

Queensland



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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 30 AUGUST 1961

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

QUESTIONS

SENTENCES IMPOSED IN RAPE CASES

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Justice—

“(1) On or about June 6 last did he appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal against the inadequacy of a sentence of five years, to be suspended after twelve months, on the prisoner entering into a £100 bond, imposed on Brian Douglas Marsh, who had been found guilty before Mr. Justice Townley in March of the crime of rape of a white woman?”

“(2) Did Mr. Justice Brown, giving judgment for the Court of Criminal Appeal, consisting of himself and Justices Stable and Wanstall, say, inter alia, ‘in view of

sentences imposed in recent years for rape, the sentence was manifestly inadequate and one of six years gaol should be substituted?"

"(3) In May this year were a youth and three men convicted in the Central Supreme Court of raping an aboriginal woman, and all released on bonds by the Trial Judge, Mr. Justice Sheehy, with no term of imprisonment whatever?"

"(4) Did he appeal against the inadequacy of this sentence, and if not, was it because he believes in one punishment for the rape of a white woman and a lesser for the rape of a coloured woman?"

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

"(1) Yes."

"(2) In giving judgment in this case, Mr. Justice Brown did make remarks to the effect of those mentioned in the question, but he also added that it was rather a bad case of rape and repeated the words of the Trial Judge that "it was a shocking and disgusting affair."

"(3) In the second case as mentioned in the question two young men, a boy of 17, and a boy of 16 were convicted in the Central Supreme Court. The three prisoners over 17 were given suspended sentences. The boy was released on probation under the provisions of the State Children Acts. All were of aboriginal extraction."

"(4) In this second case an appeal was not made, not for the reason inferred in the completely unwarranted suggestion of the Honourable Member, but primarily because it was felt that if such action were taken in this case it would not succeed. Reasons for these offenders being sentenced lightly were outlined by the Trial Judge at the time of his imposing the sentences. He then informed the prisoners that they had pleaded guilty to a very serious offence, but he also stated that it was not a usual case of rape by any means, and that it seemed that the woman concerned was of very loose moral character."

"(1 to 4) Summing up the foregoing it may be said that in the first case it was felt that an appeal was justified, an appeal was in fact made and the appeal was successful. In the second case it was felt that an appeal was not justified and an appeal was not made. The two cases are not comparable."

COMMONWEALTH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR QUEENSLAND AND OTHER STATES

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

"(1) In view of the enlarged major contribution to Australia's overseas funds which will result from the reconstruction of the

Townsville-Mount Isa railway, primarily through the consequential increased output of minerals from Mount Isa, does he not feel that Queensland should have received much more favourable treatment from the Commonwealth in the provision of finance for the railway?"

"(2) Is not the Commonwealth's attitude towards Queensland niggardly in view of the fact that seventy per centum of the cost of similar projects in Western Australia and South Australia is being defrayed by the Commonwealth Government?"

"(3) Has he read the press report stating that the Commonwealth has offered the South Australian Government financial aid of £1,325,000 for the dieselisation of the Port Pirie-Broken Hill railway and that South Australia will be required to repay only thirty per centum of the expenditure over a term of fifty years, interest to be at the long-term bond rate?"

"(4) If so, does he not think South Australia is getting more favourable treatment than Queensland, which has to repay the Mount Isa railway loan in twenty years and, additionally, at a higher interest rate?"

"(5) Has he read the published statement of the Prime Minister that the Commonwealth is providing £500,000 for the improvement of the Wyndham-Nicholson road in north Western Australia in addition to the 1961-1962 grant of £1.8 million to that State for northern development?"

"(6) If so, and in view of (a) the Prime Minister's statement that the new grant was to stimulate the turn-off of good-conditioned beef cattle, primarily for beef export, and (b) Queensland being the greatest beef exporting State in the country and, additionally, responsible for nearly twenty-one per centum of the country's exports, is he satisfied that the Commonwealth's current and prospective provision for beef roads in Queensland this financial year connotes a just assessment of Queensland's contribution to the national economy?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

"(1 to 5) Yes."

"(6) As our prospective provision for beef roads in the current financial year is still under discussion, I am unable to comment on the likely level of provision."

CONVICTION OF ANTHONY FRANCIS CAVANAGH

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"In view of (a) over four months having elapsed since one Anthony Francis Cavanagh was convicted of stealing in the Brisbane Police Court, (b) the press report that the Minister for Justice had written to

Cavanagh expressing the opinion that Cavanagh was innocent of the charge on which he was convicted and (c) the Police Commissioner having recommended a pardon, is he now able to inform the House whether inquiries into Cavanagh's allegation that he was induced to plead guilty by two police officers have been completed and with what result?"

Hon. K. J. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) replied—

"As is the practice in such matters, the advice of the Solicitor-General has been sought as to what action should be taken in relation to the Police Officers concerned in this case. When the Solicitor-General's advice is received by me, the position will be further considered. I am informed that the enquiries cannot be completed until a statement has been given by Cavanagh setting out in full detail and in proper form the evidence which he could give in proof of any charge which might be the subject of consideration. Cavanagh's solicitors were asked for a statement on May 31 last, and he himself has been advised that if he requires any assistance in the preparation of the same, such assistance will be given him if he calls at the Crown Law Office."

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Justice—

"(1) In view of his reported statement that he is satisfied that one Anthony Francis Cavanagh was innocent of a charge on which he was convicted in the police court, does he propose to have all references to the case expunged from the official court records?"

"(2) Further, in view of his conviction that Cavanagh was innocent, does he propose to indemnify him against financial loss by way of relevant costs associated with and subsequent to the court hearings?"

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

"(1) No power to have references to the case expunged from the official records is vested in me. The Letters Patent granting the pardon recites as the particular consideration therefor that the Governor in Council is satisfied that Cavanagh was innocent of the charge of which he was convicted. The Acting Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, Brisbane, and the Clerk of Petty Sessions, Brisbane, have been notified of the pardon and a copy of such Letters Patent has been forwarded for notation in the official Records."

"(2) If Cavanagh makes a claim for the relevant costs associated with and subsequent to the Court proceedings, the claim will be given sympathetic consideration."

UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG TEENAGERS

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) asked the Premier—

"Concerning the committee announced by him to examine unemployment among teenagers and referred to by the Minister for Labour and Industry in reply to my question on Thursday, August 24, last—

(1) How many times has the committee met?

(2) Have they taken any oral or written evidence from any person or organisation?

(3) Have they made any report? If so, what was the report and, if not, when will they make one?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

"(1 to 3) There is no Committee, of which I am aware, examining unemployment among teenagers. There is, however, a Standing Departmental Advisory Committee formed for the purpose of advising and making recommendations to Cabinet on the programming of public works with a view to stabilising employment in the State. Presumably this is the Committee to which the Honourable Member refers. This Committee has met on several occasions and it has made a report to Cabinet. A further report is to be furnished. The reports will be Cabinet documents and consequently not made public. The Committee was authorised to co-opt the services and assistance of such other officers of the Governmental Services as required."

ENROLMENT OF PUPILS IN STATE SCHOOLS

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"How many (a) boys and (b) girls are enrolled at the following standards in State schools in Grade VIII, Sub-junior, Junior, Sub-senior and Senior?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZHEY (Isis) replied—

"Estimated enrolments at various levels in Queensland State Schools as at August 1, 1961, are:—

	Boys	Girls
Grade VIII	11,700	10,800
Sub-Junior	9,000	8,700
Junior	6,500	5,600
Sub-Senior	1,300	1,200
Senior	1,500	1,000

COMMONWEALTH HOSPITAL SUBSIDY

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough), for **Mr. LLOYD** (Kedron), asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"(1) What amount was received by way of Commonwealth subsidy for beds

occupied in Government-controlled hospitals for the years ended June 30, 1960, and 1961, in (a) public, (b) intermediate and (c) private wards respectively?"

"(2) How many beds were occupied in (a) public, (b) intermediate and (c) private wards during the years ended June 30, 1960, and 1961?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

Item	Year Ending June 30, 1960			Year Ending June 30, 1961
	£	s.	d.	£
(a) Public	932,209	0	0	924,719
(b) Intermediate and Private	159,548	8	0	148,218
	1,091,757	8	0	1,072,937"

Item	Year Ending June 30, 1960	Year Ending June 30, 1961
	(a) Public	6,280
(b) Intermediate and Private	1,048	991
	7,328	7,460"

WESTERN HIGHWAY AND TOWNSHIP OF MINGELA

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"(1) Is it a fact that the proposed re-routing of the Western Highway, if adopted, will result in the highway by-passing completely the township of Mingela?"

"(2) If so, will he give an assurance that direct access to the town of Mingela from the Western Highway will be provided by the Main Roads Department for motorists travelling from Charters Towers to Townsville and Ravenswood?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"(1) It is possible that the new line will skirt the township. Details are not yet fixed."

"(2) Yes."

BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS AT PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"(1) Has his attention been drawn to the article appearing in 'Truth' of Sunday, August 27, wherein it is stated that doctors at Queensland public hospitals fear that a new State Government direction on blood transfusions could cost a patient's life?"

"(2) Is the opinion expressed, that doctors claim that the picking and testing of blood transfusions is a specialised task which should be left entirely in the hands of skilled laboratory technicians, substantially correct?"

"(3) If so, is the reason for this direction merely to save money by using a trial-and-error method at grave risk to patients requiring blood transfusions?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"(1) Yes."

"(2 and 3) The facts as set out in 'Truth' are incorrect. The Commonwealth Health Department controls four pathology laboratories in Queensland situated at Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, and Toowoomba. They carry out any pathology tests required by the hospitals of those cities. The Commonwealth Health Department, like my Department, has had difficulty in recruiting staff for its laboratories and, because of shortage of staff, the Commonwealth Director-General of Health asked my Director-General whether the hospital staffs at those cities could assist in making the laboratory staff's task less onerous by doing the cross-matching of blood in off hours but referring the doubtful ones to the laboratory staff. The question was discussed with the Red Cross Blood Bank and it was agreed, provided the medical officer in charge of the Commonwealth Laboratory concerned taught the resident medical officers of the hospital the procedure for cross-matching, this could be done. The Commonwealth Health Department was informed that if their staff could not see its way to continue the cross-matching, the hospital staff could do it providing the medical officer in charge of the laboratory made sure they were competent to do this. The final decision is one for the Commonwealth Health Department as it is their officers who are doing the work for the State. It applies only to the four hospitals abovementioned and to no other Queensland hospitals."

MOUNT ISA RAIL AGREEMENT

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) asked the Premier—

"Is the surprising statement by the Prime Minister, as reported in 'The Courier-Mail' of Tuesday, August 29, 1961, that the Queensland Government had never complained of the terms of the Mount Isa Rail Agreement in fact correct?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

"No."

RELEASE OF WATER FROM TINAROO DAM

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"(1) How many grazing properties are involved in the release of 750-million gallons of water from the Tinaroo Dam down the Walsh River to the junction of the Walsh and Mitchell Rivers, as reported in 'The Courier-Mail' of August 28, 1961?"

"(2) Do the numbers of cattle to be saved warrant this expedient?"

"(3) If the answer to Question (2) is in the affirmative, will he draw the Treasurer's attention to this matter to preclude further statements of the like as reported in 'The Courier-Mail' of August 9, 1961, wherein the Treasurer is reported to have stated that nearly £20 million had been spent on irrigation in Queensland since World War II in pursuit of a dream?"

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham) replied—

"(1) There are eight (8) grazing properties between the last area presently served on the Walsh River to the junction of the Walsh and Mitchell Rivers. These properties have a gross area of 1½ million acres, and an estimated carrying capacity of approximately 21,000 cattle."

"(2) As the water being released from Tinaroo Falls Dam is surplus to requirements for irrigation and hydro-electric purposes for 1961-1962 and works are already available to convey it to the Walsh River, the use of water to endeavour to relieve the emergency was considered to be well justified and a further indication of the incidental benefits of water conservation."

"(3) The effectiveness of past irrigation development has already been discussed with the Honourable the Treasurer."

TOWNSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL AND
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"(1) Is he aware that the inadequate playing area at the Townsville High School and Technical College is being further restricted by the encroachment of new works and buildings?"

"(2) When is it anticipated that this position will be relieved by the construction of a further new high school?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"(1) Yes. The new buildings are to be used for engineering classes conducted by the Townsville University College and the Townsville Technical College."

"(2) A site of 20 acres at Monkey Island has been surveyed for a high school. Foundation tests are being made to determine the building zone, and reclamation work is to commence in the near future."

HIGH-LEVEL BRIDGE OVER LEICHHARDT RIVER
AT MT. ISA

Mr. INCH (Burke) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"(1) Has the Main Roads Department received any report from their Traffic Engineer, Mr. R. Chalk, on his recent

investigation of the possibility of the construction of a high-level bridge over the Leichhardt River at Mount Isa?"

"(2) If a report has been received and it favours the construction of a high-level bridge over this river, when can it be expected that this work will be carried out?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"(1) Report is not complete."

"(2) When the report is received the question of priorities will be analysed."

EXTENSION OF ROAD, MT. ISA TO
MARY KATHLEEN

Mr. INCH (Burke) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"Can he confirm current reports circulating in Mount Isa to the effect that road construction work at present being carried out between Mount Isa and Mary Kathleen will be extended a further six miles to the east branch of the Leichhardt River?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"There will be no extension in this financial year."

TOILET FACILITIES, MT. ISA TRUCKING
YARDS

Mr. INCH (Burke) asked the Minister for Transport—

"In view of the large number of men engaged in loading operations at the Mount Isa trucking yards and the lack of toilet facilities at these yards, will he take the necessary action to have the position rectified?"

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"Toilet facilities are provided by the Railway Department at most stations for the convenience of railway passengers. It is not the practice of the Department to provide such facilities at stock trucking yards."

EXTENSION OF A.I.M. HOSTEL AT COEN

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"Owing to the excellent service now being carried out at the A.I.M. Hostel at Coen by way of hospitalisation and the boarding and caring of children from remote areas attending school, and due to the increase in the number of children making it necessary for extensions to be carried out at the hostel at a considerable cost, will the Government assist in financing the necessary extensions?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

“Having regard to commitments for Loan Works subsidies already entered into for the year 1961-1962, and the total Loan Funds available for these subsidies for the current financial year, it would not be possible to make available any new Loan Works subsidies not already considered in the Loan Works Programme for this year. In these circumstances, I am unable to hold out any hope of financial assistance for extensions to the A.I.M. Hostel at Coen during this financial year.”

CONTROL OF HOOKWORM DISEASE AMONGST ABORIGINALS

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“Owing to the difficulty experienced in the control of Hookworm Disease at Missions, Native settlements and Thursday Island, will he have a health inspector who is experienced in the control of Hookworm Disease stationed at Thursday Island, his duties to include complete health inspections of all the Missions, settlements and Government reserves in areas controlled by the D. & A. Department from Thursday Island?”

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

“It is considered the control of hookworm in the Gulf region is satisfactory. In the financial year 1960-1961, 5,109 aborigines were examined for hookworm with a positive rate of 13.1 per cent. In the previous year 3,708 aborigines were examined with a positive rate of 30.1 per cent. The Missions investigated were Weipa, Bloomfield River, Hopevale, Mitchell River, Daintree Gorge, Aurukun, Lockhart River, and Yarrabah, and the Settlements were Bamaga, Cherbourg, and Woorabinda. Towns in the Gulf area were also visited. It is considered that the work can best be done from Cairns.”

POULTRY VACCINATION, NORTH QUEENSLAND

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

“(1) Owing to the heavy cost of I.L.T. vaccination experienced by poultry farmers in the Far North, costing one farmer over £600 per year, will he explain why poultry farmers in the Far North are forced to engage private veterinary surgeons for I.L.T. vaccination while poultry farmers in the South still have the services of the Agriculture and Stock Department at a very low cost?”

“(2) Will he have this matter fully investigated with the view to giving Far Northern poultry farmers the same concessions as poultry farmers in the South?”

Hon. O. O. MADSEN (Warwick) replied—

“(1 and 2) In 1959-1960 more than 80,000 birds were vaccinated by Departmental officers against infectious laryngo-

tracheitis in the North Queensland area. Much of this vaccination was at the pressing request of the poultry farmers themselves. The high level of vaccination in North Queensland imposed a severe drain on the time of our trained staff, preventing an extension of advisory and disease investigational work which is considered to be of greater value to the industry. While I.L.T. vaccination is carried out by Departmental personnel in other parts of Queensland, the numbers of birds involved in relation to staff available are much lower and vaccination is performed only as required in the light of disease risks. My Departmental officers are not convinced that a continued high level of vaccination is necessary to avoid infection. Their experience has been that after vaccination, for several years, the risk of fresh birds contracting I.L.T. is so slight that continued vaccination of large numbers of birds is uneconomical in the absence of outbreaks. I am advised that the rates charged by private practitioners are consistent with Departmental charges for I.L.T. vaccination but, if they are shown to be excessively larger, an investigation will be made. The present Departmental charge is 16s. per 100 birds. This is at present being reviewed and will probably have to be increased.”

FILLING OF VACANCIES, STYX COAL MINE

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

“Will the vacancies at the Styx Coal Mine be filled in accordance with the Award covering the coal mining industry and the custom which has prevailed in the industry for years, namely, that preference of employment should be given to employees of a company who may be unemployed through the closure of a mine or reduction of staff at a colliery belonging to the company?”

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

“All engagements of labour at the State Coal Mine, Ogmoo, will be made in accordance with the Award.”

PAINTING OF STATE RENTAL HOMES

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“Owing to the number of State Rental Homes in the Queensland Housing Commission estate at Seville Road project, Holland Park, and the Mount Gravatt East project that require a repaint because of deterioration since being erected, will he indicate what system operates in relation to the repainting of the exterior and interior of these State Rental Homes?”

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

“The implication behind this question is that the Housing Commission neglects the

repainting of its rental homes. The fact of the matter is that the last two years have seen an all-time record repainting activity. Following inspections in the metropolitan area alone over 1,300 houses were repainted externally between July 1, 1959, and June 30, 1961. The total cost of maintenance for these two years for the whole of Queensland was approximately £660,000. With the larger estates there is a periodical inspection of all houses and those in need of repainting are scheduled for attention. At Seville Road, Holland Park, an inspection of houses was made in July, 1960, when it was found that 53 required external repainting and those houses were repainted during November, 1960, to May, 1961. Inspection at the Mount Gravatt East project show that 156 houses needed external repainting and these houses were repainted between December, 1959, and November, 1960. Internal repainting is not carried out on the same bulk scale. It is carried out when found necessary on inspection, at changes in tenancy or following a request from the tenant."

GOODWILL OFFICERS, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) asked the Minister for Transport—

"Are the four goodwill officers appointed in his Department in 1957 still functioning? If so, what are their present salaries and what has been the result of their activities?"

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"Yes. The salary range for such position is from £1,634 to £1,709. Their services are continuing to be very valuable in retaining for the Railways traffic which otherwise would be lost to other means of transport."

NEW POLICE STATION AT BANYO

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"(1) When is it anticipated that the new police station at Banyo will become operative?"

"(2) What will be the staff strength at this station?"

"(3) Will the number of personnel at Virginia station be reduced?"

"(4) In view of the number of arrests made in the Banyo and Nudgee areas will he consider the construction of a cell at the new station?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier), for **Hon. K. J. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha), replied—

"(1) Before the end of September, 1961."

"(2) One Senior Constable."

"(3) Yes, by one man."

"(4) Consideration was given to the erection of a cell at this police station, but

having in mind the availability of mobile transport for conveyance of prisoners to the City Watchhouse, and the fact that the officer in charge of any police station is required by instructions to visit cells when a prisoner is detained therein no less than at four-hourly intervals, it was considered more convenient to have prisoners lodged in the City Watchhouse; in any case, it is never desirable to detain prisoners on serious charges in suburban lock-ups. Banyo Police Station is less than one mile from the Virginia Police Station where there is a cell in which prisoners could be lodged temporarily. The last arrest in the area was on August 12 last in respect of a charge of drunkenness. This offender was conveyed to the City Watchhouse."

AMOCO OIL REFINERY STAFF

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"Is he able to state the approximate number of staff to be employed by Amoco Oil Refinery when in full operation, apart from technical staff brought in from overseas?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier), for **Hon. K. J. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha), replied—

"In construction there will be increasing numbers employed up to a peak of 800 including about six from overseas, and this will taper off to completion. During operations 150-200 will be employed at the oil refinery and of these about six will be from overseas during the first year but this number will decrease to nil over a period of around 4-5 years. If all proposals for petro-chemicals eventuate, the total employment figure will be 1,200."

DAYTIME TRAINING OF APPRENTICES

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"(1) Has he given any thought to the suggestions, made by myself and other persons concerned with the various Apprenticeship Committees and the Trade Union Movement, that full daytime training for apprentices be instituted immediately?"

"(2) If he has, and he is in favour of full daytime training for apprentices, will he indicate when the scheme will be implemented?"

"(3) If he is not in favour of the scheme, what are his reasons?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZHEY (Isis) replied—

"(1) Yes."

"(2) I am not satisfied that daytime training is the complete answer. Higher educational entrance standards may lead to shorter apprenticeships and a complete revision of existing training methods."

"(3) See answer to (2)."

WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR PRISONERS

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"(1) Is there any form of Workers' Compensation covering persons in jail or similar institutions who are convicted of crimes and are serving a sentence with labour, manual or otherwise?"

"(2) If there is no form of Workers' Compensation covering these prisoners and they are injured during the course of their prison duties just prior to their discharge, what monetary compensation or relief is provided by the State Government until their health is such as to permit them to return to an occupation consistent with their normal capabilities?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"(1) No. Prisoners are not 'workers' within the meaning of the Workers' Compensation Acts."

"(2) The Honourable Member is referred to Section 43 of 'The Prisons Act of 1958' which is administered by my colleague, the Honourable the Minister for Justice."

PUNISHMENT OF JIMMY JACKO AT HOPEVALE MISSION

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"In view of the findings in the investigation made by the Visiting Justice, Mr. J. O. Lee, into the allegations made by the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement that an aboriginal named Jimmy Jacko had been illtreated—which allegations were proved correct—and the transfer of Pastor Kernick from the Hopevale Mission, what was the origin of his information as reported in the 'Telegraph' of June 6, 1961, that this aboriginal had been justifiably punished, especially after taking into consideration his statement as reported in 'The Courier-Mail,' when he quoted the Regulations under the Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act, stating that corporal punishment shall not be inflicted upon an aboriginal over the age of sixteen years on a reserve, settlement or mission reserve, and shall not be inflicted without the Director's authority?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"When a press report of an alleged caning of an aboriginal at the Hope Vale Mission was brought to my notice, I stated the provisions of the Regulations under the Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act concerning corporal punishment. I then immediately made arrangements for a phone conversation with the Superintendent of the Mission, Pastor E. Kernick. I was informed by Pastor Kernick, among other things, that the aboriginal concerned had taken a 16-year-old Aboriginal girl away from the Mission without her parents' consent. The Pastor also said that a Court of

Native Elders and Councillors decided that the Aboriginal concerned should be caned, and, to prevent excessive punishment by the Aboriginal's own people, he (Pastor Kernick) took the cane and gave the Aboriginal six light strokes. On the same day I also spoke to the Protector of Aboriginals at Cooktown, who told me that he had seen the Aboriginal shortly after the caning and that there was no marking or other evidence of injury, and from this he was satisfied that the Aboriginal had been subject only to light caning. Whilst the evidence at the Inquiry held by the Visiting Justice, Mr. J. O. Lee, did not substantiate the information given me by Pastor Kernick, it is only fair to point out that the Visiting Justice found that although the Pastor's actions were wrong, his motives were good. I might also mention that I have in my possession a statement signed by the President, United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia (Queensland District) expressing regret that information furnished to me by the Mission Staff was not substantiated by the evidence at the Inquiry."

PROFITEERING PREVENTION ACTS

PROPOSED DISALLOWANCE OF ORDER IN COUNCIL

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.37 a.m.): I move—

"That this House resolves that the Order in Council, dated 8 June, 1961, executed under the provisions of the Profiteering Prevention Acts, and laid upon the table of the House on the 22nd instant, be disallowed."

Although this is a very important subject Standing Orders permit only a limited period of time for debate. That could have some merit, in as much as it may sharpen the debate on this very important matter.

On many occasions we have seized the opportunity in this House to declare our opposition to the continual eroding away of the powers vested in the Government to deal with price control. I should like to make it quite clear at the beginning that we do not subscribe to the policy of price control merely because we want to be a nuisance to business, or because we believe in unduly hampering or restricting the normal business methods of those engaged in private enterprise. I have never subscribed to the view that we should endeavour to control profits by Parliamentary action, as I think that that could interfere unfairly with efficient management. If profits are considered to be unduly high the tax gatherer has an opportunity to recoup some of the excess profits on behalf of the taxpayers. These remarks apply broadly to the general operations of business, but I do think that this Parliament, particularly the A.L.P. section of it, and those who subscribe to its general policies, feels that experience has shown the necessity to retain controls

on essential items of foodstuffs. I should like to differentiate in that regard. I do not mind if there is complete abandonment of price control on fashion goods. If women want to change the style of their shoes every year and the length of the hem on their fashion gowns, or if we are to have luxury tinned goods from overseas, the people who are prepared to purchase them should be prepared to pay for their preference, and such goods should not be subject to price control. But the Order in Council of 8 June, the subject of this debate, decontrolled men's and children's haircuts, meat, butter, canned cream, margarine, power alcohol and wheat. It is true to say that this action of the Government is the climax of several other decontrol measures, so that we now have the virtual abandonment of price control in Queensland. As a result, it has paved the way for agreements by monopolies and trade combinations to eliminate competition, and to impose an unnecessarily heavy burden on the consumer. During the last four years something in the order of 200 items have been decontrolled by the Government. All that remains under price control now are bread, flour, kerosene and petroleum products, but the Minister said in "The Courier-Mail" of 9 June, 1961, that these items would be retained only until the Commonwealth and the States had agreed on uniform legislation to control trade combinations and restrictive trade practices. That is an airy-fairy sort of promise that the Minister is dangling before the people of Queensland because for many years there will be little evidence of uniformity between the States in the introduction of legislation to control trade combinations and restrictive trade practices as the Prime Minister, under pressure to initiate an inquiry into the matter, has suddenly gone cold on it.

Mr. Munro: You might be surprised.

Mr. DUGGAN: I will be agreeably surprised if that is the case.

From information given to me by people who should know, as they are close to the Liberal Party, their intentions were to put some teeth into this legislation, but it will be found that those teeth are considerably weaker or not as long as they intended them to be.

Our main directive on this question today is meat. That is a staple article used in the home every day. I do not mind if controls are not exercised on cars and such major items, where the expenditure is incurred once or twice, three times or four times in a lifetime, but where there is repetitive buying of essential foodstuffs, then in the interests of the economy and in order to be fair to the people, there should be some control.

I have no objection personally to fancy breads being decontrolled. If somebody wants special caraway-seed bread, or a special ingredient in bread, and is willing

to pay for the luxury, I have no objection, but things that the ordinary consumer is obliged to use should be controlled.

The Minister has constantly said that competition will be the best leveller of meat prices, but the facts do not support him. Wholesale meat prices have declined considerably at Cannon Hill in the last few months but they have not been reflected in retail prices. There has been a reduction of 3d. to 4½ a lb. in the wholesale price which should have reflected a reduction of 5d. or 6d. in the retail price of meat, but that has not happened. The reverse has taken place with some cuts of meat—there has been an increase in price.

I have in my possession a photostatic copy of a very interesting document issued by the Meat and Allied Trades Federation of Australia. In a circular dated 30 June last on the decontrol of meat prices it says that at the last annual general meeting of the Queensland Divisional Executive a resolution was passed instructing the Divisional Committee to use every possible endeavour to bring about the decontrol of meat prices in Queensland. Note the word "instructing."

So much is heard about instructions from political organisations and here we have evidence of them. Following the circularising of this resolution meat prices were decontrolled on 10 June, 1961.

At the end of the circular, Mr. Shand, the secretary of the Federation, says—

"This opportunity is taken of commending you to support in every possible way the action taken by the present Government in freeing you to control your own business as business people, and, irrespective of what your personal beliefs may have been, as secretary I commend you to appreciate the action of the Liberal-Country Party in the decision they have made."

On whose behalf? On behalf of the butchers of this State.

There is at present a tremendous building programme on expensive butcher shops. I attended a function held by the butchers' association. I know some of its members very well. Some of the Sydney people were twitting our friends here because they did not have shops comparable to those in Sydney where they spend £70,000 to £80,000 on gleaming salons of glass and chromium which reflect the floodtide of the butchers' fortunes.

I say that they are not only making an honourable profit by doing an honourable trade but they are also making tremendous capital gains for which the consumers have to pay. They build these elaborate premises out of the fabulous profits and eventually make tremendous capital gains from them. The Minister indicated that the position should be watched. On the eve of the

North Toowoomba by-election he said that control of prices would be watched. He said there would be a prices advisory committee. We all know how he has contemptuously disregarded the advice of that committee. We know that the number of price control officers has been reduced from approximately 57 to 13 or 14 at the present time. He said the Government must have someone as a watchdog. The watchdog he provides at the present time can neither bark nor bite. We hear about the butchers' annual picnic, but butchers at the present time are having a picnic every day instead of one from time to time. The Government have adopted a policy of an open go, but lower prices have not been reflected by open competition. Take the tenders submitted to the Brisbane City Council and the Railway Department for electrical goods. Identical tenders are submitted. Oil companies submit tenders that are identical to the fraction of a penny. The same can be said in regard to meat. Ordinary consumers are obliged in the purchase of meat to take a combination of bread, sausages, mincemeat and things of that nature. It is time some action was taken to prevent the current spiralling of prices.

The Government on the one hand have tried to control wages to some extent, inasmuch as it is not permissible for the industrial tribunal to give automatic application of cost-of-living adjustments. The Government have made it obligatory on the trade unions to state a case for an increase to the tribunal, but no obligation is placed on those whose goods have been decontrolled to state a case for an increase in price. They can decide to increase rates according to their own wishes in the matter. The Government's policy has not achieved the success that the Minister claimed would be achieved with decontrol of prices, and consumers generally have been victimised as a result of Government policy in this matter.

Mr. HANLON (Baroona) (11.47 a.m.): I second the resolution so ably moved by my leader for the disallowance of the Order in Council of 8 June, 1961. It is the latest step in the policy of the Government to deprive consumers of the protection of price control. And it was brought down in typical fashion by the Government, as if it were a very trifling matter, in the middle of the Parliamentary recess, so that some months would elapse before any objection could be taken to it in Parliament.

On previous occasions when the Opposition moved for the disallowance of similar Orders in Council, the Minister said it was ridiculous for the Opposition, session after session, to protest against the further relaxation of price control by Order in Council. I point out that our course on this matter is set by the Government, that if there is anything ridiculous in our action, it springs from the policy of the Government themselves, a

policy that the Minister has seen fit to describe as orderly relaxation of price control. We know that the reason why we move for the disallowance of such Orders in Council is that the Government have pursued this policy described by the Minister as orderly relaxation of price control, in order gradually to impose them on the public so that they will not realise the full effect of them.

If I had the genius of an Ian Gall, I should depict the Minister in his role of Prices Minister, as Salome performing the Dance of the Seven Veils, because in 1957, a couple of months after the Government came to office, we had the first step in this policy of relaxation in regard to fish, fruit and vegetables. In July, 1958, we saw the next one, which related to various classes of goods including food, clothing, furniture and so on. Then in February, 1959, there was a further relaxation of price control on foodstuffs, groceries and clothing. Then in November, 1959, price control was removed from tea and breakfast foods. With the issue of the latest Order in Council we are down to the bare essentials.

Mr. Aikens: The Minister is down to his bare essentials.

Mr. HANLON: I know the Minister is in no way whatever a substitute for Salome. He is not exposing himself by a relaxation of price control. It is the community he is exposing. It is the public who are being taken advantage of by the Government's policy. Up until now it has not been possible to discern any rhyme or reason for the relaxation of price control. Why did the Government decide to maintain price control on men's and children's haircuts until the latest Order in Council, yet, some time before, lift price control on tyres and tubes? How could they determine that such items as tyres and tubes should be decontrolled last year and that control should be retained on petrol? There does not appear to be any reason in their actions. It is something that the public and Parliament are entitled to know. A few days before this Order in Council was brought down decontrolling meat prices, the Commissioner of Prices, Mr. Fullagar, announced that he was instituting a full inquiry into the prices paid for meat by the public. It came about because Country Party supporters wanted an explanation for the wide variation between the price paid for beef to the producer and the price paid by the consumers. The Commissioner of Prices made the announcement in the Press that he was going to institute the fullest inquiry and that seemed to be the opportunity for solving the meat price mystery. I am not pointing the bone at the retail butcher, the wholesaler, or anyone else, but it seems very obvious that somewhere along the line the consumer is being fleeced. Country Party supporters were anxious to have the

inquiry and in a matter of three or four days, or perhaps a week or so, after the announcement about the full inquiry, the Liberal Minister in charge of prices announced that he had decontrolled the price of meat. In other words, he cut Mr. Fullagar off at the start, before even the inquiry could get under way.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HART (Mt. Gravatt) (11.52 a.m.): There is, and there has been, in every one of these debates in the House a prime fallacy in the argument put forward by the Opposition. The fallacy arises because the Opposition assume that price-fixing keeps prices down. That belief is held despite all the evidence that has been before this House, and despite the body of the evidence that is before the public of the State. In the face of all that evidence the Opposition still assume that their old remedy of price-fixing is sufficient. It is nothing of the kind!

Mr. Walsh: Why did the Menzies Government introduce it?

Mr. HART: During the time that we had price control, from 1947 to 1957, when the Labour Government sponsored it—and I think the former Minister, Mr. Power, genuinely sponsored it and genuinely believed in it—the price of goods rose threefold. Since decontrol has taken place the price of goods has risen but not to the same extent. In our community there is a general depreciation in the value of money of about 2 per cent. every year and it will go on. That process has been going on for centuries.

I said in this House in 1958—and, I think, it is reported in "Hansard" in Vol. 221, at page 119—that a former Premier of this State pointed out that the present gentleman who leads the Opposition does not believe in price fixing at all and that he had opposed it on several occasions. Does he think that price-fixing is in any way an effective control over restrictive trade practices?

The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that these restrictive trade practices are continuing. He pointed out that tenders are all the same. We all know that. That is something we all think now should be controlled. Last year I made a speech on the necessity for a Restrictive Trade Practices Act. That is necessary but price-fixing does not control that. The basic point is this: if you are going to push people about with price-fixing, if you are going to control them and make them do things, you must be certain that what you are doing is effective.

The hon. member for Bundaberg interjected a while ago and said that a Government—whether it was the Menzies' Government or not I am not sure—fixed prices in war-time.

Mr. Walsh: In 1939 under the National Security legislation.

Mr. HART: I agree that in times of national emergency price-fixing is necessary; but price-fixing alone is not sufficient; the whole economy must be controlled, and the whole economy is not controlled at the moment so price-fixing is useless. Personally I do not think people in peace-time are willing to put up with what they would accept in war-time, and it is not necessary. It was necessary to mobilise the country for added strength in time of war. But what we need at the moment and what I hope we will get is a Restrictive Trade Practices Act. If we follow the English pattern, restrictive trade practices will be declared illegal unless it can be shown broadly that they are in the public interest. Simply fixing prices is ineffective and merely annoys the community and I have no time for it.

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (11.57 p.m.): It is extraordinary to hear the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt telling the House that he believes people should be protected from profiteering during war years and then exposed to it to the greatest possible degree in time of peace.

Mr. Hart: That is not what I said.

Mr. HILTON: That was the substance of his argument. It is true, as the hon. member for Bundaberg interjected, that it was a Liberal Prime Minister in the person of Mr. Menzies who introduced price control throughout Australia in 1939 and before that Queensland was the only State that had an effective system of price-control.

Mr. HART: I rise to a point of order. What I said was that price-fixing alone was not effective in controlling prices. I said the whole economy had to be controlled for price-fixing to be effective. The Commonwealth has not now the power to control the economy in the way it had in War time and the people would be quite unwilling to give it that power.

Mr. HILTON: I will deal with that in a moment. Before 1939 Queensland was the only State with an effective system of price control, and if the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt wants further argument from Liberal sources as to the effectiveness of price control as administered by former Governments in this State, let me quote to him the Liberal Premier of South Australia, Sir Thomas Playford, who quite frankly at a meeting of the Loan Council a few years ago intimated that Queensland was the most successful State in Australia in halting inflation.

Mr. Walsh: The only State, he said.

Mr. HILTON: The only State. I give Sir Thomas Playford this much credit, that, in those days, apart from Queensland, South Australia did more in that direction than any other State.

So the arguments of the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt are not worth much—indeed,

they are worth nothing—in this debate. One would have thought that by this time the Government of Queensland would have realised the disastrous far-reaching effect the abandonment of the people to profiteering is having on the State's economy. Those commodities that have a direct bearing on the basic wage have been released from price control with the result that we have seen the spiral of inflation increase tremendously in Queensland under the present regime and the Government will be forced, as other States will be in due course, in order to curb this inflation that is wrecking our economy, to bring down legislation that will effectively curtail the profiteering that is undoubtedly being pursued by so many unscrupulous people in the world of trade at the present time.

Mr. Graham: Those are the members of the Liberal Party.

Mr. HILTON: Unfortunately, many people engage in it. There are some honest retailers, some honest people in business; thank God for that; but unfortunately there are many unscrupulous people.

The Government talk about competition being a restraining influence on prices, but, taking meat as an example, in many centres throughout Queensland there is no competition between butchers. In many of the smaller towns, and even in some suburban areas in Brisbane, there is only one butcher shop and the people have to accept the meat at the price at which it is offered. Nobody can deny that fact. The Government, with their tongues in their cheeks, talk about keeping prices down when they know full well that in many suburban areas and in many towns throughout Queensland there is absolutely no competition. Was it not the fact that the public was being exploited in regard to beef prices that inspired the president of the U.G.A., Mr. Bell to make pointed reference to that? I think the hon. member for Baroona said that supporters of the Country Party were urging that something should be done about meat prices. Mr. Bell, realising the effect that meat prices were having on home consumption, stated publicly that something should be done about them.

Mr. Duggan: That was only on 31 May last, too.

Mr. HILTON: That is quite true. Almost immediately afterwards the Government took steps to eliminate all further argument by decontrolling meat prices. It is absurd that in these days of allegedly well-organised society we should allow people to experience the ravages of profiteering, that we should give legal sanction, as it were, to profiteering by removing all restraint on meat prices. One has only to ascertain roughly the number of carcasses of beef, mutton and pork sold in the average butcher shop in a week and add an extra penny a pound to the price—on many cuts it would be much more

than one penny—to realise the large sums of money that unscrupulous retailers are taking from their customers each week.

(Time expired.)

Mr. CAMPBELL (Aspley) (12.3 p.m.): From the remarks and arguments advanced by the Opposition this morning, one would expect prices to remain static under rigid price control. However, when we look at the movement in prices that has taken place over the years, we find that price fixing has no relation to the prices of commodities and relates only to the fixing of margins. Prices are influenced by factors that are far beyond the control of any price-fixing authority; therefore price fixing is merely an illusion.

It is obvious from the remarks of hon. members opposite that they think every person who buys or sells and who renders a service to the community is a person who is unscrupulous, dishonest, and not to be trusted. They say, in effect, that the corner shop-keeper is not to be trusted because he might diddle you for something on a box of matches, and that the butcher, the baker, and the grocer, all people who are respectable members of the community, are not to be trusted because their main object in life is to fleece the unsuspecting public.

Hon. members on this side of the House do not believe that these people who are engaged in supplying services to the community are dishonest. We believe that they are honest, and we believe that there is sufficient and efficient competition between traders to ensure that the prices of our commodities remain stable. There is one way in which price control can be effective. That no doubt will come if in the dim distant future the Australian Labour Party's policy of democratic socialism is introduced. It will be effective then because every other aspect of community life will be controlled. Only under such controls can price control be effective.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I would not be too sure about that. People in Australia are not so keen on such a hybrid philosophy. Since price fixing has been relaxed results demonstrate that with the free flow of goods and commodities reasonable prices can be maintained.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (12.6 p.m.): The remarks of the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt and the hon. member for Aspley could be very truthfully described as a lot of flamboyant nonsense, talking as they did in general terms about price control not controlling prices. First of all I am going to look at the date of the Order in Council. There is a good deal of truth in what the Leader of the Opposition said, that it was brought down in order to prevent the inquiry demanded by the United Graziers Association. However, I believe it was brought down at that time for entirely different

reasons. It was brought down on the eve of two important by-elections. No-one was very much concerned about the outcome of the Barcoo by-election. Without being derogatory of the present hon. member for Barcoo or any past member for Barcoo I should say that any man at all carrying the Labour banner could win the Barcoo seat. Whitsunday was an entirely different proposition. It is a border-line seat that could have been won by Labour. With all of the cards stacked in their favour I am amazed that Labour did not win the seat. I honestly and sincerely believe that the Order in Council was brought down as a superlative act of treachery by the Minister for Justice, in order to prevent, if possible, a Country Party member winning the Whitsunday seat. I challenge the Minister. I leave that thought in the minds of Country Party members; it is a serious thought. The bringing down of the Order in Council lifting price control on meat handed a weapon to the Leader of the Opposition, and all the supporters of the Labour Party, with which to strike down the Country Party candidate. Would this Order in Council have been brought down, would price control have been lifted on the eve of the Whitsunday by-election, had the Government candidate been a Liberal candidate instead of a Country Party candidate? I leave that thought with Country Party members. I know it is a thought that will receive a great deal of consideration.

Mr. Walsh: And they announced the reduction in subsidies.

Mr. AIKENS: Yes, the reduction in subsidies. Why did they do it on the eve of a by-election? To give the Opposition such a tremendous weapon was either an act of incredible stupidity or an act of indefensible treachery. The Minister for Justice can have it any way he likes.

In Townsville we have no competition in the meat industry at all because the whole of the meat trade is controlled by the wholesalers, Amagraz and Swifts. They fix the prices and, of course, the retailers have to sell in accordance with the wholesale prices.

They must have known that price control was to be lifted because the week before it was lifted they charged such staggering prices, particularly for shin beef, ox tongues, skirt steak, brains, liver, kidney—all of the offal meats and all of the cheap meats that were the only choice of supply to the working class. They put the prices up in some cases by as much as 8d. a lb. After that had been done the Minister for Justice announced that price controls on meat had been abolished. Listen to what appeared in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" two days afterwards. When they talk about the lifting of price controls and competition controlling prices, let them listen to what was said in Townsville and what appeared in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin."

Dr. Noble: What book are you reading from?

Mr. AIKENS: Hon. members can laugh! Yes, this is my railway driver's book that I am using; the press cutting is pasted in it. Because I am an economical man I see no reason why I should not use it. Let hon. members listen to this from "The Townsville Daily Bulletin"—

"Townsville housewives could expect to pay more for certain cuts of beef from next Monday.

A spokesman for the Townsville Master Butchers' Association said this on Thursday.

He said that the price rises would follow directly the relaxing of price controls on beef."

That is a statement from the Master Butchers' Association. The Leader of the Opposition has read an official circular that all the retailers received from Mr. Shand of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation but he did not tell you of the phone calls to many of the retail butchers in every provincial city in the State. One such phone call was, so one of my friends told me, from Shand, Master Butchers' Association in Brisbane to Townsville butchers asking them not to make their price rises too hot—with the accent on the "too"—all at once but to adopt a policy of steady, persistent rises so that the people would not squeal too loudly. Here it is in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin"—

(Time expired.)

Mr. WALLACE (Cairns) (12.11 p.m.): I rise to support the resolution. The Leader of the Opposition has again directed the spotlight of public opinion onto the callous disregard of this Government for the welfare of the people of Queensland. The lifting of price control is just another indication of the political incapacity of the Government and indicates most clearly their intention to do everything possible to destroy the workers of this State, physically and financially.

The lifting of price and other controls, in my opinion, constitutes a vicious attack on the workers of Queensland and has been done for the purpose of lowering their morale and resistance with a view to creating the same state of economic turmoil that existed prior to the advent of Labour administration. At that time the workers were forced to go cap in hand to their masters when seeking some improvement in conditions. It is in keeping with the vicious legislation recently brought down in this Chamber for the purpose of preventing the workers of Queensland obtaining natural and moral justice in industry, and by which the employers were given the green light to subjugate and prevent their employees—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the matter before the Chamber.

Mr. WALLACE: I am coming to that. Meat is one of the commodities necessary

for the maintenance of the people's health, so as a butcher and one who has been through economic restrictions such as are operating today, and knowing what parents are facing in providing this commodity for their families, I visited many butcher shops in Brisbane. I believe that Brisbane is a fair example of what is going on all over the State. I found that in butcher shops in Brisbane there is gross misrepresentation on the cuts of meat that people are receiving. I should say that the people of Brisbane are being mulcted of many pounds in addition to what they should be rightly expected to pay for their meat. A glance in some of the windows of these shops reveals a great variation in the quality of meat in different shops but I was mostly concerned with the misrepresentation that is taking place.

In almost every shop there are only one or two cuts of meat priced in the window. The remainder of cuts are on display without any prices on them and, being fairly knowledgeable on meat cuts, I found gross misrepresentation in many instances. One of the worst features was in relation to silver-side, which is generally recognised as being excellent beef for corning and boiling but absolutely unsuitable for other purposes. I found silver-side being put before the public as an excellent braising steak. Not being content with representing it as such, they had actually increased the price of it by 3d. a pound—it being recommended to the public as braising steak.

Mr. Walsh: Some get it off the shin.

Mr. WALLACE: I do not say that, because I do not agree with it. I do not blame the retail butchers for the full increases. Retail butchers must charge a price that will give them a return on the beef that goes through their shops. They have to pay the price asked by the wholesalers. The blame for high prices can be laid at the door of the wholesalers, not the retailers.

Further, on the score of misrepresentation, I point out that topside steak is being advertised in Brisbane shop windows as yearling steak, for which butchers get a higher price. Yearling meat brings a higher price than ox or cow beef. Mince is being advertised as minced topside. Other mince is advertised as minced steak.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (12.16 p.m.): I support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Baroona and the hon. member for Cairns, in opposition to the lifting of price control on the various items set out in the Order in Council. When the announcement of the lifting of price control over these articles was mentioned in the Press, the Minister made the surprising statement that keen competition would keep down retail prices. I do not know whom he was trying to fool. I do

not know whether he meant competition between butchers, competition in the buying of beef, or competition among producers. We were told about the same time that there was a shortage of cattle owing to the drought. With a shortage of cattle, how could there be competition? The final stroke of decontrol of meat prices was in my opinion the result of three years planning by the Government to gradually lift price control. The Government did not want to offend their supporters, who believed in it, so they gradually pursued this course. In fact, the death-knell of price control was sounded some time ago when the Minister amended the regulations covering price control of meat and providing that the margin of profit would be fixed. Prior to that time control was exercised at the right end, that is in the butcher's shop. The wholesalers at that time had to buy beef at a price that would allow of its sale by the butcher at a profit. That was control at the right end, the consumer end. That type of control is exercised and fostered by the Country and Liberal parties in other spheres affecting overseas trade. The Government in those matters believe in price control although they do not use that name. They refer to it as stabilisation of prices. They believe in stabilised prices for wheat and sugar, and as soon as anyone in overseas countries suggests abolition of price control the Government and their supporters cry out very loudly in protest. I agree with that attitude, but the Government are not consistent. They do not want unfair competition from overseas countries with low living standards. When it was suggested that the price of sugar would fall because of under-cutting of prices by overseas countries, the Government wanted stabilisation. The people of Queensland want stabilisation. They want to know where they are going. The housewife is affected to the greatest extent, because she does not know from day to day how she will be able to carry on with her restricted budget.

The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt spoke for his allotted time and I intended to reply to his statements, but unfortunately I could not find in his speech one point that was worth replying to.

Price control operates in the matter of wages. The Industrial Commission determines the income of the workers. Why not carry through the principle so that the cost structure will have the same basis?

When the Government, through the Minister, decided that price control would be on a margin of profit, they immediately destroyed the effectiveness of control. It was found recently that the United Graziers Association was not happy about that method, as profits were made by the wholesalers rather than by the producers. The United Graziers Association complained and suggested an inquiry, but that did not meet with the wishes of the Minister. Being a Liberal supporter, the Minister did not want to do that. He said, "I cannot interfere with the wholesaler, and

must therefore do something for the Country Party men," that is the producers. As my Leader has said, that is the reason why the Minister deliberately brought down the Order in Council covered by the motion. If we want to get down to the facts of how to overcome this problem which, I believe, is the main thing, we must have price control of commodities in short supply that affect the everyday life of our people. That is the only way to have effective stabilisation in this country. We have heard members of the Government Party say on many occasions that we want stabilisation. When he introduced the industrial legislation I heard the Minister for Labour and Industry say that we want stabilisation of costs, and we have all heard other Ministers of the Crown speaking in the same vein. Why not let price control operate effectively and let those who seek an increase justify it as was done for many years. In those days, if an industry, or a person, required an increase in the price of a commodity, it was necessary to go before the appropriate tribunal and have it determined.

(Time expired.)

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (12.21 p.m.), in reply: I expected that in support of a motion of this kind the mover and seconder, and those who spoke in support of the motion, would put forward some substantial arguments, but having listened very carefully I have not been able to perceive a single argument that I could regard as tangible. There have been many generalities and references to my doing an unveiling act which, no doubt, would be very attractive. There have been references to long teeth and short teeth, unscrupulous traders, and also references to by-elections. However, there seems to have been a singular absence of any evidence to support a claim that this Order in Council removing certain commodities from price control is injuring the people of the State.

I was interested to note that the Leader of the Opposition, to some extent, has retreated from the statements that he has made in this House on many other occasions. In the last three of four years, either he or his deputy, has objected to every item we have removed from price control, saying consistently at the time that everything we did was wrong. Now the Leader of the Opposition says, in effect, "You may have been right on some of the previous occasions, but you are wrong now."

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

Mr. MUNRO: I say this because he concentrates on food lines, and tells us to be a little realistic and keep our feet on the ground. Let us consider all the items that we have decontrolled on this occasion and state them shortly under their general names. We have decontrolled one item, that is wheat, which is subject to control in another State, that has hardly been mentioned. In addition

we have decontrolled butter, canned cream, margarine, meat, power alcohol and men's and children's haircuts. According to the latest information that we have not one of these items is controlled in any other Australian State.

Mr. Duggan: Haircuts went up 6d. the day after they were decontrolled.

Mr. MUNRO: If the Leader of the Opposition will answer my points after I have produced them all, I think it will be better. I emphasise that substantially we are only bringing the position in Queensland into line with that in several other Australian States, including two States where Labour Governments are in power.

The next point raised by the Leader of the Opposition was that this would lead to monopolies and trade combinations. He more or less implied that no action was being taken but he should know that the Commonwealth and all the States are in active consultation at the moment with a view to bringing forward uniform legislation to deal with any monopolies or trade combinations which are contrary to the public interest. Notwithstanding that, he says, the real bogey is in monopolies and trade combinations. Then he goes on to support that, and, almost in the same breath, he claims that in Queensland wholesale prices of meat have been reduced while retail prices of meat have not been reduced. If there is any substance in his claim, that disproves his previous argument because very clearly there is a much greater measure of competition in the retail selling of meat than there is in the wholesale selling of meat.

Mr. Aikens: Where is the competition in Townsville? Let us get down to facts.

Mr. MUNRO: In fact there is plenty of competition in the retail selling of meat with the one exception of the small country town where there is only one butcher. I will concede there that there may not be competition. On the other hand, price control of the small butcher in the small country town can operate very unfairly because he has a relatively small turnover and he has higher overhead costs in relation to his turnover. If you have a centralised Queen Street price control of the pound of chops that is sold by a small butcher in a country town, you are still doing more harm than good.

However, we will proceed to the hon. member for Baroona, who wrapped his argument round his objection to the orderly decontrol of prices. Does the hon. member for Baroona want a disorderly decontrol of prices?

Mr. Hanlon: No, but if the decontrol is not going to lead to increased prices why did you not come out in the open with your policy and decontrol the lot in 1957? Because you were frightened to!

Mr. MUNRO: I have explained that.

Mr. Hanlon: You are doing it gradually so that people cannot see the result.

Mr. MUNRO: Let me quote what we said in our policy speech in 1957. I will not have time to read the whole of it but this is what we said among other things at that time—

“Price-fixing orders can temporarily control prices but in their long-term effect they just as often aggravate the evil.”

We quite recognise that this artificial set-up of governmental control of prices creates a state of affairs like a patient who comes out of hospital and is supported on crutches. Immediately after the crutches are taken away there may be an adverse effect. We have had to watch the economy very carefully to see that we did not take any action that would harm it. The success of our efforts has been beyond our expectations because there has been substantially no increase in prices as the result of our actions, and that can be amply proved by figures that I will give the House in a few moments.

I will have to pass on very quickly. The leader of the Queensland Labour Party referred to remarks that had been passed by Sir Thomas Playford at one time supporting Queensland, but I will make comparisons later between Queensland and South Australia that will completely disprove any value in that.

The hon. member for Townsville South, who always likes to introduce a political slant into any debate whether it is an economic one or otherwise, suggested that we were wrong in taking this action particularly before a by-election.

Mr. Aikens: I did not say you were wrong. I said it was incredibly stupid or indefensibly treacherous.

Mr. Hanlon: Why did you stop Mr. Fullagar just when he started his inquiry?

Mr. MUNRO: One interjection at a time. The hon. member for Townsville South suggested it was the wrong thing to do at that time because it was immediately prior to a by-election. A previous speaker—I think it was the hon. member for Baroona—suggested that we were dishonest because we did it while Parliament was not sitting. Look at the anomalies and inconsistencies in those statements. Surely if a Government wish to escape the consequences of their action and are not brave enough to meet Parliament, they would not be brave enough to meet the electors in a by-election.

Mr. Aikens: Didn't you have the by-election in mind when you removed price control? Didn't you do it to defeat the Country Party candidate?

Mr. MUNRO: Apparently the hon. member for Townsville South does not know

that Orders in Council are not issued by any one Minister but are considered by every member of Cabinet. This Order in Council was issued by the Governor in Council, and every member of Cabinet in fact gave the whole matter full and fair consideration.

I shall have to be brief because my time has almost expired. There has been a great deal of talk about meat prices. The latest figures available—they are only up to 30 June last—show that in recent months meat prices have been declining rather than increasing. I do not take any credit for that, because it depends largely on factors that I cannot control whether we have price control or not.

I wish to make two comparisons. First, there was a reference to what a wonderful job former Labour Governments did in keeping prices down when they were in office. I have previously quoted these figures, but just let me point out that there were very much greater annual rises in the cost of living when Labour was in power and the operation of price control was more widespread than it is now. I will take the peaks because I must illustrate my point quickly. In the year 1950-1951, the C Series Index showed an increase of 13.3 per cent. in the cost of living in Queensland, and in the following year it showed an increase of 22.9 per cent. I am not endeavouring to use those figures to show that our policies are right or wrong, but they do show that there were very much greater increases in prices in those days.

Mr. Walsh: You know you are not being fair in that, because the referendum held in 1948 resulted in the abolition of Commonwealth price control.

Mr. MUNRO: They were exceptional circumstances; but in the years that I have mentioned there was price control in Queensland and it was ineffective.

One hon. member has asked me to make a comparison between the States. Our major move away from price control in Queensland was made in February 1959. In the two years since then the price increase in Queensland has been the lowest in the six Australian States. Using one method of computation, that is, a combination of the C Series Index and the Consumer Price Index, South Australia, the one State that has clung most tenaciously to price control, had the highest increase of the six Australian States, and if we compute it on the Consumer Price Index only for the same two periods, South Australia had the second highest increase.

Not only has no evidence been put forward by the Opposition to support their claim, but the evidence that I have put before the House indicates very clearly and strongly that our policy has been correct. Let me sum up in this way: the Opposition have been batting on a very sticky wicket this morning. When they come into the House and want to hit a few sixers, their rule

should be to wait until there is a loose ball for them to hit. They should not attempt to hit a ball such as this, when the case for the Government is well documented and is unequivocally against their argument.

Question—That the motion (Mr. Duggan) be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 28

Mr. Adair	Mr. Inch
„ Aikens	„ Lloyd
„ Baxter	„ Mann
„ Burrows	„ Marsden
„ Byrne	„ Melloy
„ Davies	„ Newton
„ Dean	„ O'Donnell
„ Donald	„ Sherrington
„ Dufficy	„ Thackeray
„ Duggan	„ Tucker
„ Graham	„ Walsh
„ Gunn	
„ Hanlon	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Hilton	Mr. Bromley
„ Houston	„ Wallace

NOES, 42

Mr. Anderson	Mr. Lonergan
„ Armstrong	„ Low
„ Beardmore	„ Madsen
„ Bjeike-Petersen	„ Müller
„ Camm	„ Munro
„ Campbell	„ Nicklin
„ Carey	Dr. Noble
„ Chalk	Mr. Pilbeam
Dr. Delamothe	„ Pizzey
Mr. Dewar	„ Rae
„ Evans	„ Ramsden
„ Ewan	„ Richter
„ Fletcher	„ Row
„ Harrison	„ Smith
„ Hart	„ Taylor
„ Hewitt	„ Tooth
„ Hiley	„ Wharton
„ Hodges	„ Windsor
„ Houghton	
„ Hughes	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Jones	Mr. Hooper
„ Knox	„ Sullivan

PAIRS

Mr. Bennett	Mr. Herbert
„ Diplock	„ Gilmore

Resolved in the negative.

The House adjourned at 12.44 p.m.