mentioned, along with other streets in Torwood and Rosalie, Fletcher Parade. Unfortunately the Lord Mayor did not see fit to answer my request but passed my letter on to Mr. Michaels in the City Hall. Again, I have had no reply from Mr. Michaels to my suggestion. Within the Ithaca electorate the Brisbane City Council owns land that could be used for an exchange scheme.

I understand the city council is offering land for exchange in Banyo, Archerfield and

a lot of other areas. We have land owned by the city council in Ithaca that could be used in an exchange scheme for people who live in such places as Torwood Street, Vincent Street, Haig Road, Rosalie, Bayswater Street and Fletcher Parade, Bardon. These people could be moved to higher ground at no cost whatsoever to the Brisbane City Council, and certainly at a very small cost only to the State Government. Some of the land in Bardon owned by the Brisbane City Council has been resumed from people living in Rockbourne Terrace and Kennedy Terrace at a cost of \$10 a perch to the Brisbane City Council. They have obtained this land very, very cheaply indeed. I want this land made available to the people living in Fletcher Parade and the people living in the Torwood-Rosalie area.

The council owns land in Leworthy Street also. This area was advertised in the Press some time last year and the newspaper article pointed out that the city council hoped to receive \$80,000 for the eight blocks available there. So the land is available. I believe that the land in the Torwood area should be set aside for the expansion of sporting facilities. The area contains the Milton tennis courts, and not far away is Lang Park. There is no reason in the world why we should not extend these facilities to include hockey fields, soccer fields and any other sporting facility it is possible to get into the area.

The area could be lowered and made a holding plain. On 6 and 7 February, when no rain fell in Brisbane, why were Torwood Street and Vincent Street flooded? They were flooded because the Brisbane River was running high. That area of Brisbane is lower than the Brisbane River at high tide and drains which normally carry rainwater into the river carried water from the Brisbane River back into Torwood. So it cannot be argued that Torwood is not a flood-prone area. I think it is a serious situation when the Brisbane River flows back into an area such as Torwood. Many old people live in there some of them in their 60's and some in their 70's. These people want to leave. They ask, "What is going to happen when I get a little older and the next flood comes? Will I be able to cope with getting out of this house in the middle of the night?" Frankly, I have my doubts as to whether these people will ever be able to cope with another flood.

So I believe it is imperative that we as a Government co-operate with the city council in moving these people onto higher ground at no cost whatever to them. I want the Federal Government also to stop pussy-footing around about the flood mitigation scheme.

Unfortunately, in Ithaca some politics was played by the A.L.P., who told people that the Commonwealth Government had agreed to this scheme. I know for a fact that we are still waiting for a reply from the

Commonwealth Government. It is now over 11 months since we made the initial request to the present Government. There was a request to the previous Federal Government, but it is now over 11 months since we made our request to this Federal Government. I maintain that it is impossible for the Brisbane City Council to carry 66½ per cent of the cost of flood mitigation. If the council has to carry these costs only subsidised to the extent of 33½ per cent by this Government, then we will not get very far with our flood mitigation scheme. I want this scheme implemented immediately and the only way for it to be done is for the Commonwealth Government to stop pussy-footing around and say, "All right, we will come to the party by paying 40 per cent of the costs." I hope the Federal Government will do this. It has had 11 months to decide and I believe we have to get on with the job.

**Mr. Casey:** Do you think a scheme for the gulf rivers should be implemented on the same basis?

**Mr. MILLER:** I think that any area of Queensland subject to flood problems such as we have just experienced must have a flood mitigation scheme implemented. Of course, it must be borne in mind that the areas I am speaking about have not suffered just a once-only flood. Torwood and Bardon have had seven floods in seven years. They are flood-prone areas. Perhaps many areas in Brisbane had a once-only flood in January 1974. We have had seven in seven years. I do not think it is good enough to ignore this situation continually.

Under the flood mitigation scheme no allowance has been made for overcoming the problem in Ithaca Creek. I have been told that the building of a dam on Enoggera Creek will ensure that the water will flow more quickly out of Ithaca Creek. This is not good enough for me. I want a retention basin built at the headwaters of Ithaca Creek and I will not be satisfied with less.

The Brisbane City Council, which imposes many conditions on builders and subdividers, should impose a condition on any subdivider wishing to open up more land in Bardon compelling him to contribute towards a retention basin. I would much rather see the council put this condition onto subdividers than ask them to pay \$60 a foot for underground electricity. To me, that is a farce, but floodwaters are not a farce. People who live near a creek should not suffer a disadvantage because a subdivider or a builder is desirous of constructing homes farther up the creek. If by doing so he creates a flood problem, he should be compelled to help overcome it. I certainly hope that the Brisbane City Council will take action along the lines I have suggested.



I want to talk also about the work carried out in Brisbane by the Civil Defence Organisation. I hope we have learned the lesson that the organisation needs to be upgraded. I certainly do not agree with the police taking charge when flooding occurs in the city. The police have a role to play just as the Army has. So has the Civil Defence Organisation and in the event of flooding, or for that matter, any other disaster, I see its role as the major one. The Civil Defence Organisation in Brisbane should be upgraded at least to the level of its counterpart in New South Wales. I should like to see it placed under the control of two heads, one an administrator, who at the present time is a public servant and could continue to be a public servant, the other a practical man. There is no other way out of it.

The organisation must be upgraded so that it will assume responsibility not only when flooding occurs but also when the waters recede. The people should be told that as the floodwaters go down, while houses are without power and shops are closed or inundated, food supplies will be made available through the Civil Defence Organisation. It is wrong to expect the supply of food and clothing to be undertaken by the Salvation Army, the churches and the other organisations that did such marvellous work during the floods. The people must know that in the event of another crisis the Civil Defence Organisation will assume control from beginning to end.

In a flood the crisis is not passed when the waters recede. I believe that it starts when the waters recede. People become broken at the sight of their flood-damaged homes. Furthermore, because shops are inundated they cannot buy food; because the power supply has been cut they are unable to cook any food that they can obtain. The relief of such people should be brought solely under the control of the Civil Defence Organisation.

Without wishing to take away from the organisation any of the credit that is due to it, I urge the Government to upgrade it so that in the event of another crisis it can play a much more important role than it played during the floods. Certainly we have a lot to learn, but I think that we have learned a lot.

I understand that during the floods the services of ham radio operators were not called upon. After two days, of course, they volunteered their services. I hope that never again will we see ham radio operators available but not used for two days.

I realise that most honourable members wish to participate in this debate, so I will not prolong it unduly. However, I wish to refer to the stand that has been adopted by the trades unions against the insurance companies. I for one rejected flood insurance cover. When asked did I wish to take out flood insurance cover I replied, "Oh no.

I will never be flooded." I was not flooded, of course, but the point is that I could have been flooded.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** If Birdwood Terrace is flooded out the whole of Brisbane is gone.

**Mr. MILLER:** If that happens we will need the second ark. However, my home at Caloundra could have been flooded. As I say, I rejected flood insurance. I believe that the vast majority of people similarly rejected it. I have not heard of any instance—there may be some—of a person being under the impression that he had flood cover. I suggest that most people knew that they did not have flood cover.

I hope that the insurance companies will take steps to overcome this problem; but, in fairness to their policy-holders, they cannot be expected to pay out vast sums of money on damage that was not covered by insurance policies.

On 7 February the trade unions approached the Prime Minister with a view to having this problem overcome. I have not heard the Prime Minister say one word about the responsibility of the insurance companies. He knows full well that they have always spelt out—and it is in quite large type on my policy—that they are not liable for damage from flooding in the area. I hope that, in the very near future we may see the implementation of a national disaster plan, or insurance companies prepared to offer compulsory insurance cover with higher premiums.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South) (5.41 p.m.): The recent devastating floods proved once again that, in times of disaster, we have people who give of their best. It brings out the best in most people, and the worst in a few. The recent disaster was no exception. I do not intend to enumerate the many hundreds of people in all walks of life to whom we in this Parliament and the citizens of Queensland owe an everlasting debt of gratitude for the magnificent job they did in the recent floods.

I have been somewhat disappointed in the debate today. It has come as an anti-climax, a damp squib. For weeks we have learnt from the Press, the television and the radio that the Labor Party, on the first sitting of Parliament, intended to initiate a debate on the Government's ineptitude in handling the recent flood crisis and disaster. The Labor Party was going to scarifify, eviscerate, wipe the floor, and do all manner of things with the Government. What have we seen and heard today, Mr. Speaker? We have seen Opposition members crawling around on the floor of the Chamber like bed-bugs, saying nothing, and merely making little squeaking noises like mice trying to excuse Mr. Whitlam.

When Opposition members talk about the generosity of the Federal Government I think of what I wrote to "The Townsville Daily Bulletin", namely, that Mr. Whitlam

has announced he intends to give away this year about \$1,000 million of the Australian taxpayers' money to countries just to the north of Australia. He is not going to give it away on a dollar-for-dollar basis. He is not going to demand that the Federal Government control it or exercise strict supervision over its spending. He is going to give it to them and they may spend it when they like, how they like and on whom they like. However, when it is a matter of giving money to the States to relieve disasters, distress, and destitution he intends to exercise strict control by sending his Commonwealth officers into Queensland to see that any money he gives to Queensland is spent as he, Mr. Whitlam, thinks it should be spent. So far as Mr. Whitlam is concerned, there is one rule for Queensland and another rule for the people in countries just to our north.

I was sickened by the usual slobbering and sickening hypocrisy of the A.L.P. members when they talked about the flood plight of the graziers and the people in the back country, of the devastation and heartbreak they have suffered. I do not wish to embarrass you, Mr. Speaker, but I know that there are other members representing north-western electorates. The people in the West in the last 10 years suffered something that wreaked greater havoc on them than the floods; they suffered 10 years of incessant drought. That drove people whose families had been on stations in the Gulf country for generations and generations off their properties even though their kids, to use an old western saying, worked their guts out to try to keep their parents on the properties. There are fine graziers stemming from a long line of graziers in the North-west who are now no longer graziers. One is now a teacher in a school in your electorate, Mr. Speaker. The drought drove him off a station in the West on which his forebears had settled and which their descendants had built up and worked, generation after generation. There was never any thought of the A.L.P. evincing any sympathy for the graziers and other people in the back country during those frightful 10 years of drought. They were not interested in them. During that period, all that the A.L.P. wanted to do was to deprive them of adequate political representation on the spurious basis of one vote one value.

As the honourable member for Townsville West said, we suffered devastation when cyclone Althea hit Townsville. We did get some small measure of relief for our people, but many people in Townsville and other areas suffered flood damage apart from cyclone and storm and tempest damage from cyclone Althea.

However, the A.L.P. trade unions did not go on strike in the Townsville area. They did not declare any buildings black in Townsville after cyclone Althea because the insurance companies would not pay people who had suffered flood damage. The A.L.P.'s tender sympathy and concern are reserved

for people in Brisbane. They intend to declare a building black in Brisbane because the insurance companies will not pay flood damage under a storm and tempest clause. I repeat that they did not do that in Townsville after cyclone Althea.

All that some prominent A.L.P. members did in Townsville when the soldiers did a magnificent job clearing up the debris after cyclone Althea was sit on the steps of their homes drinking stubbies of beer calling out "Scabs" to the soldiers who were cleaning up the mess. They claimed, "If you left that job to us, we would get triple time for doing it." We must be honest in talking about the A.L.P.'s sympathy for the people of Queensland. It evinces sympathy and tender passion for the people of Brisbane but not for those in the country areas.

I did not intend to deal with my next subject but I must because, as a representative of the people of Townsville as well as, of course, the other people of North Queensland, I have been sickened of recent weeks by statements made by the honourable member for Townsville West over the radio and television and in the columns of "The Townsville Daily Bulletin", including today's edition, proclaiming that he was coming to Parliament today and would have a debate on the flood situation if the Premier had the intestinal fortitude to debate the issue with him.

As we know, the Premier beat the Opposition to the punch. Instead of waiting for the Opposition to initiate the debate, the Premier initiated it. Consequently, we all waited—I certainly did—to hear the honourable member for Townsville West make good the many boasts he has been making over the radio and television and in the columns of the Townsville Press. I waited for him to scarify and eviscerate the Premier, to tear him limb from limb and to wipe the floor of the Chamber with him. But what did the honourable member for Townsville West do? He almost got down on his hands and knees and slobberingly almost apologised to the Premier. I have never seen him in a more docile and penitent attitude. I repeat that even in today's Townsville Press, after weeks and weeks of it, he said he would tear the Chamber apart and stack it in the Botanic Gardens.

I shall relate, because I think it is quite germane, why the honourable member for Townsville West went to the western areas of this State. He was in New Zealand when the floods occurred. He did not break his holiday in New Zealand and hurry back. He came back when it suited his personal convenience to do so. When he reached Townsville he discovered that he should probably go to Mt. Isa. Consequently, being a man with a little political nous he thought, "Well, I had better have some excuse for going to Mt. Isa, so I shall make the floods the excuse for going out there."

He made a scathing, scurrilous, defamatory attack on the Premier. I have no brief for the Premier. He is big enough and old

enough to defend himself. The honourable member for Townsville West said, "I am going out the hard way." I thought he intended to carry a swag to Mt. Isa. He said, "The Premier flies around the State in an air-conditioned, pressurised aeroplane." I wondered how the honourable member intended to travel from Townsville to Mt. Isa. I thought that at least he would ride out on Wally Rae's wall-eyed grey horse. But he went out in an air-conditioned, pressurised aeroplane. He went out in a Fokker. As a gesture to him, the captain allowed him to ride in the cockpit so that he could have a look at the floods as the plane passed over them. They are probably the first floods he has even seen.

Of course, there were no floods in Mt. Isa. I will admit that there were certain food shortages. The Mt. Isa people had their problems and a damned good member of Parliament to look after them. But that did not affect the honourable member for Townsville West; he had to go out just the same. And I will tell the House why he had to go out. I have a report from the A.L.P. in Mt. Isa about it. There are two A.L.P. branches in Mt. Isa, as there always have been. The branch on the river's western bank supported Kevin Spanner, a railway guard, who is also supported by the retiring member for Mt. Isa.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest to the honourable member that he return to the subject of the motion.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I crave your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, because the honourable member for Townsville West has tried to tell the House, the people of North Queensland, and everybody else, that he went to Mt. Isa to see the devastation caused by the flood. He said, "I went out there amid the stench of death and desolation. I went out the hard way."

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! This is a serious debate, and I ask the honourable member to be serious.

**Mr. AIKENS:** It is serious, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I do not know anything more serious than exposing the slobbering hypocrisy of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He went to Mt. Isa as the result of a recent plebiscite which was won by a left-winger named Shepherd against a right-winger named Spanner. Spanner immediately lodged a protest in the columns of the Mt. Isa newspaper and to the Q.C.E., which was immediately dismissed. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition went out to heal the breach between the two branches at Mt. Isa, and he was there five days trying to do it.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will now get back to the motion; otherwise he will be resuming his seat.

**Mr. AIKENS:** That is why he went to Mt. Isa. I have a whole page dealing with his visit. All the time that he was in Mt. Isa, in the Gulf and in the West, he was

well fed, well clothed and well housed, and he travelled in comfort. He met everybody he wanted to meet. Just think of all this talk of the honourable member for Townsville West about going out the hard way and suffering all these incalculable hardships! We in Townsville used to pick up "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" and read every second day of him out there "amid the stench of death and desolation." He was in fact in the pub having a couple of beers, as one would expect of him, and doing it in style, too.

We hear talk about the Federal Government and what they did. I have here an article from the Sydney "Sunday Telegraph" which in part reads—

"During the catastrophic floods in Queensland, the United States Government offered 20 Army helicopters for rescue work with only 24 hours' notice. Somebody in the Defence Department didn't think it worth passing the offer on to his Minister. The department merely sent a 'Don't bother' message to the puzzled Americans."

That shows how much Mr. Whitlam was interested in relieving the devastation that occurred as a result of the floods.

I did not go to the West. I do not have to go there. I was born there and reared there and I worked there. As a matter of fact, I was kept in constant touch with the West. I have with me a very fine article about the honourable member for Lytton, who went to Mt. Isa to deal with the pollution problem. On a more appropriate occasion, I shall read the report that I received from the A.L.P. in Mt. Isa about the honourable member for Lytton. It will not help to puff him up with personal ego, but it helps to show how hypocritical these men are. The honourable member for Townsville West went out, as I said, to referee a political dog-fight between the two A.L.P. branches in Mt. Isa, and he then thought that he would capitalise on the position by announcing that he was going into this area of "death and desolation."

He spoke about going out the hard way. I must be careful at all times not to embarrass you, Mr. Speaker, because, like me, you are a westerner and you know that what I am saying is true. I did not have to go out and see the Mt. Isa railway line washed away. I saw it washed away several times when I was out there working on it. On more than one occasion I worked ballast trains in order to restore the Mt. Isa line to a condition fit for locomotives to use.

When the honourable member for Townsville West talks about going out the hard way, let me give him one instance of the hard way in which we had to do our work in those days. I was a fireman on a ballast train firing for the immortal Paddy Cook. We had the VTS wagons empty after we dropped our load with the gallopers-out and the riding ganger, and coming back we

were marooned between the Gilliat channels and Holy Joe—a place that you would know very well, Mr. Speaker. We could not move one way or the other, and we were there for three days. There were some sheep on a rise underneath a gidyea clump, but we could not get to them because of the boggy nature of the ground. One of the gallopers-out shot an old stringy kangaroo that was too weak to move. It was skinned and gutted, and we lived for three days on pieces of that old kangaroo stuck on the end of a pointed stick and grilled in the firebox of the locomotive, with a bit of salt sprinkled on it. We had no other food.

This was the man who went out to the West, lived on the best—champagne, chicken, caviar—and said, “I went out the hard way.” As he said, the Premier went out in a pressurised aeroplane, dipped his toe in the water, and ran away somewhere else.

When the honourable member talks about the western people, he is talking about my people, because I came from them. During the floods and after them my telephone ran hot. In fact, I was a bit sorry that I had the damned thing put in. I received messages from people as far afield as Augustus Downs, and they told me all I wanted to know. One of them said to me, “Where did you get this galah Tucker from? How did he ever get into Parliament?” I said, “He didn’t get into Parliament. He just walked into Parliament.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make some suggestions relative to the flood. I hope that those who are responsible for sending reports up to “The Townsville Daily Bulletin” will send a fair and unbiased report of the alleged debate today, because the people of Townsville, like me, will be waiting with ears flapping to hear of the honourable member for Townsville West flaying the Premier and tearing him limb from limb, as he has been promising to do for the last month. His was the weakest and most oleaginous performance I have heard from anyone in this Chamber.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, how the Army and the Federal Government have helped the people of the North. A big eisteddfod is coming on at Easter and we asked the Army to lend us 200 chairs. Mr. Barnard said, “No”. However, as I said earlier, he gives millions and millions of dollars to the Indonesians.

In time of flood and distress, when there is a national disaster or even a local disaster, something is wrong with our laws because the police are not vested with sufficient powers to control what we call the rubbernecks and the stickybeaks.

Civil Defence personnel, the Army, the ambulance and others who do a fine job cannot get through because of hordes of people who crowd in, and I understand that an unfortunate soldier was drowned in the Jindalee area because a crowd got in the

way of a rescue boat. It seems that the police have no absolute power to order people out of the way or to get them right out of the area.

I do not know whether there is an Act under which that can be done. Probably the Vagrants, Gaming, and other Offences Act might be suitable, because it has a number of strings to it. Let us write something into an Act under which, in case of a national disaster such as this, the police could order people right out of the area and say to them, “Look, if you have come here to work, you can stay. If you have come here to stickybeak and gawk, get miles away from here and let us get on with our job.”

**Mr. Lickiss:** That story was completely untrue. There were no sightseers in the way of the defence vessels.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am only saying what appeared in the Press and what came over the radio and the television. The report mentioned the honourable member for Mt. Coot-tha, and it said that the boat had to deviate round some steakybeaking people and that, in the deviation, a fellow fell overboard and was drowned. I am not saying that it is true; I am merely telling the honourable member what appeared in the northern newspapers and what came over the northern commercial radio and television stations.

**Mr. Lickiss:** I hope you will take my assurance that it is not true.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I will accept the honourable member’s assurance. I think he will agree with me that something must be done about people who are stickybeaking and preventing men like the honourable member and others from doing the job that they are there to do.

The honourable member for Townsville West has suggested—and it was a pretty good suggestion—that the police should have two-way radios and so on. I always laugh when I hear suggestions such as that from members of the A.L.P., because I came from that country—so did you, Mr. Speaker—and it was not so long ago that the police in those areas had only a saddle horse and a pack horse, and if they wanted to send an urgent message anywhere they had to send an Aborigine with a message stick to get it from one place to another. So the Country-Liberal Government has done something to upgrade the communications and message systems.

As other honourable members have cut their speeches short, I intend to finish now. This was to be the most flamboyant, dynamic and electrifying debate that ever took place in this Chamber, but I have never heard a damper squib. This is because of the failure of A.L.P. members to live up to their skitting of the last fortnight, three weeks or a month.

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

**Mr. AIKENS:** Mr. Speaker, it will not take me long to finish if I am not provoked. I wish to deal with a very important matter that has been raised by many people during this debate, and raised by honourable members on both sides of the Chamber. It indicates that they have not given the matter any thought at all. In a time of national disaster or distress quite a lot of people are prepared to run around chanting slogans and raising catchcries, and it is amazing how many people in high places will repeat these slogans and catchcries without giving them any examination or thought at all. Since the big floods in Brisbane, just as after the bush fires in Tasmania some years ago, quite a lot of people who should have known better went around screaming at the tops of their voices, "We have got to have a compulsory national insurance scheme." I know of no greater travesty of human freedom than that; I know nothing that is a greater negation of democracy. In the first place, let us work out who would pay into the national disaster fund, how much and in what proportion. That is something that the slogan-chanters have never given a moment's thought. Secondly, who would determine what is a national disaster? For instance, would it be determined that cyclone Althea in the Townsville area a couple of years ago was a national disaster? It was a disaster to its victims. Would it be determined that some of these willy-willies that run through our western towns, Mr. Speaker, from time to time and leave a narrow trail of damage and destruction in their wake constitute a national disaster? They are disasters to everyone who has suffered from them, because in their narrow track they can do as much damage as any cyclone.

Let us ask ourselves a very important question—who would receive the greatest benefit from this compulsory national disaster fund? Never let us forget that during the last war we had a compulsory war damage fund. What a putrid rot and racket that turned out to be! My memory could be refreshed on this, but I believe that every person in Australia contributed to it. I know I paid into it and my wife paid into it. Every adult paid into it. I think every man, woman and child compulsorily paid into it. Yet at the end of the war, who received the great benefit from that war damage fund? The greatest beneficiaries were Burns Philp and Company and the other big companies up in the Pacific. They were paid scores of pounds for every coconut tree they said was blown down, whether it was a dead coconut tree or a bearing coconut tree. They pulled out millions of pounds from this compulsory war damage fund without putting any more into it than did the average man in the street who was digging ditches for a living and earning £5 or £6 a week. It was a putrid, reeking scandal. As a matter of fact, Burns Philp paid a staggering dividend a couple of years after the war, purely and simply from

the receipt of a huge amount of money from this compulsory war damage scheme. Everybody paid into it, but who benefited from it? So when we talk about a compulsory national insurance scheme against disaster or against anything else, let us remember that we cut across the inviolate freedom of the individual. A person places a value on his home, his property and even his life, and he pays a premium to an insurance company that will recompense him for the loss of his home or his property or his life. If he does not pay that premium, then he has to throw himself on the mercy, or shall we say on the charity, of the Government. What a monstrous thing it would be if we introduced a compulsory life insurance scheme and everybody had to pay into it while everybody who died received a substantial sum from it whether he committed suicide, drank himself to death, drugged himself to death or in other ways dissipated his life so that he died much sooner than he should have! Anyone who goes into the question of a compulsory national disaster scheme will realise just what arrant nonsense he is talking. I know it is very popular to scream about it at present, but a look into a compulsory national disaster scheme will show on what shifting sand the arguments are based.

I again ask: what premiums will be charged? Who will pay the premiums? Who will collect on the policies? In what proportion will premiums be paid? In what proportion will claims be paid? When one goes into these ramifications of a compulsory national disaster fund Mr. Speaker, I submit it becomes apparent that it is perhaps the silliest statement ever made. When all is said and done, why should a man who builds an expensive, substantial home on high ground above flood level, makes it as immune from cyclones as he can and then properly insures it, also have to pay into a compulsory disaster insurance fund in order to pay a substantial claim to somebody who builds a shack in a swamp and is flooded out every time we get two or three inches of rain? I ask the honourable members of this House who are bleating about the need to set up a national disaster insurance scheme on a compulsory basis, to go into all the ramifications and details of it. Do not talk to any insurance man about it because he knows the game. Just talk to any ordinary citizen who has the intelligence and sufficient knowledge of finance and economics to work it out. So let us have an end to all this blither and blather-skiting about this national disaster insurance fund.

I leave those thoughts with you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for your tolerance. I am sorry I could not read some of the documents sent to me by the A.L.P. branches in Mt. Isa, but they can wait; I will get them in in another debate.

**Mr. F. P. MOORE** (Mourilyan) (7.23 p.m.): I associate myself with the Premier's motion, but before speaking to it I must

reply to some of the statements made by the honourable member for Townsville South. I think the basis of his attack on our Deputy Leader was nothing but jealousy, because Mr. Aikens has received no publicity over the last few months as he sat on his bottom in Townsville.

If ever we witnessed an exhibition of hypocrisy, it was his defence of the Premier's statements about this flood, which were miserable and in low key. I felt that the Premier tried to keep the debate on this motion in low key because he felt guilty. This is borne out by the fact that on 29 March 1957, when the honourable member for Barambah—Mr. Joh. Bjelke-Petersen as he was then, not the Premier of this State—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier would have been referred to then as "the honourable member for Barambah".

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** I thought I said that. In the debate on "Dim Sim" petrol under the Motor Spirits Distribution Bill, Mr. Bjelke-Petersen said—

"In fact, last session, the Premier branded me as being mercenary and degenerating to an undesirable level."

Mr. Aikens then interjected—

"You have made a lot of money by the exploitation of your fellow man."

Having uttered those words in 1957, tonight the honourable member for Townsville South turns a backwards somersault and now lends his full support to the Premier, who he previously claimed had exploited his fellow man.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** Mr. Speaker, the honourable member for Townsville South has attacked my Deputy Leader, and I feel I must repel such an attack.

Because North Queensland is a flood-prone area and has experienced continual rain for the past nine months, if not 12 months, I feel quite competent to talk generally about flooding. I can well recall being stranded quite recently in Townsville by floods. At the time I was travelling by car. On that occasion I saw the honourable member for Townsville South, who boasts that he rides around his city on a bicycle (this afternoon he admitted that he has had a telephone installed in his home), travelling around in a chauffeur-driven car. To say the least, his gimmickry loses some of its impact when it is raining. Unlike the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Townsville South did not leave Townsville and failed to visit the flood areas. Today, in a fit of jealousy, he has attacked the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who wet his toes during his visits to both the northern and southern parts of the State.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: Where did you go?

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** I travelled by vehicle from Mackay to the Cape. The honourable member for Mackay saw me in his city and will substantiate my claim that I was there.

I have deep sympathy for the people of Queensland whose homes were devastated by the floods. However, I am more concerned for those persons whose homes are flooded not once a year but on a number of occasions each year.

The Premier is now walking out of the Chamber. Perhaps he feels insulted by the remark made in 1957 by the honourable member for Townsville South. The Premier has not seen fit to visit the areas in North Queensland that, though not devastated, are flooded from time to time. If he had seen the Tully, Murray and Herbert rivers in 1969, he would know what a river in flood is. Very recently, houses along the banks of those rivers were inundated once again. The people of North Queensland are used to flooding every year, not once between 1893 and 1974.

Quite recently I set off with my wife and young child for Cairns to collect my son, who attends school in Cairns and had a free week-end. I left Tully by car and soon after arrived at El Arish, where it was pouring rain. Because announcements over my car radio indicated that the North Johnstone River had broken its banks, I decided to turn round and return to Tully, which is 13 miles from El Arish. Within a matter of ten minutes I was on the range road between El Arish and Tully and found that the entire area was inundated by Hogan's Creek, which had never previously broken its banks. At Cook's Corner the water was 4ft. 6ins. deep. I saw a youth drive his Ford Falcon station wagon into the creek and climb through the window as his car began to submerge. He was able to reach the bank. We in the North are used to this type of flooding. I emphasise that we received 10 ins. of rain in two hours. In North Queensland we class it as no more than heavy rain, but the insurance companies claim that they are not permitted to include in policies clauses covering flooding in our area.

Ten minutes after I got back to El Arish, the creek had risen 4 ft. 6 ins. I then boarded the train. As the Minister for transport is present, I shall commend the railway officers on the rail motor on which we had to travel. My car had to remain at El Arish and we travelled from there to Tully. There was a wash-out where Hogan's Creek came over the line. These men got us across the wash-out. They had to more or less make a reconnaissance journey for the following mail train. At that time the mail train was held in Cairns because of this somewhat lengthy wash-out. I commend the efforts of Driver Bowers and Guard Currie that night. We negotiated 2 ft. 6 ins. of water across the line at various points. They had to test the line, their job being to get to Harwood's Crossing. They were then told to go back to Feluga, through about 5 miles of water.

At that time Tully was surrounded by water, which had risen at the fastest rate for many years.

During this debate the Australian Government has been attacked on the basis that it has no sympathy for primary producers. I wonder how much sympathy there is for the primary producers in these northern cane-growing areas who could not cut their peak tonnage this year. Thanks to the wet season, a great proportion of the crop was left in the paddocks. This is one of the worst seasons cane-growers have experienced.

One farmer lost all of his topsoil by sheet erosion. Being a country person, you, Mr. Speaker, know what that involves. It is not caused by a river or natural waterway, but simply by the movement of a body of water down a hillside. Apparently the Agricultural Bank is not entertaining this damage when determining the small loans of \$10,000 at 3½ per cent, and the \$20,000 loans at 6 per cent. That is unfair. If the bank is to apply the same rules as those of insurance companies, it is not serving its proper purpose. I hope that the Government will look into this matter. Sheet erosion is caused by flooding as a result of rainwater—in this case, 10 ins. in two hours. Anyone who saw that water at that time would realise how it occurs. Honourable members know that I have been kept away from this House by floodwaters. In flood-time I was even driven into a creek in a T.A.A. car.

**Mr. Wharton** interjected.

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** The honourable member for Burnett said that perhaps he ought to move a motion for sympathy for me. I need no sympathy, but apparently he does because people in the Burnett area are quite disturbed about his representation of them in this House. I discovered, by talking to a number of farmers who attended the cane growers' conference the other day, that the honourable member for Burnett had to square off to 20 cane farmers by inviting them to Parliament House for a meal. I do not have to square off to cane farmers in that fashion. The honourable member for Burnett should sympathise with himself.

A good deal has been said about warning systems. I heard the remarks of the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services today. I sympathise with Brisbane people who are given only the flood height at the Port Office. I am not completely au fait with the situation in this area. Where I come from, we move if we see water, but possibly Brisbane people were subjected to something quite unusual, because nothing like the recent flood has happened since 1893.

Recently, my area has experienced several monsoonal troughs and what was referred to in the local Press, southern Press and the A.B.C. news as a mini-cyclone. I heard that the honourable member for Hinchinbrook sent a telegram to the Premier asking

for more warnings on the weather disturbances in that area. The Premier said it was the fault of the Federal Government and that he was making representations to that Government. However, under my auspices, a telex machine has been installed at Innisfail Police headquarters.

**Mr. Bromley** interjected.

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** The honourable member for South Brisbane did tour with me in that area in a very bleak period known as the wet season. He was caught in one of the wettest areas. My car "gave in." Unlike most honourable members who have alternative incomes, I do not own a new car.

I can produce evidence that, at 9 a.m., the telex machine received a message from the Weather Bureau that there was a tropical low—not a cyclone—off the coast from Tully. The police in Tully were informed immediately, and the Civil Defence Organisation was given the information. The honourable member for Hinchinbrook and the Premier attempted to make political capital out of what was known there as a normal tropical disturbance—and we have many of them. If they started in Mareeba, where I was born, there would be hailstorms and violent blows. How can the Weather Bureau predict a small blow or a tropical low that is only 20 miles wide when it crosses the coast between Tully and Cardwell? Nobody could do anything about this. The Weather Bureau did predict a tropical low off the coast from Tully. That information was given to the Innisfail police inspector. The message could be shown to anyone. It is no use trying to make political capital out of these disturbances. We should co-operate whenever there is a national disaster.

Not all cane-growing areas in North Queensland were covered with water. But I will say that this year's cane crop will be one of the lightest for many years because the previous crop was not fully cut and much of the burnt cane is still in wet paddocks. It was still raining when I left on Monday.

I feel that co-operation between all concerned is most important, and that political parties should see fit to accept remarks that are made in sincerity and respect constructive criticism concerning these areas. We have all seen television documentaries vividly depicting the devastation that has occurred in the western and far northern parts of the State. There is no doubt that the damage in Karumba is possibly the worst of all. I can appreciate the situation there because of an experience I had in the little town of Euramo, outside Tully, where I recently had to leave my car because the river was 3ft. over the road on each side of the main bridge. The main street of Euramo was a gusher. Actually, it was a river. My daughter walked into it thinking it was shallow. She was taken down the stream, and I had to get in and rescue her.

When one sees the main street of Karumba today, one finds it difficult to realise what the people of that area are going through. I sympathise with them. Unlike the people of Brisbane, they are living in a remote area and the work of re-establishing the town of Karumba will cost much more than similar work in Brisbane. I emphasise again that I sympathise with Brisbane residents. However, every time we turn on the TV set we see far too much of Brisbane and not enough of other areas. This is possibly because television stations could not get teams into outside places. The Australian Broadcasting Commission finally brought the position in Karumba and Normanton before the people of Queensland, and made them realise that there has been severe flooding there. I should like the A.B.C. to take a look now and again at flooding on the coastal strip of North Queensland. This does not occur once every 20 or 100 years, but once or twice, and even three or four times, a year. I feel it is my duty to say that in giving consideration to the allocation of loans that the Premier has announced for those who have suffered as a result of the floods, the cane-growing areas that run from Mackay to the Far North should be included as areas devastated by floods.

I should now like to make some comments about cattle numbers in the Far West and North Queensland. As I have said before, I feel that at times people over-exaggerate, and graziers under-estimate their stock numbers. I think that this gives rise to cattle-duffing. We have all seen photographs of the Norman River spreading for miles. Cattle can in fact blow themselves up and float for a number of miles. We all know that there has been loss of stock. However, in view of the fact that many people have claimed great losses of stock, I think it is about time that the Government sent an expert team from the Department of Primary Industries to calculate the number of cattle and other types of stock in this State. A comparison between the calculations of that team and the returns supplied by graziers would show whether present estimates are correct or incorrect. I feel that estimates at present are well below actual numbers.

There are in my area a number of graziers who did not suffer devastation by flooding, as there is a considerable amount of high ground in the western parts of my electorate.

Although I sympathise with people living at Normanton and on the Norman River, when I hear a person on a television programme mention 40,000 head of stock, I think it is about time that the Department of Primary Industries sent an expert team into the cattle areas to ascertain actual stock numbers. One could then get a better idea of whether or not stock returns presented by graziers have been compiled in good faith. In my opinion, they have a moral duty to do that.

In my electorate, King Ranch Development Company has a property situated on the Tully River. I am reliably informed that the company writes off 1,000 head of cattle in a year. That takes into account cattle-duffing and losses due to ticks and other causes. I point out to honourable members that the value of 1,000 head of cattle is about \$250,000, and there is something wrong if a business can stand a loss of that size in one year. I was almost going to say the management must be "crook", but I cannot say that because, as I have said before, it must have the necessary expertise to have its property in such good condition. I do not think it is fair to the people of Australia or to the people of Queensland to allow a company to write off 1,000 head of cattle a year.

The honourable member for South Coast spoke about the removal of the bounty on superphosphate. It will not affect primary producers in my electorate, so I do not wish to become involved in the argument. It might affect graziers; but if King Ranch can write off 1,000 head of cattle a year, one can imagine what is being done on other properties. If an expert team from the Department of Primary Industries can check properties and ascertain the true cattle numbers in Queensland, as can be done in New Zealand, great advantage will flow to this State.

All in all, I do not think that there has been any hypocrisy on the part of the Australian Labor Party, whether in Opposition in this State or in Government in the Federal House, as stated by the Premier and by the honourable member for Townsville South. Members of the A.L.P. have come to the fore, and I am sure that all the people of Queensland appreciate their efforts. I certainly appreciate the efforts of the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and most honourable members on this side of the House who saw fit to render assistance during the floods. They were dressed in Jacky Howe singlets and shorts, not in suits and ties, when they helped people to rehabilitate themselves.

**Mr. HARTWIG** (Callide) (7.49 p.m.): I wish first to congratulate the Premier for allowing the House to debate this important issue. I believe it is important, even though some of the speeches coming from honourable members opposite are, in my opinion, more a political onslaught than constructive criticism or suggestions to assist flood mitigation.

Let me say at the outset that the Premier had the full backing of the State Government in his flights round Queensland. The Opposition seems to have conveniently forgotten the absence of the Prime Minister from Brisbane during the floods.

I point out that primary producers have gone through a very difficult period and that the whole population of the State, whether in cities, towns, or country areas, has been



affected. Therefore, I welcome the opportunity to say something constructive about flood mitigation.

The primary producer had a two-fold loss from the floods, and I will elaborate on that. At this stage I will refer particularly to the flood in the Don River area, in the Callide electorate. The primary producers there suffered an immediate loss almost a month before Brisbane was affected by flooding. At this stage I commend the Premier for his prompt action in sending a helicopter into the Callide electorate on 20 December at my request to rescue people. That was very much appreciated by the residents in the area of the Don River, which at that time was three miles wide in places. People were clinging to the rooftops.

The immediate damage was the loss of existing crops such as cotton, sunflower, pineapples and lucerne, the loss of topsoil and the loss of fence-posts and valuable wire. The producers suffered long-term losses in that the incessant rain from mid-December till now has kept many from cultivating their land. Consequently they have not been able to plant their summer crops. Therefore, on top of the flood damage they have suffered, and will suffer, a loss of income because of not having grown grain sorghum, sunflower and crops that they normally grow in summer.

I have already referred to the long-term effect. I know one landholder in the Don River area who lost more than 90 head of young stock. This was the result of cattle getting back into the flooded area when the river broke its banks and the calves being washed away and drowned. That loss will not be felt for perhaps two or three years. I extend my sympathy to those people who have suffered so severely. Two families whose lucerne was not so badly damaged, harvested over 1,500 bales of hay and, just when that was ready to be brought in, it also got wet.

I have witnessed the effect of the flood in the suburban areas. I have not been in the North-west. It is something I would have liked to see, even though it is a tragedy. However, the people in the cities have suffered greatly. I do not disagree with the policy of the Governments, both State and Federal, in assisting these people to rehabilitate themselves in their homes.

I do not altogether agree with the Agricultural Bank's loans at 3 per cent and 4 per cent interest. I feel that the red tape associated with applications by people on the land for loans should be eliminated. They must first approach their own banks and, on meeting with refusal, they must then approach the development bank. They must again receive a reply in the negative before qualifying for assistance under the flood relief scheme. This is very complicated and frustrating because many people on the land have neither the time nor the patience to follow up applications of this sort. Their

paths would be a lot easier if the approach to the development bank were not required. I cannot see that the development bank is really there to assist in the development of the primary-industry sector. I believe that in this instance the purpose is to rehabilitate people affected by floods, and a refusal by the trading bank with which they deal should be sufficient to entitle them to apply for flood relief.

It was interesting to hear the honourable member for Mourilyan speak about appointing Department of Primary Industries men to go around Queensland counting the cattle. To cattlemen, that sort of talk is a joke.

**Mr. Frawley** interjected.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** Quite apart from stock returns I would say that half the time we would be looking for the men going out to count the cattle. I have the greatest faith in the managers of these properties but even for them the counting of stock losses is very difficult. We hear nothing about the difficult labour situation being experienced by many of these outstations today. No mention is made of the great difficulty involved in getting sufficient and suitable labour to muster cattle and do fencing work. It is very difficult to get men to go into these areas.

I also believe that we should interest ourselves more in the shortages of materials. I have written to the Treasurer and the Premier about the shortage of wire and I believe that every effort is being made to have shipments sent to Queensland. Recently some wire has been getting through to Rockhampton—more than we have received over the last three months—but it is still not enough. I do not know how we will find sufficient wire in Queensland to repair flood damage because on many properties neither posts nor wire are left.

The honourable member for Mourilyan spoke about erosion. If he had been really sincere in his professed interest in primary producers he would have spoken about the deletion of the tax concessions under section 75 of the Income Tax Act.

**Mr. Bousen** interjected.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** It has done a lot. Honourable members opposite talk about assisting the primary producer. I am trying to indicate to honourable members opposite how they can assist the man on the land. They have no concern for him. Over the last 18 months they have done everything to destroy him. The revaluation of the dollar alone cost primary industry \$27 million.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** You are not doing too badly to pay that price for a filly and you look well fed and watered.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** I would like to feed and water somebody not far from here. The Commonwealth Government, by its bad and haphazard administration, has to find

revenue from somewhere, so what does it do? It takes it from the primary producers because they have neither the numbers nor the militant outlook to resist stoutly. So, such things as subsidies on butter—

**Mr. Bousen:** What has that to do with the flood?

**Mr. HARTWIG:** It has a lot to do with it. Subsidies on butter have been taken away and the free-milk scheme for schools has been abolished. This has also affected the man on the land. We are now facing the removal of the bounty on superphosphate which will have repercussions on the whole economy of the country.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** What has that to do with the motion before the House?

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Callide is wandering away from the subject of the motion. Will he please confine his remarks to it?

**Mr. HARTWIG:** We have heard a lot of talk about regional and urban development. I suggest that a committee should be set up to investigate the wisdom of allowing people to return to homes that are situated in low-lying parts of the city. The Government has been blamed for allowing people to build homes in the low-lying areas. I point out that before any subdivisional plan is approved by the Government, it must be approved by the respective city council, provincial town council or shire council. Any subdivisional plan that is drawn up in Brisbane must first meet with the approval of the Brisbane City Council.

A number of people live in low-lying areas and, as surely as night follows day, they will be flooded out again. I believe that regional and urban growth should be fully explored with a view to establishing satellite towns similar to those that have been developed in other States and in other parts of the world.

Instead of providing a person with a sum of between \$15,000 and \$30,000 to rehabilitate himself in a flooded area, the Government should have applied the money to areas that are flood free. Many people have their homes in areas where 200 years ago Aborigines would not have pitched camp because they knew that sooner or later they would be flooded out. Although in this modern age we have more scientists and advisers than ever before, we allow people to make the same mistake twice.

The honourable member for Mourilyan referred to erosion. The construction of levee banks and the contouring of land are two measures that have been devised by officers of the Department of Primary Industries in an endeavour to hold the topsoil. But we know that in floods of the magnitude of the recent ones that devastated Queensland such measures are of little avail.

Prior to attainment of office by the Federal Labor Government, expenditure incurred

on contouring of land was a tax deduction. However, since the Whitlam Government was elected, a farmer who might spend as much as \$5,000 on contour banks receives a mere pittance by way of an income-tax concession.

As I have said, the Federal Government has eliminated the free-milk scheme for schools. The Port Curtis Co-operative Dairy Association supplies milk to schools as far west as Longreach and Blackall. However, the association has not been advised by the Federal Government of the elimination of the scheme.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Callide has again wandered away from the subject of the motion. Will he please return to it?

**Mr. HARTWIG:** We had to listen to a dissertation on erosion.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Nevertheless, I ask the honourable member to adhere to the subject before the House.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** I shall conclude on this point: it has been said that we should not attempt to gain political capital from this serious matter. At the present time the country's greatest industry is facing ruination. It has been severely devastated firstly by the flood and secondly by the Federal Government. The Federal Government is denuding Australia of all primary production by whittling away privileges, concessions, incentives and subsidies. In my opinion the number one industry in this country is destined to face a very torrid time.

**Mr. BALDWIN (Redlands) (8.6 p.m.):** The honourable member for Callide started on a note which I hoped he would develop. If he had done so I would have supported him fully. He said, "Let us get down to some constructive suggestions to help the flood victims." Then, for 20 minutes, he presented us with an inventory of losses interspersed with irrelevant accusations. He did not make one constructive suggestion. However, he made three worth-while criticisms which I will reiterate in case he has forgotten them. Perhaps he advanced them by accident. Firstly, he seemed to imply that no interest should be charged on Agricultural Bank loans. If that is what he meant I am heartily in favour of it.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** I rise to a point of order. I made application to the Government and I was advised today that it has agreed to give a six months' interest-free period in respect of loans to primary producers. Does that suit the honourable member?

**Mr. BALDWIN:** It certainly does, but the period should be six years, not six months.

The honourable member for Callide said that there was too much red tape. I agree with that in the light of what I have heard about destitute farmers, victims of sheet erosion on alluvial flats who have had their crops and machinery swept into rivers, who have had to approach private banks and even hire-purchase companies because the Government bank has taken too long to look into their problems. I agree with what I believe the honourable member was implying, namely, that there should be long-term planning tied in with regional and urban development and environmental control to stop exploitation of faith-and-hope home builders who get sucked-in by land agents to build on waterfronts and seashores. If that is what the honourable member meant I am completely in favour of it.

I take part in this debate on "the great flood of Queensland 1973-74", in the hope of making some constructive contributions aimed at helping the victims of floods in accordance with their deserts, whoever and wherever they are. It is obvious to all honourable members and the public at large who have read page 2 of the late extra edition of today's "Telegraph" that the Premier moved the motion initiating this belated debate in an attempt to recoup the support lost by himself and his party by their dalliance and failure to act properly in the interests of those who suffered in the wake of the terrible tragedy caused by flood. The lack of proper action does not date from the onset of this terrible flood. What is proper to be done must be measured by our general financial level, our general technological development and our experience in dealing with natural disasters. This is experience that is peculiarly lacking in this Government's approach and, because it is lacking, proper and efficient use of resources does not take place. However, I hope it will before it is too late.

In introducing the debate this morning the Premier said that Queensland was prone to natural disasters. I assume that he means cyclones, floods, hail, wind, drought and fire. Every school geographer knows, and every person who has lived 30 years or more in Queensland with his eyes and ears open knows, that Queensland is a place of great weather extremes. Apparently everyone knows except the Queensland Government, which had to wait for a national tragedy before it would believe it. The role of the Government and Cabinet in previous tragedies, such as cyclone Althea mentioned by the honourable member for Townsville West, and the Killarney killer tornado of 1968, has been referred to previously as a reason for not donating very quickly much money—if any. What happened is vivid in our memories. Honourable members will recall that in the Killarney affair the first building to be replaced by Government effort was the T.A.B. Many private residents waited for weeks and even months without assistance.

In the heavy hail drop of 23 January 1970, when winds of up to 90 miles an hour drove hail lumps weighing up to 2½ lb. through roofs, doors, walls and ceilings from Woodridge right through Kingston, Rochedale, Eight Mile Plains, around to Capalaba and across the inlet to Lota, Manly and Wynnum, causing an estimated \$6,000,000 worth of damage, not one cent of Government assistance was forthcoming. Not one lesson was learnt about getting in amongst it with radio, walkie-talkies and everything else to intervene and bring help to the points that needed it. Not one title of a lesson was learnt, and now the Government is weeping crocodile tears in the middle of a flood disaster.

**Mr. Rae:** Rubbish!

**Mr. BALDWIN:** If the Minister is patient enough, I shall prove in a moment what I have said.

The 23 January 1970 tragedy was deliberately written down by this Government as not worthy of notice. Admittedly, that tragedy was nothing like the present one, which is estimated to cost \$150,000,000 to \$200,000,000 or more. However, it was big enough to be a disaster.

In December last year the residents of MacGregor and nearby suburbs were battered by one of the most phenomenal jetstreams I have heard of. It razed top floors off lower floors and lopped huge trees over an area of several acres. Again, millions of dollars worth of damage was done and, as with Killarney, Townsville, Woodridge and Wynnum, the residents were left fighting insurance companies. Some will still be fighting them three years hence, as they were in the Woodridge-Kingston disaster, because this Government failed to take courageous, necessary and humane action.

I mention these lesser disasters—and they were disasters—as a background to what I have to say. We have had four major floods in the Brisbane Valley in 50 years. As honourable members have said, something must be done. Do not let us simply say it; let us do it. Let us see what we can do tonight.

For a moment I shall delve into some ancient history which was recorded by early settlers in the Brisbane Valley. This has been mentioned by one or two honourable members before. It relates to the flood-warning system used by the Aborigines. They had tree markings and smoke signals all down the river valley. They had an effective system of flood warning and whole tribes could move into the hills well ahead of floods. What has happened? What has appeared from this flood tragedy is that, with all our radio, telephone, microwave and other forms of communication, we have not an effective flood-warning system. Even so, one would only enable us to save life; the buildings, wealth, furniture and equipment would still be abandoned to the water.

It has been proposed that dams could have saved the valley. I doubt it. In this last record rainfall, any dam or series of dams could not even at best be a mitigation. The whole of the Brisbane River Valley was a huge dam; aerial photographs show that. A farmer in Fernvale told me that the Brisbane River at Wivenhoe flowed for nearly 20 hours at 5 feet to 10 feet below what will be the top of the new dam barrage at Wivenhoe. In other words, the proposed dam would have been filled several times in 20 hours.

Obviously, dams are built to hold water for cities and irrigation for rural areas in dry times. The flood gates cannot be opened to release water at the first sign of a shower during a period when we are told that there is a possibility of drought. Again, the water cannot be released fast enough to empty the dams in a couple of days or they would defeat their own purpose and create a flood.

The whole of the Brisbane River Valley and the south coast area of Queensland is a notorious cloudburst area. The catchment area of the Brisbane River and its tributaries has been known to be so since the big flood of 1867. Therefore I propose that methods different from those we are using must be devised. The Albert-Logan catchment area received a record rainfall of approximately 50 inches in three days from Thursday to Saturday, so there was obviously record flooding. At the Slacks Creek crossing on the Pacific Highway the water ended up almost 15 feet higher than the previous record flood level in 1947. Scores of houses from Waterford down the river valley were wholly or partly submerged, and many were washed bodily away. Some of them were worth \$20,000 each. Some were built even below the recorded height of the 1947 flood, and sold by greedy agents and developers as "absolute river frontages". They were absolute all right—absolutely in the drink! The developers charged as much as \$10,000 a lot for this land. Those river flats were marvellous farming flats for dairying, small crops and grain crops. The honourable member for Callide, who has just left the House, mentioned this, and it is another point on which I agree with him.

It is a pity that, for party political purposes and a deliberately motivated policy of displacement, that land was turned from fertile farm flats into residential land. The Government has gained; the developers have gained; builders and agents have gained. The insurance companies have opted out, and families have lost everything but their lives. Many have lost their jobs.

In the past 40 years in which I have lived in areas on the south side of the Brisbane River, four times I have seen the Rocklea, Salisbury and Corinda flats a sea of water. The Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services has agreed that something must be done about that area. Earlier warning would

help. As the Leader of the Opposition said, let us give the warnings from the direction that I mentioned the Aborigines gave them—not from downstream up but from upstream down, because upstream is where floods mainly start. Perhaps the Aborigines were not as stupid as their white conquerors. With a series of encased floats activating ultra-high-frequency radio warning signals at fixed points down the tributaries, accurate and timely warning can, could, and should be given. Even so, residents could not, of course, move their houses, factories and businesses.

The Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services and the honourable member for Ithaca both mentioned the filling of flood plains. I feel sure that both those gentlemen know that flood-plain and tidal-flat filling, euphemistically called reclamation, has been carried out for the last 15 years as an apparently cheap method of obtaining sports fields and rubbish-disposal areas—not to mention unstable building sites. Also I feel sure that neither of those gentlemen is so ignorant as not to know that there is no Queensland statute law of any kind even to prevent a subdivider or factory builder from filling a gully at the back of his premises, a river flat or even a tidal flat, in order to get more building land cheaply, at our expense.

**Mr. Porter** interjected.

**Mr. BALDWIN:** I should like to remind the honourable member for Toowoong of his statement oft repeated in this House that Queensland is a sovereign State. If he and his mates keep going as they are, it will soon not be worth even a sovereign.

Alderman Clem Jones, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, said in 1972 during his election policy speech that this Government should legislate to give all local government bodies power to stop this so-called reclamation for building purposes. I agree with the honourable member for Ithaca that such flood areas should for all time be held as buffers against both flash floods and tidal floods. But, even so, floods such as those of 1893, 1895, 1947 and 1974 will overflow many feet deep, and only sports fields, nature strips, gardens and grassland areas could withstand such inundation.

The Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services laid the blame for the Pamphlett Bridge rubbish tip reclamation on the Brisbane City Council. Of course, he did not say the present city council, although I would say that he obviously meant all of us, and also the Press, to think that. I quite clearly recall the lagoons of the area from as far back as 1936. After the war, friends of mine built houses in Strong Avenue, just opposite the lagoons. They then were deep, and many residents pleaded to have them filled because of danger to their children. But they did not plead to have houses built on them, and they did not plead to have them built into dam walls. This is what has

happened. It is regrettable, and something must be done about it. Not only the present administration is to blame.

Let the Government stop weeping crocodile tears and protecting its friends the big housing monopolies, banks and insurance companies. I challenge it to introduce the necessary legislation as an immediate step towards prevention for the future. Such personal tragedy as has occurred, such heart-break, family break-up and loss, can be prevented only if we start now on a modern basis and with a long-term plan. The loss to industry and to our economy will not be recouped for at least three years. We do not need a state of emergency for this legislation. We only need a Government with honesty and integrity to open up the floodways and the flood flats in all areas of high-density living.

Greater financial assistance must come. If this is left to local government, the strain of providing services over wider areas will be unbearable. For many years it has been suffering from lack of help from Federal Governments and from reduced State Government subsidies.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr. Lickiss): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr. BALDWIN**: As a matter of survival, local government has had to keep its financial services within the limits of bankruptcy, and, therefore, has been forced into high-density population in areas such as waterways and floodways. In the Redland Shire, the Albert Shire and the Beaudesert Shire I have seen development within 20 feet of floodways. As a result of this, floodwaters poured 3 and 4 ft. deep through houses on the night of 25 January and early on the morning of Saturday, 26 January. I was out paddling in it, telling people to get out, and I did it because I know the country.

I do not agree with their flood-plain and tidal-plain reclamation, but I can understand why their problem has arisen. The problem, which must become more acute as more river-flat, riverside, swampy land is sold for any kind of building purposes, can only be halted—solved, I hope—by an infusion of more money into local government from State and Commonwealth sources to allow it to spread its building away from flood-prone areas. Even if we measure the term "flood prone" as used by the Premier, at 40-year intervals for residential, commercial and industrial purposes, planning must be done now. No State can stand a \$200,000,000 major flood loss, on top of major drought losses, every 40 years, in addition to many minor disasters—sometimes a myriad of them—in the same period. In short, Governments must plan for 40 years ahead, and this Government has failed to do so.

To plan for prevention is better, and, in the long term, cheaper, than to plan

for cure or even mitigation of the evil. In speaking of a natural disaster fund, the Premier, when opening the debate, said that a responsible citizen should look after his own situation or position. How far does the Premier expect a citizen to be responsible in that direction? Does he expect a retired farmer from Kingaroy, in his own electorate, buying a \$30,000 house at Kenmore from a so-called reputable agent, builder or subdivider, to know that he is buying something below the 1893 or 1947 flood level? Does he expect the builder to know that, too? Where are the surveyors, hydrographers, hydrologists and all the others who should be commissioned by the Government to look after the interests of its taxpayers?

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I do not intend to warn honourable members again.

**Mr. BALDWIN**: Where are they? Where are the geologists who can tell that the lower Brisbane Valley, the mouth of the river and Moreton Bay are sinking as the ocean level rises? Land which was 4 ft. above the sea level in the bay 100 years ago, when the surveys were made originally, is now level with the sea, tide for tide. Surveys show land on paper which is now under water at high tide, and this has happened in many places. A tidal flood is just as ruinous to a family as a flood of back-up water or a flood of rushing water. Does not our Christian Premier believe that citizens should have faith and hope that any Government they elect and pay for should protect them in return for their work and taxes? That is the big question. The Premier himself must answer it.

It is time that it became a statutory requirement for all vendors of land, other than rural or grazing land, or their agents, to issue with the contract of sale a certificate signed by an officer from the Surveyor-General's Department (which I believe is now almost extinct) that the parcel of land being sold is a certain height above the previously recorded level or an expected flood level based on a 40-year period.

If honourable members are wondering why I keep harping about a 40-year period, I point out that that is the figure set by the Australian Housing Association as an average economic life of a house. I think it is a very important consideration in any matter such as that before the House tonight.

As this Government at least appears by this belated motion to want to do something of a preventive nature, on behalf of all those people who would build near rivers, on stream flats or near to the seashore I challenge the Government to introduce legislation immediately that will make compulsory the provision of such a certificate to protect the public.

Rushing floodwaters and back-up waters from flooded rivers do not constitute the only devastating floods. During the week-end of the cyclone of 25 to 27 January, as well as the following week-end of the king tides and the build-up caused by cyclone Pam off the east coast of Australia, the low-lying parts near the Brisbane River, particularly at its mouth, the seafront of the southern part of the bay, Redland Bay and right along to the Gold Coast suffered serious damage and salt-water flooding. Salt water flooded houses from Thornside to Victoria Point, and on North Stradbroke Island at Amity Point the erosion was terrible. I ask the Government, through the Premier, to take such cases into consideration when giving flood relief.

Again, for their sake and the sake of all other victims of the tidal floods, I ask that a 40-year plan for seaside development be introduced at once. I ask that in this plan relocation on grants of land be made by this Government, and that victims of landslides and erosion also be included in such a scheme of grants.

**Mr. Porter:** What if they do not want to go?

**Mr. Baldwin:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, again I will stop short of personal sarcasm in responding to such a statement, but suggest that the honourable member who has made such an asinine interjection has not got off his Toowong terrace and gone down to see houses hanging over the sea banks at Wellington Point. I ask him to do so. In fact, to save him the trouble I will send him a photograph.

As a further measure for consideration by this late-awake Government, I call on it from the floor of the House to declare schemes of moratoriums to allow families, farmers and businessmen, who have lost so much, time to recover. If it is not possible for this to be done unless a state of emergency exists then let this Parliament declare a state of emergency here tonight and do the things that have to be done to mend the broken lives of thousands of our fellow Queenslanders.

If the skyscraper-office-building insurance boys will not cough up to buy building materials, furniture, and stock for farms and businesses, from wherever it is available, and if such action can be taken only under a state of emergency, then let us declare that state of emergency here tonight. Let the Government put its legislation where its false lips are. It should stop the face-saving shadow-sparring and get on with the job of saving good Queenslanders and their families. The Government should be helping the victims in every way now by bringing in the preventive measures that have been suggested by me and by other constructive honourable members on this side. At an early stage as many suggestions as possible should be made for immediate help now and for later preventive work.

**Mr. Porter (Toowong) (8.30 p.m.):** The Queensland floods of 1974 will, of course, be considered by all as a great disaster. I have no doubt that they will be remembered as one of the bench-marks by future chroniclers of our history, by which they remember events. After a great disaster such as this it is very easy and comforting for people to be wise after the event. Hindsight is a wonderful, truly remarkable thing. How oracular and foolish it was for the Leader of the Opposition to talk so grandly this morning about what should have been done and to be so scathing about what was not done. It is a matter of record that neither he nor any of the other members of the Opposition who had so much to say about errors of omission and commission said any of these things when the flood was still at its peak, when we were reeling from the shock of it and shaking our heads like a groggy boxer trying to recover from the onslaught of catastrophe.

Of course, some things could have been done and done better. We all learned valuable lessons from the experience and we all want to be very sure that this experience will not be easily or quickly forgotten. In other words, we want to be quite certain that we can use present miseries to enlarge future security. But for anybody in this House to select fiddling little points of criticism is, to use the colloquialism, just so much nit-picking. It makes this debate a tedious and useless gimmick forced on the House by an Opposition that was so anxious to exploit the flood for political purposes. This has been a traumatic experience for all of us, and all of us will learn from it. But the worst of all outcomes surely would be for parties or political people to try to make capital out of so much personal grief, loss and heart-break.

There have been many suggestions that this Government, and particularly the Premier, tried to make political capital out of the flood. What are the facts on the record? They are that the A.L.P., from the very start, tried to make very real political capital out of the disasters that came upon us. Mr. Egerton who is the president of the Queensland Trades and Labor Council—and, if rumour has it correctly, soon to be president of the Australian A.L.P.—said in "The Financial Review" on 29 January—

"The nouveau riche" (good words from Mr. Egerton) "property developers are the real villains of Queensland's worst flood disaster."

Then in "The Australian" on 31 January Mr. Houston said—

"The basic qualifications for financial assistance from the State Government are so tough few flood victims will qualify."

The result was that Mr. Knox, Minister for Justice, had to chide Mr. Houston publicly for being the first person to try to make political capital out of citizens' distress. As

Mr. Knox pointed out, until that time the flood crisis had been handled above the level of petty party politics.

Mr. Lourigan, the A.L.P. organiser and secretary, in the "Telegraph" on the same day said—

"It is disgraceful that a state of emergency was not called a week ago."

Now we understand why honourable members opposite have kept on insisting about the so-called necessity for a state of emergency. This is in line with what their officials have been asking for from the time the flood was with us. Of course, nobody has explained what the state of emergency would do that in fact was not done—just where it would have improved the situation. I suppose that this is in line with the comments made by Mr. Lourigan, who was reported in "The Australian" as saying that, in addition to declaring a state of emergency, the State Government should ask the Federal Defence Department to send a battalion of troops to Brisbane. How interesting! What a wonderful mentality! It would be a police State right away. He would have us treat the disaster not with good will, not with common sense, not with the purpose that a community of people develop one towards the other, but with troops. I think that under those circumstances the members of the A.L.P. have shown themselves up quite extraordinarily under a very revealing light.

**Mr. P. Wood:** You're a bit weak tonight.

**Mr. PORTER:** I am trying to point out that there was a very real attempt made to turn this whole matter into a political circus.

A matter of major importance was the statement attributed in "The Telegraph" to Mr. David Coombe, Federal Secretary of the A.L.P., to the effect that duplicate copies of all claims for assistance lodged through the Brisbane City Council with the State Government would be submitted to the Federal Executive of the A.L.P. His statement was made on 5 February, and it is significant to note that it was not until 12 February, exactly one week later, that, under pressure from Queensland members of the A.L.P., Mr. Coombe discovered that he had been misreported and scuttled backwards as fast as he could go. The fact is that a very real attempt has been made to make political capital out of something that should never have been viewed in a political light.

A good deal has been said about the advertisements inserted in the Press by the Government in which details were given as to where assistance could be obtained and what telephone numbers could be rung to obtain help here, there and everywhere. I thought that the advertisements were very good ones. I know that the organisations in my area found them of inestimable value. Apparently the story is that we should have put in that it was the Federal Government's money that was being used. Again I make the point that it is not the Federal

Government's money at all, but money collected by the Federal Government on our behalf from Queensland taxpayers. It is our money, and there is no reason in the world why we should go down on our knees and touch our forelocks to Mr. Whitlam's so-called Australian Government, which is a Federal Government, merely because it deigned to give us back some of the money that is rightfully ours. Of course it is our money, and, by adopting the attitude that they have taken, Opposition members demean both themselves and this Parliament.

**Mr. W. D. Hewitt:** In any case, the Commonwealth participation was acknowledged.

**Mr. PORTER:** It was acknowledged quite adequately at all levels.

The Leader of the Opposition tried to make great play of his claim that the means test that had to be applied in making grants for aid was a State Government invention. Again what are the facts? They are that "The Courier-Mail" of 4 February reported that, while the Premier was waiting to see Mr. Barnard and Mr. Crean, he indicated quite clearly that the Queensland Government wanted flood victims to receive grants quite free of a means test for repair or rebuilding of homes, and he would ask for Commonwealth money on the same terms as that given for the Tasmanian bush-fire disaster of 1967. We all know that in that instance the money was given without a means test.

On the same day the Treasurer (Sir Gordon Chalk) was reported in "The Australian" as saying almost the same thing when he was seeing Mr. Barnard and Mr. Crean. So let us not have any nonsense as to who required a means test to be applied. The State Government wanted money for grants given without a means test; the Federal Government required that a means test be imposed, and that is a matter of record.

Someone tried to excuse the Prime Minister for not flying to Brisbane to see what was happening when the flood was at its height by saying that he was on a very important tour—either his eighth or his ninth tour—of the outside world. Incidentally, it is rumoured that one of these days he, with his entourage, might make a tour of Australia.

**Mr. Bromley:** That's very funny.

**Mr. PORTER:** Perhaps it is. Some parts of it would certainly make one weep. I am sure everyone remembers that when the late Mr. Harold Holt was Prime Minister and was on an overseas tour he came back for this type of disaster because he felt that his role was to be there to give people the sustenance, the succour and the reassurance that the presence of the head of State does give. But Mr. Whitlam could not be there. We were told that in lieu of Mr. Whitlam we had Mr. Morrison, a

very senior Federal Cabinet Minister. I suppose he is senior; he is 28th in a Federal Cabinet of 28. I suppose he is a reasonable substitute for Mr. Whitlam.

The whole point is that the flooding was of tragic proportions in many parts of the State. We in this part of the State recognise that we have a particular problem in the zone which forms the catchment area for the basin of the Brisbane River. We always will have problems here. I think the honourable member for Ithaca pointed out that we have the problem of the flooding of the river and the problem of the flash-flooding of creeks in Brisbane. The creek flooding, of course, has become progressively worse. We now have Northey Street, in Windsor—the honourable member for Brisbane was crying about it a little while ago—which virtually floods if there is a heavy dew. Without doubt the elimination over a period of years of the flood ponds has contributed enormously to the problem. There has been a great display of crocodile tears by various people. “I cry for them; it would make a strong man weak to see them: “Who caused the problems? For instance, one of the prime contributing factors to the flooding of Northey Street was the filling in of the old Bancroft Park flood plain at Kelvin Grove.

**Mr. Davis:** Rubbish!

**Mr. PORTER:** The honourable member should look at the engineering and topographical aspects of this area to find out something about it.

The plain fact of the matter is that this area was filled in to a depth of six to eight feet, with the result that, ever since, Northey Street has been susceptible to flooding every three to six months—whenever there is a light fall of rain or a heavy dew.

Who filled in this area? There was a case in the Local Government Court No. 12 of 1968 between a man named Eggar and the Brisbane City Council, in which Eggar appealed against the council's refusal to rezone the area. He wanted it rezoned from open space to light industrial. The council indicated that it did not want the land rezoned, but he won his appeal. Why did he win it? Because he was able to demonstrate that for 12 months prior to his appeal that area had been filled with spoil—with the council's knowledge and consent—from the excavation of King George Square. In other words, the Lord Mayor's bosom friend, Mr. Stephens, was able to fill in that flood plain with the material excavated from King George Square while the council knew about it and what it would do.

**Mr. Davis:** Which year was that?

**Mr. PORTER:** It was in 1968.

We will have no nonsense about who has helped cause flooding in the creek areas of Brisbane. A host of them have been affected. The Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services, in his excellent contribution to

the debate referred to the filling in of the area near Pamphlett Bridge, and there is the filling in of the Long Pocket area. Many areas which once carried water back safely into the river have been filled. The water has to go somewhere so it spreads out at a higher level. It is the greatest nonsense in the world to suggest that all this trouble has been caused by the nouveau riche property developers, as they are described by Mr. Egerton. Every local authority has an absolute right to zone areas for the type of development it wants to see on them. Every council could have prohibited buildings of various types in places that were below a proper flood level. The Brisbane City Council has the worst record of any local authority in permitting what it knew should not be permitted. It is a reasonable estimate that of the homes that suffered in the recent floods in Brisbane two-thirds have been built in the last 10 to 12 years, in areas where the most elementary knowledge should have suggested to a city council which has the responsibility to decide that they should not have been built there or, if they should be, that particular precautions should have been taken.

Undoubtedly, the Wivenhoe Dam will provide some sort of assistance. It is suggested by some that it may take six to eight feet off the top of a future flood. It may. I do not know. If rain falls in the wrong part of the catchment area it will not, and that is a certainty.

Somerset Dam was built supposedly on the rough basis of two-thirds to prevent flooding in Brisbane and one-third for Brisbane's water supply. But what in fact happened? The Water Board ended its control of that dam and handed over to the Brisbane City Council in 1959. A Labor administration came into power in 1960. From that day on, Somerset Dam has never been emptied prior to a wet season. It has been held at almost full level so that the Lord Mayor can play petty politics and keep up the sprinkling. But, as a flood preventive measure it has become virtually useless—not only useless but, when a little grandstanding is done immediately after a flood, the residents of Kilcoy and allied districts have to carry the burden.

Another aspect has been touched on. I have had a great many complaints from people who have received droplets of money from the Lord Mayor's fund. I find very few people who have received any amount that extends into three figures. Perhaps I live in the wrong area, even though it was heavily devastated by floods. The fact of the matter is that all of these people have to wait an unconscionably long time—four to six hours is the average—and finish up with something between \$70 and \$100 or less.

Starting these ad hoc appeals is a very dangerous procedure. Here we have an appeal—and any appeal would fall in the same category—for which moneys are



received and from which moneys are distributed. All of it has to be done on the basis of trust. It is my belief that these funds should be under the direct supervision of the Auditor-General and most certainly should be susceptible to the Auditor-General's audit. This is the least that should be done by a public body dealing with public moneys.

There is one other important aspect arising out of the flood disaster to which I shall refer briefly. It is the matter of the alleged lack of insurance cover and union action that is now being taken as the result of this. There is no doubt that many people were distressed to find that their policies did not cover flood damage. But does anybody claim that he was deliberately misled? Can any honourable member opposite cite one instance of fraud in this regard? Does anybody say that insurance companies took money under false pretences? Does anybody suggest that a person who was seeking flood cover prior to cyclone Wanda's visit did not get it?

The plain fact of the matter is that the type of insurance a person gets is the type of insurance he wishes to buy. It is a business proposition. A person gets what he pays for. If anybody had wanted cover for flood damage, he would have got it. I have no brief for insurance companies. Because we have not had this problem for so long, many people either were not worried or expected that they would have some cover under the storm and tempest clause, and did not get it. To the extent that an area of uncertainty needs to be cleared up here, let us clear it up.

But for honourable members opposite or trade unions to suggest that out of this arises something in which the insurance companies have been guilty of fraud or sharp practice and that this therefore justifies the action the group of unions is now taking is not only nonsense; it is dangerous nonsense. Only a madman or a person so fanatically determined to denigrate the processes of law and parliamentary democracy would be prepared to exploit a disaster such as the flood and say, "This is the warrant for what the building trades group of unions is now proposing to do." It is an action, by the way, condoned by the Queensland Trades and Labor Council. This group of unions intends to take the A.M.P. Society and make it the victim of industrial terrorism. This group of unions abrogates to itself stupidly, arrogantly and crudely—

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** What has this to do with flood relief?

**Mr. PORTER:** It has everything to do with it. This is what unions are going to do to an insurance company which they claim failed to provide adequate flood relief. That is what the present situation has grown out of. The unions are going to select a victim, and carry out a ritual sacrifice. This is trade unionism gone mad. One

expects all sorts of strange things to be washed up by a flood, but this must be one of the strangest ever. This is the work of radical union leaders, encouraged by the A.L.P. Federal Government's own terms of breaking down accepted community standards. They have gone berserk. They are running amuck. They want to challenge responsible elected Government, and they want to set themselves up as kangaroo courts. Indeed, they have done it. Australia's version of the Ku Klux Klan, where they determine the victim and act as judge, jury, and executioner. Indeed, what this group of unions is doing to a company that has done nothing wrong is extortion. One should remember that the company selected for action is a mutual benefit society. It is not a company carrying the type of insurance arising from floods or fires.

I say that we should immediately rescind the prohibition against action for tort that unions and union officials currently enjoy in this State. If you or I, Mr. Speaker, did something that directly intimidated another person, or restricted him in the pursuit of his proper legal activities, we would be guilty at law. I say that every union, and every union official, who wants to play the heavy hand of the Mafia should be guilty in exactly the same way.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** This is to do with flood relief, is it?

**Mr. PORTER:** Indeed it is. It is totally growing out of it.

I believe that when unions hold companies to ransom, they hold the community to ransom, and they must not be allowed to do so with impunity. Talk about black bans! It will be a black day for Queensland if ever we permit unions to get away with this sort of thing. What the building trades group of unions is doing is exactly what Hitler's SS troops used to do during the war. They would pick hostages at random and execute them, innocent people, as a reprisal in order to frighten others. As I have said, it is a brutal, crude and stupid procedure. I must ask, growing out of this great disaster that Queensland has suffered, just whom do these union bosses think they are? What are they? Are they swollen, bloated little Caesars who want to take over government from the elected Government? They have no mandate—indeed, they would not dare to seek one—and they want to use union muscle to intimidate and destroy.

The great flood of January has taught us, with very harsh severity, many things. One lesson that this Parliament must learn if our society is to endure is that ambitious and ruthless union leaders must not be permitted to exercise what has been classically termed down through the ages the prerogative of the harlot, and that is power without responsibility.

Mr. INCH (Mt. Isa) (8.54 p.m.): I join with my Leader and Deputy Leader, and previous speakers from the Opposition side, in their support of the motion now before the House. However, I believe also that it is incumbent on me to support the criticism of the lack of activity by the Government in the early stages of the disaster. It not only created a great deal of damage in Brisbane and Ipswich, but also ravaged and laid waste large portions of the North-west and Gulf areas of the State. It delivered a crushing blow to graziers, big and small, in destruction of property and equipment and huge losses of stock, and, in consequence, a loss of earning power for a long time to come until properties are restored and herds are restocked to their pre-flood numbers. Further, there will be some repercussions in the meat industry because of the enormous losses throughout the cattle areas from which stock would normally be transported to meatworks on the eastern seaboard. A reduction in the supply of cattle from these areas will have an effect upon these works. The length of seasonal employment for employees, and, consequently, the economy of some coastal cities, will be adversely affected, as will the economy of the State.

When we give thought to the losses sustained by the grazing industry, let us also remember the heartbreak and misery suffered by residents of these areas who also had to abandon their homes and possessions and hurriedly seek asylum in places far removed from their usual place of abode. Many of their possessions were personal treasures for which no amount of money could recompense them, and one can well imagine the numbing effect on the minds of young couples and old people of returning to find their homes destroyed and prize possessions swept away.

While concern and consideration is now being expressed for the interest and rehabilitation of these unfortunate people it does not mitigate the lack of concern shown by both the Government and the Premier in the early stages when floodwaters were rising rapidly and it was left till the very last minute to evacuate these citizens in a Dunkirk-like operation—by air to Mt. Isa and Cairns and by sea to Weipa in an over-crowded boat continually lashed by heavy seas. It was not until five days after this episode, when the whole of the Gulf and much of the inland areas were inundated, that the Premier of this State decided to make an investigation of the conditions prevailing throughout the area. It was a flying visit in more ways than one. Unless he is endowed with extra-sensory perceptive powers, I do not know how he could perceive the extent of loss and damage to properties, homes, land and stock that lay submerged beneath the floodwaters, for he could not land and whatever observation he made would result from an aerial reconnaissance from a safe height—a useless

exercise under the circumstances, for it gave no relief or peace of mind at the time to those unfortunates who had lost their all.

As an instance to bear out my contention that the Premier, by flying over this inland sea at the time, was not able to see or get any idea of the loss or damage to properties under flood, I use Iffley Station as an example. Prior to the Premier's arrival in Mt. Isa on his grand tour of investigation, Mr. Peter Foster, the manager of Iffley, had made his own aerial inspection of the property, which was then virtually all submerged. At that time, with his personal knowledge of this extensive property and ability to assess to some extent the possible loss sustained, he cautiously estimated that this would be extremely heavy. But even he did not know at the time just how much devastation had been caused, and about six weeks later, when he was able to return to the station by helicopter, he found that the loss was far in excess of anything anticipated. A solid concrete building containing \$15,000 worth of food and supplies had been eroded and had collapsed; 60 per cent of the fencing on the downs country and 30 per cent on the forest country had gone; and of the 26,000 to 28,000 head of cattle the property carried, there are roughly 4,000 to 5,000 head remaining. The station homestead itself is uninhabitable—no power or refrigeration—and station vehicles were down to their tops in large excavations created by floodwaters. It will be many months before this property is back to a semblance of working order.

This is just one example of the devastation hidden by floodwaters during the grand aerial tour by the Premier. There were dozens of others like it, and what he hoped to prove or achieve at the time by this "show the flag" sortie over an inundated and uninhabited area, heaven only knows. All his tongue-clucking and sympathetic murmurings were entirely meaningless in the circumstances, as was the promise of a plane-load of food to be sent to Mt. Isa to alleviate the food shortage created by rail dislocation. This promise was made a week prior to his arrival in Mt. Isa on 30 January 1974, on his way to inspect the Gulf areas, and up to that date no plane-load of food had arrived. It was not until it finally seeped through to him, as a result of his meeting with civic and other representatives at Mt. Isa at which it was clearly indicated that the time for promises had long since passed, that the Premier and his Government were galvanised into action and an uplift of food into the city commenced.

The tardiness of the Premier and the Government in recognising the emergency needs of the city and the surrounding districts cut off by flood was in direct contrast to the immediate action taken by the Minister for Northern Development, Dr. Rex Patterson, when he was directly informed of the situation existing at the time by members of a deputation which met him at

the Mt. Isa airport when he was on his way to Darwin. It was obvious that he quickly grasped the situation, for within a few hours of his arrival in Darwin arrangements had been made for an R.A.A.F. Hercules aircraft to make an uplift of essential food supplies into Mt. Isa three times weekly. This was later supplemented by R.A.A.F. aircraft from Townsville and Brisbane, and an R.A.A.F. helicopter was made available for flood rescue and relief work.

Had the Premier and his Government reacted sooner and more positively to the rapidly developing flood disaster in the north-western and Gulf areas and sought the aid of the Australian Government, with all the resources at its command, instead of playing politics and leaving it to the local citizenry in their desperation to acquaint the outside world of their plight, the situation would not have developed to the desperate stage it reached.

One can only speculate as to how long many of these isolated areas would have been left to their own devices if the Premier and his Government had not been shaken out of their lethargic and unconcerned attitude towards the people of the West by the advent of the disastrous flood which hit the capital city of Brisbane. It would seem that a disaster had to occur on the Government's doorstep, so to speak, for it to realise that similar occurrences were in existence, and had been in existence, in the western areas of the State for some time prior to the Brisbane flood, and that towns within those floodbound areas of the West had been left with few supplies of essential food and materials. Travellers had been stranded on our roads and railways, roof-top rescues were practically an everyday occurrence, industries were restricted to a minimum of operations and, as has already been indicated, devastation and ruin had been experienced throughout the whole area.

In referring to this devastation, one's thoughts readily focus upon the havoc wrought upon the much-vaunted rehabilitated railway line linking Mt. Isa with the coast, which will ever be a monument to ineptitude and gross inefficiency in railroad engineering and construction as well as to the adulatory enslavement of a Government by an overseas firm of consulting engineers who, besides getting a handsome fee of \$600,000 for their services, will now, by the time the present repairs are effected, have further cost the taxpayers of Queensland millions of dollars in excess of the final figure of \$54,000,000, which this Government was so pleased to hail as being a very creditable performance on the part of the consulting engineers responsible for the project. For the Premier and his Government there will now be the ready-made excuse of an unprecedented wet season in an attempt to explain away the destruction of miles of railroad and a number of bridges. No-one will deny that the 23-inch rainfall

was more continuous and spread over a shorter period than is usual, but will it compare with the 35-inch rainfall of the 1950-51 wet season when the length of time of train hold-ups was negligible compared with that of today?

Can there be any substantial denial that colossal engineering blunders on the part of this firm of consulting engineers are responsible in the main for the destruction the line has suffered, not only on this occasion when the line went out of operation intermittently from 9 to 19 January, on which date it finally closed until 22 February—a consecutive period of roughly five weeks—but also on other occasions when bridges have been destroyed and the road-bed and line severely damaged, with trains being held up for 10 days at a time? This has occurred in normal wet seasons and the Government cannot say it was never warned or questioned about what the eventual outcome would be of this so-called rehabilitation, which in effect resulted in the creation of a huge dam with a very restricted capacity for the discharge of banked-up waters.

In speaking to the Supply debate in 1968, when mention was made of the loan negotiated for the rehabilitation work, I said, as recorded in Volume 249 of "Hansard" at page 969—

"At this stage, let me interpose that we still have not a trafficable line during a normal wet season. While I cannot charge the present Treasurer with being the chief architect of the negotiations for the loan from the Commonwealth Government for this project, which the people of Queensland are paying for so heavily, especially the people of North-west Queensland, I do accuse him, as the former Minister for Transport, together with his Cabinet colleagues at the time, of being blinded by their desire to engage, at a cost of many thousands of dollars, the services of an overseas firm of consulting engineers to plan and supervise the rehabilitation of this railroad in preference to their own railway engineers.

"These engineers, with their years of experience of railway construction in Queensland, who are ever-ready to consult with and take heed of the knowledge and experience of maintenance inspectors, trainmen and gangers, would have had a better concept of local conditions over the whole length of this line and would have made adequate provision to overcome or minimise the problem which could, and did, arise from the damming up of water in the wet season as the result of the increased height of the new road-bed above the level of the old line.

"It is now evident that the planning and supervision of the project by this overseas firm of consulting engineers went somewhat astray, as during the wet season in the early part of this year a number of wash-outs occurred on the

line and the bridge over Corella Creek, a short distance from Neila, collapsed, causing a 10-day suspension of rail traffic over the line.

"If this sort of thing occurs in a normal wet season, what can we expect in a heavy wet season? Will other bridges collapse because their foundations may not be of sufficient depth to prevent their being scoured out by flood waters? This appears to be what has happened in the case of the Corella Creek bridge.

"Are long lengths of line and road-bed to be washed away by waters that have been backed up for miles because of insufficient drainage, the outcome of what can only be regarded as inadequate planning and engineering? There is every likelihood of this occurring in a heavy wet season. It is apparent that the Railway Department itself holds some fear in this regard, if one can judge by an article that appeared in the "North-West Star" on Wednesday, 16 October, 1968. This article is headed, 'Crucial Railway Work', and reads—

"The Queensland Railways Department is taking steps to ensure the North-West rail link from Townsville to Mount Isa will not be broken by flooding in the coming Wet.

'A Railway Department spokesman said yesterday special precautions were being taken because of the "experience" in the last Wet.

"The "experience" was the collapse of the high level railway bridge over Corella Creek, near Nonda, on February 20 after heavy flooding.

'The railway service to Mount Isa was disrupted for more than a week and fresh food trucked and flown to Mount Isa following the collapse.

'Safety precautions for the wet season include:

A new designed concrete bridge over Corella Creek.

Drainage and reinforcement work on the line between Richmond and Nonda.

'The department spokesman said that the work was only the first stage of a programme which would make the line resistant to future flooding.'

I put emphasis on the word 'first' because it appears that many more washouts will occur.

The article continues—

'Work is progressing on the new \$140,000 Corella Creek bridge which should be completed by the end of November, he said.

'The bridge piers will be driven 40 feet into the creek bed.

'The Railways Department has called tenders for flood repair and protection work on the line between Richmond and Nonda.'

"I ask whether the piles or foundations of other bridges would be of sufficient depth to prevent their being scoured out by flood waters. Apparently the Railway Department is at last awake to the fact that they were not of sufficient depth.

"In this article the department's spokesman says that the bridge piers will be driven down to a depth of 40 feet. That indicates how badly some other bridges have been planned and constructed."

The position is very much the same today and it possibly will continue to be so.

Having now acquainted members with what might be termed the wet-weather history of this line, the queries directed to the Government regarding it, and the damage it has continued to suffer in wet seasons, unprecedented or otherwise, there should be little doubt in their minds that this Government, through the agency of a blundering firm of consulting engineers, is responsible for the hardship and inconvenience suffered by stranded passengers, shortages of essential food and supplies, loss to major industries and business interests of all kinds, loss of employment in a number of instances where supplies of raw materials have run out, loss to the economy of the State, and a further impost upon the taxpayers of Queensland for the repairs to the line and replacement of bridges.

It would be most interesting to ascertain the cost of repairs for previous flood damage to this line, together with an estimate of what the cost is likely to be on this occasion. As the Parliament is entitled to this information, I call upon the Premier or his Minister to supply it to the House.

Before proceeding further, I should like to pay tribute to the magnificent effort of all railwaymen engaged in the restoration of this line to a stage where, with certain restrictions, it again became trafficable. Having regard to the nature and extensiveness of the damage to the line, it is obvious to anyone who has had experience in rail maintenance under such circumstances that these men have performed a Herculean task under arduous conditions. That they were able to restore the line to a trafficable condition in such a short time bears testimony to the ability of our railway engineers and maintenance men, and their achievement is deserving of the highest praise. It should to some extent dampen the loquaciousness of a certain garrulous Federal member who confidently prophesied a lapse of three months before the line would be trafficable.

While paying tribute to the railwaymen for their splendid efforts, recognition must also be given to the part played by the officers and men of the C.M.F. in Mt. Isa. Their ready response in an emergent situation deserves the highest praise and thanks. These men performed a sterling service in the interests of the local population and that of the surrounding districts, and it is indeed

fortunate that this unit was on hand to render such valuable assistance. To this must be added an acknowledgement and measure of praise for the services rendered by the Air Force men manning Caribou and other R.A.A.F. aircraft ferrying food and essential supplies to isolated outlying areas. I must also mention the Flying Doctor Service, the civilian pilots and the many people and organisations who rendered invaluable service in assisting us during this time.

A further tribute must be paid to the splendid services rendered by Inspector Chip-pindall, his officers and men of the Police Force, who carried out a magnificent job under great difficulty, where a lack of adequate communication facilities with the outside centres within the police district made it most difficult in some instances for fast rescue operations to be carried out. We can be most thankful to the Police Force and the R.A.A.F. for their untiring efforts in very difficult circumstances to prevent loss of life.

That both forces were able to avert fatalities, supply and arrange food drops and at the same time carry out rescue operations under hazardous conditions is a tribute to their ability, devotion to duty and pride in their respective service. Their tireless effort is an example that could well be emulated by all.

As the honourable member for Townsville West has mentioned—this is a point that I wish to emphasise—there is a lack of police communication facilities in the far-western and Gulf areas, where many of the far-flung police stations have to rely upon telephonic communication, which, in many instances, can frequently be rendered useless by storms and other forms of damage, such as the recent floods.

In this day and age of sophisticated forms of wireless and radio-telephone communication, it is difficult to understand the cheese-paring, parsimonious attitude of the State Government in deliberately denying these means of immediate communication to the isolated areas that I have mentioned. The Government has failed to provide sufficient funds to the Police Department for the purchase of these vital forms of communication, and therefore stands condemned for its failure in this respect.

I trust that this deficiency in police communications in the Gulf and far-western areas has now been recognised by this Government and will be rectified as speedily as possible. This is a matter that cannot wait. It must be acted upon immediately if lives are to be saved in a repetition of the recent disaster that befell the people of the Gulf and western areas of Queensland. I hope that in the light of recent events the Government will now face up to its responsibilities and not dilly-dally, as it has done in the past.

Finally, as a trustee of the North-West Queensland Flood Relief Fund, which was launched by the mayor of Mt. Isa in co-ordination with the city council for the benefit of flood victims throughout North-west Queensland, and on behalf of the board of trustees and victims of the flood who will benefit from this fund, I wish to express heartfelt thanks to the warm-hearted people who donated so generously to this fund which, to date totals \$338,169. Of that sum \$252,500 has been subscribed by the Queensland Flood Victims Committee, the sum of \$33,500 by the residents of Mackay, which was presented by the member for Mackay during a recent visit to Mt. Isa, and \$52,169 by the residents of Mt. Isa and districts as well as individual subscribers from other areas.

This has been a most heart-warming response to such an appeal for financial assistance, and I hope that those who responded so generously and willingly will be justly rewarded in some way for the assistance they gave the unfortunate victims of the north-western and Gulf flood disaster.

**Mr. CHINCHEN** (Mt. Gravatt) (9.14 p.m.): I wholeheartedly support the motion and offer my deep sympathy to those people who suffered severely throughout the State. Having visited Karumba, Normanton and other north-western areas, I am very conscious of what must have happened in that part of Queensland. Perhaps the people of Brisbane have been more fortunate than those in the North, because here we were able to fall back on resources of manpower, materials, transport and Army units. By contrast, the people of Karumba returned to their town and found nothing. I trust that it will not be long before they, too, will get back on an even keel.

I wish to take a few moments to compliment all those people who played such a valiant part in helping to relieve the effects of the disaster. It is impossible to mention the numerous people and organisations that were involved. Their actions show that when things get tough the average Australian will hop in and do his bit.

As has been mentioned, with the benefit of hindsight we can make a lot of improvements. However, what was done, and the time in which it was done, was remarkable, and restores one's faith in human nature.

I wondered whether Somerset Dam played its part on this occasion and if it was being used for the purpose for which it was designed. I took the trouble to look at the preliminary report to see what people of the time thought as to the effect of the dam. A very high-powered committee was formed and made a report on 27 April, 1933. It consisted of Mr. J. R. Kemp (the then Commissioner of Main Roads), Mr. Fison (Engineer and Nautical Surveyor, Department of Harbours and Marine), Mr. Nimmo

(Designing Engineer, Main Roads Commission), Mr. Morris (Superintendent of Technical Education), Mr. Salisbury (Officer in Charge, Department of Irrigation and Water Supply), Mr. Brigden (Director of the Bureau of Industry), who was the chairman, and Mr. D. C. L. Smith (Bureau of Industry), who was secretary. These officers carried out an enormous amount of work, and went into the position very thoroughly. The committee was named, "Special Committee on Brisbane Water Supply and Flood Prevention." It is interesting to note this term of reference—

"Preventing or mitigating the damage caused by floods in the Brisbane River, having regard to the possibility of precipitations exceeding those recorded in 1893."

Even then people realised that the records of 1893 could be beaten. The committee had to consider flood control, and the degree of flood control that would be afforded. Reference was made to flood warnings, river gauging and the proper supply and collection of information for the operation of a system of flood control. The committee made a very complete report. In its recommendations the committee found, after its preliminary investigations, that certain improvements could be carried out on the river at Brisbane by expenditure not exceeding £500,000, together with either a dam at Little Mount Brisbane, at a certain cost, or a dam at Middle Creek. Little Mount Brisbane is the site of Somerset Dam. In its final recommendations the committee came to the conclusion that the dam at Little Mount Brisbane was the one that should be built. It said—

"provide for flood mitigation as follows:—

- (i) With a dam at Little Mount Brisbane, under average conditions, for the virtual prevention of all floods which would now reach heights of up to 20 feet at the Port Office, and for the substantial reduction of higher floods;"

The committee made its recommendation on that basis. I point out that Mr. Morris submitted a minority report and favoured the Middle Creek Dam which will become the Wivenhoe Dam that is now under consideration. He thought it would be the better one because it had greater flood-prevention possibilities.

Under the heading, "Constructing and Operating Authority," the committee said in its report—

"The State may be concerned with the dam as a source of irrigation supply. Neither in its construction nor in its operation will a dam of the size proposed be a matter for the City of Brisbane only . . ."

As my time, by arrangement, is very limited, I shall have to restrict my comments on this occasion. The committee said that the operation of the dam should be under

some clearly defined authority, which means that it should not be under the sole control of the Brisbane City Council, as it is today.

After reading this report and realising what the dam was designed to achieve, I wonder why it did not live up to expectations. I know full well that, on this occasion, all the rain did not fall in the Stanley River catchment area. During the 1893 flood only 12.8 per cent of the rain fell in that catchment area.

In this report figures were quoted as to the effect the dam should have on river heights at the Port Office. This was not borne out. I am inclined to think that what has happened is that the Brisbane City Council is using this dam for water storage when it was designed for water storage and flood mitigation. The flood mitigation area has gone. I do not know how much water was in the dam prior to the heavy rain that led to the flooding, and I would be interested to know.

I am convinced that the original intention of the designers of this dam and the committee is not being carried out at this moment. If this is the case, I am disturbed. What will happen with the Wivenhoe Dam? We are talking about flood mitigation. If that dam is handed over to the Brisbane City Council, it will be used for water storage so that sprinklers can be used. There will be no doubt about the supply of water for the city of Ipswich and the city of Brisbane, but flood mitigation will again be forgotten and again we could have a disaster such as that we have just experienced. This report contains an enormous wealth of information. This passage is very interesting—

"The Dam and the Improvements at Brisbane.—The effects of the proposed river improvements at Brisbane have been discussed. The flood-reducing effects of the dam and these works together would prevent all minor floods, and reduce others. A 20-ft. flood would be reduced to about 14 ft. A 25-ft. flood would be reduced to about 17½ ft., which flood would not be likely to occur more often than once in 100 years."

Now we have had one, and we were still seriously flooded although Somerset Dam exists.

A booklet I received from the Parliamentary Library, issued in 1950, describes the dam, its capacity and other features. It reads—

"Thus, approximately one-quarter of the storage capacity is reserved for water supply, and the remaining capacity will be available for flood storage, and this will greatly mitigate the effects of all floods which may occur."

That was the intention, but what has happened? It has had almost no effect. I thoroughly agree with the original committee that a responsible authority should be in charge of this dam, should collect all the

information necessary for the handling of the dam and should reduce the supply in that dam prior to the wet season so that it would take its capacity and act as a flood mitigation scheme, which was the original intention.

The Minister responsible for an investigation of this nature should find out what was the level of the dam. Was three-quarters of the storage available for flood mitigation? Of course it wasn't. It is being used by the council for water supply and no other reason. I am aware that Brisbane has grown and more people live here. Maybe this proportion could not be adhered to exactly. But what has been happening in the provision of additional water supply facilities so that the flood mitigation area of that dam is preserved? Brisbane has suffered enormously because of this lack of action on the part of the Brisbane City Council.

Furthermore, at a time when water from the dam had no effect on Brisbane, why should the Lord Mayor, as an individual, say, "I will close those gates. To hell with Kilcoy."? It was a great political gesture. This is the reason a responsible authority must handle dams of this nature, which the original committee pointed out. Somehow or other the Lord Mayor has enormous power and he himself says when the gates will be opened and when they will be closed. This is a disgrace. He has a responsibility to this city for what has occurred.

There has been a good deal of talk today about people upstream not being acquainted with the flood situation. This goes back to April 1955 when a climatology consultative committee, including the Commonwealth and all States, made original arrangements about who was responsible for providing this sort of data. It was agreed then, and the agreement was conveyed to the Brisbane City Council, that the Bureau of Meteorology would provide the heights from the Port Office, and that the conversion of those heights and the dissemination of that information was to be made by the Brisbane City Council. That was acknowledged by Mr. Brown, a Brisbane City Council engineer at that time. That was again stated in November 1966. The same arrangement was made again. The Brisbane City Council was to provide the service of converting the Port Office readings supplied by the Bureau of Meteorology and disseminating this information.

Furthermore, the Brisbane City Council was asked on that date for a 24-hour telephone so that its officers could be contacted and given this information at any hour. I understand that that was done. The system worked during the flood in June 1967 and the flood of 1972. Only last year there was a dummy run of the 1893 flood, and this arrangement was again confirmed. Readings from the Port Office, Ipswich and Mt. Crosby were supplied by the Bureau of Meteorology. The conversions for the Brisbane River in the City of Brisbane

were the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council, as was the dissemination of that information. The council is aware of this responsibility, and carries it out. However, on this occasion somehow or other the information never reached the radio stations. This was solely the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council. This is not fully understood, but the Brisbane City Council knows it. It is a matter that should be made quite clear.

In March 1971, the same arrangement was again confirmed. The Brisbane City Council has the responsibility of converting the readings for other areas, and disseminating such information. Here again the Brisbane City Council let the people of Brisbane down very badly.

Another matter that I should like to refer to in the few minutes remaining to me is a statement made by Mr. Morrison. An earlier speaker referred to it casually; I want to go into it in a little more depth. When Mr. Morrison was here, I presume that he was taken round by, if not the Leader of the Opposition, one of the senior members of the Opposition. He must have been very ill-informed, because he said—

"Many of the flooded areas have been zoned irresponsibly for housing and industrial development. Zoning is a State responsibility, and they will have to give local government power to execute responsible zoning."

Every member in this Chamber knows what has happened in this State. Everyone knows that local authorities produce their own zoning plans, and they hope the public will go to them with objections. They then work out what they think should be done. It is on their recommendation that zoning takes place. Local authorities therefore have this power today. Unfortunately it has been badly executed. Irresponsible zoning has taken place, and the city is paying for it now.

Again, the people get the impression from A.L.P. members who do not tell the truth that this is the responsibility of the State Government. It is in fact the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council. In the zoning of Bellbowrie, which was done by the Brisbane City Council, I know that the Main Roads Department informed the Brisbane City Council that this was unwise development. However, that advice was ignored. The civil engineer who worked on road construction there said, "This is ridiculous. This is well below the flood area". He was told, "Go ahead and do it." I am speaking now of the developers of the estate. They contacted the Brisbane City Council and were told, "All right, go ahead." The civil engineer said, "I will, but I don't like it."

The Main Roads Department advised the Brisbane City Council that this development was stupid, but the developers have gone ahead and carried it out. What can be done with a local authority such as that?

The building up of ponding areas; ill-advised zoning; issuing building permits for areas where building should not be allowed (or, if it is allowed, different heights should be demanded)—all these things come back to the local authority. When a person such as the honourable member for Redlands stands up and says that this is a State responsibility, does he want us to take these powers from local authorities and do this job ourselves? I am inclined to think that that would be a good thing. In the light of the irresponsible attitude of the Brisbane City Council, perhaps this is what should be done. However, that is the indication of the honourable member for Redlands.

I leave the matter on that note. The Brisbane City Council has enormous responsibilities in this whole matter. It wants to throw those responsibilities onto the shoulders of someone else, but they must rest where they belong. I repeat that the Brisbane City Council has enormous responsibilities.

I am pleased to have been associated with this motion, and I trust that never again will we see a flood like the last one in Brisbane.

**Mr. CASEY (Mackay)** (9.30 p.m.): Since the coming of the wet to Queensland, I have been in various areas of the State—from north of Cairns to Coolangatta, from Goondiwindi to the Gulf, from Townsville to the Far West. The only area that I have not been in personally is the South-west of the State, and I have been in touch with people in that area. The observations I make in this debate are my own observations as a result of discussions on the spot with people who have been affected by the flooding in Queensland.

Last week, before returning to Brisbane for this meeting of Parliament, I visited the north-western and Gulf areas of the State. With the typical humour of Outback Queenslanders, the thing that is on the lips of the people of that area of the State, almost to a man, is the poem written by Richard Magoffin that has received considerable publicity. I think it is worth putting on record this evening the first verse of that poem, which reads—

“When the Mitchell grass is growing and  
the inland rivers flowing,

When they’ve swollen with the run-off  
from the great monsoonal rain;

When the Flinders grass is seeding and  
the stock are fat and feeding,

We’ll forget about the hardships and  
we’ll praise this land again.”

Possibly that is the intention of this debate—that we should move on from the hardship and again praise the State of Queensland.

As honourable members know, the poem contains some comments that are particularly hard on the Premier of this State. But I think he must shoulder that burden on

behalf of all officialdom in the State of Queensland; he must shoulder it on behalf of all responsible authorities that are in any way connected with the administration of the affairs of Queenslanders. I think it is incumbent upon us, as members of Parliament, to bear equally our share of the load relative to what should and should not happen in the future.

At the beginning of the debate the Premier asked for constructive debate and comments, and I look forward to the printing of the reports that he tabled so that each one of us can get a fair picture from the officialdom of this State of what actually occurred. We are already aware that many lessons have to be learnt.

As the Premier said, Mackay is one of the areas in which the big wet began, and even today Mackay is still cut off by road from areas both north and south of it and people are running short of perishable commodities. Honourable members heard me ask a question earlier today about the shortage of “cool cars” for railway transportation, which is the only means of transport in and out of the city. Roads are completely impassable throughout the area of North Queensland in which the wet has been continuous. At least it is fine in Brisbane and the sun has come out. I suggest that parts of the North of this State have seen the sun for no more than eight to 10 days since the beginning of last December, and that is no exaggeration. If the weather does become fine and the sun comes out, local authorities attempt to patch the roads and do something constructive and worth while, but then the rain comes down again and destroys the maintenance work that they have done.

As I have moved round other parts of the State, people who have seen reports in the newspapers have said to me, “You have problems in your own area.” I say to them, “To us it is just another big wet.” I should say that this is typical of the attitude of people from the Cairns, Innisfail, Ingham and Tully areas, and honourable members heard from the honourable member for Mourilyan earlier in this debate. North Queenslanders know and understand the problems and hardships that can be created by floods, and they also know and understand the problems of isolation and remoteness from the seat of Government when such problems occur.

I should like honourable members to know that during the wet season about 2,500 cars of holidaymakers caught in the North by the heavy floods through the Christmas period and during January had to be railed south from Mackay because people could not move by road. I have great praise for the railwaymen of the area, and I suggest to the Minister for Transport that, when additional holidays are being given to the police and others who participated in flood-relief work, he should give more consideration to the railwaymen in certain areas of the State



who worked hard under terribly adverse conditions. In my own area, I know that, in addition to their ordinary work, railwaymen loaded more than 2,000 cars in order to help people leave the wet North and return to the safety and security of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and even Brisbane, for that matter, away from the problems that they were experiencing up there. To us those problems were every-day occurrences, but to them they were something severe and disruptive in their ordinary lives. The railwaymen in the Mackay district and other districts—I know they did the same in Rockhampton, too—got out in the wet and in the cold rain, and all they got for their work and their extra efforts was criticism.

People wrote to me from as far away as Adelaide commenting on holidaymakers who had returned from the North and spoken on radio talk-back sessions, making great play of the way they were and were not treated in North Queensland. I say they were treated pretty well, particularly by the railwaymen in my own area.

There are some problems that clearly arise when severe hold-ups occur. As I said earlier, even now Funnel Creek, Prospect Creek and Connors River on the main Bruce Highway are causing hold-ups. Many honourable members would know these areas well. People are being delayed by those streams, but despite that fact people will try to travel through. If a person is travelling anywhere in the North he should carry a stock of food to last him for a couple of days. If he thinks there might be dangers or problems, he should examine the weather conditions. He should not travel if there are likely to be any problems. Unknowing travellers do not take these precautions. They will not accept the advice of locals. They get into their cars, and away they go. Police attempt to put up barricades in safe areas in order to prevent them from going on too far, being blocked by one creek and then being trapped by a rising creek behind them. They then become a liability and a burden. Police and other civilian personnel of this State have to go to great trouble, at risk to their own lives, to get into these areas and take food to these stranded travellers, because they know that as soon as the travellers get into these areas there will be trouble. They have to be evacuated.

Just the other day, despite months of criticism of this type of thing, people deliberately went around barriers and were caught between two flooded creeks on the Bruce Highway between Mackay and Rockhampton. Women and young babies had to be ferried out at risk to those who were assisting them.

If the declaration of a state of emergency would help by permitting legal action to prevent such behaviour, I am all for it. Certainly, under existing legislation we cannot do anything. I think this is something

that has to be carefully looked at. The police can go out and put up barricades, but in law they have no right to do it. It would appear that the district engineer from the Main Roads Department can have some say in the matter; but there has to be something serious, such as a bridge washed away, before they can declare the road no longer trafficable. So legally they are tied down, too. All that can happen is for a policeman to stand at a barricade and issue a \$10 on-the-spot ticket to somebody for failing to observe police instructions, or some such thing; but that does not stop the motorist. He can get the ticket, drive past, and continue on, becoming a burden not only to himself and his passengers but also to those in responsible positions. This is something that has to be looked at very closely in the future.

Let me touch on the subject of communications, which has been mentioned earlier. In this day and age, when we can talk to a man on the moon 24 hours a day, it is perhaps ridiculous to consider that it is virtually impossible for an officer in one police station in the North-west or Gulf areas of this State to communicate with another because of the lack of communication equipment. This is something that has been canvassed fairly widely during the debate in this House, but I strongly support the updating of the communication network throughout country areas so that constant communications can be maintained with and between them. People are then better enabled to know what the situation is. Even now, in the absence of adequate communication facilities, it is impossible to ascertain the true situation in some of the flood areas of this State without going there, either on the ground or flying over in a helicopter, and making an on-the-spot assessment. In some areas the flying doctor network is being used for communications, but this is fraught with danger, as you would well know, Mr. Speaker, from experience in your own area. The flying doctor network is one that is normally responsible for the safety of people. That is its main concern. It is its main use. I believe we should have an additional communications network.

Also, information centres should be set up in the vicinity of trouble spots on highways, to which motorists can go and obtain correct and proper information. This must be tied in with the communications network. Some members of this House may have had this experience—I do not know—but it is virtually impossible to get a true picture of what the flooding is like on roads in these areas. If one listens to the radio stations one hears the latest R.A.C.Q. reports but 99 times out of 100 I have found them very much off beam. If one goes to the police station for a report, it is usually very much off beam, too. In fact, I would be prepared to go on record as saying that if anyone wishes to know whether he can

get from one place to another in a time of flood in this State, the second-last organisation to ask is the R.A.C.Q. and the last place is a police station. This is of course, because of our poor communications set-up.

I think these are some of our main requirements along with the warning systems that have already been mentioned. We have heard much talk about the height of the Brisbane River at the Port Office. Surely to goodness the people of Brisbane have enough common sense to know whether they reside uphill or downhill from the Port Office. Surely they have enough common sense to gain from the indications given to them some idea as to whether the water is still rising or falling.

My heart goes out to people who stayed on in places like Normanton and Karumba during this flood, when the great mass of water was streaming down the three main rivers—the Gilbert, the Norman and the Flinders—which had joined in a stream 150 miles wide. No-one knew what height it would reach or what the rainfall in the area had been. There are no river-heights recording stations anywhere up there. The people had to sit it out to see what height the water would reach. It became very dangerous for some of those who stayed in Karumba when they were left with only four feet of dry land, and less in some areas. In one particular spot they had four feet of dry land, the open sea in front of them and this massive flood behind them, and they did not know how high the rivers would rise.

Much has been said about civil defence, and we have heard two different opinions. One honourable member said that people would not come out when they were warned, and another said that at one stage some came out too soon.

Two Ministers touched on matters of civil defence but I would say that no fresh comment has been made here today about civil defence. Some Ministers in particular should take more notice of some of the points raised in debate in this Parliament, because all the points raised in this debate on civil defence have been raised previously. I have raised them and the honourable member for Sandgate and others have raised a considerable number of them.

At last we have a precedent established for the forms of Government assistance that are available. I do not want to go into them or canvass them here, but I should like to say that every area should be properly acquainted with this information. Officers of the Justice Department, the staffs of the various Clerk of the Court offices throughout the State and others who will be responsible for administering the scheme in the future, should be properly informed and trained in administering it. This has become a problem. It is all very well in Brisbane where teams can quickly refer back to their

head office should some problem arise which is not clearly and properly set out in the circular, but not so for anyone in Croydon, Georgetown, Julia Creek or Nonda who only has the circular which had been sent or, in many cases, only a telegram giving instructions. It becomes very difficult for even the best public servants in those areas to understand properly how they should administer the flood relief scheme. A distinct gap exists. Staff should be properly trained and the figures for their use continuously updated. In fact, we should give further consideration to backing them up with legislation.

Much has been said about insurance, especially storm-and-tempest cover. I again raise a very important point on storm and tempest. The premiums for storm-and-tempest cover should be equated throughout the length and breadth of the State. During the earlier sittings in this session this matter was canvassed fully by me and by other North Queensland members. On the very first day of the earlier sittings I raised it, and I know that throughout the session it was continually referred to by other honourable members.

As the Insurance Commissioner has been asked to examine the definition of "storm and tempest", he should also be asked to look at the administration of storm-and-tempest cover and the way in which premiums are adversely loaded in the northern areas of the State. Surely the people of Brisbane now realise that they can suffer just as much damage from storm and tempest as can those people who live in Cairns, Cooktown, Georgetown and other places in the Far North. Therefore it is only fair and honest that all persons who are prepared to take out storm-and-tempest cover should pay equal premiums.

I realise that we are attempting to confine the debate in order to give as many members as possible an opportunity to speak. Nevertheless I should like to refer to a few final points. I have heard statements made to the effect that quantities of materials were held in Brisbane to ensure that the local residents could be supplied with timber, corrugated iron, and so on in order to rebuild or repair their homes. But what about the people in the remote areas of the State? In Normanton, for example, I witnessed a man and his daughter scavenging along the banks of the river in an endeavour to obtain some corrugated iron to replace the roof on part of their home to make it habitable. The river bank was the only place where they could hope to find corrugated iron. I fully realise the difficulties that are entailed in transporting building materials to places like Normanton, but in a crisis such as a flood when we are dealing with people—the citizens of Queensland—we should do our utmost to provide immediate assistance not only to those who live in Brisbane or on the Gold Coast—or for that matter in Mackay or Cairns—but also to those who live in the

remote areas of the State. After all, there are not many of them, so that any additional transport costs could easily be borne by everybody in the State.

In many respects the North and North-west are on the crook end of the stick. Throughout the length and breadth of the North the people have become heartily sick of the political rows that have developed in Brisbane. We have seen evidence in this Chamber today of such political arguments.

After the floods in Brisbane, industry was back on its feet reasonably quickly. I know that some small concerns still have problems, but generally speaking as soon as the flood waters receded industry was quickly back on its feet. In contrast, it will be months and months before the cattle industry in the North and the North-west will be able to make a proper assessment of losses. It is all very well for some honourable members to talk about the wealthy graziers and the big grazing companies. What of the ringers, the fencers, the handymen on stations, the transport drivers who cart fuel backwards and forwards, the fellows who work on the cattle trains, the stockmen, and all the other ordinary people in the Outback who are suffering from the floods? They are just as entitled to be put back on their feet as anyone else.

As recently as last week I met people in the North who had not even received their first Social Services cheque some five or six weeks after the flood forced them out of work. For two to three weeks no-one was available to take an application form from them, and when someone was able to accept the form it had to go by devious means to Cairns and then to Townsville, whence, because of different administrative instructions, a letter had to be sent to the employer asking if the claimant had in fact been employed and was out of work. Through no fault of their own, these people had to wait as long as five or six weeks. In spite of this, they battled on and moreover helped their fellow North Queenslanders back on their feet. They could not reach their places of employment through the floodwaters, so they set about doing something useful without complaint. They did not sit on their backsides and "holler" as is happening in so many other places.

We must look at the over-all expenditure in various areas of the State. People of the Mackay district and other areas, including Townsville, would give anything to have bridges spanning Connors River and Funnel Creek like those we can see from Parliament House. The people of Proserpine and the Tully Plains area would love to have built-up roadways to move essential goods and maintain essential services instead of having them in profusion in Brisbane. They have experienced disaster time and time again.

I believe that we should say to all local authorities throughout the State, "You must look at building conditions in flood areas."

One very important point that the committee set up by the Federal and State Governments should look into is the purchase of breeders for the beef industry from the Northern Territory or the North-western part of Western Australia. We should move now to purchase breeders before the problem becomes too difficult to overcome. The Gulf country is one of the main cattle-breeding areas in Queensland. Honourable members who are conversant with stock know that the problem will not be overcome immediately the floods recede. It will be at least three years before store cattle are turned off from these areas.

I suppose it is an ill wind that does not blow some good. I feel sorry for the people of Brisbane who suffered during the flood. However, it has at least brought an awareness to them of the many hardships experienced for years by people in other parts of the State. Many complaints raised by honourable members from other areas of the State will now be brought to their attention. I ask the people of Brisbane to lift up their heads and look at the rest of the State to see the hardships experienced by others. I ask them to learn to carry their own hardships. If we all do this we will all be able to praise this land again.

**Mr. BROMLEY** (South Brisbane) (9.53 p.m.): I express my sympathy and that of Mrs. Bromley to all the people of Queensland adversely affected by the tragic 1973-74 flood. I include people with properties and people with businesses throughout the State, people whose homes were devastated, and people who lost everything. There are young and old people, whose possessions may have been small, who lost their all. The traumatic experiences of some of these people were probably such that they may never recover fully. Professors and doctors at our universities and hospitals who are expert in this field have said that it may take many years for people to recover from their traumatic experiences. I believe that they will certainly remember what they went through.

When I spoke to some of the older flood victims I found that their reaction was almost identical to that of older people who lost their homes as a result of freeway resumptions. The majority of old people affected by freeway resumptions have not recovered from the shock.

I pay tribute to all the people and organisations who did a tremendous job in assisting unfortunate flood victims, including members of the Police Force, the Army and other services, the Young Labor Association, B.W.I.U. members and other union members, and many other people too numerous to mention. I believe that we should pay tribute to the various TV channels and radio stations, and to all those people who donated

very generously in many ways. I do not think that enough praise can be bestowed upon them. Others include the Salvation Army and several religious and charitable organisations.

Many tragic stories could be told about the flood. I do not intend to do that. However, I have received many complaints from people who applied at Government relief centres for assistance. Some of the people who contacted me were householders and small business owners. They were refused assistance for various reasons.

One sad case that I think I should cite concerned a young woman with a child who was refused financial help. I shall explain the case briefly because I think it is tragic. Her husband, who was a truck driver, was killed in a motor vehicle accident last year. Unfortunately, she lost everything in the flood. The day before the flood, a cheque arrived for \$5,000, which was small compensation for the loss of her husband. She banked the cheque and showed her bank statement to the official at the centre. She was told that she could not be given help because she had that amount. She explained that the \$5,000 was compensation for the loss of her husband.

I advised her what to do with respect to her claim and asked her to contact me if she did not achieve any success. She has not contacted me so I hope that her claim has since been viewed sympathetically. If the cheque, which was small compensation, had arrived a week or two weeks after the flood, she would have been eligible for immediate assistance. The \$5,000 should be forgotten in this case because it was compensation for her husband's death in an accident. I sincerely hope that this lady has received some financial assistance.

What about other people who had slightly more than the early limit of \$1,000? I stress "early" because I know that it has been increased since. What about the unfortunate people who lost heavily mortgaged houses? They still have to pay the money they owe on their mortgages. I could cite many cases but I have not the time available and I do not think I should go into them anyway.

Several areas in my electorate have suffered severely for scores of years and I have appealed in this House and other places on many occasions for flood mitigation in those areas.

I shall now mention complaints that I have received from businessmen and try to further their case for assistance. I do not know exactly what the situation is at the moment. I know that immediately after the flood these businessmen were not getting any hearing, let alone any finance. Many of them telephoned me and came to see me. I advised them the best I could and explained the situation. I subsequently visited many small businesses in West End, South Brisbane, Rocklea, among other places, and it is true

to say that they were almost ruined. Many businessmen told me that if they did not obtain urgently needed assistance and financial help they would have to close down, dismiss employees, and look for other jobs. Some of these people employ three or four, and even up to 12 or 15 people. Naturally we do not want to see any business, small or large, fold up. I think I can fairly say that large businesses have a better chance of rehabilitating themselves than small ones. I am concerned with the continued progress of them all, as I think are all members in this House. Small businesses have to get started immediately, otherwise they will never get started again.

There is obviously too much red tape involved. This is evidenced by an article in the "Express" of 27 February 1974 by the Honourable F. A. Campbell, Minister for Development and Industrial Affairs, in which he said that firms are urged to seek finance. Of course, we have all been urging them to do this, and they have been trying to help themselves. But, I repeat, they have not been receiving assistance, and this is pointed out in the article by Mr. Campbell. I do not know whether, when he released this statement, he knew that they were not getting much assistance at all. The article is headed, "Firms are urged to seek finance. Victims of flood". It reads—

"... Mr. F. Campbell has urged eligible industries and small businesses affected by the flood to apply for assistance.

"To date, his Department of Commercial and Industrial Development, which is administering the scheme, has despatched 330 application forms, but only 100 have been completed and lodged.

"Mr. Campbell said he anticipated applications would reach 1,000."

From what I saw of the devastation, I think there will be more than that number. So far, only 77 of the applicants have been interviewed. Only 90 instructions to inspect premises have been issued, and 54 of the inspections have been completed. According to the article, loans so far approved total only \$42,300. This concerns me, because I have spoken to so many people who have said that they will have to fold up if they do not receive some finance.

I urge the Premier and the Minister to cut some of the red tape involved. Mr. Campbell went on to say that the fund was not a "give-away". I agree that it is not a "give-away", but that is a fairly hard-hearted statement to make. He also goes on to say that applicants have to provide suitable security against loans. I do not believe that they should be required to have suitable security. I believe that they should be assisted in all ways. We have to cut the red tape and review the system completely if, as I believe it is, the Government is fair dinkum about keeping business activities going. I think it is necessary to

get firms on their feet and operating, and then investigate claims if necessary. That would be a fairly simple thing to do.

I doubt if really searching inquiries need to be made. I have seen many flood-affected businesses, and a visit to the place where a business was conducted is sufficient to show immediately that it has been ruined. One has only to look here and there to see what sort of a business it was. One should then look at the bank account of the business, and any possible or probable insurance cover. A loan should be made available immediately, and the business would be back in operation. That is what needs to be done to get businesses started. I am very sincere about this, because, if businesses are not helped immediately, they will not start up again, and employment opportunities will be lost.

By way of flood compensation, people living in War Service homes were a little more fortunate than those occupying other homes. Quite a few people got in touch with me and said that they had been in touch with the War Service Homes Division, which had said, "Not to worry. You are automatically covered." They were told that their homes would be renovated completely as new. They were lucky to be covered by flood insurance.

I believe that the Queensland Housing Commission should take similar action. It would not do much harm if it did so. It is many years since a flood of such magnitude occurred, and it may be many years before another occurs; on the other hand it may not be as long as that.

Let us have a brief look, Mr. Speaker, at insurance and the legal jargon and the technical definitions of "storm and tempest" and "rainwater" in insurance policies. This is taken from my insurance policy. "Storm and tempest" means a violent atmospheric disturbance accompanied by high wind or rain, snow or hail, but does not mean persistent bad weather or heavy rain or persistent rain by itself. "Rainwater" means water falling from the sky in the form of rain until such time as it reaches the ground and which falls on the building described in the policy.

Apart from the definitions of "storm and tempest" and "rainwater" in insurance policies, is there a demarcation line as to what constitutes a flood? Rain that falls hits the ground as rainwater, and that is set out in the policy. Yet that same rainwater rises, and the damage is caused by rainwater which, according to the policies of insurance companies, mysteriously become a flood.

I believe that the Premier is looking into the matter, and certainly all insurance companies should look at these clauses in their policies and there should be some clarification of them. I was pleased to read in the Press recently that something is being done along these lines.

I shall now quote from a memo to its field staff (excluding Darwin and Papua-New Guinea) issued by a really big-hearted insurance company, if ever there was one. It was issued by the National Mutual Fire Insurance Company Ltd., and it is headed "Insurance against Flood". It says—

"As a result of the recent disastrous floods in Queensland, many people will suffer serious financial loss as very few would have been insured against this risk.

"All Insurers will receive requests for 'flood cover' as soon as the present crisis is over.

"You will probably receive requests from your policyholders.

"We expect most inquiries to come from people whose homes or premises have been damaged by this flood.

"Unfortunately, we are not able to give flood cover on these properties.

"The following notes are offered to help you explain the reasons for this:—

(1) A basic principle of insurance is that the losses of the few are paid from the premium contributions of many.

Insurable risks therefore must have two main components:—

(a) They must be only possibilities (rather than certainties). This maintains a reasonable balance between funds paid into the pool and funds (claims) drawn out.

(b) They must be possibilities which face a large number of people—yet remain as remote for any of them. This creates a need for protection amongst enough people to create a pool of funds sufficiently large to cover the expectedly few claims.

(2) Relating these two essential components to the risk of flood:—

(a) Flood is almost a certainty in areas where it has occurred before. Therefore the first component is not present.

(b) 'Flood certainty' exists for only a small percentage of the community (unlike the risk of Fire—which exists for everyone). For most of the remainder, it is not even a remote possibility.

Therefore, the second component is not present . . .

(3) If any scheme (other than a compulsory one) was commenced, only the people in known and doubtful flood areas would want insurance.

To make such a scheme financially practicable, those people would have to pay sufficient premium to pay for all flood damage plus the cost of administering the scheme.

In the long term, this could cost them more than the flood damage they sustained.

(4) Government Flood Relief is a practical means of compensation as this is in fact drawn from the contributions of all Australian taxpayers. It is an available means of spreading the losses from National disasters over the whole community.

(5) Government and Local Government authorities should carry some blame. They could refuse permission for the residential or industrial development of flood prone land.

(6) Sadly, there must be some responsibility carried by the property owner victims of floods. River height and land level records are available in most cities and towns for reference by careful property buyers and land developers."

In brackets at the end of this confidential memo is stated—

"This note is one which should be used with discretion. It would do nothing to improve the morale of flood victims."

Honourable members can gather from that that I do not think very highly of some insurance companies. Fancy the Premier, the Minister for Development and Industrial Affairs and the honourable member for Toowong, who spoke a while ago and who is continually living in the 17th century, wanting to stick up for these companies and defend them in every possible way, when they put out confidential memos of that sort and do not want the public to know about them. The honourable member for Aspley (the Minister for Development and Industrial Affairs) had advertisements defending them inserted in the newspapers. To me that is very upsetting. He should first have read that memorandum.

Again I appeal for urgent attention to a flood mitigation scheme for Norman Creek. Every time there is a flash flood people living in the Deshon, which is part of Buranda, Stones Corner and other parts of Buranda are adversely affected. The honourable member for Greenslopes (the Minister for Transport) is well aware of that. In January people in East Brisbane in streets such as Heath Street, Hilton Street, Walter Avenue, Ashfield Street and Clarendon Street all suffered. In addition, people living in Stanley Street East and near the Coorparoo Railway Station were affected. As usual, people living in Norman Street and Longlands Street had a very rough time. The time has long since passed when something should have been done for these people. On several occasions I have appealed in the House on their behalf. To me they seem to be the forgotten people when it comes to flood-mitigation schemes.

I patrolled those areas night and day for the three days of the flood. During the worst period of the flood I continued to travel around to see how things were going.

I was really worried about the whole situation as, of course, were the residents. Some of them were so terrified that eventually they vacated their houses.

It is time that Norman Creek was dredged. It contains huge deposits of silt. It would assist greatly if the silt, pollution and rubbish were cleared from it. I know that a great deal of the trouble is caused by high tides in association with rainwater coming down from the catchment areas. However, it would at least be a start if the rubbish and silt could be dredged from the creek.

**An Honourable Member:** It would be a big help.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** Yes. I agree with the honourable member. He knows a little of the flooding, living as he does near Northey Street.

It might surprise the House to know that many years ago Norman Creek was navigable by large boats from its mouth right up to Stones Corner. In fact supplies were brought right up the creek at that time. But I very much doubt if one could even get a dinghy half way up the creek today. As a matter of fact I know that it could not be done. The honourable member for Greenslopes (the Minister for Transport) agrees with me. I think we could do something about this creek. A woman rang me only tonight to say that she first learned to swim in Norman Creek which, in those days, was a beautiful, clean expanse of water without any rubbish whatever in it.

Another matter which annoys me and residents of the area is the disgraceful habit of filling in land to above flood level for factory sites. I refer particularly to the flood plains in the Deshon estate. One area in Deshon Street is being built up at the moment. I went down there on the Friday before the floods and measured it, and at some parts of the building the land had been built up 6 ft. above the normal flood plain. Therefore the water has to find another level, and it does—in people's homes and yards, in shops and other places.

We all have problems with flooding and we all want to have a flood mitigation scheme. Mine is not a purely parochial speech about my own area. I am worried about other areas as well as my own. Virtually every member of this House has had flood worries in his electorate, and some have worked extremely hard in assisting people in all sorts of ways. They certainly receive my approbation and congratulations.

As a result of this long debate I hope that much good will come out of the disastrous flood of 1973-74. I hope that we will very quickly get on to the building of the Wivenhoe Dam and the implementation of flood mitigation schemes in the Oxley area, my electorate and various other places. I am sure that such projects will save the economy of this city and State many millions of dollars in the future.

**Mr. FRAWLEY** (Murrumba) (10.18 p.m.): The Premier is to be congratulated for giving all members of this House an opportunity to debate the implications of the recent flood damage, but I must say that I am bitterly disappointed with the attitude of some members of the Opposition. Last week some of them, including the Leader of the Opposition, were roaring like lions and ranting about what they were going to do. What have we heard today? Nothing but the mewling of a bunch of tame pussy cats or toothless tigers. If the Opposition had a couple of real leaders instead of ineffectual figureheads, we might have heard something worth while. A party is only as good as its leaders and this explains why the people of Queensland have constantly rejected the A.L.P. over the past 17 years and will continue to do so.

The Premier played no small part in his efforts to thoroughly investigate every avenue of alleviating some of the suffering caused by the recent floods, yet today we heard shameful attempts by some Opposition members to belittle his efforts by asking stupid irrelevant questions about the use of the Government aircraft. The Premier flew many miles in the Government aircraft in his concern for the people of Queensland. By his stupid, childish question this morning as to why the Premier did not land at Normanton or Karumba, the honourable member for South Brisbane displayed the typical attitude and facetiousness of Opposition members towards this debate and showed what little concern they have for the people of Queensland. When I hear questions and statements in this House from Opposition members about the Premier's use of the Government aircraft, I realise that they are simply carrying out their orders, which are to attack the man who opposes centralism.

During the recent floods in this State many areas were devastated, particularly some suburbs of Brisbane and Ipswich. But do not let us forget that other parts of Queensland also suffered. For example, in the Murrumba electorate the south-western section, comprising Camp Mountain and Upper Cedar Creek, was affected greatly and many dairy farmers were forced to tip out their milk for as long as eight days before they could get their supplies through to the milk factory. As a result they suffered severe financial losses. Similarly, the farmers in the Lacey's Creek area suffered a great deal of inconvenience. In fact, six families were completely isolated for four days.

In the brief time at my disposal I wish to congratulate the Pine Rivers Shire Council on its efforts in getting the shire back on its feet. Naturally the shire engineer and his deputy bore the brunt of the planning, and they are to be congratulated on their efforts. In fact, the whole of the council's work-force used every means at their disposal to reopen the roads and get transport moving.

I particularly wish to mention the work carried out in the Upper Cedar Creek area by the Pine Rivers Shire Council, which made every effort to reopen roads and crossings as quickly as possible so that the isolated families could once again obtain supplies of necessary commodities and also deliver milk to the factory across the creek.

The Caboolture Shire Council suffered a great deal of road damage. In fact, a sum of approximately \$1,000,000 will be required to repair damaged roads in its area. Fortunately, or unfortunately—which ever way we look at it—most of the damage was caused to the main roads. The D'Aguiar-Mt. Mee highway was badly eroded by a landslide, and the Kilcoy-Beerwah road was cut off. As well, the small area of Bellthorpe was completely isolated when the bridge across Running Creek was washed away.

In the city of Redcliffe most of the damage occurred to the beaches and roads. Very little damage was done to people's homes, and the ordinary individual did not suffer greatly as a result of the floods. However, through the mayor of Redcliffe and the Redcliffe Apex Club, in conjunction with Channel 9's telethon, the people of Redcliffe donated approximately \$32,000 to help the citizens of Brisbane overcome some of the difficulties that confronted them. I should like to go on record in "Hansard" as congratulating the people of Redcliffe upon their very fine effort.

A matter of grave concern to me and, more particularly, to the people of Dayboro is the fact that a threat is posed by the North Pine Dam. During the recent floods, water was backed up in the Dayboro district in such a manner that it could only be attributed to the dam. I realise that the dam is a necessary part of the Government's water-conservation programme. Nevertheless every effort must be made to ensure that the people of Dayboro are not flooded out in spells of bad weather such as that recently experienced. The people of Dayboro realise that they can expect little help from the Brisbane City Council, led by Lord Mayor Jones, so they look to the Queensland Government for protection.

Anyone in the catchment area of the North Pine Dam who has had dealings with the Brisbane City Council knows from past experience what kind of a rotten deal he will get from the council. A typical example of the Lord Mayor's so-called concern for country people was his order to close the release valves at Somerset Dam. He took that action against the advice of the city council engineers, and his reason for taking it, namely, that it would quickly reduce the flood levels in the Brisbane River, was completely untrue. As the threat to Brisbane had passed, there was no need whatever to keep the dam closed. His action was nothing more than grand-standing in an attempt to gain some cheap political mileage from the disaster. He realised that

he would not win any votes in a country area, so all he was concerned about was looking after the people of Brisbane. He did not care one iota for the people of Kilcoy. The chairman of the Kilcoy Shire Council, Councillor McAulay, pleaded with the Lord Mayor to open the flood release valves before another 40 homes in Kilcoy were inundated. As it was, 12 were under water. Eventually the Minister for Works and Housing was able to persuade the Lord Mayor to open the valves.

Through the local newspaper, I have advised the people of Kilcoy, as well as those in the Neurum district outside Woodford, to sue the Brisbane City Council. I have received legal advice to the effect that, if they sue the council for damage caused to their properties as a result of the closure of the release valves at Somerset Dam, they will have an excellent chance of winning their cases.

Flooding was accentuated at Neurum, where the prison has been established, by the closure of the valves. Many farmers suffered, power lines were covered and roads were cut off unnecessarily as a result of the rotten, unprincipled action taken by Brisbane's Lord Mayor.

The Mary Smokes Creek Bridge, which is on the D'Augilar Highway and right on the border between the Kilcoy and Caboolture Shires, was under water and remained submerged for a longer period than was necessary. As a result, the Kilcoy farmers were unable to deliver their milk to the Caboolture factory, which, because of the flooding of Q.U.F. in Brisbane, was supplying most of the metropolitan area.

Previously the bridge at Mary Smokes Creek has been flooded as a result of the closure of the release valves at Somerset Dam. I urge the Co-ordinator-General's Department to look into this matter with a view to preventing further disruption to farming operations in the Kilcoy area.

As a member of this Government I am concerned not only with my own electorate, but with the whole of the State of Queensland, a concern which, I might add, is shared by other Government members. I shall be generous and say that I believe Opposition Members care about some of the people in Queensland. While they do not care about primary producers, they at least care about some of the people.

The recent attempt by A.L.P. leaders to bring politics into the Queensland flood disaster was absolutely disgusting. I am certain that the people of Queensland will not forget their tactics in a hurry. Many of the statements about looting and profiteering emanated from the Trades Hall. These people threw a smoke-screen over the situation in an attempt to urge the Premier to declare a state of emergency. What a lot of rubbish they engaged in! There was no need to declare a state of emergency. Bart Lourigan, the A.L.P. secretary, called

for the declaration of a state of emergency. He said that in 1971 the Premier had no hesitation in declaring a state of emergency over the Springbok tour.

**Mr. Bromley:** That is true.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** Of course he did because he was dealing with radicals and Communists, with sit-down Senator Georges and the honourable member for Everton stirring up all the trouble they could. Why wouldn't the Premier declare a state of emergency to stop some of these lawless radicals?

Senator Georges recently showed where he stands by lining up with the Viet Cong. He signed an appeal in "The Australian" for recognition of the Viet Cong, as did Senators McClelland, O'Byrne and Cameron, and Mr. Lamb of the House of Representatives. I challenge anyone in this House to prove how the declaration of a state of emergency could have improved flood relief. Every Government department did what it was capable of doing and no declaration of emergency could have made anything better than it was.

Arch Bevis of the Transport Workers' Union—the honourable member for Brisbane should be concerned about this, because he is his stooge in this Parliament—put in his two-cents' worth by saying that the Premier's leadership during the flood was weak and insipid. What a stupid statement to make! I could be forgiven for thinking that Arch Bevis was referring to the ineffectual leadership displayed by the Leader of the Opposition in this Parliament in the past 18 months. The Premier is to be congratulated on the part he played in Queensland's crisis. If every political leader had displayed as much concern as the Premier instead of attempting to make cheap political gain out of the misfortunes that occurred, this State, as a whole, would have benefited.

I suggest that, in future, Mr. Whitlam will be known as "the dry-foot leader". He did not even get his feet wet. He arrived in Brisbane a fortnight after the floods occurred, after completing his eighth or ninth overseas trip, taking with him a plane-load of free-loaders.

The Leader of the Opposition found fault with everything the Queensland Government did during the flood. Nothing suited him. It was easy to see that he was instructed by his bosses at the Trades Hall to knock everything worth while being done by the Queensland Government.

Another staunch Labor supporter, that is, Mike Minehan of Channel 9, also played his part in attempting to denigrate the Premier. I have it on good authority that Mike Minehan openly boasted at Channel 9 on the afternoon of the interview with the Premier that he was going to make his reputation through the interview. He failed miserably, and, by his attitude, left no-one in doubt about his one-side political



beliefs. Nobody objects to any TV interviewer probing and asking leading questions, but that can be done in a courteous manner, not in the rude and somewhat uncouth style adopted on this occasion by Mike Minehan. I certainly hope that the powers that be at Channel 9 see that this does not occur again when a political leader is interviewed. I do not care whether an A.L.P., D.L.P., Liberal or Country Party leader is interviewed; he must be given courteous treatment, not the unprincipled treatment Mike Minehan gave the Premier of Queensland. Probably Mike Minehan has been listening to Melbourne's homosexual Graham Kennedy on some of his Friday night attempts to denigrate the Premier of this State.

Recently some Johnny-come-lately of Clontarf, whose name is not even on the electoral roll, wrote an article to "The Redcliffe Herald" claiming that the Premier was "way out" because of his attitude to the Federal Government. I fully support the Premier's attitude towards the Federal Government. We do not want to be part of a great, centralist monopoly. The give-away Labor group in Queensland would sell out the whole State to the Federal Government. It would give away the Torres Strait islands and, before long, we would find ourselves under the domination of the Reds.

A rumour was spread that even the Hornibrook Highway was closed during the flood, when, in fact, it was the only means of egress to the north. That was another attempt by the A.L.P. to capitalise on the flood. Its whole platform is based on untruths.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for Works on the part he played in the flood crisis. I also congratulate other Ministers on their efforts, and I know that back-benchers on both sides of the House deserve to be congratulated on the assistance they rendered.

I should like to point out that the Premier has been generous in his thanks to Federal Ministers for flood assistance, but I have not heard one Opposition member today pay any tribute to the Premier for the unflinching work he carried out in the crisis. Why are they not decent? Why do they not stand up and give the Premier the congratulations that he deserves for the work he has done during this flood?

The whole State of Queensland should be immensely proud of the manner in which people from all walks of life rallied in time of need and gave unstintingly. It sometimes takes a national disaster like this to make people aware of their fellow men, and Queenslanders did just that. I hope that we can learn something from the flood disaster and that we can use that knowledge to alleviate any future similar disaster.

**Mr. DEAN** (Sandgate) (10.31 p.m.): In their speeches today members have covered the subject very fully. The hour is late and I realise, Mr. Speaker, that you must be

getting tired, but in a debate of this nature repetition cannot be completely avoided. I have agreed with the Whip to restrict my speech to 10 minutes, so I shall condense my remarks.

At the outset, I fully agree with the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in supporting this very important motion. The people expected us to have this debate today. They expected us to do more than give a resume. They expected us to highlight some of the serious aspects of the recent flood disaster throughout the State. We would have been recreant to our duty if we had not done that.

I was bitterly disappointed that Queensland was found really wanting in the creation of an efficient Civil Defence Organisation. I have made many speeches on this subject over the years, following a good deal of research and the receipt of advice from overseas interests and advisers on the proper working of a Civil Defence Organisation. However, my contributions on this subject, together with those of other honourable members, have been ignored. The result was evident in the recent flood disaster. We saw confusion and panic because of lack of channels of communication through which people could be told what they should do in a state of emergency. We were found wanting. Unfortunately, people suffered both materially and in health.

I sincerely hope that the Government will now give some cognisance to the importance of establishing a proper Civil Defence Organisation not only in Brisbane but also in all provincial cities and towns in Queensland. The only way to do that is to give the director full power and the necessary finance so that his officers can travel throughout the State and set up these very important units.

It was the Civil Defence Organisation that saved Britain during World War II. Statistics disclose that only 50,000 civilians lost their lives during the great bombings of Britain. That relatively small loss of civilian life was due to the work of the Civil Defence Organisation.

In the present case, the full brunt fell on the Police Commissioner and officers of the Police Department. I commend them for the marvellous work they did in that state of emergency. The police, although trained to a certain degree, are not fully instructed in all aspects of civil defence work and the structure of the organisation. They have many other duties to perform. However, I commend them for their work.

Another organisation that should be commended is the Salvation Army. What it did is only to be expected because it is ready to meet any emergency. It is a world-wide organisation that is so structured that it can meet any situation at any time. It handled this crisis in a very efficient manner. I do not say that other church organisations did

not play their part, but they have not the organisational experience of the Salvation Army, which was gained over the years, mostly in wartime and, to some extent, from daily contact with the community. Its officers did a mighty job. Service organisations such as Lions, Apex, Rotary and women's clubs also played their part, but, again, they have not the organisational experience of the Salvation Army.

I should also like to pay a compliment to personnel of the defence forces. We all know that they are highly trained for the purpose of defending this country, and they showed that they are sufficiently flexible to swing their organisation and machinery in any direction. That was seen when the Australian Government put the defence services at the disposal of the State.

Flooding occurs every year in my electorate. Many people do not realise the hardship caused in the Sandgate electorate by high tides that encroach on the lower areas. I have lived in the electorate for over 40 years, and each year this hardship is experienced by, in the main, aged people and others who cannot afford to move to higher areas. Flinders Parade and the Pine River area are two targets in my electorate for high tides. No doubt honourable members opposite will say that dealing with this problem is a responsibility of the Brisbane City Council. Essentially it is, but the expenditure required to build up the foreshore sufficiently to protect the people who are subject to flooding is far beyond the resources of the Brisbane City Council. The expenditure would be just too heavy for the council to meet.

Another matter that I wish to deal with in these few minutes available to me is the declaration of a state of emergency. I feel that the Premier should have declared a state of emergency on this occasion, as that was the only way in which the laws of the State could have been properly enforced. Louts, hooligans, no-hopers and thieves carried on in the community with almost complete immunity from the law. The police had limited powers to deal with them. If a state of emergency had been declared, the police would have had the full authority of the law, and they would have been able to enforce it very strongly. Many more law-breakers could, I am told, have been caught if the police had had wider powers at their command. A state of emergency should have been declared so that the police could have acted, and acted quickly. During the war years, when national security regulations were in force—

**Mr. R. E. Moore:** You didn't say this during the Springbok tour.

**Mr. DEAN:** So far as I am concerned, that was an unnecessary declaration of a state of emergency. On this occasion, hooligans, thieves and other law-breakers took advantage of the limited powers of the police to deal with them. One of the

worst things that took place was the obstruction of people who were helping others. Stupid people got in the road of the police and others giving aid to those who needed it. The police could only tell them to move away. Half the time they ignored this instruction and took advantage of the fact that the police were fully occupied all the time. If a state of emergency had been declared, they could have been arrested and put out of the road for some time.

The honourable member for South Brisbane mentioned red tape. Red tape is to a certain extent necessary because of dishonesty, and dishonesty is still being encountered at the present time. Much of the red tape is necessary to ensure that aid goes to the deserving people.

I also commend Australian Government Ministers on their quick action. It was their responsibility, and there is no doubt that they lived up to it. They moved into the scene rapidly.

Ministers came to this State and worked in conjunction with State Ministers.

I revert to what I said earlier. Less distress would have been caused in the community, and the whole organisation of relief work would have been much simpler, if there had been in existence a Civil Defence Organisation fully attuned to any emergency.

I did not intend to mention the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, but the honourable member who preceded me in the debate mentioned him in what I thought was a very unkind way. He could not have been sincere in what he said, because I do not think that anyone can point the finger at the efforts of the Lord Mayor of Brisbane on behalf of the people of Brisbane. He was very quick off the mark. In fact, I recall that he was in a southern State, on his way to New Zealand, when he decided to return to Queensland. On doing so, he experienced great difficulties with transport. Eventually he found himself somewhere on the North Coast, a fair way from the city, and it took him many hours to return here.

Knowing the Lord Mayor as I do, I realise that he would not sit down and do nothing. When he entered the City Hall he went into action, and you, Mr. Speaker, saw the results of his efforts. He raised money very quickly and made it available to those who needed it to help alleviate their distress.

Finally, I urge the Government to develop its Civil Defence Organisation as quickly as possible. A similar flood could occur again. Next time the disaster may not be a flood; it may be a great fire in the city. Having served as a member of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board for some years, I know that if a fire occurred in some parts of this city which are regarded as being valuable, the Civil Defence Organisation would be needed to save lives. It would be needed not to save buildings but to get people away from the area in which a catastrophe such as fire or a great flood occurred.

**Mr. R. E. MOORE** (Windsor) (10.42 p.m.): Generally speaking, I should say that all members of Parliament behaved in a very responsible manner during the recent floods. Cabinet and the Premier cannot be criticised for their efforts, and it ill-behoves members of the Opposition to try to make a certain amount of political capital out of those efforts.

Let me turn now to the floods in Brisbane and Ipswich. Queensland has had a rather short history, and, of course, the flood that has gone down in history is the one that occurred in 1893. However, Aboriginal legends say that floods of far greater magnitude occurred before 1893. There is no doubt that many big floods occurred before that time—there probably have been a thousand floods in this area since the last ice age—and there certainly are more to come.

When I drove round Brisbane suburbs and saw the flood water in the various gullies and in the tributaries that run into the main stream of the river, I could not help saying to myself, "This has happened many, many times." When one sees houses built in these areas, one says, "We did not learn much of a lesson from the 1893 flood." Of course, the generation born from now on will not learn any lesson from the 1974 flood, either. If a flood does not occur for another 40 years and there is vacant land in the Brisbane area and people are looking for housing allotments, the Brisbane City Council will say, "No, you are not allowed to build on that because it was flooded 40 years ago." But the pressure will be such that the council will have to release the land. People will say, "It happened 40 years ago. It will not happen again." It will happen again, in spite of the dams that are built in the meantime.

There was not a great deal of trouble in my electorate. Only about 50 houses were inundated by Enoggera Creek and Kedron Brook, which needs a dragline put through it and some emergency work done on it. However, we will not prevent people from building on the various flood plains in suburban areas, and when dams are built that reduce flooding, it will be even more difficult to do so.

I believe that the council should lay down a certain standard for houses so that they are built in either concrete or brick. Timber houses cannot withstand inundation because the timber warps. If a house is built of concrete or brick the only thing affected by the floods, provided the building is not in an area affected by the stream torrent, is the furniture in the house, which can probably be insured. To a major extent this reduces the loss.

**Mr. Davis:** What about gyprock walls?

**Mr. R. E. MOORE:** Gyprock is not used in a cavity-brick house. It might be used in a brick-veneer house, but I am not speaking

about brick veneer or timber. I am talking about brick houses and concrete houses. There would be some problems with sheeting if the water completely covered the house. However, it is reasonable to assume that if a house is elevated the ceiling would not be covered. If the building is in such an area that the ceiling would be covered by floods it should not have been built there in the first place.

In due time the Wivenhoe Dam is going to be constructed for flood control purposes. What will happen when the population of Brisbane increases and an increased water supply is required? Are we going to allow the Wivenhoe Dam to remain one-third full in spite of those increased demands? When we get to the stage when we have not had a flood for, say, 10 years, what local authority is going to allow that dam to remain one-third full? What will happen is that the dam will be filled to a reasonable capacity when it will be of little use as a means of control in a major flood. If we have a rain depression similar to that in January, accompanied by a cyclonic disturbance, and the cyclone crosses the coast, we will have another flood. We have had them in the past; we will have them in the future. Irrespective of any flood control measures, there will be more floods in Brisbane at some time or other. They might not occur in my lifetime, but they will occur again.

Because of the Bremer River catchment area, it is necessary that something be done to relieve the situation in the Ipswich area. If the Government released water from the future Wivenhoe Dam or any other dam because of a threatened cyclone and that cyclone did not eventuate, what would happen if in the next year there was a drought? These are all situations which are easily met with the benefit of hindsight. Whatever the Government does could turn out to be the wrong thing, no matter how good its intentions were.

Generally speaking, times of flood and cyclone are prosperous times, although individuals are gravely affected. Again, generally speaking, it is the droughts that are the wars of attrition, whereas floods and cyclones are the times of prosperity. With the type of disaster about which we are speaking, when the flooding is State-wide, a large number of people are affected and the Government comes to their aid. What happens if a thunderstorm or a tornado crosses a small area and the houses in its path are blown away? Nobody comes to the assistance of those people, because not sufficient people are affected. I do not know what is to be done about that sort of situation. I suppose the houses could be covered by storm and tempest insurance.

One hears about national disaster funds. At first sight, one would imagine that would be the ideal situation. But to some extent it is a "Big Brother" attitude, and one wonders whether the Government should adopt the

attitude of saying that everybody should be forced to have insurance on his home, as applied in wartime, or whether it should adopt the attitude that, if the people wish, they may insure, but they should take the knock if they are not covered.

In civil defence work generally, I believe that on this occasion the Armed Services did a mighty job. But it would be a good idea if the Armed Services had a civil defence role as part of their training. Even in time of war, the Army working in conjunction with civilians, would be a very competent body because we would have close co-ordination between the civilian population and the Armed Services.

I am condensing my speech from 40 minutes to 5, so honourable members will understand that I am skirting around the edges of the subject. However, I should like to deal with one problem that arises during floods. When great inundation by water occurs, various electric cables and wires are affected. The average man in the street thinks that, if an electric cable carrying 10,000 volts or 22,000 volts is inundated, the fuse will blow and the cable will be dead. It has to be realised that aqua pura, pure water, is an insulator and does not conduct electricity at all. It is only impure water that conducts electricity. It does not follow that, because a wire is in water or on the ground the fuse will blow. It is guineas or gooseberries that it will be alive. The first thing that the public generally must be made aware of is that an electric cable on the ground will probably be alive. The resistance is such that it cannot pass the amount of current necessary to blow the fuse. Most persons seem to think that the fuse will blow. They have to be taught to realise these dangers.

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER** (Archerfield) (10.52 p.m.): In entering this debate I should like to take the opportunity to refute a dishonest and misleading statement made by the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services in this House earlier today. He said that the Australian Government refused to make 50 service dwellings at Ipswich available to house flood victims. The Minister must have been smoking opium when he said that. Had he taken the opportunity to consult the Premier or the honourable member for Ipswich West, he would have learned that his statement was false. Any empty R.A.A.F. houses in Ipswich have been flood affected and R.A.A.F. families are waiting to return to them. Fifty-one houses were empty as a result of the flooding. Twelve have now been re-occupied and 12 more will be re-occupied in the near future. The remaining homes will require more time for structural and electrical repairs. Homes which were empty before the floods were occupied by flood-affected R.A.A.F. families. I repeat that the Minister's accusations were false. He either knew they were false or he makes wild statements

without regard for accuracy. He should apologise to the Minister for Defence, who promptly examined the situation, in contrast to the Premier of this State, who did not.

I point out that the Australian Government has given unprecedented assistance to flood victims. The Australian Minister for Housing (Mr. Les Johnson) has publicly stated that the Wacol Migrant Hostel is available to flood victims.

One of the important aspects that have emerged from the recent disastrous floods is the need for a well-trained civil defence organisation. There is no doubt in my mind that our Civil Defence Organisation will have to be enlarged and better trained, and enabled to give strong leadership in both a physical and a legal sense. The efforts of well-meaning amateurs can have quite harmful effects. Evidence of this is the number of house roofs damaged at Rocklea by boats going anywhere. Nobody had the authority to stop them and apparently no-one cared.

The flood has also proved that there must be a national disaster plan and relief fund and victims must know as soon as possible what help will be forthcoming and how soon.

It is an unfortunate trait of human nature that now, six weeks after the floods, those persons who were not individually concerned are losing interest, and the spirit to help others is fast fading. This does nothing for the morale of the flood victims. Moreover, the paltry compensation handed out to them is unbelievable.

One resident of Bale Street, Rocklea, was offered \$640 to carry out repairs for which he had received a quote of \$6,000. A builder suggested that he knock the house over and start again.

I know of a family that had \$300 in the bank. A month before the floods the husband had surrendered his life assurance policy and received \$1,500. As a result, his claim for flood relief was rejected. He subsequently complained to me and on his behalf I made representations to the Premier's Department. To the credit of Mr. O'Gorman, who was the acting head of the flood relief plan, he gave the man \$800.

Rocklea is a suburb of battlers and pensioners who didn't cry out as loudly as the residents of, say, Jindalee. Therefore, they were virtually ignored. I certainly did not notice the Army transporting a load of gas or kerosene refrigerators to Rocklea. Today the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services shed tears on behalf of the residents of Rocklea. I state quite emphatically that the residents of Jindalee received favoured and privileged treatment during the flood.

As to compensation, the insurance companies have lived up to their well-deserved reputation of being thieves and fine-print merchants. All they are interested in is

making money from high-rise office blocks and sheep stations. Of course, this Tory Government will not criticise its wealthy backers. It was not until the Building Workers' Industrial Union began to talk of bans on the construction of insurance company office blocks that the Government decided to act. However, I am not over-confident of a satisfactory outcome. A mild slap on the wrist will be administered, and that will be the extent of the Government's displeasure.

If an investigation by the Insurance Commissioner is warranted now, it was certainly warranted some weeks ago. This Tory Government makes it appear, rightly or wrongly, that the union's ban has stimulated the Government into taking action. It is typical of the Government to wait for a situation to develop before taking action; it can never innovate or lead.

The small businesses, which are vital to every suburb, were ignored and were expected to get themselves back onto their feet.

The unfortunate thing about suburbs like Rocklea is that instead of raising sheep or cattle the residents would rather raise children. Of course, if they had chosen to raise sheep or cattle they would have received a better deal from the Government.

The main cause of the floods was a cyclone, which at one stage remained almost stationary over the city and its surrounding areas. The bank-up of water was caused by the inability of local creeks and the Brisbane River to handle the run-off. The bank-up water had to lie somewhere, and the building up of the natural flood plain, in some areas to a height of 6 feet, resulted in water being forced into areas that hitherto were not considered to be flood prone.

There is considerable doubt as to the power to stop the building on or filling in of flood plains. The Brisbane City Council maintains that it has power to approve or disapprove of the actual building erected on the flood plain, but does not have the power to prevent the developer from building up the flood plain as a base for a building. In an attempt to take the heat off the Government, the Department of Justice contends that this is not so. Of course, the result is a stalemate. Filling is allowed to proceed, and the seeds are thereby sown for another major disaster.

The greater proportion of the Archerfield electorate escaped the floods. Minor flooding occurred at Inala and in The Blunder area, but, by contrast, the suburb of Rocklea was completely submerged. On a house-for-house basis the suburb of Rocklea suffered more devastation than any other metropolitan suburb. In fact, practically every home in Rocklea was devastated.

The natural flood plain along Stable Swamp Creek has been filled in to a large degree from Coopers Plains, through Rocklea and across to the Brisbane Markets.

The Rocklea overpass, which is a massive earth-filled construction, acted as a dam and held back the water, which completely inundated the homes on the eastern side of Rocklea. Whilst from an engineering point of view the overpass may be a very good structure, in the recent floods it proved to be nothing more than a disaster. The Nyanda overpass is proposed to be of similar construction. Will this make the suburb of Rocklea a potential lake between two giant dam walls? Has the Department of Main Roads considered this? More importantly, do the engineers looking down from their ivory tower in Boundary Street care?

On behalf of the residents of Rocklea, I suggest that the sooner the Government implements a decent flood-mitigation scheme to alleviate the flooding in Rocklea the better.

**Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier) (11.1 p.m.), in reply: After listening to the honourable member who has resumed his seat I wonder how he ever got into Parliament. Obviously he does not know what is happening; he does not read the Press; and he is quite unacquainted with reality. Judging from his speech it would seem that the Government is merely looking at insurance policies and the like at the moment.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Tell us what you have done.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** If the honourable member were to read the newspapers and be a little more alert he would know that on 7 February—this matter has been reported in the various news media on many occasions—I met Mr. Rutherford, the Insurance Commissioner. We had discussions at that point of time—a whole month ago—but the honourable member suggested that this should happen now.

On the whole, I thank honourable members for their contribution to the debate on the motion. Over all, they have been very constructive in their suggestions, which I have appreciated.

The Leader of the Opposition made one or two suggestions that rather startled me. He said that we should have invoked a state of emergency. I take it that he would have done so. He suggested that thereby we could have seized or taken over, homes belonging to people on holidays, away shopping, or absent for one reason or another. He said that, so long as the homes were empty, we should have put people into them. I take it that that would apply to his own home if there happened to be no-one in it at the time. This is a rather serious issue. He said that people should have been put into vacant hotels, motels, or anything of that nature. He completely overlooked the fact that these people were put into homes or were transferred into shelter areas and cared for. It is quite unusual for a leader

of a party to suggest that, in a free society, we should commandeer people's homes if they happen to be empty, or if nobody is there at the time, whether they are furnished or unfurnished.

The Leader of the Opposition said that I was opposed to the raising of a flood appeal fund. The truth is very much to the contrary. I do not know the background of the letter to which he referred, a copy of which I have here. The Government took the initiative in raising funds for the whole of Queensland, not for any particular part of it. A great deal of money has been raised, and a great deal of money has passed through my department.

The Leader of the Opposition made a great song and dance about the stipulations relative to \$140 a week income, plus \$1,000 in the bank. He overlooked completely that the Commonwealth officers and, indeed Commonwealth Ministers, ultimately endorsed our action up to that time and agreed that they would slightly liberalise the conditions but only to a very limited extent. I thought that the Leader of the Opposition was, in effect, condemning his own Federal colleagues in this matter. Those are some of the aspects raised by the Leader of the Opposition that I thought were perhaps a little political.

Apart from thanking other speakers for their kind remarks about the Government, I wish to refer to two other speeches. The first was made by the honourable member for Redlands, who sought to be rather political on the whole issue, while we tried to keep politics out of the debate. The second speech, which was made by the honourable member for Mt. Isa was completely irresponsible. On this occasion he acted as he has acted on former occasions when he very much misrepresented the truth. I am surprised that he should be prepared to come to this House and, by means of a prepared document, do what he did on former occasions when I tried to help him. Indeed I helped him very considerably, and spoke very strongly for him in Mt. Isa. I also took him to schools and did very many things in his interest. It was despicable of him to read a speech in which he condemned the Inspector of Police at Mt. Isa, because Inspector Chippindall did a tremendous job. In addition, the honourable member condemned Inspector Hugh Low, the Police Commissioner and the whole organisation that worked in close touch with Inspector Chippindall, the mayor of Mt. Isa and responsible businessmen in Mt. Isa to keep the lines of communication open and the supply of food flowing into Mt. Isa as freely as possible.

The honourable member said that nothing happened when I went to Mt. Isa. I was sitting beside him at the dinner table and I left his side to ring Brisbane and make arrangements for the use of the Hercules

and Caribou aircraft, and he has the audacity and hide to claim that nothing happened, when he knew what had happened.

Dr. Rex Patterson, for whom I have very high regard and who works very closely with me, flew through Mt. Isa a few moments before I landed. He continued on to Darwin. When he arrived there, he communicated with me to find out what was happening and to lend his support to the whole organisation. Considering those matters, it is rather unusual for a supposedly responsible honourable member to speak as the honourable member for Mt. Isa did.

Inspector Chippindall was in constant communication with me about the organising of food supplies and communications. I spoke to Inspector Chippindall several times from Brisbane. Things did happen in Mt. Isa, right from the very beginning. The honourable member claimed that nothing happened until there was a flood in Mt. Isa and I suddenly woke up. I had already been in the south-western and central parts of Queensland and around Brisbane long before that. It is the honourable member who woke up. He did not once ring me. I do not know what he was doing. He certainly did not seem to do anything for Mt. Isa at any time.

**A Government Member:** He never has.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** He never has while I have had anything to do with him. I wanted to correct those matters.

Wherever I went—Mt. Isa, Mornington Island, Normanton, Cairns, Julia Creek and Richmond—I spent almost until midnight on the phone to Brisbane and making phone calls to each inspector of police organising and getting things moving.

**An Opposition Member:** What did the Minister do?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I am the Premier and I was on the spot. The Minister followed me. I worked through the Minister and his department in Brisbane. I make it clear that I will not accept deliberate untruths such as those spoken by the honourable member for Mt. Isa tonight. It is regrettable that we cannot depend on a man who is supposed to represent people more fully than he demonstrated tonight when he could not stick to the truth.

I think I have covered the whole situation. I reiterate my deep thanks to the police at every centre, every organisation, and all those people who worked in the wonderful way they did. I thank several honourable members, including the honourable member for Mackay, who made worth-while suggestions to overcome this whole problem of the possibility of future floods and the action that might and should be taken.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.9 p.m.