

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 1962

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

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

QUESTIONS

INTEREST RATE ON SEMI-GOVERNMENTAL
LOANS

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

“In view of the recent decision to reduce the interest rate payable on Commonwealth Loans to five per centum, will he indicate (a) whether the semi-governmental rate will be £5 7s. 6d. and, if so, is he of the opinion that the margin between these two rates is too small to attract investors in semi-governmental loans; (b) if it is true that the £1,000,000 loan sought by the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria which is guaranteed by the Victorian Government and which attracted a rate of £5 15s. per centum was only subscribed to the extent of thirty-three per centum by the general public; and (c) if he considers that the question of semi-governmental interest rates justify an approach to the Commonwealth Government to provide a higher rate for such borrowings, thus ensuring that Local Authorities will have a reasonable chance of raising their approved loan requirements?”

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

“Yes, the maximum interest rate for semi-governmental public loans is now

£5 7s. 6d. per cent. The 'gentlemen's agreement' relating to borrowing by semi-governmental bodies provides, inter alia, that the maximum interest rates on public loans of semi-governmental authorities shall be 7s. 6d. per cent. higher than the interest rate on the long term securities issued in the last preceding Commonwealth Loan. This is the maximum margin which has applied on loans guaranteed by State Governments in the post-war period. Such margin was repeatedly confirmed when Queensland was represented by Labor at Loan Council meetings. These representatives confirmed this margin last on February 1, 1956. It is true that the public cash loan for the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria of £1 million, at 5½ per cent. interest, closed on December 19 last with only 31.3 per cent. subscription. However, following the recent Loan Council decision to maintain the 7s. 6d. per cent margin, the State Electricity Commission of Queensland received five underwriting offers in respect of their £1.4 million cash and conversion loan to open on Monday next with interest at £5 7s. 6d. per cent. The Government has no desire to impose on semi-governmental and other local bodies a higher interest burden than is necessary to raise the essential funds for developmental works, in accordance with Loan Council allocations. There is, as yet, no indication that the margin is inadequate as the following figures as to loan raisings in relation to allocations indicate:—

	Amount Raised £	Percentage of Allocation %
1955-1956 ..	13,138,573	80.1
1956-1957 ..	15,581,544	95.0
1957-1958 ..	18,603,000	100.0
1958-1959 ..	20,370,000	100.0
1959-1960 ..	21,630,000	100.0
1960-1961 ..	21,847,000	100.0
1961-1962 to February 27	20,184,353	84.4

This is a case where the proof of the pudding lies in the eating. I can present argument to justify a widening in the 7s. 6d. interest margin. But I am strongly opposed to adding unnecessarily to the burden of interest on Queensland citizens. No one would deny that 1960-1961 was a year of tight liquidity yet the full programme was raised. At this moment, liquidity is infinitely improved and this is evidenced by this morning's announcement of an all-time record raising by a Commonwealth loan in a year of peace. I am reliably informed that the Brisbane City Council have covered their full year's programme, including the recent addition; the Southern Electric Authority have already done so and the State Electricity Commission have their needs under full

assurance. Inclusive of the supplementary allocation of £1,546,000 agreed to by Loan Council this month, semi-governmental authorities can raise a further £4,238,143 during the remaining four months of this financial year, compared with £16,855,009 raised in the eight months to date. Local bodies authorised to raise less than £100,000 in 1961-1962 may each raise a further £100,000 before the close of the financial year, subject to State approval and maximum terms."

CONTROL AND ERADICATION OF MOSQUITOES

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"(1) Is he aware that last week a meeting was held in Brisbane which was attended by representatives of the Brisbane City Council and adjoining shires for the purpose of considering the most effective steps to be taken to control and eradicate mosquitoes?"

"(2) Is it a fact that there was unanimous agreement that this problem was of such importance as to warrant the co-operation of all parties concerned?"

"(3) Is it also a fact that an invitation was extended to him to be present and that he declined to do so on the grounds that no good purpose would be served?"

"(4) Does he now consider an objective of this kind as one which should have resulted in the utmost co-operation being offered?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"(1) Yes."

"(2) I have not as yet received an official intimation of any decision."

"(3 and 4) Yes. The question of mosquito eradication is one which is the responsibility of Local Authorities. I pointed out in my letter to the Lord Mayor concerning the meeting that the importance of this matter was realised and my Department would render any technical assistance possible. In this connection I may mention that the Treasury Department subsidises Local Authorities in their mosquito eradication work. The *Aedes Vigilax*, which is the nuisance mosquito which invades the metropolitan area breeds along the foreshores from the border to the Cape York Peninsula. If the Brisbane City Council and contiguous Shires did clear these breeding grounds, the next Shire north would require to clear its area so that to effect complete eradication it would be necessary to clear all breeding areas from the border to Cape York Peninsula and the cost to Local Authorities would be prohibitive."

GOVERNMENT HOUSES FOR STAFF OF
MESSRS. FORD, BACON AND DAVIS

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

“(1) Have any homes been purchased in Brisbane for the use of members of the staff of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis engaged in the supervision of the Collinsville-Mt. Isa Railway Rehabilitation Project?”

“(2) If so, how many, where are they located and what prices were paid for each?”

“(3) If homes have been purchased, to whom have they been allotted, what is their status in the Company and what rental, if any, is being paid for each?”

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

“(1) Yes.”

“(2) Three; One at Indooroopilly and two at St. Lucia. Prices—£6,800, £9,250, and £9,500.”

“(3) L. Beaton, Administration Manager, £13 2s. per week; F. H. Detze, Project Manager, £16 13s. per week; J. Worthing, Senior Engineer (Design), £17 per week. The arrangement with the Project provides that when these houses are vacated by Ford, Bacon and Davis employees, they will be sold and the proceeds returned to the Project Funds. With the rapid growth of the St. Lucia area, and the increasing shortage of building sites in the locality, plus the general appreciation in home values, it is quite likely that each property will finally realise much more than the initial capital outlay.”

COMMONWEALTH REQUESTS TO QUEENSLAND
FOR PLANS OF DEVELOPMENT

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) asked the Premier—

“(1) On what dates and on what occasions were requests made to him by the Prime Minister for a Plan of Development suitable to Queensland's requirements?”

“(2) Is it a fact, as has been stated by certain defeated members who previously represented the Queensland Liberal Party in the Commonwealth Parliament, that no action had been taken prior to December of last year to accept the invitation of the Prime Minister to make such details of developmental requirements available?”

“(3) If any such plan was ever prepared, on what date was it forwarded to the Prime Minister's Department?”

“(4) Has his Government at any time during the past eighteen months taken advantage of the provisions of the formula covering Commonwealth taxation reimbursements to the States to apply to

the Commonwealth for special assistance to Queensland to alleviate this State's unusual unemployment problem, other than the recent special Commonwealth allocation to the States?”

“(5) If any such approach were made, what reply was received?”

“(6) Has the Government at any time approached the Commonwealth Government for special assistance in relation to the State's electricity requirements?”

“(7) As he, as Premier and Chief Secretary, is the liaison with the Commonwealth and the Prime Minister in all matters of State Government administration, what comment has he to make in regard to the charges emanating from Canberra that a great deal of the responsibility for the obvious neglect of Queensland's needs lies with his Government?”

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

“(1) I am unaware of any such request.”

“(2 and 3) The political intent of the Honourable Member's question is not lost on me. However, I want to assure him that it is not my intention to prejudice the good relations presently existing between the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments, or to disclose confidential negotiations which are proceeding between our two Governments just to satisfy his political curiosity. Our plans for major developmental schemes of a national character have been submitted to the Commonwealth Authorities and, indeed, as the Honourable Member well knows, we have already received sympathetic assistance from the Commonwealth. I have no doubt that we will continue to receive a ready response in Canberra for assistance towards appropriate developmental schemes that we have submitted and will submit for their consideration.”

“(4 and 5) There is no such provision in the formula to which the Honourable Member refers.”

“(6) Yes.”

“(7) I have seen some vague references to such charges arising from anonymous sources.”

ORIGIN AND DESTINATION SURVEY, SUBURBAN
RAILWAY SERVICES

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) asked the Minister for Transport—

“(1) In view of the announcement that an origin and destination survey is now being undertaken by officers of the Railway Department in relation to present suburban railway services, will he state whether such a survey was undertaken prior to the cancellation of 624 suburban railway services on February 19 last?”

"(2) Did the firm of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis at any time conduct an origin and destination survey of suburban railway services prior to submitting their recommendations in regard to those services?"

"(3) Were such matters as public convenience and alternative transport services considered prior to the precipitate action taken in cancelling services?"

"(4) Why was not a conference called with the Brisbane City Council Transport Department in the interests of the public's convenience prior to introducing these service reductions?"

"(5) What recent action has been taken in relation to the co-ordination of Brisbane's transport?"

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

"(1) I am unaware of any 'origin and destination survey' now being undertaken. Counts are made from time to time of the numbers of passengers travelling by the various trains and such counts had been taken prior to the re-arrangement of the suburban railway services on February 19."

"(2) I am unaware of any 'origin and destination survey' having been made by the firm mentioned, but I understand that they did give consideration to departmental counts of passengers travelling by various trains and made certain investigations of their own in this connection."

"(3) Yes, but having regard to the necessity to place the suburban railway services upon a more economic basis."

"(4) It was considered that the reduced railway service should reasonably meet public requirements and there was no evidence to indicate that any increased Brisbane City Council bus services would be warranted."

"(5) Certain preliminary discussions have taken place between representatives of the Railway Department and Brisbane City Council in regard to co-ordination of rail and bus services in certain localities, but no finality has been reached since neither the Council nor the Railway Department is anxious to share its profitable areas or to accept any portion of an unprofitable area. However, I am still hopeful that when the Railway Department eliminates a considerable amount of its 'dead' running a compromise between the City Council Transport Department and the Railway Department will be possible."

BRISBANE TOWN PLAN

Mr. HANLON (Baroona) asked the Minister for Public Works and Local Government—

"(1) Is he aware that much of the concern at present generated regarding the

proposed Brisbane Town Plan arises from the failure of his Government to yet introduce legislation for a complete code of town planning powers as promised by the then Minister when the City of Brisbane (Town Plan) Bill was introduced on March 20, 1959?"

"(2) What progress has his Government made in this matter and can he indicate when such legislation will be forthcoming and when any other legislation relating to the Brisbane Town Plan in particular might be introduced?"

"(3) Is it not a fact that the proposed Town Plan shall only become and be the Town Plan for the City of Brisbane and have the force of law after the Governor in Council approves the plan with or without amendment, alteration, addition or modification?"

"(4) If so, can he indicate for the information of the public whether the Government intends before making recommendations to the Governor in Council to have regard to the financing of works proposed under the plan and the time factor in their implementation so that, from the present proposed plan prepared as a basis by the Town Planning Committee as to what in their opinion is required for Brisbane, the final plan as approved by the Governor in Council will have the maximum degree of certainty and fairness?"

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset) replied—

"(1 and 2) It is true that legislation for a complete code of town planning powers for Brisbane is essential before any Town Plan can be implemented. When Cabinet approved the setting up of a Greater Brisbane Town Planning Committee in November, 1958, it charged that Committee with the task of considering and reporting on any amendments of the town planning law that might be necessary. The Committee consists of five members three of whom including the Chairman and Deputy Chairman are nominees of the Brisbane City Council. I understand that the Committee has undertaken a deal of work in this behalf and has quite comprehensive provisions at present under consideration. As soon as the Committee has finalised its deliberations in this behalf and submitted its views on any proposed legislation to the Government, I will be pleased to give them full consideration."

"(3 and 4) The preparation of a Town Plan for the City of Brisbane is a function of The Greater Brisbane Town Planning Committee. A Plan and a report thereon has been completed by the Committee and submitted to the Brisbane City Council. The Council has advertised that the Plan and report thereon are open for inspection. The Brisbane (Town Plan) Act 1959 provides that the period during which the Plan and report thereon shall be open for inspection must be at least ninety days,

any extension of the minimum period of ninety days being a matter entirely in the hands of the Brisbane City Council. Any person may during the period fixed by the Brisbane City Council, lodge with the Council an objection in writing to the Plan. Every objection lodged with the Council must be referred to the Committee for consideration and the Committee is required to submit a report to the Council on every objection lodged. The Council when it receives the Committee's report on the objections is required to submit to me the following:—(a) The Plan; (b) The report by the Committee on the Plan; (c) Any and every objection to the Plan; (d) The report by the Committee upon such objections; (e) Such representations pertaining to any of the things set out in (a), (b), (c) and (d) above as the Council deems fit. The Governor in Council may after consideration of the Plan and of all things pertaining thereto approve of the Plan as submitted or subject to amendments, alterations, additions or modifications. Upon publication in the 'Gazette' of notification of the approval of the Governor in Council the Town Plan for the City of Brisbane shall have the force of law. Until the Plan and other material are submitted to me and I have the views of Brisbane City Council on the Plan, as required by law, I do not feel that I should make any premature statement. To do so would be discourteous to the Council, as a public elected body which has still to consider the matter and declare its views on the various issues involved."

OFF-COURSE BETTING AND TURNOVER TAX

Mr. HANLON (Baroona) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"(1) In view of his declaration on November 30, 1961, when introducing the Racing and Betting Acts Amendment Bill, that the dominant purpose of the Bill was in relation to off-course betting and that the then position gave too great an advantage to the off-course fielders who did not meet the expense borne by the on-course man, will he take immediate measures to delay implementation of the turnover tax on on-course fielders, scheduled to commence on Saturday next, until such time as the provisions for off-course betting and tax on same are in practical operation?"

"(2) If not, will not this further charge on course fielders and in turn on punters on course be an added advantage to illegal off-course operators?"

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

"(1 and 2) The tax is imposed by Parliament and I have no power to impose or to forgive a tax. There is every indication that the Race Clubs will act promptly to protect their own position."

CLOSURE OF CAIRNS RAILWAY WORKSHOPS

Mr. WALLACE (Cairns) asked the Minister for Transport—

"As he is well aware of the deep concern of the people of far Northern Queensland at the suggested implementation of the recommendation of the Railways Advisory Committee, Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis, to close the Railway Workshops at Cairns, and in view of his latest intimation through the Press of Queensland that the workshops are not to be closed, will he now give the House an assurance that such is the case and that the Cairns Railway Workshops will not be closed or the numerical strength of employees drastically reduced?"

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

"With increased dieselisation and the ever increasing use of steel wagons—features introduced into the Queensland Railways by the Leader of the Opposition whilst he was Minister for Transport, and not condemned by the present Government—the continued operation of the Cairns Workshops on their present basis of working cannot be economically justified and this unpalatable fact must be accepted. However, in implementing any decision to reduce Workshop activities at Cairns the Government will, subject to economic operation, endeavour to reduce to a minimum the impact upon the work force at that depot, but some disturbance of the personnel will be unavoidable."

PRIVATE WORK DONE BY IRRIGATION AND WATER SUPPLY WORKSHOPS AT MAREEBA

Mr. WALLACE (Cairns) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"(1) In view of the widespread belief among farmers and citizens generally in the Mareeba-Dimbulah areas that they have been unfairly discriminated against, has it been the practice of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission Workshop at Mareeba to carry out urgent jobs for farmers and other private citizens when the workshops were not fully occupied with Commission work?"

"(2) If so, were instructions issued and by whom, after receipt of a complaint by a Cairns firm through the Chamber of Manufactures, that no outside work was to be done?"

"(3) Is it a fact that the firm who originally objected does in fact now have work done themselves under the guise of being a contractor to the Commission?"

"(4) If so, will he take steps to have the instruction countermanded and return to farmers and others in the area the privilege of having access to the workshops for urgent jobs?"

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

“(1) The Irrigation Commission established workshops at Mareeba early in 1960, to provide for the maintenance and repair of its plant equipment and vehicles. Following the establishment of these workshops a large number of requests were received from local persons both farmers and business people for work to be done by the Commission and these jobs were accepted where they could not be done by equipment available to private workshops in Mareeba, or where the delay in private shops was excessive.”

“(2) (a) In June, 1960, a firm in Cairns forwarded to the Minister for Labour and Industry a copy of a letter to the Chamber of Manufactures protesting about the Irrigation Commission undertaking jobs for private individuals. As a result of this protest the Commissioner instructed his Mareeba staff that ‘private work should only be carried out where persons were unable to get it done in Mareeba, Atherton, or Cairns or any other centre within a comparable radius to Cairns. Contractors to the Commission were to be excepted from this ruling where use of private workshops would delay works.’

(b) In November, 1960, a complaint was received from three welding firms in Mareeba that the Commission workshops were doing work that they were capable of handling, particularly for the Local Authority. In this case the persons making the complaint were informed by myself that ‘since expenditure by the Council is subsidised significantly by the Government, the Commission should be free to accept work from the Council if it feels it can have this work carried out more economically at the Commission’s workshops than by private individuals.’”

“(3) The Cairns firm mentioned in Question (2) was awarded a contract by the Irrigation Commission for works on the Mareeba-Dimbulah Project in the latter half of 1961. Under the instructions referred to in Question (2), the Commission workshops would accept work from this contractor. Information is being obtained from Mareeba as to whether work, if any, has been done for this contractor and this information will be conveyed personally to the Honourable Member when it is available.”

“(4) As I consider the instructions concerning outside work to be done in the Commission’s workshops fair and reasonable to all concerned, I am not prepared to countermand them.”

PADDY’S GREEN IRRIGATION CHANNEL

Mr. WALLACE (Cairns) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“In view of the generally accepted belief in far Northern Queensland that the irri-

gation channels from Tinaroo Dam are to be completed only to the extent that they will not interfere with the supply of water necessary for servicing electrical undertakings in the process of building and contemplated, for the supply of power to southern areas and also in view of the vast potential of the Paddy’s Green area for increased farm allocations, is it the intention of his Government to proceed with the building of the Paddy’s Green irrigation channel? If so, how soon can it be expected the job will begin?”

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

“A further report by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission of December, 1961, on possible extension of the irrigation works of the Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Project to serve the Paddy’s Green section of the project is now under consideration by the Government. The complete development of the Paddy’s Green area would increase irrigation demand to the stage where full supply to the new Barron Falls Hydro Electric Project might not be maintained under very dry conditions. This aspect of the proposals is also being examined. I am aware both from personal inspection, representations by the Member for Tablelands, and a number of local organisations, of the merits and advantages of continuing development of this part of North Queensland, particularly in regard to closer settlement, increased business activity and employment. A decision on this matter is expected before the works programmes for 1962-1963 are finalised.”

INALA HOTEL

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) asked the Minister for Justice—

“With reference to the granting of the licence for the Inala hotel—

(1) Did the Queensland Housing Commission offer a site or sites for the erection of a hotel and was this site or sites available to all tenderers?”

(2) If this site or sites was considered to be unsuitable, on what ground did the Commission base its findings in this regard?

(3) Was the City Council planning committee unanimously opposed to the establishment of a hotel on the present site?”

(4) Was their opposition based on the question of creating a traffic hazard in two streets?”

(5) Did the Council list three of the sites in their order of suitability?”

(6) Is it true that the present location was not one of the three suitable sites listed and did the City Council consider the present location to be the worst site of all?”

(7) Is the present location outside the Inala locality at present developed by the Housing Commission and outside that proposed for future development?"

(8) Was the refusal of the City Council site approval contested before a tribunal under Mr. Lukin and did this tribunal give a decision against the Council?

(9) Who introduced the appeal and for what reason was the City Council's decision reversed?

(10) Is the present hotel site located in the Oxley police area?"

(11) How many brands of beer will be sold at the hotel and, if only one, what is the brand to be?

(12) If there is to be only one brand of beer sold, in view of the fact that there will only be one hotel in Inala on what ground did the Commission base its findings that customers of this hotel should only have one brand of liquor available to them?"

(13) Is the present site located on a proposed subarterial road?"

(14) Did the fact that a hotel located on the present site would attract custom from the main Ipswich Road influence the decision as to the hotel location?"

(15) In view of the chairman of the Licensing Commission's statement that he visualised a second hotel being erected in the area, when is it proposed that tenders will be called for a further hotel?"

(16) In the event of a further tender being called, is it to be construed that the remaining sites submitted for the present tender will be regarded as not being suitable?"

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

"(1 to 16) The furnishing of complete answers to these sixteen questions would involve an inquisition into the affairs of (a) The Queensland Housing Commission; (b) The City Council Planning Committee; (c) The Brisbane City Council; (d) An Appellate Tribunal appointed to review a decision of the Brisbane City Council; and——"

Mr. Sherrington: You have all the information now.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have repeatedly warned hon. members that if they ask questions they must hear the answers in silence. If there are continued interjections during the course of an answer I shall have to discipline the hon. members who interject.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I rise to a point of order. I asked perfectly straightforward questions that are of interest to the public. I feel that the Minister is evading those questions purposely.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Members' questions cannot be debated. I allowed the question to go in its entirety because I also

realised that it dealt with a matter of public importance, but it is the Minister's prerogative to answer the question in his own way.

Mr. MUNRO: In view of the interjection I might point out that I was in the process of listing various institutions whose affairs were concerned with this matter. The answer to the question continues—

"(e) The Licensing Commission, which is itself a quasi-judicial tribunal. The activities and decisions of The Queensland Housing Commission, The City Council Planning Committee, The Brisbane City Council and the Appellate Tribunal in question are matters outside the scope of the administrative responsibility of the Department of Justice. So far as the Licensing Commission is concerned I may say that the recent determination of the Commission in relation to the acceptance of a tender for a Licensed Victualler's License for an hotel at Inala is at present the subject matter of two Petitions to the Governor in Council. I propose to make a statement relative to the determination of the Licensing Commission after the Petitions to the Governor in Council have been dealt with."

EXTENSION OF FOUR-LANE HIGHWAY, ROCKLEA-MOOROOKA AREA

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

"In view of the increasing volume of traffic on the Ipswich highway between the Inala turn-off and the City, what steps has his department taken to proceed with the construction of a four-lane highway from this point to the Rocklea-Moorooka area?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"The Honourable Member for Sherwood has made representations to me on numerous occasions in respect of this section of road. Plans are in hand and it is expected that construction will shortly be authorised to extend the four lane divided roadway back to the Oxley Road at the Oxley Hotel corner. Further extension of the four lanes from this point towards Rocklea will be given consideration as and when funds can be allocated."

APPOINTMENT OF APPRENTICES AND OTHER WORKERS IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) asked the Premier—

"(1) As unemployment has reached the highest level ever amongst young people leaving school in this State, what action has been taken by him since the new loan allocation has been granted to see that the various Government Departments make further appointments of these young people to apprenticeships and clerical work?"

(2) Is he aware that a number of Government departments has appointed no apprentices for the years commencing January 1, 1961 and 1962?"

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

"(1 and 2) The Honourable Member may rest assured that administrative arrangements are being made and will continue to be made to provide the full complement of administrative and clerical officers necessary to give effect to increased programmes of public works. For the information of the Honourable Member, I would point out that since the Public Examinations held in November 1961, 304 young persons have been admitted to the administrative, clerical, professional and technical sections of the service. This number includes 124 male cadets and clerks who secured diplomas or completed the Senior and Public Service Examinations and 180 female cadets, clerk-typists and assistants from these examinations. In addition (exclusive of Teacher Fellowships) 73 Fellowships and Scholarships to the Queensland University have been awarded to secondary school students. A quick but incomplete survey shows that in Government Departments (exclusive of the Railways Department) at least 210 apprentices have been engaged since January, 1961. I am sure that the Honourable Member will agree with me that the Government has played its part in offering employment opportunities for the young people of our community."

DISMISSALS BY CO-ORDINATOR-GENERAL AT ST. LUCIA UNIVERSITY

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) asked the Premier—

"(1) Is he aware that eighteen building workers have been dismissed from the Co-Ordinator-General's day labour section at St. Lucia University in mid-February of this year and that further dismissals are to take place immediately?"

(2) If this is the position, will he take the necessary action to see that further dismissals are curtailed and that additional construction works are approved to avoid further unemployment in the State?"

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

"(1) Yes."

"(2) The buildings on which these workers were employed are nearing completion. A contract for the construction of an additional building at St. Lucia, estimated to cost in excess of £300,000, is about to be let. Many other avenues for the employment of the dismissed building workers have been opened up as a result of the accelerated governmental building programme."

REVISION OF BUDGET OF HOSPITALS BOARDS

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"(1) Is he aware of the statement that appeared in 'The Courier Mail,' dated January 29, 1962, in relation to the budget cuts ordered by the Health Department to be made by Hospital Boards throughout the State?"

"(2) Does this mean that continued free hospitalisation as promised by the Government in the 1960 Election is to be further whittled away?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"(1) I have seen the statement in 'The Courier-Mail' referred to by the Honourable Member."

"(2) As far back as the present system has existed each year Hospital Boards have received Budget cuts on their proposed expenditure. The total Budget allocations for Hospital Boards for 1961-1962 are substantially greater than those for last financial year and infinitely higher than the Budgets before the present Government took office. The Boards will also be assisted greatly by extra allocations made to them for maintenance purposes from the special grant recently received from the Commonwealth Government. Far from the Free Hospital System being whittled away, the Government has provided extra services and extra staff within our Hospitals. Never at any time have essentials been refused. Over the years maintenance and minor repairs have been deleted by Hospital Boards in balancing their Budgets, but as already stated, these special grants from which the Hospital Boards have benefited will cover a large proportion of this work."

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE FOR RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN ROCKHAMPTON

Mr. THACKERAY (Rockhampton North) asked the Premier—

"Will he give the House a detailed list showing what amount of money is to be spent in every Government Department at Rockhampton to relieve unemployment?"

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

"As allocations are not finalised, it is impossible at this juncture to give a complete picture. The Honourable Member can be assured, however, that like all other centres in the State, Rockhampton and district will receive equitable treatment in the allocation of Government funds, particularly amounts destined for the relief of unemployment."

WINDORAH-YARAKA ROAD

Mr. THACKERAY (Rockhampton North) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

“(1) What priority is placed on the Windorah-Yaraka road in relation to other beef roads in Queensland?”

“(2) How much money has been spent by the present Government on the Windorah-Yaraka road?”

“(3) Is he in a position to say when this road will be completed?”

“(4) As this road will mainly be used for the transport of cattle, is he in a position to give any figures on the number of cattle that have been transported from that area in the last financial year and also the expected numbers to be transported when the road is completed?”

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

“(1) The Windorah-Yaraka Road was included in the list of roads originally submitted to the Commonwealth for the Beef Roads programme, but the total programme has not yet been approved by the Commonwealth.”

“(2) £125,740.”

“(3) Completion of the road will depend on availability of funds and cannot be forecast at present.”

“(4) During the financial year ending June, 30, 1961, 5,196 cattle were railed from Yaraka. It is unlikely that there would be any substantial increase in this figure following completion of the road since the whole road is already available to traffic, having been cleared and formed on good alignment throughout.”

COST OF PRINTING NEW SUBURBAN RAILWAY TIMETABLE

Mr. THACKERAY (Rockhampton North) asked the Minister for Transport—

“(1) What is the cost of printing the working timetable for suburban lines to be operative on and after Sunday, February 18, 1962?”

“(2) Who authorised the printing of this timetable when amendments were made to this timetable at least ten days before this timetable was to be released?”

“(3) As it is the policy of the Railway Department to fine any employee for any minor breach, does he intend to have the officers fined or disciplined for this costly error or was the advice given by his senior officers rejected in favour of the Ford, Bacon and Davis report on suburban passenger trains?”

“(4) If the officers are not to blame, should not he accept full responsibility for errors and bungling of suburban passenger traffic in the Brisbane area?”

“(5) When will a timetable be available with all amendments and proposed ones?”

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

“(1) An account has not yet been received from the Government Printer.”

“(2) I am assured amendments were not made to the timetable ten days before it was to be released. The only amendments made prior to the date the operation of the timetable commenced, i.e., Sunday, February 18, were the addition thereto of two trains, one of which was decided upon on February 14 and the other on February 16, by which time the working timetable had been printed.”

“(3 and 4) See answer to Question (2).”

“(5) As soon as possible.”

CO-ORDINATED BUS SERVICE, SHORNCLIFFE

Mr. HOUGHTON (Redcliffe) asked the Minister for Transport—

“Will he take immediate action to have the co-ordinated bus service reinstated to meet the 10.30 p.m. train departing from Central Station to Shorncliffe?”

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

“Provision had been made in the draft timetable prepared by the Department for the co-ordination of a bus service with the 10.30 p.m. train from Central Station to Shorncliffe but it was deleted on receipt of a letter dated January 17, 1962, from the Hornibrook Highway Bus Service Limited reading inter alia:—‘You will note that we have eliminated the bus connection with the 171 down due to arrive at Sandgate at 11.09 p.m. Monday to Saturday. Our records reveal that this connection is no longer warranted owing to lack of patronage and we feel that the bus connecting with the train due to arrive at 12.01 a.m. will provide for the needs of the public at this time of the night.’”

GRANTS TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Mr. HOUGHTON (Redcliffe) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“How many local authorities have been given a straight-out grant from the recent allocation to the State by the Federal Government?”

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

“All grants to Local Authorities from this source have taken the form of subsidies. Apart from subsidies, no straight-out grants were made to Local Authorities from the recent allocation to the State by the Federal Government. The amount earmarked for subsidies is £860,000. However, the Loan Council gave an

unrestricted right to borrow up to a further £100,000 for those Local Authorities and other public bodies whose original borrowing programme for 1961-1962 was less than £100,000. If much advantage is taken of this extended opportunity, the subsidy grant could exceed the £860,000 which I have tentatively allowed."

APPOINTMENT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES,
DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND INDUSTRY

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

"(1) Apart from the recently appointed committee of eight men, how many similar committees have been appointed by him or his Department during the last four years, what were their activities and are any of them still functioning?"

"(2) Could not officers of his Department and/or the Secondary Industries Division have carried out the tasks of these committees?"

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

"(1) Fifteen Regional Advisory Committees in country areas from Cairns to Toowoomba, composed of men from all walks of life, and with the common aim of helping their district and State. They work in an entirely voluntary capacity, and many of them have already performed work of great value to their area. They work in conjunction with the Secondary Industries Division, and an officer of the Division acts as liaison between them and the Department. They will also co-operate with the State Advisory Committee. All are functioning most enthusiastically because they realise the effectiveness of their work."

"(2) No. The critically important aspect of the work performed by members of these Regional Advisory Committees is that they have an intimate knowledge of many factors applicable to their districts which no person other than a resident could have, and are regularly and willingly available at short notice to supply required information. I think the Honourable Member will agree that these groups would not remain as intensely active if they felt that they were not fulfilling a valuable function in State development. The Chairman of the recently appointed State Advisory Committee plans to visit each Regional Committee in the near future. It may be of interest to the Honourable Member to know that members of this State Committee are giving the whole of next Saturday and Sunday to a study of all aspects of their charter."

REDUCED SUBURBAN RAIL SERVICES AND
CLOSURE OF BRANCH LINES

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

"(1) In view of his recent statement that the cuts in suburban rail services had been made without proper consideration of all circumstances, will he assure the House that the recent closure of branch lines and curtailment of other services were not made with a similar lack of proper consideration?"

"(2) In view of the apparent unreliability of his advisers, will he review all other decisions on rail services made since his appointment of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis?"

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

"(1) The closure of Branch Lines received careful consideration before being effected. I am unaware of the other services to which the Honourable Member refers."

"(2) Recommendations made by Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis will be carefully considered before being implemented."

DEDUCTION FROM SICK LEAVE OF TIME LOST
WITH CHEST X-RAYS, IPSWICH RAILWAY
WORKSHOPS

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

"(1) Is he aware of the notice issued by the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Ipswich, wherein lifesavers, who are required to give mouth to mouth resuscitation and are required to have a chest X-ray each twelve months, are informed that any time lost having these X-rays may be deducted from their sick leave?"

"(2) Will he take action to ensure that those employees who give their services to the community in this capacity are not penalised by stoppage of pay or deductions from sick leave in the manner indicated in the shop notice?"

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

"(1 and 2) The Broadbeach Surf Life-Saving Club informed me recently that one of its members had asked that time lost in having his X-ray examination in connection with the mouth-to-mouth method of resuscitation be debited against his sick leave, but that this request had been refused. I immediately reversed the Departmental decision and agreed to the time lost being so debited in that and any other similar case which might arise."

DEVELOPMENT OF WEIPA BAUXITE FIELD

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

“(1) Has his attention been drawn to the developmental work being carried out on the bauxite deposits in Western Australia by Alcan and the possibility of this company outsmarting Comalco in the construction of an aluminium plant and securing the limited market available?”

“(2) As Alcan holds prospecting rights over a large area of the rich bauxite deposit in Cape York Peninsula adjoining the deposit held by Comalco, what action has been taken by the Government to force this company to develop this area?”

“(3) Is it a fact that by 1964 there will be less than 800 men employed on the Weipa bauxite field? If so, does he consider that Comalco is developing the Weipa bauxite field as set down by the Agreement?”

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

“(1) The Honourable Member is obviously misinformed. The Company mining the bauxite in the Darling Ranges in Western Australia and erecting plant in Western Australia and Victoria is Alcoa of Australia Pty. Ltd. That Company was formed last year. So far as is known, Alcan has no bauxite holdings in Western Australia.”

“(2) Alcan does hold an Authority to Prospect for bauxite over an area in the Cape York Peninsula. That Company has fulfilled all requirements of the Authority and therefore the question of any compulsion by the Government does not arise.”

“(3) The Comalco Agreement does not provide for numbers of men to be employed on the Special Bauxite Mining Lease but the confidential reports received under the terms of that Agreement show that the expenditure provisions required have been considerably exceeded.”

MAREEBA HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

“(1) Why is the Mareeba High School, with an attendance of over two hundred students, receiving ‘Cinderella’ treatment compared with other high schools in adjoining areas?”

“(2) As repeated requests by the Mareeba High School Parents’ and Citizens’ Association for the construction of a domestic science block, fencing of school grounds, sporting facilities, additional classrooms and the building of a residence for the principal have been disregarded, will he have these requests investigated with a view to having the necessary work carried out at an early date?”

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

“(1) I do not agree that Mareeba High School has received ‘Cinderella’ treatment. Compared with many other centres, Mareeba has been very favourably treated. In respect of the erection of a residence for the Principal and the provision of sporting facilities, the Honourable Member is reminded that the previous Government, of which he was a member, was opposed to the provision of ovals and the erection of residences for Principals at any Secondary schools.”

“(2) Mareeba is not the only High School where the Domestic Science Block has not been erected on the new site. Girls at Atherton, Bowen, Brassall, Caboolture, Charleville, Cleveland, Malanda and Stanthorpe have still to use the Domestic Science Accommodation on the primary school site. It has been necessary to give priority to the erection of general classroom accommodation at schools which have shown rapid growth. Classroom and laboratory accommodation are constantly under review in all schools and schedules are submitted to the Department of Public Works for attention. A request for additional laboratory accommodation for Mareeba is at present under consideration in the Department of Public Works.”

RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN COOK ELECTORATE

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Premier—

“Owing to the large number of unemployed in Cairns and the Cook electorate and the possibility of the position becoming desperate and owing to the recession in the timber industry causing large-scale retrenchment of labour in timber mills, what measures have been taken by the Government to provide work for the unemployed in these areas from funds now available?”

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

“The Government is not unmindful of the employment situation in the timber industry and as announced in the Press, Cabinet has made an allocation of just on £200,000 for re-forestation work from the additional funds received as a result of the recent conferences in Canberra. Further to that, and probably what is most important, a total of £1,420,000 has been allocated from these additional funds for expenditure by the Queensland Housing Commission. The Honourable Member will appreciate the beneficial effect the injection of this money into the building industry will have on employment, not only in that industry, but also the timber industry.”

OVERSEAS VISIT OF MINISTER FOR HEALTH
AND HOME AFFAIRS

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) asked the Premier—

"In view of the possibly tremendous importance to the health of the community in general and the medical profession in particular with regard to the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, Dr. Noble's proposed visit overseas to study hospital administration, advanced medical techniques, &c., will he give consideration to a recommendation to the Government that a private or non-Governmental doctor accompany Dr. Noble so that any beneficial results obtained from the visit may be shared equally by the Health and Home Affairs Department and the medical profession as a whole?"

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

"It is not considered necessary for a private and non-governmental medical officer to accompany my colleague, the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, on his mission overseas. It is a well known fact that members of the medical profession are continually making visits overseas for the purpose of enlarging their knowledge in their profession. The Honourable Member can be quite certain that any information in relation to advanced medical techniques will be made available—not only to the hospital services—but also to the medical profession in general.

TRAFFIC BREACHES, NEWSTEAD AREA

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"(1) Is it a fact that the first time Newstead Avenue, Newstead, and adjacent streets were patrolled by a Traffic Commission vehicle on a Saturday was on February 17, 1962?"

"(2) If so, and in any case in view of the uncertainty and lack of knowledge by the average motorist with regard to the use of parkatareas in certain districts, why was it not made public that these areas would be patrolled on this particular day?"

"(3) Was it because a race meeting was held at Albion Park that day and it was known by the authorities concerned that a great number of unsuspecting motorists would be parked in that vicinity, as is their usual custom when a race meeting is held at that particular race track?"

"(4) If he denies the aforementioned Questions, why was it that the first car booked for a breach of traffic laws in Newstead Avenue on the date stated was so booked at 11.43 a.m.?"

"(5) How many motorists were booked by Constable Stevens in the area mentioned between 11.43 a.m. and 12 noon on February 17?"

"(6) In view of Question (2), will he give consideration to the waiving of any fines for breaches committed in that area between the times stated above?"

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

"(1) No."

"(2) The suggestion that any law requires special advice of its implementation is obviously too impracticable to even require an answer."

"(3) No."

"(4) Newstead Avenue was only one street in the area."

"(5) Three."

"(6) Any person who receives a Traffic Offences Ticket has the right to appeal against the penalty and each such case receives consideration according to the circumstances of the offence."

CLOSURE OF BRANCH RAILWAY, NERANG TO
COOLANGATTA

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) In view of the public's adverse reaction in Coolangatta to the closing down of the line from that station to Southport and sale of Crown land at the site of the Coolangatta Railway Station, (a) will he consider attending or calling a public meeting in that area to explain the Government's action in closing down the railway line from Coolangatta to Southport and (b) thereby fully inform the citizens as to what form of disposal and to whom the land will go?"

"(2) Who or what firm was the successful tenderer for the purchase of the railway lines, &c., and how much is the Government receiving from the sale?"

"(3) How much maintenance was done on the line during the last twelve months prior to its closing and what was the total cost?"

"(4) Will he indicate if it is the Government's intention to dismantle the railway bridge at Maclean and Miles Streets, Kirra?"

"(5) If so, in view of accidents that have happened (the latest one resulting in six people being admitted to hospital, because of the low clearance of this bridge), will he give consideration to the immediate dismantling of this railway bridge?"

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

"(1) I am not aware of any serious adverse reactions to the closure of the railway between Nerang and Coolangatta. There is some variance of opinion amongst citizens of the locality as to what might be regarded as the best form of subdivision of the area of land facing Griffiths Street, but I am unable to comment on this matter until I receive a plan expressing the views of the Gold Coast Council."

"(2) No tenders have been invited nor will they be invited for the purchase of railway rails, rail fastenings, etc., contained in the track. These materials are required for re-use by the Department. A number of railway buildings including one house were sold by public tender and auction for removal for a total of £1,368."

"(3) The cost of maintaining the section Nerang to Tweed Heads is not available but the cost of maintenance of the section Ernest Junction to Tweed Heads for the year ended 30th June, 1961, was £17,567."

"(4) The railway bridges, one on each McLean and Miles Streets, will be dismantled when the materials contained in the track on the Tweed Heads side have been recovered."

"(5) See answer to Question (4)."

"Might I suggest to the Honourable Member that should he, in the future, be desirous of ascertaining any information on matters of a similar nature to those embodied in his five questions, he might save the time of this House by consulting with the Honourable Members for the South Coast and Albert, who, by their very active and efficient representation of their Electorates, are always very well informed."

REDUCED SUBURBAN RAIL SERVICES

Mr. MARSDEN (Ipswich West) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) Is it a fact that in reaching a decision to drastically reduce suburban rail services he accepted the report of an assistant mechanical engineer from the Ipswich Workshops, who is seconded to Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis, and completely disregarded the recommendations of the retiring Commissioner and his expert traffic officers?"

"(2) If not, whose advice did he accept?"

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

"(1) No."

"(2) The recommendation to reduce suburban rail services with a view to effecting an annual saving of approximately £500,000 was made by Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis. The working timetables issued were compiled by Railway Departmental Officers."

CLOSURE OF YARAKA-JERICO BRANCH LINE

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) asked the Minister for Transport—

"In view of the fact that there is a strong rumour in Central Queensland that the Government intends to close down the Yaraka-Jericho branch line and because the people of Central Queensland are fearful that any such move would have a very depressing effect on the economy of the region, would further divert production to

Brisbane instead of to Rockhampton, would reduce the population and increase unemployment, will he state whether the rumour is true, wholly or partly and, if partly, to what section of the branch line will the closure apply?"

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

"If statements as outlined in the Honourable Member's question are being circulated in Central Queensland, then I can only conclude that some person or body of persons are endeavouring to spread false propaganda for a particular purpose. No consideration has been given to nor is there any intention at present of closing any section of the Jericho-Yaraka Railway."

ENLISTMENT OF SERVICES OF OFFICIALS OF COMMONWEALTH RAILWAYS

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

"As the Labour-founded Commonwealth Railways made a profit of £1,407,490 for the year 1961-1962, will he seek the services of the officials of this successful railway system and terminate the engagement of the expert from the American firm of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis, and thus end the confusion that exists in the Queensland Railways at the present time?"

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

"While not desiring to detract in any way from the excellent financial results achieved by the Commonwealth Railways, I do not feel that any good purpose would be served by seriously considering the suggestion put forward by the Honourable Member. However, might I add that apparently the Honourable Member is unaware, or if he is aware, prefers for political expediency to overlook that the Commonwealth Railways is a fully dieselised system, that it comprises principally two very long runs of track, and has no branch line or suburban worries. Its long distance heavy loading is most profitable business, and up to the present it has suffered little from motor competition because long sections of roadway which run parallel with the railway are often untrafficable for long periods."

ALLOTMENT OF COMMONWEALTH NON-REPAYABLE GRANT TO SOUTHERN ELECTRIC AUTHORITY

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"What are the terms and conditions under which Cabinet has allotted £200,000 to the Southern Electric Authority for construction work from the Commonwealth's £3,340,000 non-repayable grant as reported in 'The Courier-Mail' of February 21, 1962?"

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

“No allocation was made to the Southern Electric Authority from the Commonwealth £3,340,000 non-repayable grant.”

“The £200,000 allotted to the Southern Electric Authority was from the £1,546,000 increased Debenture Borrowing Allocation for Semi-Governmental Authorities, and this fact was clearly stated in the Press report referred to in the Hon. Member’s question.”

TRANSPORTATION OF RAW SUGAR BY ROAD FROM NORTH ETON TO MACKAY OUTER HARBOUR

Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) asked the Minister for Transport—

“Have permits been applied for for the transportation of raw sugar by road transport from North Eton to Mackay Outer Harbour?”

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

“An application has been received by me from the North Eton Co-operative Sugar Milling Association Limited for a considerable reduction in rail freight on the transport of raw sugar from North Eton Mill to the Mackay Sugar Terminal, or alternatively for the issue of a permit to allow the Mill to haul the sugar by road.”

“The application is being examined by both the Railway Department and the Transport Department and when their conclusions are arrived at I will submit the matter to Cabinet for consideration.”

EXPORT OF MAIZE THROUGH DEEP-SEA PORT OF URANGAN

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“(1) As the Minister for Mines has suggested the formation of a pool of maize growers to negotiate for the sale of maize overseas, will he point out to growers the advantages of Urangan as a deep-sea port for the export of maize?”

“(2) Will he promise every assistance in the establishment of any required facilities at Urangan port in order to encourage growers to use this natural port for the chief maize-growing areas, should the contemplated overseas markets be established?”

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

“(1 and 2) Following an approach to me by my colleague, the Minister for Education, and a deputation from Burrum Shire Council, I already have in hand a preliminary study of the feasibility and economy of export of maize from Urangan.”

REFRIGERATED RAIL MOTOR ON MARYBOROUGH-MONTO SECTION

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) asked the Minister for Transport—

“(1) Has his Department withdrawn the streamlined refrigerated rail motor from the Maryborough-Monto service for use on Brisbane suburban lines and is it to be replaced by an out-of-date old type motor?”

“(2) If so, will he cancel the instruction as the withdrawal of the refrigerated modern rail motor shows a disregard by his Government for the interests, welfare and comfort of the country residents in that area?”

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

“(1) The Class 2000 rail motor was withdrawn temporarily on Friday evening last owing to the sudden breakdown of a similar rail motor in the Brisbane area. The only other rail motor available was a Class 102 H.P. which was quite capable of handling the small patronage at present being accorded the Maryborough-Monto motor, but which could not accommodate the average suburban traffic.”

“(2) Biased political comment, as contained in part two of this question, assists no one. The Honourable Member for Burnett contacted me the morning after the motor was transferred, and I assured him that it would be returned to his area at this weekend.”

ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW INDUSTRIES IN MARYBOROUGH

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

“(1) Will he concentrate his energies on encouraging the establishment of industries on an industrial estate in a country area north of Brisbane rather than on the industrial estate in Brisbane’s suburb of Wacol?”

“(2) As Maryborough is an ideal centre for the establishment of new industries, will he make efforts and give publicity to such efforts, to secure the development of new industries on the many ideal industrial sites in that city?”

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

“(1 and 2) I refer the Honourable Member to my very comprehensive answer to a similar Question he asked previously in which I fully detailed the position so far as Maryborough is concerned.”

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulations under the Auctioneers, Real Estate Agents, Debt Collectors, and Motor Dealers Acts, 1922 to 1961.

Regulations under the Art Union Regulation Acts, 1930 to 1956.

Orders in Council under the Supreme Court Act of 1921.

Orders in Council under the Lessees' Relief Acts, 1931 to 1932.

Orders in Council under the Purchasers of Homes Relief Acts, 1930 to 1932.

Orders in Council under the Mortgagors and Other Persons Relief Acts, 1931 to 1943.

Orders in Council under the Financial Emergency Act of 1931.

Orders in Council under the Criminal Code.

Orders in Council under the Landlord and Tenant Acts, 1948 to 1961.

Orders in Council under the Public Curator Acts, 1915 to 1957.

Orders in Council under the District Courts Acts, 1958 to 1960.

Orders in Council under the Religious, Educational and Charitable Institutions Act of 1861 Amendment Act of 1895.

Proclamation under the Companies Act of 1961.

Orders in Council under the Abattoirs Acts, 1930 to 1958.

Orders in Council under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1957.

Orders in Council under the Forestry Act of 1959.

Regulations under the Agricultural Standards Act of 1952.

Regulations under the Dairy Produce Acts, 1920 to 1959.

Regulations under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1957.

Regulations under the Slaughtering Acts, 1951 to 1958.

Regulations under the Stock Acts, 1915 to 1960.

Regulations under the Veterinary Surgeons Acts, 1936 to 1946.

Orders in Council under the Medical Acts, 1939 to 1958.

Orders in Council under the Health Acts, 1937 to 1960.

Regulations under the Hospitals Acts, 1936 to 1955.

Regulations under the Nurses and Masseurs Registration Acts, 1928 to 1948.

Regulations under the Health Acts, 1937 to 1960.

GOVERNMENT LOAN BILL

INITIATION

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to authorise the making of arrangements by the State of Queensland pursuant to the provisions of the Commonwealth and States Financial Agreement Acts, 1927 to 1944, for the raising of certain sums of money by way of loan by the State, and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

BABINDA SUGAR WORKS ACT OF 1924
REPEAL BILL

INITIATION

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to repeal the Babinda Sugar Works Act of 1924.”

Motion agreed to.

ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER ACTS
AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT
BILL

INITIATION

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani—Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Electric Light and Power Acts, 1896 to 1958, and the Regional Electric Authorities Acts, 1945 to 1958, each in certain particulars, and the State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1958, in a certain particular.”

Motion agreed to.

FIRE BRIGADES ACTS AMENDMENT
BILL

INITIATION

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Fire Brigades Acts, 1920 to 1959, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

HARBOURS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (12.15 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Harbours Acts, 1955 to 1959, in certain particulars.”

Under the Bill it is proposed to increase from £200 to £500 the value limit within which a harbour board member is permitted to sell goods to, or perform work for, the harbour board of which he is a member. The increase in limit follows a similar increase in the local government law.

Harbour boards will be able to acquire land for harbour purposes without price limit or being obliged to obtain prior Ministerial approval. As the Acts stand, land for harbour purposes may be acquired by harbour boards without the prior approval of the Minister provided the purchase price does not exceed £2,000 or, in the case of resumption, the unimproved value is not in excess of £1,000. Representations have been made by the Queensland Harbour Boards Association for a lifting of those restrictions.

The present law is rather inconsistent. A harbour board has to obtain the Minister's approval before it can commence to resume land with an unimproved value in excess of £1,000. Thus a board could resume without approval improved property to the value of £10,000 provided that the unimproved value of the land was not over £1,000. On the other hand, if the land were unimproved and the value were £1,001, the Minister would have to approve resumption proceedings being commenced. Again, in respect of industrial lands, in certain cases a board can acquire it without approval, irrespective of the value of the land.

I think that a more realistic approach is to give harbour boards the same powers as local authorities to enable them to purchase or resume land for harbour purposes without the prior approval of the Minister. As regards resumptions, they are all subject to the approval of the Governor in Council before they become effective, so there is ample power to protect the general public against unlawful or unreasonable resumptions.

It is proposed to authorise harbour boards to grant leases or licences for buildings and equipment for terms of up to 40 years. At present the maximum period of such leases or licences is 21 years. Recently one of the harbour boards sought an amendment to permit a 99-year lease of a spare wharf and shed to be granted to a company that wished to install cold-storage facilities on the waterfront. After studying the position, we concluded that it would be unwise. Wharves and sheds have a limited life. In this case, experience showed that it would certainly

be much less than 99 years. Consequently, while the Government believe that 21 years, the present minimum, might be too short, they consider that a 40-year period is more reasonable, and it is proposed to extend the maximum term accordingly.

It is also proposed that all such leases or licences for terms exceeding one year shall be subject to Ministerial approval before becoming effective. As the law stands, these must be sold by either public auction or tender.

In deciding to set aside the legal necessity to submit all leases or licences in excess of one year to public offer, it is not proposed that this will be done in every instance. The Minister will decide in each case whether or not public tenders will be called.

The first case where the need for public tender might well be set aside could be—

(a) Where a substantial industry, which would bring new revenue to the port and make a worth while contribution to the development of the district, wished to establish itself in harbour board premises and was willing to pay a fair rental for its occupancy.

I might observe here that virtually every harbour board up and down the coast shows a really enlightened and avid interest in securing new industries that will feed the district and the port. Very often those matters are better handled on a negotiated basis than by carrying negotiations to a certain point and then having to throw the whole matter open to public tender. The company that has been doing the negotiating could be cut out of consideration by another company that had had no part in the negotiations quoting £1 more.

Mr. Walsh: What are you going to do if you have several competing for it?

Mr. HILEY: Then you throw it open to public auction. That is only where you have something completely new coming in. The second case is—

(b) Where an existing lessee or licensee had built up a business but the term of the lease or licence was not sufficient to enable him to obtain a reasonable return on his outlay and he desired an extended period.

The third case is—

(c) For the protection of the goodwill of an established business.

In one case brought to my notice by a harbour board it was pointed out that years ago one firm established a business for the distribution of fertiliser in one of their wharf sheds. When the lease came up for renewal it was not merely a matter of the rental of the shed that was at stake but all the goodwill that had been built up in the distribution of fertiliser from that particular location. The board said, “This has got to go up for public offer.” It meant that any new competitor by deliberately outbidding the present

lessee would not merely take over the shed but virtually steal the goodwill because he would be operating from a place where the public had been accustomed to go for years. That is the third case where reasonably we can excuse the need for public offer, if we feel it was for the reasonable protection of the goodwill of an established business.

It is felt that the necessity for the prior approval of the Minister to long-term leases or licences is sufficient safeguard in the public interest.

In addition, it is intended that such leases or licences shall specify the purposes for which the subject property is to be used by the lessee or licensee, and be deemed to contain conditions that any change of purpose, assignment of lease or licence, or use of the property by any other person must first be approved by the Minister.

Mr. Duggan: You say long-term leases must still be approved by the Minister?

Mr. HILEY: No, that was the previous one. All long-term leases must receive the prior approval of the Minister before they are effected. In addition, it is intended that any such leases or licences shall specify the purpose for which the subject property is to be used. It is to prevent a person's negotiating the use of a property for one purpose and then ringing the changes completely. Because of the likelihood of shopping in leases or changing the purpose of a lease we consider that these matters should be controlled. He should be able to change the purpose or assign the lease only with the prior approval of the Minister. That is a practice that has been well recognised in other directions where the State or a State instrumentality is the landlord. That is the practice I inherited in the Queensland Housing Commission. Every time a tenant of the Housing Commission in the commercial section wants to sublet a lease he must secure prior ministerial approval. If the conditions are clear there is no difficulty. In a case where an excessive amount is being applied for goodwill the Commissioner applies a restraining influence to try to prevent what we feel is an overcapitalising of the lease in the hands of the assignee. The principle of the ministerial authority for a change of purpose of the lease or a subletting of the lease has ample precedent. It is proposed to apply the same principle to harbour board leases.

The present provisions concerning the granting of options will be re-enacted, together with those stipulating that the aggregate terms of the original lease or licence and any renewals under option shall not exceed the maximum period allowed, that is 40 years.

Harbour boards will be empowered to use temporarily surplus funds for investment in the official short-term money market. This will bring them into line with local authorities.

Under the Acts, the Sugar Board is required to establish a Replacements Fund for the replacement of terminal assets and other expenditure relating to bulk sugar handling. As the Fund can be used for purposes other than replacements it is thought that a better name would be Replacement and Reserve Fund. We agree with that and the Bill provides for it accordingly. At the present time the Sugar Board is obliged to make an annual payment to the Replacements Fund of an amount approved by the Minister. For the first five years the contribution has been fixed administratively at 1 per cent. of the capital expenditure on all terminals. Recently, the board advised that, in the light of the position of the Fund, it considered that this rate would be sufficient to meet foreseeable expenditure and suggested—now that the experience has been obtained—that that figure be inserted in the Act, with power in the Minister to require a greater contribution should he consider it necessary. This is accordingly provided in the Bill.

As the Act stands, no expenditure can be met from the Replacements Fund without prior ministerial approval. So far as the replacement of bulk sugar facilities is concerned we think that goes too far, in relation to the replacement of a belt here or something else there; so the Bill will permit the Sugar Board to operate on the Fund without such approval. For expenditure on other than replacements the sanction of the Minister will still be required.

There is also a machinery provision to cover the transfer of the credit balance in the initial Replacements Fund to the Replacement and Reserve Fund.

That covers the principles in the Bill. In the main, they are endeavouring to apply to exactly the same degree, principles which now apply in the local government law. I think there is merit in avoiding too much of a patchwork quilt in our approach to controls over such matters as the contractual capacity of members of various boards, as it becomes very confusing to the public mind if we have one limit in the local authority's laws, another in the harbour board's laws, another for regional electricity boards, another for hospitals boards and so on.

I have taken the view that where we have recently amended the position in local authority law we should adopt the local authority limit in other cases unless there is a very good reason for departing from it, thus avoiding confusion in the public mind. For the reasons I have stated, I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (12.28 p.m.): I would much prefer to withhold general comment on this measure until I have had the opportunity of examining it, because the Treasurer has indicated some important changes. However, in the way in which he presented the proposals, some merit, no doubt, attaches to the

reasons he has advanced for the change. Consequently, I should like to have a good look, particularly at the provision relating to the suspension of the obligation of calling of public tenders for certain purposes.

Taking matters in the sequence in which they were announced by the Treasurer, it seems to me that there has been some lack of liaison between himself and another Minister's department on the very point on which he finished his address, namely, the desirability of preventing confusion in the public mind about these varying amounts at which people can contract with the public authorities concerned. He stated that he fixed this £500 because that was the limit in the local authority law.

Mr. Hiley: That has already been varied so I am adopting the same limit here.

Mr. DUGGAN: That is all right and I am not against it but only last night the Minister for Health and Home Affairs brought in a Bill to amend the Hospitals Acts, to establish a limit of £250. So, it seems to be obvious that, if general uniformity is desirable there is lack of co-ordination between Ministers. This matter could have been discussed with a view to having the £500 limit in the local authorities' law apply also to hospitals.

Mr. Hiley: The Bill still has to go into Committee.

Mr. DUGGAN: It shows a lack of co-ordination, the very thing the Treasurer spoke in favour of. I am in agreement with him in that regard. I have said on many occasions that we should standardise as far as possible. If I may digress for a moment, I could mention the example of the Traffic Act. One would need to carry round a traffic encyclopaedia when driving to know how far to stop from corners, tram termini, and so on. I have said in many speeches that we should strive for the utmost simplicity and standardisation in general principles, and I am very much in favour of what the Treasurer has indicated in that regard. Instead of giving the Committee the benefit of his views, I would have been more impressed by his contribution if he had circulated those views among members of his own Cabinet. However, that is merely a point I make in passing.

In regard to giving Harbour Boards the authority to negotiate, it is true, as the Treasurer said, that there has been great competition between harbour boards to attract industries to their areas, and sometimes the competition gets so intense that there are divisions within harbour boards themselves for particular industries, and very often that competition extends beyond harbour boards and even to governmental levels. In the case of Amoco it appeared that one section was negotiating with the Treasurer and Minister for Labour and Industry, another section with the Premier, and another section again with the Minister for

Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity. Apparently representations were being submitted for people in regard to a valuable governmental concession. In that instance the weight of the Treasurer bore fruit.

I think it is desirable to encourage people to go out and look for industry. People are not going to establish industry unless there are obvious benefits to be obtained. If the districts have the facilities available, I think the people there should be given encouragement to attract industry, and undue limitation should not be placed on them in bringing to fruition the object of the negotiations. However, I should like to have a good look at that provision and give it further consideration. The three instances given by the Treasurer, I think, were quite pertinent to the submissions that he made, and I do not quarrel with the validity of his submissions. I think they were all right, but the only point I make is that these harbour boards are not entirely elected bodies in the same way as local authorities. In most instances harbour boards have a number of local authority representatives and to that extent they are persons who have been elected by public franchise. In addition, the boards have Government nominees. I do not know the number. In some cases it would be two or three.

Mr. Hiley: Two out of nine.

Mr. DUGGAN: I point out that the position of harbour boards is not exactly the same as local authorities in that respect, and in some cases experience has shown that people with a particular interest in harbour board work may say to the council, "I would like to be allotted to this particular task on the harbour board because of my interest in this matter." Sometimes those persons are business men. I think the Treasurer knows that that is so. I am quite certain that when he went to Rockhampton on one occasion he was canvassing for personnel to work on the harbour board because I believe he was not completely happy about the composition of the board at the time. I think he was motivated on that occasion by the desire to get good personnel. I am not attributing any improper motive to him. But some of the people elected to local authorities can have extensive business interests and because of their participation in the affairs of the harbour board can gain certain knowledge, and I think there should be reasonable safeguards in the legislation against persons securing an advantage in fields in which they are interested or in which they have some related interest.

Strangely enough, in my mail this morning I received a paper from Western Australia. A Cabinet Minister there has had very strong charges made against him in connection with the application of the Rio Tinto company for the right to develop iron-ore leases. Some very strong allegations were made because of his relationship with

B.H.P. We have to be particularly careful when we are giving valuable concessions, including harbour board facilities. This is not the era of the small man, but the era of the big company with the capital to use the facilities for export purposes. There could be the questions of the storage of food, grain, coal, and oil terminals. Of course, we realise the importance of those facilities that are provided by outside interests. I do not think there would be any harm if men with the highest possible integrity controlled these matters. I am not suggesting that members of the harbour boards are not of the highest integrity, but very often I think they may believe they are doing a public service by recommending a certain course of action, whereas they may not be. We must be very careful if we are going to abrogate to harbour boards the right of determining, without public tender, the rates for these things. I should like to have a look at that before we finally commit ourselves to it. It is true, as the Treasurer said, that there are some safeguards embodied in the legislation regarding long-term leases, and also against the character of the lease being changed. In my opinion that principle is very desirable because it could happen that a low-profit industry could seek special terms from a harbour board for the lease of an area, and the board knowing that there was not very much profit to be earned from the operation of that facility might be prepared to give very beneficial terms. Without the Treasurer's right of veto they could very well sell their lease to someone else, for some other purpose and reap a profit. Attempts have been made on previous occasions to do that and I am glad to know that the Treasurer has safeguarded against that possibility by including in the legislation provisions to deal with such situations.

The provision under which the harbour boards are given the right to invest surplus funds in the short-term money market seems to be something to which the Treasurer has given his imprimatur. The same principle was contained in the amendment to the Hospital Acts which was introduced yesterday. If the funds are there, properly allocated for the purpose, and are lying idle merely because it is not possible to utilise them at the time, providing that their investment does not prevent the development of the harbour from proceeding in its normal way, then it is appropriate that these funds should earn some money rather than that they should be lying idle in a bank or some other place.

Subject to those reservations the purposes behind the Bill are sensible. However, I should like to give some further consideration to whether the safeguards are adequate. Other than that, I think this is quite a good Bill.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (12.37 p.m.): The Treasurer has outlined what appear to be simple amendments in the light of his

introduction of this measure, nevertheless they could be far-reaching. I expected that the Treasurer would have many more amendments to the Harbours Act. We are coming to the stage now that this Act, like other Acts since this Government came to power—and it appears to be an annual occurrence—has to be amended regularly. It seems to me that the Government believe they must find some grounds for amending the law. There was a time when the Land Act took pride of place. Each year we could expect one or two amendments to that Act. The Local Authorities Act followed in a like manner. The Treasurer will agree that he has brought down several amendments to the Harbour Boards Act since harbour boards came under his control.

While the principle of the election of members to harbour boards is not contained in the Bill, reference was made to it by the Leader of the Opposition, when he said he was not particularly concerned about the method adopted.

Mr. Hiley: I do not think he committed himself on that.

Mr. WALSH: He was referring to the method of election, at the present time, of members who had already been elected to other bodies. I do not want to misinterpret what he said.

Mr. Hanlon: He just said that they were not elected directly by the public.

Mr. WALSH: That is true. I thought I understood him to say that he was not quibbling about the principle. I may be wrong, and if I am, it does not matter. All that I want to do is to register very strongly that I am against the present method of election of members of the board. I am very surprised that the Treasurer has not made a move to change it in view of the many representations he has had from harbour boards and the association for amendment to the Act to restore the provision that operated before this Government took office. The Treasurer will see the wisdom of that later as the urgent need for it becomes more apparent.

I do not disagree with the patchwork amending of the legislation to increase the sum up to which members of various semi-governmental or public authorities might be allowed to contract with the particular authority they are serving. In this case the increase is from £200 to £500. But now it is necessary to amend the Local Government Act and the Harbour Boards Act. Yesterday we had a reference to an amendment of the Hospitals Boards Act. I suggest to the Treasurer—and I think he would be capable of doing it—that he consider the advisability of introducing a specific measure to cover all semi-government and public bodies in this respect. That would do away with the need to amend numerous Acts from time to time to cover the principle. There

may be some difficulties in the way but it would be worth while to examine the possibility.

I should be very cautious in my approach to the Treasurer's proposal to give harbour boards the right to lease land without calling public tenders. It opens up very grave dangers. It would be reasonable to assume that the reason for introducing the amending provision is that somebody has approached somebody, the harbour board or the Government as the case may be, and this obstacle has been found to be in the road. Otherwise, as I am sure the Treasurer will agree, one does not go round looking for such amendments. Usually in such cases representations are made to the public body or to the Government. From the public's point of view the safeguard has always been and should continue to be that, irrespective of who wants the land, the semi-governmental authority must publicly advertise that a site is available and so enable any interested party to make inquiries and put a proposal to the harbour board. It is a very dangerous precedent to give a harbour board the authority without the Minister's having any control or power of veto. If I understood the Treasurer aright, the board will have that authority.

Mr. Hiley: Anything over a year the Minister has the right of veto.

Mr. WALSH: If the Minister has the right of veto over a year, I cannot for the life of me see that any great industrial undertaking would want to bargain with the harbour board on the basis of one year. That is quite clear. I do not know the reason for the amendment of the provision. The existing provision appears to have worked fairly satisfactorily and it would be interesting to hear the Treasurer give the Committee the basis of the approach made to the Government for the amendment. If the Government or the Minister is to have some control in the matter, there is not so much to complain about. Nevertheless I issue a warning against departing from the strict rule that has applied over the years that these matters should be above suspicion of any kind. With certain matters, like the Hamilton lands, we have a committee set up. As the Treasurer realises, any organisation that might be interested in establishing an industry could put its proposal to the committee. If the committee was convinced that priority should be given to this industry or that industry, they gave it priority. The committee was composed of prominent public servants who were responsible to the Premier or the Minister of the day. That was a good safeguard, and I do not like to see power passing into the hands of local bodies such as this without strict control being operated in some way by the central authority, the governmental authority. We all know that the human element comes into these matters. Anybody with experience of local authority service knows the pressure that is brought to bear on members of those

authorities to use their influence in this, that or the other direction. It will be interesting to see what provisions the Treasurer has incorporated in the Bill.

In regard to the removal of the limitation on the purchase of property by harbour boards, here again I may not have followed the Treasurer quite correctly. The Treasurer will agree, of course, that it is very necessary that he should continue to exercise some control over the expenditure of loan funds by harbour boards. I should not like to think that a harbour board will be given authority to purchase a property out of loan funds without the approval of the Treasurer, irrespective of the amount.

Mr. Hiley: If it has to borrow the money, it has to get the loan approved; if it buys it out of its own revenue, it is a different matter.

Mr. WALSH: I know that. I have made a note here that that would be the difference. But when the Treasurer has before the Committee a proposal to remove the limitation or restriction applying to the purchase of property, I think we should know specifically the difference between revenue and loan funds. I realise that the boards' loan programmes and budgets, and so on, have to be submitted to the Treasurer. You could not say on the one hand, "These boards are boards with local autonomy," and then try to pare their budgets and take this out and that out. They submit a proposal to the Treasurer that certain sums of money be raised by debenture loans. After the Treasurer and his officials have a good look at the representations, they go to the Loan Council and receive its approval or otherwise for the particular amount. I merely wish to be sure that the Treasurer is not going to leave the gate wide open for harbour boards to negotiate for the purchase of any property without there being some power somewhere to limit them, particularly in the expenditure of loan moneys that the Government must guarantee.

I wish to refer briefly to the site again and discuss how these questions might arise. I do not wish to start the fight again between Gladstone and Rockhampton. Far be it from me to encourage harbour boards to fight. But one can imagine the interest of the harbour board at Port Alma, for example, when Ampol came along and said it wanted a site. We heard the boasts of the hon. member for Rockhampton South about what was going to be done and about a refinery being erected there to the exclusion of anywhere else. The Treasurer could reply, quite rightly, that the Government invited all the companies to submit proposals, and that is the procedure that I should like to see continued in relation to harbour board properties, whether at Port Alma or elsewhere.

The other parts of the measure are mainly machinery. Small difficulties have arisen and an organisation such as the Sugar Board might think that an amendment is required to protect its interests. If it is going to

make it any easier to protect their money by including the word "Reserve" in the title of the Replacement Fund, all very good, let us include it. But I do remember that we took up a great deal of time here considering an amendment to the Racing and Betting Act to eliminate the word "board". Since then all I have heard about is the Totalisator Board. You can put these words in or out but they do not make much difference. Nevertheless, the Treasurer will agree that the Sugar Board Fund certainly has been a means of providing a satisfactory basis of finance for the various harbour boards throughout the State. It has enabled them to proceed with their work at a faster rate than if they had to rely entirely on the normal financial resources. That money was available to the sugar industry through the Sugar Board having invested it. They are getting a return on it; it is going back into the sugar fund, all of which I believe is a very good financial policy. As a matter of fact, some people would call it socialisation, but I still think it is good.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (12.51 p.m.): Nobody can quarrel with what is being done about increasing the amount of exemption in the matter of interests in contracts. That is plainly necessary because of inflation. However, I should like to chide the Minister about the limitation on gift duty. It is £1,000 now even though it was £1,000 when I was a boy. Perhaps the Treasurer might contemplate an adjustment in that limitation at the appropriate time.

The matter of interest in contracts creates a difficult problem. On the face of it a man might have a business that he conducts himself. I have much more time for the man who conducts a business in a private capacity without sheltering under the Companies Act than the man who takes advantage of that Act with its protection of limited liability and other advantages. In very many cases 90 per cent. of the shares of a company are held by one man. In private companies the £500 would not apply. Under the provisions of similar Acts he would have to give written notice to the appropriate board that he has shares in the company. He even may have to refrain from voting on a particular matter. If his business is conducted purely as Bill Brown with no limitation to his liability he is limited to £500. If it is Bill Brown Pty. Ltd. there is no limitation to the amount of the value of any contract he can enter into. I can remember a case concerning the manager of the Gladstone meatworks. He was a member of the harbour board in Gladstone. The police magistrate, Mr. J. D. McLean, was a member of that harbour board. Had he not been a member this other chap might have got away with it. He gave notice of motion that the harbour dues on meat be reduced and the harbour dues on butter increased. I can still picture Mr. J. D. McLean "doing that fellow over" as they would say in the vernacular.

In Rockhampton Mr. Hinchcliffe, Chairman of the Rockhampton Harbour Board, is there for the specific, or at least the main purpose of protecting the interests of his company. It is a big company and the main user of the wharf there and, if he can get the harbour dues on meat down, he does a great service to his company. The Treasurer must concede that harbour dues on meat at Port Alma and other ports are uneconomic. Harbour dues are to a harbour board what rates are to a local authority. They are the means of obtaining revenue to pay the board's expenses and if they do not charge sufficient dues they have not enough money to meet their commitments. In the case of Rockhampton it becomes a liability and a burden on consolidated revenue.

I should say that the manager of Lakes Creek meatworks is doing a great service to the big overseas interests that he represents in keeping these rates at an uneconomic level. It amounts to nothing less than that the taxpayers of the whole of Queensland are subsidising Vestey's meatworks, which is a colossal concern whose interests are perhaps not as big as those of Queensland but nevertheless very big.

However, these things are there; they are more a warning than anything else. I do not see any solution to them, so it is not much good labouring the question. If any alteration was to be made I should say the same limitation should have been applied to companies as to individuals, and also to their employees.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 1 p.m.