

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 18 OCTOBER 1961**

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**WEDNESDAY, 18 OCTOBER, 1961**

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

**QUESTIONS****WATER RELEASED FROM TINAROO DAM FOR STOCK**

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“(1) What was the total acre feet of water released from the Tinaroo Dam into the Walsh River to assist stock in the country as far as the Mitchell River junction?”

“(2) Has he any information allowing a reasonable assessment, of the number of stock saved by the release of this water?”

“(3) Are any pastoral companies or graziers being required to pay any moneys to the Department for the water which saved the lives of their cattle?”

**Hon. O. O. MADSEN** (Warwick—Minister for Agriculture and Forestry), for **Hon. A. R. FLETCHER** (Cunningham), replied—

“(1) 9,000 acre feet of water have been released from Tinaroo Falls Dam into the Walsh River in connection with the supply of water for stock as far as the Mitchell River junction, a distance of 130 miles beyond the limits of the Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Area. The latest advice indicates that the released water has supplied 110 miles and releases are continuing with a view to supplying the Walsh River to that junction.”

“(2) The Mareeba Shire Council, at whose request the release of water was made, has advised that the results achieved have been of great benefit to pastoralists concerned, who estimate 4,000 head of cattle have been saved.”

"(3) The present release is being made as an experiment to ascertain the feasibility of supplying this section of the Walsh River and no charge was made. However, the Mareeba Shire Council was advised that if the experiment was a success and further releases were requested, graziers would be required to meet a charge for the water supplied."

JAPANESE STEEL USED ON MOUNT ISA  
PROJECT

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

"(1) Is it a fact that Japanese steel is being used on the Mount Isa-Townsville railway reconstruction project? If so, for what purposes is it being used, in what quantities and at what cost?"

"(2) Why is steel being procured from Japan rather than from Australian sources?"

"(3) What steel, if any, was imported into Queensland from Japan during the year 1960-1961 and what was the landed cost?"

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

"(1) Japanese steel is being procured by the Hawaiian Dredging—Pomeroy, Haunstrup Coy., the successful tenderers, in the work of No. 6 Contract 'Bridges, Hughenden to Duchess and Appurtenant Works', the superstructure of which bridges will be of prestressed concrete. The types of steel being so used are deformed bars and wire strand. The total quantity of reinforcing steel, i.e., deformed bars, is 671 tons and the price delivered Townsville, including Customs Duty, is £60 per long ton. The tonnage of wire strand is 518 and delivered on wharf, Townsville, the price, including Customs Duty is £123 per long ton."

"(2) When this steel was ordered none was being made in Australia. Broken Hill Pty. Limited, from whom inquiries were made, stated it was considering manufacturing deformed bars but would not accept a firm order. They thought manufacture might commence in November or December, 1961, but the progress of the work could not be held up pending any such possibility. Wire strand is not made in Australia."

"(3) So far as the Railway Department and the Mount Isa Railway Project are concerned, it is not known that any steel was imported into Queensland from Japan during 1960-1961 year."

WOMEN ON JURIES

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

"(1) How many women have registered for jury service in (a) Southern, (b) Central and (c) Northern Queensland?"

"(2) How many were called for jury service in the Criminal Court during the year ended June 30, 1961?"

"(3) How many served on the jury?"

"(4) How many were challenged by (a) the Crown and (b) the defence?"

**Hon. A. W. MUNRO** (Toowong) replied—

"(1 to 4) Enquiries are being made in relation to this matter. I ask the Honourable Member to repeat his Question on Tuesday next."

INSPECTION OF INTERSTATE MEAT AT  
BORTHWICK'S WORKS

**Mr. HOUGHTON** (Redcliffe) asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

"With reference to his answer to my question on Friday, October 13—

(1) Does he believe that Borthwicks is one of the organisations to which public welfare is something less than a matter of first importance and one which delivers a product that is not of the highest possible standard?

(2) If there are organisations such as this, will he tell the House whether he has other powers and whether these powers allow him to take action against these organisations?

(3) If he possesses such powers, what action is he taking or does he intend to take?

(4) With reference to his statement that the cost of handling during inspections by the Queensland Meat Industry Board at the Brisbane Abattoir amounted to one-third of a penny, will he instruct the Queensland Meat Industry Board to refund to all operators concerned all amounts charged over and above one-third of a penny per pound?

(5) Following the decision of the Magistrate in the Ipswich Petty Sessions Court on Thursday, September 28, that an Ipswich butcher did not have to submit for inspection at the Ipswich Abattoir meat he had brought interstate, will he tell the House whether the Queensland Meat Industry Board as a result of this decision still has the power to demand that interstate meat shall be submitted to them or to any other district abattoir for inspection?"

**Hon. O. O. MADSEN** (Warwick) replied—

"(1 to 5) As stated in my answer to the question relating to meat inspection, asked by the Honourable Member on October 12, I desire to again emphasise, that the primary concern of my officers is to ensure that the meat-consuming public receives a product of the highest possible standard. There have been occasions, when inspectors have found meat brought in from interstate sources which has not measured up to the required standard. My Department has the

powers to inspect and give directions in regard to such meats, and I assure the Honourable Member that these powers will be exercised. The charge made by the Queensland Meat Industry Board for meat handling at that works is based on an estimated cost, and bears no relation to the claim made by Borthwicks that such handling cost can be covered by a charge of one penny per carcass. This claim is, as usual, extravagant and misleading. The Honourable Member may rest assured, that interstate meat coming into Queensland will continue to be inspected, and I sincerely trust that the Honourable Member, acting in his capacities as a Member of this Parliament, first citizen of a city area, as well as agent for the firm previously mentioned, will assist my Department in ensuring that his fellow Queenslanders receive meat completely suitable for human consumption. The decision of the Magistrate in the Ipswich case will not, in any way, affect the policy of my Department in this regard."

HOMES BUILT THROUGH TOWNSVILLE  
CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETY

**Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville North) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"Are public tenders called for all homes built through the Townsville Co-operative Housing Society? If not, what is the procedure adopted to determine who shall be given the contracts?"

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

"I am not aware of the practice of the Society in this behalf but the selection of a builder is a matter primarily for the applicant. The function of the Society is merely to finance."

TIN AND IRON ORE DEPOSITS, MOUNT SPEC-  
EWAN AREA, TOWNSVILLE

**Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville North) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"With reference to the recent press reports of tin and iron ore mines in the Mount Spec-Ewan area, Townsville, are there in fact any such mines being worked in this area at present? If so, what are the names of the companies concerned and where are their headquarters?"

**Hon. E. EVANS** (Mirani) replied—

"The area referred to is in the Hinchinbrook Electorate and the Honourable Member for that electorate has been in constant contact with my Department on the mineral potential of this locality. He has been advised that the present position is that small-scale tin mining by individuals and syndicates has been active on the Kangaroo Hills Mineral Field, centred on Ewan, for many years and with present

tin prices there is appreciable activity in the area. No companies are working tin mines in the area. In regard to iron ore, the Federal Government has recently granted a Mr. Stonehouse of Townsville a license to export iron ore from Willett's Knob near Ewan. This deposit has also been known for a long time. It is not yet being worked."

SCHOLARSHIP CLASS, SOUTH BRISBANE STATE  
SCHOOL

**Mr. BENNETT** (South Brisbane) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"(1) Is it his intention to abandon the scholarship class at the South Brisbane State School at the expiration of this year?"

"(2) If so, in view of the progress numerically and academically made by this school in recent years, why is it to be singled out for this unfair treatment?"

"(3) Will South Brisbane scholarship students now have to travel from South Brisbane to East Brisbane, if they wish to study for the scholarship examination next year?"

**Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEEY** (Isis) replied—

"(1) No."

"(2 and 3) See Question (1)."

"A phone call to the department would have elicited the information requested."

LIQUOR LICENCE FOR QUEEN STREET CAFE

**Mr. BENNETT** (South Brisbane) asked the Minister for Justice—

"(1) Has he or any of his Departmental officers given an assurance to a certain well-known cafe proprietor that he will receive a liquor licence for his Brisbane Queen Street cafe when the Liquor Bill becomes law?"

"(2) If not, is he aware that this well-known Queen Street cafe proprietor is in the process of installing a liquor bar and other liquor facilities thereby giving the public the impression that he has received an assurance that a licence will be granted to him?"

**Hon. A. W. MUNRO** (Toowong) replied—  
The short answers to these questions are—

"(1) No."

"(2) No. However, to remove any misconception that could arise from the asking of this question I might add that, in terms of the Bill at present in course of passage through the House, all questions of the granting of licenses will be matters for determination, not by the Minister but by the Licensing Commission. Furthermore there is nothing in the Bill to permit the installation of a liquor bar in any restaurant whether licensed or otherwise."

LAWNS AND GARDENS AT BANYO RAILWAY WORKSHOPS

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

“(1) Is it a fact that approximately 2,600 feet of concrete kerbing ranging in depth from twelve to eighteen inches was put down as bordering for the recently constructed lawns and gardens at Banyo workshops?”

“(2) How many working days were involved and how many men were there employed on this job?”

“(3) Is it a fact that three three-ton trucks were used to carry turf and soil and two gangs of eight men worked with the trucks for approximately two weeks?”

“(4) How does he reconcile these facts with his reply to my question on August 24 last that the approximate cost of these lawns and gardens was £200?”

“(5) Is he aware that rust is showing on practically all steelwork on uncompleted sheds at Banyo due to inadequate maintenance?”

“(6) When it is proposed to recommence construction work on the air-conditioned train shed at Northgate?”

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

“(1) 1,360 feet of concrete kerbing seven inches deep was constructed.”

“(2) The work of the kerbing was done intermittently in conjunction with other work with which it did not interfere. There was no particular allocation of men to this work.”

“(3) The soil for the garden was obtained in conjunction with that being carried to fill the approaches to Cabbage Tree Bridge and no particular gangs or trucks were specially allotted to the loading and carting of soil for the garden.”

“(4) As the work of constructing the garden was carried out intermittently in conjunction with other works no costs were recorded against the work other than an approximate cost of £200 as mentioned in my reply to the Honourable Member's question on August 24.”

“(5) I am aware of this position and, in fact, inspected this work personally on October 4. The Chief Engineer's Department is preparing for me an estimate in relation to certain work which I believe should be carried out to protect the materials already erected.”

“(6) This is a matter which is at present the subject of consideration.”

SEA TRANSPORT OF CATTLE FROM CAPE YORK PENINSULA

Mr. **ADAIR** (Cook) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

“Owing to the severe drought conditions now existing in the Cape York Peninsula

and the impossibility of droving cattle long distances owing to the shortage of feed and water on stock routes, what are the latest developments regarding negotiations for sea transport of cattle from this remote area.”

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

“Negotiations are still in progress, and it is expected that a final decision with respect to a suitable vessel will be reached in the near future.”

“NEW STATE” CANDIDATES IN NORTH QUEENSLAND AT 1960 GENERAL ELECTIONS

**Dr. DELAMOTHE** (Bowen) asked the Minister for Justice—

“(1) In what North Queensland State Electorates did New State candidates stand for election in 1960?”

“(2) What were the total valid votes cast in each of these electorates?”

“(3) What percentage of the total vote did each of these candidates secure?”

**Hon. A. W. MUNRO** (Toowong) replied—

“(1) Hinchinbrook, William Charles Wilson; Townsville North, Archibald David Hooper.”

“(2) Hinchinbrook, 6,993; Townsville North, 12,136.”

“(3) Hinchinbrook, W. C. Wilson, 438 votes, 6.26 per cent.; Townsville North, A. D. Hooper, 871 votes, 7.18 per cent.”

CLOSURE OF BRANCH RAILWAY LINES

Mr. **DONALD** (Ipswich East) asked the Minister for Transport—

“(1) How many branch lines have been closed since January 1, 1961?”

“(2) What was the length of the line in each instance and in the aggregate?”

“(3) What mileage of rails has been lifted?”

“(4) How have these rails been disposed of and to whom?”

“(5) How many branch lines are operating under trial or review and what is the mileage involved?”

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

(1 and 2)—	Length of Line in Miles
Lappa to Mount Garnet ..	32.5
Kjabbi to Dobbyn ..	19.5
Malbon to Selwyn ..	41
Barlil to Winderera ..	12
Kingaroy Saleyards to Tarong	17
Nerang to Tweed Heads ..	20
Allora to Goomburra ..	9
Pengarry Junction to Crow's Nest ..	29

180”

"(3) Of the Lines listed in (1 and 2), the Allora to Goomburra Branch of nine miles only has been lifted. The lifting of the Section Kajabbi to Dobbyn, 19.5 miles, and of the Pengarry Junction to Crow's Nest Branch, 29 miles, is in progress."

"(4) The quantities of rails not required by the Department from the Allora to Goomburra Branch Line and from the Pengarry Junction to Crow's Nest Branch Line were advertised for sale by public tender, the successful tenderers being—Messrs. Abrahams and Williams, Brisbane; Messrs. Danesmore (Qld.) Pty. Ltd., Brisbane; Messrs. Gibson and Howes, Bingera. The rails from the Kajabbi to Dobbyn Branch Line have yet to be advertised for sale by public tender."

"(5) Overseas Consultants, Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis, have the operations of all lines under review."

### PAPER

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Report of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies for the year 1960-1961.

### CREMATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

#### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

**Hon. H. W. NOBLE** (Yeronga—Minister for Health and Home Affairs) (11.22 a.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Cremation Acts, 1913 to 1958, in certain particulars."

The provisions of the existing Act may be subdivided into three broad headings—(1) the requirements to be met before a body is cremated; (2) provisions to be met before a crematorium may be established or operated; (3) provisions governing the preservation of the records relating to cremations.

The Bill deals in the main with the control and licensing of crematoria and the preservation of records, with a minor amendment to do with the cremation of bodies.

The Act as it now stands provides for the approval of sites, plans and equipment by the Director-General of Health and Medical Services before a crematorium may be established, and it further provides that a licence must be obtained with the approval of the Governor in Council before a crematorium may be used. Further, as the law now stands, the local authority has no power or control over the establishment of a crematorium in its area.

I think hon. members will agree that, even after the Director-General has been satisfied about the suitability of a site and the plans

for a crematorium, it may well be that the local authority could have valid objections from the point of view of town planning and the like. It is reasonable that my department would at least to a very large extent be governed by health considerations, whereas the local authority might be influenced by many other considerations.

In fact, in practice the position has arisen that the department was prepared to approve a site and plans and recommend the approval of the establishment of a crematorium in a local authority area whilst the local authority was strongly opposed to it.

The Bill therefore transfers the powers of approval and licensing of crematoria to the local authority, retaining, of course, the existing provisions of the Crematorium Act and the Coroners Act, governing the requirements to be met before a body may be cremated.

As I mentioned previously, the Act now requires the approval of the Director-General of the site, plans, and apparatus. Whilst every applicant must satisfy the Governor in Council, amongst other things, that he is the owner in fee-simple of the site, or that he has the written consent of the owner to such an application, and that there is no objection by the owner or occupier of any house or land situated within 100 yards of the site, it has been the practice to treat these matters in stages—for example, to first approve the site and then obtain the evidence regarding ownership, absence of valid objections, and so on. Only then would the applicant be required to submit architect's plans for the proposed building and particulars of the apparatus to be installed.

It could be that the relevant authority might insist on all things being done as a whole. If this were so, the applicant could be put to very considerable expense in regard to the preparation of plans and other things, only to find that his application failed, perhaps because the occupier of a house or the owner of the land within 100 yards of the site of the proposed crematorium lodged an objection.

It is proposed to take advantage of the amendment of the Act to make provision for the granting of provisional approval, to be followed by a final licence, to ensure that the requirements are met in stages. If the application fails at an early stage, the applicant will then be saved unnecessary expenditure.

I might mention here that whilst the proposed amendment will transfer the licensing and control of crematoria to the local authority, it is proposed to retain the statutory provisions that an objection by the occupier of a house or the owner of land situated within 100 yards of the site of the proposed crematorium will prevent the granting of a licence, but with the amendment that the house or land referred to must be within 100 yards of any building

or other structure to be used for purposes of the crematorium. I think hon. members will readily realise the difficulties that can arise under the old provision wherein the relevant distance was 100 yards from the boundary of the crematorium land. For example, the site of the proposed building could be in the centre of a very large piece of land, perhaps running into acres, but the occupier of a house or the owner of land within 100 yards of the boundary could prevent the establishment of a crematorium. Under the proposed amendment it will have to be 100 yards from one of the buildings—either the crematorium itself or where the ashes are kept. As hon. members know, they have walls in which the ashes are kept.

**Mr. Houston:** A wall would be a building in this case, would it?

**Dr. NOBLE:** Yes. With regard to records, the Act provides that the officer in charge of the crematorium shall file in and keep at the office of the crematorium all permissions and certificates required to be received by him. It is further mandatory that these records be preserved for all time.

It is necessary, of course, that strict procedures be followed and that certificates be retained because of the complete disposal of a body by cremation. It is felt, however, that unnecessary inconvenience is caused by the present provision, and it is proposed to bring it into line with Great Britain and New South Wales, where there is a statutory period of 15 years for the preservation of such records. A register of Cremations is kept at all crematoria, and this will be retained for all time, as are the records of burials in a cemetery.

Certain religious sects, such as Hindus, have always been permitted to dispose of bodies of members of their religion on a funeral pyre, subject to the consent of the Minister and strict police supervision, and of course all medical certificates or coroner's certificates required for a cremation must be completed and produced. Under a strict reading of the Act, this could be regarded as a breach thereof, and it is proposed that the necessary amendment be made to provide for these cases.

I commend the proposed amendments to the Committee.

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.29 a.m.): At this stage I do not see any reason to quarrel with the proposed amendments that have been outlined by the Minister, other than in one respect. I shall deal with it in a moment or two and perhaps it can be disposed of to the satisfaction of myself and other hon. members on this side of the Chamber. It seems an eminently sensible idea that the local authority should have a decisive say in the granting of sites. It is proper that the Minister has seized the opportunity to

give that authority to the councils. It is true that the Health Department is primarily concerned from the health point of view, but from a town planning point of view it is of tremendous importance to local authorities that they should have the power to determine in what areas crematoria should be placed. Although generally speaking crematoria today do not present the eyesores of the old type of cemetery, nevertheless they have a rather depressing effect. We all know what eyesores are presented by obsolete tombstones. One does not know to what extent some people are prepared to go in regard even to the keeping of the ashes of loved ones who have passed on. One has only to read some of the American papers to get an idea of the tremendous trade that is carried on, capitalising on human emotions and sympathy, in providing for lavish funerals. It is almost degrading to read about the expensive funerals that are offered, many of which are far beyond the financial capacity of the bereaved. Some of them are on the scale of the funerals of eastern potentates, far beyond the means of people in poor circumstances. Nevertheless it is suggested to them that they would be objects of derision if they had a relatively inexpensive funeral. If they do not have an expensive casket and so on they are told that their neighbours will look down upon them. I do not know whether there is some general control over the type of crematoria that might be built at some future date. I do not know whether there is some general pattern laid down, whether there are a great variety of designs, or whether they are likely to become eyesores. The Minister will remember that there was an amendment to the relevant Act dealing with the erection of tombstones in city areas. I think it limited them to six inches above ground level. That was a very progressive move. I think everyone will agree that it is rather a depressing sight to come into a modern city and see neglected tombstones. I do not know whether there is a provision covering the point, but I should like some assurance from the Minister that crematoria are not likely to become eyesores in the years ahead. From what I have seen of them they seem to be quite artistically designed. I well remember seeing one of the places in America where many of the national heroes are buried. It is all very unostentatiously done with merely tablets under the trees. Instead of being depressing it has rather the reverse effect. I found it of tremendous interest to go through the area reading the famous names.

The point to which the Minister might give some consideration is the altered boundary of 100 yards. I think a distance greater than 100 yards might not be an unreasonable limit in regard to the building. I should like him to give some reasons why 100 yards has been chosen. I would agree with him about the boundary. Probably that is not an unreasonable requirement but

on the other hand 100 yards off a large building would not be tremendously far away. At Mt. Thompson the central building is on the highest point of the land with some area of grounds around it. It is a somewhat depressing spectacle to see the casket and mourners going in. A distance greater than 100 yards should not be an unreasonable distance unless the building were effectively screened. That is the only matter I raise at this stage. The Minister might give some consideration to it. Otherwise, the alterations seem to be sensible ones and I see no reason why there should be any opposition to them.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South) (11.35 a.m.): The subject of cremation is a very contentious and controversial one.

**Mr. Houghton** interjected.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The hon. member for Redcliffe is apparently getting burnt up about it already. Numbers of people in our community do not believe in cremation on religious grounds. I respect their opinions. I have nothing whatever to say in criticism of them in any way. We know, of course, that the basis of the Christian religion is that there will be a bodily resurrection from the dead. If the relatives of a deceased person see a coffin containing the whole body interred in the ground, it is not very difficult for them to imagine that later on, when the Angel Gabriel blows his horn—probably out of tune—the body will rise from the dead and be resurrected in Heaven.

I have no quarrel with that view held by any person but, where a body is cremated and the ashes taken home, put in a tin or a pickle bottle on the mantelpiece or on the stump cap under the house it is a very different matter. Imagine a pickle bottle of ashes being resurrected into a full body and going physically to Heaven!

However, that is my own personal view on the matter. While still giving the right to every other person to hold his view on cremation my idea about body burial in the ground is that it is distinctly unhygienic and it takes up quite an area of very valuable land. If one goes through a city of any size in Australia one will see what are known as old cemeteries right in the heart of present cities. They have been used as burial grounds in the past and the city has grown right around them. We have one in Townsville, in West End, in the very heart of the city. Frankly, they are not very pleasing sights.

**Mr. Bennett:** What scientific information have you to show that burial grounds are unhygienic?

**Mr. AIKENS:** If the hon. member for South Brisbane has, like the Minister who introduced the Bill, or the hon. member for Bowen and some of us, seen bodies in an

advanced stage of decomposition and corruption he would know. Ground cemeteries, of course, are selected in ground that is very easy to dig. They do not have cemeteries in rocky ground, and this decomposition and corruption must seep away and probably seep underground for quite a considerable distance. Who knows but that it might enter a well; it might come to the surface in someone's yard. There could be traces up to half a mile away. However, I am not going to enter into an argument on that. It is my opinion that ground burial is unhygienic. If the hon. member for South Brisbane holds any other opinion he has a perfect right to it, and to express it. I am tolerant enough, at least, to give him that right.

I should say that something should be done in regard to the establishment of a crematorium in my own city of Townsville. Again, I am speaking only from the point of view of my own electorate. When my own party was in control of the Townsville City Council we made tentative approaches to the government of the day with a view to establishing a Local Authority Crematorium in Townsville. I am almost certain that at the time we were told that a local authority could not establish a crematorium, that it had to be done by a public company. Consequently, because we could not get sufficient people in Townsville interested in the formation of a public company to establish a crematorium in Townsville, the idea went by the board.

However, I am certain that if the local authority in Townsville could be induced, incited, provoked or prevailed upon—use whatever term you wish—to establish a crematorium in Townsville it would be a very popular move. At present people who die in Townsville and who wish to be cremated have to be railed all the way to Rockhampton in order to be cremated. Some of them are sent all the way to Brisbane, at considerable expense. That practice, of course, lengthens the period of mourning between the death and disposal of the body, with considerable distress to relatives.

I said yesterday when talking of local authority matters that I am always averse to any undue interference with the operations of a local authority. But even if a local authority for some reason or other is averse, as apparently the Townsville City Council is, to the establishment of a crematorium, I think some approaches should be made to the local authority by the Government or someone who has some influence with the local authority, to have it investigate the proposal.

I expect that Mt. Thompson in a purely economic sense is a profitable undertaking. Perhaps the hon. members for Rockhampton South and Rockhampton North could inform me whether the Rockhampton crematorium also is profitable. I would say, and the Leader of the Opposition lightly touched on

this matter, that the cost of burial today is becoming almost prohibitive. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, in America the stage has been reached of its becoming a racket, so much so that undertakers in America are now publicly described as "bier barons". It is much more expensive to die in America than it is to live there.

Recently an elector of mine went to America to visit her daughter who had married an American during the war. When she was over there she became ill and her daughter, without any desire to be unsympathetic, said, "For goodness sake, Mum, don't die here. Go back to Australia to die if you are going to die. If you die here, we will probably be ruined for the rest of our lives." The old lady cut short her holiday with her daughter and came home to Australia. She did not die. Fortunately she is still alive and is now in good health, but as I said, burial is becoming a racket in America and it is becoming a bit of a racket in Queensland also.

**Mr. Bennett:** It was a pretty mean attitude for the daughter to take.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I do not think the daughter meant it in that way. But at least this woman's daughter said it. She told me her daughter said it and, if the hon. member for South Brisbane would have a look at some of the charges for ordinary burials in America, he would have quite a deal of sympathy for the daughter.

In Townsville recently the Pensioners' Association took up with the local undertaking firm—there is only one—the matter of prices for the interment of pensioners. A pretty satisfactory solution has been reached.

Cemeteries in Queensland are usually controlled by a cemetery trust and, with the rising costs and one thing and another, charges for graves and burial fees have all gone up. Speaking from memory, I think the cemetery charges alone in Townsville are £15 or £16 per interment.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the Bill.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I was led astray by the interjection of the hon. member for South Brisbane. I was drawing a comparison between the cost of ordinary burials and the cost of cremation. I got quite off the hygienic angle of it and I was merely speaking in the interests of people who desire to be cremated. I have made provision in my will to be cremated. Do not let there be any mistake about that. If it was possible to provide for it, I would not mind if my relatives cut up my body and used it for cray bait.

**Mr. Duggan:** Have you made arrangements to have your ashes sprinkled over the back bench?

**Mr. AIKENS:** As a matter of fact, if I thought my ashes would have the effect on some people that I think they would have, I would have some of them sprinkled on the Leader of the Opposition.

But I really think that in the second city of Queensland, and that is what it is, due in a large measure to my political representation, we should at least have a crematorium. We have one in Rockhampton. I do not know what they are doing about it in Toowoomba or Ipswich, cities of comparable size with Townsville. If the local authority can now set up a crematorium—

**Dr. Noble:** They have power to license a crematorium but the crematorium must be set up by a public company.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am glad that the Minister for Health and Home Affairs made that interjection because the rule still stands that a local authority cannot establish its own crematorium. It can license a crematorium and probably lay down rules and regulations governing the conduct of it, but it must be set up by a public company as a profit-earning concern. It is certain that it would not be set up by a public company if it was not a reasonable profit-earning concern.

**Dr. Noble:** If a local authority were to approach me regarding the establishment of a crematorium, I would be glad to have a look at it.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am very glad to know that my speech has at least brought forth this very fruitful remark. We have now learnt that only a public company can set up a crematorium in Queensland and that the old law still operates, but we have the assurance of the Minister for Health and Home Affairs that if a local authority wants to establish a crematorium he will be happy to look into it. As a result of that assurance there is nothing now to prevent the Townsville City Council, or the local authority in any provincial city, from making a move to establish its own local authority crematorium. I thank the Minister sincerely and I believe that my speech has been well worthwhile.

**Mr. DEWAR (Wavell) (11.47 a.m.):** I have a few remarks to make about this measure which, I believe, is a very good one. It gives power to local authorities to establish sites, and control the type of buildings to be used for crematoria. The Leader of the Opposition sounded a note of warning that a problem may arise because the standard of the buildings could drop. However, I do not think there is any likelihood of that. Local authorities, with the modern concept of buildings, are keen on town planning and are well aware of the need to keep up the standard in their areas. They are jealous of these things and I do not think there is any likelihood that building standards will drop by giving power to local authorities to determine such matters. I agree with the comments of the Leader of the Opposition about

the unsightliness of many old cemeteries to be seen in most country centres and in the city at Lutwyche, Toowong, and Morning-side. There is nothing about them to create an atmosphere of beauty. However, modern cemeteries have gone a long way towards removing this unsightliness. When I was in England at the end of the war, a friend of mine with whom I had spent some time in the Army wrote to me and asked me if I would go to the Bath Cemetery, near Bristol, to see the grave of his brother who had been killed in a raid over Europe. I did so, and I took a photograph of his resting place. I will never forget my feelings on entering that cemetery. It was a beautiful place. I suppose its area would be 100 to 200 acres; it has been preserved virtually as a parkland. It was as beautiful as any national park or botanical gardens. It was beautifully kept. One could not help but be filled with feelings of restfulness and reverence in the atmosphere that it created. It in no way gave the impression that it was a burial place. This new concept in cemeteries is becoming part of the thinking of the men in charge of such things in the modern cities of the world, and it is to be commended.

As I listened to the comments of the hon. member for Townsville South I could not help feeling that it ill becomes any hon. member to deride the beliefs of other people. He may not agree with them, but they are entitled to their beliefs. Those people who believe in a fuller life after our mortal life is finished believe that the soul of man is the important thing, that when the day comes when Gabriel blows his horn the dead shall arise. I believe that all people, because of the souls they have, and the life they have lived on earth, will be entitled to arise whether they have been buried or cremated. The hon. member went on to say that if he had his way he would will his body to be used as crayfish bait. I have the impression that crayfish are a rather discerning type of crustacean and it is quite probable they would have nothing to do with him in any case. However, that is in keeping with the comments that he normally makes on these matters and I conclude my reference to him with the quotation from Greek mythology, "Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad."

The Brisbane Crematorium is a place of beauty. All of us at some time visit these places when friends and loved ones are taken. Recently I was there and I was surprised and pleased to note that, on adjoining land at the rear of the building, a very large group of modern homes has been built in the last year or two. So often we hear such a hue and cry when a local authority wants to put a cemetery in a certain area. People living within a mile, and sometimes even as far afield as 10 miles, lend their voices in protest at the establishment of a cemetery near them. We have a similar hue and cry when a local authority seeks to have funeral

parlours removed from the city limits to some area outside the realm of traffic congestion. So I was very happy to see these excellent modern homes built so close to the Brisbane Crematorium. It seemed to me that at least there were some people who realised that constructing a home adjacent to such a building did not in any way detract from the value of their property. Anyone who could think the Mt. Thompson Crematorium was other than a place of beauty would not have much idea of what constitutes beauty.

However, it is good that the Bill makes provision for people who wish to complain about the action of a local authority. The distance envisaged is realistic because it is quite obvious that any organisation likely to build a crematorium must have a very large block of land to take care of expansion. It is obvious, too, that a building of this nature would be erected in the centre of the land so that it would be a long way from any nearby homes.

I think the Bill is a sound one and the Minister is doing the right thing in placing control of these matters in the hands of the local authorities, for they are best fitted to exercise the jurisdiction.

**Hon. P. J. R. HILTON** (Carnarvon) (11.54 p.m.): I do not propose to debate the Bill at very great length. I realise there is a difference of opinion about cremation among sections of the community. Personally, I do not believe in it, but that is a matter for me. If others believe in it, well and good.

However, I think the alteration of the provision dealing with the distance of 100 yards is a little dangerous. I visualise that, if permission is given for the establishment of a crematorium with the proviso that it must be at least 100 yards from a house, and not from the boundary of a property, there may be additions to the building in the course of time. That is borne out by experience to date. If it is not limited to the area of land on which the crematorium is situated, we might find further buildings being erected right up against land in residential areas. I do not know whether the Minister envisages that permission will have to be given before every addition is made, or whether the first permission to establish a crematorium will give the company or the people conducting the crematorium the right to put additional buildings anywhere on their land.

**Dr. Noble:** Not within 100 yards of a house.

**Mr. HILTON:** That is the original building.

**Dr. Noble:** Yes, but they cannot at any time build within 100 yards of a house.

**Mr. HILTON:** Does the Bill clearly provide for that?

**Dr. Noble:** Yes, it does.

**Mr. HILTON:** I think the question should be examined, because additions have been made already to some crematoria.

**Dr. Noble:** It would not apply to crematoria that are erected already. For example, the crematorium at Mt. Thompson has its wall almost round the whole of the property. We are not making the provision retrospective.

**Mr. HILTON:** Irrespective of where that wall may be, looking ahead they may, in the course of time, want to erect further buildings. The wall of the original building may be 100 yards away from the nearest residence, but later additions may come very close to residential areas. I think that should be guarded against.

**Dr. Noble:** I think the provision will ensure that companies erecting new crematoria will erect them on quite a large area of land so that they will be able to keep within the 100-yard limit if they find it necessary to expand in the future.

**Mr. HILTON:** According to the Minister, the only provision in the Bill relating to this matter was that the wall of the original building must be at least 100 yards from the nearest residence. That may be all right at present; but we have no guarantee about the area of the land that will be used, and if additions are required new buildings could be erected within 20 or 30 yards of existing residences. I think that is undesirable. I believe that it would be much more desirable to keep the boundary of the land on which the crematorium is situated as the line of demarcation.

**Dr. Noble:** I was guided by the draftsman, but we will make a further check on that to make certain that no buildings will come within 100 yards of the boundary.

**Mr. HILTON:** I think that is an all-important point.

The hon. member for Townsville South made some remarks about ashes and dust, and so on. I do not think that whether one is cremated or whether one gradually disintegrates into dust has any vital bearing on the resurrection of the body. It is in the creed that all Christians profess that they believe in the resurrection of the body and life eternal. It does not matter whether the body is burnt or whether it decomposes into dust. That has no bearing on it at all. I think his remarks on this subject were not in very good taste. He should read further on this important subject. Perhaps then he may not be disposed to make such remarks.

**Mr. BENNETT** (South Brisbane) (11.59 a.m.): I shall address my remarks to the point in relation to local authorities raised

in the debate. In doing so, I support the remarks of my leader, who expressed the opinion of the Opposition on this matter.

Dealing with the controversy relating to cremation and other forms of burial, I agree that this is a matter for individual belief and opinion in a democratic community such as ours. I also do not believe in cremation. If my body is to be burnt, I should like that to be decided by a much higher authority than any human being.

It has been claimed by the Minister that it is not possible for a local authority to have control of or conduct its own cremation business.

I submit with respect that that view is contrary to Section 30 of the Local Government Act, the relevant portion of which reads—

“The Local Authority shall have delegated to it the functions of Local Government.

And without limiting the generality of its powers and authorities the Local Authority shall have and possess and may exercise and perform express powers and authorities (including the power to make by-laws) in relation to the following matters:—The undertaking, provision, construction, maintenance, management, execution, control, regulation, and/or regulation of the use of . . .”

And it deals with a long list of items included in which is the disposal of the dead.

Any local authority in Queensland clearly has power to construct its own crematorium and to conduct cremation services. As a matter of fact, from the knowledge I have I think it is the aim and ambition of the Brisbane City Council to so conduct its own cremation services as a local authority business. Seeing that cremation has become one of the means of disposing of the deceased, I do not see any real reason why it should not be conducted by a local authority. It is perfectly obvious, as has been mentioned, that huge profits are being made from cremation services. It is perfectly obvious that the shareholders are making more profits and getting bigger dividends from the disposal of bodies in this fashion than they would receive from many other lucrative investments in the business and commercial life of the State. I suggest that it is ghoulish in the extreme that exorbitant profits should be made in that field. As cremation is to be accepted as a form of disposal of bodies I exhort the Minister to provide that cremation services should come directly under the control of local authorities and should be conducted by local authorities in order that due decorum and dignity can be maintained, and that excessive profits should not be made in such unfortunate circumstances.

**Mr. PILBEAM** (Rockhampton South) (12.3 p.m.): I rise to support the Bill, but particularly from the viewpoint of local government. I realise that Governments

are becoming more and more aware of their responsibility to co-operate with local authorities in many spheres. In Rockhampton we have a crematorium controlled by a private company. I am not aware of what profits they make, but I presume they do make profits. Burials are a subject that has been brought more and more to the notice of local authorities. I agree with the previous speaker that cremation services could be undertaken by councils. As a matter of fact there is a move now to transfer the responsibilities of cemetery trusts to local authorities, simply because they are bigger financial undertakings. I think a crematorium would be a different matter. Local authorities are called upon to co-operate to a great extent, not only in regard to the crematorium, but also in regard to cemeteries. We are asked to provide bitumen roads and assist in the cleaning up of the areas. We do so. Therefore, it is quite in order that we should be given control at least of the site of the crematoriums of the future.

I do not think the problems involved are quite as real as has been painted here. Generally the crematorium is constructed well away from habitation. The precaution is always taken to ensure the acquisition of an adequate piece of land, not only to provide cremation services but also for adequate car parking areas. The problem of proximity to habitation is not quite as real as it might appear. I approve wholeheartedly of the Government's action in allowing local authorities to control this very vital aspect of our communal life. I am pleased that it seems to be the general feeling in Government departments that we should at least be consulted. There has been too much on which local governments are not consulted. When departments put buildings in our towns, and have advanced their plans, they do not consult the local authority and it often conflicts with town planning. Government departments often break existing by-laws because they have not consulted local authorities. I think this is a definite move in the right direction. I approve of it and congratulate the Minister on introducing the Bill.

**Mr. ANDERSON** (Toowoomba East) (12.6 p.m.): I commend the Minister on introducing this Bill. It is a pity it was not done years ago. The largest inland city in Queensland would now have a crematorium. A move was made years ago for a crematorium in Toowoomba and a beautiful site was set aside for many years by the late Mr. J. D. Annand, in particular, who was a member of this Parliament at one time. He had a site selected in the Wilston area in Toowoomba on a nice hill with a lovely view all round. The council put it on their town plan as a site for a crematorium but it never came to fruition because, unfortunately, it was too close to a house and it was rejected. Today we are looking for a fresh site. I commend the Minister on introducing the Bill.

**Hon. H. W. NOBLE** (Yeronga—Minister for Health and Home Affairs) (12.7 p.m.), in reply: I thank the Committee for the way in which this Bill has been received. There have not been very many objections but certain ideas have been put forward. The Leader of the Opposition is somewhat frightened that perhaps some monstrosity might be erected as a crematorium, but I think the local authority, the responsible body, would not approve of plans that would in any way harm the beauty of its area.

Another matter that was raised was the distance of 100 yards from a house. As the hon. member for Carnarvon pointed out, a future building near a crematorium might encroach closer than 100 yards. I will look at that matter again to see that no building used for crematorium purposes is closer than 100 yards from a house.

The hon. member for Townsville South raised the question of a local authority having power to erect its own crematorium. I am assured by the hon. member for South Brisbane that they already have that power. However, I assure the hon. member for Townsville South that if they do not already have it, and an approach is made to the department for it, we shall be only too happy to consider it.

**Mr. Aikens:** Personally, I do not think they have the power. They have power to provide for regulation and control but I do not think they have power to build.

**Dr. NOBLE:** Under the Act any person, which includes a corporation, may establish a crematorium authorised by a licence from the appropriate local authority. At present it does not mention the local authority as a constructing authority but I should say that, if any local authority desired to establish its own crematorium, it could approach the department and the department would see if it had the power to do so.

The hon. member for South Brisbane raised the matter of fees for cremating bodies. I think the Governor in Council exercises control over fees payable not only for burial but also for cremation. If the fees charged by a public company for a cremation are in excess of those allowed by the Order in Council they are not recoverable. I think the Order in Council protects the citizen against excessive charges.

**Mr. Bennett:** The Order in Council says "not recoverable", but the client who is charged the fee does not know that and he pays.

**Dr. NOBLE:** I should think that the people conducting crematoria are unlikely to charge more than the fee prescribed and, if they do, the excess is not recoverable.

I heard the hon. member for Townsville South say that he would like to provide in his will that his body be cut up by his relatives and used as bait for cray fish.

**Mr. Aikens:** If it was in accordance with the law.

**Dr. NOBLE:** I do not know if any self-respecting crayfish would desire to use such food, but one way in which he could dispose of his body would be to will it to the Medical School.

Motion (Dr. Noble) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Dr. Noble, read a first time.

### DENTAL ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

#### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

**Hon. H. W. NOBLE** (Yeronga—Minister for Health and Home Affairs) (12.13 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Dental Acts, 1902 to 1959, in certain particulars.”

The Bill amends only one section of the Act, and that is in relation to penalties.

The section provides that no person other than a medical practitioner, or a person registered under the Act, shall practise dentistry or take or use the title of “dentist”, “dental practitioner” or the like.

The Act provides for a penalty not exceeding £20, and a further penalty not exceeding £5 for every day during which a contravention in this respect is continued after conviction.

The Dental Board has informed me that these penalties have not been effective in all instances.

While it is true that in most cases of breaches legal action has had the desired deterrent effect, there have been cases where the unqualified person has been prepared to pay numerous penalties following convictions, regarding them as a type of premium to allow him to carry on.

The Dental Board gave an instance of an unqualified person who practised dentistry in a Queensland country town for at least 12 months during which time the Board successfully proceeded against him on 63 occasions with the result that he paid fines totalling £1,300. At the end of the period he left the town and went to another large country town in this State where he advertised over the radio that he was in practice as a dentist.

The Dental Board has further advised me that in other cases unregistered and unqualified persons practising dentistry have openly stated that prosecution was not to be feared as the penalty for a breach of the Act was very small. The Act provides for a

penalty of £20 maximum, with an additional penalty not exceeding £5 for each day during which the breach is continued. This penalty was introduced in 1916.

I am sure that all hon. members will agree that whilst a penalty not exceeding £20 may have been a reasonable one in 1916, the altered value of the £1 today has made it a very small penalty. Again, a continuing penalty of £5 per day, may, at first glance, appear to be a more or less effective deterrent on its own. However, such is not the case. In practice it is necessary to give proof to a court that a breach has been committed each day if the penalty of £5 a day is to apply. This makes the preparation of a case cumbersome and costly.

The Bill provides for a penalty not exceeding £100 on conviction, and continues the existing penalty of not more than £5 for each day during which the contravention continues.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

**Mr. MELLOY** (Nudgee) (12.17 p.m.): I do not think the answer to this problem lies in an increase in fines. I think the answer is the provision of adequate dental services by the Government. If they are provided a field will not be open to people who are inclined to practise dentistry in contravention of the Act.

**Mr. Ramsden:** Do you think you ought to nationalise them?

**Mr. MELLOY:** The hon. member has a point there, but I do not propose to deal with it at this stage. Prior to the last Federal election the A.L.P. indicated that if returned it would provide dental services for children up to 16 years of age. That would prevent unregistered dentists from practising. Hon. members will note that I am not saying “unqualified” dentists. Later on I will make my point clear. If we are to provide full dental services for the people of the State, our work must commence in the schools. At present we have not sufficient dentists in Queensland to cover all dental services adequately. I shall confine my remarks to school dental services because that is where we must start.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I do not want the hon. member to engage in a general discourse on dentistry. There is only one principle in the Bill and it relates to the penalty for the practice of illegal dentistry. I should like the hon. member to confine his remarks to that principle.

**Mr. MELLOY:** I intend to tie up my remarks with the measure. If we are to prevent the illegal practice of dentistry we must provide an alternative, and we cannot do that unless we have enough dentists.

**Mr. Hanlon:** If one man could pay a total of £1,300 in fines and still carry on

there must be good money in dentistry and there must be an extreme shortage of dentists.

**Mr. MELLOY:** That is true.

**Dr. Noble:** The people who went to that unregistered dentist may have got bad treatment and perhaps their mouths were ruined.

**Mr. MELLOY:** The Minister is talking of probabilities. We have no evidence of the quality of the services provided by the individual whom the Minister has in mind.

The Government will have to put their own house in order in the matter of dental services. Let them make dental courses more freely available in the University for those who are unable to pay for them otherwise they will restrict the numbers who desire to follow this profession. Under the present set-up we can only put them through the University to make them dentists. I do not intend at this stage to canvass any other means of providing dental services—I perhaps could at a later stage—but if we pass the Bill as it has been presented we will not make any contribution to the dental services. If unqualified practitioners can provide a service to the people, the people will patronise them. If their fees are as they are at present, it will pay unqualified practitioners to carry on and pay the fines. I do not think increasing the fines is the answer.

As the Minister has said, and as you yourself have indicated, Mr. Taylor, the debate on the Bill is restricted. If we are to be confined to speaking to the Bill there is not much we can say; but we do not think that the imposition of heavier fines is the answer to the problem. Perhaps at a later stage we can develop that argument.

**Dr. DELAMOTHE (Bowen) (12.22 p.m.):** I should like to make a small contribution to the debate and to point out that the whole object of the Bill is to protect the public from unregistered dentists. It is a fair assumption that there is some reason for a dentist's being unregistered and the most likely one is that he is unqualified.

I am quite sure that all hon. members opposite would entirely agree with the proposition that a practising unqualified man is likely to bring danger to an unsuspecting public. One of the very good things that hon. members opposite, particularly union members do, is to ensure that only qualified tradesmen of various kinds are employed on tradesmen's jobs. To be consistent they should agree, as I am sure they do, that only qualified dentists should undertake dental work.

A strange point about the unqualified dentists I am acquainted with is that they have not gone into the areas where dental attention has been at a minimum or non-existent. To my knowledge they have practised in towns where there has been a Government dental clinic and where there have been private dentists.

**Mr. Houston:** How do they make so much then?

**Dr. DELAMOTHE:** They do what all unqualified tradesmen do; they under-cut the trained person in price, just as the unqualified wood butcher under-cuts the qualified carpenter in price.

**Mr. Melloy:** What about the registered men who overcharge?

**Dr. DELAMOTHE:** I do not know that that accusation has a general basis. I would say there are one or two specked apples, whether they are doctors or carpenters or archbishops or professional swimmers. There are always a few at whom the finger can be pointed but that is not true of the general run.

**Mr. Aikens:** Why not clean them out of the profession?

**Dr. DELAMOTHE:** The Dental Board is there, just as the Medical Board is there, to discipline those who step out of line. The only way to deal with overcharging in the dental and medical professions is to have a fees tribunal.

The important thing is that the Bill will make sure that the dental attention that is available is qualified, reputable, and free of danger to the general public. The present fines have proved to be no deterrent, as indicated by the case referred to by the Minister and the hon. member for Baroona, in which a man has been fined a total of £1,300 at £5 and up to £20 a time. It is necessary, therefore, to increase the fines so that they will be a deterrent.

I support the Bill because I believe that it will do what it sets out to do.

**Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (12.26 p.m.):** As I see the provisions of the Bill, a great deal depends on the terms "unqualified" and "unregistered". I do not know whether the position in Queensland now is different from the position in the immediate post-war years. I know that there were then certain fully qualified dentists who were denied the right to give qualified dental treatment to many people who were clamouring for it in some of the country towns. Those people were not registered in Queensland; they were registered in New South Wales. I have in mind one particular case on which I fought a losing battle. The person concerned was a dental officer in the R.A.A.F. who held the rank of Squadron Leader and who was also a qualified pilot. He could practise in New South Wales and in the Federal Capital Territory, and he wanted to extend his services to small towns in the south west of Queensland where people were clamouring for dental attention. He held a doctorate in dentistry from a reputable university in America and was registered in New South Wales. He could practise in the Federal Capital Territory and pull the teeth of the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Bromley** interjected.

**Mr. HILTON:** The Prime Minister at that time was the late Ben Chiffley. I am just making the point that the man could give dental attention to the Prime Minister of Australia but was denied the right to practise in Queensland and was threatened with prosecution if he landed in a small burgh in south-western Queensland and gave the people there much-needed dental attention. That was a most ridiculous situation. If it still exists, I have certain misgivings about the Bill.

I think it should set out clearly what is meant by "unqualified dentists." In my view, dentists who are competent to perform all phases of dental work should not be prevented from giving dental attention where it is urgently needed simply because the Dental Board in Queensland will not register them. Certainly I would not countenance for one moment anything calculated to reduce the standard of dentistry as practised in the State, but I believe that on that occasion the Dental Board was riding a high and mighty horse. They knew that there was a shortage of dentists in Queensland and that we were endeavouring to bring them here from the United Kingdom and other places. Yet here was a man, I repeat, who was registered in New South Wales and could practise in the Federal Capital Territory but who was denied the right to render urgently needed dental assistance in certain parts of Queensland. If that applies today, I think the Bill should be deferred until there is a proper reconciliation between the Dental Board in Queensland and its counterparts in other States and the question of reciprocity in qualifications can be ironed out satisfactorily. I am opposed to any increased penalties if obviously qualified dentists are prevented from giving dental services where they are much needed. I should like the Minister to give us an indication of the reciprocity position as it affects the Dental Board in Queensland, New South Wales, and other States. That information is vital before we should be asked to give a considered opinion on the Bill.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townville South) (12.30 p.m.): The Bill again emphasises the very bad odour in which the professional groups of the State are held by the people of Queensland. Here we have a Bill which in effect says that the penalties to be imposed on those who illegally practise dentistry are to be increased. That is the only answer that the Government and the dentists—if we were dealing with a medical Bill, the doctors—can find to the fact that many people will go to unregistered practitioners rather than to registered practitioners. There must be some very sound reason why people will go to unregistered dentists and unregistered medical practitioners. Is it that they are not getting the services that they should be able to get from the registered men?

**Dr. Delamothe:** Psychological.

**Mr. AIKENS:** It is not psychological at all. It is due entirely to the fact that the dental profession, like the medical profession and the legal profession, control their own affairs.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to the Bill.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am confining my remarks to the terms of the Bill which increase the penalties to be inflicted on unregistered dentists. I am saying that people are going to unregistered dentists, just as they are going to unregistered doctors and unregistered legal men, because the dental profession has not the courage to clean the incompetents and charlatans out of the dental profession, just as doctors have not the courage to clean the charlatans out of their profession.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is no need for the hon. member to deal with the other professions. I ask him to deal with dentists.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I have had very satisfactory results from the dentists that I have attended both in Townsville and Brisbane. I go to dentists here, of course, only when there is need for an urgent job to be done. I have no quarrel with any dentist I have attended, but I do know that there are same dentists in practice who should be hounded out of the profession for incompetence and slummocky work. But the Bill is going to protect them. It is going to put up a barrier of fines against the man who does the work that these slummocky and incompetent dentists do. If there are sufficient dentists to cater for the needs of the people of Queensland why is it that at times people have to wait weeks for an appointment with a dentist? I will say that most dentists will go out of their way to draw an aching tooth or a tooth that is giving a lot of trouble. But why is it people who want extractions, plates or fillings (they call them "inlays" now; when they were "fillings" they charged only 10s. 6d., but now that they are "inlays" they cost six guineas) have to wait so many weeks to get an appointment if there is an abundant supply of dentists? The fact that men are operating illegally—I am not saying that some of them are operating incompetently—is because first of all people are not sure of the service they will get from a registered dentist, secondly they have to wait too long for an appointment with a registered dentist, and thirdly, in many instances, they have to pay too much for the services that the registered dentist renders. That is why people are going to unregistered dentists.

The argument that goes on between the unregistered practitioner and the registered practitioner in the dentistry field is not confined to Queensland. It rages in other States of the Commonwealth. I am going to read an extract from "The Sunday Mail" of

19 June, 1960, which has a distinct bearing on the provisions of the Bill. It is headed "Claims bribes on dentures" and reads—

"A decision by the New South Wales Government to permit dental mechanics to sell dentures direct to the public, has brought into the open charges of scandal which have been whispered for 14 years.

"Dental mechanics have sought the right of private practice in dentures since 1934.

"They have mounted many campaigns which have all been counter-attacked by the N.S.W. branch of the Australian Dental Association.

"Following a fierce fight in 1946, it was rumoured that both dentists and dental mechanics had paid out large sums to politicians to bolster the causes."

**Mr. Bromley:** Quite true, too.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am glad to have that interjection because I am sure the hon. member would speak from personal knowledge. The article goes on—

"Now, a leader of a section of the dentists, Mr. J. W. Hollis, says he can produce five dentists prepared to 'swear on oath that £15,000 was raised by dentists for payment to the Labour Party to block dental mechanics from direct dealing with the public.'

"One of the five dentists supporting Mr. Hollis claims that he helped organise a £15,000 fighting fund in 1946, because there were rumours that the technicians had raised money to support their case.

"The money raised was to be used to make the Dental Act water-tight against illegal practices by the technicians."

Just what this Bill seeks to do—make the Dental Act water-tight by increasing the fines that will be imposed on technicians who practise dentistry. The cutting continues—

"'But the £15,000 appears to have achieved little,' he said.

"This same dentist claimed that a second fighting fund had been opened in 1952 among dentists.

"The N.S.W. Premier (Mr. Heffron) said last week he had heard allegations that payments had been made from funds raised by dentists and mechanics to the 'Labour Movement and politicians.'

"He urged anyone with knowledge of bribery to go direct to the police with it, and claimed that the allegations were made from some ulterior motive.

"The State Opposition Leader (Mr. Askin) is calling for an inquiry.

"Mr. Hollis says nothing less than a Royal Commission will do."

So that, apparently, this fight has been going on in every State of the Commonwealth and I should like to ask the Minister without

being accused of imputing improper motives to him whether any slush fund has been raised by dentists in order to have this amendment put through?

**Dr. Noble:** I have not heard of one—not so far as our party is concerned.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The Minister, by inference, suggests that the slush fund went to the Country Party.

**Dr. Noble:** I did nothing of the sort.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am happy to have that statement recorded because he said "not so far as our party is concerned.", and he put the emphasis on the word "our".

**Dr. Noble:** Not so far as the Government parties are concerned.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Very well, I just gave him the opportunity of replying to that. If he had not been so busy listening to the interjections of the Opposition and if he had not had the astute Treasurer alongside him to refer him to it, it would have gone into "Hansard" that way.

**Dr. Noble** interjected.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I trust the hon. member will get back to a discussion of the Bill.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I will get back to the Bill and to a very important provision in it. The Minister in his introductory remarks made specific reference to the fact that medical practitioners in Queensland can practise dentistry. Is that not so?

**Dr. Noble:** They can take out teeth.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Never mind about "they can take out teeth", they practise dentistry under the Act. I remember bringing this up once before. Medical practitioners—and goodness knows some of them should be bagmen and not medical practitioners—can practise dentistry but a man who serves for years and years and attains a considerable degree of excellence as a dental mechanic and who knows all about the game, cannot practise dentistry. He cannot take out teeth; he cannot make a plate; he cannot put one false tooth on a plate; he cannot do anything. The man who knows all about it cannot do anything but any medical practitioner—and many of them are warbs—can practise dentistry. There are doctors who are drunks and drug-addicts who can practise dentistry in any manifestation and the Minister cannot deny it. This Bill provides that so long as a man holds a medical certificate—and he can be anything else in addition to holding a medical certificate—he can practise dentistry. The Bill still gives him an open go to practise dentistry. We are going to increase the penalties for those who know all about dentistry, the qualified dental mechanics, the people who assist those who practise dentistry. They are going to be slugged and mulcted with heavier fines. To

be quite candid, I am not going to vote for the Bill, not because I think unqualified men should be given an open go to work in competition with qualified men but because it does not deal with the real reason for the existence of unqualified men. The real reason, and I will not weary you, Mr. Taylor, with tedious repetition, is that the dental profession has not the guts to clean up its own profession and get rid of the charlatans, the incompetents and the money-hungry members who are bringing disgrace to it.

**Mr. BROMLEY** (Norman) (12.42 p.m.): I, with my colleagues, do not think the Bill will solve the problem outlined by the Minister. The hon. member for Carnarvon has the right idea. He spoke of the unqualified and unregistered. That is the point of the whole matter—unqualified and unregistered—and I do not think it has been cleared up by the Minister.

The hon. member for Townsville South spoke of a so-called slush fund. By way of interjection I said, "That is quite true." At the outset I want to make my position clear. Some money was used or slung to various members of a political party in New South Wales, but I know for a fact that it was not slung to Labour politicians. I know where that money went.

**Mr. Aikens:** Tell us.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** I know who set up the fund. I merely want to clear up that point.

We all know that in Tasmania a qualified dental technician, and I emphasise the word "qualified," is legally able to practise. That is the law in Tasmania.

In referring to the high prices charged by dentists today, I am not deviating from the Bill. This morning I spoke to a member of the Parliamentary staff who told me that the charge for a two-teeth partial denture to this person was 30 guineas. If that is not highway robbery, I do not know what it is. That is only an example of some of the prices charged today. Other dentists charge more for that type of work.

We have heard from the hon. member for Bowen. I will admit that the B.M.A. at least fixes charges for visits to and by a medical practitioner. It may be £1 1s., £1 2s. 6d. or £1 5s.

**Mr. Aikens:** Oh, boy! How long is it since you have seen a doctor?

**Mr. BROMLEY:** I think the Minister will agree that doctors charge 2s. a visit in the metropolitan area. But the A.D.A. sends a price list to each of its members, and the price list gives the minimum charges. If any member is caught charging under the amount shown on the price list, he is immediately called on to explain his action and dismissed from the association. Dentists may charge whatever they like, as long as they do not charge less than the amounts shown on the price list. They are not called to order, irrespective of the extent to which they rob the

public. An increased fine is not going to make any difference; it is not the right approach. Doctors generally have an ethical standard in the matter of fees, but I do not think we can in all honesty say the same thing about all dentists. Some of them have consciences that react for the benefit of the public. I wished to make those few points clear because you told my colleague, Mr. Taylor, that we cannot depart from the Bill, and I wished to register my thoughts and make myself completely clear on illegal dentistry.

**Mr. HANLON** (Baroona) (12.46 p.m.): The Opposition is interested in this matter only to see that the people of the State are given firstly efficient service, and secondly a service under which they are not exploited financially. The hon. member for Nudgee, and other speakers, have pointed out that the Government have to explain what motivates them to impose substantially increased fines. The Minister told us that one unregistered dentist was fined a number of times at £5 a time, I think—

**Dr. Noble:** £20 is the maximum.

**Mr. HANLON:** £20, or whatever it was, and he paid a total of £1,300 in fines and yet had gone to other towns to start again. If the unregistered dentist, charging much the same fees as the average dentist charges—if he charged too much more he would not get very many customers—can afford to pay £1,300 in fines and still find it profitable to continue, it would seem that it is not the fine that has to be made much heavier but that the charges made by the dentists are too high.

In my opinion there is certainly some responsibility on the dental profession to look into this question. When the Minister introduces a Bill seeking to give protection to established registered dentists, by imposing vicious fines to keep unregistered dentists out of the field, to my mind there is a corresponding responsibility on the profession as a whole to see that they are not overcharging the public. On the figures put forward by the Minister it seems evident that he has established that charges generally must be much higher than they need be. I do not say that a qualified man in the dental profession—any more than any other profession—is not entitled to a decent return for the study he has made of the subject and the ability he has gained in the practice of his profession. However, any profession, whether medical, or dental, has no right to ask Parliament to impose very heavy fines, without doing anything to show that it is doing the right thing by the public.

As the hon. member for Carnarvon said, it seems that there is a great dispute as to where the "unqualified" and "unregistered" terms blend. There was a wide division of opinion, even in the debate this morning. It is not just a matter of someone practising as a doctor, where the decision is

considerably more clearcut. We find that even with the medical profession, a small section of the community wants to patronise people who are regarded with disfavour by the accepted medical profession. There is a much wider division of opinion as to what is meant when we talk about a qualified dental practitioner. The Minister would be well advised to have a closer look at the Bill before he proceeds to the second reading stage. We shall examine the Bill very closely. When he has done that we will be in a better position to judge exactly what he has in mind. Meanwhile he should take the time to answer the matters that have been raised by members of the Opposition.

**Hon. H. W. NOBLE** (Yeronga—Minister for Health and Home Affairs) (12.50 p.m.), in reply: I have been asked what I had in mind in introducing the Bill. I want to assure the hon. member for Baroona that it is not the Government's intention by the Bill to protect the dental profession. The objective of the Bill is to protect the people from the meddlesome work of meddlesome amateurs who set themselves up as dentists and who could do irreparable harm to the mouths of our citizens.

It has been said that the increased fines will not be a deterrent to these meddlesome amateur dental practitioners. When it is realised that the person who now pays £1,300 in fines will under the Bill pay something like £6,500, I am sure it will be agreed that that is a very considerable sum of money and that it should act as a very definite deterrent.

The hon. member for Carnarvon mentioned reciprocity among various countries and the States. There is complete reciprocity among the States but in the case he mentioned of the practitioner who got his degree in an overseas university—

**Mr. Hilton:** He was registered in New South Wales and in the Australian Capital Territory.

**Dr. NOBLE:** Certain rules are laid down under the Schedule to the Act whereby the Dental Board sees to it that those who are registered are properly qualified to practise dentistry. Under the Act as it stood in the time of the hon. member's Government, that person from the United States of America had no right at any time to practise dentistry in Queensland. A couple of years ago we had a look at the matter, as hon. members may remember, and we amended the Dental Act. At present any person who states that he is a qualified dental practitioner through some university overseas which has not got reciprocity with the University of Queensland has to produce his diplomas, certificates and the like. They are examined by the Dental Board and, if they are genuine, he is allowed to go for a practical examination set by the Faculty of Dentistry.

**Mr. Bromley:** They are not all allowed to do that, are they?

**Dr. NOBLE:** From any university overseas he produces his diplomas and certificates and, if they are considered to be certificates from a recognised university which is not one that has reciprocity with the University of Queensland, he is allowed to sit for that examination. He is examined by the Faculty here in Queensland and if he passes he is registered and is allowed to practise. I have no doubt that if the person mentioned by the hon. member for Carnarvon is as qualified as he states he could easily have passed the examination and been registered in this State.

**Mr. Hilton:** He was registered in New South Wales. They accepted him there.

**Dr. NOBLE:** The New South Wales Labour Government did some very funny things after the war. They registered certain medical practitioners who were not capable of practising medicine. They certainly registered medical practitioners who cannot practise in any of the big cities. They cannot practise in Sydney or Orange or Newcastle but they can go out to the poor people of the West and practise on them. If the hon. member regards that as being the act of a very good administration, I certainly do not. I think they were very wrong in New South Wales in doing that.

**Mr. Hilton:** The Air Force accepted him. He had the rank of Squadron Leader as a dental officer in that Service.

**Dr. NOBLE:** At the present time he would be examined, if he so desired, by the Dental Faculty of this State, and I have no doubt that if he has the capabilities the hon. gentleman says he has, he would be registered.

The hon. member for Norman said he knew of certain money changing hands in New South Wales. If he knows of that money passing hands there in a manner not completely legal, it is his duty as a responsible citizen to make it known to the Police of that State and to bring the culprit to justice. It is no use making such statements in the Chamber unless he is prepared to back them up outside. If he is genuine in his statement and if he has complete proof of it—and if he has not got complete proof he should not have made the statement—he should go out and inform the New South Wales Police so that the culprits can be brought to justice.

**Mr. Bromley:** You said something about my being genuine. I do not think you were genuine when you said that everybody who has a certificate from another country that has no reciprocity with the Queensland University can pass an examination and set up as a qualified dentist. I know of cases where they have been made to serve two years at the University.

**Dr. NOBLE:** The hon. member should know that, under the Act, either they are allowed to practice straight away or they may be asked to work for a couple of years, just as medical men have to practise in our hospitals. Because they are not considered capable of practising in their present state, they are asked to do a little further time. Then if they sit for another examination and they pass, they are allowed to practise. But if it is considered at the first examination that they will never be capable of practising with their present knowledge, they are not allowed to have that extra chance.

I think I have covered most of the points raised by hon. members, so I shall say nothing further at this stage.

Motion (Dr. Noble) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Dr. Noble, read a first time.

The House adjourned at 12.58 p.m.

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