Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 12 OCTOBER 1949

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WEDNESDAY, 12 OCTOBER, 1949.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. S. J. Brassington, Fortitude Valley), took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

BURDEKIN DAM—COMMONWEALTH CONTRIBUTION.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba.—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

"In view of the published report that the Burdekin Dam scheme is being investigated by a Commonwealth committee of four, and that Commonwealth financial assistance will depend upon the results of such investigation, on what did he base his statement last month that he expected the Commonwealth Government to bear at least 50 per cent. of the cost of the dam?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

"The hon. the Leader of the Opposition appears to have just learned that the Commonwealth Government has appointed a committee to examine the Burdekin Dam project. In this connexion, I would refer the hon. gentleman to the statement I made on my return from the Premiers’ Conference and which appeared in the 'Courier-Mail' of 5 September, 1949. In that statement I said that, following the detailed submission which I made on behalf of the Queensland Government, the Prime Minister expressed very great interest in the Burdekin Dam scheme; that a Commonwealth committee was investigating the economics of the scheme; and that an early decision on the amount of assistance which the Commonwealth would contribute could be expected. At the same time, having regard to the nature of the discussions which I had with the Prime Minister, I expressed the opinion that I expected the Federal Government to bear at least 50 per cent. of the cost of the proposed Burdekin Dam project. I see no reason to alter the opinion which I expressed on that occasion."

GRAZING SELECTIONS FOR EX-SERVICE MEN.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba.—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"1. As from what date did the provision operate that 50 per cent. of areas opened for grazing selection are reserved exclusively for applicants who are ex-service men?

"2. How many grazing selections have been acquired to date by ex-service men under that provision?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—

"1. 30 April, 1946.

"2. Thirty-four. Ex-service men have also had the right to compete for the blocks made available for general competition, and have been successful in drawing some of these blocks."

SUSTENANCE PAYMENTS TO EX-SERVICE SETTLERS.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR (Hamilton) asked the Premier—

"In view of the fact that the twelve months’ sustenance period provided in the War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act is proving quite inadequate to meet the practical requirements of settlers on heavily timbered blocks which require lengthy preparation before cultivation and which in any case are subject to seasonal hazard, will he make representations to the Commonwealth Government for an extension of the twelve months’ sustenance period in those cases where hardship is being experienced under the Act as it now stands?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

"Various aspects of War Service Land Settlement, including certain provisions of the War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act, which is a joint agreement between the Commonwealth and State Governments, have been receiving the attention of the Secretary for Public Lands, who administers the War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act and also the War Service Land Settlement Act in this State. In fact, consultations have already taken place at the Minister’s direction, between the Land Administration Board and the Deputy Director of War Service Land Settlement in Queensland. Further discussions are to be held this week with the Commonwealth Director from Sydney."

LIMIT TO ADVANCES TO EX-SERVICE SETTLERS.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR (Hamilton) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"1. Have any representations been made to him by the Agricultural Bank or by any other institution or person urging a review of the limit of £5,000 advance provided in the War Service Land Settlement Act?

"2. In any case will he give the House an indication of his attitude on this question?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—

"1. No. I would mention for the hon. member’s information that Part III. of the War Service Land Settlement Act of 1946, which relates to financial arrangements, is administered by the hon. the Treasurer through the Agricultural Bank.

"2. So far as I am aware the present limit of £5,000 has, up to the present, proved adequate. Should the occasion arise and circumstances so warrant, I will take up the matter with my colleague, the hon. the Treasurer."

Mr. HILEY (Logan) asked the Premier—

"In view of (a) the continuous fall in the purchasing value of money, and (b) the marked disparity between the costs of preparation for use of one land settlement block situated in open plain country and a second land settlement block in a heavily timbered area, will he make representations
to the Commonwealth Government for a
review of the limit of £6,000 imposed on
advances under the War Service Land
Settlement Act.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—
"I would refer the hon. member to the
question which I have already given in reply
to question No. 3 (a)."

Mr. RUSSELL (Dalby) asked the
Premier—
"In view of the provision in the War
Service Land Settlement Act that improve­
ments of a previous owner operate in effect
as a deduction from the advance of £6,000
made available under the Act and as this
in many cases restricts the amount of the
advance available for purchase of necessary
plant, will he make representations to the
Commonwealth Government for an increase
in the maximum advance allowable in any
such case?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—
"I would refer the hon. member to the
answer which I have already given in reply
to question No. 3 (a)."

ALLOWANCES FOR CLEARING AND FENCING TO

EX-SERVICE SETTLERS.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR (Hamilton) asked the
Treasurer—
"1. Is he aware that, at the time War
Service Land Settlement blocks were open
for selection in the Dalby district, the
Lands Department officials promised the
selectors that a sum would be provided as
an allowance for clearing and fencing and
that should the selector personally carry
out portion or whole of these works, he
would be allowed an appropriate sum for
such work?"

2. Is he aware that officials of the
Agricultural Bank are refusing to honour
the promise made by the officials of the
Department of Public Lands and that, in
consequence, hardship is arising?"

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton)
replied—
"1 and 2. I would be pleased if the hon.
member would give me particulars of any
alleged refusals to honour promises made
and I will investigate them."

INTEREST-FREE PERIOD, EX-SERVICE SETTLERS.

Mr. HILEY (Logan) asked the Premier—
"In view of the substantial delays in
securing plant by War Service land settlers,
with consequent losses of benefit of the
interest-free period prescribed by section
14 of the Act, will he consider an amend­
ment whereby the twelve months interest­
free period operates from the date upon
which the money was expended rather than
from the less suitable date upon which the
lease commenced?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—
"I would refer the hon. member to the
answer which I have already given in reply
to question No. 3 (a)."

GALVANISED IRON, DALBY DISTRICT.

Mr. RUSSELL (Dalby) asked the
Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—
"In view of the fact that War Service
land settlers in the Dalby district have at
last acquired a considerable amount of
expensive agricultural machinery, the bulk
of which is standing completely unpro­
tected from the weather, will he make
special representations to the appropriate
authority in order to ensure that supplies
of galvanised iron are made available for
the protection of such machinery?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—
"Representations have been made by
the Department to the Co-ordinator-General
from time to time, but as the hon. member
is aware, galvanised iron is in extremely
short supply and is not released for roofing
or building of machinery sheds—houses
have priority. Following on these represen­
tations the Co-ordinator-General has
recommended, and the Government, has
approved, that tenders be called for 500
tons of corrugated galvanised iron from
overseas to meet requirements of War Ser­
vices land settlers."

LOCAL AUTHORITY RATES OF EX-SERVICE

SETTLERS.

Mr. RUSSELL (Dalby) asked the
Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—
"Where a War Service land settler enters
into occupation during a financial year, is
it the policy of his department to require
such settler to pay local-authority rates on
the block for the whole of such financial
year?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—
"It is not the function, let alone the
policy, of the Lands Department to deter­
mine what rates or for what periods rates
shall be paid by War Service land settlers,
or for that matter by any other settler.
This is purely the function of the local
authority."

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN APPLICATIONS.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong) asked the
Attorney-General—
"Will he give consideration to amending
the Guardianship and Custody of Infants
Acts, 1891 to 1928, so as to make the simple
procedure of section 5 of those Acts, by
which a mother obtains an order for cus­
tody of a child, also available to a father
seeking custody of his child, thereby replac­
ing the cumbersome and inappropriate
procedure by writ of habeas corpus which is at
present the only remedy open to a father
in such circumstances?"

Hon. G. H. DEVRIES (Gregory)
replied—
"Yes. I will give consideration to this
matter."
Questions. [ASSEMBLY.] Personal Explanation.

CONSTITUTIONALITY OF PETROL RATIONING.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"With reference to the statement attributed to him as Deputy Premier in ‘Courier-Mail’ of 10 October, that ‘the garage people were responsible for disturbing the satisfactory distribution of petrol which applied before the High Court’s judgment’, is he not aware that the High Court decided that the Commonwealth Government’s action in rationing petrol had been illegal and contrary to the Constitution since at least 16 November, 1948?"

"Does his statement imply that his Government hold the view that a citizen who, by constitutional means, restrains the Government’s breaches of the law, is unworthy?"

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane) replied—

"Yes."

"No."

FREE INSURANCE, GOVERNMENT HOMES.

Mr. DECKER (Sandgate) asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government—

"1. How many purchasers in possession of workers’ dwellings or workers’ homes are on the books of the corporation and ineligible to benefits under the free insurance scheme?"

"2. How many applicants not yet in possession of a worker’s dwelling or a worker’s home and for whom the corporation has approved or is considering approval of advances, have taken out cover with the Insurance Commissioner and are therefore ineligible to benefit under the free insurance scheme?"

"3. Why is the actuary’s report dealing with the free insurance scheme refused to members of the Opposition when this important subject forms part of a Bill now before Parliament?"

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona) replied—

"1. The information will be shown in the Commission’s Annual Report to Parliament.

"2. One.

"3. This is a confidential document, and I have already advised the hon. member that this scheme would cost the Government around £80,000 per year in six to eight years."

Mr. DECKER (Sandgate) asked the Treasurer—

"1. What rate of premium will apply between the Treasurer and the Insurance Commissioner in the home-builders’ insurance scheme?"

"2. What amount is provided in the current 1949-50 Estimates to cover such premiums?

"3. What amount has been set aside in the 1949-50 Estimates to cover subsidies on home-builders’ deposits?"

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) replied—

"1. The Treasury Department does not fix rates of premiums. It is being provided in legislation that the Treasurer shall, from time to time, by Order in Council, determine from all such moneys as are appropriated by Parliament for the purpose all premiums for insurance cover issued by the Insurance Commissioner.

"2 and 3. Legislation providing for the payment of insurance premiums and to cover subsidies on home builders’ deposits is at present before the House; when such legislation becomes law provision will be made for the anticipated expenditure in the current financial year."

ACCOMMODATION OF FORESTRY WORKERS.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"1. In view of his reply to my question of the 5th instant concerning camping facilities and amenities in Forestry Department camps, will he state if it is true that when an A.W.U. organiser visited a number of Forestry camps in company with an officer of the Forestry Department on 16 August last the A.W.U. officials found disgusting conditions in relation to the disposal of night soil?

"2. If such conditions did exist does he not consider that any hon. member, when such a report comes under his notice concerning the delinquency of any Government department, has a bounden duty to the public to question the Minister concerned to seek information?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—

"1. It is true that from time to time A.W.U. officials and the Forestry Department Industrial and Accommodation Inspector make an inspection of forestry camps, and suggestions for improvement, where same are desirable are offered and discussed by both parties, and may eventually lead to a recommendation to either the District Forest Officer or Head Office, Forestry Department, for consideration.

"2. There is no necessity for the hon. member to butt into the affairs of the A.W.U. That organisation, over the years, justly prides itself on its ability to look after the interests of its members, irrespective of the industry in which they are engaged."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. BARNES (Bundaberg) (11.12 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, as there is a conspiracy of silence by the Press against me I object to a Government department’s taking part in that conspiracy—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must proceed in the recognised form.

Mr. BARNES: I draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to ‘‘Hansard’’ No. 7. You are in charge of the issue of ‘‘Hansard.’’
Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Does the hon. member wish to make a personal explanation.

Mr. BARNES: You have forced me into this. I ask the leave of the House to make a personal statement. As there is a conspiracy of silence against me by the daily Press I object to a Government department's taking part in that conspiracy. "Hansard" No. 7 of 20 September purports to report a speech made by me that day. It has failed to do so and I have had no fewer than four "Hansards" returned to me that were issued from the Government Printer without my speech. As custodian of this department I ask you to report to Parliament on that failure.

Mr. Aikens: Do you mean to say that your speech was deliberately excluded?

Mr. BARNES: It looks like it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to give me full particulars so that I can have an investigation made.

ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY; EXTENSION OF HOURS OF SITTING.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier): I move—

"That, during the remainder of this Session, unless otherwise ordered—

"1. The House will meet for the despatch of business at 10.30 a.m. on Friday in each week, in addition to the days already provided by Sessional Order, and that Government Business do take precedence on that day.

"2. The House may, on the days allotted for Supply, continue to sit until 10 o'clock p.m. Each of the periods between 11 o'clock a.m. and 4 o'clock p.m. and between 4 o'clock p.m. and 10 o'clock p.m. shall be accounted an allotted day under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307. All provisions of Standing Order No. 307 and of Sessional Order of August 3 last shall, mutatis mutandis, continue to apply."

Motion agreed to.

DISEASES IN STOCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Mann, Brisbane, in the chair.)

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock) (11.22 a.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Diseases in Stock Acts, 1915 to 1948, in certain particulars."

The Bill is a very simple one.

Mr. Sparkes: They always are.

Mr. COLLINS: It is only hon. members like the hon. member for Dalby who make them difficult.

This Bill contains only two clauses. The Diseases in Stock Acts Amendment Act of 1944 provided for the making and levying of an assessment at a flat rate upon all milk supplied for consumption or use within the area of the city of Brisbane, and in other areas that might be gazetted for the purpose. Subsequently, this provision was extended to include cream supplied for consumption or use within such areas.

In appreciation of the efforts of certain producers to reduce the incidence of infection in their herds, or to maintain herds free from tuberculosis, it is now proposed to provide for the varying of the rate of assessment levied within the limits prescribed by the Principal Act, in certain instances, to such extent as the Minister deems equitable. In effect, power is sought to make and levy an assessment on all milk and cream supplied for consumption or use or intended consumption or use within a gazetted area or areas on a variable basis in lieu of the existing flat rate prescribed, to provide for the payment of a reduced rate of assessment by owners of herds—

(a) in which tuberculosis has been eliminated, and

(b) who have regularly contributed to the Compensation Fund without benefiting under the compensatory provisions of the Act.

The Diseases in Stock Act, as it stands at present, gives power for the assessment of levy to pay for compensation and the cost of testing in particular areas. The levy may be varied in different areas, but there is no provision for variation of levy as between individuals or groups within an area. The present suggested amendment makes provision for relief in the case of a man whose herd has been submitted to tests and has been found, or made, free of tuberculosis. It also makes it possible for relief to be given to those owners who have been paying levy since the inception of the scheme, but who have not been able to have their cattle tested owing to staff shortages.

As the Compensation Fund is in a sound financial position, it is felt that consideration should be given to some reduction in levy payments. Full levy will therefore be paid to cover costs of testing and compensation, and reduced levy where it is necessary to cover only the cost of test.

In areas supplying milk to Brisbane where no testing has been carried out since the inception of the scheme, it is confidently expected that sufficient men will be available to begin this work in January, 1950.

In the country surrounding Brisbane there are many areas where tuberculosis has been more or less eliminated and in these a reduced levy would be sufficient, with the exception of the few herds in which tuberculosis still exists, for in most of them it would be necessary only to cover the cost of testing, whereas in the latter further compensation for reactors is likely to be necessary.

There are other areas, e.g., Toowoomba and Atherton, where tuberculin testing was first carried out by the officers of my department.
in collaboration with the veterinary surgeons of the American Army. This testing has been confined to a limited extent and will be possible in these herds but at the same time it will be necessary to extend the testing to take in other areas and herds, including those from which milk is supplied to the city of Toowoomba. Here again it will be possible to arrange a reduced levy for the herds that have been kept tubercle-free by regular testing.

Assessments on milk now applicable are a farthing per gallon of milk supplied for consumption or use in the gazetted areas, viz:—

(a) The city of Brisbane, 1-1-45.
(b) The South Coast Area, 8-7-45, comprising the area of the town of Southport, the town of Coolum, and that portion of the area of the Nerang Shire which is east of the South Coast railway line.
(c) The South Coast Area, 14-6-48, comprising the area of the city of Ipswich, the shires of Beaudesert, Beenleigh, Boonah, Cleveland, Coomera, Laidley, Moreton, Normanby, Pine, Rosewood, Tamborine, Tingalpa and Waterford.

So, Mr. Mann, the principle of the Bill is simply one to give relief to those persons who have cleaned up their herds, either in certain areas in the Brisbane milk district or other areas such as the Darling Downs; and to vary the levy on those who have been paying it since the inception of the scheme but, owing to the shortage of veterinary surgeons for the purposes of testing the stock, have not been able to have their herds tested.

It is felt that some have paid sufficient for the compensation that they are likely to receive or sufficient to meet the charge that is likely to fall on the fund.

The only principle in the Bill is one to vary the areas in order to give relief where the Minister thinks it is required.

Mr. Nicklin (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.28 a.m.): I do not intend to speak at this stage of this Bill because I do not understand what it is all about. I merely rise to say that I wish that in future every Minister who is introducing a Bill would raise his voice sufficiently to let us hear what is in the Bill. Unfortunately we could not hear anything about it, so I must reserve my comments till I see the Bill and read in "Hansard" what the Minister said.

Mr. Decker (Sandgate) (11.34 a.m.): I am in the same position as the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Collins: Why did you not stop talking? You would have heard it then. (Opposition interjections.)

Mr. Decker: From the few scraps I heard, I believe the object of the Bill is to reduce the levy payable on the herds of contributors who have not had the services of the department in the elimination of T.B. I am disappointed that we are not in this Bill considering also the angle of compensation. The Compensation Fund is growing, probably because of excessive levies and too little compensation to people whose stock have been condemned. I hope that the low rates of compensation payable for beasts that are shown to be diseased will be reviewed. Today, especially, the cost of replacement is so high that some justification exists for increasing the amount payable to those who lose cattle owing to the results of the T.B. test.

That is all I have to say at this moment. I will leave further comment until I read the Minister's speech.

Mr. Marriott (Bulimba) (11.31 a.m.): I regret that the Minister was not able to speak fully enough this morning to enable me to hear what he said. It may be that he is suffering from laryngitis and if that is so I sympathise with him. There was no talking going on in this corner, but I had to strain my ears in an endeavour to hear what the Minister was saying. However, like the hon. member for Sandgate, I gathered that one of the principles of the proposed Bill is to reduce where possible the levy payable by producers to meet the cost of testing cattle for bovine tuberculosis.

The Bill really touches the health of the people, inasmuch as it deals with the testing of our herds for T.B. and the culling from them of diseased cattle, and I wish to know more about it. I hope at the second reading to hear what it is all about, but just now I wish to give the Minister a hint of my views on some angles on this question.

We have heard in this Chamber statements and questions about the disposal of condemned T.B. cattle. I asked a question of the Minister, but I think the hon. gentleman's answer was rather directed to combating a suggestion that I had complained that when diseased or condemned cattle were being destroyed at the Brisbane abattoir, the machine used for chopping those carcasses to pieces caused the splash of the juices—

Mr. Collins: This is outside the scope of the Bill. This Bill does not deal with the abattoir.

Mr. Marriott: If it is outside the scope of the Bill, then let the Bill be enlarged to deal with this point. Answers given to questions dealing with diseased stock and particularly T.B. stock are not strictly truthful.

Mr. Collins: I rise to a point of order. I must object to the accusation that has been levelled at me that my answers are untrue. Any answers that I have given are strictly truthful. I can assure the Committee of this and I should like the hon. member to accept my assurance. I think what he has said is an insult.

The Chairman: Order! I hope the hon. member for Bulimba will accept the assurance of the Minister on that matter.

Mr. Marriott: I will accept the Minister's assurance that he was acting in all good faith when giving those answers here, but I want to point out that the answers were evasive.
Mr. Marrriott: Very well, I will get to the point later in another way. Of course, condemned cattle are invariably suffering from T.B., and a question was asked, I think by the hon. member for Windsor, whether any part of the carcasses came back for human consumption. He was assured that no part of the condemned cattle came into human consumption.

Mr. Marrriott: If the proposed Bill does not deal with it, then we had better make it deal with it. We should hear what the Minister has to say in reply to my statement. Cattle that are condemned, when slaughtered at the Brisbane abattoir, are put through the digester, as the Minister stated, but all cattle suffering from T.B., when slaughtered there, are not condemned. The diseased part is condemned and taken out, but the rest goes into human consumption. I challenge the Minister to give that a flat denial and to get it from his officers. I say his officers are not doing their duty to the public. When T.B. cattle are eliminated from dairy herds, the reactors are slaughtered at Goodna and the carcasses are carted through the city and destroyed through the digesters at the abattoir, that being the only treatment works at Cannon Hill. I am not objecting to that, but I am objecting to the lack of care displayed in the disposal of those carcasses. At the same time I persist in saying—and my information is reliable—that parts of the beasts slaughtered at the abattoir that are found to be diseased are condemned but the rest of the beast from which the diseased parts came is sent back through the trade, through the butcher shops, to the people of Brisbane. If the Minister will have an investigation made into the circumstances down there possibly he will be able to deal with some of his inspectors who mislead him and mislead the public in general.

Mr. Heading (Wide Bay) (11.36 a.m.): I am very interested in the question of diseased stock and levies in connection therewith. While I did not catch everything the Minister said, I do know that he mentioned something about relief from levies, and that is confirmed by the fact that you, Mr. Mann, have mentioned that the Bill is one to deal with relief from levies. If the Minister is contemplating some relief to the people who are contributing to the cost of testing stock in the Brisbane milk area, I hope he will extend that relief to the primary producers who wish to clear their herds of T.B. all over the State. Recently a tax of 3s. 6d., a head has been imposed on the primary producer who desires to have his stock tested in order to build up a T.B. free herd. This is a wonderful opportunity for the Minister to extend this relief to everybody, so that we can carry out an effective campaign for the elimination of T.B. in cattle in Queensland. That is not beyond the bounds of possibility.

Mr. Collins: He oozes generosity.

Mr. Heading: I did not catch that remark, but I say it would be in the interests of the primary producer and of everybody else living in Queensland. A broad national view should be taken of this matter, and I hope that when the Bill comes before us it will prove to be broader in outlook than we were led to believe this morning and I trust that there will be some reduction of the tax levied on primary producers towards the elimination of this disease. I repeat that it would be in the interests not only of the primary producers but of all residents in the State who eat meat and drink milk because they would know that their meat and milk came from disease-free stock.

Mr. McIntyre (Cunningham) (11.41 a.m.): To the extent that it was possible to hear what the Minister had to say this morning it appears to me that he has included in his amending Bill some of the things we advocated very strongly when the previous Bill was before the House. In other words, we advocated relief for those dairymen and associations who have taken steps to clear up this disease. I refer particularly to the Downs Dairy Association because the Minister knows that for years it has collected a levy

I am only a layman, but I have long experience of the handling of stock and I am of the opinion that this can be done. Over the years at our own bacon factory the number of pigs condemned for T.B. has been reduced from 1 in 200 to about 3 per cent. I think it was perhaps 2.75 per cent, to about .58 per cent last year and, I think, .47 per cent, the year before. Through the efforts of the department and the operations of its veterinary officers, as well as the vigilance of the growers who have pigs condemned, we have been able to reduce condemnations to that extent. If we could extend the testing of stock and relieve the growers of the charges now being made for the testing we should be doing an excellent thing.

Mr. Collins: Relieve him entirely?

Mr. Heading: Yes.

Mr. Collins: And do away with compensation?

Mr. Heading: The Minister has come right in and I want to tell him that already we pay $25 a year in the form of the bull tax, which is supposed to be used towards paying for the cost of running the veterinary services of the department. That is a big effort by the dairying industry, because this is really a tax on the dairying industry. We also contribute towards the Buffalo Fly Fund and the Diseases in Stock Fund, and probably if we look about we shall find we are paying into other funds as well. I do know that we are paying 3d. for every pig, 3d. for every calf and 6d. for every head of cattle inspected at our works, so that we are paying a fair amount of money towards the inspection of stock and the Government's effort to eliminate disease. I suggest to the Minister that he be a little more generous and adopt a broad attitude, not only in the interests—

Mr. Collins: He oozes generosity.

Mr. Heading: I do not catch that remark, but I say it would be in the interests of the primary producer and of everybody else living in Queensland. A broad national view should be taken of this matter, and I hope that when the Bill comes before us it will prove to be broader in outlook than we were led to believe this morning and I trust that there will be some reduction of the tax levied on primary producers towards the elimination of this disease. I repeat that it would be in the interests not only of the primary producers but of all residents in the State who eat meat and drink milk because they would know that their meat and milk came from disease-free stock.
from its suppliers and compensated those who have destroyed their beasts that reacted to the test. Because this association has been supplying the city area it has been obliged to pay an additional levy, the departmental levy, a very unjust and unfair imposition. So far as I can gather, this measure is one to relieve those persons who have taken such action as this and to that extent I wish to compliment the Minister on at last realising what is a fair thing to do in this branch of the industry.

Mr. THEODORE (Herbert) (11.43 a.m.): I do not think hon. members of the Opposition are so deaf as they make out, because after listening to what they have had to say this morning I realise that, instead of knowing nothing about the Bill or catching only a smattering of what the Minister had to say, they know a great deal about it.

The Bill shows that the Minister realises that it is necessary to make some provision to meet a situation that has arisen since the introduction of the original Act. In the early stages of the campaign against bovine tuberculosis the department was not able, owing to shortage of staff, to give effect to the provisions of the Act to the extent that it was expected, and a tremendous area still remains to which attention must be given. It is now realised, seeing that the work cannot be carried out any more quickly, that the people who have been contributing should receive some relief and that is all the Bill does.

The Bill provides that if certain districts have been cleaned up the levy shall be removed. That is quite right and I cannot see why any hon. members opposite, even those who represent the dairymen, should take exception to it. It is impossible to include a standard levy in the Bill; that must be left to the discretion of the Minister. He, acting on the advice that he receives from time to time, will give whatever relief can be afforded. That too is right in principle and I cannot see any other way of meeting the existing situation.

I am sure that when hon. members opposite see the Bill they will find that they have little room for complaint about it.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (12.46 p.m.): I am very grateful to the hon. member for Bulimba.

Mr. Power: Of course. He should be in your party; that is his place.

Mr. PIE: Let the hon. gentleman sit down and mind his own business. It is about time that he minded his own business.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Windsor to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. Aikens: He gave him a well merited rebuke.

Mr. Power: You mind your own business, too.

Mr. Aikens: I will tell you the same thing.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask hon. members on my right to obey my call to order.

Mr. PIE: Thank you, Mr. Mann, for your protection. It is now very dear to me that according to the hon. member for Bulimba the answers we get to questions directed to the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock are completely evasive.

Mr. COLLINS: I must object to the statement that replies given by me in my capacity as Secretary for Agriculture and Stock are a complete evasion of questions. I say positively that there is no evasion at all, it is the truth, the absolute truth that hon. members get. If the hon. member is sincere in his remarks I ask him to point out where the evasion comes in. I ask him to withdraw that statement.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Windsor to accept the explanation of the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock.

Mr. PIE: I accept it now but I shall prove where he has completely evaded questions and hon. members may judge whether he is the Minister for Evasion or the Minister for Agriculture and Stock.

On 22 September last I asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"What is the procedure adopted when a beast slaughtered for export is condemned by inspectors? Does any of it find its way onto the local market?"

The hon. gentleman said in reply—

"The whole of the carcasses and viscera are condemned, diverted to digesters, and converted into fertiliser by heating under pressure, which kills all living matter. No part of the beast finds its way onto the local market."

According to the hon. member for Bulimba the part of the beast not affected by the disease finds its way onto the local market. That is why I complain about. The Minister has asked me to point out where he has evaded the issue and I am entitled to reply to him.

I asked the hon. gentleman this question too—

"What are the differences in regard to inspection of meat for export and local consumption?"

The Minister replied to that question and the reply is all right.

I asked him also—

"Is it a fact that when meat is passed for export the kidneys are removed, while they are allowed to remain in the carcasses used for local consumption?"

The hon. gentleman agreed that that was so.

Then I asked—

"Is he aware of any cases being reported by butchers to his or Health Department officers of kidneys affected by nephritis being contained in carcasses?"

The Minister replied—

"All organs are examined at the abattoirs and condemned when necessary."
The Minister knows, if he is on his job, that what I said is correct. Butchers have complained to his department or Health Department officers that kidneys have been affected by nephritis. His reply to that question was a complete evasion. He said—

"All organs are examined at the abattoirs and condemned when necessary."

Mr. Collins: I am stating a fact.

Mr. PIE: You are not stating a fact and you know it. We are fed up of hearing these things.

Mr. COLLINS: I rise to a point of order. This debate is on the desirableness of introducing a Bill to subsidise the destruction of dairy cattle suffering from T.B., but the question being raised by the hon. member is entirely outside the scope of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must uphold the point raised by the Minister. This is not a debate on the whole scope of diseases in stock. The motion covers only a specific point.

Mr. PIE: We do not know what "in certain particulars" are.

Mr. HILEY: I rise to a point of order. Am I right in asking whether at this stage hon. members are entitled to raise not only the principles contained in the Bill but matters that might well be contained in it?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The matter raised in the debate must be relevant to the principles which the Minister has stated, are contained in the Bill.

Mr. HILEY: The Bill purports to deal with diseases in stock.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The matter must be confined to the subject matter of the motion.

Mr. PIE: This question of diseases in stock is of such vital importance to the people that I have no alternative but to move the following amendment:

"Add to the question the words—

'And for other purposes.'"

I want to discuss the most important issue that has been raised in this Committee. It is about time we had a show-down on this matter because the Minister, as I have proved, has completely evaded my questions. I asked him whether he was aware of any cases reported by butchers to his or Health Department officers of kidneys affected by nephritis being contained in carcasses. I know that reports have been made to his department and to Health Department officers. His reply to me was a complete evasion of my question. That is a thing I do not like in this Parliament. His reply was—

"All organs are examined at the abattoirs and condemned when necessary."

Mr. Collins interjected.
Mr. PIE: Who do you think you are?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask hon. members to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. PIE: I will not allow the Minister to ask me who I am.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. PIE: I will let the Committee judge. I will read the whole question that I asked on 23 September, and the answer.

This is the question—

4. What is the procedure adopted when a beast slaughtered for export is condemned by inspectors? Does any of it find its way onto the local market?''

This was the reply to that section of the question—

5. The whole of the carcass and viscera are condemned, diverted to digesters, and converted into fertiliser by heating under pressure, which kills all living matter. No part of the beast finds its way onto the local market.''

(Opposition interjections.)

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock): Mr. Mann, I move—

"That the question be now put.''

(Opposition interjections.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The amendment has not been stated. The motion before the Committee is the original motion. The Minister can move that the question be now put, but until the amendment has been stated I cannot accept his motion in regard to it.

(Opposition laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: It does not seem reasonable that he can have a discussion outside the scope of the Bill without moving an amendment.

(Opposition laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope hon. members will maintain some degree of dignity and decorum. This is Parliament House; let us treat it as such and stop this hilarity. The hon. member for Windsor has moved as an amendment to the original motion, that certain words to be added. After he concludes his remarks I will state the amendment, and then the amendment can be dealt with.

Mr. Decker: The Minister wants to move the gag.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. PIE: I will leave it to some of my colleagues to follow.

Amendment stated.

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock): Mr. Mann, I move—

"That the question be now put.''

Mr. Aikens: Talk about Surry Hills rules; talk about Woolloomooloo rules; this is worse than Spring Hill rules.

Mr. Aikens: Woolloomooloo rules.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark and apologise to the Chair, because it is a reflection on the Chair.

Mr. Aikens: It was not a reflection on the Chair; it was a reflection on the Minister who moved the gag.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have asked the hon. member to withdraw that remark and apologise to the Chair.

Mr. Aikens: Very well, I will state what I said and then withdraw it because I am not going to withdraw something you said. I said, 'This is Surry Hills rules, or Woolloomooloo rules, worse than Spring Hill rules,' and I withdraw that remark and apologise to the Chair.
a Bill to amend the Diseases in Stock Acts, 1915 to 1948," in certain particulars, I propose, by means within the Standing Orders, to prevent the Minister from covering up. Rather, I propose to adopt means that will bring the Minister out of the bolthole into which he has run by moving a further amendment, to delete the words—

"In certain particulars."

I propose moving that amendment in order to bring the spotlight of public attention onto the attempts made by this Minister to prevent discussion on a point on which the Opposition are taking the role of protecting the public.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member seeks to go back over ground already covered. I ask him to confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. Wanstall: I am moving an amendment to delete the words, "In certain particulars." The other amendment was to add words. My reason for proposing that those words be deleted—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have not heard the amendment.

Mr. Wanstall: I realise you did not hear it, because I have not moved it. My colleague, the hon. member for Enoggera, is now writing out the amendment. The Minister was so concerned and worried over the exposure of his activities in this matter, which has been brought out by the Opposition this morning, that in his frenzied attempts to get out—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I understand the hon. member proposes to delete words?

Mr. Wanstall: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member would not be in order. We have already discussed and defeated an amendment that proposed to add words to the motion and it is not now competent for the hon. member to move for the omission of certain words in the original question. The only thing the hon. member can do is discuss the question before the Committee. The whole of the words contained in the motion originally moved must be left intact.

Mr. Wanstall: The other amendment was to add certain words to it. The only question on which the Committee voted was the question whether those words should be added. In so voting we have not, by implication, approved of the words that are already in the motion. That is where I submit, with respect, that your ruling is not right and I do ask you to consider that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in moving the amendment he proposes.

Mr. Wanstall: You are ruling that I cannot move this amendment. I now thank the Leader of the Opposition for making a suggestion that will prevent the Minister from

sheltering in the bolthole he is now sheltering in. My object is to drag him out and I now move the following amendment:

"Add to the question the words—

'to make provision for the effective carrying out of the provisions of the Act.'"

Mr. Foley: Taking the matter out of the hands of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wanstall: No. This is a matter with which the Opposition are gravely concerned in the public interest and from a desire to protect the public. The debate has disclosed circumstances that the Minister himself by his actions admits to be so serious that he has made extraordinary and frenzied attempts to stifle debate. He even moved the gag prematurely. It is bad enough to move the gag prematurely. He then moved the gag prematurely. He has even moved the gag prematurely.

The CHAIRMAN: That matter has already been decided by the Committee and I ask the hon. member for Toowong not to proceed with it.

Mr. Wanstall: I have said what I wanted to say. The Minister has denied the charge that he made an evasive answer to a question by the hon. member for Windsor. I do not propose to make any implication that he deliberately evaded the question asked but the fact is that the Minister's answer was misleading; whether it was deliberately so or not I leave it to the people and to hon. members of the Committee to judge.

Mr. Collins: I refuse to accept the statement made that my answer to a question in Parliament was misleading.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Toowong must accept the assurance of the Minister.

Mr. Wanstall: I accept his assurance but I am, through you, Mr. Mann, and through this Chamber, asking the people of Queensland to form their own judgment as to whether the Minister made an answer that was misleading or not misleading. When the people realise the attempts the Minister has made this morning to stifle discussion I think their judgment will certainly not be in his favour. I am informed by the hon. member for Aubigny, who is an expert on the question of cattle, that he can produce sheets that show that portions of beasts have been condemned—the forequarter, the hindquarter or the head or something else—and the rest of the beasts have been passed out to the public for consumption.

Mr. Aikens: It has been going on for years.

Mr. Wanstall: That is the crux of the question and it is wrong to ask the public to take the risk that that part of the carcass will not itself be diseased. When you get a large portion of a carcass condemned as being disease-ridden, it is wrong to ask the public to take a risk with the remainder. Departmental officers, in order to give effect to
the provisions of the Act, are taking a risk with the health of the public. We protest against it.

I am gravely concerned at the attempt made by the Minister to prevent discussion on this vitally important subject, which from the public viewpoint is of supreme importance. It is because the hon. members for Bulimba and Windsor have disclosed how serious this matter is that the Opposition are endeavouring to give it full and adequate debate this morning.

The Minister can if he likes move the gag again on my amendment. If he is still frightened to face our criticism and is still anxious to conceal from the public what is actually taking place, he will move the gag again on my amendment. However, if he is prepared to have a complete and frank debate on the subject, he will refrain from moving the gag. Let us see how he answers that challenge.

Mr. PATERSON (Bowen) (12.16 p.m.): I support the amendment, but I should have preferred an opportunity to speak in support of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Windsor, because it would have given me an opportunity to speak on every aspect of diseases in stock. However, the Minister gagged the debate on that amendment and he was supported by a majority. I am now confined to the present amendment, which is not so effective as the amendment moved by the hon. member for Windsor.

The question raised today by the hon. member for Bulimba, which gave rise to this debate, is one of supreme importance, and I am surprised that the Minister should move the gag in order to stop the debate on such an important question. If it is a fact that when a beast is condemned for tuberculosis and only part of it is diseased the rest of it is sold to the public for consumption, it is time that hon. members in this Committee voiced their protest against such a practice. If the amendment moved by the hon. member for Toowong was ruled out of order, I had intended to move another amendment. I had intended moving for the addition of the words—

"And for the purpose of prohibiting the sale to the public of beef from a carcass any portion of which has been condemned by a Government inspector for tuberculosis."

That would positively have prevented the sale of such meat.

I do not need to take up much time in speaking on this subject now because those hon. members who have already spoken have expressed my opinion. However, as the matter has been raised, no time should now be lost in taking prompt action to ensure that no meat sold to the public comes from any carcass a portion of which has been condemned by a Government inspector for tuberculosis.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (12.18 p.m.): Now that the matter has been raised, I want to say that from information given to me by men working in the industry the racket is much hotter than that outlined by the hon. member for Bulimba. Let me show how hot the racket is. Let us suppose that a portion of a beast is diseased, such as the head, the forequarter, or the hind quarter. The regulations provide that the remainder of the diseased carcass shall not go overseas. In other words, under the present system the Australian people are being compelled to eat meat from carcasses, parts of which have been condemned by meat inspectors and they are being compelled to eat also meat that is considered to be unfit for consumption by people in other parts of the world. That is how rotten and how raw this racket is.

Let us suppose that the head of the beast is diseased. The rest of the carcass cannot go overseas because it is considered to be unfit for consumption overseas. But the rest of the carcass goes into local consumption, and is consumed in ignorance of these facts by the people of Queensland and by people who buy their meat from the abattoir.

Mr. MARRIOTT (Bulimba) (12.20 p.m.): The Minister should realise exactly what is going on in this department that he controls. The meat-eating public, particularly of the metropolitan area, and for that matter in Queensland in general, are not aware of the class of meat that is put before them. It is possible through the medium of this amendment to have the provisions of this Bill broadened in order to protect the people, it will be justified.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already allowed a good deal of latitude in the debate on this amendment. I listened very attentively to the hon. members for Bulimba and Mundingburra, and now the hon. member for Bulimba. The original motion has nothing to do with carcass meat or abattoir meat. This is a machinery measure designed to give relief of payment to certain men in the dairying industry. The amendment is one designed for the effective carrying out of the provisions of the Act. That is not a principle of the motion. I therefore ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the original question before the Committee.

Mr. MARRIOTT: With due respect to you, Mr. Mann, I will endeavour to deal with the variation of the levy, which the Minister indicated is proposed in this Bill, but I and others are seeking to have its provisions broadened so that the health of the people might be properly protected and they shall not have to eat rotten, stinking meat that men refuse to handle but that is eventually converted into manure for the consumption of the people, as was done here recently.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already pointed out, and the Minister has indicated too, that the slaughtering of cattle at those abattoir is not a principle of this motion.

Mr. Wanstall: It is in my amendment.
The CHAIRMAN: The amendment does not make provision for it.

Mr. Wanstall: It could.

Question—That the words proposed to be added (Mr. Wanstall's amendment) be so added—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 25.

Mr. Aikins Mr. Morris
Barnes Nicklin
Bjelke-Petersen Peterson
Brown Plunkett
Decker Russell
Evans Sparkes
Reading Taylor, H. B.
Kerr Taylor, H. B.
Low Wanstall
Lackins
Macdonald
Madsen
Maber
Marriott McIntyre

NOES, 31.

Mr. Brown Mr. Jones
Bruce
Clark Larcombe
Collins Marsden
Crowley Moore
Davis Moers
Devries O'Shea
Donald Power
Duggan Smith
Dunstan Taylor, J. R.
Farrell Theodore
Foley Turner
Graham
Guna
Hanlon
Ingram Burrows
Jenison

PAllS.

AYES. Noes.
Mr. HIlley Mr. Hilton
Muller Gair

Resolved in the negative.

In division—

Honourable Members interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is impossible for the tellers to do their work with all this noise.

Motion (Mr. Collins) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

First Reading.

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Collins, read a first time.

SUPPLY.

COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Mann, Brisbane, in the chair.)

Debate resumed from 11 October (see page 777) on Mr. Larcombe's motion—

"That there be granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1949-50 a sum not exceeding £257 to defray the salary of the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor."

Mr. ROUSEL (Dalby) (12.31 p.m.) I read the Budget with a great deal of interest. It made a very good reading to the Government and their members who know no better than to accept this document as gospel.

However, to anyone knowing the possibilities and possibilities of development in the western and northern part of the State it will be realized what a very poor attempt has been made towards this development. In this respect much of the Budget is just hot air and lightly glosses over the small amount of assistance given to primary production.

The Treasurer should give some credit to the community as a whole for the state of well-being existing in this State at the present time. There are many in the community who have worked hard from various motives, some patriotic, some maybe selfish, but their objective was to advance the interests of the State as well as their own. A tremendous amount of credit is due to the ordinary private individual but this is not mentioned by the Treasurer in his report.

The Government, with their absolute majority, still seem to be class-conscious. The lack of development in the State is due to either ignorance or dishonesty and this is shown by the small amount of assistance given to primary production. This has been very lightly glossed over in the Budget, as I have stated.

There has been talk of the development of the State generally but we are not getting anything like the results that we should be getting and the situation as it exists in the interior of the State—the drift of population from those areas in particular—proves there is something wrong with Government policy. Today, we hear nothing but talk about plans but these are all in the blue-print stages.

Mr. Brand: No action.

Mr. RUSSELL: No action. Mention was made of the recent idea of building roads to the channel country. Previously we had heard much of railway development. Commissions sat, heard evidence, and made recommendations, but nothing has been done. Now the proposal is put forward to build roads out there. These, I believe, are totally inadequate.

Observe the allocation from Loan Fund to the great mining industry of Queensland; a mere £27,000. From that fund, having regard to the very great potential of the State, is a very inadequate amount.

I got no inspiration whatever from the Budget and today I want to deal with subjects that would more appropriately come under the heading of Estimates. However, as this is possibly the last opportunity I shall have of dealing with them, I shall have to take this opportunity as I do not want to leave this Assembly without voicing my opinion.

As you know, I have to resign my seat in the State House in order to contest the Federal election on 10 December, and at this stage I want to record my disapproval of clause 70 of the Commonwealth Electoral Acts, 1918 to 1940, which requires that State members of Parliament resign their State seats 14 days before nomination to become eligible to contest a Federal election. That means unnecessary and unnecessary expense of State, particularly if the State member is not elected to the Federal House, because then the State is put to the
expense of a second election, which could be very easily avoided. I suggest to the Government that they make a protest against this enactment.

I now wish to address myself to the Secretary for Public Works who started off in his office with great promise but so far has not lived up to it. It has been stated by him that one of the reasons for not proceeding with the urgent building requirements of this State is the extreme shortage of steel. That is generally known to exist, and we know the causes of it. The Government, of course, cannot be responsible for the industrial conditions that obtain in New South Wales, but when the American overall steel position—for that matter the steel position all over the world is so satisfactory—It seems to me that the Government should have taken steps to obtain more steel from overseas countries to carry on the development of this State.

The only countries in the world that have recorded a lower steel production than prior to the war are Australia and Germany. I cannot help feeling that it is an indictment of the administration of this country that we should be grouped with ruined Germany so far as our steel production is concerned.

I submit that the Government should press for a dollar loan in order to get more steel. It would be in the interests of Great Britain also if we could do that because we should then be adding tremendously to our productive potential.

Let us see what has happened to American steel production while our production has been going back since the war. The production in 1948 was 88,500,000 tons and in the 12 months ended April, 1949, that figure rose to 92,000,000 tons. In the first four months of this year the output rose to the rate of 96,000,000 tons a year. Those figures were given by the American Iron and Steel Institute.

Mr. Bruce: What were the Australian figures for the same period?

Mr. Russell: I only know that the Australian figures have gone back. I have not got them, but they can be obtained at any time and I suggest that if the Minister is interested he should look them up himself.

Steel production in America and other parts of the world is now being curtailed, because the demand is going off. The steel cannot be absorbed in America because the dollar situation is causing an impasse in world trade. Might I remind the Committee also that the dollar shortage is very largely the result of the Socialist Administration in England?

Mr. Power: You remind me of Balfour, the way you speak.

Mr. Russell: What did the Minister say?

Mr. Power: You heard me the first time.

Mr. Russell: The administration of the Department of Public Works is not only costly but it is not doing the job or getting the results it should. Consistent over-estimation, as is usually the case, must be very handy to the Treasurer as his final figures do not appear so terrible when as usual there is over-expenditure in some other department.

On his elevation to the position the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government, it will be remembered—and I remember it distinctly—criticised his predecessor in office very forcibly and gave all sorts of assurances that the department would be cleaned up.

Mr. Power: Mr. Dunstan, I rise to a point of order. I take exception to that remark by the hon. member for Dalby, because I never criticised my predecessor. I ask that hon. member to withdraw the remark, as it is entirely untrue. I criticised the administration of the department but I never mentioned my predecessor.

The Temporary Chairman (Mr. Dunstan): I ask the hon. member to accept the denial of the Minister.

Mr. Russell: I have to accept the Minister's denial but I suggest that he read "Hansard."

The Temporary Chairman: Order! I ask the hon. member to accept the denial.

Mr. Russell: I accepted it.

The Temporary Chairman: Order! . . . and withdraw the remark.

Mr. Russell: I thought I had withdrawn it. However, I accept his denial and withdraw the statement, but I ask him to read "Hansard."

I can see no evidence of important changes in the introduction of personnel or in the system of administration. It is of little value offering criticism without substituting some ideas calculated to overcome the difficulty you criticise. I suggest that the setting up of an advisory council to the Department of Public Works would be worth while, and I further suggest that that council consist of an engineer, an architect, a builder, who might reasonably be nominated by the Technical Trades Association, and there would be need for a business man and a representative of the Public Service. However, I will develop the suggestion as I proceed.

At present the department is in charge of an Under Secretary who is an accountant and who I have no doubt is a very good accountant but unfortunately he is neither an architect nor an engineer. I am not making a suggestion that the Under Secretary should be superseded but it might be possible to split up the various duties, which would entail of course the appointment of a deciding authority under the Minister. It might be possible to split up the control with one Under Secretary having final authority in matters of difference. That system is common in army administration and could be applied to the Department of Public Works. I cannot but feel that such a department should be in charge of either an engineer or an architect.

It would seem that the architects in the department play a very secondary part in its administration and that
they are over-ruled by the Under Secretary, who apparently views things from an accountant's angle. It is commonly believed that technical employees play a very secondary part in administration and are always subject to the Under Secretary, who is not technically qualified in any of their professions.

Immediately under the Under-Secretary are the Chief Architect and the Inspecting Architect, and from the Estimates it can be seen that the Chief Architect gets a salary of £1,232 and the Inspecting Architect £332. I say positively that these salaries are not high enough to attract the best professional ability into the service.

Mr. Power: We have also a manager of the Construction Branch who gets over £1,000 per annum.

Mr. Russell: I am trying to make suggestions to improve the department. Any good architect is in the best position to get a considerably greater salary than that. The department is run on traditional lines, that is to say, what was laid down in the past is the pattern for today, but these methods are to a very large extent outdated. In 1936, when the Premier, the Hon. E. M. Hanlon, was Secretary for Health and Home Affairs, he apparently came to realise that the Department of Public Works was incompetent and he introduced a policy of going outside the Department of Public Works to get architects for the construction of the more advanced work. Today about the only things the Department of Public Works is designing are schools and these are hopelessly behind the times. I suggest that the Minister in charge of the department go somewhere else and have a look at what is happening there.

This department is the death-bed of any young and enthusiastic man because its policy is bound up with the cast-iron formula of precedent. Any intelligent young man starting in the department is not used to the best advantage and does not get adequate training. There is no opportunity to develop originality, and such men are kept for years on routine work. They are not permitted to perform the full duty of an architect.

If they design a building they do not follow the job through to its completion. Someone else writes the specifications and the man who designs the job has nothing to do with its execution. Nothing can be more calculated to stunt interest in any man because he never sees his work, and the only opportunity he has of seeing it is to go out and see it on week-ends. After a while he loses that interest and will not bother to do even that.

I say positively that it is the duty of the Chief Architect to so organise these men as to give them every opportunity to allow them to develop some of the work right through from start to finish. He could also weed out those that are not competent. That would stimulate a tremendous interest in his staff.

The process at present employed in the department is causing the rot there, and one can gauge it merely by asking anybody and judging by the result. I am afraid it is affecting the whole of the service. That is why, when the Secretary for Public Works first came to the office he said he was going to clean it up. I for one said at the time, "Thank God, someone is going to do something," but he soon went back, apparently not going to do anything for fear he might become unpopular.

The Commonwealth Department of Public Works is a very useful example for the State department to follow, because there they have adopted the practice of going outside the service for experienced men and their work and efforts, as can be readily seen, have been very much more successful.

Not only is there a moral rot in the Queensland Department of Public Works but it is very costly to the taxpayer. Most of the work done is wasteful and unnecessary.

A tremendous lot could be saved in overhead by giving district inspectors—this suggestion is one the Minister might listen to. It is as important—authority to have minor jobs done.

Mr. Power: That shows how stupid you are, because we give them that authority.

Mr. Russell: I will tell the Minister what I have found. The Government do not extend that authority sufficiently. At present the procedure is something like this: if a school needs an inexpensive lavatory the procedure is roughly that the request has to go to the Department of Public Instruction. Then it is referred to the Department of Public Works. The latter department then sends out its local inspector, but it may be many months before the local inspector is able to make that inspection. When the inspection is made the report is sent back to the Department of Public Works, where the design and plans are drawn.

Mr. Bruce: Every department except the Railway Department is centred on the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Russell: I am telling the Minister how costly this process is and I hope that he will alter it.

These plans, having been drawn, go to the Department of Public Instruction for approval. Then they go back to the Department of Public Works, where they may stay for another period of time. This is all done by day labour. When the plans and specifications go back to the Department of Public Works the officers of that department make estimates of the material required.

That is what happens, and I am sure that a job costing £100 would by this procedure have an additional 100 per cent. overhead added to it. That is, if its right cost was £100 it would probably need another £100 expenditure for this procedure, and it would take six months at least to get it done.
The hon. member for East Toowoomba has just handed me a letter typifying this procedure. It reads—

"I am pleased to inform you that approval has now been given to the expenditure necessary to enable certain works to be undertaken at the State School, Middle Ridge.

"The work will comprise repairs to verandah floor and handrails, and the supply of two galvanised iron sawdust boxes and scoops to each of the children’s lavatories."

An inspector was sent out first to report on that request. I would suggest that his time would cost more than the job was worth.

This delay and extra expense would be overcome by giving the head of the Department of Public Instruction authority to have minor jobs done by local contractors, or have it done in a similar way by the Department of Public Works.

My point regarding the enthusiastic young men is illustrated by the fact that recently some young architects from England joined the Department of Public Works, but after a short period of service decided to get out.

Mr. Power: One of those young men got out to dodge his wife because he brought another young woman out with him.

Mr. Russell: It should be correct to assume that the volume of work carried out in the post-war period has been as great as that carried out in a similar period before the war. It would therefore be expected that a smaller administrative staff would be required in the post-war period, but that is not so, because administrative costs are forever rising while the volume of expenditure has decreased. This is one of the troubles in Australia today: too much of our productive labour is drawn off from productive work and put into the non-productive civil service. That is something to which consideration should be given.

However, it is not for me to say how the Department of Public Works should be run or organised. I merely draw attention to faults and say that the results are not good enough. I have tried to point out some of the causes and I have indicated a solution by the appointment of this council that would go into the matter and advise the Government properly.

I suggest the council comprise an outside engineer, an architect, a builder, and a business man to advise the Government on what is wrong with the department and to work out a solution. The council could review the present administration and policy of the department and make recommendations to the Government for its improvement and efficiency. I suggest that the council be a continuing one and that it should keep under review the standards of design and construction within the department. I suggest it should be the function of this council to report to the Government from time to time and that it should be appointed every three years.