Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 1 DECEMBER 1953

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Mann, Brisbane) took the chair at 11 a.m.

CIRCULATION AND COST OF "HANSARD."

Mr. Speaker laid on the table the report of the Chief Reporter, State Reporting Bureau, on the circulation and cost of "Hansard" for the session of 1952-1953.

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulations under—

The Diseases in Stock Acts, 1915 to 1952.

The Fruit Marketing Organisation Acts, 1923 to 1945 (6).

By-law No. 644 under the Railways Acts, 1914 to 1951.

CITY OF BRISBANE ACTS AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

Bill, on motion of Mr. Gair, read a third time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

Bill, on motion of Mr. Gair, read a third time.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—SIXTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Clark, Fitzroy, in the chair.)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1953-1954.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

FAIR RENTS OFFICE.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (11.8 a.m.): I move—

"That £26,977 be granted for 'Department of Justice—Fair Rents Office.'"

The amount required is £3,329 greater than last year's expenditure, the additional requirements for salaries being £2,629 and for contingencies £700.

The increase in salaries is brought about by provision for two additional officers and by increases in the basic wage and the payment of the normal award increases, together with a general increase under the Public Service Award.

The increase in the appropriation for contingencies is due mainly to provision being made for expected heavier costs for payroll tax, electric current, travelling expenses and printing.

Question stated.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (11.9 a.m.): I thought there might have been some comments by members of the Committee on this Vote. A good deal of attention has been paid to the system of fixing fair rents and I am glad to know that members have nothing to say and are quite happy about the position.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (11.10 a.m.): I should like to assure the Attorney-General that I am one of those who are not very happy about the work of the Fair Rents Office. One might have no objection to the amount that is provided for maintaining this service if it was doing any good, but to my mind the Fair Rents Court is operating very unfairly against one section of the community. I refer to people who own houses that were built before 1942, which have to be let at a considerably lower rental than houses that have been built since then. The people who are affected most are generally aged people who are perhaps living on the rents of a few cottages and who find that the increased cost of living has placed them in a very unfavourable position. The inflationary trend has caught them up in its web in that their income is fixed at the 1942 rates of rental, whereas their living costs have been considerably increased by the inflationary spiral. In my opinion that is very unfair. I cannot see why there should be any distinction between the rents of houses built prior to 1942 and those of houses built since then. We have to remember, too, that many of those older places are very roomy and are far more comfortable than the more modern types of homes. Nevertheless, the owners of those homes are obliged to accept a lower rent than the people who own modern homes.

I have never advocated exploitation of the general public—I believe that when houses are difficult to obtain no landlord should be at liberty to demand just whatever rental he might think he is entitled to—but I find it very hard to see why there should be any discrimination between the rents charged for old houses and those charged for new houses. There is nothing fair in keeping down the rental of a place merely because it was built before 1942. Even if it is in excellent repair the owner is obliged to accept a comparatively low rental.

Mr. Nicklin: The older homes are generally more comfortable than the modern ones.

Mr. MULLER: The leader of the Opposition is stressing what I have just said, that is, that a great many of the older houses are more comfortable than the modern ones, and I should like the Attorney-General to consider relinquishing the regulation that discriminates between the rentals for the older types of homes and the more modern ones.

These so-called fair rents—I prefer to call them unfair rents—have caused a shortage in the number of homes available for rental. Anyone who owns a home that is usually let to tenants will try to sell it because he will

get greater return from his money if he invests it in a loan or something of that kind. In some cases, of course, that is not done, because a person who is getting on in years does not wish to change his method of investment. However, because of the present discrimination in the rentals, he is almost compelled to do so.

I have been through this kind of thing myself. I bought an old house a couple of years ago to get someone out of a tight corner and it was one of the worst investments I ever made. Many young married people are looking for homes today and a number of them come to me at Parliament House seeking my help. They do not all live in my district either. Incidentally, it is always amusing to me that the owner of a house to let should be described as a landlord when in fact he is anything but a lord, most of the owners of such properties are poor people or people with modest means and they are not disposed to invest any more of their money in house properties. Young people who cannot raise enough money to build homes must rent them and the competition for the few homes available for renting today is so keen that all home-seekers cannot be satisfied. Let me tell hon. members of my experience in buying the old home I mentioned. I thought I was doing someone a pretty good turn. I bought the old place. I went to the trouble of moving it and having it erected elsewhere. In the course of time the rent was fixed by the Fair Rents Court and my return for my trouble in buying, moving and erecting it elsewhere was nothing. I will have nothing more to do with buying homes in the bush and having them renovated or removed.

This fair rents system, so called, is not only doing no good but is doing a jolly lot of harm, and it is accentuating the shortage of houses in this State. I should like the Minister to have a look at the question again to see whether the time has not arrived when the system should be altered. Of course, the circumstances that operated during the war years made it necessary that house rents should be kept on a fair level but now that we have returned to normal conditions there should be no discrimination in rents as between the old places and the new. If the Fair Rents Court is to continue to operate it will have to give its decisions according to what a house is worth, and the age of it should not be taken into account unless of course it is not in good condition.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (11.18 a.m.): I cannot follow the reasoning of the hon. member for Fassifern but I want to tell him that it is necessary to retain control of house rents at the present time because the lag in home construction has not yet been taken up satisfactorily. There has been a great improvement in the building of homes in Queensland, and the State Housing Commission has played a very important part in that respect. It is very pleasing to me to be able to go to Holland Park and other parts of the city and notice that the temporary housing accommodation that originally existed in those places is now being removed. I understand from the hon. member for Chermside himself that the temporary housing accommodation has been eliminated from his electorate altogether.

Mr. Dewar: At Chermside, but not at Kalinga, and it is not the property of the Housing Commission.

Mr. POWER: There was a very big centre at Chermside and I have still three temporary housing centres in my electorate. However, temporary accommodation generally is being gradually eliminated.

The hon. member for Fassifern is quite wrong in saying that people will not build houses today for letting because they are discouraged by the system of fair-rent control. I have explained on more occasions than one in this Chamber that a person who builds a house today gets the same percentage return on his investment as the people get for a house that was built before 1942. Prior to 1942 houses cost considerably less than they cost today. The hon. member's line of argument is that the owner of a house that cost £1,000 in 1942 and that could be sold for £2,000 today should be permitted to charge a rental based on £2,000. They are getting the same percentage return on their capital investment. The same thing applies to investments in insurance or government bonds. The interest rate has increased, as a result of the policy of the Commonwealth Government, but they have not made the increase retrospective; they did not increase the interest rates on the bonds taken out when the interest rates were much lower. It is a matter of the investment of capital and one that even the hon. member should be able to understand because he is engaged in business. It is quite unreasonable to say that a person who built a house for £1,000 should be allowed to receive a rental on the basis that the property is worth £2,000 today. He can increase his capital if he sells that property. The hon. member has not advanced any sound argument to support his contention in that respect.

The hon. member said that there was a shortage of houses, that people will not build them. That may be so, but rent-control has nothing to do with that. The hon. member should know that there is a fixed rate on the capital invested. Irrespective of what the house costs today to build rent will be fixed on the cost of construction. In view of that, how can the argument be sustained that as a result of rent-control people will not build homes? The high cost of building homes has made it uneconomic for persons to invest in that way because they feel there may be a slump at any time. I remind hon. members of something that I mentioned before, that a worker's home built at a cost of several hundred pounds was sold by auction during the term of the Moore Government, when the economic depression was acute, for the amount of £1. It was bought by the Workers' Homes Department and the house in normal times was worth £500 or £600. The speculators did not know

it was to be sold or they would have been there and the price would have gone higher. I know that my own boy built a home that cost £2,200, and the home that my late father built adjoining my own home, containing three bedrooms, a dining room, a sitting room, a breakfast room, a kitchen and a bathroom downstairs, was built 40 years ago at a cost of £325. Would anybody suggest that because it would cost £1,500 to build now that the rental should be on that basis?

Mr. Muller: I would suggest that.

Mr. POWER: Of course the hon. member would; he would be prepared to exploit the worker.

Mr. Muller: No.

Mr. POWER: He would be prepared to exploit the worker, on his own admission.

Mr. Muller: No, the worker is my friend.

Mr. POWER: On his own admission the hon. member admits he is prepared to exploit the worker and charge him a rental based on the present-day value of £1,500 for a house that cost £325 to build 40 years ago. My wife owns a house opposite where we live that was built for £650-odd for which she was offered £1,750. Would anyone suggest that the rental should be fixed on the present-day capital value? The hon. member does; I do not, nor does any member of my family or the Labour Party.

This legislation is framed with the object of protecting the workers from avaricious people. The hon. member for Fassifern cannot show any justification for complaints in regard to the rents that are fixed. I again point out that rentals were fixed at the 1942 basis, but in some other States they were paying on the 1940 values. In one State the rental is based on the 1939 value. Values in Queensland are pegged at a later date than those in other States and there is no justification for anyone to suggest that rentals should be charged on present-day valuations.

I have conferred with members of the Real Estate Institute and been informed by a number of the members of that institute that prior to rent-control the rent fixed by the owners of quite a number of houses was too low and did not give them the return that the Act now enables them to obtain; they were pegged by the Commonwealth Government by regulation and this was carried on by the State Government. But these people can make application to the Fair Rents Court for a variation of rentals and there have been numerous applications to that court by a number of reputable agents. I have been informed that increases in rentals up to 8s. a week have been given by the court and I would suggest that people who think they are not receiving reasonable rental for their premises make applications to the court, which will give them any relief that is justified. Perhaps there are one or two anomalies that could be adjusted but I am examining the position as a whole. I would point out, too—probably many people do not know it—that each time an increase in rates is made by the local authority or in charges by the electricity undertaking, amounts that are being paid by the landlord, application must be made for an adjustment for these increases, which are passed on. Moreover, 20 per cent. is the amount allowed on furniture because, as hon. members can well understand that most tenants do not take care of another person's furniture as they would of their own.

The hon. member for Fassifern made the statement that the basis of the 1942 valuation was not reasonable but I would point out that in New South Wales rentals are based on 5 per cent. of capital valuation as at 31 August, 1939. For new buildings it is 5 per cent. on the capital cost. In Queensland the rates are much higher. In Victoria the rate is 5 per cent. on capital valuation at 31 December, 1940 and for new buildings 5 per cent. on capital cost. In Queensland the percentage is net 6 per cent. on capital valuation as at 1942 and for new buildings 6 per cent. on capital cost. These figures indicate that Queensland conditions are far superior to those of any other State in the Commonwealth and they destroy the argument advanced by the hon. member for Fassifern that the shortage of houses in Queensland is due to rent-control. That is not so. In Queensland the basis is 6 per cent. on the capital cost at 1942, plus rates or any other outgoings. For example, a certain allowance is made for repairs and depreciation. In view of these facts there is nothing in the contention of the hon. member for Fassifern.

The only argument the hon. member advances is that some aged people have invested money in property with a view to living on the rentals when they retire. That is true, but does he suggest that it is reasonable to ask the tenants in properties that were built prior to 1942 to pay higher rentals, because the £1 has depreciated in value, in order that the landlords may live in the style in which they desire to live? One way out of the difficulty would be to ask the Commonwealth Government to be a little more lenient and eliminate the means test so that these people might supplement their income by drawing upon the pension fund.

Mr. Morris: If a person owns a property the rental of which is based on the 1942 valuation, and sells it to somebody else at present-day values, how is the rental based?

Mr. POWER: The rent is still based on the 1942 value. It is based on cost of construction at the time of erection of the building. If a person erects a new building today, he will get 6 per cent. on the capital cost. If we agreed to the principle suggested in the hon. member's interjection, it would be an easy matter for Mrs. Jones to transfer her property to her husband or some other member of the family at present-day values and so increase the rent.

Mr. Morris: Is there any consideration for the person who must sell but cannot, because no-one will buy if the rent is to continue on the old basis?

Mr. POWER: That does not come into it at all. We cannot legislate for the individual; we must legislate on broad principles. It is admitted that some people are debarred by the Commonwealth Government from receiving the invalid or age pension because they own some property and I repeat that one way out of the difficulty is for the Commonwealth Government to ease the means test, but they will not do that. They remove excise from whisky and other commodities but they will do nothing for the worker. There is no excise on champagne, but there is on beer and petrol. They are still getting a big rake-off by way of petrol tax. I understand that the recent reduction in taxation has benefited one wealthy Brisbane company to the extent of £40,000. I do not propose mentioning the name because I do not want to make public the affairs of that business. The Commonwealth Government make that handsome gift to such people as that but all they will do for the worker is increase the pension by 2s. 6d. a week, at the same time making no provision for those people who have a few houses from which they receive an income of from 20s. to 25s. a week.

Mr. Heading: You have not given them anything.

Mr. POWER: We have not interfered with them in any way whatever. Is the hon. member of the same opinion as the hon. member for Fassifern? Does he say that although a property cost £1,000 to build in 1942 we should fix the rental on today's value, of perhaps £2,000?

Dr. Noble: What about the Crown timber royalties?

Mr. POWER: I am dealing with rents. What about the increase in the fees of the medical profession? What about the fact that since the introduction of the Commonwealth Medical Benefits Scheme the fees of medical practitioners have increased?

Dr. Noble: What about politicians?

Mr. POWER: What about politicians?

Mr. Muller: Why should your salary be increased?

Mr. POWER: Why should yours? I am selling my labour, and if I were getting £5,000 for the work I am doing I should be earning every penny of it. For the information of the hon. member let me tell him that whereas he has been here perhaps two days a week out of four, members of the Cabinet have not only been here, but have been sitting in Cabinet until 11 at night going through legislation that could not be dealt with during the working hours of the day. The hon. member is a part-time member of Parliament and he wants to know why the salaries of members of Parliament should be increased.

Mr. Muller: Don't be personal.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member raised the question. The hon. member for Yeronga raised another matter and I reply: what about the increase in fees of members of the medical profession?

Mr. Munro: You do not truly think that an increase in age pensions is the solution to our problems in regard to rent-control?

Mr. POWER: We have no problem of rent-control here.

Mr. Munro: The operation of rent-control is inequitable and you cannot solve it by a pension increase.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member is quite wrong. Let us have a look at what a committee of inquiry in South Australia had to say with regard to the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act. The members of the committee were W. C. Gillespie, LL.B., S.M., chairman, A. W. Bowden, A.I.A. (London), public actuary, Miss Ruth Gibson, B.A., Dip.Ed. and M. H. E. Mackay. This is what the committee had to say—

> "It is impracticable and unsound in formulating a scheme for general application—which is the goal at which we are striving—to endeavour to cover all circumstances that are not usually found in the average case. We consider that provision cannot effectively be made for the indigent landlord who is, and even in 1939 was, endeavouring to eke from rented premises an income that they are incapable of yielding."

That is what an independent tribunal had to say.

Mr. Larcombe: In a Tory Government State.

Mr. POWER: In a Tory Government State, as the hon. member for Rockhampton points out. That is worth repeating—

> "We consider that provision cannot effectively be made for the indigent landlord who is, and even in 1939 was, endeavouring to eke from rented premises an income that they are economically incapable of yielding."

That was the proposal of the hon. member for Fassifern, adopted by the hon. member for Marodian.

This is interesting too—

> "In such instances the real truth is that he does not possess sufficient capital to sustain him without drawing upon the capital itself and the only practical course for him to adopt is to convert his asset into a form of investment that does not require him to expend portion of the gross return in order to maintain its capital value. It is frequently said that the low level of rents is causing particular hardship to poor landlords. When the circumstances of a particular landlord are investigated it frequently transpires that the real source of his hardship is not the level of his rent but a circumstance that he shares with great numbers of his fellow humans, namely, insufficiency of worldly assets to maintain him."

That is a statement by an independent committee of inquiry appointed by an anti-Labour Government.

I should like to see the day when we can eliminate rent-control, but there are people who are preventing us from doing it. I should like also to see the day when we can close Boggo Road gaol, and the day when we can reduce the number of men who are policing the laws of this State. My Cabinet recently approved of trying an experiment in the elimination of control over serviced rooms. What happened? Accommodation charges jumped from £2 9s. to £5 19s. 6d. a week, and all that the tenants get is one clean sheet a week and tea and toast for breakfast. It is people such as the owners of those serviced rooms who compel the Government to maintain control. As long as we have exploiters in our midst we will continue controls so that we can deal with them.

Let us examine the rental position as it exists in the southern States. This article appears in "The Melbourne Sun" of 28 November—

> "Rent Bill Provides Gaol for Rackets.
>
> "Important reforms, including stiffer penalties for 'key money' and 'bed and breakfast' rackets, are included in the Government's Landlord and Tenant Amendment Bill, to be explained to the Legislative Council on Tuesday."

Then the article states the penalties to be imposed. It looks as if I might have to do something in that direction when the Act is next amended.

I rose merely to point out that the hon. member who raised this matter has no grounds whatever for complaint. The hon. member for Toowong is regarded as one of our very able business men. Every time he writes a letter to "The Courier-Mail" it receives prominence, unlike statements by Ministers of the Crown in giving the actual position of any matter under discussion. They are treated in a style suitable to the politics of the newspaper concerned. The hon. member for Toowong knows the position just as well as I do. He must know that if you are to give property-owners an increase in rent by valuing their properties at present-day rates, it will be necessary to go further. People who invested their money in loans during the war will have to be given full value for those loans instead of having to sell them at about £88 10s. In addition, people who lent money at 3½ per cent. some years ago will have to have their interest rates increased to the rate that is now being paid by the Commonwealth Government on their loans. After all, it is an investment of money prior to 1942, and in addition to the cost of erecting the building, the owner is allowed a return of 6 per cent. plus something for depreciation and rates.

As I say, there is no justification for the complaints that have been made. I urge those people who think they are being treated unjustly to place the full facts before the Fair Rents Office. Many of these elderly people have little or no knowledge of the law. I send people daily to the Fair Rents Office, and I am sure that the officers there give them a very patient hearing. The investigating officer puts a value on the property concerned and in addition the owner can get an independent valuation and place it before the court.

Nothing can justify the contention that the rent for a house that cost £1,000 before 1942 and is today valued at £2,000 should be higher than the 1942 rental, because of its higher money value today. It is all part and parcel of a capital investment, and if the proposal is that we should alter our system of returns on capital investment it will be necessary to revise the whole of our financial system, and indeed the whole of our economic structure. It is all very well for some house and land agents to say that rents should be increased but they are animated by personal reasons in that they collect a commission on the rents paid to them. No sound argument has been advanced against the present policy of the Government in this connection and it is the best system of any State in the Commonwealth.

Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS (Whitsunday) (11.47 a.m.): I do not agree at all with the opinion of the Minister on this subject, and I propose to show how shallow his arguments are. He compared the position of a house valued at £700 in 1942 with that of the same house valued at £2,000 today. Does he not realise that the owner of a house valued at £700 in 1942 is allowed to take repairs, insurance, rates, maintenance, into account, which gives him a net rent return of 6 per cent. or a gross of 10 per cent.? That would mean that in 1942 the owner of the house would get a gross income of £70 a year, or about 30s. a week. We must now have regard to the value of money at the time and ask ourselves what the owner of the house could do with an amount of 30s. a week. Many of these houses are owned by old people who have invested their life savings in them. Some of them may own two or three such houses, which at one time gave them an income of £3 to £4 a week, but today £3 to £4 will not go half as far as it went prior to 1942.

The Minister said that the owners of such houses were not entitled to get a rent based on their present-day values, that it was all a matter of capital cost, and that they were entitled to get only 6 per cent. on their capital investment. I propose to show just how ridiculous his statement is. I take the case of a house valued at £700 before the war in 1942, on which the owner is allowed a gross return of 10 per cent., which is £70 a year or near enough to 30s. a week. He is not allowed to get any higher rent than that from a house valued at £700. It will be readily admitted that such a house has a marketable value today of £2,000. Let us suppose therefore that the owner sells the house for £2,000 and builds a new one with the money. He now owns a new house and he can get 8 per cent. gross from that which on £2,000 amounts to £160 a year or near enough to double the amount that he would get otherwise.

Mr. Power: The old house would still be subject to the rental conditions laid down in the Act.

Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS: I am not concerned with the rent of the house that has been sold. That is someone else's pigeon. If the owner sold the old house to his tenant, who required it as a home, the rent would not be a matter of any concern. I was pointing out that after allowing for repairs, maintenance and so on, the owner of the new house valued at £2,000 could get 8 per cent. or about £160 a year, whereas a man who owned a house valued at £700 in 1942 could get only 30s. a week. Such people have to dispose of their property and build a new house in order to get the fair and equitable rent to which they are entitled.

I am not a believer in high rents, but some of the rents charged by the Housing Commission are absolutely shameful and if they were brought under rent-control they would be reduced. I know that many of the Housing Commission houses, owing to the circumstances of the occupants, are returning a very small rent, but many of the occupiers are paying large rentals, rentals that I do not believe are reasonable. In fixing the rental the Commission takes into consideration children of 16 to 17 years of age who are working and earning a few shillings a week. Every member knows that when a lad or a girl begins to work for about £2 a week it is not sufficient to pay for food, let alone clothing and entertainment, yet the Housing Commission takes the amounts earned by the children into consideration in determining the fair economic rent.

I think that people who invested their money in years gone by should be entitled to an equitable return on present-day values and that it should not be based on something out of the Ark.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (11.53 a.m.): I will not let the hon. member get away with that one. The hon. member raised the question of the rental of premises built prior to 1942 and based on 1942 values. He mentioned the payment of 30s. a week.

Mr. Lloyd Roberts: On a £700 house.

Mr. POWER: For a £700 investment. The hon. member went on to ask what the owner of the premises could do with 30s. a week. I point out that that does not come into the matter.

Mr. Lloyd Roberts: It is very important.

Mr. POWER: It does not come into it at all. The hon. member is asking us to amend the law to enable a person who built a house prior to 1942 to have the rental based on present-day values. Because there has been a drop in the value of the £1 and in purchasing power he wants to enable the owner to exploit the worker. Because these things have happened—the drop in the value of the £1 and the drop in purchasing power—despite the promise of the Commonwealth Government that inflation would be cured, he wants to allow the occupier of a house to supplement his income. His argument is perfectly illogical. The hon. member said also that the person who built a home prior to 1942 for £1,000 and sold it for £2,000 and then built a new home would receive an income based on the £2,000. That is quite right. That is what I have been trying to tell the hon. member all along. The owner is allowed the same return on the capital cost today as he is able to obtain on the capital cost prior to 1942.

Mr. Lloyd Roberts interjected.

Mr. POWER: Do not try to put words into my mouth; the hon. member made his speech and now I am replying to him.

Mr. Lloyd Roberts: It is not a very sound reply.

Mr. POWER: It is a very sound reply, and if the hon. member cannot understand that is not my responsibility. The hon. member for Whitsunday is well versed in this business and he knows that no matter what he might do or say the owner of an old home that cost £700 can charge a rental only on the 1942 value. Irrespective of how he manipulates it or bases his argument on the hypothetical cases he put forward he cannot get away from that fact.

The hon. member for Toowong referred to the reduction in the purchasing power of the £1. I would remind the hon. member that many people invested in £100 bonds. Would the hon. member suggest that because of the reduction in the value of the £1 the Commonwealth Government should increase to £150 the value of a bond bought for £100? I might remind him that as a matter of fact, according to the present value of the £1, the amount of the £100 bond would have to be increased to £168. I would also remind the hon. member that those who invested in £100 bonds some time ago can sell them now for only £87 10s.

The question of the rents charged by the Queensland Housing Commission was raised but let us have a look at the rents charged by the Commission. The rents charged by the Commission on new homes built today are much lower than the rents being asked for homes built by private enterprise. Of course, I do not complain about that.

Mr. Lloyd Roberts: In the aggregate they average.

Mr. POWER: Never mind the aggregate; we are dealing with the matter generally. Of course, private enterprise is bound by the Fair Rents Court. I am not saying that it is doing anything dishonest but I would point out to the hon. member, who is dissatisfied with the rentals charged by the Queensland Housing Commission, that in the rental the capital cost of the building is taken into consideration and these rents are fixed under the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement. An agreement requires at least two parties and may only be varied by agreement between the two parties. An attempt is being made by the Secretary for Public Works and Housing to have a conference held with the Commonwealth Government. I have no wish to

repeat what I said the other day, as I might be accused of being political, and of course I am not that. The Commonwealth was not prepared to confer on the proposal to eliminate a number of these houses and sell them on very low deposits to the occupiers. There will be tremendous maintenance work on these buildings. At the present time a considerable amount of maintenance work is being done and it is known that the maintenance of these houses will be costly. For instance, painting is costly. It would be much better if these homes could be transferred and sold on low deposits to the occupiers. I was merely informing the hon. member for Whitsunday of the exact position in regard to the rentals as he said the rentals charged by the Queensland Housing Commission were too high and he was amazed at them. Comparison shows that in this instance the charges by the Queensland Housing Commission are much lower than those required by private enterprise.

This further statement from the report of the South Australian committee of inquiry is interesting—

> "Very few houses erected since 1939 are occupied by tenants. Those who have built since that time have done so almost entirely for their own occupation and some have sold to owner-occupiers. The dire shortage of dwelling houses, together with the competition between users of materials have forced up prices, both of construction and on sale of houses already built. Many owners ruefully contemplate the amount of rents they receive when they realise the enormous increment at which they could sell (particularly if they did so with vacant possession) and when they realise the prices being paid for the erection of houses. Unfortunately the pernicious influences that have inflated the prices of new and old houses and, in a sense, their value have operated generally with drastic effect upon prices of virtually all commodities and services and consequent serious lessening of the value of money which, of course, includes the money received by landlords for rent. It is, we think, realism rather than avarice that prompts the average landlord to seek higher rent. No doubt there are exceptions."

Mr. DEWAR (Chermside) (12.2 p.m.): The Minister stated that home-building had caught up with demand to a great extent, and that is so. Figures supplied to me some time ago show that in pre-war days the density of home occupation throughout the Commonwealth was four persons to a home. Today it is 3.07 people to a home, which indicates conclusively that the number of homes available in relation to the population is much greater than it was.

The Queensland Housing Commission and the housing authorities of other States have been largely responsible for this improvement. So also have the Commonwealth Government by their war-service homes programme. In the four years following the war 13,160 war-service homes were built and in the last three years that number had increased to 44,300, so that the great improvement during the last three years has been due mainly to the activities of the Commonwealth Government.

The Minister has endeavoured to reply to some of the statements made by hon. members on this side. Again I remind him, as I did when discussing the Chief Office Vote, that the Queensland Government are not backward when it comes to charging rentals. Again I draw his attention to page 564 of "Hansard" where the hon. member for Clayfield is reported as having asked the Minister for Transport whether it was a fact that a house bought by the Railway Department for £3,200 was advertised for rental at £4 1s. 4d. a week plus rates and taxes. The Minister for Transport is reported as having replied that the department did buy the house for £3,200 and advertised it for rental at £4 1s. 4d. a week, the prospective tenant to pay all rates and taxes.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: That was not the original capital cost of the house.

Mr. DEWAR: That is so. Once again we have a glaring example of the fact that the Government, while insisting that private enterprise shall observe the regulations rigidly, pay no great heed to them themselves.

The Government are always bemoaning the fact that there has been a great change in the value of money. There seems to be no doubt about that and one would be wasting time to argue that point. I point out, however, that money values have changed just as singularly for the person who owns a home that was built before 1942. It has been suggested on this side of the Chamber, and admitted by the Minister, that a number of homes are rented by people in what we might call the pension category, widows who have lost their husbands and have gone to live with a daughter. That person rents the home that was left to her by her late husband, and persons like her depend entirely on the amount of money they receive by way of rent.

I repeat, the Minister is always putting up a case for the tenant. He says that because a house was built for £800 or £1,000 prior to 1942 the owner should charge a rent based on the original cost of the house. Although he suggests that the person who owns the home is entitled to receive only an income based on what it cost to build the house, he protects a tenant who is receiving an income based on present-day values. I agree that you have to keep down the costs to the person who is renting the home but I think also that both parties should be put on an equitable basis. A worker sells his labour on 1953 values but he is paying rental for his home on 1942 values. There is no equity in that at all.

If the owner of a home wants to sell, the person who is prepared to invest in that home for rental purposes must realise full well that he will be able to charge only a rental based on 1942 values, although he has paid £2,000 for a house that originally cost £850 or £1,000. It is hardly likely that any person will be interested in such

an investment when he can invest his money in other gilt-edged securities, such as the Brisbane City Council loan at 4¾ per cent. and the Southern Electric Authority loan at 5 per cent. He does not need to invest in the doubtful project of a home with all its attendant problems such as maintenance and repair. By and large, there naturally will be a hesitation on the part of investors to go in for that type of investment.

Let us assume that an owner finds he cannot live on the income that is allowed by the Fair Rents Court and realises that it is essential for him to sell. He sells and gets £2,000 and is then able to invest that sum in a gilt-edged security from which he can get a far greater return. The Minister has told us that no matter how many times and old home may be sold it still has to be rented at the old value. That is all right in theory, but what actually is happening is that few people are interested in buying such a home as an investment, because they know that their returns will be limited to the 1942 values. That kind of investment is not taking place. These homes are changing hands but the buyer is usually a person who intends to occupy the home himself. After the sale has been effected the person who has bought the home for his own occupancy goes to the court and obtains an eviction order against the occupier of the premises. He proves conclusively that his need of the home is greater than that of the person who is renting it, and after the time during which the tenant has the opportunity to find other accommodation has elapsed, the home ultimately ceases to be a rented home. I have been called upon to handle many such cases. About once a month a constituent of mine is evicted from his home. At the present time one of my constituents, who has seven children, has an eviction order against him and he has to be out of the place by 11 January. As soon as a man is evicted he goes to the Housing Commission and seeks temporary accommodation. If he knows a Labour member he is in that temporary accommodation for a month or so, but if he knows a Liberal member he is in it for from 6 to 9 months, which is the best I can do for any of my constituents. As I say, he is forced into that temporary accommodation, for which he pays about 19s. a week. After being there for about six months—unless he is in Victoria Park, which it seems some do not want to leave—he asks for a home, and immediately he gets one his rental is computed on his income.

I am not now talking about pensioners, because I know quite well that many homes are rented to pensioners at rentals of 15s. a week. That has a lot to do with the fact that the rentals paid by other people are higher than they would otherwise be.

The person who has been evicted from his previous home, for which he may have been paying from 25s. to 30s. a week, and for which he would have been prepared to pay perhaps £2 a week had he been given the opportunity, is given a home on some housing estate, for which he has to pay perhaps £2 17s. or £2 18s. a week if it was built by day labour, or £3 4s. a week for a pre-fabricated house fitted with an electric stove.

What have the Government done to help that type of man? Their regulations have forced the owner of the house that he previously occupied to sell it to someone who wants to use it himself as a residence. He has been evicted by the court and ultimately has to pay a rental of about £3 a week.

How is the fair-rents legislation helping the working man? That is the question I put to the Minister. The Minister says that rents are computed on 1942 values, and that he will not alow the working man to be exploited because of the changed money values. However, it is not impossible to conceive that values may drop, and drop alarmingly. They have done it before, and we are not so sage-like that we can overcome difficulties that for thousands of years have not been overcome by men with much greater capacity than we possess. It is quite possible that at some stage there will be a decrease in values. After an increase in values the Government keep rents down to 1942 values, but if by any chance values drop to, say, those of 1936, will values for rental purposes remain at the 1942 level? Not if the Labour Party is in power. If values revert overnight to those that existed in 1936, rents will immediately be computed on 1936 values. There is no doubt about that. The Government should be consistent in these matters.

Let me illustrate my point still further. Let us suppose that a widow goes to live with her married daughter, who desires to be good to her. The daughter's husband is a man in a reasonably good position and they allow the mother to stay with them at no cost to the mother. Let us suppose that over a period she is able to save £850 because she is able to live with her daughter without cost to herself. Let us suppose also that she has a rented house that her late husband was able to buy. From that house she can get an income based on 1942 values. Now she has saved another £850 and she desires to invest that money too. Perhaps she will be able to help some other person by providing her with a home but she now finds that it will cost her something like £2,000 to build a home today similar to the one that her husband left her, which cost £850 when it was built. She will be able to get rent for the new home in accordance with its capital cost today, a house that she was able to build out of a rent based on 1942 values. Her living conditions enabled her to save this money but the living conditions would cost in other circumstances two or three times more than when the house was built and from which she has collected the rent that gave her an income that enabled her to build the new house. The cost of living today is three times the amount that it was then.

This is a matter that should be assessed on an equitable basis but the regulations are not being carried out equitably. I am not saying that there should be any exploitation of the

worker in the matter of rents, to use a phrase so often used by the socialists, nor am I saying that the State Housing Commission is justified in charging high rentals. I am not saying that private enterprise on the one hand should charge high rentals or that the Socialists should charge high rentals, anything up to £4 a week for the house let by the Railway Department. I am not arguing that rents should be greatly increased. My whole argument is that there should be a basis of equity as between both parties. The policy that is now carried out by the Government in this connection does not help the worker at all, whereas on the other hand there is increasing evidence of the fact that it is tending to bring about the sale of homes with the consequent eviction of the tenant, who eventually pays twice as much rent for a house provided by the State Housing Commission. How is such legislation helping the worker?

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (12.17 p.m.): The hon. member for Chermside referred to a question asked in this Chamber about the rent charged for a house by the Railway Department and the answer by the Deputy Premier, Mr. Duggan. The Deputy Premier pointed out at the time that the rent charged for the premises was lower than the rent that would have been charged if the house had been the property of private enterprise, and I think his reply effectively answered the hon. member for Chermside.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: But the rent was not based on 1942 values?

Mr. POWER: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: I am asking a question.

Mr. POWER: I advise the hon. member to stick to his irrigation and water conservation schemes. If he is not careful, one of these days he will finish up falling into one of the dams.

The hon. member for Chermside mentioned money values. I point out that they have nothing to do with the amount of rent that is fixed. The hon. member said also that the worker sells his wages to the highest bidder. That is not right, and the hon. member knows it is not right.

Mr. Dewar: He sells his wages at 1953 value.

Mr. POWER: He does not.

Mr. Dewar: What does he sell?

Mr. POWER: The hon. member is irresponsible, and he demonstrated that the other night when he made a statement that we had fixed certain prices on rubber belting and it was pointed out that it did not come under price-control. The irresponsible member for Chermside should know that the wages of the worker are fixed by the Industrial Court. That is the tribunal that decides, after hearing representatives from both sides, what the worker shall receive. The hon. member is engaged in business—he has one or two people, including his wife, working for him—and he should know that the wages of those people are fixed by the Industrial Court. Rents are fixed by the magistrate on the evidence submitted to him. Has the hon. member any objection to the magistrate's fixing the rental values of those properties? In his nasty little way—and he is noted for this—and in a very snide way he had a crack at the Housing Commission. He said that when a person's house was sold he had to go to the Housing Commission seeking accommodation. That is true. Houses are sold from time to time and people must vacate those premises. The court decides who would suffer the greater amount of hardship and decides accordingly. The hon. member said that if that person goes to a Labour man he does not always go to temporary accommodation and if he does, he remains only a few weeks, whereas if a person goes to a Liberal member he remains in temporary accommodation for nine months.

Mr. Dewar: Six to nine.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member is not telling the truth when he makes that statement; and it demonstrates how unfair and how irresponsible he is. The hon. member always takes the opportunity to try and belittle a Government department and to cast reflections on numbers of employees of the Housing Commission. The hon. member's statement is a deliberate untruth and only parliamentary Standing Orders prevent me from expressing in my own language what I think of the hon. member for his statement. I challenge the hon. member to produce evidence in support of his allegations.

It is true that certain people have not gone into temporary accommodation. Today temporary accommodation is pretty well a thing of the past, with the exception of the centres in my electorate and one at Kalinga. There have been cases where people have had to vacate their homes, and, owing to illness it was not advisable to send them to temporary accommodation. I recollect that when I was Minister in charge of housing we had cases at Chermside of unfortunate people who were suffering from tuberculosis, and we did not think it was wise to put them into temporary accommodation where they would be using the same public conveniences as other people; we thought the only humane thing to do was to provide those people with houses, and we did that. Such an action would receive the commendation of every decent member of the Opposition. It does not appeal to the hon. member. He has no decency when he makes these attacks on the Housing Commission.

As a further illustration I mentioned the aged people and asked whether it would be fair to put aged people in temporary accommodation. They were put straight into homes without having to go through temporary accommodation. Parents with spastic children were placed in homes without having to go through temporary accommodation. It was important that the spastic children should have some comfort and some space in which to relax, which would not be

available to them in temporary accommodation. Without any evidence whatever the hon. member attacks the commission for having done these humane actions. The attack was low, mean and contemptible but it is only what one would expect from the hon. member for Chermside. We found it necessary to put ex-service men minus limbs straight into homes without having to pass through temporary accommodation. The hon. member complains about this sort of thing. He has not furnished evidence to support the allegations he has made and I am satisfied the decent members of the community will treat this individual with the contempt he deserves for his unwarranted attack on the officials of the commission and his slandering of these unfortunate people, such as parents with spastic children, soldiers who have lost limbs and people who have been ill because these unfortunate people got some preference.

Mr. Clark, to enable me to reply to the allegations made by the hon. member I hope you will allow me some latitude. People who go into temporary accommodation provided by the Queensland Housing Commission are provided with permanent accommodation on the basis of a points system. Under the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement 50 per cent. of the houses built under that agreement must be available to ex-service men. There have been instances in which ex-service men with large families have not been required to go into temporary accommodation. It is impossible to provide suitable temporary accommodation for a man and wife with eight or ten children. These are reasons why there have been departures from the policy of the department and there is every justification for these departures, but we have the hon. member for Chermside endeavouring to inflame the minds of people in temporary accommodation by causing them to believe that they have been passed over. His attack on the commission is low, mean and contemptible. As I have pointed out, 50 per cent. of the accommodation in homes under the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement must be given to ex-service men and some of these men have been only five or six weeks in temporary accommodation. The commission has been able to arrange with the persons who bought the houses in which such people as I have mentioned lived and obtained ejectment orders to allow these tenants to remain for say, three months or so so that they could go direct into permanent homes rather than into temporary accommodation.

The hon. member also attacked the rentals charged by the commission. Take houses built prior to 1942; a house built in 1921 cost £18 a square. In 1942 the cost was £65 a square. The owners of houses built in 1921 were allowed to increase the value of the premises from £18 to £65 a square. In his dirty sneering way the hon. member asks what would be the position if the costs of building became cheaper, would the rental value have to be decreased to the 1936 value? As I have said, we have allowed all premises built prior to 1942, and some were at as low as £18 a square, to be valued at £65 a square. That again destroys the argument of the irresponible hon. member for Chermside who rises here without any facts at all and adopts these tactics for the purpose of attempting to score off the Government politically. Up to date he has not won a trick. On the contrary, he has made himself look silly. The other night, Mr. Turner, you made him look sillier than I have seen anyone look for many years.

The cost of constructing a home today is £187 a square. The hon. member argues that we should allow a person who built a home for £18 a square in 1921 to charge the worker a rental based on a value of £187 a square. It is no wonder that we control prices. It is no wonder that we control the price of leather belting, the business in which the hon. member is engaged, when we find he is prepared to adopt those tactics.

For his information, I point out that a dwelling at Annerley that was bought for £310 in 1938 has been valued at £737 for rental purposes. Is not that a reasonable return for the landlord? It is more than twice the price paid for the house in 1938. Another dwelling at Eagle Junction was bought for £200 in 1942 but has been valued at £710 for rental purposes. Another house at Buranda cost £475 in 1946 but it is valued at £758 today for rental purposes. Yet the hon. member for Chermside has the temerity to suggest that we are trying to squeeze the landlord, that we are trying to prevent him from getting a reasonable return on his money! He is getting more than a reasonable return.

Then he trotted out the old socialistic tiger. I remind him and the members of his party that they have been trotting that tiger out for a long while now, trying to put a twist in his tail. Every time they go before the electors they try to do that but succeed only in twisting their own tail. At the last election they cut off some of their own heads, for they returned fewer members than before. In view of these circumstances, our policy must be sound. We leave it to the intelligent section of the people to decide on the facts we put before them.

We are proud of the fact that nearly 80 per cent. of the people of this State either own their own homes or are in the process of buying them. We believe in home ownership. We also believe in abolishing the landlord wherever possible. Our terms and conditions of home-purchase are far superior to those of any other State. If the Prime Minister is willing to confer with our Secretary for Public Works and Housing and the Ministers for Housing of other States, the complaints made by the hon. member for Chermside can be eliminated altogether. Certainly his complaints are unjustified so far as Queensland is concerned. The best way of getting a contented community and eliminating Communism is to give the people some stake in the country, to give them the right to own their own homes. That is the policy of this Government. The Commonwealth Government today, because of the attitude they are

adopting, are preventing many people in the State from becoming home-owners. They are not prepared to vary the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement.

I repeat that the remarks of the hon. member for Chermside are entirely untrue and without any justification. They are mean and cowardly and only what you would expect from the hon. member, who, whenever he rises in his place, makes allegations that he cannot support.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (12.36 p.m.): I have no desire to enter into a dog-fight with the Attorney-General. All I want is to see a fair deal for every member of the community. It is furthest from my mind to exploit the person who is renting a house; no-one is so close to my heart as a person who works for an honest living.

The Attorney-General, in reply to me, made some reference to what I was earning and what he was earning. I cast no reflection on what he is earning as a Minister of the Crown. He and his brother Ministers earn all they get. However, I am prepared to admit that I am earning a great deal more than I was in 1942, and the Minister will agree that we are all earning more than we were in 1942. On the same token the owner of a home should be getting more money for his investment than he was in 1942.

Let us consider the basic wage. I have no records with me, but I venture to say that in 1942 the basic wage was a good deal less than £6 a week.

An Opposition Member: It was £4 5s.

Mr. MULLER: Suppose it was £5. Then again, how do interest rates in 1942 compare with those ruling today? The hon. Minister has said that the person who bought bonds at that time has to accept 1942 values. That is not so. Many of us bought bonds during the war period and they bore interest at 3 per cent. Those bonds matured and we were paid our money and were then able to invest the money at present-day interest rates.

Mr. Power: You are only paid 3 per cent. on your bonds.

Mr. MULLER: But they matured and the money was returned to us and we could invest it in what we wished. That is not so with the owners of these homes.

Mr. Power: He can sell his house if he wants to.

Mr. MULLER: I know he can, but the hon. gentleman admitted in reply to a question that even though he sells his house the rental is still based on 1942 values. All I have to say is that anyone who buys one of these old places has something wrong with him, and should be certified for the Goodna mental institution. One has only to buy one of these places to find out what the maintenance costs are. They are very much higher than on a place built more recently. I have had one of them and I know just how much the repairs and maintenance cost. Recently I was informed that it cost £240 even to paint one of these old places. Admittedly it was a farm house, but it was built 35 years ago and had been kept in a reasonable state of repair. If you have to replace a tank and have a bit of plumbing done it costs a lot of money when you pay for these repairs at 1953 rates. These replacements are so costly that the position of the owner of one of these old places is almost impossible.

Let us compare two men, whom we will describe as A and B. A had £2,000 in 1942 and he invested in a house worth £500. Today A's assets are still £2,000. B had £2,000, which he invested in a farm. Many farms I knew that were selling at £2,000 in 1942 are selling at £8,000 today. The same remarks apply to a business, such as a small milk factory or any other kind of business. With the inflationary trend, all values have increased. The same thing would apply to livestock. For the life of me I cannot see the Minister's point. I cannot see why a person who, through no fault of his own, has invested his life's savings in a house property to gain an honest livelihood should be the victim of discrimination. There is such a thing as pride in the make-up of many people, people who would not ask for an age pension as long as they had some means of livelihood. Many such people have invested their money in house properties, only to find that their return is based on 1942 values, whereas their cost of living is based on present-day values. To my mind it is all cockeyed, and much as I might strain my imagination I cannot follow the Minister's argument that to carry out my suggestion would result in the exploitation of the working man. I should not have suggested what I did if I had thought that was so. Today's wages are based on today's cost of living, included in which is house rentals. A man who gets one of these old places and pays rent on 1942 values is indeed fortunate, particularly as the only people who are buying them today are those who intend to live in them.

As I said previously, I have had some experience in these things and I know other people are in exactly the same position. The position is quite unfair. When we consider the conditions under which we are living today and how different they are from those of 1942, I cannot see why we should penalise people who were unfortunate enough to own these houses at that time.

We must remember, too, that people who invest money in homes in order that others might have somewhere to live are doing a national service; they are making a material contribution to the economy of the country. Under present conditions many young people find it hard enough to live without saving money to build a home, and if we can encourage people to invest their savings in house properties we should do so. We must remember also what is being paid out in shire rates and in other directions.

Mr. Power: They get an allowance for shire rates.

Mr. MULLER: I know they do, but all these things increase the owner's costs. I

know that the Minister is a very busy man—nobody appreciates more than I do the hours he has to work, and that is perhaps one of the reasons why he is so nervy—but I should like him to examine this matter very closely. I am not advocating the cause of the wealthy man. Only recently I went round with a person who was looking for a home to rent, but we found that all the older homes had been bought by people who subsequently occupied them.

As I say, I feel that the time has arrived to eliminate the discrimination that now exists between the two classes of homes. Irrespective of political bias, every member of this Committee wishes to be fair to every section of the community. If one section of the people is exploiting another under such circumstances that the exploited person has no chance of defending himself, there is some justification for Government action, but there is no suggestion of exploitation in the case of the owners of these old homes. I should like the Government to have another look at the matter. I cannot see why there should be any differentiation between values prior to 1942 and values today. As I said before, a great many of the old places are very much more comfortable than a good many of the modern homes, although the old places originally cost very much less to build. All that I ask the Government to do is to take a fair view of the matter. I have no desire to exploit anyone.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (12.47 p.m.): I am very happy to know that the hon. member for Fassifern appreciates the work done by Ministers of the Crown and thinks that they earn their salaries.

Mr. Muller: I do not dispute that a bit.

Mr. Gair: They are considerably underpaid compared with a number of business executives outside Parliament.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member complained that the owners of certain houses were subject to 1942 values but that position is not peculiar to them. It applies to all other sections of the community. What I am trying to point out is that before 1942 Government bonds bore interest at 3 per cent. and any investor at that time received only 3 per cent. for his investment.

Mr. Muller: The bonds have matured.

Mr. POWER: That is another aspect of the matter but the hon. member got only 3 per cent from the bonds then. When the bonds matured he could invest his money in securities carrying a higher interest rate or he could invest his money in other directions to give him a higher return on his capital. All that we have done in connection with the old houses is to say that houses built prior to 1942 must be valued on the 1942 basis. I gave the Chamber some figures a little while ago to show that in 1921 a house cost £18 a square and that in 1942 the cost was £65 a square. I went on to point out that we allow the owners of the houses built in 1921 to charge a rent based on the values of houses built in 1942 which was £65 a square. If we take the hon. member's argument to its logical conclusion we should have to say to the owners of the houses built in 1921 that they could charge only a rent based on the capital cost of £18 a square. If we adopted the argument of the hon. member for Chermside we should have to say also that the owner of houses built in 1921 would be entitled to get only 6 per cent. on the capital investment of £18 a square. However, we decided that such people should be allowed to get a rental based on 6 per cent. of the 1942 value, which was £65 a square. There are quite a number of these houses built in 1921 at £18 a square still in existence and in pretty good condition and is it expected by hon. members opposite that we should say to the owners, "You are entitled to a return of only 6 per cent. on £18 a square today?" It would be illogical to do that.

Mr. Gair: No insurance company will write up your fire policy because of changing money values.

Mr. POWER: The Premier has pointed out that if you took out a fire insurance policy for £500 many years ago and your house was destroyed the insurance company would not take into account the depreciation of the £ or the purchasing power of money and pay you £750.

Mr. Muller: You cannot avoid a situation like that.

Mr. POWER: We are only applying business principles to the fixation of house rentals. It is unreasonable for the hon. member to say that the rent for a house built in 1921 for £18 a square should now be based upon present-day capital cost of £187 a square. It is illogical to argue that way. The hon. member said the owners of the houses are penalised but he has not shown how they were penalised. I want to know in what way they are penalised. As a matter of fact, the Government of the day, instead of working on the £18 a square that operated in 1921, were prepared to take the 1942 value and allow the rental to be fixed at £65 a square. We are not penalising them in any shape or form; we are more than generous.

Mr. Muller: You are robbing them.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member knows more about robbing people than I do. When butter was being made at a certain butter factory a cat got into the vat——

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. POWER: The cat was pulled out and the butter was sold. The employees were told that anybody who mentioned the incident would get the sack. If the hon. member wants to get down into the gutter it is O.K. with me; I will get down with him. If he wants to be offensive to me he will get it back.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. POWER: The hon. member referred to rates. Rates and insurances are allowed in addition to the 6 per cent.

For wooden buildings, post-war houses, there is a repair allowance of 1½ per cent., and on those built from 1930 and prior to the war period the amount is 3 per cent. and on those built prior to 1930 the amount is 4 per cent. There are also variations which are made, according to the report of the various officers. I have clearly refuted the statements made by the hon. member.

This is a very important point that has been overlooked by hon. members opposite who have advocated allowing people to charge rent based on today's value. The Government for many years controlled land sales in this State. Why? Because they were endeavouring to prevent inflation and prevent properties from being sold at far above their fair price. The policy advocated by the hon. member for Fassifern and the hon. member for Chermside, supported by other hon. members opposite, was that the Government should allow rents to be fixed on the price paid for properties sold at black-market prices.

Mr. Muller: Oh no.

Mr. POWER: Oh yes. Hon. members opposite cannot get away from that one. The hon. member knows as well as everybody else that houses were sold on the black-market. I had to take up such a matter with a firm in Brisbane, which sold a house to a man, who was a prisoner-of-war in Japan for many years, at a black-market price. I suggested that it refund that money, otherwise there would be trouble; and the money was refunded. That is how the people are exploited by black-markets. The hon. member for Fassifern and the hon. member for Chermside, by advocating the elimination of control, are suggesting that we should allow those black-marketeers and profiteers who bought those homes at black-market prices and that we should allow them to charge rental at black-market prices. That is the policy that they advocate, and they cannot get away from it. The policy of this Government is to see that rents are fixed on a reasonable basis.

Another argument advanced by members of the Opposition was that the owners of these properties that are pegged at 1942 values were getting no increase. That is not correct. I pointed out that in many cases that have been brought before the Fair Rents Court the rents have been increased. What better method could be devised for the fixation of rentals? The valuer on behalf of the owner, the valuer on behalf of the tenant, and the investigating officer of the court place all the facts before the court. As a matter of fact, today many business premises are being brought under the control of the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act. Although the Opposition are complaining about that Act, at every Cabinet meeting I bring forward orders in council bringing properties under the Landlord and Tenant Act. Why is that being done? It is to ascertain the equitable value of a property so that the rental can be determined by the magistrate in charge of the Fair Rents Court. The result has been many agreements between owners and tenants on rentals. I might state that today there is a practice, of which I do not approve and which we do not accept, whereby people are prepared to enter into an agreement to take up a lease of business premises and pay any rental set out in order to get immediate possession of a property. Immediately on getting possession they apply to be brought under the Landlord and Tenant Act so that the Fair Rents Court can determine the rental. But the tenants have entered into leases, which are written contracts. Knowing that this practice exists, we have, when the matter has been investigated and the practice verified, said, "You made that agreement with the landlord and we do not propose to bring out an order in council to allow you to have any variation in the rental of that property unless you can show us that you made the agreement under duress." The Fair Rents Court is some protection. There must be some merit in the Landlord and Tenant Act when owners of properties make applications to have their properties brought under the Act.

Mr. Sparkes: What is the position of a person who bought a house today at £2,000, a house that was built in 1932 or 1933? Has he the right to charge on that basis or how does it work?

Mr. POWER: He is allowed to charge a rental on the 1942 value but if there have been any additions, improvements or repairs, that fact is taken into consideration.

Before concluding I will revert to the point made by members of the Opposition that some owners of properties built prior to 1942 have received no increase in rentals. The figures before me show that for a house rented in 1942 for £1 2s. 6d. a week, under rent control the court approved of a rental of £1 15s. a week.

Mr. HEADING (Marodian) (2.15 p.m.): When I interjected this morning, the Minister more or less lined me up as supporting the opinion of the hon. member for Fassifern. I was not prepared to come in then without giving reasons why I hold certain views on this matter. Whether he needs to get as expressive in his observations, his personal observations of some hon. members in particular because they hold views that differ from his, I am not sure, but everyone is entitled to his own view.

Mr. Power: So long as he tells the truth.

Mr. HEADING: As the Minister asked me questions, I am prepared to ask him one or two on this matter. Take the position of a man who bought a house in 1942 at the value ruling at that time. As the years went on he must have had certain expenses in connection with that house. For instance, he would have insurance, rates, maintenance, painting, and so on. He takes an ordinary business risk when he buys it. If values had gone down in that period he would have been responsible. If he had wanted to sell it he would probably have lost money. But if, as did happen, values increased, he would be entitled to the increased value that had accrued over the years. If I buy a farm and,

because of increased costs and values, the value of the farm is enhanced, surely I am entitled to that increase?

Mr. Gair: All he is morally entitled to is a fair return on his capital invested.

Mr. HEADING: I should have been entitled to that increase, just as I am bound to meet any losses that might have resulted from a reduction in values. If values come down, I have to carry that loss. If a house is to be put in a different category from any other business, men are not going to put money into houses.

A friend of mine canvassed Ipswich in the last few weeks looking for a house. It is almost impossible to rent one, for the simple reason that apparently people are afraid to invest money in houses for rental.

Mr. Gair: That does not come into it.

Mr. HEADING: I should like to ask the Attorney-General another very pertinent question. The hon. member for Chermside raised it, but because he did so it does not mean that I am going to dodge it. It is important. If, for instance, the value of primary products overseas decreases appreciably, there will be a lowering of standards in Australia. There will have to be a lowering of wages, because what we live on today is the value of the money earned by our primary products overseas. If a person builds a house in 1953 and those values drop, what is going to be done about the rent? Does the Minister say that because he built it on 1953 values he must continue to receive rental based on those 1953 values, when actually the economic position of Australia might have decreased measurably?

Mr. Gair: That is no analogy at all.

Mr. HEADING: I know it is not an analogy if the Premier does not want to see it, but it is an analogy.

Mr. Gair: It is not an analogy.

Mr. HEADING: I do not care what the Premier calls it. The fact is that that position could arise.

Mr. Gair: Of course it could arise in a recession.

Mr. HEADING: The house that costs £187 a square now could decrease in value to £100 a square. Do the Government propose then to reduce the rent to those people in spite of the fact that they put so much more money into the building of that house? Is the fellow who built the house to carry the loss because general values have decreased? If they insist on continuing to fix rent on 1942 values, what do they propose to do if values decrease?

Mr. Power: I will reply to that when I get up.

Mr. HEADING: In spite of the fact that the Minister castigated the hon. member for Chermside I think he raised a very important point and one that should receive some consideration. If there is an economic recession and the Government keep your rents at what they are today they will be up against a very big obstacle, yet to be fair, they have to do that.

Another point is that rents are taken into account in the fixation of wages, which are based on 1953 costs.

Mr. Gair: That does not come into it.

Mr. HEADING: If that is so a person who is paying rent for a house based on 1942 values is better off than a person who is paying rent for a house based on present-day values. I know that some of the houses built by the Government today are bringing a rent of £3 a week, some a little less and some perhaps a little more. If wages are based on 1953 costs a person who is fortunate enough to be renting a 1942 house is certainly in the better position.

The hon. Minister said that his wife owned a house that cost somewhere about £650 to build. I was wondering whether he would advise her to sell that house at 1942 values or to ask 1953 values for it. I think that is a point he should consider when dealing with this matter.

The Minister also said quite a lot about the black-market. Black-marketing does not come into this thing at all. I am not saying that people would not demand too high a rent if they had the opportunity, because just as some people in all walks of life will try to get a little more, home-owners will do the same, but generally speaking I think home-owners want only a fair thing. I do not see where black-marketing comes into the story at all.

Mr. Gair: If a person bought a house at a black-market price, naturally he looks for a greater rent in order to pay off his investment.

Mr. HEADING: He would not pay a black-market price.

Mr. Gair: If he did. At that time land-sale controls were on.

Mr. HEADING: He has to keep the house in good repair, but he has to do it on a 1942 rent. There are people with not very much money who are living on rents they are getting from these houses.

Mr. Gair: You do not understand it.

Mr. HEADING: I understand it quite well.

Mr. Gair: I say that in all fairness.

Mr. HEADING: It is not the Premier who is making this speech, it is I.

Mr. Gair: I am entitled to speak, just as you interrupt me when I am speaking. Do not get touchy about it.

Mr. HEADING: I am one of those who seldom interrupt other speakers.

Mr. Gair: You do interject.

Mr. HEADING: I interject very little. If the Premier is to keep on interrupting while I am talking, Mr. Clark, that is a matter between you and him.

All those people who are living on the incomes they receive from houses they bought before 1942 have to keep those houses in good repair.

Mr. Gair: Allowance is made for that.

Mr. HEADING: I know it is. I listened very carefully to what the Minister had to say on that point. I know he said they got the allowance for it in the rent, but from where are they to get the money to pay for it? They need money to do these things and they certainly cannot get it from the rent. They are getting probably only 25s. a week rent, but they have to pay for these things at 1953 costs. They cannot buy paint or iron or pay for labour on 1942 costs; they have to pay for those things at present-day costs. In addition, in order to pay for them they cannot wait till they get the increased rent the Minister is telling us about. If they have to buy material and employ labour, they have to pay for it immediately. The people from whom they get the materials or the labour will not wait for payment till the property-owner receives an increased rental. No matter what argument may be advanced, at the present time people are just not interested in building homes for rental purposes. I know a man who has just spent weeks in Ipswich looking for a place in which to live, but he has found it an almost impossible task.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (2.27 p.m.): The hon. member for Marodian referred to my castigation of the hon. member for Chermside for making false statements in this Chamber. He implied that certain people were receiving privileges as the result of representations from this side of the Chamber and that members of the Opposition were not afforded the same opportunities. I pointed out why certain people did not go into temporary accommodation, and I am quite sure that the hon. member for Marodian would agree that what I said was sound. Does the hon. member not agree that certain classes of people are entitled to special consideration? Does he not think, for example, that limbless soldiers are entitled to special consideration? Does he suggest that it would be fair to put a person suffering from T.B. in a temporary housing centre? I know the hon. member for Marodian does not. I castigated the hon. member for Chermside for his unfair attack on the Queensland Housing Commission, and for his nasty innuendoes.

The hon. member for Marodian said that because values have increased since 1942, we should allow property-owners to charge increased rents. Rentals are fixed, however, on 1942 values, that is, on the investment made as at 1942. If the hon. member invested money in war bonds in 1942 at 3½ per cent., although today the interest rate is 4¾ per cent.——

Mr. Heading: But they could appreciate or depreciate in value, in the same way as a house.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member would still get only the same rate of interest on his investment. That is the point I am making.

Mr. Heading: You are talking now about interest rates?

Mr. POWER: Yes.

Mr. Heading: You said this morning that bonds could depreciate in value?

Mr. POWER: That is so.

Mr. Heading: They can appreciate, too.

Mr. POWER: I make the point that you are allowed a certain interest rate on the capital invested. Let me tell the hon. member for Marodian that there is no return from any farm until labour is applied to it.

The hon. member sought some information about the appreciation in the value of property and I want to tell him that the rent would be fixed in accordance with the cost of constructing the building concerned, that if the value of the property depreciated the rent would still be fixed on the basis of the cost of constructing the building. In that way we preserve the rights of the individuals at both ends—where the value of property appreciates and where it depreciates.

Mr. Heading: That means that people who have to employ labour are unable to do so.

Mr. POWER: That has nothing whatever to do with the method to be adopted in fixing the rent. However, as I do not expect that we should ever have a Moore Government again, that situation will not arise. The matter is not governed by the actions of any Government but follows a certain procedure that takes into account the cost of constructing the building.

The hon. member for Marodian dealt with the fixation of wages. Again, that is not the matter under consideration. We are dealing with the fixation of rents.

Then the hon. member referred to the rents that were charged under the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement and I would point out to him that the State Government are not solely responsible for the fixation of the rent, that it is done in accordance with a formula set out in an agreement that binds the States and the Commonwealth. That agreement cannot be departed from except with the consent of the parties concerned or, in certain circumstances, where the court makes an order. The Minister in charge of housing has suggested to the Commonwealth more than once that there should be a conference of the parties on the agreement. Suffice it for me to say that the rents fixed under the agreement are lower than those that would be fixed for similar houses by private enterprise. I am not blaming private enterprise, because the rent is determined by the Fair Rents Court in accordance with a formula set up for its guidance.

The hon. member also referred to the sale of properties. Again that does not come into the matter under discussion. He and other hon. members have advocated that where property is sold the rent should be assessed in accordance with the purchase price. There has been a considerable amount of trading in property on the black-market. There were

a number of prosecutions in the court for this offence and I am considering the introduction of legislation to deal with black-marketing providing for imprisonment without the option of a fine. Quite a bit of black-marketing is going on today and if I have time this session I propose to introduce an amending Bill to deal with the matter. There was a good deal of black-marketing during the war years and it may be necessary to take similar action again now. It has been argued by hon. members opposite that because a person pays an exorbitant price for a house we should allow him to fix the rent in accordance with the purchase price.

Mr. Heading: We did not argue that way.

Mr. POWER: If the hon. member did not, other hon. members suggested that it should be done. We know that black-market prices were paid but that is no reason why the tenant should be called upon to pay a high rent.

Mr. Heading: I did not argue that.

Mr. POWER: I accept the hon. member's statement.

Mr. Nicklin: Do you think that if exorbitant rents were asked the owners would get tenants?

Mr. POWER: I would say, at the present time, yes, that does operate.

Mr. Nicklin: Not very much.

Mr. POWER: As a matter of fact, generally speaking these things do not operate to any great extent—it is only because of the actions of a few people that these controls are necessary. We had evidence the other day in the removal of control from serviced rooms, and we had to threaten the people concerned that their premises would be declared if they did not revert to the conditions that operated before. A few people like that are responsible for the necessity of retaining controls in order to protect the public.

The amount of money possessed by any person does not come into the picture. What we are concerned with is the repayment on the capital investment, and the rental is fixed on the 1942 values. As I pointed out before, in 1921 buildings cost £18 a square, but when we fixed rentals on 1942 values we allowed owners of houses built then £65 a square.

I propose to show as we go along how these rents were fixed. The rents are fixed by the magistrate and not by me or anybody else. Rents of houses built before 1942 are fixed on the 1942 values, and those of houses erected since 1942 on present-day values. It may be thought that applications to the Fair Rents Court are not frequent. I point out that for the year ended 30 June, 1953, 2,752 applications were received for determination and 20 of those related to business premises. Members of the Opposition complained about rent-control and we have had applications to have business premises brought within the ambit of the Act. It is apparent that they must be satisfied; it is of some value when they ask for it.

Mr. Nicholson: Who were the people? Those renting the premises or the owners of the premises?

Mr. POWER: That is a pertinent question. Both the owners and the tenants have applied. I could quote many instances where the landlord or the tenant or the agent on behalf of the landlord and tenant have made application to have the premises brought within the ambit of rent-control. Ninety-five per cent. of the applications to have business premises brought under rent-control were from owners. That is cogent evidence that there must be some merit in rent-control; and it is an effective answer to the Opposition who say that we are not giving the owner a fair and reasonable return. We specially exempted the business community some time ago but gave them the right, if they so desired, to be brought within the ambit of rent-control, and since then there have been numerous applications. I think that effectively answers the argument of members of the Opposition. From time to time consent orders are agreed to. The landlord and tenant get together and agree on a certain rental. After it is investigated by the officers of the department, the agreement may be approved of.

Let me analyse the work of the Fair Rents Court for the year ended June, 1953: 2,752 applications were received for determinations of which 20 related to business premises, 1,861 in respect of dwellings and self-contained flats, 256 for share accommodation, 108 for seaside districts, Redcliffe, Wynnum and Southport, and 435 from outside centres as far north as Cairns. Hon. members will realise that the Act was availed of in all parts of the State.

The following is rather interesting information for the metropolitan district: rentals were increased in respect of 1,372 premises including flats and shared accommodation, only 124 were reduced, the rentals of 43 premises were confirmed, and 383 applications were struck out either withdrawn or lapsed for want of prosecution. During the same period 354 complaints were received in respect of alleged breaches and although only 11 prosecutions were launched in the court, the registrar was successful in obtaining a refund of £2,344 10s. 1d. from 79 lessees.

The Leader of the Opposition asked whether many charged exorbitant rentals and I can now give him the information that refunds amounting to £2,344 10s. 1d. were obtained from 79 persons. This is ample justification for the retention of rent-control. These people were prepared to go beyond the law, and so long as people are prepared to do that the Government have no option but to retain control. I intend to ensure that the law is carried out. We have no option but to protect the people from being exploited.

At one time I was interviewed by a lady who was about to be prosecuted because she had overcharged in rent. I pointed out that she had overcharged and there was no justification for it. She told me that the

late David Gledson and the late John Mullin were gentlemen compared to me; in fact, what she said about me I am not prepared to repeat in this Chamber. I had this much satisfaction. I was advised by Mr. Parker that there was a possibility of getting about £78 from the lady, and having it refunded without having to prosecute her. As I have frequently pointed out, it has always been my policy, if things can be straightened out, to have them straightened out without taking the people to court and having penalties inflicted on them. When there is a better way than that to iron these things out I endeavour to take it. The lady paid up the £78 but she afterwards sought information as to the address of the person she had overcharged. Evidently she wanted to see her and endeavour to compromise. I was not prepared to give that information. It was her legal representative who telephoned me about the matter. I declined to give the information and advised them that if she did not refund the money, a summons would be issued for the recovery of the money and if necessary execution taken on her goods and chattels.

The registrar dealt with 52 applications for orders in council under Sections 39 and 40 (3) and 150 applications for certificates of exclusion under Sections 63 and 64. The number of persons interviewed at the office during the year was 11,412. Hon. members can therefore see there is justification for this control and that this section of the department is doing a remarkably good job on behalf of the people of Queensland. Those 11,412 people who went there must have gone for advice. The statistics I have quoted are ample justification of the work of the department.

The prosecutions mentioned were mainly against landlords for interfering with the use and enjoyment of the premises of lessees, by unauthorised ejectment, or cutting off some service to the lessee, such as electricity, and against landlords for selling or reletting dwelling houses within 12 months after obtaining ejectment orders on the ground that they required them for their own occupation. There has been a great deal of misrepresentation in that direction. Applications have been made to the court by people who said they wanted the premises for their own use or occupation. After having the tenants ejected, they very quickly disposed of the properties. As hon. members will appreciate, the sale value of a vacant house is about 20 per cent. more than that of an occupied house, because certain action for ejectment becomes necessary before possession can be had. These landlords, in their desire to get round the issue, misled the court and we had to take action against them.

The hon. member for Marodian mentioned rates. We could not make a better comparison than with a State controlled by people of the same political colour as hon. members opposite. Although the municipal rates may not be allowed in full in South Australia, and the other States, the average amount paid over the preceding five years is allowed; here such an outgoing as is paid by the lessor is allowed in full by the court. But again we are better off than South Australia, not only are the values more favourable but allowances are made for rates.

As to depreciation, the minimum allowance of 2 per cent. is made on the value of improvements other than those constructed of brick or concrete, in which case the allowance is reduced to 1 per cent. A greater allowance is made in districts subject to the ravages of termites or severe climatic conditions. I understand that the allowance in the northern and far western parts of the State has been increased to not less than 3 per cent. If roofs and so on are subject to saltwater spray, the allowance has been increased to as much as 7½ per cent. No-one can complain that this is unreasonable. Although the depreciation allowance should be used by the landlord to establish a sinking fund for the replacement of the premises when they reach demolition value, needless to say very few landlords, except companies owning large premises, do so.

The allowance for repairs in respect of wood or fibro houses in the metropolitan area is now calculated on a sliding scale, ranging from 1½ per cent. to 4 per cent., according to the age and state of repair of the dwelling. If the lessor fails to effect necessary repairs or replacements, the allowance is reduced, as in other States, until the repairs or replacements are effected. The allowance for repairs in respect of brick or concrete premises varies with the size and type of decoration, whether paint or papering and in the case of multiple-storeyed buildings, whether the hiring and erecting of tubular steel scaffolding is necessary receives due consideration.

I draw attention to the fact that some landlords are, by reason of their own neglect in keeping the premises in a fair state of repair, attempting to shift the loss onto the tenants by refusing to replace stoves, baths and sinks, and the tenants are either forced to vacate, or supply their own amenities. We have a man named Blocksidge, who is a member of the Property Owners' Protection Association. He has been screaming his head off for a long time about rent-control. He has been anxious to have it removed. Let us look at how Mr. Blocksidge treats his tenants. One lessee of Mr. H. N. Blocksidge's dwelling in Guy Street, Buranda, after consenting to a determination, withdrew the consent on the ground that he had been using his own stove for a number of years. No stove, even, was provided by the owner. The court refused to entertain the consent for the fixation of the rent, and after having regard to the lessor's failure to renew the stove, reduced the valuation of the premises and fixed the rent accordingly. No wonder Mr. Blocksidge is complaining. He is complaining because his rent was reduced. His rent was reduced simply because he would not put in a stove. This is the man who is screaming his head off and complaining to the Government about rent-control.

It is known that many landlords have refrained from effecting necessary repairs or replacements in order to force the lessees to vacate, so that they may be sold with vacant possession on the uncontrolled market. The New Zealand Liberal Governmnt met this contingency by conferring the necessary authority on tenants to require such landlords to effect necessary repairs or replacements within 30 days, and in default the courts there are empowered to suspend or reduce rentals for any period during which the default continues. There again the Opposition are offside with their own party in New Zealand, which believes that the tenant is entitled to some protection. It gave that protection by legislation.

Let us have a look at the method adopted here of dealing with flats or shared accommodation. The court does, if necessary, make the following allowances—

Goodwill.—Goodwill, if allowed by the Court is usually calculated as being one year's net profit, on which an allowance of 3 per centum may be made. (Net profit—present total rent received plus value of lessor's quarters, less present outgoings.)

Repairs, Maintenance and Renewals.—Where an owner lets a tenement building, whether flats or shared accommodation, an additional repair allowance may be made to cover the wear and tear occasioned by an increased number of persons occupying the premises. Where a head-lessee exists and under his lease he is required to effect internal repairs and renovations, some allowance may be made to him according to his actual expenditure.

Common Furniture.—The value of the goods supplied in the hall, stairway, landing, laundry, or other portions shared by all lessees—an allowance of 20 per centum or 8s. per week per £100 value may be made. A similar allowance may be made in respect of furniture exclusively used by any lessee or occupant.

Electric Appliances.—

All of these things are taken into consideration.

The allowance for stoves, hot water-system, etc. is calculated on the estimated life of the appliance.

Gas.—The actual cost of gas as supported by the last four accounts is allowed to the lessor, but care is to be taken that where slot meters are provided, the amount collected is to be deducted from the account. In cases where some lessees have additional gas appliances, individual allowances are to be debited against the lessee concerned. This would apply where gas fires, refrigerators, sink heaters, etc. are used by lessees.

Electricity.—The actual cost of electricity supported by the last four accounts is allowed to the lessor. If the lessee has additional appliances, separate loadings are made as in the case of gas. Same would apply to washing machines, refrigerators, radiators, toasters, etc.

Excess Water Rates.—As per account is allowed to the lessor.

Extra Garbage Service.—For a lessee, as per account, is allowed to the lessor.

Cleaning Allowance—Lessor.—In some cases extortionate claims are made for the hours involved in the cleaning of the common areas, namely, entrance hall, stairs, landing, bathroom, laundry, toilet, etc. There are fast and slow workers. The allowance is also tied up with management. The authorised officer can usually gauge from the plan of the premises the area concerned and what would be a normal allowance.

Meter Rent—Gas.—As per account, is allowed to the lessor.

These are all additions. This goes to show how the system operates, and that everything is taken into consideration.

Wages—Cleaning.—If a cleaner is employed, the actual wages paid are allowed to the lessor. In some cases a part-time cleaner is employed, and the lessor also spends some time in cleaning. In such cases allowances should be made under both headings, but care is exercised to ensure that the amounts claimed as wages for cleaning are reasonable and do not exceed award rates.

Caretaker.—In large establishments where a full-time caretaker is employed, award rates are allowed to the lessor, but in such cases no allowance is made to the lessor for management.

Gardening.—Where performed, or in asphalted yards, allowance is made to the lessor, depending upon the area involved.

Linen charges.—This charge is allowed against the individual lessee, as the charge varies according to the number and type of articles laundered.

Cleaning materials.—An allowance to cover the cost of buckets, soaps, disinfectants, brooms, mops, etc., used in cleaning the common area is allowed to the lessor.

Telephone.—The ground rental only is allowed to the lessor, and is apportioned among all the tenants.

Other items, such as the cost of toilet rolls, fumigation and registration fee payable to the local authority, are allowed.

Management.—Where the lessor resides on the premises and exercises proper supervision and control, and attends to the cleanliness of the premises and the wants of the lessees, an allowance in respect of each tenancy is made by the court, but not to exceed £15 per annum per tenant. If the lessor is non-resident and there is little supervision, the allowance is reduced according to the conditions found to exist.

I think I have given members quite a deal of information, but I desire to deal with one other matter before resuming my seat. An interesting case that was heard recently by the court should be a warning to the purchasers of new dwellings. The dwelling in question, containing 771 square feet of floor space, was erected early in 1951, and sold

to the landlord, an ex-service man, for £1,865. After spending a further £105 on improvements, the lessor let the dwelling at a rental of £3 7s. 6d. a week. The tenant appears to have been satisfied until the heavy rains arrived this year, when a number of faults in the construction developed. The authorised officer's report, which was accepted by the parties, discloses that the roof (aluminium) has a rough finish, the guttering leaks at most of the joints; most casement windows are badly fitted and some cannot be closed properly; the walls under these windows are badly water-stained; the second bedroom cannot be occupied in wet weather; several doors are warped and cannot be closed, the front door has a large gap between the base of the door and floor and in wet weather water flows into the lounge; the house has apparently dropped on one side leaving a half-inch to one-inch gap in the wall at the front of the house; and no drainage is provided.

Had the premises been in a good state of repair the magistrate would no doubt have struck out the tenant's application, as after he personally inspected it, he determined the capital value at £1,797. He applied the provisions of Clause (i) of Section 17 (justice and merits) by having regard to all the faults and fixed the rental at £2 17s. 6d. per week. The landlord will be at liberty to apply for a variation of this determination after all necessary repairs are effected.

It must be remembered that the majority of workers in this State, especially those with families, prefer to own their own homes even if they have to obtain loans and pay a high interest rate but unfortunately for many people the loan market has been considerably restricted during the past two years.

I do not think I need say anything further about that matter. I think I have more than effectively replied to the criticism that has been offered by members of the Opposition, and have established that rentals are determined on equity and justice. They are based on the capital cost of the investment as at 1942 or since 1942, whatever it might have been. There is nothing wrong with that principle, nor is there any justification for the complaints that have been made by the Opposition and by others who advocate that in respect of a property that has been bought at a black-market price, we should allow the owners to fix whatever rentals they like and exploit the workers of this State.

Vote (Fair Rents Office) agreed to.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (3 p.m.): I move—

"That £4,770 be granted for 'Friendly Societies.'"

The amount required is £524 greater than last year's expenditure, the additional requirements for salaries being £410 and for contingencies £114. The increase in salaries is brought about by increases in the basic wage and the payment of the normal award increases, together with a general increase under the Public Service Award. The increase in contingencies is due to provision for slightly heavier expenditure in most items.

Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (3.1 p.m.): Mr. J. T. Sutcliffe, secretary of the Federal Government's Basic Wage Commission in 1920, who wrote a "History of Trade Unionism in Australia," mentions that the spirit of association was manifesting itself in Australia as early as 1831. This was shown in the first place by the formation of benefit or friendly societies in connection with various trades, and in that year, when total population was less than 80,000, several such societies were formed. The earliest of which any record can be found was that of the operatives engaged on ship- and boat-building in Sydney. The example set by these workers caused much interest among workers in other industries. Consequently, other friendly societies were formed shortly afterwards. Though it is difficult to discover the exact constitution of these benefit societies, from accounts given in newspapers of that time it is apparent that they were established to provide sick and funeral benefits, as friendly societies do now and have been doing over the years. Employees in Melbourne organised in a similar fashion and in 1844 a Printers' Benefit Society was established that provided sick and funeral benefits and an unemployment allowance.

This form of organisation was very popular amongst the English people in England in this generation and it was to a large extent the forerunner of the trade-union movement. I think that when the employees in a particular calling saw the benefit of being organised into societies that would protect their interests in a time of sickness and accident, it is only logical to assume that they would see the benefit that would accrue to them by being organised in a body that would protect them in their calling by seeing that their conditions of employment were bettered and that their wages were made more attractive. However, Mr. Clark, I had better resist the temptation to deal with the subject of trade unions on this question before you call me to order.

There is no doubt that friendly societies have played a very important role in the lives of the people of Queensland, both before and since its separation from New South Wales. They are still playing a very important part in the lives of the people. Indeed, friendly societies have played a very important role in every country in the British Commonwealth of Nations. I do not say that they are essentially a British institution, but like many other things, the idea originated in the British Isles and it was copied by the rest of the world. They did have their origin in Britain and the Dominions. Their benefit to the community has been considerably restricted by the present Commonwealth Government health legislation. Before the introduction of the Workers' Compensation Act which provided for payment for workers injured in industry or who met with

accident. There is a difference between the two things. Some members of this Committee remember the time when the law was amended to provide that compensation should be paid to a worker who met with an injury in industry. Prior to the passing of that Act friendly societies provided the only form of sustenance to the family of an injured worker. For the people who were injured outside employment or who fell ill, the friendly societies were the only source of the family income. The friendly societies at all times enabled their members and their families to obtain the benefits of medical attention when it was necessary. Incidentally they made it possible for many medical practitioners to obtain a large practice and a wide experience that would not otherwise have been available to them and many such men became wealthy for that reason. You have only to speak with officers of the friendly societies and learn of the number of members of the various societies who pay so much a year in order that they may receive medical attention to realise the income that some doctors receive from the friendly societies.

It is to be regretted that much of the effectivenes of the friendly societies has been destroyed by the Commonwealth's National Health Scheme. Nevertheless, if it were not for the generous and excellent hospital service made available by this Government the position of many workers would indeed by serious. And should acute unemployment or underemployment occur in Queensland the position would be too terrible to contemplate, if it were not for the services made available by this State at our general hospitals because the unemployed person would not have sufficient money to pay a doctor to visit his home or to pay for a visit to the doctor's surgery. Members of friendly societies could find sufficient money to pay quarterly subscriptions to their various lodges, but it would be impossible for anyone who was out of work or on part-time work to pay a doctor for necessary medical attention The friendly societies did guarantee medical attention to members before the introduction of the Earle Page scheme, and they were largely responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the good relationship between the doctor and the family, even to the third and sometimes the fourth generation. That has now gone, in spite of all the advertisements and the claims of the doctors and the B.M.A. and the medical benefit societies.

Mr. Nicklin: Why?

Mr. DONALD: It has gone for the simple reason that the scheme has destroyed the connection between the patient, his family and the doctors.

Mr. Nicklin: Why?

Mr. DONALD: The Leader of the Opposition knows as well as I that the attention the family got from the lodge doctors was as good as the treatment given anywhere else. It is just as much nonsense to claim that the lodge doctor did not serve the lodge patient skilfully and that is proved over and over again by the fact that families have retained the lodge doctor unto even the third and fourth generation. It is to be regretted that this service is now being destroyed.

Under the friendly-society system members paid so much a quarter—it might be £1, 25s. or 30s.—and when one became sick all one had to do was to visit the doctor or have him call and one got the full benefit of that doctor's skill and advice. What is the position now? One has to visit the doctor and the doctor must be paid in cash before he will attend to you. If a person or a member of his family is too sick to visit a doctor and the doctor has to visit the home he has to be paid at once. The receipt issued by the doctor has to be sent to the secretary of the lodge or the benefits society in order that the claim for payment or the doctor's services may be made and after waiting many weeks, perhaps months, the patient gets part of the amount expended. Formerly the injured and sick got medical attention promptly, the doctor got payment for his services, and the patient got the services. But nowadays a patient must have the money to pay for the medical services and gets only a certain percentage of the amount expended repaid and that after considerable delay.

We all remember the attitude of the members of the British Medical Association to the excellent health scheme established by the Chifley Administration when the late Ben Chifley was Prime Minister. This was available to everyone, irrespective of income or status in society, but it was not acceptable to the members of the B.M.A. To their everlasting disgrace they resisted the will of the people to such an extent they were able to defeat the scheme and as a reward for the help they gave the anti-Labour parties in defeating the health scheme of the Chifley Administration the present Sir Earle Page scheme was started.

The chief objection of the doctors to the Chifley scheme was said to be the many forms to be filled in, that is, it was all tied up with red tape, but what is the position today? Formerly the medical practitioner was paid by the lodge. Doctors visited the patient. The patient now has to visit the doctor and must pay his money on the spot. The patient must fill in this form and that form and then has to wait many weary months for repayment of some of the expenditure he has incurred, all because he has been unfortunate enough to fall ill or meet with an accident.

In confirmation of my statements I refer to the 68th annual report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies and Building Societies. Mr. Gibson, the registrar, states—

"The total amount of benefit distributed by such Benefit Societies during the year

was £235,622, which is £32,555 less than the distribution the previous year. The principal items of benefit were—

	£
Sick Pay	82,284
Funeral and Special Donations	49,897
Medical Attendance and Medicines (including rebates under Medical Services Funds for six months to 30th June)	105,360''

That, in itself, Mr. Clark, although considerably less than in the preceding years, for the reasons I have already given, is conclusive proof of the value of these friendly societies to the community.

The report continues—

> ''The total membership of the benefit societies at 30 June, 1952, was 62,024. During the year, 1,826 new members joined by initiation (which was 1,058 less than the intake in the previous year), 5,285 members left by arrears or resignation, 1,071 members died, and the outward clearances exceeded the inward clearances by 56, the overall result being a loss of 4,586 members during the year. The loss the previous year was 1,248.''

There we see how the operation to the medical benefit scheme is interfering with the work of the friendly societies that had given the people of the State and the Commonwealth excellent service for over 100 years. These other organisations are eating into their membership and as a consequence their value to society in general is decreasing. That is the aggregate picture.

Let us look now at the picture relating to individual lodges or friendly societies. Any official of any friendly society will agree that what I am saying is correct. He will admit that every society is losing membership, for the reasons stated by me and mentioned in this report. I quote now the effect on two friendly societies of long standing and high prestige in the community. The first is the valuation of the North Queensland district of the Hibernian-Australasian Catholic Benefit Society as at 30 June, 1952. The membership of the society's benefit funds decreased to 477 from 629 at the previous valuation date, 30 June, 1947. That is a reduction of 152 members, approximately one-quarter of the membership, and the reasons for the loss are mentioned in the report.

The second example is the valuation of the North Queensland branch of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows Friendly Society of England, as at 30 June, 1952. The membership of the society's benefit funds decreased by 264 to 1,685 since the previous valuation date, 30 June, 1947. This society, in common with the one I previously quoted, is experiencing an alarming decrease in membership from 1,685 to 1,421, or approximately one-sixth. That loss is not as great as that of the Hibernian Society, but at the same time it is causing alarm amongst those who have put so much voluntary work into the friendly-society movement.

As a result of the introduction of the Commonwealth's National Health (Medical Benefits) Regulations, friendly societies have had—

> (*a*) To arrange for the termination of the per capita medical agreements.

Under these agreements the lodges paid members of the British Medical Association a certain amount each year, and in return for that payment the member of the society was given all the medical attention he wanted. No-one can dispute the quality of the service given in this way.

In addition, friendly societies have been required to—

> (*b*) Introduce a fee-for-service scheme to replace the per-capita medical agreements.

The introduction of the medical scheme by Sir Earle Page, a member of the British Medical Association himself, has meant the replacement of the per capita medical scheme by a system under which the family man is now required to pay on the spot for any medical attention he may receive, apart from the service available at a general public hospital throughout Queensland.

Other things friendly societies have been required to do are—

> ''(*c*) Inaugurate hospital benefit funds to enable members to obtain the benefit of the Commonwealth Hospital Benefits Regulations, 1952;
>
> ''(*d*) Recast the fee-for-service medical schemes to enable the members to obtain the benefit of the Commonwealth National Health (Medical Benefits) Regulations, 1953.''

Strange to say, Mr. Clark, the report goes on to draw attention to the paradox that the societies suffered the greatest loss of members. It reads—

> ''It may appear something of a paradox that the Societies suffered the greatest ever loss of members during this period of unparalleled activity, but the very uncertainty as to the future of the medical benefits available to the members during this transition period, was to a large extent responsible for this severe loss. Allied, of course, with the keen competition with the unregistered and uncontrolled outside organisations offering similar benefits. Another factor was the apparent reluctance of many members to pay for the increased cost of such medical benefits and of management expenses.''

Those are the words of Mr. Gibson, who ranks very high in the Public Service of this State, and the value of whose work cannot be disputed. He is a man who has given a great deal of help to these Societies and ensured the smooth running of their affairs. That is a result that cannot be disregarded.

Mr. Gibson continues—

> ''At all times the friendly societies, through their dispensaries, their several sick, hospital, and medical benefit funds, have taken very commendable action to cater for the needs of those members who may be unfortunate enough to suffer illness

or accident, or who may require hospital facilities or medical or surgical attendance at any time.''

If the Commonwealth Government had asked for the co-operation of these friendly societies when bringing their scheme into operation, instead of introducing rival organisations, there might not be so much objection to their scheme.

Mr. Gibson continues—

''What type of organisation is better fitted to provide such benefits and act as the instrument of the Commonwealth in the payment of the Commonwealth benefit than the co-operatively established and efficiently administered Friendly Society? The providing of these benefits is but an extension of the activities of the Societies throughout the years and the experience and training of the Society Executive Officer will be invaluable in the early stages of such new funds. The cost of administration of any such Society Fund will be comparatively low, and above all there is always the cautious hand of the Official Valuer restraining any extravagant expenditure and ensuring that sufficient reserves are maintained in the Funds to meet any normal eventuality. The general public may be assured that the utmost confidence may be placed in such a Fund conducted by a registered Friendly Society which has been approved of by the Commonwealth authorities.''

We should take into consideration the fact that friendly societies were formed in the first place to give this service to the sick and maimed for a very nominal contribution, without any desire to make any profit or exploit the sick and the maimed, whereas the medical benefit societies are established not for that purpose but for the purpose of making a profit for themselves. They have set up offices and expensive organisations and they must make a profit on the money they have invested. These medical benefits schemes exist, not to give service, but to make profits, and this severe blow to the friendly societies is reflected in the concluding paragraphs of Mr. Gibson's report, in which he says—

''I earnestly hope that the Societies will now be in a position to settle down and seriously pursue a policy which will enable them to regain the numerical ground lost over the past few years.''

I too hope that they will be able to maintain the very efficient service they have been able to give the public of Queensland in common with the rest of the Commonwealth. If we can do anything to help the friendly societies regain their strength,. both numerically and financially, we shall be doing something in the interests of the community of this State, in caring for the people in times of ill-health. Every member of this Committee should pay the compliment that is due to these people who, over the years, have sacrificed themselves for the benefit of the sick and the injured in order that their wives and families could have some means of sustenance during the period of their illness and they themselves medical attention whenever necessary.

Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) (3.26 p.m.): Friendly societies were set up originally for the specific purpose of protecting workers in the lower income groups and their families. They consist of different organisations, including religious and working-class bodies. In early days it was beyond the means of most working people to afford medical attention, with the result that in Great Britain particularly these societies were established to help workers not only to receive medical treatment but also to build their own homes.

I pay a compliment to these organisations, most of whose work is done voluntarily. It is only full-time officials, such as secretaries, who receive payment for the work they do. These organisations provide their members with various benefits, such as medical benefits, hospital benefits, and regular payments for the time during which they may be unable to work through illness. That system was the forerunner of our Queensland system of free medical treatment and hospitalisation. We have taken the cue from the service that has been given for many years by these societies.

From very humble beginnings friendly societies have been built up into organisations with very large assets and investments. On 1 July, 1951, they owned assets to the value of £2,639,950 and on 30 June, 1952, that total had grown to £2,734,386, an increase of £94,436. Those figures show how these organisations play an integral part of the welfare of our State.

As I was a member of a friendly society, I know the benefits that they provde for their members. We frequently hear of circumstances in which a member of a friendly society is in dire straits and of the assistance rendered to them, and I wish to pay a compliment not only to those organisations for the excellent work they do in giving help in such cases, but also to the Government for passing legislation to give them the necessary powers to carry on Friendly Society work by an Act.

Votes passed under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order.

At 3.30 p.m. under Standing Order No. 307, and Sessional Order the questions for the following Votes were put by the Chairman and agreed to—

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Department of Justice—			
Friendly Societies ..	4,770	0	0
Balance of Vote ..	450,751	0	0
Department of Health and Home Affairs ..	9,322,486	0	0
Department of Public Works	888,512	0	0
Department of Labour and Industry	3,221,010	0	0
Department of the Treasurer	2,733,694	0	0
Department of Public Lands and Irrigation ..	1,623,767	0	0
Department of Public Instruction	8,406,114	0	0

Department of Mines and Immigration ..	698,064	0	0
Department of Railways	29,031,000	0	0
Department of Transport	61,723	0	0
Department of Auditor-General	92,521	0	0
Trust and Special Funds	43,599,987	0	0
Loan Fund Account..	19,850,000	0	0
Supplementary Estimates, 1952-1953—			
Revenue	2,145,047	8	1
Trust and Special Funds	1,608,736	1	8
Loan Fund Account	2,068,431	13	5
Vote on Account ..	23,500,000	0	0

SEVENTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY—RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

Resolutions reported and, on motion of Mr. Walsh, received.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

The resolutions being taken as read—

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer): I move—

"That the Resolutions be now agreed to."

Hon. members indicating a desire to discuss certain Resolutions—

Resolutions 1, 3, 14 and 20 agreed to.

Resolution 2—Department of Premier and Chief Secretary—

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (3.39 p.m.): I take this opportunity to draw the attention of hon. members to the loss that has occurred in the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms. I believe an erroneous idea is prevalent amongst members that this is due to the low prices charged for meals. The profit and loss account is available to all members and I have examined it. It disclosed a loss of £3,671.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is out of order. The Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms come under the Legislative Assembly Vote, which is Resolution No. 1. There was no call of "Not formal" to that resolution and it was agreed to. The House is now dealing with Resolution No. 2.

Mr. BURROWS: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, that I am out of order. I was looking at contingencies on page 8 of the Estimates, Refreshment Rooms.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Estimates have been dealt with and the House is now dealing with Resolutions.

Resolution 2—Department of Premier and Chief Secretary—agreed to.

Resolution 4—Department of Justice—

Mr. TURNER (Kelvin Grove) (3.44 p.m.): The Prisons section of the Department of Justice Vote did not come before the Committee and I desire to discuss a suggestion made by the Comptroller of Prisons, who is alarmed at the shortage of accommodation for prisoners. In his report he suggests the establishment of a probation system for prisoners, to which I have given considerable thought for many years. I have made many visits to the prisons and I suggest the institution of a system under which prisoners could be sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, even double the present term, but the serving of the term be considerably reduced. I look at a man in prison somewhat in the same light as a bird in a cage. When I was a boy I trapped birds and naturally they were held captive in a cage. Each time I went near the cage such a bird, evidently feeling that I was going to do it harm, fluttered and battered itself against the wires. As time went on, the bird gradually became used to my going to the cage. Then, as time went on further, it became, as it were, domesticated and would be reluctant to leave the cage. I have found men in prison for their first offence humiliated and shamed at their confinement in a prison. They were like birds in confinement; they were afraid of what would happen next. But the time comes when the imprisoned man does not feel that resentment. He becomes used to his confinement like the bird. I think that a scheme might be evolved whereby an offender could be released on parole before he reached the stage at which he loses the sense of humiliation and fear. If he was released from prison then, he would feel greater reluctance to return to prison, especially if he was a young man.

The reform introduced in 1935 by our former Premier, the late E. M. Hanlon, has had such marvellous results and has brought about the rehabilitation of so many first offenders that I feel that now that it has been in operation for a long time we should go further. My idea is that we evolve a scheme under which, even though it meant that the term of the sentence of imprisonment would be doubled, the prisoner would be released on parole for a longer period. This, I believe, would help in the rehabilitation of prisoners and put greater fear in the minds of people who are contemplating committing a crime. I base my advocacy of that system on my illustration of the bird in the cage; having been imprisoned in the cage for a short time and released, it will never be caught the second time. I proved that as a boy. If a bird is let out it will not return to the trap, unless forced to do so by starvation. The intelligence of a human being may be likened to that of a bird and I have no hesitation in commending my suggestion to the Minister for submission to Cabinet.

If we had a probation system under which officers endowed with sound common sense and understanding kept in touch with convicted persons, very few paroles would be broken. These people should be allowed out on parole before they have had the opportunity of becoming accustomed to prison surroundings and the association of the habitual and more vicious criminals. I am confident that such a scheme would receive

the support of the whole community. I believe that the business people would co-operate by employing and helping to rehabilitate these young offenders, and for that reason I commend the suggestion to the Minister for submission to Cabinet.

Dr. NOBLE (Yeronga) (3.49 p.m.): I realise that we have spent a good deal of time on this department, but I should like to take up a little of the Committee's time to discuss the Licensing Commission.

No doubt all hon. members know that the liquor traffic, with which the Licensing Commission deals, goes back as far in history as price-control, almost back to the time of Babylon mentioned by the hon. member for Chermside the other day.

Since then the liquor traffic has gained enormously in power. It has exercised an influence on the body politic, both national and international. There is no need for me to go into the history of the liquor traffic, but it does make interesting reading for anyone who cares to spend a little time on research in the subject. Suffice it to say that internationally the liquor traffic has changed the fiscal policy of nations from time to time. There have been nations in the history of the world that had prohibition within their borders but because of reciprocal trade with countries that dealt in alcohol were forced to open their doors to the alcohol from those nations in order that they might continue to trade with them in other goods.

Naturally, as the years have gone by, the business in alcohol and the liquor trade have increased enormously. Astronomical sums are spent every year in the purchase of these products. This gives great financial power to the people who are in this business. Today there are very few organisations in Australia that are concerned in the liquor trade but those organisations have necessarily built up huge financial power in their cartels. No-one can tell me that any organisation with the great power that finance gives these cartels does not influence the body politic in Australia today.

Alcohol has been and still is the curse of the world. It is a curse we shall always have with us. Statesmen have from time to time attempted to prohibit the use of alcohol within their own borders, and of recent years the United States of America introduced prohibition within its borders but found that it could not handle the position. As a matter of fact, while prohibition was enforced in the United States of America more alcohol was confiscated yearly by the authorities than was produced in the United States in pre-prohibition days, and in spite of that huge confiscation of alcohol still more alcohol was produced than in pre-prohibition days and sold.

During the time of prohibition in the United States there was no Government control over the brewing of alcohol and the result was that poor alcohol was produced, to the detriment of the health of the people.

Although we know that the liquor traffic is the curse of the world we must, as I have said, realise that it will be always with us and realising this this Government must see that the production of liquor is properly administered in order that the evils associated with it are mitigated and there is a discouragement to people to drink to excess and that we have a sensible and civilised form of drinking.

Let us digress for a moment and look at a couple of illustrations from other countries in the world. In Great Britain, Australia, and the United States of America we have licensing systems whereby breweries, wholesale distributors, and retail distributors are licensed by the Government. In Great Britain the licence comes up for examination every year and every seven years that licence can be cancelled, if the commission controlling the trade decides to do so. In Australia a similar commisison can shift a licence from one site to another. The licence attaches to the licensed premises and gives it the whole of the goodwill to the business. When we realise that, we see what enormous power lies with the Licensing Commission in our country. If this power is used in the right way it can be of great benefit to the people of Australia.

Sweden has a different system. The brewing is done by private capital but they have a limitation of dividends very similar to that applied to the Southern Electric Authority in this State. The brewing companies are semi-governmental utilities. Private capital is used to run them but their dividends are limited to 7 per cent. The whole of the retail trade and wholesale trade in Sweden is, however, conducted entirely by a Government commission that has the power to buy buildings, to hire and fire labour, and the like. All the profits that accrue from the brewing trade and from the wholesale and retail trades in Sweden become Government funds. Further, although ales and beers can be bought by the people at will, spirits cannot be bought freely. Everyone in Sweden who desires to buy spirituous liquor has to obtain a passport, from which it can be ascertained how much he can buy annually. In Great Britain and Australia, of course, anyone over the age of 21 is entitled to buy spirituous liquor and beer. In Sweden, too, the alcoholic content of beer and ales is only 2.3 per cent., whereas in Australia it is 4.5 per cent.

Let us look for a moment at the liquor trade as it exists in Queensland and try to discuss its faults and suggest reforms with the idea of overcoming the evils that exist today.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope that the hon. member does not intend to embark on a discussion of liquor reform. He will be out of order if he does so. We are discussing the administration of the Licensing Commission, and the hon. member can discuss only that.

Dr. NOBLE: I was going to suggest ways and means by which licences could be issued.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss liquor reform at this stage.

Dr. NOBLE: I will discuss ways and means by which licences can be issued to various organisations.

In issuing licences to breweries, the Licensing Commission should try to mitigate the evils that exist at the present time. As in Scandanavia, we should have set up in this State an authority that limits dividends. That has already been done in the case of the Southern Electric Authority. Such an authority, in issuing a licence to a brewing company, should tell that company that it would be wrong for it to encourage drinking in the community. Encouragement is given at present to a large extent by advertising. The Licensing Commission should have power to say to a brewing company, "If you intend to carry on brewing in this community you will have no power to advertise your products and thus encourage drinking."

With regard to the retail trade, the Licensing Commission should have power to say to the licensee of a hotel, "You shall conduct your hotel in accordance with our regulations. Unless you observe them your licence will be taken from you." It should have power also to say to the licensee, "The closed-bar system is wrong." The present closed-bar system results in crowded and unhygienic bars. People crowd round bars four or five deep every afternoon, swilling beer as fast as they can. To my mind, that is an uncivilised and a surreptitious way of drinking. The Licensing Commission should have power to say to a licensee, "If you want to keep your licence you must have an open bar with a minimum of bar space and a maximum of seating accommodation. It will be necessary for you always to have available food and light refreshments so that people can obtain food with their drink. You must also see that your accommodation is of the standard required and is congenial to the people who are drinking." It should have power to say also, "We will issue a licence to one person only. We do not agree with the tied-house system that exists at the present time."

We have been told on many occasions in this House that there are not many tied hotels in Queensland, and although there may not be actually many of them on the register of the Licensing Commission that are described as tied hotels, nevertheless many hotels are held by the nominees of the breweries, which means that they are in fact tied hotels. Therefore we should say to the brewers that they are not entitled to own hotels in this State, that the tied-house system in this State must go.

A practice has grown up on the part of the breweries that should meet with the very strongest objection by the Licensing Commission itself, that is to say, when a lease of a hotel comes up for renewal every few years the brewery puts up the price of the lease to a greater level and then charges a greater rental for the use of the hotel. The Licensing Commission should object very firmly to that practice. It should be within the power of the Licensing Commission alone and not within the power of the brewer to fix the price that shall be paid for the lease of a hotel or the rent to be paid.

At the present time the Licensing Commission will not give a licence for the sale of spirituous liquors or beer in cafes and I think it would be a good thing if cafes were allowed to sell light wines and ales, bearing in mind my earlier suggestion that the alcoholic content of our beer should be reduced from 4.5 per cent. to 2.3 per cent. I think it would be in the interests of the people if they could go into a cafe and have their meals with their wives, and so on, and at the same time have light wines or ale if they so desired. A cafe should not be allowed to sell liquor to be carried away.

A very contentious matter in connection with the liquor trade is that the Licensing Commission will not allow drink to be taken to balls and public places. I think that is a very bad thing because it does not stop drinking at such places. I am now, Mr. Speaker, discussing the control the Licensing Commission should exercise. It does not stop drinking at these places because the people who attend the balls usually do not go until the ball is almost over. They come in a wobbly state and not with the idea of enjoying the ball. The Licensing Commission should have power to say that the ball committee could issue a ticket with a voucher attached, such voucher to be signed by the recipient of the ticket, to say that he is over 21 years of age. That voucher should entitle such a person, over 21 years of age, to apply for liquor at the ballroom. I know that there has been much abuse in connection with drinking at our public halls but the voucher I have suggested would entitled the holder of the ticket to be supplied with drink, to be drunk at the hall. Such a person would not be allowed to take drink with him to the dance but he could get it either through the ball committee or send it there beforehand by virtue of the ticket and voucher that he holds. This is a matter for the Licensing Commission in its administration and I think it would be a good thing for our social life if the people could get drink in this way. If they could they would not attend so many cocktail parties before they went to the ball.

Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (4.3 p.m.): I listened with a good deal of interest to what the hon. member for Yeronga had to say on the subject of drink and while I agree with some of the sentiments he expressed I cannot agree with all of them. I think that every sensible person, particularly those connected with the working-class movement, must agree that alcohol is a curse but I cannot agree with the hon. member that it will always be with us, nor do I agree with him that prohibition in America was a failure. It is a matter of opinion. Prohibition did not fail in the United States because of the system of prohibition itself; it failed because of the black-marketing in the sale of liquor and because of the selfish interests of financial groups.

The hon. member went on to point out how in his opinion the evil could be combated. I am surprised that an hon. member who said that the drinking of liquor was a curse should then proceed to advocate its sale in the cafes throughout the city. If drink is a curse in a hotel, it is a curse in

a cafe. If drink is a poison in one place it is just as poisonous in another place. The less the opportunity that is presented to our youth to drink, the better it will be for our young people. To use the words of the hon. member for Yeronga, it is an evil trade; and we must take notice of his words in that respect because he is a medical practitioner.

I am astonished that the hon. member should advocate facilities for drinking at dances and balls. To suggest that drink is a curse to our people and then to argue that this curse to the people should be taken into our social life is very illogical. This Government have had the courage to say that no liquor shall be consumed in or round dance halls. If people partake of alcohol before they go to a ball or a dance, perhaps that is something the Government cannot control; but if these people are allowed to guzzle again at a dance or a ball, their condition will be worse than before and that is something we should avoid. I think that the Act will continue to stand as it is and we shall still be able to keep this evil away from our dance halls, which the Government can control if they cannot control individual parties.

The annual report of the Licensing Commission is very interesting; at least I found it so. I quote the following from it—

> "The cessation of all building controls in August last has permitted the Commission to embark upon a programme of ensuring the rebuilding of hotels previously destroyed and now trading in temporary premises, and the extension and renovation of existing premises, where such work is considered necessary. In many cases the deterioration caused by the inability to effect repairs over the past 10 to 12 years has become noticeable."

From what I have heard and seen, this is very desirable—that we should eliminate these temporary premises in which alcohol is sold, and in which the primary purpose of hotels cannot be fulfilled—the giving of service to the travelling public in the way of meals and accommodation. They should be controlled in the way the commission suggests. I do not say that the commission could have done this before, because it was impossible to expect the licensee to carry out these renovations when building-control operated—and rightly so, because when people were in need of homes it would not be right to use a great amount of timber and material and the skill of artisans in the building trade in the renovating of hotels.

The report goes on to state—

> "All owners of hotels trading in temporary premises have been served with orders to rebuild the hotels and the quantum of accommodation to be contained in such new hotels has been specified in such orders."

The emphasis is on accommodation and we can regard that as being very satisfactory.

The report also states—

> "Authority to continue trading in temporary premises has been refused in three cases where the Commission was not satisfied that every effort to rebuild was being made by the owner. These premises have now been closed for the sale of liquor. The Commission hopes that the coming year will see the end of all temporary bars."

This is evidence in support of what I contend that our Licensing Commission is a power for good against this evil. Here we have evidence of the work of the commission in the closing of temporary bars where no effort was made to erect premises to give the public the service the licence compels them to give, accommodation and meals as well as the serving of liquors. At least three temporary bars have been closed, and unless others make the necessary repairs they will be closed. At least, it compels these people to convert their drinking dens into decent and comfortable hotel accommodation.

The report states—

> "The commission's inspectors, appointed during the past year, are proving themselves diligent and capable in the performance of their duties, and their accurate and up-to-date information and reports have been of great assistance to the commission. As they were trained in the office of the commission they are well aware of the requirements of the Liquor Acts and the standards set by the commission for licensed premises. Their reports are coming to hand regularly, and extensive orders for repairs, etc., based on such reports, are being issued. Considerable improvement of hotel premises in all parts of the State will be effected when these orders have been complied with. These inspectors have also been directed to report on the condition of furniture, fittings, etc., in hotel bedrooms with a view to improving the standard of comfort. The installation of wall wash-hand basins with hot and cold running water is also being ordered where necessary as regards first-class hotels, and hotels catering for the southern tourist trade."

That is another justification for the appointment of these inspectors, which at the time was criticised by certain interests in this State. I think they have more than justified their appointment. The main justification for the erection and maintenance of hotels is the need to provide food and accommodation, particularly for the travelling public, and not for the purpose of becoming grog-houses. The hotels erected by the Queensland Temperance Union have proved that. There is no better accommodation to be found in Brisbane or Toowoomba than that at the Canberra Hotels in these cities, temperance hotels erected by the Queensland Temperance Union. They prove conclusively that it is not essential to have a liquor bar in order to meet the requirements of the travelling public for board and lodging. Accommodation is the main item. No hotel, irrespective of how much liquor it sells or is consumed on its premises, can provide better food and accommodation than these two temperance hotels. Personally, it is very pleasing indeed to me to know that the commission is working along these lines.

I do not wish what I have just said to be interpreted as being wishful thinking on my part, because of my stand on the liquor question. I have been very honest and I think I am justified in having some faith in the commission and that the commission will do its best to remove gradually some of the many evils connected with the liquor trade.

For the benefit of the general public I must mention that the members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly are more temperate than any other section of the public. I would go so far as to say that, collecting 75 people at random in the street, there will not be found among them so many temperance workers and moderate drinkers as are found among the 75 members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly. I speak in this way because of the misconception that exists in the minds of some of the public that there is far too much drinking among members of this Parliament, and that we do not conduct ourselves properly. That remark is prompted by recalling a dinner tendered to the delegates of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. in this city some years ago, when the late E. M. Hanlon was Premier.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DONALD: I have no wish to clash with you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! On this resolution the hon. member can discuss the administration of the Department of Justice.

Mr. DONALD: Hon. members can regard the work of the inspectors of the Licensing Commission as satisfactory and I sincerely thank the Commission for its good work in reducing the number of licensed victuallers from 1342 in 1935 to 1,234 in 1952. That is all to the good and it is to the credit of the commission. I hope it will carry on the good work, Mr. Clark, but make the tempo a little faster. The reduction in the number of licences, unfortunately, is not reflected by a decrease in the drink bill of Queensland. It is, however, working to the common good because it is endeavouring to make the public as temperate as possible by reducing the number of hotels with a view to reducing the drink bill of Queensland. The drink bill of Queensland for the year ended 30 June, 1952, as estimated by Mr. Jack and published in "The Temperance Gazette" has increased. His calculations are based on the official figures supplied by the Commonwealth Customs Department and the State Government statistician. For that year the figures were—

Spirits, over £5,000,000.
Wine, over £1,000,000.
Beer, almost £16,000,000.

making a total of almost £22,000,000, an increase of almost £5,000,000 compared with the previous 12 months. It represents a rise of £3 12s. a head from £14 7s. 5d. to £17 19s. 5d. for every man, woman and child in the State. The estimate does not take into account any variation in values, the addition showing the actual increase in alcoholic consumption, as will be seen by perusal of the actual consumption per head. The consumption of spirits per head was .59 of a gallon, against .58 for the previous year. Wine was .50 of a gallon against a similar quantity previously, and beer has increased from 13.10 to 17.83 gallons. I think, nevertheless, that the Commission is honestly endeavouring to moderate the drinking habits of the people or the consumption of alcohol in Queensland.

One vexed point I should like to see the commission tackle relates to local option. I believe it to be my duty to fight for the restoration of the principle of local option. It is a democratic method suitable for use in a democratic community. It is ethically right and politically wise in that it provides a method of decision in harmony with democratic thought and according to public opinion in the electorate. It gives to each district the right to decide whether liquor licences shall exist in that area. It is not only because it is a plank of the Labour Party's platform that I advocate it; I am speaking from my own experience, and I am sure every hon. member will agree with me. When a licensed premises in our district was moved from its existing site to one next door, although 99.4 per cent. of the residents voted against it, we lost because we could not compete with the financial might of the liquor interests.

I should like here to pay tribute to the work Alcoholics Anonymous is doing in redeeming some unfortunate people and making useful citizens out of them.

The Department of Justice is very important. As I did not have the opportunity of speaking on the Chief Office vote, I should like to pay tribute now to the Attorney-General and his officers. Their activities should be of great interest to everyone, because the department's influence finds its way into every home in the State, from the most humble dwelling to the most pretentious palace. Its influence is felt by those lovers of freedom who are satisfied with the sky for a roof as they travel from place to place, enjoying life in their own way. It is also felt by those who have forfeited their rights to free citizenship by their anti-social conduct and who find themselves behind closed doors as guests in Her Majesty's Prison. Few, if any, can truthfully deny that they have received some protection and benefit from this department. Everyone has received justice, a special and particular form of justice that is referred to throughout the world as British justice, a privilege that has become a right and that will be defended by citizens throughout the British Commonwealth of Nations at all times and, if need be, with their lives.

Now and again there may be a miscarriage of justice, for man is not infallible, and our economic and social structure is far from perfect. However, all hon. members must have noticed an interesting article that appeared in our local Press recently comparing the behaviour and working of the people engaged in the courts of the United States of America with the corresponding procedure adopted in our courts. Those who did must

thank the men in charge of the Department of Justice and of the prisons of Queensland. It was very pleasing, Mr. Speaker, for me to sit in my place in this Chamber and hear such glowing reports of the personal conduct and ability of the present Comptroller-General of Prisons. I should like to remove the impression that Mr. Rutherford was related to the late Mr. Gledson. He was no relation but while Mr. Gledson was superintendent of the Bundamba Methodist Sunday School Mr. Rutherford was one of his scholars.

Mr. Rutherford would be the last to claim credit for the work he has done. His success is just another illustration of what can be done by good family life and correct upbringing by good christian parents in a good christian home. I have known the family for years and I regret that his father, a good christian, a good unionist, and an excellent Labour man, who with his good wife was responsible for the training of a family who are highly respected by all who know them, is not here to hear, or at least to read, the glowing tributes that are being paid to Mr. Rutherford by both sides of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DONALD: I was not aware, Mr. Speaker, that I was out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I was not calling the hon. member to order; I was referring to hon. members conversing on the back benches.

Mr. DONALD: Within recent years I have not been privileged to visit the prisons and the prison farms in this State but I have on occasions gone through them in company with Mr. Gledson when he was Attorney-General in this State. I was impressed by the happiness that was exuded by these people who are denied their freedom. They give the impression that they are endeavouring to make useful citizens of themselves. The articles they are turning out are of excellent quality and their furniture compares favourably with that manufactured in the factories of this State. The same applies to the metal-manufacturing section.

The inmates of the female section of the prison reminded me very much of the inmates of our mental hospital in Goodna. They appeared to be more mentally deficient than bad.

The work that is being carried out in the State prison farms is something of which this State should be proud. In them we have institutions that are actually health camps. Their surroundings are such that they could very well be regarded as health resorts. Not very far from the valley in which one prison farm is located are health resorts that are extensively patronised by the people as well as being extensively advertised. In these prison farms men who have been broken in body and health and who have been no use to society, are now, thanks to the kindness and the help they receive, able to rehabilitate themselves. Some of them have been able to return to society as skilled tradesmen. Some of them even have obtained engine-drivers' certificates, men who previously had never shovelled a spoonful of coal into a boiler or had anything to do with a steam engine. All that is the result of the fact that some years ago the department saw fit to set up these prison farms in an attempt to rehabilitate those unfortunate citizens who from time to time are incarcerated for offences against society. As the result of the treatment that these people are now receiving, I trust that the necessity for prison farms will eventually disappear.

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) (4.26 p.m.): I should like to record my thanks to the Attorney-General for granting permission to a party of Parliamentary representatives to visit Boggo Road gaol last Wednesday afternoon. I should like also to have recorded in "Hansard" my appreciation of the courtesy extended to us by the Comptroller-General, Mr. Rutherford. He went to no end of trouble to show the party round the prison, and his courtesy was deeply appreciated.

We were all impressed with the work of the prisoners and with the fact that as far as possible the prison is self-supporting. I am sure, too, that the goods made by the prisoners in the course of their work must save other Government departments considerable sums of money.

We are extremely fortunate to have a man like Mr. Rutherford as Comptroller-General. He tries to understand the needs and the desires of the prisoners, and he does everything possible to restore them to the straight and narrow path. I am sure that his efforts must meet with a great deal of success.

There appears to be an urgent need for additional accommodation at the prison, either by the erection of new buildings or the renovation of the existing buildings. I know, of course, that the Minister is fully conversant with the requirements.

Mr. Power: And I am rather worried about the position.

Mr. LOW: The matter is a serious one and we promise the Minister our full support in any move that he may make to overcome the problem. I am sure that the Government cannot go wrong if they follow Mr. Rutherford's recommendations.

I desire to refer also to the Licensing Commission. I believe there is an urgent need for the lifting of the standard of hotel accommodation throughout the State. If we are to take full advantage of the tourist trade, we must do everything possible to see that hotel accommodation in every town in Queensland is raised to the highest possible standard. I am sure that every member of this House must be dissatisfied with the present standard. It is a matter of urgency. There does not appear to be anything to prevent an all-out building programme. Sufficient finance is now made available by the different institutions to enable hotels to be improved. There are no building restrictions and I trust that the Minister and the Licensing Commission will see that our valuable tourist traffic is not lost through the lack of proper hotel accommodation in the various cities and towns.

The Estimates of the Department of Justice have been thoroughly discussed and I conclude by submitting my proposals to the department for its consideration.

Mr. NICHOLSON (Murrumba) (4.31 p.m.): The hon. member for Yeronga, the hon. member for Bremer, and the hon. member for Cooroora, have more or less covered the subject that I intended to discuss relating to the standard of hotel accommodation in Queensland. It is interesting to note that since the lifting of building controls quite a number of hotels have taken on a different look. Most of these hotels are privately owned or are held by syndicates other than those controlled by breweries. The breweries seem to be in a position to get away with certain things. Many of the brewery hotels, to say the least of it, are disgraceful in the matter of accommodation, both in the bar and in the bedrooms. There is one such hotel at Redcliffe, a brewery hotel, which is a blot on the coast. There swill-tub drinking takes place with people overflowing onto the footpath in a way that is a disgrace to any town. Frequently tourists visit Redcliffe from other parts of the State and other countries of the world and the Licensing Commission should launch an all-out drive to see that all the hotels, not just a few of them, give proper service, regardless of ownership.

The hon. member for Yeronga referred to the practice adopted by breweries in fixing the rents of hotels. The present system in use by the brewery-owned hotels and some syndicate-owned hotels is undesirable because it offers no incentive to the owner of the hotel either to improve his conditions or to lift his trade. It is to base the rents mainly upon the yearly trade, which means that if a hotel-owner improves his business he thereby automatically puts a rope round his neck in respect of his next year's rent. As the business is improved, so the rent is increased, and that goes particularly for the brewery hotels.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Licensing Commission has nothing to do with the rent of hotels.

Mr. NICHOLSON: I was suggesting that the Licensing Commission should have some say in the fixing of the rent of hotels.

The hon. member for Bremer said that the number of liquor licences in Queensland had been reduced. I think the hon. member mentioned a total decrease of 108. That may or may not be desirable; it depends on the angle from which you look at it. The limiting of the number of licences will tend to place a premium on the price of those licences that are to be had. At the present time licences, particularly those for which public tenders are called, are bringing exorbitant prices. This gives us food for thought—as to whether part of the exorbitant price can be attributed to the lucrativeness of the trade. Would it be desirable to have more licences and thus bring about a reduction in their price and make the business a little more competitive than it is today? That might be an incentive to create a higher standard of hotel and bar accommodation throughout the State.

Speaking of ideal bar accommodation, the northern part of this State outshines the southern part tenfold. Most of the bar accommodation in the best hotels in the North is spacious and airy and the service is given under excellent hygienic conditions.

I think also that the Licensing Commission should pay attention to the hours of trading. As the Act stands hotels can trade between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m., but it is not necessary for them to remain open during all those hours. I believe that consideration should be given to the matter of amending the Act and making it definite that the hours shall be between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. If a person holds a licence to trade between those hours I fail to see why he should be able to say what hours he shall remain open or closed. The licence is issued for a specific purpose, and its requirements should be carried out. The present Act, which lays down the hours shall be between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m., does not necessarily mean that the licensee can close his doors and serve liquor inside, but it does permit him to close up his hotel and let the public go hang. This happens more often in the country than in the city. Many city hotels do remain open all the time. I believe it is desirable to have an enforcement of the law, as I suggest, to compel the hotels to remain open during the hours for which they have a licence to sell liquor. This I believe would overcome the peak-hour or session drinking.

The Licensing Commission has a big job ahead of it in lifting the standards of accommodation. I pay this tribute to it, that already we can see marked progress in the appearance of many hotels; but unfortunately many of them have had a face lift only. The exterior looks excellent and I can well imagine a tourist from another part of Australia, or even from overseas, pulling up in front of one of these hotels and from its appearance imagining that he was about to enter a super or de-luxe hotel, only to find once within its portals that behind the beautiful exterior was only second-class accommodation. I could probably point out half a dozen hotels that have had this face-lifting but behind all this beautification are just the same old hotels. In other words, it is still the same wolf in sheep's clothing.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (4.41 p.m.): Mr. Speaker, it is apparent to me that hon. members have not yet had sufficient of the Estimates for the Department of Justice. Of course, the debate in Committee on these Estimates was concluded because of the Standing Orders. First of all I will deal with the matter raised by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove, who made the suggestion of a parole system for prisoners. There is a good deal of merit in the suggestion and it will certainly receive consideration, but hon. members must realise that it will require much investigation and consideration before it can be adopted. In other words, that is one of those

matters that must wait until more urgent matters are attended to. Mr. Rutherford has discussed the matter with me and I might here mention that I am very glad to know that hon. members have such an excellent opinion of Mr. Rutherford, the Comptroller-General of Prisons. It was I who appointed Mr. Rutherford to that position and not the late David Gledson. Mr. Rutherford was selected from many applicants and the selection has proved to be a good one. Mr. Rutherford has done a good job.

In reply to the hon. member for Yeronga, I would say that what takes place in America does not apply in Queensland. The State Licensing Commission has done an excellent job. It has discharged its functions very well.

A suggestion has been made as to the limitation of the number of breweries to operate in this State, but I would remind members of the Opposition that they criticise the Government for alleged interference with private enterprise, but now they make the suggestion that we should limit the number of breweries.

An Opposition Member: It is a monopoly.

Mr. POWER: It is not a monopoly. Let us make the position quite clear. I understand another brewery is being established in this State. There is nothing to stop a brewery from being established but hon. members will recall that the Commonwealth Government restricted credit. This might have had something to do with it, but there is no law in this State that can prevent any other brewery from starting business in this State, and we do not propose attempting to prevent anyone from starting in opposition to existing breweries.

It has been suggested that we limit the dividends of breweries. If we are to limit dividends, we must look at the subject in a general way. As a Government, we must legislate for the whole community, not one particular section. If there is to be a limit on the profits of breweries there should be a limit on the profits of doctors, dentists, chartered accountants, builders, leather-makers, and so on. Do not let us be accused of interfering with private enterprise. If hon. members want it that way, let them make suggestions. I have never believed in interfering with the rights of private enterprise.

It is also suggested that we might prevent breweries from advertising. If that is logical, it is also reasonable to suggest that we should prevent the advertising of D.D.T., frocks, belts, and other things. Why pick out one section of the community for special treatment?

Several hon. members have complained about lack of accommodation for people who desire to have a drink. I point out that this difficulty is not felt all day; it is experienced only during the peak hour when the workers wish to have a glass of beer on their way home from their places of employment. Those people have not the same privileges and comforts as members of Parliament and members of clubs. They go to the public bar, but the crowding lasts for only about one hour a day. It is suggested that we should ask hotel-keepers to put in more bars to cope with a rush lasting only an hour a day? That would be uneconomic. If this crowding took place all day, some action would have to be taken.

The hon. member for Murrumba referred to a hotel in his electorate. I think it is the Moreton Hotel. For his information, I mention that plans have been drawn up for major improvements there. Where we find it necessary, the commission takes action to eliminate these disabilities.

Then the hon. member suggested that breweries were receiving different treatment from private owners of buildings. There is no evidence of that. I do not know where the hon. member gets his information. Of course, during the war years, building controls were in operation and there were no building improvements in this State. I have mentioned already that last year certificates of approval for improvements costing over £298,617 were granted by the commission, and it is expected that the amount this year will be considerably increased. Plans are being considered by breweries for the erection of new hotels in the metropolitan area. I agree that some hotels are not what they might be. These things are being examined. I do not say that there is not some room for complaint, but the commission had knowledge of these matters and is taking action to overcome them.

The question of selling liquor in cafes is one about which I have my own views and members of this Parliament have varying views and they have expressed them. I am not expressing the opinion of the Government but personally I am not in favour of extending licences to cafes, and I do not think there should be any extension of facilities for drinking at balls and dances. People go to balls and dances to enjoy themselves and if anyone desires to have liquor he can have it before he goes or after he leaves. There are many people who go to dances and balls who do not drink and there are many young girls present. The hon. member for Yeronga is of opinion that liquor is not good for you and yet he still wants to make provision for drinking at these functions.

Dr. Noble: They would have to be more than 21.

Mr. POWER: How are you going to tell their age? By their teeth? That would be very difficult. I think that if people go to dances they go there to dance and enjoy themselves and I do not think there is any necessity for liquor to be available in these dance halls. If they have it before they go that is their own business, and if they want to have another drink when they get home, that again is their own business.

The hon. member for Bremer, who is an advocate for temperance, has been quite fair in his reference to the work the commission has done in the improvement of the hotels. We have found it very difficult to ask the local policeman to act as inspector and we have appointed inspectors. We propose in

the near future to add more inspectors to our staff to see that the liquor laws are carried out.

Then there is the matter of accommodation. We have at all times insisted that accommodation must be provided for boarders. Notices have been served on a number of hotels that they must provide accommodation. Where we have evidence that that is not being done the commission will not hesitate to take action.

The hon. member for Cooroora raised the question of better hotels. During the years of the war very little was done but at the present time we are seeking to overtake the lag. When I say "we" I am not including myself, because I have no authority over the commission. I do not want to have any authority over it. I have full confidence in it and believe that it is doing its job correctly. It has already been decided that additional licences shall be provided on the South Coast, and objections can now be lodged against them. As all hon. members know, for years it has been very difficult to get hotel accommodation anywhere on the South Coast.

Mr. Kerr interjected.

Mr. POWER: I will explain that later to the hon. member.

The hon. member for Murrumba dealt with the amount of premiums received by the Licensing Commission for licences. He seems to be of the opinion that if more licences were granted there would be greater competition. However, we are not greatly concerned with the amount of premiums paid for licences. All we are concerned about is the type of accommodation that is provided. We are naturally concerned with the amount received from fees, because they all go to the commission, but our major consideration is the type of hotel and the standard of accommodation provided, not only for tourists but for our own people.

Mr. Nicholson: Licenses are issued by way of public tenders, are they not?

Mr. POWER: Yes.

The hon. member for Murrumba has said that breweries get away with certain things. I assure him that breweries receive no special consideration. On the contrary, they are treated in exactly the same way as privately-owned hotels. Rather than increasing the number of hotels controlled by them, breweries have disposed of some of them.

The hon. member for Murrumba dealt also with hotel trading-hours, which at present extend from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. He wants the law amended to force hotels to trade between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. At the present time, because of insufficient beer supplies, hotels do not keep their bars open for the whole of the trading hours. However, after a recent increase in beer quotas the position is gradually righting itself. During the war hotel proprietors were encouraged to close their bars when the beer went off, because it was after the beer went off that the people were sold cheap plonk and other spirits. We want to see less spirits consumed. We do not think it is a good thing for young people to drink spirits, such as rum, gin, brandy, whisky, and wine, nor is it a very good thing for those who are getting on in years. I am sure that the hon. member for Yeronga could tell us that brandy affects one's liver. I have been advised by medical men that beer does not have nearly the adverse effect on our organs that spirits have. I think it would be unwise to attempt to force hotel proprietors to keep their bars open once the beer goes off. We should, however, be ever watchful to see that hotel bars are not closed when they are selling beer in the lounge. That is a matter for strict supervision by the members of the Police Department and the licensing inspectors. If a hotel has beer to sell, its bar doors should be open for the sale of it and it should not be confined to the lounge, to be sold at an increased price.

Mr. Nicholson: Do you not think that the restriction of hours of trading tends to bring about the sessional peak-hour drinking when this could be avoided by a spread of trading hours?

Mr. POWER: If the hotels were compelled to remain open for all the hours prescribed by statute it would mean that quite a number of people would not be able to get a drink at all.

Mr. Nicklin: There always appears to be plenty of beer when there is competition between the breweries.

Mr. POWER: There is competition between the breweries in Brisbane.

Mr. Nicklin: No real competition.

Mr. POWER: Yes, plenty of it. I am told also that the Cairns brewery is able to supply all the beer requirements of North Queensland. If that is so, the hotels should be able to remain open for a reasonable time during the day. It is a matter that we can look into. If we find that the beer is available and that the hotels still close their doors on Saturday afternoons, perhaps it will be necessary to bring in an amendment of the Liquor Act to deal with the matter. I propose to amend the liquor law next session.

Mr. Nicholson: Most of the rush drinking takes place on Saturday morning and I think the rush could be avoided if the hotels remained open longer during the week.

Mr. POWER: I cannot agree with the hon. member there. I notice that the patrons of hotels generally leave for their homes at 12 or 1 o'clock and I am sure that they do not come back again in the afternoon. Most people go to sporting fixtures or have other means of relaxation on Saturday afternoon. A hotel should not be allowed to close its doors while it has beer to sell but I do not think we should try to force hotels to remain open just for the sale of spirits.

Mr. Nicholson: I would not agree with that myself.

Mr. Dewar: Have you given any thought to the suggestion to reduce the alcoholic content of beer?

Mr. POWER: That does not come within the ambit of the Licensing Commission and rather than incur the wrath of Mr. Speaker by dealing with a subject that is not under consideration I prefer not to answer the question.

The hon. member for Murrumba said that exorbitant prices were charged for a licence but that is not correct. The highest price paid by tender to the Licensing Commission was £2,000 and many licences have been sold for only £50. That is not a very high price to pay for a licence.

Mr. Nicholson: It depends on the locality.

Mr. POWER: Of course it does. Once a person gets the licence it becomes his property and subject to good behaviour he holds it in perpetuity. The hotels in Queensland compare favourably with those in the other States and the tariffs are 20 per cent. below those in New South Wales and Victoria.

The hon. member for Sherwood wanted to know what method was adopted when a new licence was to be granted. Let me illustrate the procedure by a reference to the South Coast, where the granting of two licences is now being discussed. Let us assume that there should be two more licences for the South Coast. Objections will be received and if they are rejected tenders will be called for the licences. Each tenderer, when submitting his tender will state the type of hotel and the accommodation he will provide and the amount he is prepared to pay to the commission for the right to conduct the hotel on some site. The commission will examine the proposal and it may decide that the site mentioned is not the most suitable, or that the site is satisfactory but that the accommodation proposed is not in accordance with what the commission requires. The whole point is that the decision hinges, not on the amount of money that a person is prepared to pay for a licence alone, but on the amount plus the type of accommodation that he is prepared to provide. One syndicate may say, "We are prepared to spend £300,000 or £400,000 on a hotel and we are prepared to pay £1,000 for a licence," and another syndicate may say, "We are prepared to pay £25,000 for a licence and spend £60,000 or £70,000 on a building." The person who would get the licence would be one who would be willing to provide the best accommodation. The licence belongs to the Crown. The licence fee goes into a fund, and when a licence is surrendered compensation is drawn from that fund to be paid to the person who surrenders the licence.

I thank hon. members for their kindly references to the Licensing Commission. Its only interest is to see that the law is carried out without fear or favour to every person with whom it deals.

Resolution 4—Department of Justice—agreed to.

Resolutions 5 to 7, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Resolution 8—Department of the Treasurer—

Mr. NICHOLSON (Murrumba) (5.9 p.m.): This resolution embraces the Department of Harbours and Marine which deals with the fishing industry; and I take this opportunity to say a few words about the statements made by various bodies on behalf of the fishing industry as a whole. I have already spoken of the fishing industry and its importance to food production for this State. I think that perhaps a great deal more consideration could be given to the industry than has been given to it, not only by the controllers of the industry but perhaps by the local authorities. We noticed in the paper recently statements about the staking of nets and the breaking of oyster beds and the fact that part-time fishermen were being allowed to net fish.

There is now an influx of southern fishermen, who bring with them nefarious fish traps which have a very detrimental effect on the killing of fish, in many instances without providing extra food for the population. It is time the authorities of this State realised that allowing any person who possesses a licence to stake nets and to set these fish traps, as these southern fishermen are doing, is an injustice to the fishing industry and to this State. Throughout the world there is probably no greater attraction to the tourist trade than good fishing grounds, but unfortunately Queensland is getting into the position that most of the fish from the well-known and reputable fishing grounds are being lost. It was only recently that I made representations to the Treasurer to have certain parts of the coastline of the Redcliffe peninsula closed to net fishing. The reply from the Treasurer was in itself quite laudable and perhaps suited the occasion but one thing that struck me forcibly in that letter was the statement that the professional fishermen in Sandgate were netting in certain areas. It was also remarked that the hauls were very small. That in itself should be sufficient to awaken the authorities to the fact that our fishing grounds are being overworked. If the hauls are small it must necessarily follow that no new fish are coming along. These fishing grounds are denuded of the small and young fish, they are driven away, and if no rest is given to the fishing grounds, such as is given to game reserves, they will be ruined. Fish are not so "dumb" as they look. They know when they are being tantalised and being driven from their breeding grounds.

Although perhaps professional fishermen are the greatest offenders, the opinion I am about to state as regards mullet is subscribed to by expert fishermen. The mullet run for a specific reason. It is their spawning season. They swim up the coast and find their way into the creeks and rivers to spawn. But what do we find. The moment a ripple on the ocean is noticed or the lookout spies the fish, the professional fishermen go out and they pursue the mullet from Tweed Heads to as far north as they possibly can; and with what result? Only 25 per cent. of the mullet find their way to the breeding grounds. The

rest, if not caught in the nets, throw their roe—the fishman's term—and make for the open sea. Under normal conditions, because of infertility and natural enemies, the hatch coming from the spawn is approximately 25 per cent.

First, then, only 25 per cent. of the fish find their way into the rivers to spawn. The mortality rate in the resultant hatch is 75 per cent., so that only 25 per cent. of the spawn finds its way back to the ocean as young fish. I urge the department to give more consideration to the representations made to it by the fishing industry for a curtailment of the indiscriminate issue of licences to week-enders who, upon payment of a fee of 10s., are now allowed to use nets. The department should also consider the establishment of fish sanctuaries where the fish could breed before making their way to the open sea again. With the sanctuaries the breeding would be undisturbed and we should have the double benefit of added tourist attraction and more profitable industries.

Recently the prawning industry developed in Moreton Bay.

Mr. Sparkes: Is that the tiger prawn?

Mr. NICHOLSON: Yes, and it is interesting to note that with the introduction of deep freezing the Moreton Bay tiger prawn is finding its way onto southern markets. We now have a good export trade to other States. Again with some little fostering by the Government, the prawning industry of Moreton Bay might become a great dollar-earner. Only recently we read in the Press that some hundreds of thousands of dollars had been earned by Western Australia by the export of crayfish tails to America. The export of the Moreton Bay tiger prawn and the king prawn might have great dollar-earning potentialities for this State.

These trawlers are licensed. Certain regulations govern their operation. For instance, they must use nets of a certain mesh and there is a restriction on the size of prawn they are allowed to catch. Most prawners work to the regulations, but, as in every industry, there are one or two "goats" who make it hard for the rest of the industry. Recently there has been an influx of southern trawlers to Moreton Bay to the detriment of local men who work the whole year and are prepared to take the good with the bad, whereas the southern opportunist cashes in on the flush season. There should be a limitation on licences for prawning, as in New South Wales.

Another unfortunate circumstance is that in Moreton Bay these men have no facilities for unloading their catch. Only recently I made representations to the Redcliffe Town Council with a view to obtaining permission for the prawners to use the jetty. It seems a sorry state of affairs that a local authority can hold the gun at the head of an industry that might possibly be a great dollar-earner for this State. It is sad that an industry can be stifled by a local authority that will not give the prawners permission to run vehicles on the jetty. The Redcliffe jetty will stand a load of anything up to 20 tons. It was built during war-time to carry heavy loads. The objection raised by the local authority is that the trucks would damage the jetty. I have tried in every possible way to convince the local authority that it was doing this industry and the State an injustice. They are really hampering this industry. Unfortunately my appeals have fallen on deaf ears. They have gone so far now as to allow the prawners to tie their boats up to the wharf and they charge them £1 a week for doing so. I think that in itself might be quite reasonable, they may be entitled to do that, and the prawners would not object to paying that price if they were allowed facilities for loading supplies and unloading their catch. At present they have to carry it in baskets sometimes a quarter of a mile from their boats up to their trucks.

I think it would be a great help if the council adopted a broader outlook towards this industry, and I appeal to the Treasurer to use his influence in the matter. I do not know whether there is any law to prevent the local council from stopping the fishermen from using the jetties, but I do think that they are doing a disservice to a fast-growing industry of this State.

I have made representations to the Department of Harbours and Marine on behalf of the council as to the possibility of granting help towards the upkeep of these jetties and I have received information that favourable consideration would be given if the council applied for such a grant. It has not done so and I think it is a very poor outlook on the part of the council in regard to an industry in its own town. I have told the council just exactly what I am telling hon. members here, so I am not going behind its back. I do feel that some arrangement could be arrived at between the council and the Department of Harbours and Marine, and I should like the Treasurer to look into this matter and see just what entitlement these fishermen have under the laws of this State to use public jetties, if they are not committing a nuisance. The fishing industry as a whole is in the doldrums as far as catches are concerned and as far as the distribution of fish throughout the State is concerned. Consideration should be given not only to the issuing of fishermen's licences but also to the issuing of retail licences. The indiscriminate issuing of licences to fishermen and the curtailment of the issuing of licences to resellers is causing a bottleneck in the industry. Some of the most difficult licences to obtain in this State are a licence to resell fish, a licence for a fish shop and a licence to buy from the board. A licence for a fish shop to buy from the board means that a person can buy his fresh fish from the board whereas a licence to retail fish or sell fish, without a licence to buy from the board, means that the person running the fish shop is handicapped to the extent of 3d. a lb. It costs him 3d. a lb. more for his fish than it does a person who is licensed to buy from the board. The unfortunate part of it

is that many of these people with licences are at the fish markets, which are right alongside the board, and the fish is hardly handled before its price rises 3d. a lb. That extra cost is either passed on to the public or has to be borne by the owner of the fish shop who cannot buy his fish direct from the board.

Mr. Walsh: Do you suggest that all retailers should be allowed to buy direct from the board?

Mr. NICHOLSON: I would not suggest that, but I think there should be a more equitable distribution of the licences. I fail to see why any person who owns a fish shop and sells cooked fish to the public should have a privilege that is denied to someone else. If anyone is to be stopped from buying direct from the board, they should all be stopped. Let the fish go through the usual retail channels. If some people, because they do not possess licences, are forced to buy their fish from a retailer before they can cook it and resell it to the public, everybody should be forced to do the same.

Mr. Gair: There must be a wholesaler in the fish market, as well as a retailer.

Mr. NICHOLSON: Everyone with a fish shop should be allowed to buy from the wholesaler. There is a difference between the board and the wholesaler. I am sorry if I confused the issue.

Mr. Gair: Some buyers can buy at the market.

Mr. NICHOLSON: I am sorry I misled the House by referring to retailers instead of to wholesalers. There is, of course, a difference between buying from the board and buying from a wholesaler.

Mr. Walsh: I asked you whether you were suggesting that all retailers should be allowed to buy from the board. That was what I gathered from your remarks.

Mr. NICHOLSON: Let me clear the point up. I believe that if a certain number of people who are retailing fish and serving it as meals are permitted to buy direct from the board, so should every fish shop in Queensland. I do not see why a certain number should be allowed the privilege of buying direct from the board. In other words, the board should be the wholesaler.

Mr. Gair: I think you are out of your depth.

Mr. NICHOLSON: There should not be any discrimination between any two fish shops. No fish shop should be allowed to buy fish 3d. a lb. cheaper than the next fish shop.

Mr. Walsh: Does that not apply in every branch of business? For instance, does it not apply to electrical contrivances, which you yourself sell?

Mr. NICHOLSON: We buy from a wholesaler.

Mr. Rasey: Chandler would not allow you to buy direct from the factory.

Mr. NICHOLSON: Exactly. Every business buys through a wholesaler. Sometimes, of course, a person claims to manufacture an article and sell it direct to the retailer, but that is his own business. The position with the Fish Board is exactly the same. The board is in the same position as a factory, and there is also a wholesaler. Why should one fish shop be allowed to buy from the factory while another, because it does not possess a licence, is not able to buy from the factory and has to pay another 3d. a lb? The result is that the majority of fish shops have to be run at a greater cost than the privileged few. It should be a case of either one in, all in, or one out, all out.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (5.30 p.m.): If the hon. member's suggestion is adopted it will lead to chaos and to the disadvantage of the industry. A retailer of fish has to install a plant and give a regular service. In the old days the practice was for the fisherman himself to hawk his fish and sell it at any old price and no-one would be bothered to give security to people who engaged in the retailing of fish for the fisherman. However, since the establishment of the Fish Board certain people have been licensed, but before they were licensed they had to show their credentials, they had to prove that they were reliable people, capable of handling the fish. As a consequence, the Fish Board had to be able to regulate, more or less, the distribution of fish so that it would not be either a feast or a famine. The hon. member's suggestion that in the olden days before the establishment of the Fish Board, the wholesalers would sell to any retailer in business, is entirely wrong. Let him try to buy galvanised iron from a wholesaler and see how far he will get. If you are a retail hardware merchant and you belong to the select few you will be accepted by the manufacturer or the wholesaler and appointed as a distributor, but unless you are you will find that you are not on the same terms as some of the other people.

Mr. Nicholson: But you would not say that two wrongs make a right.

Mr. BURROWS: No, and I cannot agree with the hon. member's declaration that the Fish Board is the only instrumentality that does what he suggests.

Mr. Nicholson: I did not say that.

Mr. BURROWS: The hon. member said that there should be no discrimination between the different retailers and the Treasurer asked by way of interjection whether the same practice did not exist in connection with the line of goods that the hon. member sells. He knows very well that the wholesalers will not make supplies available to every Jack, Tom and Harry who sets up a mushroom concern.

Mr. Nicholson: They would if he had the money.

Mr. BURROWS: I challenge the hon. member, through you, Mr. Speaker, to try to buy a certain line of shirts, or to buy galvanised iron, or wire, or for that matter

any of the B.H.P. products. You will find that in a particular town, perhaps, they have a certain retailer of their products and that they decline to supply their goods to any other in the town. That has happened and the hon. member, I think, would admit it if he was honest.

Mr. Nicklin: What do you mean by that, "if he was honest?" Are you implying that he is dishonest?

Mr. BURROWS: Yes. Unfortunately the debates in this House do get dishonest sometimes.

Mr. NICHOLSON: I rise to a point of order. If the hon. member is implying that I am dishonest, I should like a withdrawal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I took the hon. member's statement to be a figure of speech and not a reflection on the hon. member for Murrumba. I allowed the hon. member for Murrumba some latitude in dealing with the Fish Board, but the debate is strictly out of order, and I ask the hon. member for Port Curtis to confine his remarks to the Department of Harbours and Marine.

Mr. BURROWS: I should like to say that from my experience and observations—and I have lived in a town near which fish are produced in very large quantities—since the establishment of the Fish Board the fishermen have enjoyed greater security and they have received a better average price, with the result that the fish industry is on a better basis today than ever before. I think the criticism offered by the hon. member for Murrumba is uncalled for and very unjustified.

Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) (5.36 p.m.): One of the things that have lived in my memory this session is the very useful debates that took place in connection with the city of Brisbane when the City of Brisbane Acts and Other Acts Amendment Bill was under discussion.

It is my desire this afternoon to have a few words to say about the future planning of another important thing that comes under the control of the Treasurer, the planning of the port of Brisbane. I think we should realise that the new port of Brisbane—and I say that because I refer now to the port down the river as distinct from the one higher up that was developed earlier—has advantages that few ports of any magnitude have had anywhere else in the world, that is, vast strips of country on both sides that have so far avoided becoming built-up areas and consequently hampering the development of the new port through having residential suburbs or factory areas on them.

Mr. Walsh: That is not happening now.

Mr. HILEY: I know. We start off with that advantage; and starting off with that advantage it is absolutely essential that we preserve every atom of that advantage and do nothing that might frustrate any of that advantage, which might occur if we permitted it to be used in a manner that in later years we might regret.

It appears to me that the instrument we have set up under the ministerial supervision of the Treasurer for planning the shape of the future of the port of Brisbane might not be the ideal one for the purpose. It may be that the authority could have been improved by the appointment of further personnel. The authority consists of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, an officer from the Department of Public Lands, an officer from the Railway Department, an officer from the Department of Labour and Industry, a State Government representative, the Chief Engineer of the Department of Harbours and Marine, and the Surveyor-General.

The first criticism that I make of that committee which deals with the Hamilton lands, that are an essential component of the port of Brisbane, is that it may be an excellent committee for carving up Crown lands in some part of the State, but I question whether it is of sufficient weight to understand the business of ports and the handling of cargoes to adequately bear the responsibility cast upon it. There is no member of the committee who has had any practical experience of handling cargoes or shipping or in the assembling of cargoes for shipment or in the storing of goods commonly handled by mercantile marine. We have the Chief Engineer of the Department of Harbours and Marine, and I acknowledge that Mr. Fison's work over the years has resulted in great improvement to the stream of the river itself. He has greatly improved the port dredging depths and the port will be more capable of handling large vessels than it was two or three years ago. Mr. Fison is an engineer specialised in such matters as retaining walls, the flow of tidal streams, dredging procedure and things like that but Mr. Fison, I think, would be the first to admit that when it comes to practical experience of assembling and storing cargo and the actual working of ships he has not that speciality. He has the speciality in the waterway itself. There should be at least some representatives on that committee who really understand more about it and I propose to give some practical example whereby I think that so far some mistakes have been made.

Mr. Walsh: The particular phase of the development of the port itself does not come under my department.

Mr. HILEY: To the extent that it is related to the development of the port of Brisbane, it should and if it is divorced from the hon. gentleman's department, all I can say is that it is a very great tragedy. In the discharge of his responsibility for the harbours and rivers of this State, it is absolutely essential that his authority should carry clearly through to the development of lands adjacent and essential to the improvement of that port and harbour. If the Treasurer is telling the House that the Hamilton lands are not clearly within his Ministerial responsibility, I am bound to say that is a very great tragedy.

Mr. Walsh: I am not talking of the Hamilton lands, I am talking about a particular committee you refer to.

Mr. HILEY: That committee deals with Hamilton lands and it is a great pity that the Treasurer——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing that matter. The hon. member has been reminded of that by the Treasurer himself.

Mr. HILEY: Surely I can deplore the fact that the Treasurer in exercising his Ministerial office finds himself shorn of the opportunity of playing an adequate part in something that will have dire and tragic consequences to the very responsibility that is his, the responsibility of harbours and marine.

Mr. Walsh: You realise that all these reclaimed lands would be leased by the Department of Public Lands and not my department.

Mr. HILEY: The committee goes into the question of using the lands and it is the hon. gentleman's department that is putting the spoil onto the land. I will go so far as to say this: one of the things that exercise me most on the question of harbours and rivers of Brisbane is that the dredging of the river and putting the spoil on the Hamilton inlet to reclaim it for industrial use may be a very great tragedy to the port. I seriously question whether it is the wisest use of the land and whether any effective use will be able to be made of it.

Mr. Walsh: The reclaiming of that land?

Mr. HILEY: Yes, and I will tell the hon. gentleman why. At the present time, every day there is being pumped thousands of cubic yards of spoil containing somewhere about 60 per cent. of moisture. It is being put on top of a natural mud basis and it will take years for the surface to dry out. From the experience I have had lower down the river the subsoil some few feet below the surface will never dry.

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION.

At 5.45 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! By arrangement I will vacate the Chair now. I remind hon. members that the committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will meet in this Assembly at 6.30 p.m.

SUPPLY.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURER.

Debate resumed on Resolution 8—Department of the Treasurer—

Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) (7.15 p.m.): I am not impressed by the way in which the present sea of mud is being covered with soil containing a very high volume of water and it is perhaps not likely that it will dry out beyond the surface layers at any time. Lower down the river there is a natural clay base where some of the industrial users have attempted to put in heavy floor loading, only to find that there was a movement in the floor causing a sagging that led to a squeezing up of material round the edges of the building. So it seems to me, from experience there, that we should consider what happened near Pinkenba, which has been stable soil ever since the white man came to this country. We cannot hope to succeed, in my opinion, on a natural clay basin covered with spew mud containing a very high volume of water.

Mr. Walsh: Do you suggest that we should do nothing?

Mr. HILEY: No. We have quite a considerable length of frontage for end-to-end wharves down the river and if we look far enough ahead we can hold the Hamilton inlet as a wet dock for the future development of the port of Brisbane. In all the great ports of the world, London, Hamburg, and others, wet docks have played an important part in port development. They are free from tidal scour, the sea just simply running in filling them and running out again with no great movement in the water, and so they have played a very notable part in the development of most of the great ports of the world. I suggest that we should keep the Hamilton inlet and use other land for industrial development. In the future development of the port of Brisbane we may not find sufficient land for end-to-end wharves up and down the river.

That is the first point I make. My second point is that in the layout of the port of Brisbane we should do everything that we possibly can to preserve depth at the back of the wharves for port needs. If you look at the port of Sydney you will find that its great curse is the great number of small wharves. Either the sheds are too small or the wharves themselves are too small, or the yards at the back of the wharves and the sheds are too small. I believe we should re-examine the area at the back of the wharves to make sure that there is always ample depth back from the river frontage for the railway line and we must always make sure that our port development down there is not constricted, as is the case in other ports. We have two wharves down the river that appeal to me as being somewhat sufficient for this purpose, the first the Newstead wharf and the other Bretts' Wharf. In each there is ample room in the yard to stack material in the open and there is ample room for semi-trailers and big wagons to manoeuvre freely.

Everyone who has handled goods knows that if you have a yard that is not big enough to take a semi-trailer it makes a world of difference to the cost of operating. Lower down the river some of the wharves now being developed, such as the Brisbane Stevedoring Company wharf, the Hamilton wharf, the B.H.P. Steel wharf, and the one under construction for Nixon Smith Company impress me as being confronted with the incipient problem of not having adequate space for wharf, sheds, yards for the handling of trucks and provide enough

open space for storage. The proximity of the railway line to the river frontage is one of the narrowing tendencies. The point I should like considered is whether in developing the future of the port of Brisbane consideration should be given to that now, before the fixed improvements come in and before areas are alienated for industrial use, in order to make sure that for all time you have for the development of the port of Brisbane adequate space to support berthage. We have seen an increase in the size of the average tonnage. We have seen ships come here, not so much greater in number, but infinitely greater in tonnage. When we recognise that we can have a facility to bring the big cargo in a very big ship, that will be one of the ways to effect transport economy. It is no use putting a big ship at a wharf if the sheds will not hold the cargo that the bigger vessels can carry.

The plea I make to the Minister in considering the future development of the port of Brisbane is that he should safeguard the one natural advantage that he has so far retained, that is, the natural spaces. Now is the time for the railway line to be moved back 50 or 100 yards from the river. If you wait 10 or 20 years circumstances then may be such that it becomes an almost physical impossibility. While we are examining a new plan for the development of the city of Brisbane it is incumbent on us to spare time for the consideration of the future of the port of Brisbane 50 or 100 years hence. Certainly when developing the port lower down we are working alongside areas that are as yet largely under-developed.

A Government Member: They are guided by expert opinion.

Mr. HILEY: The expert opinion is excellent opinion, well qualified for cutting up some of the pastoral lands and other lands, but on the question whether it contains within its own compass a sufficient appreciation of the physical problem of the assembling of cargoes, the handling of ships, and the storing of cargoes into shed storage is another matter. We have seen great development in the size of motor transport. Semi-trailers are now up to 50 feet in length and are capable of handling vast quantities of goods on the highways of this State. The greater the capacity of the ships, the greater the quantity of goods we hope to see handled through our port. As far as the Hamilton inlet is concerned I have some doubts whether you will be able to use on that land anything but the lightest of structures, unless you go to the great expense of concrete floating rafts and things of that kind. Because of that fear I contend that now is the time to examine the question whether the spoil that is being taken out of the river and being dumped into the inlet would not be far better employed in reclaiming the land surrounding Meeandah and Whinstanes which is low-lying and where the spoil would be usefully employed and whether the Hamilton inlet should not be preserved in the hope that some day it could be used for a wet dock. If fuller examination showed that a wet dock will never prove a necessary feature of the development of the port the inlet can be filled in then. If it is filled in now and industrial buildings are allowed to spread over it it is lost for all time. That is why I raise the plea to the Treasurer and I hope that the very spirit that has led to a much improved performance and much more responsible attitude to the water features of the port of Brisbane will be carried through to the other side of the port's requirements, a superb waterway, ample berthage, and plenty of space behind the berthage to handle and store the goods that are unloaded from the larger ships that will be offering.

Mr. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) (7.27 p.m.): I wish to say a few words in relation to the responsibility of the Treasurer in local-authority matters. On two or three other occasions in this Session of Parliament I have referred to the practice which in itself is very desirable, that when a local authority, the Brisbane City Council or any other local authority, resumes land it advertises its intention prior to the resumption. That has saved a great deal of trouble in the past and will save a great deal of trouble in the future. I regret that in the administration of the Department of Local Government provision has not been made for advertising the sale of any land the council has.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in discussing legislation.

Mr. MORRIS: I am not discussing legislation. I think it could be brought about just as satisfactorily by administrative action. If the Treasurer exercised his administrative powers in that regard—

Mr. Walsh: Show me where the administrative powers are.

Mr. MORRIS: We will get together, if you like, afterwards.

Mr. Walsh: There is no such power in the Act.

Mr. MORRIS: Probably I can show it to the hon. gentleman, in the same way I was able to correct the hon. gentleman in regard to quoting from "Hansard." He may recall that. I believe that administratively the Treasurer could ensure the practice that is operating——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister intimated to the hon. member that that matter is not within his province of administrative authority and I will not allow it to be referred to. That is a matter for legislation.

Mr. MORRIS: Very well, I will not continue the discussion any further, but will you, Mr. Speaker, permit me to say that it is a great pity we have a Treasurer who cannot realise what he could satisfactorily do in that direction?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (7.29 p.m.): I join with the hon. member for Murrumba in what he

has said about the fishing industry. I emphasise that this is an industry that could become a great deal more valuable to the State than it is at present, when it is considered that this State has the second-largest coastline of any State in the Commonwealth but that its production of fish is not sufficient by any means to provide for the needs of its own people. We have been selling, for the greater part of the year, fish imported from New Zealand, indeed from almost all parts of the world, and a good deal of it fresh fish that I believe could be supplied from our own fisheries if sufficient importance was attached to them.

Two things are necessary to build up the production of the fishing industry of this State. The first and greatest need is more research into the habits of our fish, the conservation of fish, and the development of the undoubted resources that exist in the northern waters of this State that at present teem with some of the best edible fish in the world. As yet, those supplies are hardly touched for the purposes of supply to the people of Queensland.

I know that a certain amount of research is being undertaken by the C.S.I.R.O. and the State, but unfortunately we have not many facilities yet for any extensive research into the habits of fish, those of the mullet in particular. We know that a certain amount of tagging is being done from time to time and efforts are made to gain some knowledge of the habits of these fish but the annual catch of mullet seems to be diminishing each year.

This is due to a number of causes. One is that we do not give enough attention to the protection of the breeding grounds, the headwaters of the creeks and rivers running into our seas and estuaries. A tremendous amount of damage is done in those upper reaches by the indiscriminate use of dynamite. I know that the department's inspectors are doing their utmost to catch these dynamiters, but very few of these people are brought to book, despite those strenuous efforts. A considerable amount of dynamiting is going on in areas not so far from Brisbane and adjacent to Moreton Bay. Millions of young fish are destroyed in this way.

Then there is the indiscriminate issuing of licences to every person who happens to have 5s. and applies for a licence to use a net. Because of this indiscriminate issuing of licences, the creeks, rivers and estuaries are dragged by amateur fishermen every week-end, with the result that the fish are not permitted to remain undisturbed in their normal breeding grounds and this leads to poor hatching. They do not multiply as they would if they were not subjected to the indiscriminate dragging of nets that takes place.

There is much to be said in favour of the suggestion made by the hon. member for Murrumba that fishing licences should be issued only to genuine professional fishermen who depend on catching fish for their livelihood. At the moment there are many fishermen who operate only during the mullet season. These seasonal men take the cream away from the professional men who work all through the year to earn a living. In addition to more intensive research into the habits, movements and breeding grounds of our fish, the Minister should examine very closely the question of limiting licences for net fishing to professional fishermen who depend on fishing for a living.

I should like also to make reference to the development of the oyster industry in this State. In Queensland, particularly in Moreton Bay, we have ideal oyster-raising waters. The Bribie Passage oysters are well known for their quality. Unfortunately, however, we do not raise sufficient oysters to meet our own requirements and most of the oysters eaten in the State come from southern States which have not the natural resources to breed and fatten oysters that we have right here at our own door-step.

If we are going to develop the oyster industry, particularly in Moreton Bay, it will not be done by the indiscriminate methods that have been used in the past of just picking up any oysters that may grow on a lease that may be obtained from the department. We shall have to cultivate oysters by scientific methods and make the fullest use of the undoubted breeding and fattening grounds that we have available.

One of the weaknesses in the Fish and Oyster Act is that a person who invests money in the cultivation of oysters does not get sufficient protection to enable him to carry on his business properly. Some little time ago I forwarded to the Honourable the Minister some suggestions for the amendment of the Fish and Oyster Act, and I am rather disappointed that up to the present time I have not heard anything from him as to whether those suggestions I put forward contained any merit, or whether he proposes to do anything about this industry.

When you start to cultivate oysters you concentrate your oysters into a small area. In these days of thickly populated coast lands and the availability of motor-boats, it is very easy for anyone to get onto an oyster bank where oysters are cultivated in trays or grown on sticks, pick half a bucket of oysters in 10 minutes, and get away undetected. It is not possible for the owner of an oyster bank to be sitting on his bank with a shot-gun 24 hours a day, and consequently the experience of those who are endeavouring to cultivate oysters is that they are only encouraging people to come and steal from their banks. The Fish and Oyster Act at present does not contain stringent enough provisions to enable the fisheries inspectors and the owners of these banks to take effective action against these oyster pirates.

But that is not the worst damage that can be caused to an oyster bank. Possibly the greatest damage is done by the indiscriminate rowing of boats over the banks when there is not sufficient water to prevent a boat from scraping on the bottom. It does not matter how many notices you put up that trespassers will be prosecuted, anybody who gets

into a rowing boat thinks he can row anywhere and will pay no heed to any such notices. Once a boat rows over an oyster bank upon which spat is spread out, in an area of 100 yards £20 or £30 damage can be done by pressing these oysters into the sand, because immediately they are pressed into the sand they die. When the owner of an oyster bank endeavours to prosecute these unreasonable persons, of whom there are quite a few, he comes up against weaknesses in the Act. Of course, the great majority of people will get off an oyster bank when they are told that they are trespassing, but there is always the unreasonable fellow who will tell you to go to the hot place and say he will row anywhere he wants to. If you have oysters growing on sticks and you put the sticks into the bank to catch spat, these people row over the bank and knock the sticks down. The damage that can be caused by people who row across banks is in itself sufficient to make many people think twice before they invest money in cultivating oysters. In order to encourage people to take up oyster cultivation under modern methods and to produce sufficient oysters to meet the public demand, we should give them reasonable protection from loss by theft and by damage caused by the thoughtless person who will row over banks.

I hope that in view of the present value to this State of oyster production and its potential value under the latest methods of oyster cultivation, the Minister will closely examine the Fish and Oyster Act to see whether its provisions are sufficiently wide to give the necessary protection to men who have invested thousands of pounds in the production of oysters. In the rivers of New South Wales, such as Georges River, the trespasser on oyster banks can be kept out to a certain extent, but it costs a good deal of money. I believe that minor amendments to the Act will give adequate protection to those men who are endeavouring to cultivate oysters in Queensland and to increase the productivity of that industry. In view of the possible development that we can get from our fishing industry—and I am now referring to both fish and oysters—the matter is well worthy of consideration by the Minister and his officers.

Mr. TURNER (Kelvin Grove) (7.44 p.m.): I think the main reason for the shortage of fish in Brisbane, and in Queensland generally, is the change in our coastline that has been caused by nature. I have known Southport for——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member does not intend to enter into a discussion on fishing.

Mr. TURNER: I have raised this matter only because other hon. members have suggested to the Treasurer——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the resolution that is now under consideration.

Mr. TURNER: I advise the Treasurer to be very careful before implementing any of the suggestions that have been made by members of the Opposition. I suggest, too, that he should look very closely into the prawning that is going on at the present time in Moreton Bay. Seventy-odd boats are operating there now. I think that they are over-doing it and destroying the prawning beds in the process. There are plenty of other prawning grounds between here and Bundaberg on which they could operate and the department will have to do something very shortly if Moreton Bay is to be preserved as a breeding ground for prawns. I know that there are 74 boats operating every night of the week in Moreton Bay and they will soon clean the place out. It is true, as the hon. member for Murrumba said, that the prawns are a good dollar-earner and that large quantities of them have been successfully marketed in America. I know that there are two companies operating in Moreton Bay on a scientific basis. They catch the prawns and immediately snap-freeze them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now debating a matter that comes under the Department of Harbours and Marine.

Mr. TURNER: I have not said anything that does not come under the Department of Harbours and Marine.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is a matter for administration by the Department of Harbours and Marine.

Mr. TURNER: I am suggesting that the officers in charge of the administration should look into these matters.

Mr. Nicholson: Do you agree with me that the number of licences should be limited?

Mr. TURNER: I am not saying that they should be reduced or that they should be increased but the operations of the existing licensee should be extended over a wider field.

I cannot agree with the advice tendered by the hon. member for Coorparoo relating to extra wharf space for shipping. I have had considerable experience with overseas shipping and I can say that in these days, with motorised transport, there is less need for large yards, especially for the deep-sea ships. A good deal of the import cargo is brought down by the lorries direct from the ships slings. Wool constitutes a very valuable item of back-loading for overseas ships and for weeks before the ships arrive here the companies are dumping wool and storing other cargo for the ships. I have seen at least 12,000 bales of wool stored in the sheds. It is material that cannot be put in the yards. The advice tendered by the hon. member for Coorparoo should be seriously considered critically before the Government decide to make greater yard room available for the overseas shipping companies. Most of their cargo is shed cargo, cargo that can be easily handled. They have very little deck cargo and any deck cargo there is can be easily lifted with the ship's slings direct to

the jinkers that take it to its destination. The companies handle these heavy lifts as little as possible and I repeat that before we adopt the suggestion by the hon. member for Coorparoo the matter should be examined very seriously. He mentioned that some deep-sea companies had large yards in which the jinkers could turn, but they can turn in the sheds too. If the shipping companies used the whole of their yards they would still have more shed room than they required. They have sufficient shed room to cope with all their cargo. I think the interstate ships need more room than some of the overseas ships and so I suggest to the Minister and his officers that they give thorough consideration to the hon. member's suggestion before they decide to accept it.

Resolution 8—Department of the Treasurer —agreed to.

Resolution 9—Department of Public Lands and Irrigation —

Mr. FLETCHER (Cunningham) (7.49 p.m.): I desire to take this opportunity to make a few observations on the subject of land, which with agriculture and stock is one of the most important matters that I had hoped for many days would come up for discussion, in order that I might know the policy of the Government and debate it at length.

In our present circumstances I think that that land, its use and administration, are of the very greatest importance to the Government, to us and to everybody in Queensland. I think I have heard the phrase "this great State of ours" used more frequently in this Chamber than any other phrase. It has often occurred to me that we might have some trouble in substantiating the claim to greatness implied by that term. We are great only in one sense, as far as I can see, and that is in space. We certainly are great in the matter of land but in every other important matter for consideration we cannot by any means be called great. Our industrial production is not of such dimensions or of such efficiency that we can point to it with any great pride. Seeing that we are so dependent on things needed to be transported long distances our costs of transport are comparatively high. Our costs of production, especially industrial, are very high. It has even been said in this Chamber, not long ago, that even the cows here have a very low unit of production per individual. I suppose that is correct. There are other things I could say about our lack of greatness, if you put it that way. In just one thing are we great, and that is land; that is something in which we are rich.

We are a mere handful of people in a rather precarious position at the moment. It is admitted quite often in debate that our position geographically—and perhaps historically—is not too comfortable; we are too close to the Asias and modern conditions have made the Asias and the Asiatic people far more of a menace to our comfort than they used to be. We are a mere handful of people and we shall have to hold this country against the threat implied by the fact that we have thousands of millions of people not far from the North, and nothing much to stop them from coming here if they ever decide to come; possibly they will. We have a pretty low industrial output per man here and we have a very low output——

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the administration of the Department of Public Lands and Irrigation.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am talking about the necessity of administering our lands in such a way so as to make our future population safer from every point of view. I am basing my argument on the fact that practically our only resources—undeveloped anyway—are our lands. It must be conceded by those who know the conditions that it is generally admitted that our position is rather precarious and we have to increase our production in order to be secure; we have in short, to produce or perish; and that means populate or perish. We have to give practical consideration to the question how we can do this. I think an examination of the situation will convince us that it cannot be done industrially.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! We are dealing with the administration of the Department of Public Lands and Irrigation. That is the only matter that is before the House, and not the development of the country.

Mr. FLETCHER: The administration of our lands—the practical aspects of the department's administration and the populating of the land and the production that comes from it——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This resolution has nothing to do with the populating of the land. It deals with the administration of the department only.

Mr. FLETCHER: Perhaps I can go to the extent of suggesting to the Government that their administration in the matter of land settlement has not been what I should like it to be. Their attitude toward land settlement has not been beyond criticism and I wish to make a few suggestions based on my practical experience of land matters. In relation to getting men on the land I have the feeling that the Government have been rather over-emphasising that it is desirable to introduce not what I am familiar with—dry-farming conditions—but the importance, necessity and desirability of instituting irrigation. As one who has worked under dry-farming conditions and also taken some interest in irrigation and knows something of its practical application I would say as my considered opinion that Queensland's agricultural future is tied up far more intimately and is likely to be developed far more certainly and quickly through the application of dry-farming methods than with irrigation.

Some may make the lamentable comment that Queensland has very little other future than an agricultural future and I draw attention to the fact that in Queensland we

have under cultivation of all kinds at the moment not very much more than 2,000,000 acres and have considerably over 16,000,000 acres of undeveloped land that could be developed under closer-settlement agricultural conditions but not by irrigation. This is something that has exercised my mind for years and I have long examined the policy of the Government in the hope of discovering that they really understood this and had a long-term policy designed to develop these huge undeveloped resources in land that can be used for agriculture. We say that we have to develop and we have to produce and do these things quickly. I think it was the hon. member for Balonne who among other hon. members on the Government benches admitted it. That hon. member said that we have to produce to survive and the only way to do it is to irrigate. I agree with the first part of his statement but disagree with the second because I think our future lies in the development of our dry-farming areas.

Perhaps some hon. members may not know what I mean by dry farming in relation to the land. It is a system of growing things by conserving the moisture in retentive clay-type soils and using it later on to grow crops. It is under that system that we grow most of our grain crops. That is a very important matter for Queensland. The technique has been evolved over the years and it is undoubtedly the one on which we have built our grain production. As I said previously, there are 16 or more million acres of undeveloped land of this type of soil in the area that can be used, where the rainfall is sufficient. Unfortunately some would not be of use because it is too far from suitable transport to get the resultant crops away to the markets. I think the idea of spending £500,000 in the St. George area on irrigation is a good thing and might in some way develop the area down there. My own personal opinion, however, is that that £500,000 would be far better spent in developing our brigalow areas. This would give a greatly increased return in a much shorter time. In the brigalow area we have a tremendous tract of the best type of soil known. All it needs is development and the main development would be both rail and road access. Of course, that is probably where we shall fall down, since our railway development has not kept pace with the extension of our land industries. Our agricultural development has paralleled the railway lines because heavy crops like sorghum, wheat and other grains have to be taken out, and up to now—I do not know what development will take place in road transport some day—the best available transport has been by railway. So the matter of opening that good soil must depend to a great extent on Government policy, on whether access and facilities for getting the crops out will be provided.

I know that the development of the brigalow land will require a good deal of money, but we have been speaking about millions for irrigation. The Government have a duty to examine the whole question of this undeveloped brigalow land, for Government policy is going to determine whether the Land Administration Board will be able to do what it should do. It is probably the most important administration board in Queensland when we consider our state of development, but it will be constrained by what the Government are willing to do for it by way of providing access to and outlet for the things that are produced from and on the land. We have probably 16,000,000 acres of this undeveloped brigalow land and it can and should be developed. It is admitted by hon. members on the Government side almost three and four times a week that we must develop.

Mr. Jesson: Whom do you mean by "we"?

Mr. FLETCHER: Queenslanders. I do not deprecate developing land by irrigation, but first things should come first and developing the dry-farming areas is far and away ahead of irrigation at the moment, when it comes to getting a return for the money expended. With irrigation we think in terms of millions of pounds, and we plan for the future, whereas the necessity is to develop now. We have the land and the men. If we apply one to the other and we have a properly determined Government policy we cannot go wrong. I know there will a difficulties, but if we set out to do this it can be done, because we have all the resources. We have to expand to be saved. I know it is not a simple matter, and I know that Government policy hinges around transport, but as I said before, it can be done.

The advantages of developing our good chocolate clayey soils are manifest. In the first place, you have men with their feet on the soil, and I suggest that you can get no better man anywhere than a person who is working a block of land of his own. These men develop qualities of citizenship, a standard of integrity, and a standard of achievement of proving themselves on the land.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed the hon. member a good deal of latitude. The speech he is making might be all right on the Budget, but we are dealing with the administration of the Department of Public Lands. He cannot make a speech on land matters generally.

Mr. FLETCHER: Very well, Sir. I will finish by urging the Government to take my suggestion seriously and to develop our lands profitably from the point of view of getting a quick return, a big return, and a sure return. The way to do that is to employ the dry-farming method rather than the irrigation method. I think the responsibility is the Government's, and I make my suggestions in the hope that the Government will take them up with assurance from me and from this side of the House that we will do everything possible to help them if they are prepared to work along these lines.

Mr. DUFFICY (Warrego) (8.9 p.m.): I have listened with considerable interest to the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. He took us on a Cook's tour and to my way of thinking did not reach any conclusion.

Production, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, has nothing to do with the question now before this House. That I would suggest, is a matter for the people who are in control of the lands of this State. The question that is under consideration is the administration of the Department of Public Lands, whether it is efficient or whether it is not efficient, whether the officers of that department and the hon. the Minister are carrying out their duties in the best interests of this State, and in the best interests not only of the existing population but of posterity.

A recent amendment of the Lands Act. which has been implemented efficiently by officers of the Department of Public Lands, was the amendment of 1952. It was designed to increase production—which the member who has just resumed his seat spoke about—in the rainfall area of 20 inches or more. It was opposed very bitterly by members on the other side. That piece of legislation was one of the forward steps of this department. What did we find, Mr. Speaker? We found that hon. members opposite, who allegedly represent rural interests in this House, opposed that legislation very bitterly. It is noteworthy, however, that that legislation, and its implementation by the officers of the Department of Public Lands, met with the approval of the electors of this State in no uncertain way. I say that because seats in the belt to which I have referred, which were previously held by members of the Opposition, are now held by members of the Government party. That indicates that that piece of legislation, which was so effectively implemented by the Department of Public Lands, met with the approval of the electors of this State, although it may not have met with the approval of those people who allegedly represent rural constituencies. I may be getting off the track a little, Mr. Speaker, but I represent a rural constituency, and in passing I should like to point out that members on this side of the House represent most of the rural constituencies in this State. If anybody cares to disagree with my statement, I point out that in the last general election 46.8 per cent. of this State was not contested by members of the Opposition.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the resolution under discussion.

Mr. DUFFICY: I am pointing out that members on this side of the House have a greater knowledge of the administration of the Department of Public Lands than hon. members opposite could possibly have. I say that because 46.8 per cent. of the whole of Queensland was not contested by hon. members opposite at the last State election. Therefore, they cannot know very much about the administration of the Department of Public Lands.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DUFFICY: I realise that that may be a little apart from what we are discussing; I mention it merely to point out that as I represent the third-largest electorate in Queensland, I have some knowledge of the activities——

Mr. Nicklin: How many electors do you represent?

Mr. DUFFICY: I represent intelligent men, because I was elected unopposed. That is a demonstration of their intelligence.

As I say, I have some knowledge of the administration of this very important department, because I represent the third-largest electorate in Queensland. The officers of the department who are stationed in Charleville, the land commissioner and the land ranger, are frequently called upon by graziers for practical and technical advice on their everyday problems. At no time have I found those officers unable or unwilling to give the advice that was sought from them. I think every hon. member here, particularly those who represent rural constituencies, will admit that no other Government department—and I am not speaking disparagingly of any other department—gives more courteous or more efficient service than the Department of Public Lands.

I take this opportunity to express my personal appreciation of the Minister for the way in which he has conducted his department and I extend my thanks to each and every officer under his control. From my own personal point of view and from the point of view of the people I have the honour to represent in this Parliament, this is the most important department of Government. I should be lacking in my duty and certainly lacking in appreciation if I did not extend my thanks to the Minister and all his officers for the courtesies they have always extended to me.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (8.16 p.m.): The Department of Public Lands and Irrigation is a very important one for the State. I should like to reply to the hon. member for Warrego, who has just left the Chamber, and to tell him that at no time have the Opposition voted against a proposal for the development of the brigalow country. We may have offered suggestions for the improvement of the Government's proposal, as we have every right to do as members of the Opposition but we have never condemned it. It is untrue for the hon. member to say that we have opposed it bitterly. I have made a check of the attitude of hon. members towards the proposal and my memory is fairly good too, and I have no knowledge of any objection that was raised by hon. members on this side of the House to the Government's proposal.

The subject of land is a very important one because the entire success of the State depends upon its proper development. My friend from Cunningham has referred to the importance of agriculture and stock too and they are related to the land because without land you can have no agriculture and no stock. The department must see that in the

matter of land administration it is not hurried by any section of people in one district in one particular way. For instance, I know that in the past departmental officers have said that a certain area is very suitable for settlement and then there has been a hue and cry from the people in the local town to have it cut up into smaller areas still. That happened in the development of Burrandowan. It was taken up and then the whole thing had to go back into the melting-pot. It meant that much administration had been wasted and the land had not been properly settled. The settlers had to be given additional areas—and I quite agreed with that. After all, there is not much use in having a man on the land if he is to be continually on the doorstep of the Minister or the department seeking help. That is not in the best interests of the State. Therefore I agree that it was wise to give the settlers additional areas. When land is cut up for settlement the department should err on the side of giving a little too much land rather than too little, otherwise you will everlastingly have the settler in trouble. No settlement can be successful unless the settler himself is successful.

I have had some experience in this connection in New South Wales where land was developed somewhat along the lines of land settlement in Queensland. Quite a number of settlers were successfully growing sheep until the New South Wales Government decided that they should go farther out and that their present lands should be used for closer settlement. They were taken up by new settlers and the areas came to be described as marginal lands on which the settlers have not been successful. I appeal to the Minister, before he disturbs a successful settlement, to be very careful that the settlement he envisages is going to be successful. It is no use driving one lot of settlers out and putting in another lot that you will have to mother for the rest of the time they are on the land. That is what happened in New South Wales.

I am sorry that the Department of Public Lands and Irrigation has decided to do away with the freehold title to land. The hon. member for Belyando may smile. He probably knows that I have a lot of leasehold land. That is so, and I am also interested with others in a lot of it.

Mr. Foley: Much of your wealth comes from it.

Mr. SPARKES: I can tell the hon. gentleman that whether it is leasehold or freehold does not make it carry one more bullock or sheep. I speak particularly for the smaller man. Everybody likes to feel, "This is my own; I own it." From time to time people are coming from the South and they make comparisons between the way our land is developed here and the way it is developed in other States in Australia. I think the man with freehold is more inclined to develop his land to a greater extent than the man with leasehold. I am happy with leasehold; less money is involved. If you have 100,000 acres of freehold you have to put up a fairly large amount to buy it and then you have to pay land tax on it. As the Minister knows, in 99 cases out of 100 the big areas are in leasehold areas.

Mr. Foley: You prefer being a lessee of the Crown to being a lessee of a southern landlord.

Mr. SPARKES: The hon. gentleman will keep referring to me, and he seeks to quote me as an example. I speak for the people, not just for myself. Let us not be so selfish as to just consider ourselves. (Government interjections.) Hon. members can think as they like. I have as much freehold land as I want, especially with the land tax that applies to it. When I first came to this State there was an agricultural-farm system in operation under which the settler had 40 years to pay it off. That was an ideal tenure for this State for a small man who wanted a block of land because he had a long period in which to develop it. Let the administration give the people the right to say what they will have, leasehold or freehold.

Mr. Brown: You want other people to take freehold but you will not take it yourself.

Mr. SPARKES: Some people do not want to understand. I give the hon. member credit for understanding, but he is just trying to put something over. I have a fairly large area of freehold myself, but once a person gets 40,000 or 50,000 acres of freehold that is a fair wad, and I do not want any more. But the Government do not say to them, "You must take freehold." They should give the people the right to take whichever they like, and I should like to see the administration of this important department take that into consideration.

Mr. Foley: What is the difference between a piece in perpetuity and a piece of land held in freehold?

Mr. SPARKES: If there is no difference, why not give the man the opportunity to choose? The hon. gentleman, others conversant with the industry, and I know that land to be opened in the western areas is invariably opened for leasehold and is taken up as leasehold. Nobody wants to take it up as freehold. But when it comes to small areas, why not give the people the choice? After all, any administration must be better off if it pleases the people that it places on the land, and surely the man who is placed on the land and is happy and contented must be better off than the discontented settler? Even the Minister will agree with that. All I ask is that he be given that right.

Another matter that the Lands Administration Board does in its wisdom—so it thinks, but to me it is very unwise—is to provide that if a person has an additional area he cannot dispose of that additional area unless he sells both areas together.

Mr. Foley: Why is it given to him? To make it a living area. You will have it back to where you started.

Mr. SPARKES: At one time it was in the Act that the Minister "may" decide, but the "may" has been taken out.

Mr. Jesson: And so it should be.

Mr. SPARKES: I should like it left in the hands of the Minister to decide. After all, everything should be dealt with on its merits. I recall an instance in which two areas, the original and the additional, were left to a man under a will. He is quite happy with the area close to him but the other is about 30 miles away and he is not happy about that at all. He wants to dispose of that land. If the would-be purchaser has a fair area of land no risk is run. No doubt the Minister will stand up and tell us that if my suggestion is adopted there will be men with areas that are too small to make a living from. I suggest that the department, when agreeing to the sale of the additional area, should make sure that the purchaser has a sufficient area. There is then no worry about its being too small an area. The instance I mention is in the Kingaroy shire. A man was left by will the original area and the additional area. The original area is near his own home and he is quite happy about that. He has developed it under the department's administration but he would like to dispose of the other area. The other area happens to be near a man who has developed all his land. This is a sort of green belt. He runs a few cattle on it. If that man was permitted to sell to the person alongside him, who would develop it, that must be in the best interests of the State. It would cause it to be developed rather than go to timber.

Mr. Foley: He got it for nothing. Why should he sell it to somebody else? Why not surrender it and let it be given to somebody else?

Mr. SPARKES: He would have to surrender both.

Mr. Foley: No. He got it for nothing in the first place and you are suggesting that he should sell it and make a profit.

Mr. SPARKES: I am saying that rather than that he should have all this undeveloped land the whole case should be put before the Minister. Perhaps in ninety cases out of one hundred it might be better to make these people retain the land or get out, but there are cases such as the one I have just mentioned. If the Minister cares to come up to my place I shall be only too happy to show him how the land alongside has been developed by another person, whom he will know, and how this particular land is undeveloped. He will agree then that the Minister should retain that right. No matter what law we might be administering, the Minister usually has a discretionary power. I know that if I buy a piece of land tomorrow the Minister will have to give his consent, and although it is only a formal matter, that power is contained in the Act. Why is it suddenly taken out in this instance? It was there for years and provided that the Minister "may, if he so desires . . . ." I repeat that in the interests of not only the State but the people concerned, it is better that the Minister should retain that right.

This is a big State. In it there are vast areas that experienced men know can be handled only by those who are strong enough to develop them. It is not only unwise but cruel to put on that far western country people who have not the means of developing it. I agree that closer settlement must come, but it must be done in areas in which the rainfall will permit of closer settlement. There are areas in this State that can be developed only by the big man or the big company, and it is in the best interests of the State and its development that these properties shall be held by the bigger companies. The large areas to which I have referred are about to go through a prolonged drought. I speak from practical knowledge in this matter, because my company holds a good deal of this land. We are getting letters now from out there saying that the position is becoming parlous. I know that the Minister may say they should provide for drought, but I cannot discuss that point now. The main thing at the moment is that in cutting up these areas we are careful to err very much on the side of generosity.

Mr. Foley: You are speaking now of the five-, eight- and ten-inch rainfall areas.

Mr. SPARKES: Yes. Even in the Blackall-Barcaldine district a fair area of land has to be given to each person. What I am suggesting now might not apply while the price of wool is high, but we cannot expect these high prices to continue. I think they must drop and when they do we shall find that men are inclined to stock heavily in order to catch up with it. The greatest killer of all is the overstocking. I know the Minister will agree that some people will overstock, no matter what we do, but we cannot legislate for those types of people. We can only legislate for the normal person. In the far western parts of Queensland you must not have areas that are too small. I know that in the closer settled areas one can live on a few hundred acres. I know men in my electorate who are growing corn and peanuts on areas as small as that. However, in these western areas, if a man puts on another 300 or 400 ewes to get square, that is where his trouble starts. It is part and parcel of the administration of the Government to prevent overstocking. Hon. members will remember the Act that was put through to prevent it. I think I asked the Minister at the time how he was going to police it.

Mr. Foley: It has had a very good moral effect.

Mr. SPARKES: If you turn up "Hansard" I think you will see that that is what I said. It is like asking a man to sign his name on something. It may mean nothing, but the fact that you ask him to sign his name puts the wind up him. There is no way of policing it.

Mr. Foley: Our commissioners keep an eye on them.

Mr. SPARKES: I have the greatest respect for the land commissioners despite the fact that they put my rent up every time they come along.

When that Act was passed the idea was to prevent overstocking, but I say that if you err by being too stringent about the amount of country you give a man in that area you are in fact doing exactly the same thing. You are forcing the man into the very thing you are trying to legislate against. Overstocking is one of the greatest bugbears and something about which the Department of Public Lands must be very careful. Not only is it bad for the person who brings trouble on himself, but it destroys the asset of the land. If a person continually overstocks he destroys the land itself and therefore the administration should be very careful about forcing him into a position where he will do so.

I rose mainly to correct the statement of the hon. member for Warrego that we bitterly opposed the amendment he mentioned. There was no bitter opposition. I think I was one of the principal speakers in the debate and my object was to make suggestions to improve the development and administration of that land. The suggestions that we put forward were practical. I cannot see for the life of me how it can be said that we bitterly opposed it when we were merely making some suggestions. If I vote against a measure on every possible occasion I might be said to oppose it bitterly, but that was not so on that legislation.

Mr. Foley: There was an ex-member who carried out a big campaign against it.

Mr. SPARKES: I cannot be responsible for the action of any ex-member. I do not know the member to whom the hon. member refers.

Mr. Foley: The hon. member for Roma.

Mr. SPARKES: The hon. member for Roma was in the House when the legislation went through and he did not vote against it. After all, it was a big project and those who have been through the mill should be entitled to make practical suggestions. Only the other day I made a special trip to see experiments the department are carrying out on my daughter-in-law's father's place, at Condamine. Anything like that I am only too happy to have a look at, and I feel sure the Minister appreciates any suggestion that comes from people who have had any experience on the land.

Mr. DOHRING (Roma) (8.40 p.m.): Land administration in Queensland is one of Labour's greatest achievements, and it is something we are all proud of. The officers of the Land Administration Board and the Department of Public Lands have given this State very courteous and efficient service. I have lived in Western Queensland all my life and I am well acquainted with land settlement from Roma west. A satisfied rural population is the best test of the success of land settlement, and I know that the people of this State from Roma west are all quite satisfied with the land administration policy of this Government. We hear of people's troubles, but there are no complaints from the people in that area.

The land administration policy of this Government is playing a big part in another great achievement, that is, the development of the brigalow country. Some time ago the Government made loan money available, and the liberal repayment plan brought the money within reach of all. Money was made available for such reproductive work as ringbarking, watering, fencing, and so forth, and thousands of acres were developed and brought under full production. That was a very great achievement. I have lived and worked as an officer of the Department of Public Lands in the Roma district for many years and I know that the selectors in that area are well satisfied with the land settlement policy of this Government. They have all the amenities of life and they are all doing very well.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (8.42 p.m.): The question in the Government's administration of our lands that concerns me is whether the land is being genuinely held for the purpose of being used in the interests of the State or purely for speculative purposes.

Mr. Sparkes: What do you mean by that?

Mr. BURROWS: I think the best example I have heard of the policy of allowing people to hold land purely for speculative purposes since I have been in this Parliament came from the hon. member for Aubigny, who has advocated a return to the old English feudal system, under which a man was given the right to hold land and to rent it out to sub-landlords, who in turn rented it out to serfs, who did all the work. The serfs had to make sufficient not only to keep themselves, but also to pay the rent to their landlords and to the landlords higher up.

Mr. Sparkes: There are thousands of acres on the Downs that are run in that way now.

Mr. BURROWS: That is not in the best interests of the State. Who is the hon. member for Aubigny that he should have a greater right to 50,000 acres of land in this State than the humblest farm worker in the country? If we believe in Christianity, and I sincerely hope that some hon. members do——

Mr. Sparkes: Break it down. We are not in church now.

Mr. BURROWS: It would do the hon. member a lot of good if he went to church and if he kept the commandments. I will mention the one I have in mind if the hon. member does not keep quiet.

Mr. Sparkes: Have you ever heard of the Biblical injunction, "Love thy neighbour?"

Mr. BURROWS: The hon. member has not heard of the Seventh Commandment either so he had better keep quiet.

The Government are the trustees of the land for the people, but past Governments alienated vast areas. I have a map in my hand showing a piece of freehold land that has extended about half a mile each side of a river and as a consequence the land further out has been isolated from its natural water. Under the old settlement schemes all the best pieces of land were alienated and thus they isolated the second-class land from their natural water. In many cases it made the second-class land more or less useless and today it is simply producing burrs and other pests, whereas if the freeholding system had not been permitted this trouble could have been prevented. In view of the high price of land no farmer can afford to take up land today under the conditional purchase or freeholding system that the hon. member for Aubigny advocates. Take for example a piece of land that is worth up to £20 an acre. Let us assume that an area of 400 acres is available for conditional purchase. A selector would be putting an impossible burden on himself in taking up the land under the conditional purchase system and paying high prices for the implements and stock necessary for his livelihood. He would have no hope of surviving. I have prepared income-tax returns from farmers and I know that some of them are still paying for the land they acquired under the conditional purchase system, which eventually means that they get the freehold title of the land. That was under the agricultural farm system mentioned by the hon. member for Aubigny. I found that land comparable in area and quality adjoining the property and available under perpetual lease could be had at a rental of £14 to £15 a year against £60, £70 and perhaps £80 a year to meet payments under the conditional purchase scheme. I have had some experience in connection with agricultural farms because we had a dairy that was held under the conditional purchase system as an agricultural farm. We had to pay an amount annually for the land. Subsequently the lease of land not far distant from us expired and it was made available on perpetual lease tenure. The amount of rent payable under the perpetual-lease system is no more than a quarter of the amount required under the freehold system.

Mr. Sparkes: In the case of one you go on paying for ever but in the case of the other you pay only for a certain period.

Mr. BURROWS: That might sound all right, but immediately the land becomes freehold it attracts land tax.

Mr. Sparkes: Not a small area like that.

Mr. BURROWS: No.

Mr. Sparkes: You walked into that one.

Mr. BURROWS: You do not have to have a large area today, in view of the fantastic prices that are paid, to attract land tax. Another big consideration is that the rental paid under perpetual leasehold is a deduction for income-tax purposes, whereas the payment made in respect of a conditional purchase is not. You are only placing a brick round the neck of the purchaser, and with the added burden of the high capital cost for implements, stock, etc., it is virtually impossible for him to carry on. I maintain that anybody who has examined the opposition intelligently prefers perpetual leasehold. One of greatest commendations for perpetual leasehold is that the banks—and these institutions are not favourably disposed to the policy of the Labour Government—recognise an equity in perpetual leasehold as being on a par with that of freehold. Every hon. member opposite who has had anything to do with land knows that this is so.

Mr. Plunkett: Why did you give up your farm anyway?

Mr. BURROWS: I gave up my farm, as the hon. member calls it—I never actually owned a farm—because of a personal tragedy, but for which I should still be on it; and if I had the money to buy another farm I could not get there quick enough to buy it.

I listened with interest to the contribution to the debate made by the hon. member for Cunningham. I am sure that if that gentleman is not corrupted by political propaganda from members of his party—a party that unfortunately he has drifted into—he will be an acquisition to this House. I was sorry to hear him quietly damn by faintly praising the system of irrigation in this State. Irrigation is a good investment because this State is unfortunately subject to variations in rainfall. Without irrigation we should always be subject to the hit-and-miss methods that we have practised in the past and that have been the cause of much of the undevelopment of this State. When we have irrigation we have the assurance that we can grow crops. If we have irrigation works scattered throughout the State—and that is the policy of the department, as is evidenced by the Mundubbera weir, the St. George weir, and the Burdekin weir, and other irrigation projects—we shall be able to grow the fodder that is so necessary. If we had been able to grow that fodder during previous droughts we should have saved the lives of thousands of stock. The miniature irrigation project on the Lockyer is an example of how crops grown under irrigation have saved cattle in the 1947 and 1951 droughts, and the results from that small scheme show the part that weirs at Mundubbera and other weirs along the Burnett River and the one at St. George will play in the growth of fodder in the years to come.

The officers of the Department of Public Lands in many instances have erred on the side of being too soft with the lessees. Too much land in this State is held by individuals who will not develop it and work it to the maximum. Like the dog in the manger, they cannot use it but they begrudge the right of anybody else to have some. I know some of the best land in Queensland that because of neglect, the lack of enterprise or because the owner had had too much land and was incapable of working it, has become infested with burr and other vermin.

Mr. Sparkes: Freehold or leasehold?

Mr. BURROWS: Both freehold and leasehold.

I place on record my appreciation of the amendment to the Land Acts made only last year which in future requires land to be used and put to much better use than in the past, and to the transfer of the land. I can give an instance that is applicable to at least a dozen places in my electorate. At a little place just past Rosedale, north of Bundaberg, there is a school but today there are not sufficient children to warrant its being kept open. At one time there were 40 or 50 children attending that school.

Mr. Sparkes interjected.

Mr. BURROWS: The hon. member can be wise and he can be shrewd. He is sitting pretty with his 50,000 acres and he does not give a damn what happens to the other fellow. Members on this side are concerned with the future of Queensland, but the hon. member is selfish and will not look past his nose. That is a most despicable type of person. He is self-satisfied, he is self-sufficient, and he is not concerned about the future. I am taking this matter seriously. The closure of that particular school is associated closely with the land policy that existed many years ago.

Mr. Sparkes: Many years ago people had more children.

Mr. BURROWS: We are not all bluebeards like the hon. member.

I was speaking of the effect a land policy could have on closer settlement. Because of high prices and fairly good seasons, the grazier has enjoyed an era of prosperity. He has been able to buy out the dairyman. In the little township to which I referred I know of at least five dairymen's houses that were sold and removed to the city of Bundaberg while the farms on which those houses stood have become part of the grazier's paddocks. The few dairymen who are left will be forced to sell out eventually because there will be no school in the locality. As a result of this gradual swallowing up by graziers, I can see a reduction in the population of those areas.

Under the amendment passed last year, from now on it will not be possible to transfer land that is selected and for that reason it should make a great contribution to decentralisation in general. There are some hon. members opposite—I am pleased to say this does not apply to the more intelligent members of the Opposition—who are worried only about their own selfish interests. They are out to serve the big men who want to monopolise the land. The hon. member for Cunningham wisely pointed out that we want more population, but what hope have we of getting population if we are not willing to move up and make a little land available for the newcomer? If we are to be like the hon. member for Aubigny, who wants to hold big stretches of land and keep everybody else away—no doubt if he had his way he would go round ready to shoot anybody who was seen even looking over his fence—we shall never increase population. If the Government abandon their present policy and return to the old system advocated by hon. members opposite, that of freeholding land, they would be betraying their trust and would be no longer fit to continue governing in this State.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR (Clayfield) (9.4 p.m.): I should not like to see this debate concluded without saying something about the Government's irrigation programme. I criticised it earlier in the year, that part of it relating to the building of weirs as against major dams in particular, but I should like now to say something in appreciation of the co-operation I have had from the officers of the Minister's department. The senior officers in particular have been very helpful, even though they have known that I might criticise Government policy. Of course, I have never criticised any officer of the department.

Mr. Foley: They have nothing to hide.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I am referring to the co-operation of the administrative officers of the department. At the moment, I am not referring to Government policy. They are two distinct subjects. However, I do want it reported, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the senior officers in particular, and all the officers I have met at the projects I have visited, have been very helpful. They have known that I have gone out to these projects seeking information with a view to improving the water facilities in this State of Queensland.

I have in the past criticised Government policy in relation to construction of weirs as against the construction of major dams. I notice, by the Estimates, however, that a new policy appears to have been adopted this year. The sum of £72,000 was expended last year in the investigation and construction of weir projects. That has been taken out of revenue, but I am happy to see that under another Vote, which is not the subject of discussion at the moment, whereas £79,000 was expended last year, this year provision is made for the expenditure of £190,000. So it would seem that my criticism and my urging the Government to adopt a policy of construction of a great number of weirs has borne fruit. Two and a-half times the amount spent in that form of construction last year is to be expended this year.

The policy I have been advocating is that a greater number of people who are already producing should share in the expenditure of Government money—loan money or any other money—in conserving the water that flows through existing agricultural land that is being developed. A much greater expenditure is necessary than has been expended on such projects as the Mundubbera weir, which I do not look upon as a great success, the Selma weir, the Eureka weir and the Bruce weir, weirs that were built at tremendous expense to cater for so few people. I think the Minister appreciates that I am just as eager to see the development of a major dam in Queensland, and I have never been able to understand why the knowledge that we gathered some 25 to 30 years ago in the Dawson has been allowed to drift aside while

other more spectacular projects have been adopted as a policy of the present Government.

On the Burdekin the Minister is about to open the Gorge weir. I should like to be there with him as I should like to know what he has to say.

Mr. Walsh: The Minister will tell you now if you let him get up.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: If he wants to get up I will allow him a quarter of an hour if he will tell me one or two things. There is one thing I should like the Minister to answer in that quarter of an hour. The development of the Burdekin is proposed on the basis of irrigated pastures. Much of that land is believed by Dr. Summerville's division of the Department of Agriculture and Stock to be suitable for irrigated pastures. At the present time graziers on the banks of the Burdekin River are fattening cattle at the rate of 1 to 25 acres. Irrigated pastures, we know, as developed along the lines we have seen in other States and as we might see them at Gatton and possibly Theodore, will fatten cattle at the rate of two bullocks to one acre, or at least three bullocks to two acres. That would be an admirable achievement if we could be sure that people holding land on the banks of the Burdekin will be satisfied to adopt the policy of irrigated pastures. But I should like the Minister to tell us what is to be the procedure if a grazier says, "I am perfectly satisfied with the way I am fattening my cattle now." The Minister may build his Gorge weir and his major dam on the Burdekin and eventually water will flow down the channels to the small farms, but if a grazier says, "I am not going to the expense of developing my land to grow irrigated pastures so that a greater volume of production will follow," do the Government intend to take over that grazier's land and carry out the scheme, or will they use persuasive methods to get him to adopt their ideas?

I have just been asked, Mr. Speaker, to leave the Minister ten minutes in which to reply, but because of my generous and co-operative nature I will allow him a quarter of an hour.

That is the one point I want to bring out. I promise the Minister that during the coming year I will, if possible, visit not only the Snowy River project to see what has happened down there in the last three years, but also Tinaroo and the Burdekin and one or two of our other areas. I will even go to that lonely little place called Emerald which, in about one thousand years' time at our present rate of expenditure, will have a major dam on the Nogoa. I hope to travel round and I know I shall have the co-operation of the officers of the department. While I will give the Government every possible encouragement to spend all the money they have allocated for the building of more weirs on rivers and creeks passing through existing agricultural land—and the Minister knows I have in mind Barker's Creek at Nanango, and several other creeks—I should like the Minister to give us some indication of what the procedure will be if graziers are satisfied with their present methods of fattening cattle and are not prepared to go in for irrigated pastures after the Government have provided water facilities for them.

The Minister is always interesting to listen to, and as I promised him a quarter of an hour in which to reply I will now resume my seat. I hope he will give some consideration to the point I raised.

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Belyando—Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation) (9.14 p.m.): I desire to thank the hon. member for Clayfield. I refrained from rising in my seat earlier in order to give him an opportunity to say a few words, which I knew would be about irrigation. I know his interest in the matter and he has often offered helpful suggestions.

As to the debate generally, I feel that the principal speakers on the Opposition have indicated that they are gradually coming round to Labour's land policy, possibly with the exception of one or two degrees. Even the member for Aubigny can see quite a lot of good in Labour's policy.

I might mention that 82 per cent. of this great State, with its 670,000 sq. miles, is held under grazing tenure and has been so held for years past. As the various leases fall due it is the duty of the Land Administration Board to suggest some better use of the land to bring about more intensive production by the employment of more people on the land. The board has done a very fine job in the administration of Government policy, which is to subdivide the land into more than one living area where that is possible in order that a greater number of families can go on the land. That has been our policy since 1916 and we have gradually subdivided all the big sheep leaseholds in the State. Any land that could be described as good sheep land has been subdivided in accordance with our policy and with no loss in production. Indeed, production has increased under that policy. The fact that only 8 per cent. of the land of the State is held under permanent agricultural tenure indicates the scope for a further application of Labour's policy of closer settlement. That policy is being applied where it is possible to subdivide the land and increase our production. Today we have only 104,000 acres under irrigation, yet that area is producing over £9,000,000 worth of agricultural products. That should indicate to hon. members that a further extension of our irrigation projects, of which we have a number in the offing, should be encouraged and assisted in every possible way. Hon. members know that the late Ben Chifley, when Prime Minister of Australia, indicated to the late Premier of this State, the Hon. E. M. Hanlon, that he was prepared to go fifty-fifty in the big irrigation project on the Burdekin and at Mareeba.

Mr. Nicklin: Have you got that in writing?

Mr. FOLEY: That was given publicly and it is contained in the records of a

Premiers' Conference, which are available for the hon. member to read. We say that the present Commonwealth authorities should honour the promise made by the then Prime Minister because these irrigation projects would increase the production of the State to a tremendous extent, and not only that but would also help to increase the population in these isolated areas. For instance, the Burdekin project would increase the population of the Burdekin delta by 40,000. How are you going to do that by the dry-farming methods advocated by the hon. member for Cunningham? The irrigation project at Dimbulah and Mareeba, would also increase the population by 7,000 to 8,000. As a result of the scheme at Nogoa, too, instead of having a few thousand people we can increase our population by about 7,000. These projects are worth while. I appeal to hon. members opposite to make some effort to induce the Commonwealth Government to fall in behind the State Government and make money available so that these projects can be brought to fruition. Hon. members opposite have been offering suggestions and I offer what I believe to be a constructive suggestion—that they apply to their colleagues in the Federal sphere to see whether they cannot get them to back these big schemes of which I speak. If that help was forthcoming these schemes would not be something to be achieved in the distant future but would be realised in a short number of years.

Reference has been made to brigalow land. Already applications covering several million acres of land have been made to the department, and I am hopeful that in the near future, after the completion of negotiations, we shall have the best part of 1,000,000 acres available for closer settlement. That will be something worth while. As time goes on, we hope that as the result of experiments carried out by the two departments concerned we shall be able to tell the settlers how to destroy the useless timber known as brigalow in order that greater productivity may be achieved.

During the last three years we have dealt with 48,000,000 acres of expired leasehold in this State, an area four-fifths the size of Victoria, and scattered throughout Queensland where varying climate and rainfall are experienced. Where the rainfall is as low as eight to ten inches the areas are considered as not favourable for closer settlement. What did we do in respect of those areas? Our policy is to renew those leaseholds; and of that 48,000,000 acres, in the last three years we renewed 31,000,000-odd acres of pastoral leasehold on development conditions involving the making of more provision for water, subdivisional fencing, and every possible means whereby the carrying capacity can be increased, as well as making the land safer during drought periods. Areas totalling 11,184,000 acres have been subdivided for closer grazing settlement, and the result will be that new families will be settled in those areas; 5,212,000 acres have been given back to the graziers in cases where it was not posible to subdivide and in order to ensure a living area for each.

We pride ourselves on being the trustees on behalf of the people of this State for 93 per cent. of our lands. That is something that is not enjoyed by any other State or country in the world. The Government of the day and Labour Governments over a number of years have acted as trustees in this way and they have been faithful to that trust, and not one acre of land has been alienated by them from the State.

That is the policy that every member of this House should subscribe to. In the past Governments have been wrecked on the question of what should be done with the land, whether it should be held by the people, and leased to those who would gainfully use it and allow the dividends by way of rent to come back and be used by the Government on behalf of the people in the creation of amenities and helping to improve standards in other directions. That has been our policy and when all is said and done, summing up the whole matter, is there much difference between a lease in perpetuity that we grant by means of the perpetual-lease system and perpetual ownership of a piece of land? The two pieces of land will produce the same. If it is an area for which £50 an acre had to be paid and it requires 300 acres to make a living, I can assure you that the small man for whom the hon. member for Aubigny was pleading has either to pay out a considerable sum of money or high interest rates to some other landlord who owns that land. We do not agree with that. We give him a goodwill amounting to thousands of pounds when we allot him a perpetual lease or even a grazing lease. For instance take the Tinnenburra leases near Cunnamulla. I quote them only by way of illustration. The goodwill value of each of these leases was a free gift of just on £34,000 to those persons who were lucky enough to have their names drawn from the ballot box. The same applies to Noondoo—£20,000-odd to everyone who was successful in the ballot there. They are assured of priority in perpetuity. That is the system we follow. If after 28 years it is not suitable for subdivision we allow them priority for a lease. If it is, we subdivide it into what is a living area in the locality.

As to rental I do not think any country in the world can be quoted in which conditions are so favourable. The hon. member for Aubigny spoke of high rentals. The mere fact that we charge through our rental system an average of 1s. 2d. a year a sheep for the sheep lands of the State and with wool at 7s. a pound that means that 2¾ ozs. of wool of every sheep is our share from the leases. As to the cattle country, the hon. member for Aubigny, who has big leaseholds, will admit that we do not get a pound of steak from each bullock he produces. The average rental value of the cattle lands in the State works out at 3s. 6d. a head. Taking these factors into consideration I think our policy is sound and the mere fact that 46 per cent. of the country areas of Queensland is represented by members on the Government

side and that they were unopposed last election is a sure indication that our policy is accepted by the people of Queensland.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 3 November, I shall now proceed to put the resolution under discussion and all other resolutions not already agreed to by the House.

Resolution 9—Department of Public Lands and Irrigation—agreed to.

Resolutions 10 to 19, both inclusive, agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Clark, Fitzroy, in the chair.)

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (9.30 p.m.): I move—

"(*a*) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1953-1954, a further sum not exceeding £31,080,585 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(*b*) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1953-1954, a further sum not exceeding £24,599,987 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(*c*) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1953-1954, a further sum not exceeding £10,850,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(*d*) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1952-1953, a supplementary sum not exceeding £2,145,047 8s. 1d. be granted out of the Conslidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(*e*) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1952-1953, a supplementary sum not exceeding £1,608,736 1s. 8d. be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(*f*) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1952-1953, a supplementary sum not exceeding £2,068,431 13s. 5d. be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(*g*) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1954-1955, a sum not exceeding £12,000,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(*h*) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1954-1955, a sum not exceeding £8,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(*i*) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1954-1955, a sum not exceeding £3,500,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account."

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported, received and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2.

FIRST READING.

A Bill, founded on the resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means, was introduced and read a first time.

SECOND READING.

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (9.35 p.m.): This House gives a tremendous amount of its time to the financial affairs of the State. We have just completed 16 days of detailed consideration to the Estimates, or rather I should say part of the Estimates, of this State. I think hon. members will admit that those 16 days that have been allocated for the consideration of the Estimates of this State are a pretty generous amount of time, but on looking back over the last 16 days we have to ask ourselves: do we make good use of the time that is allocated for the examination of the Estimates of expenditure of this State? Looking back over the last few years, we may well ask ourselves have we made the best use of the time during those years? I should say that we have not. In fact, I should say that the discussion of the Estimates this time has become almost farcical. We discussed in detail, only four votes out of 20, which is approximately one-fifth of the votes to which we should have given detailed consideration. In a brief few minutes we dealt with almost £150,000,000 of money without any debate or without any examination of the administration of the departments that have the responsibility for expending those moneys.

In fact, Sir, some of the departments have not been before the House for very many years, and I think it is time we gave very serious consideration to some revision of the Standing Orders so as to ensure that each year we do examine the majority of the departments of this State, and that the members of this House shall have the opportunity of debating in detail the various departments that are responsible for the expenditure of a considerable amount of money.

For nine whole days we debated the Estimates of one department, and for the great majority of those nine days the time was taken up by the Minister himself.

Mr. Walsh: That is not correct. How many speakers were from your side?

Mr. NICKLIN: "That is not correct," the Hon. Treasurer interjects. Why, Sir, the Attorney-General got up in this House and proudly announced on one day that 16 speeches had been made during the course of the debate, of which he had been responsible for 13. If we paraded all the Ministers round the ring and awarded a prize for the most long-winded Minister the Attorney-General would win hands down.

Mr. Walsh: That shows the lack of interest by your side.

Mr. NICKLIN: The Opposition always get blamed for these things, Sir. If we talk too much we get blamed for preventing the business of the House from being done. If we are prevented from talking by the Minister exercising his privilege and making a half-hour or a three-quarters of an hour speech on every ten minutes' speech made by this side of the House, we are accused of lack of interest.

Mr. Keyatta: It is laid down in the Standing Orders.

Mr. NICKLIN: Of course it is laid down in the Standing Orders. That is what I am saying, that it is time the Standing Orders of this House were reviewed and some procedure written into those Standing Orders that will ensure that we give the maximum consideration to the various departments of the State, and that members of this side of the House shall have an opportunity of criticising if necessary, praising if necessary, but certainly examining the administration of the varous departments of the State.

When we bring senior officers of the various departments down to this House to hear the debates and the criticisms of the various departments, is it not a benefit to those departments and to the Ministers concerned? All Ministers should endeavour to have their own departments discussed during the course of the Estimates and have their senior officers brought here. That would undoubtedly lead to more efficient administration, and would keep the administrative officers of the various departments on their toes at all times. And so I hope that the farcial spectacle that we have witnessed here for the last nine days, of the Minister in charge of a particular department occupying virtually the whole of the time allotted to a discussion on his department, will end and that this will be the last time we shall see such a spectacle in this House.

And now, Sir, I want to examine briefly the Appropriation Bill that we have before us. It deals with very large sums of money and provides the wherewithal for Her Majesty's Government to carry on the affairs of this State, not only till the end of this financial year but for three or four months of the next financial year, until we have an opportunity in the following session of Parliament to make the necessary appropriation.

I want to deal with the three main aspects of State finances that have emerged from the discussions during the present session, the discussions on the Appropriation Bills, the discussions during the Budget debate, and the discussions that have taken place during the 16 days that have been occupied in considering the Estimates. The first of the three main aspects with which I want to deal is the question that crops up in every debate that we have dealing with financial matters, that is, whether or not the Queensland Government have been treated in a niggardly fashion by the Menzies-Fadden Government, as has been alleged continually during all the debates to which I have referred. Even the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation, in winding up the debate on the resolutions, said, "We should have built the Burdekin dam, we should have built the Tinaroo dam, and we should have built all the other dams if only the Commonwealth Government had given us enough money." As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, for years and years this Government did not spend all the loan money that the Federal Government allocated to them.

Mr. Walsh: Cite the years.

Mr. NICKLIN: I have cited them dozens of times. I refer the Treasurer to my speeches in "Hansard."

The second aspect to which I want to refer is the payment by the Commonwealth Government to State Governments and by State Governments to local governments. Let us see how such a system works out in practice.

The third aspect that I want to examine is whether Queensland, after 35 years of Labour rule, has become a State with a genuine claim for a special disability grant from the Commonwealth Government, similar to the grants that are made to Western Australia, South Australia, and Tasmania.

First of all, let us examine the question of Commonwealth payments to Queensland. One thing that is very certain is the effect upon the elections of a non-Labour Federal Government imposing taxes to obtain revenue for a State Labour Government to spend. What a wonderful position this Government are in! They have no responsibility for collecting the money they spend. Who would not be a Government under those conditions? The responsibility of government is pushed to one side, because they have not to collect the moneys they spend. Yet we find that the Government who do the collecting for this Government—and as a result collect all the odium that is associated with the collecting of taxes—get only abuse and no appreciation from hon. members opposite. I venture to suggest that if the Federal Government increased the allocation to this State next year by £50,000,000 or £60,000,000, they would still be abused by hon. members opposite. They would not get any appreciation for the increase in the amount. Hon. members opposite play politics all the time and endeavour

to confuse the real issue. The Menzies-Fadden Government not only imposed taxation to provide a generous amount of revenue for the States under the income-tax reimbursement formula but they also imposed additional tax, amounting to £280,000,000 in 1952-1953, for the purpose of helping the States' loan programmes. The Commonwealth Government risked their political future and they lost a tremendous amount of political popularity in an endeavour to make contributions to help the loan works of the States. They collected additional taxation amounting to £280,000,000 to finance State loan programmes. What thanks did they get from hon. members opposite for doing that? In addition they left the whole income from public borrowing to the States and financed their own works programmes from taxes.

We just had the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation echoing what hon. members opposite have been saying ever since this House opened in August last. He said that if the Federal Government had only given the State Government certain money the State Government would have been able to do this, do that, and do the other thing. The State Government's record of performance in connection with these various projects that the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation so glibly talked about has been nothing to write home about and nothing to throw up their hats and cheer about.

Let us see whether the State Government have had niggardly treatment from the Federal Government. I take two lines of evidence in support of my case. For instance, I take first the number of employees in the State service paid from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. If the Government had not got substantial consolidated revenue moneys they could not have employed a considerable number of employees. Apparently the Government have not been handicapped through lack of money in the Consolidated Revenue Fund because when we look at the movement of employees paid over the years from that fund we find that at 30 June, 1948, there were 36,257 and that at 30 June, this year the number had grown to 43,796. These people are not paid with fresh air, they are paid in hard cash, and where does the hard cash come from that goes into the Consolidated Revenue Fund? It came from the much-maligned Federal Government in the main, and the increased number of employees is not an indication that the Government have been greatly disadvantaged as a result of the alleged shortage of money from the Commonwealth Government.

Now let me turn to railway accounts. In 1946-1947 overtime payments in the Railway Department amounted to £428,812 and the railway deficit to £845,895. The overtime payments for the last financial year amounted to £1,780,400 and the deficit reached the all-time record of £4,660,555. Where was the money found? It was found from consolidated revenue. And who was the greatest contributor to consolidated revenue? It came from the money paid to the State by the Federal Government.

Mr. Gair: Contributed by the taxpayers of Queensland.

Mr. NICKLIN: Some of it, and some of it from the taxpayers in the other States.

Mr. Gair: We got only our share.

Mr. NICKLIN: Do not forget, too, that Queensland was placed at a considerable advantage under the uniform-tax agreement. The Treasurer knows that.

Mr. Gair: Why?

Mr. NICKLIN: Because we had the unemployment relief tax, which was classed as income tax. The Premier has been told by the Premiers of the other States that they are contributing to our revenue.

Mr. Gair: Three other States are mendicant States.

Mr. NICKLIN: Victoria is not a mendicant State. The point I make is that one Government are providing money for another Government to spend; and that is something that is not to the advantage of the Government who are providing the money and it is to the detriment of the Government who are spending it without the responsibility of collecting it.

Mr. Walsh: Do not we do it with the local authorities?

Mr. NICKLIN: I will deal with the local authorities in due course. This position was ably criticised in the winter forum of the Australian Institute of Political Science, by a visitor from the United States of America who was dealing specifically with uniform taxation. What he said can be applied with equal force to the money supplied by the Commonwealth toward State loan programmes. This is what he said—

> "What is wrong with uniform taxation? Uniform taxation provides the most handy, the most unique and valuable smokescreen for incompetent State Governments to hide behind."

There is no doubt about that when we consider the attitude of hon. members opposite.

This gentleman went on to say—

> "A system whereby the Government of the people is not brought before the bar of public opinion and judged for its deeds and misdeeds must have something wrong with it. The State Governments which, under the Australian Constitution, for better or worse, have a great many of the fundamental Government powers of Australia must be brought before the bar of public opinion. The question is not merely one of principle. I say judge for yourselves when you see your politicians making speeches or issuing statements after council meetings. See whether they are assuming responsibility or shirking it."

They are wise words from a visitor who was having a dispassionate look at this country and who had no interest in our country. His words are applicable to the point that I make.

The actual figures for the generous treatment of Queensland by the Menzies-Fadden Government have smashed the Government's

case to atoms. If anything further was needed it has been supplied by a prominent Federal member of their own party, Senator McKenna, who was the Senate leader under the Chifley Government. When speaking at the winter forum of the Australian Institute of Political Science in Sydney in July, 1953, he said—

> "I next express the thought that there is far less acrimony and disagreement between the States and the Commonwealth in the matter of income-tax reimbursement and its allocation than is generally thought. After a preliminary skirmish on the principles and alleged principles involved, inspired largely by offended dignity, most Premiers go away reasonably well satisfied and better satisfied than they will publicly admit with their share of income-tax reimbursement."

How true that is! Undoubtedly they are very much better satisfied than they publicly admit. The Premier and the Treasurer come back to this State from Loan Council meetings with the greatest revenue this State ever expected and more than they were entitled to after the strict formula had been applied, and all they did was to abuse the Federal Government, right, left and centre, and allege that niggardly treatment had been handicapping this State.

Senator McKenna went on to say—

> "It is a tribute to the bargaining power of the States and to the Commonwealth's recognition of the growing financial problems of the States that in the past four years the grants determined by the formula have been greatly exceeded—
>
> In 1949-1950 by £8m.
> 1950-1951 by £20m.
> 1951-1952 by £33½m.
> 1952-1953 by £27¼m."

Mr. Walsh: What about the relation to increased costs?

Mr. NICKLIN: That is very generous treatment indeed. Did they not exceed the formula to meet the increase in costs the States had to bear? Of course they did. It is a matter of opinion whether the formula was exceeded by what was enough. According to the State Government, particularly hon. members opposite, it would be never enough. As I said previously, it would not matter had it been increased by another £27,500,000; they would still cry they had not enough.

Senator McKenna proceeded to say—

> "This in my view shows that the Commonwealth has not been niggardly with the States in this matter but that it has, under Governments of different political complexions shown a degree of generosity."

Senator McKenna is a leading member of the Labour Party but reading that statement one would think it was a remark I had made in criticising the actions of the Labour Government. It is not my comment nor that of any member on this side but a comment of a leading member of the party of hon. members opposite.

The Senator continued—

> "It is asking too much to expect that any State Government will ever express satisfaction with the amount of its income-tax reimbursement grant."

How true are those words and how much are they emphasised by what the Treasurer has said from time to time during these debates and that has been repeated parrot-like by hon. members opposite.

The statement continues—

> "Nor can State Governments be expected to discard the easy answer to pressure groups, worthy and unworthy alike, that Commonwealth parsimony prevents their demands for State financial assistance being met. . . . State Governments are easy winners in the propaganda war with the Commonwealth."

There is no doubt there; they spend the money without any responsibility of collecting it.

I now come to the second point, payments by the Commonwealth to States and local authorities. The Government have built up a case that the Commonwealth Government have been mean to them and that they have been very generous to local authorities. The Treasurer had very much to say during the last week or so about the generosity of the State Government to local authorities.

Mr. Walsh: Surely you are not disputing that?

Mr. NICKLIN: The Government have been reasonably generous to local authorities but not nearly as generous as the Treasurer endeavoured to make out. Do not let us forget that the money provided for local authorities did not come out of the Treasurer's hip-pocket, as one would imagine it did on hearing him talk. Actually the local people pay the whole of the bill and whether it is raised by the local government, the State Government, or the Commonwealth Government makes no difference whatever, except where any section of the people do not get a proper share of the raisings whether taxes or loans. It does not matter who raises the money, it comes actually from the citizens of Queensland and Australia.

These citizens who make the contribution to the funds spent by the State and the local authorities have something to complain about if they do not get a fair share of the raisings by the Government to which they make the contribution.

There are three forms of government, but only one people and the spurious presentation of the case that one Government have been mean and the other generous is plain nonsense. Actually it would be better if all money used for local purposes was raised locally, for then there would not be any argument about it, and possibly it might be cheaper in the long run. One great advantage one would get from that would be that there would be a greater realisation of the fact that there is no such thing as a Government gift, and there would certainly be a great deal more control over expenditure than there has been in the past.

Take local authority subsidies as an example. They have been bandied about this Chamber from time to time as an example of the generosity of the Government to local authorities and the people of local-authority areas. Do not let us forget that the people in those areas pay their share of taxation or the interest and redemption on loans involved in the payment of the subsidies. The Government are merely the go-between and if each section gets its proper share, no harm has been done, except through the idea the Government have fostered that people have got something for nothing. To hear the Treasurer talking here from time to time, one would think local authorities were getting something for nothing when they get these subsidies.

Let us look at this question from the angle that everybody contributes towards the moneys that are expended on these two forms of government. Let us see whether, although we contribute equally, we get an equal share of the expenditure of those moneys, and let us apply the examination to local authority subsidies in particular. The Treasurer has endeavoured, by various sets of figures, to disprove the fact that there is a disproportionate allocation of subsidies between the cities, towns and shires of the State. If we look at the local-authority subsidies for the last 21 years up to 30 June of this year, and compare the amount allocated with the population of the area concerned, we can see that we have not had an equal distribution of those subsidies to the various forms of local government in this State.

Take Brisbane first. The percentage of mean population in Brisbane is 36.5, which is far too much. It would be far better if some of that population was in other parts of Queensland. But the position is that the mean population of Brisbane is 36.5 per cent. of the total population of the State and the subsidies received by Brisbane over those 20 years have amounted to £11,331,426, or 45.3 per cent. of the total subsidies allocated to local authorities.

Mr. Walsh: You are misrepresenting the position, and you know you are.

Mr. NICKLIN: I am not misrepresenting the position. The amount I have quoted includes £750,000 written off the Story Bridge and £1,808,978 written off the Brisbane sewerage scheme. After all, they are subsidies to the Brisbane area and they have to be paid by the whole of the people of the State. We have only to cast our minds back to the time when the Story Bridge was being built to remember the statements made in this Chamber that Brisbane would pay the whole amount for the Story Bridge.

Mr. Gair: You would not have built the Story Bridge. You would not have had the vision.

Mr. NICKLIN: I would not have built it under those conditions. The Story Bridge is for the benefit of Brisbane but the people of the rest of the State have been saddled with the responsibility. If we are going to adopt that policy, let Brisbane accept the responsibility for the sewerage scheme of Mackay.

Mr. Gair: Do we not subsidise that?

Mr. NICKLIN: Who subsidises it?

Mr. Gair: The Government.

Mr. NICKLIN: I am not talking about the Government. I am showing how unfair the Government subsidies are. Of the subsidies that have been paid in the last 25 years 45.3 per cent. have gone to the City of Brisbane. The other cities, with a mean population of 18.1 per cent., have received £7,972,480 or 32 per cent. of the total subsidies. Then we come to the towns and shires, which have a mean population of 45.4 per cent., and we find that they have received £5,669,042, which is 22.7 per cent. of the subsidies paid. Is that a fair allocation?

Just a little while ago we had one of the hon. members opposite getting up and contending that he, with two or three other hon. members, represented 47 per cent. of the total area of the State. Is he satisfied with that allocation to his area? We never hear him getting up and saying anything about it. In view of that, instead of representing 47 per cent. of the State, I say that they are misrepresenting it because they do not stand up for a fair allocation of the subsidies. The 47 per cent. that is represented by the hon. member for Warrego and his colleagues contributes a very substantial proportion to the loan funds and consolidated revenue of this State from which these subsidies are paid.

After all, a big proportion of these subsidies are paid out of Loan Fund and not out of consolidated revenue. Obviously the people of the towns and shires have paid out under the subsidy scheme about £2 for every £1 they have received, and they are expected to be thankful. That is the attitude of hon. members opposite towards them, just because they happen to live a few miles away from Brisbane.

Now let me move on to the third question I want to examine, the question of a special disability grant for Queensland. The Treasurer, on the Appropriation Bill No. 1, on 6 August of this year, said—

> "We have reached a stage in our development when the States that were supposed to suffer a disability because of Federation are now far ahead of Queensland in industrial development. Last year, or perhaps it was the year before, I quoted from the Budget Speech of Mr. Playford, the Premier of South Australia, in which he said that he expected that as from then they would no longer require any assistance from the Commonwealth Government."

While it is understandable that because of sound government, a State may become ineligible for a disability grant, it is impossible to believe that unsound government can make a State eligible.

The figures of the Railway Department provide some very interesting reading. In 1947-1948 there were two increases in fares

and freights. There was a 10 per cent. increase and a 12¾ per cent. increase, giving a total increase of 22¾ per cent. increase for the year. The railways finished up with a deficit of £859,000 for the year. In 1948-1949 there was no increase in fares but the deficit of the department was £339,534. In 1949-1950 there was again no increase and the deficit amounted to £1,539,306. In 1950-1951 there were three increases in railway fares and freights, the first of 8¾ per cent., the second of from 5 to 10 per cent. and the third, on freights only, of from 10 to 30 per cent. yet the Railway Department finished that year with a deficit of £1,108,000. In 1951-1952 there was a further increase on freights only, of from 5 to 10 per cent., but the Railway Department had a deficit of £3,508,000 in that year, and in 1952-1953 it had a deficit of £4,660,000.

Those results would take a lot of explaining to a Commonwealth Grants Commission. As from 1 August of this year fares were increased by from 5 to 10 per cent. and freights by from 5 to 25 per cent. That was the seventh substantial increase in seven years. If I had more time I would show that although fares have increased by between 40 and 60 per cent. in the country districts, Brisbane suburban fares are lower today than they were in 1927.

Mr. Gair interjected.

Mr. NICKLIN: Does the Premier challenge my statement?

Mr. Gair: Yes, I do.

Mr. NICKLIN: If that is so, I will have a go.

Mr. Gair: You say they are lower than they were in 1927?

Mr. NICKLIN: I do not make statements here unless I can support them. If the Premier would like to put a little money on this, now is his chance.

Let me quote from the railway timetable of 29 May, 1927. I will take Auchenflower for a start. According to this timetable the first-class single fare was 6d., and the second-class single fare was 5d. According to the present suburban timetable, the corresponding fares are 5d. and 4d. In 1927 the return first-class fare was 9d. and the return second-class fare was 6d., and the fares today are respectively 10d. and 7d. If you take Bowen Hills, Mayne Junction, Virginia and Sandgate, you will find that only in the instances of Sandgate and Zillmere are the fares higher today than in 1927. That position requires some examination.

Mr. Walsh: You are quoting the return fares for 1927.

Mr. NICKLIN: I have quoted both the single and the return fares.

Mr. Walsh: You have your figures mixed.

Mr. NICKLIN: It is the old, old story from the Treasurer. He says I have my figures mixed. I refer him to the railway timetables. I suppose the figures in them are correct. The Treasurer was the Minister in charge of the Railway Department for some time, and if the railway timetables are not correct, he must accept some responsibility.

What a farcicial position it is that railway fares in the suburban area are cheaper now than they were in 1927, particularly when the railways are losing very heavily and are faced with increasing costs, which hon. members opposite have been crying to high heaven about from time to time! When the Government want extra money where do they look for it? When they try to reduce railway deficits, where do they look for extra revenue? They do not take it from their cobbers in the city; they go into the country areas and take it out of the hides of the people there. Where are all the hon. members opposite who represent country districts? What do they say about these things? They do not care two hoots what happens to the people they represent, yet they claim to represent people in the country areas!

Since 1915, Queensland has had 35 years of Labour Government and South Australia only eight years. Let us contrast the Budgets of this allegedly wonderful Labour Government here with the Tory Government in South Australia. In his Budget speech in 1953-1954, at page 16, we find the following—

> "The Premier informed the Commonwealth that he would not hesitate to apply under the Constitution for a Commonwealth grant and, if necessary, become one of the so-called mendicant States."

Contrast that statement with the South Australia Budget speech, 1953-1954, page 7—

> "I would again assure members of this House and the public generally that under any reasonable arrangement for the return of income tax powers to this State, the State should be able to meet its necessities with rates very much below pre-war rates, and that South Australia would be one of the lower-taxed States and not one of the higher, as it was pre-war."

Contrast that statement with the present Queensland Treasurer's Budget statement that Queensland could not reasonably tax to the extent necessary to meet its full budgetary requirements if income-taxing powers were returned. The reason is that the capacity of the Queensland Government to spend, and to waste, is unlimited.

Finally let me give hon. members opposite a Christmas fact, and I give it to those who are always claiming progress and development in Queensland under Labour Governments. I look at one gauge of prosperity, one that has been mentioned in this House on many occasions. I refer to the savings-bank deposits as at 30 September, 1953. In South Australia they amounted to £116,292,000 or £153 12s. a head, and in Queensland £112,829,000 or £89 4s. a head. May I say to the people of this State that if they want to increase their savings-bank deposits and get closer to progress and prosperity in this State they should elect a Tory Government, as the people of South Australia have done?

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Premier) (10. 17 p.m.): It was not my intention to take part in the debate to any extent, because it is obvious that I am prevented from doing so by a very severe cold. We have listened to a speech by the Leader of the Opposition that very much resembled many other speeches he made during the last election campaign, which the people of Queensland very decisively refused to believe. All that the hon. gentleman said tonight he said on the hustings throughout the State, from Mossman in the North to Coolangatta in the South, when he went throughout the length and breadth of the State denouncing Queensland and all that had been achieved here over the years. He deplored whatever progress we had made. All his speeches were on political lines, and as a result the people very decisively re-elected the Government who had done so much for Queensland's development. One would have thought, after listening to his speech tonight, that this was a State of stagnation, that it had been ruled for very many years by an inept and incompetent Government who had brought about ruination in private enterprise and destroyed anyone who had capital to invest. One would have thought that no-one had succeeded in his business undertakings and that there was no measure of prosperity here.

Mr. Jesson: He has knocked Queensland.

Mr. GAIR: As has been remarked, he has knocked Queensland in his speech, and the evidence is that he has consistently knocked her in every speech he has made, for political rather than good reasons.

The hon. gentleman appears to be more than satisfied with the treatment meted out to this Government by the Commonwealth Government. If that is so, why has he, in company with other members of the Opposition, exhorted the Government to do more than they are doing at the present time? If we are going to give effect to their suggestions, particularly those that might contain some merit, they must realise that that can only be done by expenditure, whether from revenue or loan funds. Why do they not be consistent and say, "Because of the Commonwealth's inability to supply you with additional loan money and because we believe you are already getting more than your share from taxation reimbursements you should slow up the expenditure?" That is what they should say if they were consistent, instead of appealing to the Government to expend money every time they get on their feet.

However, I did not rise to answer the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition on the financial side. I can with confidence leave that to my colleague the Treasurer. The hon. gentleman spoke about the representations I have made—as my predecessors have made—at Premiers' Conferences in the past, on tax reimbursement, and he would have you believe that we went down there to extract just as much as we could from the Commonwealth as irresponsibles, disregarding the question of what was a reasonable share for Queensland. He complained that the formula was in Queensland's favour. If it was, he and other Queenslanders should have been very pleased with the fact. I have admitted at Premiers' Conferences—I have stated bluntly and frankly—that if the formula reacts unfairly and unjustly against any other State, let us adjust it. The fact remains that there is only one State to which it might react unfavourably, and that is Victoria. The Leader of the Opposition sought to create the impression that it reacted against every State except Queensland; but that is not true. This State is seven times the size of Victoria and because of its size and dispersed and limited population, and because of its great distances, we are at a distinct disadvantage in comparison with a small pocket-handkerchief State such as Victoria. The differences between the two States are odious. The Leader of the Opposition said that 36 per cent. of our population was in Brisbane. That may be so and I agree with him that I should like to see a lesser percentage of our population in Brisbane. The fact remains that about 56 per cent. of the population of Victoria is in Melbourne and approximately 67 per cent. of the population of South Australia is in Aedlaide. So when they decry our 36 or 37 per cent., let them be fair and make a fair comparison with the other States. Let us have regard to population and size. We have approximately 1,250,000 people in Queensland but there are more people in Melbourne; yet the hon. gentleman will talk about the advantage we have in Queensland, where we have a limited dispersed population with great distances to contend with. If we have an advantage under the formula we got that advantage under the Commonwealth uniform-tax formula. It is one of the few advantages this State has in comparison with the bigger States, particularly New South Wales and Victoria.

I said at the Premiers' Conference, and I say here very definitely, that if any formula reacts unjustly against one State it should be adjusted, but that is no argument why the Leader of the Opposition should deplore the fact that we have an advantage. He should welcome it and rejoice in the fact that this State, which over the years has been discriminated against by Federal Governments, irrespective of party, has had an advantage.

The hon. member with great gusto quoted Senator McKenna. I am not concerned about what Senator McKenna says. He has never been Premier of Queensland and is not likely to be. He is like many other people who go to Canberra who have not the responsibility of running a State and meeting the expenses of hospitals and schools and providing for the increased population. It is all right for the Commonwealth Government to bring in migrants, subsidise their passage, and leave the rest to the States. Senator McKenna does not speak for me on this question; and as far as this State is concerned, it is because of my responsibility as Premier of this State and the person charged with leading the Government, I am not surprised that any Federal Minister, irrespective of party politics, should adopt

that attitude. They can sit at Canberra in complacency and leave the major share of responsibility to the State Governments. I have always endeavoured to be reasonable and I think that our loan programmes over the years have shown that.

The Leader of the Opposition takes us to task and says we wanted to spend money on this and that, but it is strange that on each occasion on which I have attended the Loan Council Mr. Price, the Commonwealth Co-Ordinator-General of Public Works, has stated that the Queensland programme of works was the most realistic of any submitted by any State of the Commonwealth, that it was a truer record of what has been done and what was intended to be done. Mr. Price has eulogised the Queensland submission on more than one occasion. Whose opinion is to be accepted, that of Mr. Price who is charged with the responsibility of examining the works programmes of all the States of the Commonwealth or that of the Leader of the Opposition? We have confined our works programmes to things that matter and these come under the headings, as I said before, of water, power and transport. They are the three essentials for the development of any country. Unless we provide water and electric power and improve transport, how are we to develop Queensland, particularly a State of the dimensions of 670,000-odd sq. miles? We must be realistic about these things. It is idle to blame the State Government merely for political gain.

The Leader of the Opposition has charged me and the Government with having hammered the Federal Government merely for political purposes. Let the hon. gentleman be consistent and say, "Whilst I charge you with that sin I will not engage in it myself." But the hon. gentleman immediately goes off at a tangent and charges the State Government with something for which they have been responsible and excuses himself on the same score.

Mr. Nicklin: What did I charge you with that you have not been responsible for?

Mr. GAIR: The only thing the hon. gentleman has charged me with to which I plead guilty, as I will always do, is never having missed an opportunity at either a Premiers' Conference or Loan Council meeting of getting as much as I could for the people of Queensland. The day I cease doing that I shall not be fit to occupy the position I hold.

Because of my cold, I do not propose to deal with all the matters raised by the Leader of the Opposition. I leave that to the Treasurer. But the Leader of the Opposition opened his speech with the same old song about the Opposition's inability to discuss all the departmental Estimates. That has never been achieved in the 21 years of my parliamentary experience.

Mr. Nicklin: The first year you were here.

Mr. GAIR: A perusal of the records discloses that it was never achieved prior to my coming here.

Mr. Nicklin: Yes, it was.

Mr. GAIR: Since I have been in charge of this House I have endeavoured to give the Opposition from year to year the departments they did not discuss in the previous year. After all, the responsibility does not lie entirely at our door. The Opposition are equally responsible for the time taken in discussing a particular vote. No other Parliament in Australia devotes 16 days to a discussion of the Estimates. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the millions of pounds that were passed by Parliament without discussion. Let him think of the huge sums passed through the Parliament at Canberra without any discussion. I repeat that no other Parliament in Australia allots 16 days to a discussion of the Estimates. It is as much the responsibility of the Opposition as it is of the Government to discuss as many departments as possible. Let us see what has been done in the last few years. In 1950-1951 we discussed the Estimates for—

Executive and Legislative.
Premier's Department.
Railways.
Transport.
Department of Public Works.
Department of Public Lands and Irrigation.

In 1951-1952 I deliberately refrained from putting any of those departments before the Opposition because they had been discussed in the previous year. Instead, I gave them the Department of Public Instruction because there had been a cry for that, and they devoted the bulk of the time allotted for discusison on the Estimates to discussing the Department of Public Instruction. They took up the rest of the time in discussing the Department of Health and Home Affairs. This means that in 1951-1952 they discussed only two departments.

Last year they discussed—

Executive and Legislative.
Premier and Chief Secretary.
Health and Home Affairs.
Railways (in part).

This year we dealt with Executive and Legislative and the Premier's Department. This is the normal thing and does not take long; it took about a day and part of a day. Then we dealt with the Department of Agriculture and Stock, and I draw attention to the fact that there has been no discussion of the Attorney-General's Department for several years. I gave the House the Attorney-General's Department because we have not had it for so long and I thought hon. members opposite would welcome an opportunity to discuss it. Evidently they did, because the discussion on the Department of Agriculture and Stock took only 4½ days and the rest of the time was devoted to considering and discussing the Estimates of the Attorney-General's Department.

Mr. Nicklin: Mostly by the Minister.

Mr. Power: In reply to allegations by your members.

Mr. GAIR: The Opposition may charge the Minister with having made many speeches. When discussing the Estimates, matters are raised either by way of commendation or criticism. If any suggestions are made in the course of the discussions, it is for the Minister to answer the criticism, acknowledge the commendation, and refer to suggestions made for the improved working of the various branches of his department. Ministers adopt different practices. The present Attorney-General thinks it is more effective and far more advantageous to members opposite to answer their criticism and to deal with their suggestions as the speeches are made. That is his practice, and I have found members of this House especially Opposition members expressing appreciation of the Minister's enthusiasm and his activity and energy in that respect. It is useless for the hon. the Leader of the Opposition to get up here year after year and make the same criticism about there not being sufficient time to deal with the Estimates. The responsibility is not mine.

As I have already pointed out, I have endeavoured to cater for the Opposition, and I would say that no leader of the Government has done more to fit in with the desires and the requirements of the Leader of the Opposition than I have done, and I believe the Leader of the Opposition will concede that point.

Mr. Nicklin: Hear, hear!

Mr. GAIR: He must accept some of the responsibility if we have debated only three or four of the departments. It is useless for him to get up here and try to lay the blame at my door.

Mr. Nicklin: I did not say that at all.

Mr. GAIR: Yes, the hon. gentleman d'd. He blamed the Minister for occupying the time.

Mr. Nicklin: I certainly blamed the Minister.

Mr. GAIR: That was my chief reason for rising to speak. I think that as has frequently been stated before, the matter to a great extent is in the hands of the Opposition. They should realise that they can deal with many more departments and deal with the departments they want to by refraining from speaking at such great length on matters that are evidently comparatively insignificant compared with the things they want to deal with. Until they do that we shall still have the complaint from the Leader of the Opposition year in and year out, and I hope that he will be Leader of the Opposition for many years to come.

Mr. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) (10.38 p.m.): I am sorry the hon. the Premier has chosen to work himself up into a frenzy in this debate on the Estimates. The matter is one that should be of interest to both sides of the House. It was dealt with very dispassionately and fearlessly by the Leader of the Opposition when he pointed out that a great deal of time was taken up by the hon. the Attorney-General.

Mr. Power: In reply to allegations made by you.

Mr. MORRIS: I would expect an efficient minister to deal with such allegations in a short space of time. I hope that some good, at least, will come from the suggestion that has been made of allocating more time to these other departments. I am quite certain that some formula could be discovered to work out an allocation of time more satisfactory than the present one. I can tell you this from my own knowledge; I have listened to the debate on the Estimates during ten different years, and only on two occasions have the Estimates of the Department of Public Instruction been considered in those ten years. I believe that that department has not been given the attention that it deserves. Too often when there has been criticism of that department the criticism has been levelled at the ministerial head when quite often I believe that is not where the criticism should have been levelled. I believe that the faults that exist within the Department of Public Instruction today could with infinitely more justice be laid at the door of the Cabinet, because they regard that department as the Cinderella department of the State. I feel, too, that many of the complaints we are forced to make about the Department of Public Instruction could be more fairly laid at the door of the Secretary for Public Works and Housing than that of the Secretary for Public Instruction, because the former is responsible for deciding whether many things, such as septic systems and sewerage, things that are so lacking in our schools today, will be provided. Let that suffice for that point. I hope that the Standing Orders Committee will try to arrive at a more satisfactory arrangement than the present one.

One of the things we hear in this Chamber probably more frequently than anything else —I heard it from the Attorney-General only today—is that it is the duty of Parliamentarians, if they know of anything that is wrong or believe that anything is wrong within the administration of Queensland, to bring those matters before this Parliament. I agree with that view. I think hon. members on this side of the House try in every possible way to improve the life of this community by bringing before Parliament matters that they believe will lead to some improvement in existing conditions. Some days ago the hon. member for Nundah said that he believed there had been some corruption within his own adminstration. He made that charge, and I am sure he made it believing it to be correct. Consequently, I have tried on many occasions to discuss a certain matter in this House, but I have not been able to do so. I know that Standing Orders are somewhat restrictive of debates, but I have tried on several occasions to make certain references without any success. I felt this morning that I could, with advantage to the State of Queensland and the city of Brisbane in particular, ask a question of the Secretary for Labour and Industry, who is in charge of the Police Department, but my question was disallowed. You, Sir, in your wisdom

disallowed the question. I may have my opinion; you have yours, and I do not criticise it on the floor of this House. I had in mind certain matters that I believed required investigation. On Friday last the hon. member for Nundah said that it would be desirable for the Police Department to know the full facts of the matters that I spoke about in this House, and because I wanted to co-operate with him and with the Minister, I laid many facts, numbering 10 in all, on the table of the House. However, much to my amazement they were not allowed to be placed on the table although they were matters that I believe the Police Department could with advantage investigate.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I want to tell the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha that I am ruling the matter out of order because it has nothing to do with the matter on which he seeks information from the Minister. I have already told hon. members that the purpose of addressing questions to Ministers is to get information about Government policy and matters relating to the different departments. The matter that the hon. member has in his hand has nothing whatever to do with the Minister. It is purely and simply a Brisbane City Council matter. It has nothing to do with the Estimates either.

Mr. MORRIS: But we are discussing the Appropriation Bill now.

Mr. SPEAKER: It has nothing to do with the Appropriation Bill either and I rule it out of order.

Mr. MORRIS: I say that is a negation of justice. You would not allow me to ask the question and now you will not permit me to read this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let me tell the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha that I rule the matter out of order as being a matter relating to a subject on which he required information from the Minister and as I ruled it out of order on that occasion I cannot now allow him to introduce the same matter into this debate. He is not entitled to do that.

Mr. MORRIS: Very well, Mr. Speaker, I accept your ruling but I would remind you that you do not know what I have here. What I intended to refer to was not in my question at all. You refused to allow me to ask the question and now you say that I cannot raise the matter here.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member thinks the matter he has is of importance he can take it to the Commissioner of Police himself and ask for a full investigation into the matter.

Mr. MORRIS: Do you deny me the right to refer to this matter on this Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, I do. I rule it out of order.

Mr. MORRIS: But you have not heard it.

Mr. Burrows: But we know your form.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope that hon. members on my right will allow me to deal with this matter in my own way. Let me tell the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha that I am ruling out of order the matter that he sought to raise this morning by way of questions. He is not in order in trying to discuss the matter on this Bill either.

Mr. MORRIS: I have listened with interest to what you have to say. The Lord Mayor, the hon. member for Nundah, said that if the police interviewed me on certain matters he hoped that I would not come here complaining of victimisation. Now that I am willing, of my own free will and accord, to produce the matters that I believe should be investigated, you are preventing me from doing it on the floor of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORRIS: On the Appropriation Bill we have just as wide a scope in debate as we have on the Address in Reply and the Budget Speech. In those two debates, you, Mr. Speaker, know very well that no matters are ruled out of order and I submit that you can no more rule out of order the matters that I have here than you can rule anything out of order in the Address in Reply debate or the Budget speech. You do not know what I have here.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I put it to the hon. member direct: is he endeavouring to raise in the House now the matters that were attached to his question this morning?

Mr. MORRIS: In the main yes, with some alterations.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then I rule them out of order. What the hon. member proposes to raise has nothing whatever to do with the House. Let me tell the hon. member also that the police have no right to interview him, either when he is going from Parliament to his home or coming from his home to Parliament, while the House is in session. If he has any matter of importance he can take it to the police station himself. I have ruled the matter out of order and I hope the hon. member will not continue with it.

Mr. MORRIS: I am not frightened of being interviewed by the police in going to or coming from my home.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not say that the hon. member was.

Mr. MORRIS: I have certain information that I think should be given to them. I am dealing with a matter of administration not within the local-authority area. Surely I can read matter to the Minister who is in charge of this department? That is the point I put. I feel that it should be investigated.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I lay it down for the information of the hon. member and the information of hon members generally that when I rule a matter out of order in relation to a question I am not going to allow any hon. member to try to get that matter in.

Mr. NICKLIN: Hon. members have a certain responsibility.

Mr. Walsh: Are you rising to a point of order?

Mr. NICKLIN: I am.

Mr. Walsh: You did not say so.

Mr. NICKLIN: You endeavour to advise the Chair far too much.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That is a reflection on the Chair. No member advises me how to conduct the House and I ask the hon. member to withdraw it.

Mr. NICKLIN: I did not intend it as a reflection on you, Mr. Speaker; if you think so, I will withdraw it. I was rebuking the hon. member for Bundaberg and perhaps I exceeded the bounds in that respect.

If hon. members have matters of grave public importance involving what might amount to graft or other serious charges in connection with the administration of a department that is under the control of a Minister of this House, are you denying him that right?

Mr. SPEAKER: Absolutely no. I am not denying any member the right to do what he is entitled to do. I ruled this morning that the matter the hon. member raised was entirely a matter for the Brisbane City Council and had nothing to do with the Minister in charge of Labour and Industry and for that reason I ruled it out of order. Had the hon. member got up and brought it out in debate this afternoon it is problematical what I should have done about it; but having ruled it out of order in connection with the question I cannot allow the hon. member to bring it in now.

Mr. MORRIS: I had hoped to refer to matters that I believe are the responsibility of not only the Treasurer but the Secretary for Labour and Industry, who is in charge of the police. If they heard the things I wanted to present to them I feel that I should have shown that some rotten things were going on in this city today. It was for that purpose that I intended to bring it up. I will bow to your ruling. May I say this and I do not think you will rule this out of order—that there is a piece of land at Kenmore opposite which a person who has a garage in that vicinity hoped to build a garage. He was not permitted to build the garage then because it was stated that it would be a traffic hazard and it was in an A-class residential area. Notwithstanding that statement a wealthy syndicate was permitted to purchase a piece of council land. To enable it to purchase this piece of council property—it was an open-space reservation according to the latest town plan that is available and that was submitted to this House—presumably it had to be re-zoned, but at least it had to be re-surveyed. It was done in the teeth of that request by members of the progress association for a piece of ground. I believe the statements I had to present to this House would have shown that a certain man, a Mr. Liu, an influential man in Queensland and one who throws expensive and lavish parties to influential men in Queensland, I believe, is at the back of a syndicate that is doing this. And I hoped by presenting these matters before the House I should cause some investigation to be made. I believe, and many other people believe, that as the result of the instigation of this particular man somebody within the council has authorised the re-survey of the land and somebody has authorised the sale of the land without advertisement. These matters could have been put before the responsible Ministers and the details I have could have been presented to the police. They then could have followed them up and then we could have had the matter cleaned up, as the hon. member for Nundah asked in this Chamber.

I believe that the hon. member for Nundah, acting in his capacity as Lord Mayor, has himself been fooled by somebody within his council organisation and that he made statements only last Friday that were not true. They were not correct. I believe they were quite innocently made and that the statements were made in good faith by the Lord Mayor because he had been misled by officers or somebody within the council administration. In Saturday night's paper I have read statements made by Alderman Glover. These were published in the Brisbane "Telegraph" and contained incorrect statements also.

Mr. Power: If you have evidence, take it to the Criminal Investigation Branch.

Mr. MORRIS: You are trying to stifle the evidence. You are all trying to stifle the evidence.

Mr. Power: I am not trying to stifle anybody.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORRIS: I would say that the shuffling that has gone on in relation to matters that I have mentioned lead me to wonder very gravely why there has been so much effort to stifle me from saying what I wanted to say on this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There has been no attempt to stifle the hon. member. The hon. member has his rights and I will see that his rights are maintained.

Mr. MORRIS: Why are they frightened to give me the opportunity of presenting these matters in this House? (Government interjections.) I have made an effort to present all these facts in this Chamber. (Government interjections.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

A Government Member: Why do you not let the Criminal Investigation Branch do it?

Mr. MORRIS: As far as I am concerned I have made every effort in my power to present these matters in the place where I believe my responsibility lies. I now leave

them with the clear understanding that even if I am interviewed I will refuse to make any further statements.

Mr. Smith: You are a coward.

Mr. MORRIS (starting to move across Chamber): You are a rotten ——.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member for Carpentaria to withdraw the remark he made to the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha.

Mr. Smith: What is that?

Mr. SPEAKER: "The hon. member is a coward." I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

Mr. SMITH: Well, I will withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member to withdraw it unreservedly.

Mr. SMITH: I will withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha to apologise to the House for his unseemly conduct.

Mr. MORRIS: I am sorry.

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (10.59 p.m.), in reply: I have something to say regarding the matters raised by the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha but because of the atmosphere I think I had better leave those things unsaid. It is a pity the hon. member could not restrain himself in the circumstances. (Interjections.) However, there are a few observations I should like to make in reply to the remarks by the hon. members opposite.

Before I come to that I want to refer to certain criticism by the hon. member for Coorparoo of the way in which questions are answered in this House. From time to time there have been complaints about the way in which Ministers have replied to questions. All hon. members should know that Standing Orders provide that it is the prerogative of a Minister to answer a question in the way in which he wishes to answer it. As a matter of fact, he is not obliged to answer questions at all. I have gone out of my way at times to give information that has not been sought in questions. I gave it more in elaboration of the point that might have been made in the question. On the other hand, I believe I am right in taking the view that in the great majority of cases the questions asked by the Opposition seek to embarrass the Government or the Minister to whom they are addressed. To the extent that they do that, I have no hesitation whatever in getting down to the level of the hon. member who asks the question and replying in a way that I think appropriate. I might say there are a few hon. members who have asked questions in a straightforward way designed to seek information and if hon. members care to look up my answers to them they will see that they are in direct reply to their questions. Probably I departed from that principle on one occasion when the hon. member for Toowong asked me, as he usually does, a straightforward question. I did that seeking to get a little propaganda in about the deficits that had been accumulated under the anti-Labour Government, but surely I am not to be blamed for that?

Mr. Munro: We all do that at times.

Mr. WALSH: But I object to the misrepresentation in the Press by the hon. member for Coorparoo. If the hon. member for Coorparoo does not know how to ask his questions, that is not my fault. I refer in particular to a question he asked about matters pertaining to the Fish Board. One would imagine that a man with his qualifications would have some understanding of the necessity for accuracy and that he would take a little time in drafting his questions.

The hon. member asked me a series of eight questions relating to the Fish Board. The fifth of those questions was—

> "Is the whole sum of £61,694 considered to be fully recoverable?"

My answer was—

> "At 30 June, 1953, the whole amount was considered recoverable."

Is that what the hon. member put in his article in the "As I See It" of "The Telegraph"? It certainly was not. He put in something entirely different. He said—

> "The Minister told Parliament that the whole amount was recoverable and that no losses would be sustained."

That cannot be found anywhere in my answer to the hon. member's question. I say the hon. member was deliberately misrepresenting the position.

He goes on further to say—

> "Where a Minister rises in his place to supply Parliament with something which is presented as a factual statement, Parliament is entitled to expect that the statement will be entirely true."

I agree entirely with that, but it is a pity the hon. member does not follow his own advice, especially when we remember the numerous misstatements he made during the course of the Budget debate and the several times he was corrected for the misstatements he made. The hon. member can try to wriggle out of it, but he made a deliberate statement that the first time certain adjustments had been made in the Estimates was since I have been Treasurer, whereas as a matter of fact these things had been going on since 1874, and the particular adjustments regarding the details of expenditure for the year had been going on for the last seven years. The hon. member had the hide to get up in this Assembly and say it had only been brought into force during my period as Treasurer. The hon. member should study his own questions closely, some of which would not reflect credit on a very inexperienced and obscure accountant.

The hon. member knows that in referring to these things there are certain business risks and he is the one who ought to know it because he knows that an individual got

away with £11,000 from a firm he was interested in, and in which, I understand, his firm were the accountants. I stand corrected if that is not so.

Mr. Hiley: You are corrected. Fadden & O'Shea were the auditors.

Mr. WALSH: I say that one of the employees got away with £11,000 and he had to admit himself that it could not be found by the auditors and accountants.

Mr. Hiley: I have never sought to deny that someone from Cervetto's got away with it. You are seeking to deny it.

Mr. WALSH: I am not seeking to deny it, I am pointing out that the hon. member has misrepresented the position in his article in relation to the answer I gave.

Mr. Hiley: What was it you said?

Mr. WALSH: I said that at 30 June——

Mr. Hiley: The whole amount was considered to be recovered.

Mr. WALSH: Exactly.

Mr. Hiley: It is a nice twist.

Mr. WALSH: It is the hon. member that is doing the twisting. I have no objection to the hon. member's quoting what I actually said but I object to the hon. member's twisting my words. The answer that was given was straightforward.

The hon. member also asked, "Is the sum of £3,846 shown in the account of the Fish Board for June, 1953?" He said June, 1953. I anticipated the hon. gentleman and accordingly I made it clear that the particular sum referred to the financial year ending June, 1953.

Later on the hon. member asks, "What was the amount of interest charged in that year by the Board?" Which year? The hon. member doesn't say which. In my reply I condescended to come down and help the hon. member by saying that the amount was such-and-such a figure for the financial year ending June, 1953. However, that is by the way. There are many other important matters I want to speak about.

The Premier has already dealt with the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition regarding the time allotted for the discussion of the Estimtes. I might add to what the Premier has said that there is a limit of one hour only on each individual member of this House who participates in the debate on the Financial Statement. How many members exercised their right? One full hour is allotted to every member outside of the Leader of the Opposition who is entitled to an hour and a half, like myself. Every other member is entitled to one hour on the Financial Statement. There is a period during which hon. members can analyse the Financial Statement and the Estimates for every department that is dealt with. Was advantage taken of that time by the Opposition? Of course it was not. Look back over the debates and see the nature of the contributions by hon. members opposite to the debate on the Financial Statement. Very little interest was shown by them in the financial transactions of the different departments. That is the answer to the charge that sufficient time was not available. Even this evening, when hon. members were given the opportunity to discuss the Department of Labour and Industry and the Department of Health and Home Affairs, the resolutions were agreed to without any discussion by hon. members opposite. No member of the Opposition has any cause for complaint. The Premier was quite right when he pointed out that no other Parliament is as generous as this Parliament in allocating time for the consideration of financial matters.

The Leader of the Opposition then dealt with the question of financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government. His claim again was that this Government are continually complaining about the niggardly treatment handed out to them by the Menzies-Fadden Government. I have quoted repeatedly in this House figures that show beyond doubt that Queensland has been discriminated against, and is still being discriminated against, in the allocation of finance by the present Federal Government. If the hon. member wants evidence of that, let me remind him that in 1944-1945 the tax reimbursement grant to this State from the Commonwealth Government under the uniform-tax legislation was £5,821,000. That amount was paid for a period of four years, in accordance with the original uniform taxation. In 1949-1950, under the Chifley Labour Government, the amount was increased to £11,539,592, an increase of £5,718,592 on the amount allocated during the first four years of uniform taxation. Under the the Chifley Labour Government we had an increase on the original amount of 98.24 per cent.

And now we come to this year, under the Menzies-Fadden Government. We find that the amount is £22,718,000, an increase of £11,178,408, or 96.8 per cent., over the amount for 1949-1950. What better evidence than that does the Leader of the Opposition want? Let him put those figures to his acountant friends on the other side and see whether they can dispute them.

Let me relate those figures to costs, and that is the important thing for the substantial increase in the allocation by way of tax reimbursement under the present Federal Government in itself means nothing unless it is related to costs. As at 30 June, 1945, the basic wage in Queensland was £4 17s. a week. As at 30 June, 1949, during the period of the Federal Labour Government, it was £6 3s., an increase over June, 1945, of 26.8 per cent. As at 30 June, 1953, however, the basic wage in Queensland was £10 18s., an increase of 77.2 per cent. on June, 1945, It will be seen that with an increase of 26.8 per cent. in the basic wage the Chifley Labour Government increased the tax reimbursements by 98.24 per cent. whereas with an increase in the basic wage of 77.2 per cent. over June, 1945, the present Menzies-Fadden Government increased the tax reimbursements by 96.8 per cent., or less than the Chifley Government gave this Government.

The Leader of the Opposition also made reference to the substantial amounts that had been handed back to the State by the Menzies-Fadden Government by way of tax reimbursements and he proceeded to say that the Federal Government were supporting the State Government's works programme. It is quite true that the Federal Government have, over a period of years, underwritten the works programmes of this State by a certain amount but the States did not ask the Commonwealth to do that; for reasons best known to themselves the Commonwealth did it. We have had much misleading propaganda on the matter and particularly the statement by the Prime Minister in the House of Representatives that the Commonwealth was supporting a works programme for the States amounting to £200,000,000. One would imagine that the Commonwealth Government were finding that money. Nothing of the sort. It is expected that £100,000,000 will be raised on the loan market and with domestic raisings making £105,000,000 the Commonwealth will be obliged to find about £95,000,000 of the total of £200,000,000 that is required to give effect to the States' works programmes. This State, for example, has contributed a very considerable amount to the Commonwealth, so relieving the Commonwealth of the necessity of raising a substantial amount of money. This relief is brought about by the agreement that we have with the Commonwealth Savings Bank, under which we are entitled to raise a given sum. However, the amount that is raised is part of the overall pool of loan raisings. The benefit that Queensland gets out of it is a lower interest rate for that amount but the whole of the States share in the amount raised by the Queensland Government under the agreement with the Commonwealth Savings Bank. I have taken the matter up with the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank to see whether some adjustment cannot be made. It is true that the States of South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales have their own savings banks on which they can rely for considerable finance for their local-government programme and for investment with semi-governmental bodies.

Mr. Hiley: Could you not arrange to have an instrument like the State Electricity Commission take this fund out of the pool?

Mr. WALSH: No. If the hon. member apprises himself of the terms of the agreement he will see that specific sums have to be provided for the Agricultural Bank and for housing. We have asked for the quota that we are now entitled to of £500,000 and that will be allocated accordingly. I think it is quite clear that the State gets a benefit from domestic raisings but this has to be included in the overall pool for the benefit of the States accordingly.

It has been said that we have not spent all our loan money. In the course of my reply on the Financial Statement I referred to the fact that we spent the equivalent of 104 per cent of our loan funds, that Parliament had actually allocated I think £20,832,000 and that the amount actually expended was £21,854,000. So it will be seen that £1,022,000 more than was appropriated by this Parliament from loan funds was expended on loan works. That charge is answered by the figures I have quoted.

The Leader of the Opposition proceeded to make some reference to Queensland's being a mendicant State, or the likelihood of its becoming a claimant State. I certainly did refer to that in the Financial Statement, and I gave the reasons why. I pointed out, amongst other things, that since 1938-1939 no less than £89,500,000 had been contributed by the Commonwealth to the other States by way of special grants in addition to any grants made under the tax reimbursement legislation. These huge sums that were made available to the other States have enabled them to develop their resources and activities; and they have received a benefit that Queensland has not received from the Commonwealth Government. No matter how the Leader of the Opposition might try to wriggle out of it, he cannot do so successfully.

Let me put these figures on record again. I pointed out in the Financial Statement that Queensland's share of the tax reimbursement grant for 1952-1953 represented £17 6s. 7d. per capita, compared with £23 19s. 5d. received by South Australia, £31 2s. 11d. by Western Australia, and £19 17s. 4d. by Tasmania. These sums were in respect of tax reimbursement grants and grants recommended by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. It does not matter under what heading the States have it; the fact remains that South Australia has received nearly £7 a head more than Queensland, Western Australia £14 a head and Tasmania over £2 a head. It does not matter how the hon. gentleman tries to wriggle out of it, there are the figures indicating the help given by the Commonwealth to those States.

It is true that because of that other States, like South Australia, have become more highly industrialised. No less a person than the hon. member for Coorparoo was submitted to a considerable barrage at the Liberal Convention earlier this year, when he pointed out fairly and truthfully that no single Federal works project was being undertaken in this State, as was the case in several other States. The Leader of the Opposition tries to defend the Commonwealth for carrying out a policy that provides for the construction of the Leigh Creek railway in South Australia, the Snowy River project in Victoria and New South Wales——

Mr. Nicklin: Both Labour Government projects.

Mr. WALSH: It does not matter. I am not concerned about which Government introduced them and I am not condemning the schemes; but I contend that there is just as much justification for this State's claiming that the Commonwealth should assume financial responsibility for the

building of a line from Dajarra to the Northern Territory for the Leigh Creek railway. There is just as much obligation for their helping this Government in developing the great resources that would be opened up by the Burdekin dam project. We have received no support from the Leader of the Opposition or the Country Party members opposite in support of our contention that we should receive any help whatsoever from the Menzies-Fadden Government. At least we did have the veiled suggestion from the Leader of the Liberal Party that the Commonwealth Government should undertake some works in Queensland. Here we have the Leader of the Opposition defending the attitude of the Menzies-Fadden Government towards this State while at the same time he is prepared to approve of considerable assistance being given to other States.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about the Commonwealth's collecting revenue and passing it on to the States but the Commonwealth would have in the main to collect the revenue that was collected by the State prior to uniform taxation. I have stated in this Chamber over and over again that the Commonwealth proportion of the total tax collected throughout Australia in pre-war years would not amount to 40 per cent. What is the position now? It is the reverse of that. The Commonwealth's proportion now is almost 80 per cent. of the total taxation collected, whereas according to the Treasury officials' report submitted to the Loan Council on the matter of the return of the taxing powers to the State, we find that the amount available to the States is about the same percentage of the national income as it was in 1938-1939, which clearly indicates the Commonwealth is collecting vast revenues and with no help to the States. If the hon. member has any complaint or is genuine in his criticism of the Government's attitude regarding the contributions made by way of subsidies to local authorities, I can assure him that if he is prepared to make the suggestion that subsidies be abolished we shall be able to reduce taxation by that amount in this State.

Mr. Nicklin: My suggestion is that subsidies should be more equitably distributed between the various sections.

Mr. WALSH: I am coming to that, and I will prove that the hon. gentleman's statement is wrong, as I did the statement of the hon. member for Fassifern. I have the figures here and will put them on record side by side with the figures of the Leader of the Opposition. The hon. member appears to object to the cities getting some of these benefits. I will show they are not getting their fair share. Vast projects are undertaken by the local authorities in this area and we must not overlook the fact that country areas get some benefit of the activities of Brisbane just as Brisbane gets some benefit out of the development of rural areas. But why take up the attitude of dividing this State, the city versus the country, when it is known that each is dependent on the other?

I pointed out previously that in our loan programme, of the allocations from the Loan Council to this State, amounting to £18,450,000, 27 per cent. is set aside for Treasury loans and subsidies to local bodies. That is a very considerable figure. Can the Leader of the Opposition cite the Budget of any other State in Australia where such a considerable part of the Budget is allocated to local authorities, semi-governmental bodies and other organisations undertaking public administration? If no subsidies were paid we should be in the happy position of being able to reduce taxation by the equivalent of that amount.

The Leader of the Opposition had something to say about savings-bank deposits in this State. In normal times that would be quite a relevant figure to quote to show the stability of industry but last week the hon. member for Southport raised the question of the very substantial increase in savings-bank deposits under the Menzies-Fadden Government over the deposits under the Labour Government in 1949. It is quite true that the deposits per head in June, 1953, were £108 6s. 5d., as against £91 11s. 8d. in June, 1949. That figure, in itself, does not tell the whole of the story. As I have said frequently, the housewife, the woman in the home who has to work to the family budget, is the best judge of what the £1 can buy today. She can tell us that she could buy more with the £1 under the Labour Government in June, 1949, than she could with the £1 under the Menzies-Fadden Government in June, 1953. If we adjust the figures to the real value of the £1 today, we find that instead of being £108 6s. 5d. a head the deposits would be £66 12s. 1d., or £24 19s. 7d. less in real value than the £91 11s. 8d. of June, 1949.

Mr. Nicklin: You have got more pounds today, too.

Mr. WALSH: And we need them, indeed we need half as many again to meet the increase in costs that has occurred since the Menzies-Fadden Government came into power.

Another thing to which I draw the hon. gentleman's attention is the very good sign we see in Queensland in the fact that the people of this State are investment-minded. When money became tight a little while ago, I stated that there was not the slightest doubt that in the course of time savings-bank deposits per head in Queensland would be much lower than they were two or three years previously, for the very good reason that a substantial number of savings-bank depositors have withdrawn their money and invested it in the State Electricity Commission loans, Brisbane City Council loans, and other public issues for development. It is good to see the community interested in that way. On the other hand, in States like Victoria and South Australia, we do not see this position. Down there, the contributors to public loans are usually banks, insurance companies, and others who have considerable finance at their disposal.

Before my time expires I had better put the figures on record for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition who, like the hon. member for Coorparoo, has the habit of getting his figures badly mixed up. I have already tabled a return, in reply to a question asked by the hon. member for Callide in August, showing particulars of Treasury loans and subsidies to local authorities. Under that heading we find that for the year 1952-1953, of a total amount of £1,180,065 approved by way of Treasury loans, Brisbane's proportion was 34.22 per cent. Subsidies approved for the same financial year amounted to £3,795,079. Brisbane's proportion was 42.31 per cent.

Before going any further, I might explain that these Treasury loans and subsidies include loans and subsidies made to—

The Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board.

Brisbane harbour.

Is it to be argued that the Brisbane harbour is not entitled to the same percentage of subsidy on developmental work that has been undertaken in the Brisbane port as Townsville, Cairns, Gladstone, Bowen, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg and Maryborough? Where is the logic in arguing that Brisbane is not entitled at least to its share of subsidies for the development of the port of Brisbane? The same thing applies to other public bodies.

I might point out also that the Brisbane City Council gets virtually no Treasury loans whatever. All its loan raisings are on the public market or by private agreement.

The subsidy is paid according to the amount expended, and if local authorities outside the Brisbane area have failed to raise and expend the necessary loan moneys over the period, neither the Brisbane area nor the Government can be blamed for that. The subsidy can only be paid according to the amount expended on particular projects in any local-authority area. Consequently, if Brisbane spends more proportionately than the outside local authorities obviously it must get a greater proportion of the subsidy.

Now, if we look over the 21-year period—and this destroys the argument of the honourable the Leader of the Opposition—we find that the Treasury loans approved in the 21-year period from 1 June, 1932 to 1 June, 1953, amounted to £15,575,976, and Brisbane's proportion of that was 18.52 per cent. Of the subsidies approved during that same period of 21 years the total was £22,554,462, and Brisbane's proportion was 38.9 per cent. Where did the honourable the Leader of the Opposition get his figure of 45 per cent. from? Of the total of the two amounts, £38,130,438, we find that Brisbane's proportion of loans and subsidies was 30.57 per cent. Where is the discrimination in favour of the city? Obviously it is not there.

The Government's policy over the years has been to help local authorities, particularly in the outback areas and the hon. the Leader of the Opposition knows full well that in the case of electricity the rural areas are entitled to a subsidy of up to 65 per cent., but no subsidy is paid to the Southern Electric Authority, which services a considerable area, and very little if any is paid to the Brisbane City Council. Consequently it could be argued, if you are seeking to make discriminations, that there is considerable discrimination in favour of the country areas there, but the city people, as far as I can gather, have never objected to that because they appreciate that they cannot exist in the city areas unlesss the rural areas are being developed, whether by way of land development or the development of coal resources. The city realises that it depends very extensively on the development of these resources to maintain its existence.

Motion (Mr. Walsh) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Clark, Fitzroy, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Treasurer to pay moneys as directed by warrant—

Mr. MUNRO (Toowong) (11.39 p.m.): Mr. Clark——

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow any discussion on the clause.

Mr. MUNRO: May I inquire under which Standing Order, Mr. Clark?

The CHAIRMAN: Standing Order 307 says—

> "At 8 o'clock p.m., subject to the following proviso, the question under consideration and every question necessary to bring to a conclusion the proceedings of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, and the passing of the Bill through all its stages, shall be put by Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees, as the case may be, without amendment or debate."

Mr. MUNRO: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Clark, but I should like to ask a question.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 8, both inclusive, schedule and preamble, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING.

Bill, on motion of Mr. Walsh, read a third time.

The House adjourned at 11.45 p.m.