

BRIGALOW COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT IN QUEENSLAND

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

This afternoon in Canberra, Commonwealth and Queensland Ministers had a very helpful and co-operative discussion relating to the Queensland Government's proposals for the development of large areas of Brigalow country in Central Queensland. The Commonwealth Ministers involved were Mr. McEwen, Mr. Holt, Senator Spooner, Mr. Davidson, Mr. Adermann and myself. Queensland was represented by the Premier, Mr. Nicklin, and the Minister for Lands and Irrigation, Mr. Fletcher.

The Commonwealth Ministers made it clear that they were attracted to this venture as one which will, in substantial degree, increase production for export from an area of Queensland not yet developed but which very much lends itself to development.

The discussion revealed that the Queensland Government had worked out its development plans in detail.

Certain details of the financial arrangements were discussed and settled, and in the result the Governments have agreed that the proposal will now go ahead, the Commonwealth agreeing to find in the current financial year £1.65m. (which is the amount now sought by Queensland) and in the remainder of the planned five year programme further annual contributions to take the total over the five years to £7.25m. The finance will be provided by way of special loans to the Queensland Government.

This decision by the Commonwealth to provide £7.25m. towards the development of the Brigalow country follows earlier decisions to provide £5m. for the construction of beef roads in Queensland and a further £3.3m. requested by the Queensland Government for the sealing of the roads.

The Commonwealth is happy to be able to contribute towards these great projects which mark a new phase in Queensland development and promise greatly increased returns to Australia through increased export output.

CANBERRA,
6th November, 1962.