

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 25 MARCH 1965

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

QUESTIONS

GRIT-ARRESTER, TOWNSVILLE POWERHOUSE.—Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Industrial Development,—

(1) Is he aware of the report in *The Courier-Mail* of March 12, which said that the Southern Electric Authority is spending £250,000 on new grit-arrester equipment at the Tennyson powerhouse, Brisbane?

(2) If so, how much does the Northern Electric Authority propose to spend on new grit-arrester equipment at the powerhouse on Murder Island, Townsville?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Expenditure at the Central Generating Station in Townsville on grit-arrester equipment and other measures taken to control grit emission now totals £65,000. I am informed that, as a result of this, grit emission has been considerably reduced to a level lower than other powerhouses of similar type in Australia, and that no further expenditure is contemplated at this stage."

DAM AND WEIR CONSTRUCTION.—Mr. Newton, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

(1) What is the number of Dams and Weirs under construction in the State by his Department as at February 28, 1965?

(2) Of these, how many are being built by (a) private contractors and (b) day-labour?

(3) What is the number of employees, including all trades and clerical staff, employed on such projects as at February 28, 1965?

(4) What is the number of applications received by his Department for assistance under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act from July 12, 1964, to February 28, 1965?

Answers:—

(1) "Excluding Callide Dam, on which work by the contractors has been completed recently, the Commission has three dams, namely Leslie, Coolmunda and Wuruma Dams, under construction."

(2) (a) "Major components of Coolmunda Dam will be constructed by contract with overall Commission co-ordination and some day labour work. (b) Leslie and Wuruma Dams are being built by day labour, with some contract work."

(3) "Leslie Dam, 209; Coolmunda Dam, 70; Wuruma Dam, 30."

(4) "Technical assistance only, 634; technical and financial assistance, 173."

TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT SCHOOL CROSSINGS.—Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

(1) How many pedestrian-actuated lights have been installed at school crossings in the metropolitan area?

(2) How many applications have been received from school organisations for the installation of these lights?

(3) How many of these have been accepted or rejected and how many are awaiting decision?

(4) Has any survey of metropolitan school crossings been carried out to ascertain the desirability of providing this safeguard?

Answers:—

(1) "Twenty-nine sets installed."

(2) "About eighty applications."

(3) "Sixty-four sites have been rejected as being well below the warrant."

(4) "Yes. Two surveys have been made—one to check conditions and one to check the accident records. The latter survey indicates that, where traffic lights are installed in locations that do not meet the warrant, school patrols offer greater protection than traffic lights."

TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT BALD HILLS SCHOOL CROSSING.—Mr. Lee for Mr. Campbell, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a news item in *The Courier-Mail* of March 22, 1965, that the Main Roads Department will install pedestrian traffic lights in Gympie Road near Bald Hills school and that the Works Committee of Brisbane City Council last week approved of the installation?

(2) Have not pedestrian traffic lights been operating near this school for several months?

(3) Why is it considered necessary to install a second set of pedestrian traffic lights in the vicinity of this school?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Yes. The pedestrian traffic lights at the Bald Hills school crossing have been operating since August, 1964."

(3) "A second set is not being installed. How the report originated I cannot say."

COMMUNIST INFILTRATION IN SUGAR INDUSTRY.—Mr. Lee for Mr. Campbell, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Industry,—

As statements have been made from time to time by various persons, including statements by Mr. Edgar Williams, the Branch Secretary of the Australia Workers' Union, that Communist infiltration is now taking place in the sugar industry, for the purpose of disrupting it, has he in his possession any information to support these allegations?

Answer:—

"I regret to say that the Government has such information in its possession, but it is not proposed to disclose details. However, I quote one instance, which is the case of a member of the Communist Party, who was employed with a certain undertaking for many years. Recently, he received a direction from his Communist Party bosses to leave his employment, and to take up employment in a certain sugar mill. It is understood the person concerned was very unhappy at receiving such a direction to leave his former employment, but apparently he was not strong enough to defy the party. The reasons for such a direction to this person to seek employment in the sugar industry, I am sure, are obvious to all Honourable Members. Reliable information is also to hand that the rebel C.M.C. Group is endeavouring to cause disruption in the sugar industry, and it is understood that certain members of the A.W.U. at one sugar mill have decided to defy the A.W.U. Executive and support the move which was proposed by the Communist dominated Queensland Trades and Labour Council for a twenty-four hour stoppage. I am happy to say, however, that, in three other mills in this particular area where similar attempts were made, they were unsuccessful."

ERADICATION OF HYACINTH ON BREMER AND BRISBANE RIVERS.—Mr. Donald, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

As the growth of hyacinth on the Bremer River and on the Redbank reach of the Brisbane River is threatening navigation, will the Department of Harbours and Marine take the necessary action to rid the rivers of this pest before it seriously interferes with transport on them?

Answer:—

"As I informed the Honourable Member in Answer to his Question of October 24, 1962, the problem of hyacinth infestation is a recurring one. It reaches a peak after long periods of low flow in the river and its tributaries. Flooding of the streams alleviates the position. It is my understanding that the present level of hyacinth infestation in the upper reaches of the Brisbane and Bremer Rivers has been

surpassed frequently in the past on occasions when the resultant interference to commercial navigation proved to be negligible. I do not anticipate any serious interference with commercial water transport from the present movement of hyacinth but I will have the matter watched. I would point out to the Honourable Member that the constant bed of infestation for the tidal reaches of the River is the tributaries, creeks and lagoons above tidal influence not subject to the jurisdiction of the Department of Harbours and Marine. The eradication of that infestation is a matter for the Local Authority under the Local Government Acts."

POLICE INVESTIGATION, DISTURBANCE IN SERPENTINE ROAD, PINKENBA.—Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) Is he aware that following a disturbance and assault in Serpentine Road, Pinkenba, on the afternoon of March 18, the victim telephoned the Valley police and was instructed to lodge his complaint with the Hamilton police who advised him the matter would be dealt with as soon as possible?

(2) As no apparent action has been taken, will he take appropriate steps to expedite the enquiry into this matter?

(3) Will he also ensure adequate police are available in that area to carry out immediate investigation of any similar happening in the future?

Answer:—

"The facts of the incident have been ascertained and it has been reported that a statement was made to the Hamilton police by a man at Pinkenba. The person who made the report to the Hamilton police now claims that he wanted the police to see a man about an incident of alleged abuse to his wife, but the police constable who received the report at Hamilton, reports that the man concerned stated he did not want any police action in the matter and was only reporting the incident so that the police would know his side of the story, in the event of the other party to relevant incidents making a complaint to the police about him. Although both police on duty at Hamilton at the material time were called upon to undertake special measures in relation to a search for a missing child, action could have been taken to have the report from Pinkenba investigated, had it been made clear by the man reporting to the police, that he desired police action in the matter. The police staff at Hamilton is considered adequate for normal requirements in the Division and additional staff from outside that Division can be made available when required."

WEST BARRATTA BRIDGE.—Mr. Coburn, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

Further to the Answer to my Question on October 14, 1964, relative to the completion of the West Barratta bridge, when will this structure be completed and will penalties be imposed for failure of the contractor to complete the contract by February 26, 1965?

Answers:—

(1) "Work is proceeding well at present. Completion will probably take eight weeks. The contractor has had some difficulties."

(2) "No penalties are imposed on contracts but liquidated damages are automatically debited to the contractor's account when he fails to complete on time, unless some extension of time is authorised. An application by the contractor on this job for some extension of time is at present under examination. Specified time of completion on this job was 26th February, 1965."

TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT KELVIN GROVE ROAD, PROSPECT TERRACE AND L'ESTRANGE TERRACE INTERSECTION.—Mr. Hanlon, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

(1) Did the then Minister, The Honourable A. T. Dewar, approve in August, 1963, that traffic signalisation at the intersection of Kelvin Grove Road with Prospect Terrace and L'Estrange Terrace should have the highest priority?

(2) Was this project included in the programme for the financial year, 1963-1964, but not carried out and, if not, why not?

(3) Did the late Minister, The Honourable E. Evans, instruct in September, 1964, that design work associated with this project be expedited? If so, has the Minister's instruction been carried out and, if not, why not?

(4) Has a reliable estimate of the costs involved both to the Government and the Brisbane City Council yet been obtained?

(5) As children from the immediately adjacent schools have continued to suffer injury on the crossing outside the hours when it is manned by police, will he affirm that the project be expedited?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes, and it was regarded as having high priority since conditions meet the warrant."

(2) "Yes. However, you will recall that my predecessor, the late Honourable E. Evans, M.L.A., informed you by letter that, because of certain designing problems, the plans could not be prepared in 1963-1964."

(3) "Mr. Evans issued instructions in September, 1964, for design work to be expedited. The instruction has been carried out and the scheme is almost ready for discussion with the Brisbane City Council. The council will have to approve of certain provisions inherent in the scheme before work can commence."

(4) "Final estimates have not yet been made."

(5) "I will instruct the Traffic Engineer to expedite work on the project as much as possible."

TEACHERS COLLEGE IN NORTH QUEENSLAND.—Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) How many new students were enrolled at the Teachers College, Brisbane, this year as (a) first-year students and (b) second-year students?

(2) In both categories how many of the students came from the Northern division of Queensland?

(3) Do the numbers so recorded justify the establishment of a Teachers College in North Queensland?

(4) If not, what would be the minimum requirements of the numbers applying to indicate the need of a Teachers College in North Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) "New students undertaking courses at Teachers' Colleges are enrolled thus: First year, 970; second year, 165."

(2) "Students from the Northern Division of Queensland are: First year, 94; second year, 21."

(3) "Not at present."

(4) "Approximately 200 each year."

NEW RAIL MOTOR UNITS FOR CAIRNS DISTRICT.—Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

(1) Is he aware that old and out-dated rail motors are still operating within the Cairns district, are not confined to the suburban area, but are being utilized on long distance runs, and that modern rail motors do not perform the complete service required inside and/or outside the suburban area?

(2) When can the Cairns district expect new and modern rail motor units to cater for the full requirements of the travelling public?

Answer:—

(1 and 2). "Three modern rail motor trains consisting of eight vehicles which can be operated as six independent services,

and five rail motors of 102 horse power, are attached to the Cairns District. The long distance services are worked by the modern rail motors while the 102 horse power motors work the suburban services between Cairns and Aloomba, a distance of 17 miles 47 chains, and between Cairns and Mareeba, a distance of 46 miles 21 chains. The 102 horse power rail motors are only utilised on long distance services when a modern rail motor train is undergoing repairs. There are no rail motors which could be transferred to Cairns to replace the 102 horse power rail motors. The present fleet of rail motors in the Cairns District is adequate for the patronage offering."

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING IN CAIRNS.—Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) Has a decision yet been reached in relation to the site for a State Government administrative block and offices in Cairns?

(2) Have plans been drawn up to provide a modern administrative block and offices to house State Government Departments in the Cairns area? If so, when is work expected to commence on this most-needed block?

Answers:—

(1) "A final site determination has not yet been made."

(2) "No. Plans cannot be drawn until the site determination is made."

DISMISSALS, PADDY'S GREEN IRRIGATION PROJECT.—Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

Is it a fact that there were recent dismissals of workmen in the Paddy's Green irrigation area? If so, what were the reasons for their dismissals?

Answer:—

"There have been no dismissals further to those mentioned in my reply to the Honourable Member's Question on March 16 last."

ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION, MOUNT GARNET ABORIGINAL RESERVE.—Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

In view of the overcrowding of the existing houses at the Mount Garnet Aboriginal Reserve due to elderly relatives and others living with families and friends, will he consider the erection of additional houses for pensioners and quarters for single men in order to eliminate the overcrowding?

Answer:—

"Since this Government assumed office, six dwellings have been erected on the Aboriginal Reserve at Mount Garnet where none previously existed. Plans and specification for the erection of a single men's quarters on this Reserve are nearing completion and tenders will be invited shortly. Septic systems have been recently installed for all dwellings. Additionally, fencing, including subdivision, has been completed. The building programme at Mount Garnet Reserve was designed to meet the needs of those permanently established there and forms only a part of the total housing programme being implemented by this Government throughout the State for indigenous peoples. The Honourable Member is assured that I will again have the position at Mount Garnet examined and the needs of the people will receive the usual generous and sympathetic consideration of this Government, consistent with the overall State requirements and funds available."

MILLSTREAM BRIDGE, RAVENSHOE-MOUNT GARNET ROAD.—Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

Have plans been completed for the new bridge and road over the Millstream on the Ravenshoe-Mount Garnet Road? If so, when will this work be commenced and when is it expected that it will be completed?

Answers:—

(1) "No, but design work is in hand and is about half completed."

(2) "Every endeavour is being made to start the job in this financial year and it is hoped to complete it during next financial year. This of course will depend on weather and availability of labour and materials."

NEW POLICE STATION, MAREEBA.—Mr. Adair, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

Are plans in hand for the building of a modern police station and residence at Mareeba in place of the old and unsuitable buildings now in use and, if so, when will work be commenced on the construction of them?

Answer:—

"The erection of new police station buildings and a sergeant's residence at Mareeba are listed by the Police Department as desirable. The Mareeba project has been included for consideration in the 1965-1966 Police Works Programme, and will be proceeded with in accordance with priorities for work of a more urgent nature and the funds available. The preparation of plans will be undertaken by the Department of Works at the appropriate time."

REMODELLING OF MAREEBA STATE SCHOOL.—Mr. Adair, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) As the Mareeba State Primary School is in a neglected condition, will he have the necessary work of repainting the buildings, both externally and internally, carried out at an early date?

(2) Will he replace the present old and worn out desks and forms with modern furniture and also have constructed set-in cupboards under blackboards in all classrooms, similar to that already provided for in schools in the Brisbane area?

Answers:—

(1) "Consideration is being given to remodelling a section of the school. The matter of external and internal painting will receive consideration in conjunction with the proposed remodelling."

(2) "A report on furniture in the school was obtained from the District Supervisor of Works, November last. Owing to works of a higher priority, it is not expected that funds for replacements will be available this financial year. This matter will, however, receive consideration early in the forthcoming 1965-1966 financial year. Replacements will include the standard provision of 14 ft. built-in cupboards with 12 ft. hyloboards, where necessary. I would remind the Honourable Member that this Government has already spent £32,500 on the Primary School and £135,000 on the High School at Mareeba since it took office."

MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES, THURSDAY ISLAND.—Mr. Adair, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

As travel by motor vehicles on Thursday Island is of very limited mileage and in view of the bad condition of all its roads, will he consider granting a substantial reduction in registration fees on motor vehicles there?

Answer:—

"No. Registration fees are not based upon the extent of use made of the vehicle or upon the condition of the roads. It would be quite impracticable to operate on such a basis. The Town of Thursday Island receives in Commonwealth Aid nearly twice the amount received there from motor vehicle registrations. In addition about £900 per annum is made available from Main Roads maintenance funds."

ATHERTON TABLELAND BUTTER ASSOCIATION SUPPLY OF MILK TO TOWNSVILLE.—Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

(1) Has Atherton Tableland Butter Association (known as Malanda Milk), an absolute monopoly on the supply of milk to the Townsville area and, if so, is this monopoly subject to any Government charter or the like?

(2) What is the determined charge as a deposit on a bottle and what does Malanda Milk charge?

(3) Has Malanda Milk any power or authority to compel its customers to accept homogenised milk whether they want to or not and did they recently attempt to do this?

(4) Is there any provision for a six-day delivery if the customers wish it or is this the prerogative of Malanda Milk?

(5) Is the distribution centre at Garbutt, Townsville, required to remain open for the purpose of supplying vendors during any period of the day and, if so, what is it, and what power exists to compel Malanda Milk to observe these hours?

(6) How many bottles of (a) pasteurized and (b) homogenised milk are being supplied daily in the Townsville area?

(7) What representations are required to support a request for a royal commission or public inquiry into the operations of Malanda Milk?

Answers:—

(1) "The Atherton Tableland Co-operative Butter Association operates under an Order in Council under Section 48 of "The Milk Supply Acts, 1952 to 1961" for the supply of pasteurised milk in the Townsville area. The Association is subject to various conditions which are set out in the Order in Council."

(2) "Prices Order No. 5, dated March 25, 1964, for milk distribution in Townsville provides for a charge rate for supply of bottles not exceeding three pence per bottle. It is understood the Association is charging more than three pence and that the Chairman of the Milk Tribunal has the matter in hand."

(3) "The conditions of the Order in Council require that the Association shall supply the demand for pasteurised milk within the area mentioned in the Order in Council."

(4) "A condition of the Order in Council is that the Association must supply the demand of consumers and thus if any want a seven-days-a-week delivery they are entitled to it."

(5) "The Order in Council requires the plant at Garbutt to be open for the sale and delivery of pasteurised milk and cream between 3 a.m. and 4 p.m. daily other than Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, on which days it must remain open between 3 a.m. and 12.30 p.m."

(6) "The daily average throughput of milk at the Garbutt factory is about 4,500 gallons of pasteurised bottled milk and

1,500 gallons of bulk, heat treated milk. It is believed the quantity which is homogenised would not exceed 20 per cent."

(7) "There is no information within my Department which suggests any justification for the holding of an inquiry of the type mentioned."

NEW X-RAY MACHINE, TOWNSVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL.—Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) When and where will the recently approved new X-ray machine be installed at the Townsville General Hospital?

(2) With regard to replacement parts forwarded for the existing machines, are second-hand parts often forwarded and, if so, why?

Answers:—

(1) "The new X-ray machine will be installed in the existing X-ray section of the main General Hospital building."

(2) "The Townsville Hospitals Board has advised that the only second-hand parts received for the existing X-ray machines were replacement valves for the transformer which the engineer, Queensland Radium Institute advised were preferable to new valves for use in conjunction with the other existing old valves in the transformer. This gives a better balanced performance."

POLLUTION OF BRISBANE RIVER AND MORETON BAY BEACHES.—Mr. Dean, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

Further to the Answer to my Question on September 9, 1964, relative to the joint State Government-Brisbane City Council investigation of possible pollution of the Brisbane River and Moreton Bay Beaches, has a report been completed and when will its contents be made available to the House?

Answer:—

"Officers of my Department have been sampling the water of the Brisbane River at weekly intervals from eight points on the north bank, eight points on the south bank, and three in the centre of the river between the mouth and the Indooroopilly Bridge. It is understood that the Brisbane City Council is sampling the water from fifteen points in the navigation channel between Bishop Island and the Indooroopilly Bridge. When the results of the tests were considered in December it was realised that it would be necessary to continue testing through all seasons of the year because of variations due to weather conditions. Results so far show that there appear to be pockets of pollution to some degree at certain points but the tests indicate the over-all quality of the water, despite the dry season, is satisfactory. Regular weekly samples have been taken

from the bayside beaches north of the Brisbane River. The findings confirm the earlier opinion expressed that the pollution of bayside beaches by water from the Brisbane River and the Luggage Point outfall is insignificant. The results obtained by Departmental Officers and the Brisbane City Council will be collated before the final report is submitted."

AMOUNTS OWING BY ROAD TRANSPORT OPERATORS.—Mr. Byrne, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

(1) What is the total number of debtors and total amount owing by them as Roads Contribution to Maintenance and State Transport Tax which has been outstanding in excess of twelve months?

(2) Will he state how he intends to recover this amount?

(3) Does he anticipate any amounts to be written off as bad debts and, if so, what amount?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "In order to accurately collate the information requested by the Honourable Member, it would be necessary to analyse each debtor's ledger card at the Transport Department and where legal action involving recovery of charges or fees has been taken, to ascertain from each Court throughout the State, and in some cases other States, the present position in each individual action. This would involve a considerable amount of work at a great deal of expense. However, as I said in Answer to a somewhat similar Question yesterday, if the Honourable Member has any interest in a particular operator or operators and makes a direct approach to me for information, I shall endeavour to assist him."

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

The Grammar Schools Acts, 1860 to 1962.

The Racing and Betting Acts, 1954 to 1964.

The Stamp Acts, 1894 to 1964.

The Companies Acts, 1961 to 1964.

FORM OF QUESTIONS

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) having given notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I shall have a close look at the hon. member's question. It would seem to contain too much padding.

Mr. MURRAY (Clayfield) having given notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member's question appears to solicit an expression of opinion.

ORDER IN CHAMBER

Mr. **BROMLEY** (Norman) proceeding to give notice of a question—

Mr. **Aikens** interjected.

Mr. **SPEAKER**: Order! I should like once again to remind hon. members that it is highly irregular and disorderly to interrupt a member when he is giving notice of a question or addressing a Minister, and that it is equally disorderly to interrupt a Minister when he is giving a reply. I do not know what the rebuke by the hon. member for Norman was, but I have no doubt that it was well merited.

SAWMILLS LICENSING ACT
AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Hon. **H. RICHTER** (Somerset—Minister for Local Government and Conservation) (11.42 a.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Sawmills Licensing Act of 1936, in certain particulars.”

I would remind hon. members that the present Act, which was designed to promote stabilisation in the timber industry, was assented to on 24 September, 1936. It has not since been amended.

In essence, it provided for the licensing of sawmills, veneer and plywood mills, the limiting of the maximum productive capacity, the approval of site of individual mills, and for the submission by licensed mills of quarterly returns of the volume of logs treated. Its purpose was to exercise some control over sawmilling capacity in relation to log supplies available.

In the 29 years since it was enacted the Act has been instrumental in giving a considerable measure of stability to the industry which it was designed to assist.

However, the administration of the Act over the years has shown the need for certain amendments, and these are covered in this Bill, of some 21 clauses, which I am submitting for the consideration of hon. members. The Timber Industry Inquiry Committee of 1959 recommended amendment of the principal Act, and from discussions I have had with members of the timber industry they are also aware of the need for amendment.

Although amendments have been made to most of the sections of the principal Act, the vital principles are not departed from in this Bill.

As might be expected, in the lengthy period which has elapsed since the Act came into operation, changes have taken place in the industry. The processing of logs into new types of product has been developed, and new methods of log conversion have been

introduced. Also, the excess of licensed sawmill capacity over the supplies of logs available has become abundantly clear.

In effect, the industry has, to some extent, outgrown the practices and procedures existing when the principal Act was passed, and it has become necessary to bring it up to date to meet the changes which have taken place, and also to give the necessary legislative support to permit improved administration.

Let me say that the Bill itself is not of a contentious nature. The definition of “sawmill” is amended to include plants processing logs into products such as wood-wool, chipboard, woodpulp, pulpwood chips or wood fibre board; and to exclude mills employed solely on dressing, planing, moulding or re-sawing timber. The former type of mill has developed since the original Act was framed, and as they are engaged in processing logs, it is desirable to bring them within the scope of the Act. The latter mills do not convert logs, and their licensing serves no useful purpose in controlling sawmill capacity in relation to log supply available.

The “maximum productive capacity” of a sawmill is amended from a daily to a quarterly basis, and is now defined as the maximum volume of logs to be processed by the sawmill in each quarter. The use of daily capacity has proved to be unnecessarily restrictive on licensed sawmillers. I do not think it would be reasonable to regard it as a breach of the Act if a sawmiller who had on occasions exceeded his licensed capacity on a daily basis and yet over each of the quarterly periods of the year had an average daily cut well below his licensed capacity. Furthermore, licensed capacity in the principal Act is related to eight hours’ operation of the mill. This would enable a sawmiller, by working overtime or two shifts, to increase the cut of the mill. I have frequently pointed out that the forest resources of the State are inadequate to support fully the existing licensed sawmill capacity. In these circumstances it is desirable to have a licensed capacity that fulfils the functions of the Act and which does permit the limiting of cut on a sound administrative basis. This will be achieved by the use of the quarterly period in defining licensed sawmill capacity.

Penalties under the Act were fixed in 1936. These are being increased to amounts more in keeping with present-day money values.

There is provision for the Minister, when granting a licence, to grant it subject to terms and conditions, and for such terms and conditions to be attached to the licence, and also for such terms and conditions to be revoked, varied or added to by the Minister during the currency of the licence. Formerly such restriction had to be prescribed by Order in Council.

The method by which the present maximum productive capacity, on a daily basis, of existing sawmills is to be converted to a quarterly basis in conformity with the new definition of maximum productive capacity, is prescribed.

This conversion to the quarterly basis will have the effect of removing much of the excess licensed sawmill capacity in Queensland, but at the same time it will permit each miller to cut at least as much as was formerly cut at his mill. However, in cases where the licensed capacity has greatly exceeded the actual cut some of the excess licensed capacity will be removed. This will have the effect of more closely equating licensed capacity to the supplies that are available. The basis of such conversion is substantially that recommended by the 1959 Timber Industry Inquiry Committee.

Requirements regarding the transfer of licences are amended, and provision is made for refusal to register a transfer in certain specific circumstances.

The section of the principal Act requiring the keeping of records and the furnishing of returns is amended to bring within its scope holders of certificates of exemption. This is necessary to obtain, for statistical purposes, particulars of logs converted by exempted mills.

Existing provisions permitting the exemption from the Act of persons who establish that no part of any timber sawn, cut, peeled, sliced or otherwise processed by them is intended for sale, are continued, but it is made clear that exemption must be obtained before the timber is sawn.

A new provision is included permitting the cancellation by the Minister of a sawmill licence or certificate of exemption, after the holder thereof has had an opportunity to show cause why such action should not be taken.

The period within which proceedings for an offence under the Act may be instituted is extended from six months to one year, and two additional evidentiary provisions are included.

The section dealing with matters which may be prescribed by regulation is amended in certain particulars, the chief of which concerns fees.

The Act limits the basis of determination of fees which may be charged in respect of licences and renewal thereof to not less than 5s. or more than £5. These amounts were fixed in 1936 and are considered to be unrealistic on present-day standards.

The proposed amendments remove such limitation, and also permit of the prescribing by regulation of fees for other matters or things under the Act.

There are certain other amendments of an administrative nature. I will not go into them at the moment.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.51 a.m.): Probably an examination of the Bill would show that it contains many desirable features. I feel, however, that the Government would have

been better occupied in solving the problems confronting this ailing industry rather than concerning itself with certain administrative adjustments in regard to licensing. No Government in Australia, particularly this one, can be complacent about our timber industry, in which there is declining production, closure of sawmills, and increasing evidence of the importation of timbers.

I have before me at the moment one of the most recent statistical returns issued by the Bureau of Census and Statistics, Brisbane; Bulletin No. 13 of 1965, which deals with Queensland sawmill statistics for the June quarter of 1964 and for the 12 months ended 30 June, 1964. It discloses this revealing information—

“Log timber processed by Queensland mills in 1963-64 (423,866,000 super. feet), although showing some recovery from the record low figures for 1961-62 and 1962-63 (increases of 9 per cent. and 7 per cent., respectively), was 35,336,000 super. feet, or 8 per cent. below the 1960-61 total and 11 per cent. below the average for the years 1955-56 to 1959-60.”

I do not think anybody can view that position with complacency. In this State, which is peculiarly well suited to the development of forest areas and the growing of timber where, after the ravages of war, it was no longer necessary to impose controls on building, where capital was able to use its resources freely and without restriction, and where there has been a progressive increase to almost record proportions in building, we are 11 per cent. below the average for the years 1955-56 to 1959-60. That is a shocking state of affairs. The Government should apply itself to the question of what is wrong on the production side instead of spending so much time on administrative matters which form the subject of the Bill.

An examination of log timber processed in Queensland, according to the survey, discloses that hoop and bunya pine declined from 62,289,000 super. feet in 1953-54 to 29,597,000 super. feet in 1963-64; kauri pine declined from 5,825,000 super. feet in 1953-54 to 1,685,000 super. feet in 1963-64; cypress pine declined from 59,067,000 super. feet in 1953-64 to 53,328,000 super. feet in 1963-64. The only significant increase is in plantation timbers. Hardwoods, where we would expect an increase, declined from 259,763,000 super. feet—

Mr. Richter: You appreciate that the timber is just not there?

Mr. DUGGAN: And the Government is doing precious little to restore it. That is the main reason for my criticism of the Government. This is an important industry. It is regarded as one of the first five in the Commonwealth. It employs something like 60,000 people, a quarter of whom are in Queensland.

Balances of payments will become of extreme importance in the state of the economy in the next few months because of the action

of the American authorities in directing companies who have invested in this country to return to America higher percentages of profits, and the actions of overseas companies, without any opposition from the Federal Government, in raising finance in this country instead of obtaining it from abroad, as has happened previously. These things will accentuate balance-of-payment difficulties very materially, and this trend has caused many thoughtful people to consider what the implications are. The "Australian Financial Review" pointed out in September last year what will confront this country in the next few years. It said—

"However, some authorities say that production from existing forests and plantations can be expected to increase to some 450m cubic feet by 1975 and to 629m cubic feet in the year 2000.

But this would still leave a tremendous gap between estimated future need and production, and a big task confronting Australia if it is to become self-sufficient in timber."

I have before me figures that confirm that every year we will be faced with the need to import increasing amounts of timber. Our natural resources enable us to do something much more positive than is being done now. It is estimated that even a conservative injection throughout Australia of about £5,000,000 a year would help reforestation considerably, but there is no evidence of any such action. No doubt the hon. member for Maryborough has much information on the inadequacy of present reforestation work. The hon. member for Fassifern will also be aware of this, because he has previously drawn attention to it quite frequently. Reforestation is not having made available to it the sums of money allocated by the Government for other phases of development.

Far too much apathy has been shown by this Government, and other Governments elsewhere in the Commonwealth, towards taking some action to correct the present position. Figures reveal a continuing decrease in the number of sawmills licensed in Queensland. This is a sorry reflection on this Government and, indeed, on Governments elsewhere. I do not know why there is so much complacency in this very important matter. I can well understand that it may be necessary to import chemicals, drugs, parts of highly complicated machinery, and all sorts of things that it may not be possible to produce economically here. Timber, however, is something that we should be able to do something about.

I want to use this opportunity to focus attention on what I consider to be the undue complacency of those in authority towards this problem. I have before me a whole bundle of information showing the deterioration that has taken place in the timber industry, yet the Government has not done very much about it.

When opening an exhibition connected with the building industry a few months ago, the Premier urged that all efforts be made to keep down the cost of timber so that it would not be priced out of use by other materials. With the decrease in overseas supplies, particularly from places such as Japan and the Philippines, and the price increases that can be expected each year, the cost of timber will no doubt continue to rise, and this will have an added adverse effect on our economy generally.

Although the provisions of the proposed Bill that deal with the licensing of sawmills are worth-while and necessary, I think it is putting the cart before the horse. I should be much more appreciative of the Government's action if, preceding legislation of this type, we had some evidence of renewed interest and financial activity on the part of the Government in dealing with the grave problem of the diminution in timber supplies and in stepping up reforestation.

Timber is part of our national heritage, and I do not know why Governments do not take action when they can do so relatively cheaply. Reforestation has many things to commend it. All the funds expended are retained in Australia, a very high labour content is involved, and the demand for the product is almost insatiable. It would also reduce the quantity of timber imported from overseas, which is growing alarmingly. I understand that about 20 per cent. of Australia's timber requirements now come from overseas, and it is expected that this will rise to 30 per cent. in the future. It is almost like saying that we should be importing butter or wheat from other countries. We have this opportunity to increase our timber resources, but no action is being taken to provide the comparatively small sum that is needed to avoid the necessity to import large quantities of timber from overseas. I am disappointed that the Government has not shown more initiative in dealing with the problem. It may be necessary for it to approach the Commonwealth authorities, who I think would be interested because reforestation would lead to development in the industry and would also reduce the demands on Australia's overseas reserves.

Many aspects of the timber industry require consideration. I suppose that, of all the industries operating in Australia, the timber industry gives a lower net return to those engaged in it than does any other industry. Apart from several notable examples, the record of timber firms generally has been a very unhappy one. If one looks through the records, one sees that in the case of Kauri Timbers, Hancock and Gore Limited, Duncans Holdings, and many others, the return on funds invested is very inadequate, and in some instance it has led to major capital reorganisation. It is obvious that there is something wrong in an industry in which prices are increasing and supplies diminishing, and it provides an opportunity for the manufacturers of alternative construction materials to inject their products

into the market. If alternative materials produced locally can meet the demand, the position will not be so bad; but, as I said earlier, timber is being imported from abroad, and the quantity imported will increase. The need for alternative construction material will not arise if timber production can be kept at a level sufficiently high to meet consumers' demands.

The Bill evidently contains a considerable number of clauses, and I shall welcome an opportunity to examine it in detail. I was endeavouring to listen and write at the same time while the Minister was speaking, but I presume that some of the provisions of the Bill have been included as a result of the recommendations of the Timber Industry Inquiry Committee of 1959. It will be interesting to see to what extent the Government has followed the recommendations of that committee, and I shall probably direct my remarks to those provisions with greater particularity at the second-reading stage.

It seems to me that the industry is suffering from a lack of Government support as well as a lack of public support. The country's timber reserves should attract the interest of everyone in the community, and any worthwhile provisions put forward by the Government or by the Minister would, I am sure, receive enthusiastic backing from members of Parliament and members of the public. That is the challenge that I ask the Minister to accept—the regeneration of the State's forests. I ask him to provide sufficient funds to enable the timber industry to match its production with the annual demand, instead of asking us to face a situation in which expenditure on imported timber is increasing.

Mr. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha) (12.5 p.m.): I must share the sentiments of the Leader of the Opposition in his remarks about the national awareness that should now be apparent in regard to the future of the timber industry in Australia. I feel that the Queensland Parliament, of necessity, must think of Queensland and, with the increasing freeholding of larger areas, it is imperative that we should give encouragement to the registered proprietors of such lands to embark on what might be termed primary forest ventures.

Much of the land that has been freeholded—particularly land that has been freeholded in large areas—could be more suitably applied to timber than to other rural pursuits. In the past, of course, we have found that under the leasehold system the control of the timber resources on such lands has been vested in the Forestry Department and I should like to see, as a great believer in the free-enterprise system, private landholders embarking on this very necessary pursuit.

I should like to go further and suggest that areas licensed to private millers by the Crown might be better developed from the point of view of the regeneration of the timber resources by millers themselves rather than by the intervention of the Forestry Department. Perhaps we could look to the

question of reducing royalties to offset some of the costs involved. Some of the finances we receive by way of royalties might be used to enable private millers to assist in the rejuvenation of areas which they are going to fell.

If one peruses the records in the Forestry Department dealing with royalties received from the operations of millers of natural timber, one can be left in some doubt as to the economics of the Forestry Department operating under the system it applies at the moment. I feel that the time is ripe for a national approach to this matter. After all, it directly affects our balance of payments as they stand at the moment, due to timber imports, and every indication points to the fact that the position will become more aggravated as time goes by.

It is true that the use of timber is changing but it is equally true that in future our timber requirements will increase rather than lessen. I strongly submit that this should be a matter dealt with on a national basis at a joint Commonwealth-State level. A taxation concession could be given to those landholders who are prepared to engage in the increasing of our forestry resources or our timber reserves. Consideration of death duties with respect to timber could also be examined. This would certainly not be unconnected with national development as we see it at the moment.

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) (12.9 p.m.): It is very interesting to note that in the year 1965, some of the provisions in the Bill cover recommendations by the Timber Industry Inquiry Committee in 1959. In the introduction of a measure such as this, I think one should go back and look at the position that applied in 1936, when we of the Opposition occupied the Government benches. When a Bill was introduced by the Minister at that time, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Maher, replied on behalf of the Opposition, which would have contained a majority of Country Party members. On that occasion we were criticised by the then Leader of the Opposition who suggested that by licensing sawmills we were setting up a monopoly in this State. We were told that what we were doing would result in higher prices. We were charged with not doing the right thing in the interests of the workers who wanted to build homes. We were told that we were not helping to keep rents down. Mr. Maher's contribution, as reported in "Hansard," Volume 159 of 1936, is well worth reading. On this occasion we will be watching for the same things as Mr. Maher was looking for in 1936 because, as the Opposition, it is our duty to watch the interests of the people of Queensland.

The alleged undesirable results of the 1936 legislation did not eventuate. Not long after 1936 World War II broke out. There was no curtailment of the activities of sawmills in this State; indeed, there was probably greater growth in the sawmilling industry than at any other time in the

State's history. Sawmills sprang up in almost every district where timber was available. When legislation was introduced which provided a certain amount of protection to home-builders against the lyctus borer, it closed a number of small mills. Previously mill-owners had been cutting immature timber. After the passage of that legislation they had to cut only the right type of timber or close down. The principles applying to the granting of new licences were very similar to those being provided today. I think that is very sound. Licences were issued for a particular locality where a certain amount of timber was available. It is made quite clear in the report of the Timber Industry Inquiry Committee that in the granting of licences consideration should be given to the timber available in the area for the next five years, or more.

However, things have changed considerably since the 1936 legislation was passed. Today the Opposition is concerned about prices. At that time the price of timber was controlled; any price increases were subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Prices. The price rises which were forecast by the then Opposition did not occur. That was because of the policy of the Australian Labour Party.

The 1959 report of the Timber Industry Inquiry Committee would be one of the hottest reports ever tabled in this Parliament. Submissions made to that committee of inquiry did not come only from those concerned in the milling of timber; they included submissions from the users of timber, such as the Master Builders' Association and the building-trade group of unions, which at that time was waging a strenuous campaign to save the building industry in Queensland. The report indicates that the committee of inquiry had a very tough time with the Queensland Sawmillers' Association, the Maryborough and Bundaberg Timber Merchants' Association, the Queensland Timber Stabilisation Board and the North Queensland Sawmillers' Association. In spite of that, in its report the committee summed up the position and the members were game enough to make certain recommendations. There is no doubt that they form the basis for the legislation now before us.

I hope that the Bill will not contain anything that will involve a further increase in the price of sawn timber in Queensland.

Mr. Richter: It does not come into it at all.

Mr. NEWTON: I am very pleased to hear that, particularly having in mind how the price of sawn timber skyrocketed because of the private price-fixing ring that is operating in Queensland among the sawmillers' associations.

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that this is a very important measure. My Leader pointed out what should be done

in an attempt to conserve timber in this State. We must ensure that the sawmillers do not do as they did in the post-war period, namely, price timber right off the market. Today, not only is timber imported from overseas; it is well known that large quantities of building timber come from the other States, particularly New South Wales. That timber is transported to building sites in Queensland at a price which compares favourably with local timber. In some cases it is lower. When that can be done, there must be something wrong with our price structure.

Other matters which must be considered because of happenings since the legislation was introduced in 1936, and in the light of the committee's findings in 1959, are the many new methods and trends in the building industry which are affecting sawmills throughout the State. I was pleased that recently the Treasurer gave a number of members from this side of the Chamber an opportunity to go on a tour. I was one of the party, and we saw a number of different building boards that have been introduced to the State. Some of the factories that produce these boards commenced operations interstate, but they are now operating in Queensland. All of these building boards are replacing timber. It is very interesting to note that, after the frame of a house has been put up in timber, virtually the rest of the house can be completed without using any timber at all. Exterior sheeting is available today which is not made from timber, and metal window frames, doors and linings are available. There are also various lining boards that contain no timber. The building industry is using more metal than before in the form of ceilings, doors, windows, partitions, awnings, cupboards, and shelves. The position obtaining today is different from that of years ago. All these matters must be taken into consideration when dealing with this Bill.

The Minister said it was intended to exclude planing mills from the licensing provisions.

Mr. Richter: Planing and re-sawing.

Mr. NEWTON: This should be looked into to find out how far we will go in this matter. It is true that in this State there are mills which only dress and plane timber.

Mr. Richter: They handle timber already cut.

Mr. NEWTON: That is so. Most of the large mills in the State, and most of the mills in the smaller towns, have been set up in such a way that not only do they bring logs in and break them down; they also plane the timber in a planing mill attached to the sawmill. Is no licence to be held for the planing section? In most mills both sections are under the one roof, so we will have to be clear on that point.

The Minister spoke about extending output and daily capacity. There may be some merit in the suggestion that this should be considered on a quarterly basis. It has already been pointed out that we have not as much timber available in the State as we did in years gone by, but some mills are doing what could not be done immediately after the Second World War, namely stockpiling a certain amount of timber. It is not actually being stockpiled; it is being left to dry out and be treated.

The Minister did not indicate that any mills are working more than eight hours a day. When there was a boom just after the war and there was a big demand for timber, the mills were working from daylight till dark six days a week.

A possible reason for the introduction of this principle—anybody experienced in the timber industry or the sawmilling industry knows this—is that it is an effort to overcome the problems that arise in the wet season when the cutters, sniggers, and carters cannot get into the forests to get the timber, and consequently none reaches the mill. That could be one of the reasons; I do not know. In my experience, before the Second World War most men working in the timber industry did so on a contract basis. This was done because sawmill-owners wanted to get as many logs as they possibly could during the dry season, so that they would have ample to continue production during the wet season. I have not seen many sawmills close down during the wet, particularly in the southern part of the State. The position may be different in the North. That is something that we should like explained by the Minister. As the Minister said, the members of the Timber Industry Inquiry Committee were in favour of this action. They also pointed out that assessments should be made over quarterly periods, as the Minister outlined in his introduction.

As indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, the Bill probably contains some desirable features. I make it quite clear that Opposition members will examine it closely to make sure that none of the things with which we were charged by the Opposition when we were the Government, and which are not in the interests of Queensland generally, are contained in it.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (12.27 p.m.): As I was once the Minister in charge of Forestry, I should like to express my views on the matter now before the Committee. First of all, let me say, as I know something of this contentious matter of sawmill licences, that to me it is little wonder that the Minister has seen fit to introduce the Bill. I can well remember the many problems that had to be considered during my term of office.

The Timber Industry Inquiry Committee mentioned by the hon. member for Belmont was the result of my anxiety at that time for the timber industry. I asked Cabinet for permission to have this inquiry made, and later I shall tell hon. members why. I

wish to say right at the outset that during my period as Minister in charge of forestry I was most appreciative of the work done by all the officers of this department. Mr. Grenning, who was then Director of Forests (that title has since been changed to Conservator of Forests) did an excellent job. His offsideer was Mr. Trist, who is in charge today. Both those officers, and all the others right down the line, did splendid work. I am full of praise for the efforts of all of them, as the whole ramifications of forestry present so many difficulties.

In the days when we were in Opposition, I spoke on a number of occasions on matters referred to by the Leader of the Opposition this morning. It has always concerned me greatly that Australia, with a handful of people and a vast territory, should be obliged to import timber. I do not propose now to go into the details of the Bill, because I do not know what it contains. I shall reserve my comments on the intention of the Bill till I have seen it.

We must keep clearly in mind the great difference between the production of softwoods and the production of hardwoods. In the early days of settlement in Queensland, reserves of hardwood were wantonly depleted. I am not dealing with this subject from a party-political angle, because I should say that both this Government and former Labour Governments have been guilty of not spending sufficient money on reforestation. However, I think the reason for this is obvious when one examines the subject. It is largely a question of economics, and anyone who makes a close study of reforestation will see how much it costs to clear the scrub, plant seedlings and nurse them, and then grow the trees. All this takes a good deal of time, too, and one can readily appreciate that it is not a very profitable operation.

On the other hand, looking at it from a national point of view, the question is: do we want timber, or do we not? Substitutes are coming into use. Brick is being used in many instances, although it is very much dearer than timber, and various types of metal are used for inside work and the trimmings on buildings. Is the stage approaching when we will not require timber? Personally I think there will be uses for it for many years, and the fact that timber is being imported to a country such as this worries me very greatly.

I had not been Minister for Lands for very long before I initiated action that resulted in the appointment of a committee of inquiry into the timber industry. Although I must confess that its report does not give as much assistance as one might have hoped. I want to say again that the committee, which was headed by Mr. William McLean, who was then a member of the Land Court, did a very good job and made a thorough survey of the industry, and officers of the Department of Forestry helped in every way possible.

The real trouble in the industry arose many years ago. When I was sitting on the Opposition benches and the hon. member for Bundaberg, Mr. Walsh, was Minister for Lands and was administering forestry with lands, as I did when I was Minister, I mentioned my own experience, and I had to stand up to fairly severe criticism from mill-owners and others for the statement that I made. However, that statement was true, and it still is true. Over 30 years ago, before I became a member of this Assembly, I sold hardwood timber on the stump for 5s. a hundred, and sawn timber was then worth about 35s. a hundred. At the time that I made the statement, timber was worth about £7 a hundred, but I could still get little more than 5s. a hundred on the stump (I think I got about 10s. a hundred). This is where the trouble lies.

If one asks the owner of freehold or private land to nurse trees, one must be prepared to pay him a reasonable amount for them. If he is not paid an adequate sum, he will pick up an axe and put a white collar round the trees; he knows that it is not possible to grow both trees and grass. Fortunately, I had a little timber and I was able to run cattle at the same time; but I know how utterly impossible it is to grow grass and raise cattle with a really heavy growth of timber. Of course, when one gets into the "rubbishy" hardwood country, it is a different matter again.

Both before I took office and since, officers of the Department of Forestry have seen fit to reserve as forestry reserves country that was not suitable for grazing or agriculture, and have thus preserved a great deal of hardwood. One cannot plant hardwood and wait till it grows to millable size—some hardwood trees may be as much as 100 or 200 years old—but something can be done with softwoods. With all the experience that I had and the information that was available to me, I was very unhappy about the cost of housing, the price that builders were obliged to pay the millers, and the rapid increases in prices. One thing that the report revealed to me very clearly was that about 35 per cent. of the cost of sawn timber was attributable to transport charges. This involves picking it up from the bush, taking it to the mill, and everything else that has to be done by the time it is taken to where it is required. Just what are we going to do? I complained to Mr. Grenning very early. I said, "This looks wrong." His reply—and that of Mr. Trist, too—was, "We have what is called 'mill study'." That is, they take the cost of the log into the mill, the cost of processing it, and then the recovery. Of course, one has to allow for a good deal of wastage in some of the timber, and, by the time the whole of it was gone through, a ridiculous figure was arrived at.

The main trouble is that we expect logs and, if we expect logs, somebody has to look after the timber and preserve it. It does not matter whether it is the Crown,

the property owner or anyone else, somebody has to look after the timber. If he does not, we just do not get logs.

Dealing with sawmill licences, I used to renew bucketfuls of these licences every week. When they expired they would be always coming back for renewal. I will never forget it. The Minister is smiling; he appreciates what I am saying. That is on the mill side of the matter. Then there were continuous complaints that timber could not be obtained. The Forestry Department was expected to get the timber, but the plain fact was that there was not enough timber to supply the mills. One after another they closed down, and they were ready to blame everyone but themselves. If ever there was a man for whom I felt sorry it was Mr. Trist, who was handling that side of the administration. We have not solved that problem by any means, the most contentious points being the price at the stump and the price out of the timber yard.

I should like to tell hon. members another experience of mine. I hate bringing in my own business but when I use my own business as an example I know that what I say is absolutely correct. A few years ago I bought a property at Proston—about 1,000 acres, or perhaps nearly 1,500 acres. It was freehold land, and to my surprise there were some beautiful hardwood trees on it. I wondered why they had not been milled and I was told, "You can get nothing for them here." I thought, "With all the stories I have heard I will make a few pounds." The trees are still there. The best I could get for them was 10s. a hundred. Hon. members can tell everybody in the country if they like, but the trees are still there. They are beautiful hardwood logs; I have never seen better. There is a bitumen road to the property, and it would be possible to drive a tractor and trailer right up to 90 per cent. of them and pick them up.

There must be something wrong when that state of affairs exists. I suppose if I went out of my way I might have been able to get 15s. a hundred for those trees; I do not know. I did not inquire. I would have done so if I had anticipated that this Bill was coming before the Committee. Sawn timber today is worth approximately £8 10s.; it may be a little bit more. Although the price goes up continually, the poor unfortunate "cocky" looking after the trees gets nothing for them. That is the root of the trouble.

Mr. Bennett: Do the trees take much looking after?

Mr. MULLER: Yes. First of all, if you grow trees you cannot grow grass. If you grow trees you lose the grass; it will not grow close to the trees. I do not blame the hon. member for asking that question; if I was in his profession I suppose I would do the same. But those who know the bush will know that what I said earlier is correct. You cannot have both trees and grass. Most of the timber has been cleaned out.

These trees have not, but I have done it myself. I had men not only with axes but with poison pots, and they poisoned everything because it does not pay us to keep the trees.

Mr. Lloyd: It might be easier if the Forestry Department rangers had control. On whatever stands of timber are available the ranger could have some control over what trees should be cut, even on freehold land.

Mr. MULLER: That is about as stupid as anything I have ever heard in my life. Supposing he came to the hon. member and said, "We will do that but you pay for it, Mr. Lloyd."! The person who preserves a tree on his freehold land has to get something for it. The Department of Forestry has prevented people from murdering trees on leasehold land. It has always seemed to me to be disgraceful that with all the timber that is available and with so small a population we should be importing timber. It is time we took stock of ourselves. If everybody right along the line is looked after, so also should be the man who nurtures the tree.

The inquiry into the industry showed that all these charges were justified, which was a tremendous surprise to me. I had thought that there was a good deal of exploitation, but the inquiry revealed very clearly that the charges made at the mill were justifiable. Are we going to let costs crucify us in this industry? It applies to many industries, but none has suffered more as the result of increasing costs than the timber industry. Since I have been out of ministerial office sawmillers have written me letters telling me how unfairly they are being treated. I knew it was coming; it could not be otherwise. The timber has been cut out and they expect to get supplies of logs, but no provision is made for them.

I am sorry, Mr. Hooper, if I am repeating myself but I feel that on this occasion it is worth it. Right from the start the Department of Forestry has been set a big job. It can deal with softwoods. Some of the country allocated to it was too rough even to run goats. However, the scrub was cut and the land was planted. The result has been really wonderful, but I seriously question the economics of it. Each time I go past some of the Forestry blocks I cannot help but think that I would not like my money tied up in that way, waiting for some return. If anything can be done to relieve the position with sawmilling licences, if it can be made any easier for departmental officers, and if the position can be made clearer and easier for the mill-owners, I think the Bill has a good deal of merit.

I know that I have got a little off the track, Mr. Hooper, and I appreciate your tolerance. But this is a really important matter. Following the line of the Leader of the Opposition, and with my experience both in the department and on my own property, I felt that it was only right that I

should pass on these views to the Committee. What I have said will be queried by some of the mills, but everything I have said is the truth. If anybody does not believe me, at the end of the week I will show him the logs on the property. Go 400 or 500 miles from Brisbane and see what the position is. When you realise the costs involved in landing timber in Brisbane you can readily understand where the problem lies. If we are to import timber because we are too silly to put our own house in order, is there not a possibility that that sort of thing will apply to many of our other requirements? We import these things because we do not make the effort to grow them ourselves.

I wish the Minister well with this measure. I will have something more to say about it when I have seen it.

Mr. MURRAY (Clayfield) (12.46 p.m.): I have listened to the hon. member for Fassifern with very great interest. He brings to us his years of experience and gives us his observations as a primary producer and a former Minister. It is quite obvious, from the attention given to his speech, that all hon. members appreciate his knowledge and sincerity.

Mr. Bennett: Do you agree that he should still be a Minister?

Mr. MURRAY: I believe that he is an asset to this Assembly—a far greater asset than many hon. members opposite. His contributions are extremely valuable to us.

As the hon. member for Fassifern said, possibly we are doing more in controlling the timber we have than in taking positive steps to expand the industry. Do we require expansion of the industry? The hon. member for Fassifern asked whether we wanted timber or not. This poses quite a question. We should know in our minds where we are going. If we want timber, long-term planning is absolutely essential.

Over the years there have been many suggestions as to what we should do. The hon. member for Townsville North will agree with me that one of the principal suggestions put forward in North Queensland for real stability of employment and economic use of the land relates to the use of the country for forestry projects. That idea is advanced constantly and I believe it to be a "natural". Our natural timber forests are a depreciating asset.

If we want timber, although it is unlikely that we can ever reconstitute the forests with the type of timbers we have scavenged from them (sometimes because of shortsightedness), we should determine what timbers we should be planting for forestry purposes.

I do not know if the hon. member for Fassifern or the present Minister has been to Bulolo, in Papua.

Mr. Bennett: Bulolo is in North New Guinea.

Mr. MURRAY: I thank the hon. member.

The Bulolo Gold Dredging Company is in partnership with the Commonwealth Government. It is an excellent arrangement. I understand that the Commonwealth Government is a 49 per cent. shareholder in the project.

Mr. Adair: It has 51 per cent.

Mr. MURRAY: Is the hon. member sure?

Mr. Adair: Yes.

Mr. MURRAY: It does not seem to matter very much in this arrangement, because it is working splendidly. I walked through the area and had a good look at the milling operations a few years ago. I was very impressed. They are planting on 40,000 acres of land. Generally it is the same type of land—or it appears to be—as is to be found in many areas of North Queensland, around Tully, Innisfail and so on. By no means are there great areas of flat country. It is fairly steep, hilly land. However, I understand that on an area of 40,000 acres the operation is perpetuated—planting and cutting—on a 20-year cycle, with clinky pine. Clinky pine may not be the answer for North Queensland, although it has been suggested to me that in many of the coastal country areas it would be satisfactory. If it is not, I am sure there is some timber which, in about that period, would complete its cycle. To my way of thinking, that is what we should be considering.

If the long-term investment that this requires is more than can be provided by private enterprise, the Government could well give assistance, as in the Bulolo Gold Dredging Company—Commonwealth Government partnership. I understand it has the largest ply-mill in the Southern Hemisphere. As the hon. member for Fassifern said, costs must be kept to the minimum.

Mr. Adair: They pay the native labour the absolute minimum.

Mr. MURRAY: They do; but, forgetting wages, the efficiency of production would be very high because the whole procedure, or cycle, from the seedling to the planting, the tending, cutting, transporting to mill, right through to the finished ply, wrapping, packing, and finishing for export, is fulfilled in the one operation, and it is indeed a very efficient operation. This is the type of scheme we should be planning. We must also consider that with more Commonwealth money going to Papua and New Guinea there will be expansion of those activities to the detriment of any expansion we desire to undertake. It may then be too late.

If we are to plan for the future the Minister and some of his departmental officers should get on a plane as soon as they can, and get around the world in latitudes similar to ours and see what is being done, and judge whether or not we are up with it or way behind it. I think it is vital that that should be done.

I am sure, as the hon. member for Fassifern said, that in this vast area of country we have, with low pressures for occupation or use of this land, forestry projects are of tremendous national importance. In addition, they would tie in so well with the employment of aboriginal labour in North Queensland.

In the vast areas that we have in both high and low-rainfall areas there must be, and are, tremendous possibilities. The hon. member for Townsville North knows that this would go a long way towards solving our seasonal employment problems, also. Nothing much has been done. We know that we have dedicated officers in the Department of Forestry. We also have many frustrated officers in the Department of Forestry who would like to see so much more being done. But one could never question their dedication. We should give them credit for the wonderful work they have done with so little.

We have our forests. When flying over the country one can look down occasionally and see forestry projects. But they are merely pinpoints on the map of Queensland. They are pinpoints on the map of New South Wales, for that matter, although I rather suspect that New South Wales would be ahead of us in this regard. But we do have wonderful assets, particularly in many areas along the coast, for the fast growing of softwoods in North Queensland. I think we should be doing something about it.

I think the hon. member for Kedron really meant by his interjection that the forestry officers should perhaps be able to exercise more control on freehold land to ensure there is not wanton destruction of timbers such as takes place for the very reason mentioned by the hon. member for Fassifern. The primary producers must make up their minds.

The hon. member for South Brisbane asked whether much work was required—whether these trees need much attention. In most cases, no, but if one is conscious of forestry potential, one tries to keep a fire out of it.

The primary producer must decide whether it will be more economic to keep a stand of timber, as mentioned by the hon. member for Fassifern, or knock it over and use the country for some other purpose.

Mr. Tucker: That is the real crux of the matter.

Mr. MURRAY: That is the real crux of the matter, as the hon. member for Townsville North says. I think the hon. member for Fassifern has raised something that should be investigated very thoroughly if stands of timber on properties are to be preserved. When one looks round the country now and sees the amount of timber being knocked over, one realises that it is a wasting asset. If it is to be preserved, some sort of encouragement must be given. Surely we are not so barren of ideas that we cannot find a way of encouraging

primary producers to set aside areas of land, as I think was mentioned recently by the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha.

It may be possible to achieve this result through taxation concessions that, quite rightly in the national interest, should be made. The producer would get his capital later, and perhaps he could be taxed through the growing period and not have to pay the whole amount of tax in one year. There are many things that can be done in this matter if the will and the desire are there.

I have great sympathy for the Minister controlling the Forestry Department. I think it has been generally a neglected child. This has not been done deliberately; it is merely something that has been tacked away out of sight. There are lots of sawmills in the country, many of them—let us face it—grossly inefficient. The operations of many of them tend to keep the cost of timber high and to increase the demand for synthetics and other materials. Sawmills must become highly efficient if timber is to retain its place in the building industry.

Mr. Richter: Sawmill efficiency is improving tremendously.

Mr. MURRAY: I agree with the Minister; that is perfectly true. There are, however, still instances of gross inefficiency in the timber industry and, when one does see improvements taking place, it is very welcome indeed. I think the trend will continue. Somewhere along the line, let us answer these questions raised by the hon. member for Fassifern: "Do we want timber?" "Are we planning ahead?" If we are not, let us set to and do something about it.

I do not believe that the cost of such action would be very great. The most important thing to do is determine to find out whether or not we want it, and then set about deciding what to do. I do not think the cost to the State or the nation would be very great. We cannot see what the future holds at this moment; others with more expert and technical knowledge than I have can look into that. If the answer to our question is that timber is required, the possibilities of Queensland are almost unlimited.

Mr. Lloyd: The Commonwealth Government could assist quite a bit if they allowed taxation rebates for regeneration and reforestation in Queensland.

Mr. MURRAY: That is quite right. What the hon. member for Kedron mentions has been raised in other places. At conference after conference of people considering this problem that has been one of the things constantly put forward as a requirement. There are people willing to do something about it, but they need guidance. The hon. member for Kedron says that the Commonwealth Government could well be asked to co-operate. If these steps were taken, I believe that the wealth produced to the State would be tremendous.

[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.]

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) (2.15 p.m.): I listened attentively to the Minister's introduction of the Bill, and I think the provisions he has outlined will be of benefit to the timber industry. I shall reserve further comment on them till the second-reading stage.

I am very worried about the future of the timber industry, especially in the far north of Queensland. In my opinion, it is one of the biggest employers of labour in the Far North, when one takes into consideration the fact that roads have to be built into the forest and the scrub, that timber has to be carted either by road or by rail to the mill, and that a number of men are employed at the mill. Further employment is provided, too, in home-building, in ply and veneer mills, and in furniture factories. The industry is certainly of considerable importance to North Queensland.

There are a number of sawmills in North Queensland, and in my area alone two of them have been closed. The mill at Cooktown, which employed up to 26 men, has been closed since 1957. I blame the Forestry Department for this, not the mill management. The hon. member for Fassifern praised the department and said its officers are doing their job, but I am not going to throw it any bouquets. I believe that the department is playing a big part in the closure of mills in outlying areas, and I do not think that the mill in Cooktown should have been closed. It had functioned for years, and although I am not taking the part of the owner of the mill, I point out that it cost 25s. a hundred super feet to transport timber from Cooktown to Cairns by sea, which made it difficult for him to compete with mills on the Tableland and in the area around Cairns. I claim that the Forestry Department should have come to the assistance of that mill. I asked questions in the House about it and took the matter up with the Minister and appealed for some assistance for the owners of the mill at Cooktown so that the industry could continue to operate in that area, but I got little help from either the Minister then in office or the Forestry Department. In my opinion, the department should have assisted with road-building to tap the large stands of timber in the area round Cooktown. Millions of super feet of good scrubwoods and softwoods in the Mt. Poverty area are not being used, and I am sure that the Forestry Department has no knowledge of the quantity of timber in the Bloomfield area. I do not believe that a forestry ranger has been right through the area to assess what quantity of timber is there.

Mr. Richter: They do.

Mr. ADAIR: I doubt that they have been right through that area—the Roaring Meg and Bloomfield area—to assess the wealth of timber there. The Cooktown mill should

never have been closed down and assistance should have been given in the area to keep it going.

Mr. Aikens: The Government claims to believe in decentralisation, yet it practises centralisation.

Mr. ADAIR: That is so. At present, there is no employment for people in Cooktown, other than on main roads work, and unless the town is given some assistance it will die. The best way to assist is for the Forestry Department to help to re-open the mill. There is a plymill still functioning at Bloomfield but the miller has to cart timber from Cooktown to Cairns. The administrator of the Cook Shire refuses to give any assistance whatever in repairing the road. I spoke recently to the carrier who carts the timber from Bloomfield to Mossman and on to Cairns, and he carries a swag in his truck because he never knows when he will be stuck. He has a four-wheel drive truck following him to pull him out when he becomes bogged, yet no assistance has been given in road construction in the area.

Therefore, I throw no bouquets at the Forestry Department. I believe that in these outside areas the department does very little, if anything, to assist millers to carry on. It is of the utmost importance that the Cooktown mill be re-opened because, as I said, since the closing of the railway it is the only industry in the area for the employment of labour.

Mr. Richter: Do you realise that those mills get a big stumpage concession?

Mr. ADAIR: There may be a concession, but it is not generous enough to allow them to function. The same position exists in Mt. Molloy, where a couple of years ago a section of the mill was burnt down. That mill has never re-opened and I cannot obtain any information about when it intends to re-open, or whether it intends to re-open at all, yet there are large stands of timber handy to it. Again I think the Forestry Department should come in and do something to help these people re-open the mill. The workers who were employed at the mill now have to go to Mossman to get work. They go there in the cutting season and cut cane, and then work at other mills in the slack season, when cane-cutting has ceased. If this mill was functioning they would have work near their homes. I repeat that it is high time something was done to see that this mill is re-opened. The owners have a licence to mill the timber in the area and they should be forced to re-open the mill, or lose the licence, which could then be given to somebody else.

The Forestry Department built roads in the Mossman area that were nothing more than goat tracks. Thousands of pounds have been spent on virtually nothing yet, in places like those I have mentioned, it refuses to do anything that would lead to the re-opening of these mills and the providing of employment for people in the area.

What has happened in the Bailey's Creek and Tribulation areas? What money has the Forestry Department put into those areas? Very little. It has been left to the millers or the contractors who are carting the timber to build their own roads. It is high time the department did something to assist to keep those areas open and the mills going.

I listened very attentively to the hon. member for Clayfield when he was speaking about New Guinea timber. He mentioned that the Federal Government owned stands of timber and a mill at Bulolo. There is no comparison between the cost of production of mills in New Guinea and the cost of production of mills in Queensland. He mentioned the timber that has been planted there. I doubt the truth of what he said. I think they were natural stands of timber. From the information I have received from people from New Guinea, the ply is processed in an electric push-button mill. Coloured labour is employed at about £3 a week, compared with at least £16 in our mills. There is no chance of mills here competing against mills manufacturing ply in New Guinea with the use of coloured labour.

The Forestry Department knows that there are still large stands of timber available in the Cooktown, Mt. Molloy and Bloomfield areas. There are still ample supplies of softwoods and hardwoods, such as hickory and penda. All types of softwoods are available, including a lot of kauri pine in the Bloomfield area and silky oak in the Bloomfield, Tribulation and Bailey's Creek areas. There are also large stands of oak timbers.

It will be a sorry day if the Bloomfield mill closes down because of the neglect of this Government and the administrator of Cook Shire. I cannot approach him. He was appointed by Cabinet. I may as well not be the member for Cook; I have no say. He will not take any notice of me or of anybody else. I doubt whether he would take any notice of the Minister for Local Government and Conservation or any other Minister. He is a Cabinet appointee and if you approach him he will let you know that. No one person can tell him what he should do.

Mr. Davies: What is his name?

Mr. ADAIR: Roly Gallop.

Mr. Richter: He is a pretty good officer.

Mr. ADAIR: The Minister and his colleagues idolise him. Let them go up to Cooktown and talk to the people there. Let them find out for themselves how many hundreds of thousands of pounds he has poured down the drain. Let them see what road work has been carried out. The administrator definitely refuses to do anything about it. If you go along the Bloomfield road today you see five-year-old saplings at

the side of the road. That shows that a grader has not been over it in the last five years.

Mr. Aikens: You think the administrator is a first-class clot?

Mr. ADAIR: In my opinion, yes. I make these statements because I really believe they are true, and so do the people in Cooktown. There is no way in the world that I can do anything about it. I have no say and I do not think any Minister has any say. The administrator has Cabinet appointment and it will take a senior decision by Cabinet to make him do anything at all.

I rose to make the point that the Forestry Department is doing little or nothing to help the mills in the Cooktown and Mossman areas to carry on. Until the department does something to help, mills will continue to close down in the remote areas of the State.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (2.31 p.m.): I am compelled to remark that when this very important debate on perhaps one of the greatest of the State's assets resumed after lunch there were exactly 12 members out of 78 in the Chamber. Had the debate been concerned with the financial or economic aggrandisement of the south-eastern corner of the State—for instance, had it concerned a four-lane highway from Brisbane to the South Coast—every metropolitan member, every south-eastern member, and every city slicker would have been in the Chamber ready to jump up to contribute his share of oral garbage to the debate.

Mr. Bennett: Where were you all last week?

Mr. Newton interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: I was not making an ass of myself on television, wherever I might have been. The hon. member for Belmont interjects about the administrator in Cooktown being a first-class blob. I should say that the hon. member for South Brisbane is only a second-class blob. I thank the hon. member for Belmont for giving me an opportunity to say that.

There may be quite a lot of substance in the remarks of the hon. members for Cooktown and Fassifern. The hon. member for Fassifern was formerly Minister for Lands and had control of the Forestry Department for some time. He would be speaking from the depths of his ministerial experience, and also from the depths of his experience as a country man.

Every day the Queensland timber industry is becoming more and more a monopolistic enterprise. Until quite recently there were two timber mills in Townsville, the old Rooney mill at Railway Estate and the Hancock and Gore mill at Pimlico. They are both now owned by the Brown and Broad monopoly. One has been closed down so that only one mill is now operating in

Townsville; if one wishes to buy timber there is only one mill to go to. A man came to me recently with an account from the Brown and Broad mill in Townsville for a handful of 2 x 1 rough hardwood nogging and a few cover strips. I did not ask him what he wanted it for, but there would be only enough nogging to line the wall of a decent-sized "little house" in the back yard. The price of the nogging and cover strips was nearly £10.

It appears to me that it will not be long before timber prices itself right off the market for home construction, and particularly for home reconstruction and repairs. There is a great upsurge at present in the use of concrete masonry and other timber substitutes. If in the very near future timber is wiped out completely as a home-building material, greedy monopolistic sawmills will be to blame, no-one else. As the hon. member for Fassifern said, men with good millable timber on their land are offered only 10s. a hundred super feet on the block. But if anyone tries to buy the same timber from the mill he has to pay up to £9 a hundred super feet, and if he wants it carted from the mill to his home he has to pay cartage.

One of the very important aspects of this matter is the importation of timber from New Guinea, and at times, from Canada and the northern States of America. A good deal of it comes into Townsville for Mount Isa Mines Limited. Until quite recently, when timber came from New Guinea, Canada, and now and again a bit of teak from Burma, it was unloaded at Cairns, Townsville, or Mackay. Now, due to the anti-North Queensland policy of the Federal Government—I think the Minister in charge of this Bill should have something to say about this—no timber from overseas can be unloaded at Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Gladstone, or any other Queensland port except Brisbane. All timber from overseas must be unloaded in the Government's beloved Brisbane.

Mr. Richter: You know why?

Mr. AIKENS: Yes, and I am going to say why; rather, I am going to give not the real reason why, but the paltry and specious excuse put up by the anti-Queensland and anti-North Queensland Federal Government. The excuse is that quarantine officers are stationed only in Brisbane to see that the timber does not contain the "Aikens" bug or the "Bennett" borer or something else that is supposed to be in timber from overseas.

If the Federal Government wanted to foster this North Queensland industry and cut down on costs, it would station a quarantine officer at each of the northern ports. When all is said and done, the Estimates that will be presented in the August session of the Federal Parliament will reveal an increasing number of Federal public servants. Surely the cleaner could be put through some of the innumerable overlapping Federal

Government departments and quarantine officers transferred or trained so that there would be one in each Queensland port in order to maintain the timber industry, which flourished in North Queensland for some time.

Mr. Richter: Do you know that the North Queensland mills are also supplying Mount Isa Mines Ltd.?

Mr. AIKENS: The North Queensland mills do supply a bit of hardwood to Mount Isa.

Mr. Richter: I meant softwood.

Mr. AIKENS: Maybe a little softwood. The Minister knows as well as I do that there is not much softwood that can be supplied; there could be a little bit of veneer supplied. But the point is that Mount Isa Mines Limited has brought in huge quantities of oregon pine, which is used mainly for shafting and timbering underground because it is the most suitable timber for that purpose. It cannot be brought in now unless first of all it is shipped from Canada to Brisbane and then railed from Brisbane all the way to Mount Isa. Yet the Federal Government claims to be interested in the development of North Queensland!

As a matter of fact, there is a man in North Queensland now on the North Queensland Development Committee, something the People the North Committee did not want but are now claiming all the credit for since they got it—or since we got it. He seems to be doing a reasonably good job within the restrictive limits placed upon him by the Commonwealth Government.

How ridiculous it is that ships that once unloaded timber at Cairns have now to travel an extra 800 miles to Brisbane to unload the timber, which then has to travel by rail all the way back to North Queensland. This is the sort of thing we are getting from the Federal Government. I hope that the Minister who is putting this Bill through is not in accord with the actions of the Commonwealth Government in this regard. I feel certain that if he has the interests of North Queensland at heart he will make strong recommendations and protests to the Commonwealth Government to end this Gilbertian situation.

Mr. Richter: You are very much out of date. I have that matter pretty well in hand.

Mr. AIKENS: Then it is in pretty safe hands. I could not say that of many Ministers who occupy the Government benches. If this Minister has the matter pretty well in hand, I shall leave further criticism of the Federal Government until I see what success the Minister has with his colleagues in the Federal Government.

Mr. Bennett: You still work for the Federal Government at election time.

Mr. AIKENS: I know that the Standing Orders prevent me from saying, "You lie, and you know you lie," so I will not say it, as I do not want to breach them.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: Let me now deal with timber from New Guinea. This concerns not only North Queenslanders and Queenslanders, but all the people of Australia. The Federal Government is preparing to give New Guinea independence. When that will happen, we do not know. When it does, we do not want another Congo. The Federal Government is at present pouring millions of pounds into Papua and New Guinea. That money is coming from the pockets of the taxpayers of Australia and is being used, among other things, to establish a timber industry in New Guinea. As the hon. member for Clayfield said, many of the stands of timber in New Guinea are owned by the Commonwealth Government but they are not being exploited by it. They are being exploited by private enterprise under charter from the Federal Government. There is therefore an amazing situation in which the taxpayers of Australia are being compelled to subsidise the timber industry in New Guinea, which, as a result of that subsidisation, is closing down sawmills in Australia and crippling the Australian timber industry.

Mr. Adair: Plymills.

Mr. AIKENS: Yes, mainly plymills, but it will not be long before sawn timber and other types of timber are being sent to Australia, because this is merely the thin end of the wedge. In effect, the Federal Government is compelling the taxpayers of Australia to subsidise themselves out of business, and that will be seen also in respect of other commodities that I cannot discuss in this debate. Other things will be planted, manufactured, and exploited by private interests in New Guinea.

I believe that this Government, jealously preserving the integrity of Queensland Parliament and the interests of the people of Queensland, should call a halt to this compulsory subsidising by the taxpayers of Australia of industries in New Guinea. They will drive similar industries in Australia out of business, thanks to the subsidies they receive and the availability of cheap labour. Then the Federal Government will say, "It is time to grant New Guinea independence," and in that country will be the booming and thriving industries built up on the subsidies paid by the Australian taxpayers.

Mr. Adair: The Commonwealth Government owns 51 per cent. of the shares in that mill.

Mr. AIKENS: It may, but it does not operate it. The hon. member for Cook knows that. The Commonwealth Government used to own 51 per cent. of the shares in A.W.A., C.O.R., and many other companies, but neither it nor the taxpayers of Australia received anything from them.

I say these things with regard to timber because what is true of the timber industry is true of other industries established in New Guinea at the expense of the Australian taxpayers. I really think it is time that the Government, jealous of preserving the rights of the State and its economic and financial structure, had a close look at this issue.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (2.44 p.m.): I was drawn into the debate by some of the remarks of the hon. member for Fassifern, and I now have some comments to make on one very important matter that was raised. The hon. member said in his speech that much marketable timber was being held on properties and that the lack of a reasonable price meant in many cases the wanton destruction of timber, regardless of whether or not it was required. The Act relative to the licensing of sawmills was first introduced in 1936, and I think that the report of the Timber Industry Inquiry Committee that resulted in its introduction would show that licensing had become necessary because of the great number of sawmills that had been constructed over the length and breadth of the State and which utilised whatever timber was available. The wanton destruction of timber was the real cause of the soil erosion problem with which the State is now faced.

I do not intend to breach Standing Orders, Mr. Hooper, but I wish to mention that the greatest amount of soil erosion has occurred in areas where the proportion of freehold land is highest and where timber resources were the greatest. Over the years, many farmers had so much land and so little regard for the conservation of timber resources that they destroyed timber wantonly. As I said, sawmills were built indiscriminately, and many of them were inefficient and brought little profit to the persons who built them.

The problem is not as easy to solve as the hon. member for Fassifern would have us believe. Royalties payable to the Queensland Government have always been variable. From the time of the licensing of sawmills, they have been based on the distance from the railhead of the stands of the timber on Crown land. An officer of the Forestry Department marks the timber that can be milled, tenders are called, and sawmillers submit prices for the timber. If it is some distance from the railhead, a smaller royalty is payable on the timber than is payable on timber right at the railhead. I do not think we can get away from this system other than by reverting to the system under which sawmills were constructed quite indiscriminately. If we do this, the timber we need for regeneration will be wantonly destroyed and soil erosion and other problems will be made worse.

I am well aware of the problem to which the hon. member for Cook referred. The sawmill at Cooktown operated for many years, and the machinery deteriorated after the mill was closed. I do not know whether the owner modernised the mill and renovated

the machinery, but it was in very bad condition when I saw it last and thousands of pounds would have had to be spent to bring it into operation.

I do not think the Conservator of Forests, or his deputy or officers, should be accused of causing trouble in regard to the granting of sawmill licences. They are dedicated officers. Immediately after the last war I was in close association with a man named Lutton, who did a great deal to break the close ring that operated in the timber industry in Queensland. Unfortunately, he died when he was 41 years of age, but he made his mark in the post-war years. Through him, I met officers of the department and forestry rangers in the south-west of Queensland. I found that they had more than an interest in their work and were really dedicated to it. In fact, they lived timber, and I think that many of them had sawdust in their heads instead of brains. I do not mean that in any derogatory way; I mean that the timber industry was their whole life. If they believed that a sawmiller was doing the wrong thing, they tried to prove to him that he was wrong. They believed that the timber should be preserved. They associated with their work a policy of soil conservation, and in all of these things they were dedicated to their task. If they have made any mistakes it is because they have been on the over-cautious side, just as primary producers have made mistakes in the political pressure they have applied from time to time for the issue of new sawmilling licences. This has led to permission being given to destroy on Crown land timber which, in the opinion of the Forestry Department, required regeneration.

These matters are always a contest between the primary-producing section of the community and the Forestry Department's officers. On the one side they are too keen to cut timber and on the other they are perhaps, on some occasions, a little over-zealous in refusing permission to destroy the timber wealth of this State. Because a man has a stand of timber on one farm and other stands on neighbouring farms, and because the cost of transportation varies, pressure is often brought to bear for the issue of new licences for the various areas or for the payment of a stumpage rate to the farmer higher than that on the original stand, with the result that we are fast reaching the state we were in in 1936.

In my opinion, the worst problems in the timber industry today do not result so much from the importation of timber or the cost of production. Our problems go back many years, to the time when our softwood forests were completely denuded. Queensland pine was one of the finest softwoods in the world but, because of the wanton destruction of this timber, production of pine in the State virtually ceased. The Queensland Government has had to spend tremendous sums in regenerating softwood forests and in

re-planting Queensland pine on the Atherton Tableland and in other parts of North Queensland, and reforestation of American pine in the South.

Because of increasing costs the 1959 timber inquiry recommended a rise in royalty rates. Royalties on timber planted by the Crown do to some extent control the stumpage on timber on freehold land. There was an increase in royalty in 1959, and from that time onwards there was some resistance because the cost of constructing a timber house increased until it was almost equivalent to the cost of a brick home. Many people in the community today, because of the gradual lift in the price of timber houses are building in brick, and the demand for timber houses has been reduced.

The importation of hardwood has occurred more in Southern Queensland than in other parts of the State, mainly because the Government's transport policy has had a big impact on the cost of Queensland-produced hardwoods compared with those produced in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales. The great proportion of hardwoods used in home construction in Brisbane is imported into Queensland from the Northern Rivers of New South Wales. There is no transport tax on it and no restriction on its import, so naturally the price is much more favourable than that of hardwood timbers grown locally in Southern Queensland.

There has been a similar impact on cypress pine grown in the south-west of the State, mainly in the Dalby, Roma and other adjacent areas. The cypress pine industry in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales, favourably treated by the New South Wales Government—rebates are granted on its rail transport to markets in Sydney—competes more than favourably with our cypress pine, which once enjoyed a wonderful market in Sydney. Two or three years ago the transport policy of the present Government had a very harsh impact on the production of cypress pine in the south-western parts of Queensland. Whereas the transport policy of the Queensland Government has harshly affected the cypress pine people in this State, the New South Wales Government's policy was to grant freight rebates in order to cheapen the cost of transporting cypress pine to Sydney.

If we are concerned about the economics of the industry we must insist that the present policy of licensing sawmills in Queensland is maintained rather than have a policy of granting licences indiscriminately. Over the years I have spoken to many people engaged in the sawmilling industry. They have told me that when the Crown advertises stands of timber, members of the sawmillers' association immediately meet in conference to decide whether it should be Mr. Brett, Mr. Hyne, or somebody else—

Mr. Richter: No longer.

Mr. LLOYD: It might be even Mr. Smith or Mr. Jones. They decide which firm is to be the successful tenderer. This is decided by members of the sawmillers' association in conference.

Mr. Richter: No longer.

Mr. LLOYD: They did, anyway. They would decide what price was to be paid, and it would be shared between two or three members of the association. I can remember when Mr. Wes Lutton broke into the sawmillers' association. He broke the ring. He started off in the sawmilling industry as a young man. He was one of the first men to break the ring. The Minister assures me that no longer is this ring of tenderers in existence, but such rings do exist in other industries in the State. The hon. member for Mourilyan assures me that there is still this arrangement amongst sawmillers in different parts of the State to organise who will be the successful tenderer and what royalty will be offered.

Mr. Davies: There are only two members of the Government listening to you, including one Country Party member. They are not very interested. They must be at a meeting of the sawmillers' association.

Mr. LLOYD: That could be so. Since 2.15 p.m. there have never been more than four Government members sufficiently interested to be in attendance. There are no more than three here now. Obviously there is very little interest in the Bill. The independent member on that side, the hon. member for Fassifern, made a very valuable contribution to the debate. He is one who has had sufficient experience and is sincere enough to know when to cut trees and when not to.

When the hon. member was speaking I suggested by interjection that perhaps the forestry rangers should have the same powers over freehold land as they have over leasehold land. Had they possessed that power we might not be in the position we are facing at the present time. When a licence is sought an inspection is made by a forestry officer to determine the amount of millable timber within the area. There would be many parts of the State where the timber is so far from the site of the proposed mill that it would be uneconomic for the miller to operate at a higher price than 10s. a 100 super feet, as instanced by the hon. member for Fassifern.

The destruction of our timber in the past has created many of the problems that we are confronted with at the present time. It is necessary to import most of our softwood requirements, as well as a great deal of our hardwood requirements. While the plywood from New Guinea presents serious competition for the locally manufactured article, I think the main factor is that plywood is being replaced in home construction. Many other wallboards are taking its place. Years ago plywood was used freely in home construction, but that

is not so today; its use has gradually diminished. Plaster sheets were first introduced to take the place of plywood. In later years other lining materials have been introduced. They are more economic because less labour is required in their use. The economics of the problem occupy an important place in the minds of our forestry officers, as many of our sawmills have closed down.

After 1946 there was a great upsurge in timber construction, but many of the sawmills in operation between 1946 and 1956 were inefficient and their machinery was out of date. It was only the great demand for timber for home construction that kept them going. Many of them had to disappear as time went by, and many of them did.

I do not know whether it will be the policy of the Government in future to amalgamate areas that were previously sawmill areas and call fresh tenders for new mills. I know that the Minister is to be given greatly extended powers. It may be that in his opinion the areas in which mills have closed down should be merged, and that fresh tenders should be called. As suggested by the hon. member for Fassifern, where there is millable timber, and where possible regeneration will not be affected, I do not think there can be any objection. When a definite policy is formulated it should concentrate on regeneration and reforestation, with a definite liaison with the Government's soil conservation policy.

Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) (3.3 p.m.): The Act has not been amended since 1936, so it would seem that this measure is very much overdue. The Minister explained that the Act stabilised the industry. He said that there was a need for improvement, although vital principles were not being departed from, and that it was the intention generally to bring the Act up to date to cope with the changes that have taken place between 1936 and 1965. That is a very long time—29 years.

The Minister said that no vital principles were being departed from, and one could well take it that the departmental officers must know, from periodical surveys, the quantities of softwood and hardwood available in Queensland. The greatest area of rain forests in Australia, if not in the world, is to be found in the place that I come from. In the Tully-Innisfail region the average annual rainfall exceeds 150 inches. It is a very desirable area for reforestation, something that has been badly neglected over the years. Even after being prompted so often by hon. members on this side to do something about reforestation, the Government has done nothing whatever. Labour Governments instituted a policy but this Government did not continue it. As a result, the areas were neglected and were subsequently burnt out.

The Minister proposes to legislate for reforestation and regeneration. That will do a great deal of good but its value will be lost if it is neglected.

Something should be done to save the rain forests in North Queensland. Inroads have been made into these areas for cattle fattening. I have no objection to this, provided it takes place in the fringe areas and not in the areas in which the first-class timber is growing. I asked a question recently whether it was proposed to use more areas in the rain forests for cattle fattening. I was told that there was no such intention. I suggest that it will not be long before those rain-forest areas are made available for cattle fattening. As I say, I have no objection to marginal lands being used for that purpose.

Last year I was a severe critic of the Minister and the administration of his department in regard to the sawmill at Carruchan. I hope that this practice will not be permitted to continue. This mill had a licence to mill 3,000,000 super. feet a year. The mill was burnt down, and for three years not a stick of timber was cut. Approximately 100 employees were dismissed and they had to sell their properties for what they could get. Their families had to leave the area because they had to find employment elsewhere.

I advocated that the sawmill licence should be taken from the mill. I believe that the information given to me was misleading, because the Government believed that the company concerned, Brown and Broad Ltd., was remodelling the mill, or building a new one, and installing new machinery. I got misleading information every time I asked a question, and I venture to say it was deliberately misleading.

The Minister should not grant to anyone a licence to cut timber, with the right to neglect production and still retain the licence to be disposed of to somebody else. Without a licence a timber mill is worth nothing, so it has a very high asset value. This is what happened with Brown and Broad Ltd., and I do not want to see it happen again. I hope the Minister will not permit it. We must not have a recurrence of this type of thing. Today timber mills are being absorbed by the great monopolies, and it will not be long before all the small, independent mills have been taken over. One sees from reports coming forward from time to time that each year there are fewer mills than there were previously.

Mills, both large and small, give a good service to the community. They employ labour under good conditions, they provide homes for the workers, and North Queensland can ill afford to see them go. The sugar industry provides employment for only part of the year, whereas timber mills employ men for the whole year and provide a very necessary service throughout the northern part of the State. I desire to see them continue to operate and prosper. Although I do not wish to repeat myself, I must say

that they are excellent employers, and that, generally speaking, those owning them are very fine people.

One of the things that one hears, particularly in the North, is that the industry seems to revolve round one man. It is said that he has the right to do this, that, and the other thing, and that his word is law. The things that one hears of this person are at times very good and at other times very bad. I have every respect for him. I think that he is doing an excellent job, and I would be happy to see an end to those rumours.

The hon. member for Kedron referred to the fact that at times when quotas of timber are up for sale the successful bidder is known before the auction is held. I have heard that suggestion repeatedly, and it is not good to hear it. I know of nothing to suggest that those rumours are correct, and I do not wish to cast any aspersions on the person in charge.

I would like to see sawmills in the timber areas given a better deal than they have had in the past. I refer particularly to the mill at Carruchan. It is only a small mill, and the owner has been trying for about 20 years to get a licence for a small supply of timber. He is a good employer of labour and, in spite of his many applications, he has been told that he cannot be given a licence. He can get some timber for making cases. Another small mill similarly placed is the one at Upper Murray. I am not sure whether the owner of that mill has a licence; if he has, it is for a small quantity. These people could very well be given small quantities of Crown timber, instead large firms being given additional quantities from time to time.

I hope the Bill will provide for a tightening-up of many of the things that I think require attention. I shall reserve further comment till I have seen it.

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (3.14 p.m.): I think it can fairly be said that the timber industry is one that has been beset over the years with many problems. Whilst I should like to study the Bill before passing judgment on its contents, I feel that I must rise on this occasion to add my contribution to the debate on this industry.

It was very enlightening to listen to the hon. member for Fassifern this morning. It can be fairly said that he spoke as a man with much practical knowledge of the industry. I know that he holds very strong views on the wilful destruction of rain-forest timbers in a chancy experiment designed merely to prove whether it is economically possible to fatten cattle on land in coastal areas. I lived in the North for some years, and I believe that the risk is too great when we bear in mind that rain-forest timber can be grown only under natural conditions.

The industry has been beset by many problems over the years and a number of factors have contributed to them. First there was the indiscriminate cutting of timber,

and possibly this happened because people did not have any real knowledge of the value of timber in the early days. It is still happening today. On grazing properties on which there is timber, a certain amount of ringbarking of trees is done in order to increase the water supply on the property, and I often wonder how much building timber has been destroyed in this way. Possibly graziers have a good case for ringbarking, because water is one of the main problems of their industry and every effort must be made to increase water supplies. However, it is unfortunate that over the years this policy and this type of thinking have resulted in the destruction of quite a lot of valuable building timber.

One of my main purposes in rising to take part in this debate was to indicate that I believe that the transport policy of the Government has not assisted the timber industry. In my opinion, the industry in Queensland has not been given the protection that it ought to have been given against the importation of timber from New South Wales. I think it was in 1961 that it was pointed out that the Queensland Housing Commission, which as a single unit is possibly one of the biggest users of timber in the State—

Mr. Richter: You must realise that we are short of hardwood in the south-east of Queensland and that the nearest source of supply is northern New South Wales.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Yes. If the Minister listens to what I have to say, possibly he will agree with me. Although it is claimed that there is a shortage of hardwood in south-eastern Queensland, the hon. member for Fassifern said that there are many good stands of timber that are not being tapped because of the small reward that the person concerned would receive. I know personally of several instances where this has happened. I have mentioned to people in the country that they had a good stand of timber and said, "Why do you purchase timber from the mills?" They say, "It is not profitable to use your own timber. By the time you go out and cut it, transport it to the mill, and have it milled and transported back, it is easier to buy it, as it costs only approximately 10s. more per hundred than the cost of having it transported and milled. And you have no worry." In my opinion, there must be valuable stands of hardwood that have not been tapped.

As I was saying before the Minister interrupted me, in 1961 it was brought to the attention of the Minister who was then in charge of housing that we were borrowing Commonwealth money to provide homes in Queensland and spending a great deal of it in New South Wales on the importation of timber. It was being imported free of road tax, and in the Brisbane area, particularly at Inala and Acacia Ridge where the greatest percentage of building was going on, about 90 per cent. of the timber used was coming

from New South Wales. I can recall once in Dalby when we had the same plea by the sawmilling people—that they were being put out of business because they could not possibly compete with timber that was coming from New South Wales free of road tax while they were obliged by this Government's policy to pay road tax on their timber.

I can recall, too, that the Railway Department was not very helpful to the Dalby millers who complained of wide pilfering of timber in transit so they decided to try to combat it by railing their timber in 5-cwt. bundles. The railways in Dalby had no equipment to handle bundles of that size. So, one way or another, many obstacles have been put in the way of the sawmilling industry in these places, most of them created by the Government.

As to the use of timber in Housing Commission homes—this Government threw aside the policy of the previous Labour Government, which specified that only Queensland timber could be used in Queensland Housing Commission homes.

Mr. Richter: You would be in an awful mess if you did that today.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: That remains to be seen. The Government has thrown that policy aside but, if we can believe claims for recent developments in the timber industry, it may not be such an obstacle as the Minister thinks. It is claimed that the process of impregnating timber by vacuum-pressure makes second-class timber quite as useful as first-class timber. It is still in the experimental stages, of course; I have made some inquiries into it, and the value of the method remains to be seen. However, if the claim is borne out a wealth of secondary timber that would never have been considered for use in home-building must surely become available to the building industry.

I want to deal now with the attitude of the Queensland Sawmillers' Association to the timber situation in this State. While it may be possible to achieve a good deal in reforestation of softwoods, there is no doubt that the possibility of supplementing our hardwood resources by reforestation is very remote. Apparently the sawmillers themselves are not very concerned about the depletion of timber stocks, because in 1959 the Queensland Sawmillers' Association, when protesting to the Premier over a suggested increase in the price of hardwood (not that I would go along with an increase in the price of timber, because I would not support anything that would put up the cost of building in Queensland), through its president, Mr. Brett, said that there was too much panic over the depletion of South Queensland forest reserves. He said—

“When we run out in Queensland we have plenty of other building materials

available, such as cement, bricks, and Burnie board. Let us worry about the depletion when it happens.”

and so on. Apparently that is the attitude and thinking of the sawmillers' association, or it was at that particular time.

Mr. Richter: You do not agree with that, do you?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Of course I do not agree with it, and I think it was a very irresponsible statement for the president of the sawmillers' association to make. Possibly the regeneration of softwoods is reasonably easy, but not so with hardwoods because of the number of years' growth required. If the Bill will combat that type of thinking, it will certainly achieve something and so could well merit support. It is to be regretted that some people are interested only in making a quick quid out of the industry, regardless of the possible long-term effect.

Unfortunately, the economic policies of the Federal Government have adversely affected the sawmilling industry over the years, particularly after the post-war boom subsided. They have had a profound effect on the building industry throughout Australia. The building industry is usually one of the first to suffer from any restriction of credit brought about by the economic policy laid down by the Commonwealth Government. We can recall what happened in 1961, at the time of the unwarranted credit squeeze. Because of the restriction placed on home building, many sawmillers throughout the State were forced to close down, and many men were dismissed. A “Courier-Mail” report in June, 1961, said—

“Timber millers in North Queensland were stacking up huge piles of logs and burning them because of the credit squeeze slump, a leading miller, Mr. H. C. Eggers, said in Cairns yesterday.”

Mr. Wallis-Smith: That did happen.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: That is so.

If the approach to the timber industry is to be on the basis that you can turn on and turn off credit, and bring about a situation where usable logs are consigned to the ash heap merely because there is no outlet for the timber in home building, the Commonwealth Government will not contribute anything to the stability of the industry, and certainly will not do anything to help those North Queenslanders to develop the northern part of the State.

There should be a wide investigation into what can be done to assist the timber industry and to ascertain whether, by freight concessions, by road-tax concessions, or in any other way, timber resources can be tapped economically, particularly in view of the fact that the Queensland Housing Commission is one medium of home-building that can give a stimulus to the sawmilling industry. Every

endeavour should be made by way of concessions to the industry to ensure that, as much as possible, Queensland timber, milled in Queensland mills, is used for the construction of Queensland Housing Commission homes.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (3.30 p.m.): I have not very much to say on this important measure. I do not intend to deal in any way with the economics of the industry. My comments are related to sawmills and milling concerns in the Greater Brisbane area. The time has long since passed when sawmills and other industries connected with timber should be removed from the city confines. I am speaking particularly for people who suffer from a health point of view as a result of the nuisance created in the closely settled areas of Brisbane.

Mr. Hughes: Can they be blamed if residences have been built around them with the passage of time?

Mr. DEAN: Perhaps that is a point. There has been progress in the suburbs. However, just because the sawmills happened to be there years ago when there was vacant land around them that does not mean that they have to remain there forever. People who suffer from bronchial trouble or asthmatic complaints have to be considered. I could name certain milling concerns which are causing many upsets to people's health.

The presence of sawmills creates a serious fire hazard in the closely settled areas. When I served on the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board many years ago this was one of the nightmares that faced the board. In the Albion area huge quantities of timber were stored or stockpiled and it was considered that the brigade would be hard put to it in controlling a fire in that closely populated suburb. The atmosphere in the suburban area of South Brisbane is very bad at times, with the refuse, smoke, and fine sawdust that emanates from timber mills. The time has long past when they should be allowed to remain in the suburbs.

The hon. member for Salisbury referred to the quantity of timber being imported. I remember that years ago timber was imported. Many homes were built in the Zillmere area, which was in my electorate at the time. They were of very poor construction because of the inferior quality of the imported timber. Nevertheless, the building of homes for our ex-Servicemen who were returning home was speeded up.

I rose principally to speak about air pollution, and to make it clear that as soon as possible sawmills and timber concerns which create a nuisance should be removed to the outer areas of Greater Brisbane.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (3.34 p.m.): The importance of this Bill may be gauged by the number of speakers who have taken part in the debate. Many important points have been raised, but speakers have come mostly from this side of the Chamber.

It will be noted that very few hon. members from the metropolitan area are present on the Government benches.

Mr. Thackeray: They are having a Caucus meeting.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH: Whether that is more important than this measure is a matter for them to decide. They are neglecting a measure that is more important than a Caucus meeting. I do not know how important this Caucus meeting is.

As the Minister said, this measure has been under consideration for some years. The Bill contains 21 clauses, so it is quite extensive. There must be a definite move to increase the stability of this industry. I hope the Bill will continue to protect the industry, which is so important throughout the whole of Queensland and the adjoining islands.

The Minister said that there would be a change from a daily to a quarterly quota. In this regard, consideration must be given to the weather. After weeks of rain the logs cannot be hauled or manoeuvred into the mill, so it would be difficult for the miller to reach his quota. Regulations should be introduced to give him a chance to catch up when better weather prevails.

Increased penalties are to be provided. One of the troubles with the timber industry has been the ease with which penalties could be avoided. I will not go into the details, but there have been ways and means of avoiding penalties, for instance, harvesting the timber and not using it in the way it should be used. As the hon. member for Salisbury said, logs were burnt. I know they were burnt, and that is the reason. It was uneconomic to mill them, and the only way to get rid of them was to burn them. I hope that this will be properly policed to ensure that there is no way of avoiding the increased penalties at the expense of the timber industry.

The Minister has the right to cancel a licence. I hope he is not called upon to exercise that right. Once he does, mills will be saying that they have carried out the letter of the law under the Act and have been victimised by the Minister, whereas other mills can get away with anything. We do not want to further reduce the number of mills.

I have here a circular dated 16 March, 1960 which contains a reference to reforestation, particularly in North Queensland. These comments were passed by a district forester. He said that reforestation can only be undertaken in developed State forests; that it cannot be undertaken on timber reserves, Crown land, etc. I asked the Minister several questions about the growing of timber on broken land on farms and private lands, and the provision of young trees by the Forestry Department. The growing of trees on broken land would have a threefold effect: firstly, it would prevent soil erosion, a matter debated at length last Tuesday; secondly, it would

attract moisture or rain to the area; and thirdly, it would be an economic venture, and would assist in maintaining our timber resources. But very few people would be prepared to go to the expense of buying the trees, planting them, and looking after them, when they know that in a Government-owned scheme the trees would be planted much quicker and in much larger areas. Every two or three acres planted would be of considerable advantage.

I wish the Minister would give consideration to supplying suitable trees to farmers who are willing and able to plant and care for them in areas on their farms that are not suitable for other crops.

The district forester went on to say—

“Reafforestation is at present limited to the Danbulla State Forest . . . Regeneration work in rain-forest areas is being taken: approximately 2,000 acres at Kuranda and three areas near Atherton.”

Regeneration work in rain-forest areas is really a matter of employing people to keep an eye on nature's efforts. That method may have been all right when timber was not being harvested, and there were no haulage tracks, loading ramps, and other inroads into stands of timber. Now there are tracks criss-crossing forest areas and loading ramps that contain nothing but Gympie-bush or stinging trees. There was a report only recently in “The Courier-Mail” of protective clothing having to be supplied to workers in such areas to prevent their being stung by Gympie-bush. They are also to receive extra payment when working in these areas. These places could be growing the timber that once graced their slopes. The extent of such areas is far in excess of what most hon. members might imagine. Sometimes areas are closed for 20 years before they are re-opened, yet after even that period no millable timber will be found where there were tracks or loading ramps.

In rain forests, where the climate and the light are suitable, trees grow rapidly and, with a little assistance from Forestry Department officers in the planting of trees of the same species as those in the immediate vicinity, millable timber would be found in those places where now one finds only Gympie-bush. The Minister says this is not worth worrying about; I say it is. Every track left for the growth of Gympie-bush and other rubbish detracts from the value of the land and lessens the possibility of keeping the timber industry in existence, in the North or anywhere else.

The district forester continued—

“Reafforestation operations in wet weather create problems.”

No matter what one is doing, wet weather creates problems. Those created in the timber industry are no greater than those created anywhere else, because one of the things needed for the growing of timber is a suitable climate, together with adequate rainfall, depth of soil, and light. They are

available in North Queensland and, with the exception of rainfall, in almost all parts of Queensland. Moisture is available all the year in North Queensland, and trees could be assisted in regeneration programmes, instead of merely being allowed to regenerate themselves.

Why should not Forestry officers assist the trees? We have nurseries for their cultivation. I think that what I suggest would be a short-cut to obtaining a much larger supply of timber. South Australia, for example, was originally a State with no natural stands of millable timber. Today it is self-supporting and in a position to export to other States. This has all been achieved by enterprising foresight. Whilst South Australia began behind scratch and is now in such a favourable position, Queensland, which started with 170 species of timber, is now introducing legislation to try to give stability to the industry.

It is no good talking about stability unless there is an industry to stabilise. There are in Queensland ghost towns that were once flourishing mining towns. When the minerals were extracted, those towns could not be regenerated. An alternative industry might have been found to keep them alive, but the minerals were no longer there to support them.

In the case of timber, the responsibility rests on the Government and those who are engaged in the industry to see that the supply of timber is preserved. Reforestation should be in the minds of all of us if we wish to prevent timber towns from becoming ghost towns. Some of them assuredly will, because an article that appeared in the Press some days ago stated that the timber on the Atherton Tableland will last only 13½ years. Will people go to a town that has a life of only 13 years? The answer is, “No, definitely not.”

I notice, too, that a number of mills are now under the one ownership. Small mills are being bought up by large mills and logs are being diverted to the larger mills and processed there, to the detriment of the area in which they are harvested. Again we could have the spectacle of a flourishing little town on the fringe of the rain forest, with sizable stands of timber adjacent to it, being allowed to die while the logs are transported to a larger mill.

At one time, logs in the Millaa Millaa area were carried mainly by rail, but this practice has ceased following the closure of the railway line. They are now carried by road transport and this increases traffic hazards. Has any hon. member tried to pass a timber truck on the Kuranda Range Road early on a foggy morning? It is almost impossible to do so. One has either to take an undue risk or spend anything up to half an hour behind the truck.

I should point out, too, that 95 per cent. of the mills in North Queensland use electric power that is generated in the area. We

should bear in mind that, every time a mill closes, the possibility of having secondary industries in the vicinity of provincial towns and cities decreases. The Minister should remember that point when he is considering any provisions in the Bill that may tend to keep small timber townships alive and encourage people to remain there in the belief that timber will be available for more than 13 years and give them a livelihood for the rest of their lives.

I have a very high regard for the officers of the Forestry Department, and I know that the Minister and his officers are well aware of what can be achieved by reforestation. However, I think it is worth putting on record just what effect the planting of 600 trees to the acre can have. I shall speak of North Queensland, because I think that if each of us looks after the area he represents, the whole of Queensland will advance. As I said at the beginning of my speech, there are many hon. members who are not interested in the whole of Queensland; they are interested only in the area they represent, and will not advance arguments or suggestions that might help any other part of the State. I ask hon. members to visualise the position in the North with two great industries adjacent to each other, namely, the sugar industry on the level country and the timber industry on the higher areas adjacent to it. We see vast expansion in the sugar industry—it is given prominence everywhere—yet the timber industry is allowed to languish. It is beyond me to understand why one industry should be so highlighted while another is allowed to go into the doldrums and remain there.

In regard to building, much is said about brick, mortar, Burnie board, etc. The hon. member for Salisbury read a report which said, "There is a time coming when we will not need timber, but timber will always play a major part in building construction. The finished building may not be said to be of timber construction but timber will be used to a great extent in its construction.

I hope that this Bill will do everything possible to enable the great timber industry in the North to continue and to hold its own with the industry in any other part of Queensland. I hope also that the Minister can increase the number of forestry plots and preserve timber that has been harvested. By that I mean that I hope he ensures that penalties cannot be dodged simply by harvesting timber marked by the ranger, allowing it to lie on the ground for some time and then destroying it rather than milling it because, in the miller's opinion, it is uneconomic. There is something wrong with an economic structure in which that can happen and high penalties should be placed on that type of handling of this very important product.

With those few remarks, I reserve further comment until I see the Bill.

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) (3.53 p.m.): In introducing the Bill the Minister mentioned that he was implementing certain

aspects of the 1959 report of the Timber Industry Inquiry Committee. I am indeed grateful that he is not implementing all of the 1959 recommendations. I feared very much that those parts of the report that deal with the industry in such a way as to seriously affect it in the Maryborough area were going to be implemented by the Minister.

The Leader of the Opposition, in emphasising the importance of this industry, not only to the State but to Australia, spoke very wisely. I believe that on a previous occasion when I was addressing this Chamber on the timber industry I gave some figures showing the value of that industry, of the dairying industry, and of other important industries, and drew a comparison between the timber industry and those industries. I proved that as well as comparing favourably with the most valuable and important agricultural industries in this country, the timber industry also plays a more valuable part in decentralisation. In small communities where there are no other industrial activities sawmills are very important. They are scattered throughout the State, in cities along the coast. For instance, in the city of Maryborough there is a sawmilling industry responsible for the livelihood of 700 to 800 people. It plays a very important part in the economic life of that centre.

I feel that, generally, the value of this industry and its general influence upon the economy of the State and of Australia as a whole is not fully realised and appreciated. When the hon. member for Fassifern was talking about the destruction of timber on freehold land throughout the State, and the fact that the Forestry Department had little or no control over that sort of thing, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition interjected and suggested that it might be wise for the department to have the right to inspect the timber on freehold land so that trees of likely commercial value could be marked for preservation until they were commercially usable. His suggestion was met with laughter from hon. members opposite, who considered it only from the point of view of the interference it would mean with the liberty of the subject. But only two days ago we had a Bill before us dealing with soil erosion which reeked of interference, compulsion and penalties. It demanded that this and that be done in the interests of the State because of the importance of the preservation of soil. What could be more important than the preservation of timber?

I, too, am disappointed that there are so few Government members in the Chamber for this very important debate. When we are dealing with matters concerning men on the land, Government members, particularly Country Party members, are noticeable by their absence. I thought we would have had some very interesting speeches during this debate. We certainly cannot rely on the opinion of one. We should like to hear

the opinions of many so that we can arrive at some conclusion. I know the great differences of opinion there were about the destruction of the rain forests in the North.

Today the hon. member for Fassifern made a good speech. On a previous occasion he expressed the opinion that the destruction of the scrub lands in the North was criminal. At that time the Minister said it was not necessary to be concerned about the destruction of our rain forests. We know that in the Maryborough area there are thousands of acres in what is known as the wallum country—I prefer to refer to it as coastal uplands or coastal lowlands—that can be developed for approximately £30 or £40 an acre, where cattle could be fattened much better than—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DAVIES: I am just showing that without the destruction of the rain forests there is plenty of land that can be developed. I am taking the word of the much experienced hon. member for Fassifern.

There is much more that can be done by the man who owns his own land. We have to persuade him to plant trees on the slopes of hills, of the little gullies and along the streams. I am not going to deal with soil erosion, but both matters are linked. In many streams in America floods have been controlled by giving attention to every gully in the area by the planting of trees. One Government member complained that if the trees were preserved on some of the grazing land and agricultural land the farmer would lose so much grassland. With the denuding of that land of its forests the farmers are losing the soil that grows the pastures and grasses. Both matters are very much linked up. In many coastal areas the slopes of hills are being cleared for banana and papaw planting—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DAVIES: I will finish on this point. How often it is that that land quickly becomes eroded and barren. Before the clearing is done there should be an inspection of the soil to see whether the clearing of the slopes is warranted.

In a publication by Mr. G. J. Rodger and Mr. D. Brookman, a former Minister of Forests in South Australia and an acknowledged expert on forestry work in Australia, there is a summary of the assistance given for private forestry work. I will not read it, but I recommend it to hon. members. They may read at page 8 of the publication "Forest Finance in Australia" what is being done in New Zealand, the loans that are made, and the fact that repayments do not commence until the first thinnings are taken and the financial returns for the plantings start to come in. South Australia has a scheme, so has Victoria. A scheme operates in Britain and other European countries, notably Sweden, Norway and France.

The advisability of assisting men on the land to plant little plots here, there, and everywhere would be a good subject for debate. We must deplore the importation of timber. In 1958-59, £57,000,000 worth of timber was imported, and the figure for 1960-61 was £85,000,000. At the present time approximately £100 million worth of timber is coming in to this country. Some people say, "If we can import timber, why worry?" The statement has been made by Mr. Brookman and Mr. Rodger that by the year 2000 it may be impossible to import timber, for a number of reasons.

As I have emphasised previously, we must prepare for the future. With improved living conditions, more families in the Eastern countries will be buying the morning paper and so there will be an increase in the use of paper and other timber products. With their frightening increase in population, and increased purchasing power, the Eastern countries will need all their timber for their own use. I repeat that we must prepare for the future.

The statement that timber will not be used to such a great extent in the building trade in the future is not borne out by present trends. I refer to Volume 14 of the Commonwealth Department of National Development, Forestry and Timber Bureau's publication "Timber Supply Review," which gives a rough reckoning of the usages of the various timber products. It compares the 1950-51 average use with the 1961-62 average use, which gives us an idea of the use of timber today. There have been increases in the use of timber products in many instances, and in other cases the use of timber products has held its own.

When we refer to cardboard boxes being used instead of timber boxes, it must be remembered that cardboard is a by-product of the timber industry. Many of the substitutes used in house construction are also timber by-products. People will always have a love for timber. Although the main part of a home may be constructed of other material, the glow, warmth, naturalness and atmosphere created by a good-quality timber room, can never be replaced. I am sure that people will always have a love for timber and will not be content with brick-and-mortar-type homes.

Although the hon. member for Belmont emphasised that in a great number of homes the quantity of timber used is now less than it was, it is still pleasing to note the amount of timber being used in most homes. I admit that the general manager of one of the larger building firms has said that in one type of 12-square house the timber content was reduced from 7,437 to 6,197 superficial feet in two years. In general, the timber and the various timber by-products used in the construction of homes and other buildings emphasises the necessity for us to do more for the industry. We are not doing enough.

I believe that this State is using the money made available to it wisely, thanks to the experience of experts such as Mr. Trist.

I believe that the department is doing a magnificent job with the money available to it, but this Government must bear its share of the responsibility for the provision of more money. The Leader of the Opposition has already said that if an extra £5,000,000 was made available it would go a long way towards solving the future problems of this industry. Other figures have been quoted. It was said some years ago that the granting of another £1,000,000 by the Commonwealth Government would tend to solve the problem of increased costs, and would allow for the planting of an extra 25,000 acres a year. Mr. Rodger said that our present extension rate of forests should be from 25,000 to 60,000 acres a year, and that that would tend to meet our problems in the future. This report that I have referred to reads—

“To have overcome completely the national shortage of homegrown timber in recent years Australia would have needed half a million acres in addition to the plantation area already established. Present financial resources available to Forestry Departments will only allow an increase in plantation area sufficient to balance increasing demand and the decrease in yield from the native forest. It would be impracticable and perhaps undesirable to establish the additional half a million acres in a short period, but an addition to the present planting programme of a further 25,000 acres per year for twenty years would be a practicable way of achieving the aim.

“To establish a further 25,000 acres annually in addition to present programme would cost less than £1 million extra per year.”

It has been difficult to find a market for thinnings. I am concerned about when thinnings will be taken from the Maryborough-Tuan area. With the new system of impregnation, which strengthens this timber, it could become a good financial proposition. That is being done in some areas in which a satisfactory market for thinnings has been established. The Minister may be able to tell us something about that matter.

The report continues—

“Import savings would commence from thinnings about 15 years after the scheme started and would rise from about £10 million annually when thinnings were first marketed, until on present values, they would equal over £70 million annually forty years after the scheme was initiated. If the complete half a million acres was established in twenty years, the returns from the sale of thinnings would more than cover all subsequent charges.”

We can afford to spend millions of pounds sending men to the moon, and on military experimentation. I am not questioning the advisability of that because I am not in a position to say what is necessary and what is not. But surely £1,000,000 a year is not beyond this country. We have had to apply

pressure of all kinds on the Commonwealth Government to assist us financially in education, another matter of national importance, and in other directions. It is most regrettable that this Government supports the Commonwealth Government in its failure to face up to its responsibilities in matters of national importance.

I am interested in these comments. I wonder if there is in the sawmilling industry the stable efficiency that there should be. In Maryborough, a house can be built for between £40 and £100 a square cheaper than in Brisbane. Maryborough's efficient sawmilling industry, with its modern machinery, is possibly the answer.

The conclusions on page 35 of “Timber Supply Review” include—

“(1) that logs are coming from progressively less accessible areas;

(2) that average log size is dropping leading to increased cost of recovery and that improvement in logging techniques has not been sufficient to offset this; and

(3) that the full economic benefits of improved equipment are not being realised.”

And later—

“(1) that percentage recovery is tending to drop, assuming log size is dropping and unimproved milling techniques.”

This brings up a very big question. Sugar mills, for instance, have to replace machinery to enable the extraction of increased quantities of juice at faster speeds. I wonder whether there is that same degree of efficiency in the sawmilling industry. Efficiency is demanded in all forms of production. If a farmer is inefficient, his inefficiency is reflected on the consumer. An inefficient manager of an industry means articles of poor quality in the shops. In the same way, efficient managers and machinery are required in sawmills. There must be efficient control of the industry. I know that some years ago an experienced officer of the Forestry Department made regular inspections of the sawmills of the State and advised managers and owners of any steps necessary to improve efficiency. I hope that is still being done.

Your tolerance, Mr. Hooper, is appreciated in the extension of the debate. I do feel that when these two huge reports, Volumes I and II, of the Timber Industry Inquiry Committee, were produced, and at considerable expense, they should have been tabled in the House and a full debate should have followed. If it is the intention of the Government now, after eight years, to start implementing the recommendations of that committee—

Mr. Richter: It is not eight years.

Mr. DAVIES: I am trying to hurry. The report is dated 31 August, 1959, so that the period is actually seven years. There is not much difference between a Government that procrastinates for seven years and one that

does the same for eight years. If any consideration is to be given to implementing any more recommendations contained in the report, I hope that close attention will be given to the situation existing now. A price increase, justified or otherwise, may be recommended in Brisbane for reasons other than the economic state of the industry. In fact, it was given for other reasons that I shall not deal with now. The report did not seriously affect the Maryborough industry, although it did affect it to the extent of the loss of the Tin Can Bay area, which is the home of the best hardwood in the State.

I hope that an examination of the Bill will reveal points of value, particularly to the home builder. We hope that greater efficiency will come to the industry, because one of the greatest failings of industry today is the refusal to absorb costs. The simple, and rather contemptible, method is merely to pass them on to the consumer. That has been mentioned by members of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. I feel that in the sawmilling industry we see, in many cases, another example of failure to absorb costs by increased efficiency.

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset—Minister for Local Government and Conservation) (4.14 p.m.), in reply: Many Opposition members have participated in this debate but, unfortunately, few dealt with the Bill. It is a sawmill-licensing Bill, yet all sorts of arguments have been advanced to which I do not propose to reply. I believe hon. members opposite were off the beam because there were so few of them in the Chamber when I introduced the Bill.

The Leader of the Opposition accused the Government of being complacent over the shortage of timber. This is not so. The Government has been in office for 7½ years; nothing that it could have done would have had an effect on the supply of timber today. Hon. members must know that commercial timber cannot be grown in 7½ years and responsibility for the shortage of timber today must rest fairly and squarely on the shoulders of former Labour Governments, who were in office for almost 40 years. I might add that it takes about 40 years to grow millable timber.

Before the present Government came to office, all revenue from stumpages on timber found its way into Consolidated Revenue, while loan funds provided the finances for plantations. This Government altered that procedure and all revenue received from the forests now goes to the Forestry Department. If this procedure had been followed by former Labour Governments, we would not now have to go to the Loan Council to get money for our plantations and more money could be spent on forestry projects instead of on the servicing of loans.

The Government is by no means complacent; it is doing all it can to rectify the position. The Australian Forestry Council

was formed last year, and action has already been taken to approach the Federal Government for assistance in an expanded programme of timber plantings. I believe that this will bring results. Several hon. members spoke about making an approach to the Federal Government. This approach has already been made by the Australian Forestry Council. The proposals aim at doubling the annual plantings in Queensland, and as it takes many years to grow commercial timber, I repeat that former Governments must take their share of the blame for the shortages today. The mistakes were made 30 or 40 years ago.

Mr. Davies: We did a very good job. We had to face an unsympathetic Federal Government, a big depression, and a world war.

Mr. RICHTER: Former Labour Governments did a very poor job. They put the whole of the revenue from the forests into Consolidated Revenue instead of putting it back into plantations.

The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha, Mr. Lickiss, spoke of plantings on freehold lands. An approach has been made to the Federal Government with a view to encouraging plantings on private lands, and it has also been suggested to that Government that succession duties on forest crops be deferred until those crops are marketed. I believe that more people would plant privately if this were done. The unfortunate fact is that, at present, when an individual dies his whole estate suffers because he has to pay probate on the timber. To encourage private plantings, we are asking for more liberal limits for averaging for income-tax purposes. Just recently a report into some other categories of primary products established a five-year averaging period, but I consider that is not fair in relation to the growing of timber. Timber is a long-range crop and the average should be taken over a longer period than five years—I suggest 20 years.

The hon. member for Belmont referred to the 1936 Bill and the need for it. I agree with him, but he did introduce some statements by Mr. Maher, who was then a member of this Chamber. I do not know what happened at that time and nor does he, other than what he can read in "Hansard". But I think he should remember that the conditions in 1936 were not the same as conditions today. Had they been the same, surely that in itself would condemn the previous Labour Government for not doing more about it. They did not realise the position any more than Mr. Maher did.

The hon. member referred also to timber coming from the Northern Rivers of New South Wales. There is a shortage of hardwood throughout South-east Queensland and the Northern Rivers district is the natural source of supply for the Brisbane area. Anybody who denies that we are short of timber in Queensland does not know the facts. We are desperately short of hardwood,

and surely it is logical to get it from northern New South Wales. The hon. member alleged that Queensland has a surplus of timber waiting to be cut. That is not so. We are dangerously short of timber supplies and the sooner we realise it the better.

The hon. member for Fassifern was responsible for the inquiry and report in 1959. He has a very good knowledge of the industry and I want to thank him for his reference to the officers of the department. I think they deserve all the compliments he paid them. He has worked with them; so have I; and I have the greatest respect for their scrupulously fair handling of the very difficult position that exists today. I throw the adverse comments that were made about these officers back into the teeth of the hon. member who made them because I believe the officers are scrupulously fair. Owing to the shortage of timber theirs is a very difficult department to administer. They do a splendid job in difficult circumstances.

Mr. Davies: Who attacked the officers?

Mr. RICHTER: The hon. member for Cook.

The hon. member for Kedron talked about an increase in royalties. An increase in royalties could increase the cost of timber, too. Hon. members should keep that in mind. However, I thank the hon. member for Kedron very much for his contribution.

In reply to the hon. member for Clayfield, I say that the Australian Forestry Council have no doubt that we are short of timber. They realise that forest product imports today represent, next to oil, our largest import. The hon. member for Maryborough said the value was over £80,000,000; but it is closer to £100,000,000.

Mr. Davies: I said "well over £80,000,000".

Mr. RICHTER: That is a very serious state of affairs; that is where we stand on timber, and the sooner hon. members realise it the better it will be for all concerned.

The Minister for Territories, Hon. C. E. Barnes, is a member of the Australian Forestry Council, and I assure the hon. member for Clayfield that he is well aware of the timber that is available in New Guinea. The next meeting of the Forestry Council, to take place in July or early August, will be held in New Guinea.

I believe that the problem of the shortage of timber is a national one. That is why the Forestry Council has taken this matter to the Federal Government. They must be interested. The importation of timber must be a great slug on our overseas balance. Therefore I think they must take heed of our request.

The hon. member for Clayfield referred to the neglect of forestry operations in Queensland. I agree that we could and should have done more, but I ask him to remember that the latest date on which planting figures for

all States are available is 30 September, 1963, and the figures show that at that time Queensland had the second largest area of Government-established softwood plantations in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Murray: Would you agree that Queensland has the greatest potential area of any State?

Mr. RICHTER: Yes. At that time South Australia had 122,608 acres of plantation, Queensland 103,362 acres, and New South Wales 99,549 acres. I agree that Queensland has the greatest potential, but I remind the hon. member of the timber stands in North Queensland and the natural regeneration up there. We are doing a big job there. In addition, 750,000 acres of natural forest has been treated with silviculture. That is a big contribution to our future timber needs. I do not know whether many hon. members have been to North Queensland and seen what the department is doing. Those who have will realise that it is doing a splendid job. But I agree that much more can be done by way of silviculture in that area.

Mr. Davies: Anything that they have done, they have done well.

Mr. RICHTER: Yes, but I agree that there is more to do.

We have a constant flow of visitors from interstate and overseas who observe our practices and procedures and research work. It is generally acknowledged around the table of the Forestry Council that we are doing a very good job in Queensland, and I pay tribute to Mr. Trist and his officers for the work they have done.

The hon. member for Cook made a personal attack on the administrator of the Cook shire. Just what that has to do with a sawmills licensing Bill I do not know. It is regrettable that he made that attack on a very honourable, highly-respected officer. He is well thought of by the Department of Main Roads and the Department of Local Government. The hon. member was a little out of character in doing that. I do not know why he adopted that attitude. He spoke of the Mt. Molloy mill. The department has an assurance from the licensees of the Mt. Molloy mill that they will rebuild it. They are rebuilding Yungaburra at the present time, and immediately Yungaburra is completed they will start at Mt. Molloy. I agree that there would be very little point in building the two mills simultaneously. They are pressing on with the Yungaburra mill first and will then get on with the Mt. Molloy mill. I assure the hon. member that the department is keeping in very close touch with the position.

The hon. member referred also to the Cooktown area and the area north of the Daintree. The position with timber in the area north of the Daintree is exactly the same position as that of the Cooktown timber. This area is largely uneconomic because it is inaccessible at present. Let us face the facts.

The roads are very poor and the crossing of the Daintree is very difficult. We must consider the economics of opening up large areas of timber in the Cooktown area, and north of the Daintree.

As to the expenditure in the area at Cooktown the department has spent £12,000 in an attempt to make the timber economically accessible. While we have spent quite a lot of money, it is uneconomic to spend too much money in trying to get the timber from these areas. The expenditure was discontinued when the mill was unable to operate economically. I think the hon. member for Fassifern made a good point when he spoke about the economics of timber-growing. The hon. member for Cook must realise that that is important. There are stands of timber in the Carnarvons in most inaccessible places, and I have seen stands of timber in other areas where it just would not pay to try to get them out; it would cost too much.

An Opposition Member: There is some in your own electorate.

Mr. RICHTER: In my electorate it is all accessible and it is pretty well worked. Stumpages in those areas are at the very minimum. The Forestry Department makes nothing out of them because transport, haulage and extraction are so difficult.

Referring again to the area north of the Daintree, I pose the question whether it is wise to cut this timber, possibly subsidising the hauling and cutting, when it is not economic to do so. If we did, we would some day regret that we had been so impetuous. Some day it will be used, and used economically.

The hon. member for Townsville South did not deal with the Bill in any way. He said that there was competition from New Guinea and the millers there. He, also, seemed not to realise that Queensland, and Australia generally, is short of timber.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition dealt very well with the Bill. I thank him for his complimentary remarks about the officers of the department. They have to make some very unpopular decisions to maintain a sustained cut of timber.

It is essential for us to introduce this Bill to control licensed capacity.

I have already dealt with the remarks of the hon. member for Mourilyan, who spoke about neglect. I think I have answered his remarks sufficiently.

The hon. member for Salisbury evidently does not realise that there is a shortage of hardwood in South-east Queensland. He said we should use Queensland timber in Queensland homes for Queenslanders. That is all very fine if it can be done; but we must of necessity bring hardwood from the Northern Rivers district of New South Wales and, by the same token, we must send quite a large quantity of cypress pine to Sydney.

The hon. member for Tablelands referred to reforestation and the establishment of forests on defunct farms. When planting is on a burned area, there is not the re-growth and other problems that exist on defunct farms. The experience of the department is that it is more costly to replant a defunct farm than fresh scrub lands.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: If the farmers are prepared to undertake this work, do you think they should be given a chance?

Mr. RICHTER: Yes, they should be. But it is not a good proposition for the department to take over these farms when there is available natural scrub country that can be replanted. We are encouraging individual farmers to do what they can. I hope that, following our approach to the Federal Government, we will get sufficient money to be able to encourage people to do this work. If we can get the Federal Government to grant income tax concessions and succession and probate duty concessions, the private individual might be induced to proceed with this plantation work.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: It is the general practice to leave little patches of scrub lands all over these farms.

Mr. RICHTER: That is quite right, and I think it should be encouraged. We cannot allow private individuals to plant haphazardly. They must plant in areas where it will be economic to cut the timber.

Motion (Mr. Richter) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Richter, read a first time.

FARM WATER SUPPLIES ASSISTANCE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset—Minister for Local Government and Conservation) (4.40 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

As I said when introducing the Bill, this is a simple amendment. As the Act stands at the present time, applications for financial assistance must be referred by the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply to the Director-General of Primary Industries for a report by a technically qualified officer upon the prospects of success of the farming operations involved.

The Director-General has indicated that, when the application relates to works required for the irrigation of sugar cane, the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations would be a body better qualified to investigate and report on such applications. The Director of the Bureau agrees.

The Bill therefore provides that when applications for advances under the Act for works for the irrigation of sugar cane are made, these applications will be referred to the Director of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations instead of to the Director-General of Primary Industries.

The purpose of the Bill is to provide a better service under the Act, and it is in the interests of the farmers whom the Act is designed to assist.

Motion (Mr. Richter) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Hodges, Gympie, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

IRRIGATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset—Minister for Local Government and Conservation) (4.43 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The Bill proposes two amendments. The first provides for the insertion of a new clause in Part I of the schedule to the Acts. Part I sets out provisions relating to the business, property, works and undertakings of the commission. The new clause will empower the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply to make advances to contractors for items of plant, equipment, buildings, etc., delivered to, and erected on, a project site. A similar clause was inserted in the corresponding schedule to the Water Acts by amendment in 1964.

Major works are undertaken by the Commissioner under the provisions of both the Water Acts and the Irrigation Acts. Dams such as the Leslie Dam, Borumba Dam, Moogerah Dam, etc. are constructed under the Water Acts. The reservoirs and works associated with the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation area, Burdekin River irrigation area, Dawson Valley irrigation area, and St. George irrigation area, are constructed under the provisions of the Irrigation Acts. The Bill is designed to give to the Commissioner the power with respect to contracts under the Irrigation Acts that he already has under the Water Acts.

In a major engineering contract such as the construction of a dam, the initial provision of plant and equipment and, more particularly, the installation of fixed plant and erection of accommodation and other facilities represents a heavy expenditure and forms a significant part of the contract price. If progress payments to the contractor are made only for work on the dam itself, the contractor must carry this heavy initial investment himself with recoupment over the period of the contract as work on the dam

progresses. The Bill proposes that the Commissioner may, by means of advances on the security of the plant, buildings, etc., recoup the contractor somewhat earlier for this heavy investment.

Two main advantages arising out of this method of payment are—

(a) If the contractor is relieved of this heavy initial outlay, a cheaper tender price can be obtained as a result of the interest savings the contractor would achieve by not being called upon to carry this investment himself;

(b) It would also give opportunities to tender for the work to smaller contractors with somewhat limited cash resources.

Mr. Duggan: Do you think those savings will be passed on to the department?

Mr. RICHTER: It will be competitive tendering. I think contractors will make an allowance.

This procedure has already been adopted in the construction of Callide Dam under the provisions of the Water Acts. Advances to the order of 80 per cent. of the Commissioner's valuation of plant, equipment, buildings, etc., on the site and to be used in the works were made. These advances were recovered by deductions from progress payments on work actually carried out on the dam. The total amount advanced was £437,000, which represents about 21 per cent. of the total contract price of £2,090,000. Advances were recovered over a period of 13 months during the construction of the dam.

The second amendment alters clause 33 of Part II of the Schedule to the Acts, which sets out subject matter for regulations. At present, clause 33 (which deals with charges to be levied by the Commissioner) states that regulations may be promulgated for the purpose of—

“Fixing the scale of charges to be paid for water or power supplied to consumers, including if deemed desirable the fixing of a minimum amount to be paid in every case; . . . fixing different charges for water or power according to the purposes for which it is supplied; determining the time at which charges for water or power are to be payable, whether in advance or otherwise; . . .”

In May, 1957, regulation 16, based on clause 33, was promulgated. I hoped that the hon. member for Bundaberg would be in the Chamber, because he mentioned this matter at the introductory stage and made a statement to this effect—

“The Minister is introducing legislation to validate something the Government has done in the past. Apparently it has not been too sure. That is not a bad way of doing it, I suppose—committing the murder first and then explaining it afterwards.”

I point out to the House that it was the hon. member for Bundaberg—I am glad to see that he has just come into the Chamber—who committed the murder, because this Government was not in office when the regulation was brought in in May, 1957.

Mr. Walsh: Look at all the terrible things you have done since then.

Mr. RICHTER: I have always complimented the hon. member on his memory. Either it is slipping or he had other things on his mind in May 1957.

Regulation 16 provides that, in respect of town water supply, the Commissioner may make a charge on land on which any building is erected, and which is within 300 feet of the middle of a road in which water mains are laid down by the Commissioner, and from which a supply of water may be given to the land. It covers charges for town water supplies only.

However, the Solicitor-General has pointed out that clause 33 can be interpreted to mean that water must be laid on or connected to the land before a charge can be made for it. He suggests that the matter should be clarified by amending clause 33 as set out in the Bill and removing any uncertainty from the operation of this regulation since it came into force in 1957.

The town water supply schemes for which charges are made under regulation 16 of the Irrigation Acts at present are at Theodore in the Dawson Valley irrigation area, at Claredale, Millaroo and Dalbeg in the Burdekin River irrigation area, and at Tinaroo Falls dam township and Walkamin and Mutchilba in the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation area.

Except in the case of Theodore, where the Commissioner previously carried out the complete function of the local authority, the installations are those which were initially provided to serve construction camps or townships erected by the Commissioner. With the falling off of construction and the acquisition by private persons of allotments in these new township areas, the Commissioner has been placed in the position of supplying water for domestic purposes to private consumers. Any further schemes of this nature are likely to be brought about by similar circumstances.

I might point out that no works can be carried out under the Irrigation Acts until the proposed scheme is approved by resolution in the Legislative Assembly after the submission of a report setting out details of the proposed undertaking. Therefore, any town water supply schemes constructed by the Commissioner, other than minor ones incidental to the construction of the approved works, must have prior approval of Parliament. The regulation is designed to make a charge comparable with that made by local authorities in these circumstances.

Apart from the fact that the installation of the water supply scheme is done by the Commissioner in the first instance for the supply of a construction camp or township, in most cases the handing over of this facility to a local authority would probably result in increased costs of operation. This is because the schemes are relatively small and the Commissioner would have available in the area personnel normally employed on irrigation operation who could operate and maintain the water supply works on a part-time basis. A local authority would probably find it more costly to do so, without having the alternative work available.

Clause 4 of the Bill removes any uncertainty in respect of the application of regulation 16 since it was gazetted in 1957.

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) (4.52 p.m.): At the introductory stage we of the Opposition indicated that we would wait to see the contents of the Bill before stating our views on it. The matters we particularly mentioned at that stage are those the Minister has now outlined in his second-reading speech. He made fairly clear the Government's intentions, but the Opposition would like him, in his reply, to clear up some points related to that portion of the Bill that deals with the making of advances to contractors before any work is actually carried out on the site.

The Minister has indicated fairly clearly what is contemplated. However, in relation to dams, for instance, it was pointed out by some members on this side that quite an amount of work would have to be done by the contractor by way of building and installation of plant. The Minister has mentioned this point, but we should like to know how far the Government will go.

Mr. Richter: 80 per cent.

Mr. NEWTON: 80 per cent. of the total cost?

Mr. Richter: Of the Commissioner's valuation of the work done.

Mr. NEWTON: I take it that it is 80 per cent. of the work to be done, because it is to be an advance. It will be advanced before any work is done.

Mr. Richter: It will be on the land.

Mr. NEWTON: Very well, that clears that point up. The Minister has indicated the percentage. I raise this point because of what the Minister has said today. We want to make sure that the successful tenderer is financially sound.

Mr. Richter: We would not make him an advance otherwise. We are not compelled to.

Mr. NEWTON: No. Although the Minister is not compelled to give somebody something, a provision is included in the Bill that gives him the right to do this, and once the Bill becomes law it becomes part of—

Mr. Richter: You still do not give it to a person who is unsound financially.

Mr. NEWTON: The Minister is saying that now. He also said that by doing this he would get lower tenders. It gets down to the fact that it will be known what capital it is necessary to have following the passage of this amending legislation. Contractors will know what they need to have to start. They will know that as long as they can get that percentage at least that part of it is covered. If the Minister gets lower tenders it will be because tenderers take this provision of the Bill into consideration.

The Minister went further and said it would encourage the small people to tender. It is a matter of just what works may be covered by the Bill. With dams and weirs and other types of work, irrespective of who the person is, particularly when we get down to the smaller man, he must have certain plant and material to do the job. We have had plenty of experience in Queensland of successful contractors not being able to finish jobs because they did not have the necessary plant. Initially they thought they could do the job because they were confident they would be able to hire the plant.

Mr. Richter: Don't you agree with the principle of giving the small man a go?

Mr. NEWTON: I do. I have no objection to that at all. All I am saying is that we have to be sure that whatever assistance is given we are protected at all times. We are the spenders of public money, and in the interests of the general public we have to take all these things into consideration. When the hon. gentleman was Minister for Works he had experience of one building contractor in the West. That sort of thing has to be watched. We have to make sure that a contractor is not on the verge of bankruptcy or a fly-by-night merchant. This is one of the important parts of the Bill that we are really concerned about. We said that at the introductory stage, and we repeat it now. We want every assurance about it.

We appreciate what the Minister and the department are trying to do in this matter, but they are firstly providing things for the man on the land.

Mr. Richter: The mortgage will be secured.

Mr. NEWTON: The further we go, the more information we get.

Mr. Richter: I told you that at the introductory stage.

Mr. NEWTON: I was here but I must have missed it. I tried to follow the Minister very closely; he outlines his Bills clearly, but I must have missed that point. That is why I rose on this occasion.

On the other matters in the Bill, it seems quite clear from what the Minister has said concerning regulation 16, on the water supply charges, that it was introduced on 9 May, 1957, although the Bill says it was 11 May. Is it the intention that it

will cover properties that are within 300 feet of a road along which water mains shall pass and that are supplied with water from the mains? As it reads—

Mr. Richter: It will be validated.

Mr. NEWTON: I thought that was so. If those points can be cleared up, the Opposition has no objection to the Bill.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (5.2 p.m.): There is one supplementary matter arising from what the hon. member for Belmont has said. I think the Minister may be able to clear it up. It is obvious, from the experience of the department, that there is need for some action to be taken on these lines. The Minister challenged the hon. member for Belmont to indicate whether we were against the small man coming into the picture. I want the Minister to consider the possibility that large works involve a tremendous amount of capital and organisation. In the main, it is really work for the "big" man. A spokesman for Thiess Bros. Ltd. told me that their plant at Mt. Isa is worth over £1,000,000. For an economic return and competitive tendering it is obvious that large-scale equipment must be used. It is useless having under-powered bulldozers or small trucks when large, rugged trucks are needed. That is very apparent in road building. Many people who are small battlers want to get into the field because the department will advance 80 per cent. of the cost of the capital equipment for a job. Once they do so they will immediately become big contractors, with the department purchasing most of the equipment. That is one of the inherent dangers.

Some years ago, when we exempted local authorities from paying transport fees on local-authority equipment we found that the Wambo Shire Council (Mr. Sparkes was then a member of this Assembly) wanted big shipments of oil transported. Normally this would be a job for one of the big transport companies. However, the transport fees were lifted and the council then had equipment for which it had a capacity, for use in the shire, of only 40 or 50 per cent. The council demanded permission to go outside the shire to do all sorts of things not related to its responsibilities. In other words, it had a trading department in the transport of heavy equipment.

The Minister must watch this in his department particularly because he will not have an opportunity to get details, although naturally he will be acquainted with the general principles of particular recommendations. I ask him to watch this facet. I am not making a plea for the big contractor, except that it is obvious that today much of the large-scale work, as distinct from the small-scale work—

Mr. Richter: The big contractors would also be financially embarrassed, even though they are big contractors.

Mr. DUGGAN: Yes, but I am dealing with the small contractor at the moment. The big contractor is a different problem.

Following on what the hon. member for Belmont said, it is apparent that the Government will not be advancing loans to small contractors who have surplus equipment lying idle for a long time, resulting in bankruptcy, or who will be tendering uncompetitive prices to such an extent that wages will not be paid or industrial conditions will not be observed. People who are working on a small margin of profit will have to be watched to ensure that they do not protect themselves at the expense of industrial conditions.

There are two types of big contractor. There is the type of person who has amortised some of the jobs, for instance, the Cooby Creek scheme. There was a tendency on the part of some of the contractors to write off a good deal of their equipment against the capital cost of that dam. It is uneconomic to have people writing off equipment which has a useful economic value on any other job somewhere else. It is more advantageous to have specialist contractors who understand the requirements of the department and can use their equipment on two, three, four, or even five jobs. In that way lower tenders would be submitted than if the contractor intended to write off the capital cost of his equipment, or an unnecessarily high proportion of that equipment on one project.

What will be the relative position of a man in a large organisation, or a contractor, who is in the fortunate position of not needing a great deal of financial assistance from the department to transfer his equipment to some particular site? Will he still ask for this assistance to be made available to him on terms which are not disclosed in this Bill? I do not know whether interest will be charged or whether the amount will be debited against the value of the work being done. The Minister did not deal with that point, or if he did, I did not hear him. If it is proposed that interest be charged—obviously it will be less than bank interest—the situation might arise where contractors who could normally get accommodation from financial institutions will ask the department to make funds available at a rate lower than they would be obliged to pay if they obtained the finance from a bank or other lending institution. I should like the Minister to give us some explanation of these matters because they are important.

Some time ago the Treasurer made a great point about what can be done when loan allocations are received from the Loan Council and there is a surplus of funds in the Treasury. He said it is the practice to invest them in the short-term market. In that way those surplus funds, until they are required for some purpose, accrue revenue for the Treasury. If there is an allocation of a couple of million pounds for irrigation works and some of those funds are lying

in the Treasury for months, that amount could be earning interest in the short-term market. This investment could now be prevented if the department has to make loan advances to these contractors.

Those are points on which, although we are not in opposition to the Bill, the Minister may see fit to give us some information.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (5.9 p.m.): After listening to the speeches of both members of the Opposition who have just spoken about the small contractor, I have come to the conclusion that they do not realise—perhaps few of us do—how many small contractors can be involved in this matter. I shall take the Coolmunda Dam as an example. I have been associated with this dam right from the initial stages. The job is to be done by a combination of contract and day labour. Many of the small contracts are being carried out by local people who are in the habit of getting advances on the job from local landholders.

Mr. Newton: The small contractors would be taking subcontracts from the main contractors.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Some would and some would not. Some examples of small jobs that could be done by contract came to my mind whilst I was listening to the last speaker. I do not say that that is necessarily how all of them would be done. A telephone line might be inundated and a contract would be let for it to be rerouted. It is possible that a telephone line will have to be brought in. Lines carrying electricity might have to be replaced from inundated areas, and, in the example to which I have referred, even the main road and railway lines have had to be re-routed. Small contracts are let for the construction of roads. Quite a lot of timber is required on these jobs, and contracts are let for both round and sawn timber. The excavation for the spillway may be done by contract, as may be the removal of buildings from areas to be inundated.

Mr. Duggan: Our attitude is that we do not think the department should set itself up as a banking institution for contractors.

Mr. McKECHNIE: No, but I feel that in this case help is being given to the smaller contractors, and the Government is helping itself also by enabling men on the job to hop in and do the work at a price below what it would cost to bring people to the site from some far-removed place.

Mr. Duggan: That is the chief merit of the Bill.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Yes. It will benefit the department and the local people who tender for small contracts. The exploratory drilling with the ordinary percussion drill may be done by contract.

Mr. Newton: By the original contractor.

Mr. McKECHNIE: By the commission. The same applies to soil, rock, and sand samples and supplies. That is all that I wish to say. I merely wish to commend the Bill for the help that it will give to both small contractors and the commission.

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset—Minister for Local Government and Conservation) (5.13 p.m.), in reply: I refer the hon. member for Belmont and the Leader of the Opposition to my speech opening this debate in which I referred to what was done under the provisions of the Water Act. What the Bill proposes is already an accepted principle under that Act.

I think the first point made was that contractors would be relieved of some of their initial expenditure and that, as a result, better tender prices would be obtained. The second point was that opportunities would be improved for the small contractor—the battler. I think the Leader of the Opposition agrees with that.

The Callide dam was constructed under the provisions of the Water Act. Advances were made in that case to the extent of 80 per cent. of the Commissioner's valuation of the plant, equipment, buildings, etc., on the site and to be used in the work. The advances were recovered by deductions from progress payments on work actually carried out on the dam. The total amount advanced in that case was £437,000, which represented about 21 per cent. of the total contract price of £2,090,000.

Mr. Newton: It is a lot of money.

Mr. RICHTER: It is a lot of money, but I think it is fairly well secured. The hon. member can rest assured that the Commissioner will not make advances to unreliable contractors. We are under no obligation to make advances, and they will be made only in cases where we are reasonably sure. The scheme has worked very well in the particular case that I have mentioned and I do not see why it should not work in other cases. However, I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that every precaution must be taken by the department to ensure that it does not get caught by an unworthy contractor.

Motion (Mr. Richter) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of clause 10 of Part I of the Schedule—

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (5.16 p.m.): The Minister has explained the purpose of this clause at some length, but what he has said up to date does not satisfy me that there is justification for engaging in this type of financing of contractors. He said that a substantial amount has been advanced already on the basis of the security of plant—an advance of 80 per cent. of the value of the

plant, or whatever it was—but the fact remains that the clause does not set out the position as the Minister explained it.

Let us have a look at it. It reads as follows—

“Where the Commissioner has entered into a contract for the construction of any works he may, at any time or from time to time, subject to such conditions as are therein prescribed and approved by the Minister, make advances to the contractor from the proper fund maintained in respect of such works. Such advances may be made before the commencement of the work and may be by way of loans of money on the security of items of plant and construction equipment which are the unencumbered property of the contractor and which are intended by the contractor to be used by him in the execution of the works. The conditions prescribed in respect of repayment of such an advance may include provision for repayment thereof by way of deductions from progress payments due from time to time by the Commissioner to the contractor.”

It is perfectly true, as the Minister said, that the Commissioner is not bound to make any advances to the contractor; but it would certainly be an unusual provision that compelled the Commissioner to make advances.

It is interesting to note that the advance may be made before the commencement of the work and that it may be by way of loans of money on the security of items of plant or construction equipment. This seems to me to be a fairly loose method. I cannot imagine any bank making an advance to a client on the security of plant that may be valued at £10,000 today but that may be worth only £5,000 tomorrow. Everyone knows that if a bank is making an advance it wants better security than that and it hooks in every other security it can get. Are we to use this loose method of financing contractors? What security does the Agricultural Bank require when a settler applies for a loan to enable him to develop his property? It requires every piece of dirt and improvement on that land in order to make the advance secure.

As all hon. members know, the moment a motor vehicle, for instance, goes onto the road, the purchase price can be written down by 33 per cent., anyway. Everybody knows, too, that the value of this plant engaged on work such as the construction of dams drops quickly and considerably. I do not know whether we have reached the stage of giving to a selected group of people special conditions under which loans may be made available whereas a man who wants to develop his property for agricultural purposes has to throw in everything he has.

Mr. Richter: It is not actually a loan; it is an advance.

Mr. WALSH: The Minister has been here long enough now to know that it is not what he says by way of interjection or

during the course of his introduction of the Bill that will be interpreted in the courts as being the law; it is what is written into the Act.

Mr. Richter: The clause refers to advances.

Mr. WALSH: The subclause says—

“Such advances may be made before the commencement of the work and may be by way of loans of money. . .”

There is nothing obligatory in this to say that the Commissioner is bound to make a condition on the method of repayment, as has been stated by the Minister. The subclause says—

“The conditions prescribed in respect of repayment of such an advance may include provision for repayment thereof by way of deductions from progress payments due from time to time by the Commissioner to the contractor.”

The word “may” is used. The language is very loose, particularly when it is compared with any document an applicant to the Agricultural Bank has to sign for the purposes of obtaining the bank’s advance, or loan—call it what you like.

Attention has been drawn to the fact that even the big men have to come along and get Government guarantees. Thiess-Peabody undertook to spend £8,000,000 on the construction of a railway line but they had to get a bank guarantee of £700,000 before they could start. So do not let us be influenced by the Minister’s emotional and sentimental plea for the small man. I was surprised to hear the hon. member for Carnarvon justifying this policy when he knows that the advances are to be made from Government funds, which are limited, and that it will mean that less and less money is available for worthwhile development of the land. Let the banks accept this responsibility as they have done in the past. If, as the hon. member for Carnarvon says, the wealthy graziers have been making advances, let them continue to make them to landowners, because they are getting the benefit from the conservation of water, anyhow. Why pass that responsibility on to the Government or to the Irrigation and Water Supply Department when they have very limited funds, restricted as they are by Loan Council decisions?

It will be found that, when applications for advances are made under different Acts by landholders, there will be no funds available. Many people now are struggling under all sorts of difficulties caused by the drought and the Government may need this money in the near future to make advances to assist them. The further afield you go in this direction, the less money there will be for the proper development of the land.

Mr. Richter: The funds are set aside for that particular job.

Mr. WALSH: The Minister knows as well as I do that if you gave the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply double the funds, he would be able to provide a plan to spend them.

Mr. Richter: You have an allocation for a particular job.

Mr. WALSH: I appreciate that. There is an allocation for any job under way at present. But the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission is limited to the expenditure of the funds allocated by the Treasury out of the money that the Loan Council has made available. Do not let us hoodwink ourselves. Should the Loan Council say next year, “You are going to get £2,000,000 less in loan funds,” the Irrigation Commissioner would be one who would be asked by the Government to review his estimate of expenditure to see how much he could cut it down.

Mr. Richter interjected.

Mr. WALSH: I do not know that the Irrigation Commissioner has ever been flush with funds. If you gave him twice as much, I do not think this decision would be justified. People are screaming out for assistance all over the country. Even today we read in the paper or hear over the radio that down in the Logan or somewhere else they are worried about the salt water getting into the underground water supplies. That applies to the Bundaberg and Burdekin areas as well. With limited funds available, why should we help in this class of activity which should be the responsibility of the banks or the graziers, as the hon. member for Carnarvon has told us?

Mr. McKechnie: They are mainly depressed farmers.

Mr. WALSH: The cat is coming out of the bag now! In that case, this is more or less a temporary expedient to meet the situation in a particular locality. What is the Minister going to do about the distressed farmers outside?

Mr. McKechnie: The ones who were paying these men, not the ones doing the job.

Mr. WALSH: It is a pity that the Minister and the hon. member would not make themselves clear in the first place.

If the Government is determined to make this provision, all I want to see it do now is extend it to give the same assistance to the small building contractor. Let the Government try to find ways and means of making small advances to small building contractors so that they can build more homes for the people who are crying out for them. If we are to accept this principle, there are very many other phases of our economy that require the same attention by way of Government advances.

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset—Minister for Local Government and Conservation) (5.29 p.m.): As I said before, this principle has already been adopted in the Water Act,

and it has worked pretty well. For the benefit of the hon. member for Bundaberg I point out that a security deposit is paid by every contractor. A contractor does not come in "cold" and you give him an advance on his plant without obtaining some security. You have that security to work on. I can see no danger in this at all, as long as it is administered carefully to ensure that advances are not made to a worthless contractor. You must know your men and you handle them accordingly.

If there were any compulsion in this at all, I would agree with the hon. member for Bundaberg, but, as there is no compulsion, it depends entirely on the administration of the department. In the case of the Callide Dam, an advance of 21 per cent. of the total contract price was made. If you have a reliable contractor, surely the hon. member for Bundaberg will agree that that is quite a reasonable thing to do. As provision has been made in both Acts, it is logical to put them both on the same basis.

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the utmost care must be taken to pick the right men. Let me repeat: if there were compulsion—if the Government were compelled to make an advance—it would be an entirely different matter; but the Government "may" make advances. It is entirely our own business—if we think it advisable.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (5.30 p.m.): The Minister cannot lead me astray with the statement that every contractor has to put in a security deposit. Of course contractors have to, but that is related to the completion of the contract. I do not know that it is related to any security that would be required for the purchase of plant. I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that there is no compulsion to make the advance or the loan and, likewise, no compulsion is included in the clause for the repayment of the loan by way of deductions.

The Minister may advance ideas about what security may be put down to see that the contract is completed but, in effect, that is supposed to be a form of retention money, which can be used in the event of somebody else having to continue with the contract if the first contractor fails. The Minister must know from his experience, as I know—probably with less experience in this type of activity—that there are some contractors who get so far in and get into such a muddle that they find themselves in liquidation, in the hands of the Official Receiver. It is true that the Crown may have some rights but, if there is no provision in the document stipulating that the deduction shall be made in progressive repayments, how does the Irrigation Commissioner overcome that and how does he get repaid? There is a discretionary power in the Commissioner, the Minister, or whoever controls the contract, to include in, or leave out of, the contract compulsory repayments by way of deductions from the amounts to be paid on the progressive work done from time to time.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—Power to make regulation sixteen under Principal Act—

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (5.32 p.m.): I thank the Minister for his compliment about my retentive memory, but I have never pretended that I could remember every regulation I had signed. In this case the Minister attributed to me the responsibility of bringing down this regulation, or of sponsoring it. I cannot recall that, at any time in May, 1957, I was scheduled as Minister in charge of the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply.

Mr. Richter: You were otherwise employed at the time.

Mr. WALSH: That is not the point. The Minister made the specific statement that I was responsible for bringing down this regulation. I accept whatever responsibility I may have to for bringing down a regulation under any one of the Acts administered by me as Treasurer or Minister for Local Government, but I do not assume responsibility for bringing down any regulation under the Irrigation Act.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

BURIALS ASSISTANCE BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. P. R. DELAMOTHE (Bowen—Minister for Justice) (5.35 p.m.): I move—

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

As I outlined in my introductory remarks, the Bill seeks to validate a procedure which appears to have been in existence throughout the life of this State. The Bill places upon the Under Secretary of the Department of Justice the responsibility of disposing of unclaimed dead human bodies and provides that the Under Secretary may recover from the estate or from the closest of the relatives the costs of the funeral, but only if the estate or the relative is in a position to meet these costs.

Mr. Ramsden: Is "closest relative" defined in the Bill?

Dr. DELAMOTHE: Yes. At the introductory stage hon. members appeared to appreciate readily that some person must ultimately be responsible for the disposal of dead human bodies where no suitable funeral arrangements can be made, and appeared to approve of the objects of the Bill.

Motion (Dr. Delamothe) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 6, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—Publication of regulations—

Hon. P. R. DELAMOTHE (Bowen—Minister for Justice) (5.37 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“On page 3, line 11, omit the word—‘application’

and insert in lieu thereof the word—‘publication’.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. P. R. DELAMOTHE (Bowen—Minister for Justice) (5.39 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

As I outlined in my introductory speech, this Bill seeks to place officers employed in the Chief Office of the Department of Justice in the same position as officers employed in certain other Public Service offices for the purpose of enabling them to study law and qualify for admission as solicitors of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

I feel that it is unnecessary for me to go into any greater detail as the objects of the Bill were fully outlined in my introductory speech and hon. members will by now have had an opportunity to examine it.

Motion (Dr. Delamothe) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

MINING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Main Roads) (5.42 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Mining Acts, 1898 to 1955, in certain particulars.”

Following the recent introduction of certain amendments to the Mining on Private Land Act, it is now necessary for complementary amendments to be made to the Mining Act, and this Bill has been framed principally with that end in view. Whilst these necessary

amendments were being considered, opportunity was also taken to introduce other amendments designed to eliminate anomalies in the Act which have shown up in practice, and to extend the application of the Act to cover modern methods of mining and prospecting which have changed so much in present times.

The Bill does not envisage any great change in the application of the law covering mining and prospecting, but rather is aimed at clarifying the meaning of the Act in certain circumstances and extending its application to a wider search for gold and minerals with resultant benefits to the miner and the State.

Hon. members will recall the amendment to the definition of “private land” recently introduced as an amendment to the Mining on Private Land Act. That amendment, for the reasons given, classifies private land as that land which is already freehold, which is being purchased as freehold, or which will become freehold by absolute right. Consequently the amendment to “Crown land” set out in the Bill more concisely defines that term. Various other terms used in the Act are also more clearly defined.

The amending sections dealing with public purposes and reserves are closely related and follow the new definition of “Crown land”. “Public purposes” is a new definition and clearly defines that land that has been set aside for public purposes or objectives and, as such, is to be regarded as a reserve for the purposes of mining and prospecting. “Reserves” will now include roads and cover all land vested in the Minister for Education and the Commissioner for Railways, as well as land held in trust or reserved for public purposes as described by that definition. As I said earlier, mining and prospecting on such reserved land will be allowed, but under certain stringent conditions covered by the terms of the Bill.

The Bill deals with the registration and grant of residence areas and business licences. The provisions of the present Act dealing with these titles were framed to suit conditions in the early days of mining, when the scene of operations changed quite frequently. Settlements grew up overnight around new strikes and sometimes faded almost as quickly. The holder of a miner’s right can register a residence area on which to live close to his work, and on which he pays no rent to the Crown. Similarly, a business licence may be granted entitling the holder to occupy land for business purposes. £2 is the annual fee for a business licence; 5s. is the fee for a miner’s right. The amendments to these sections preclude the registration of any fresh residence area or the grant of any fresh business licence within any city, town, or township. However, they may be obtained in remote areas on mining fields. It is considered that these titles today are not satisfactory titles from the Government’s point of view because valuable building blocks can be acquired for only a nominal

rental or for no rental. Those areas or licences that are in existence at present will not be disturbed.

A further provision of the Bill is so designed that the holder of an authority to prospect who desires a water right or similar title may apply for it and have it registered without it being necessary for the proclamation covering the area held to be revoked, the title registered or granted, and a fresh proclamation issued. Section 23 of the Act is not affected in any other way, but it has been rewritten to make its intention clear.

The normal mining lease is granted for 21 years with a right of renewal, but in certain cases it is desirable to grant mining leases over areas for a fixed term so that the minerals can be extracted from the land and the land then rehabilitated and made available for residential or business purposes. It is doubtful whether this can be done under the present Act, so this specific power has been included in the Bill. Leases now in existence will not be affected.

The Bill provides also for compensation to be payable to holders of Crown leaseholds whose land is taken up for mining purposes or over which an authority to prospect has been granted. Compensation will be paid only for improvements on the land. It will be for their actual value or for their loss in value due to the mining operations.

The present Act permits mining on reserves, and the Minister determines what surface area of the reserve can be taken up by the applicant for a mining lease. However, it does not permit the surface of a road to be disturbed, nor does it permit the granting of authorities to prospect over reserves. The Bill varies the provisions of the Act by giving the Governor in Council power to grant leases and authorities to prospect over reserves which include roads, but now the Governor in Council will determine also what surface area may be mined. This takes the right away from the Minister and vests it in the Governor in Council.

In case hon. members are feeling concerned at the possibility of bulldozers tearing up the main streets within their electorates, explosions in suburban or country streets, jackhammers, etc. outside the doors of churches, and so on, I should like to explain that throughout the State there are many roads that were designed and gazetted many years ago. One knows they are roads because they appear on maps, but actually they have never been constructed and probably never will be. In fact, there are designed townships in parts of the State, and streets, reserves for churches, etc., which have never been anything more than the designer's dream. These are the roads with which this amendment will deal primarily. In other cases roads may be mined; but in all cases, before the surface is disturbed, the local authority will be consulted before the Governor in Council approves of the lease and the surface area.

This will be the case in respect of all reserves, except that the trustees of the reserve, whoever they may be, will be consulted. Compensation will be payable for any damage caused.

With regard to authorities to prospect on reserves, I consider that a person or company spending large amounts of money prospecting an area should be granted protection. The same conditions apply as to mining leases, that is the Governor in Council, after reference to the trustees of the reserve, will determine what part of the surface may be disturbed and what compensation is payable. I would remind hon. members that this Bill deals with gold and other minerals. It does not deal with coal, which is provided for in another Act.

The remaining provisions of the Bill are self-explanatory and merely regularise present practices.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East) (5.51 p.m.): I have listened to the Minister carefully and as conscientiously as possible and I feel that there is nothing very contentious in the Bill. It is bringing the law up to date. I agree with his remarks that methods of mining and prospecting are totally different today from what they used to be, particularly in the winning of metal. It can be said that there has been a revolution in this field, no matter what kind of mineral it may be—gold, coal, or any other type.

We have seen the old methods of mining, for instance, with the pick and shovel. We have also seen the methods used today. The old method of mining has been almost entirely eliminated, but the modern method has brought to the industry various problems which must necessitate amendments of the Act.

From the Minister's remarks, I do not think there is anything in the Bill dealing with the winning of minerals that would necessitate an amendment of the safety rules in the Act. It is well known, whether it be metalliferous mining or coal mining, that methods have been revolutionised and to meet that position it is only reasonable and logical that the Government should seek some amendment of the various Acts dealing with the matter, particularly in regard to safety.

The Minister said that mining would be permitted on leases and reserves. Again I feel that this has become necessary. If there are valuable minerals lying under the surface of reserves there is no logical reason why they should remain there if the nation requires them, particularly if they can be mined without any undue disturbance to the surface. That they can be has been proved throughout the world, and I think it would be folly to allow minerals that we want for development to remain beneath the surface. I cannot see that there should be any objection to mining on reserves so long as the necessary precautions are taken not to interfere with the surface and to see that there will be

no danger of a cave-in destroying the reserve for whatever purpose it had been set aside. We have illustrations all over the world of cities built over mining fields. The mineral has been taken away without disturbance to the surface, and in this case, I feel that safeguards will be taken to protect the reserves. The Bill refers to the mining of gold and other minerals but not to the mining of coal, which is provided for in another Act. However, that is no reason why it should not be fully discussed here. I think the Minister said that provision will be made in this Bill to protect businesses in mining fields. I do not think we can object to that, either. A mining field, of course, is there for the winning of ore but the winning of ore from the bowels of the earth is usually the means of providing a thriving locality. When there is mining activity in an area it brings to the district other activity, and if it is necessary to protect business people, as outlined by the Minister, I think we must accept the principle.

I gather that the lease for this form of mining is limited to 21 years. Because of modern means of development and the quicker winning of ore it is thought that the period of the leases should be extended. Again I think that is a very sensible provision. After all, in our lifetime 21 years might be quite a big gap, but in the development of a nation or a particular field 21 years is a very small lapse of time.

The Minister dealt with compensation for leaseholders. If a leaseholder has not been compensated at this stage for any inconvenience he has suffered in the past, I think it is time he was. I think we can agree that he should receive compensation in full.

The decision to take from the Minister the prerogative of granting leases and authorities to prospect and give it to the Governor in Council is certainly a step in the right direction. I am sure former Ministers for Mines would have liked to have it that way. The Minister will have the assistance, wisdom and experience of the other members of Cabinet, as well as that of the Governor, whoever he may be from time to time, to help him arrive at a correct decision. That decision will not be the decision of one man but a decision based on the opinion of, at the present time, at least 14. I do not think we can quarrel with that. After all is said and done, no matter what problem confronts us, if we can get assistance in arriving at a solution it is more likely to be the correct one if we have the help of other people in arriving at it. The Minister for Mines will still be able to put his views forward strongly. If the Executive Council is not doing what he thinks is the proper thing he will be able to have his say and correct any misapprehension in the minds of the people sitting with him around the Executive Council table.

I had to smile when the Minister said it would not be necessary for us to fear that bulldozers will be interfering with our rest or peace of mind. However, there is a

tendency with every modern facility that comes into being, helpful as it might be to the public, whether it be in the field of transport or anything else, for its advantages to be offset by the noise it creates. Every modern method seems to create more noise. If we could only eliminate noise we could bring a lot of satisfaction to everybody.

The Minister drew attention to the fact that many maps show roads and byways which in fact do not exist. Although they have been shown on maps for years the "roads" are never likely to be used as roads. The fact that these "roads" are shown on maps should not prevent mining development which would bring about the proper exploitation of our natural resources. The extraction of minerals from the bowels of the earth, which will help the economy of our country, should not be interfered with simply because planners of the past have said, "We want a road here." As to protection for the company concerned, I do not know what protection it needs or what the Minister has in mind.

[Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.]

Mr. DONALD: I was about to say that I had examined the suggested provision to give power to the Executive Council to grant leases, which until now has been the prerogative of the Minister for Mines. I was very mindful of the fact that in the past Ministers have been guided by the experience and knowledge of their departmental officers. I should hate to think that the passing of this responsibility from the Minister to the Executive Council may in some way interfere with the efficiency of the department. I do not think that the Executive Council would be foolish enough to disregard the advice given by the departmental officers, advice which has been gained over the years. They have assisted the Minister and I do not think their advice would be ignored. The Minister would be armed with the information, and he would impart it to the members of the Executive Council who would be influenced in coming to the correct decision, not so much by what the Minister was able to tell them but because the Minister was conveying the opinions held by his departmental officers. I know that the practice has been adopted in the past, and I should hate anyone to misconstrue my thoughts.

Another amendment will allow mining leases on aboriginal reserves throughout the State. On the Weipa reserve bauxite is being mined. A royalty is paid on all ore extracted and I should hate to think that if mining is carried out on an aboriginal reserve—be it metalliferous mining or coal mining—the aborigines would not benefit from the ore extracted. I think protection should be provided so that the royalty will help to raise aborigines to the standard we think they should enjoy. Perhaps when the Bill dealing with aborigines is being discussed we may give some consideration to that matter.

In the introductory stage of a Bill of this nature I think I should take advantage of the opportunity to pay a tribute to the men who form the Mines Rescue Squad. They render a very valuable service in the coal-mining industry and to the men therein. They are available at all times of the night and day. At the moment there are 30 trainees, under the command of Mr. Bill Owens. They are divided into five teams, each of six men. The trainees' services are given voluntarily, without any financial reward. Training is carried out twice a week. The superintendent is the only member of the brigade who is paid for his services. The brigade was first formed in 1910 and has been functioning ever since then. The efficiency of the brigade was shown in no uncertain manner by its success in a recent Australia-wide competition which drew the best men from the South to Booval. The Booval team was beaten by only half a point for the Australian championship. There were six or seven brigades from New South Wales. The Newcastle team won, but it was equipped with the very latest of modern equipment, more modern than the Booval team had. In spite of that, Booval was beaten by only half a point. In fact, there were only $1\frac{1}{2}$ points between the first, second and third teams. Newcastle beat Booval by half a point, and Booval beat Nebo by one point.

The Bill will give protection to the big prospectors, but I hope that the old type of prospector will also be protected. In spite of scientific developments which are supposed to aid and make prospecting much easier, it cannot be disputed that the old prospector has been responsible for discovering every major mineral field in the Commonwealth. The old type of prospector discovered the Weipa field, Mt. Morgan, Mt. Isa, Cloncurry, Charters Towers, Gympie, and all the other rich fields in Australia.

These prospectors received very little reward. Few, if any, died wealthy men. When we amend our legislation to give protection to the wealthy companies which are prospecting, let us give some thought and reward to the humble prospector who has rendered such valuable service to this country and has made it possible for the rich fields to be developed, adding to the economic wealth of the nation.

I pay tribute to the people responsible for the printing and publication of "The Mining Journal" which is sought by all sections of the Australian mining community, be it metalliferous or coal. It has won the reputation, deservedly, of being a publication that can be depended upon as giving information on how the industry is working in Queensland and the Commonwealth, and also contains articles written by mining experts all over the world.

I hope that the Bill will improve our mining laws to the extent the Minister claims. There is no mention of safety in the

Bill. We cannot be too careful in the occupation of mining, and any legislation aimed at greater safety must be supported and welcomed.

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) (7.23 p.m.): In introducing the Bill the Minister said that it contains the right to hold leases on reserves; I take it that that includes aboriginal reserves. We have not had that right before. Apparently the right will be given to prospect in the Cape York Peninsula and to hold leases on aboriginal reserves there. If that is the meaning of the Bill, I believe it is a good one. The aboriginals would not be interested in mining copper, tin, or wolfram. Prospectors will be able to go there as long as they do not abuse these rights. I doubt whether they will be allowed to go onto any of the Torres Strait islands. There is a wolfram outcrop at St. Pauls on Moa Island. Different prospectors have tried to get onto this island to mine it. I hope that the legislation will not permit that. Owing to the tin boom in the mining areas such as Irvinebank, individuals are taking up several leases. They take up old mines that have been good producers. It would not matter so much if they took up only one or two, but one man, or groups of two or three, take up 10 to 12 mines. They apply for them, have their applications granted, and a few weeks later apply for exemptions and hold up those mines for six months. They do this by putting over any excuses at all. They say that it is too wet to work them, that they are waiting for finance, or that they are going to build roads. They apply for exemptions and their applications are granted.

These people are merely speculators. They then try to sell the mines to the large companies on option and many are able to do that. Sometimes there is no down payment and at other times £50 or £100 is paid. If a company prospecting the mine then finds ore, it exercises its option and pays a certain figure for the mine. The people who take out these mining leases have no intention of working them, and all they do is hold them up while they endeavour to find buyers. If a mine is bought, the company buying it will work it. If it is not sold, the person taking it up applies for exemption and gets it for six months. When that period has expired, another application for exemption is made, and that process will continue till he either gets a buyer or runs out of funds to pay for the mining lease. I should like the Minister to look at this matter because it is holding up progress in mining in far northern areas.

There is no doubt that mining methods have changed. At one time the pick, shovel, and Gympie hammer were used. Today much of the prospecting is done with bulldozers. In the area between Herberton and Silver Valley, where the old prospector used to use a prospecting dish and pick and shovel, today large TD25 bulldozers are being used. Thousands of yards of material are being "dozed" out to a depth of 30 feet and approximately 20 to 30 feet wide.

Much heavier loads are now being handled. I instance the case of Don Walker at Herberston, who has the Consolation Mine. Instead of the Gympie hammers that used to be used for sinking mines, modern machinery is now handling ore in bulk and bringing down 100 tons a day for transport by heavy vehicles to the battery at Herberston.

That is the type of mining being carried on in that area now, and I can see a bright future for it. Right through the mining fields in the North, where I mined for years, there are large deposits of low-grade ore containing .5, .8, and up to 1 per cent. tin. Modern methods and the high price make it economic to mine this ore, and I can see that the State treatment works at Irvinebank will not be able to cope with the demands made on it as this type of mining progresses. Another treatment plant will have to be built, because there are hundreds of thousands of tons of ore to be mined in the Irvinebank and Stannary Hills area. I shall refrain from commenting further on this part of the Bill until the debate on the second reading.

I hope that the Minister will investigate the matter of people taking out leases in areas such as this and holding them to prevent others getting in. They have no intention of mining; they hold them only in the hope that they can sell them. If they cannot sell them, they forfeit them.

In the Cooktown area, small prospectors are greatly concerned because B.H.P. holds so much of the country. It has leased large areas of land in the Rossville, Cooktown, and Mt. Poverty areas, in which there are deposits of alluvial tin. These are treated using diesel plants and hydraulic sluices, and small alluvial miners have been forced out of those areas by B.H.P. In my opinion, the alluvial miners should be allowed to continue working there in spite of the fact that B.H.P. holds the leases. That company leased land on Cape York Peninsula on which small gold prospectors were operating. I took the matter up with the Minister for Mines, and he gave those prospectors the right to carry on mining even though B.H.P. held the leases. In that case 5 acres was about all they required; but larger areas would be required for tin-mining because the dirt has to be removed with hydraulic sluices.

When B.H.P. surrenders its leases, another smaller company takes up the land and the small alluvial miners are again excluded. I think it is high time that more consideration was given to the rights of these men. The companies have thousands of acres of land and it would not do them any harm if small prospectors were allowed to continue mining on their leases.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (7.34 p.m.): In his introductory speech, the Minister forecast that there would not be any great change in the Mining Act and he reminded hon. members of the provisions of the Bill that was introduced recently, permitting right of entry to freehold land.

As I understood him, the Minister said that the Bill will provide for mining and prospecting on reserves, which is not allowed now, but he indicated that the provision was more or less subject to and governed by section 16 of the Act. Until the Bill is printed and we have had an opportunity of studying the clauses, I do not think there is very much to quarrel with in the proposals that he has outlined.

As mentioned by the hon. member for Ipswich East, provision is being made also for compensation on Crown leaseholds—for the value of improvements on Crown leaseholds, I understand. My previous remarks apply to this matter, too. I do not think we can have any great objection to the provision, because there have been certain inequalities in the past and, I presume, a certain amount of hardship resulting from the fact that this provision was not in the Mining Act.

The Minister referred to the high cost of geological exploration in the mining world today. That is quite true, and I think it is very pertinent to bring to the notice of the Chamber the fact that in several spheres, both State and Federal, a considerable subsidy is paid in the field of oil search, but very little subsidy is available in the field of geological exploration designed to assist in the discovery of base metals. The field apparatus maintained by some of these exploration companies is extremely expensive. Furthermore, they engage officers with high technical skill and they have in their possession technical equipment that costs fabulous sums of money. I think a measure of justice should be meted out to those people by the various governments, particularly to those mining companies that, in the past, have played a significant part in the development of this country and are continuing to do so.

The Minister said that the Bill would make provision to enable a wider search for gold and other minerals. I should like to draw the Minister's attention to a very serious state of affairs existing in Queensland in that connection. It has to do with the Mt. Morgan mineral field—the leading gold-producing field in the State, and a very significant contributor to our annual copper production. Copper has been very prominent in the minds of many of us recently. This mining field has given employment to many thousands of Queenslanders and has been in existence for many years, supporting a town that has had a very chequered history. The Minister spoke of affording protection to businesses on mineral fields. If we look at the chequered history of this field, we see that there was a complete cessation of activities in 1925. Now a position is emerging that should greatly concern the Minister and his department, even though it is not within his direct administrative responsibility. The Minister is a newcomer to office but I am sure he is conscientious in his responsibilities and that he will

endeavour to ensure that the figures of the value of production from the mineral fields of the State will be steadily maintained.

Unfortunately, the Federal Government has placed a ban on the export of copper and so has forced Mount Morgan Ltd. to a point where it will have to sell its blister copper at a lower rate than it could have got under an export contract it arranged some months ago with a Japanese firm called Sumitomo. In addition, by refusing to lift the export ban wholly or partially, the Federal Government is aiding the metal interests who are concerned in scuttling this contract—one which would be of great benefit to the mineral production of this State.

Let me give a little of the history of the Mt. Morgan mineral field. For the six years up to June 1964, the price of copper on the London Metal Exchange was so low that operations of the Mt. Morgan company were maintained only with the assistance of a bounty from the Commonwealth Government. The value of that bounty was approximately £1,100,000 a year. It was given to the company to offset the high cost of refining at Port Kembla and also because of the realisation of the blister copper at the mine. Because of the copper price control just after the war—from 1946 to 1952—when the minerals were exchanged through the British Ministry of Materials, because of the suspension of quotations on the London Metal Exchange, Mt. Morgan Limited was forced to sell at a price lower than the prevailing price, receiving £557,000 less than it would have received if the copper had been sold at the Ministry of Materials price. In other words, the company played a very significant part in meeting this country's demands for copper. It was willing to do this, and compelled to do it, despite the fact that in doing so it lost over £500,000. In April 1964, the London Metal Exchange price rose considerably. It reached such a figure that Mt. Morgan, with other Australian producers, could hold its selling price in Australia at a figure based on what became known as the world producer price.

Finally, in June 1964, the Australian price on that basis reached a level at which no bounty was required to be paid by the Commonwealth. I think all hon. members can follow that and realise that this great producer of gold and copper was playing the game.

From June 1964 until December 1964, the revenue Mt. Morgan received for its total copper sales was £644,000 less than it would have been if it had sold at the London Metal Exchange price.

Over the 18 years from 1946 to 1964, Mt. Morgan actually discharged its responsibilities to the Australian community—discharged any debt, as it were, for having received this bounty from the Commonwealth Government—by selling its copper at less than world prices. During the years in which the bounty was paid by the Commonwealth

Government, this great producer of ours actually was responsible for keeping operations going at the Port Kembla refinery. But for having Mt. Morgan's copper to treat, the refinery would have been in a very serious plight.

In October 1964, the company negotiated with the Sumitomo Company of Japan. It was very jubilant because it thought it would be able to give its shareholders a better deal. When I spoke to Mr. Hennessy, the general manager of the mine, he told me that the workers at Mt. Morgan could feel much happier for the fact that he had negotiated the contract at a price that would be acceptable to their interests. He would be able to give them a better deal and ensure that the future of this great mining town was further extended. So the people would not have to continue to live in the hopeless fear they have known for years. Go to Mt. Morgan and ask the butcher, the baker, or any child in the street, the price of copper. Without exception, they will be able to quote the world price of copper simply because they are so dependent on it and fearful of the return of the grave situation of 1925, when their town was locked out.

Despite the negotiation of this agreement, several factors have come into being which are very detrimental to this mining interest. I referred earlier to the Commonwealth Government's ban on export copper and its refusal to lift the ban or ease it. In December it became very clear that, even without any production of Mt. Isa, Australia could get all the copper it needed for its industries, mainly by importing it. The company applied for a lifting of the ban. On 1 January, the copper fabricators, who had imported a considerable amount of copper, raised their price to a rate £224 a ton above the Australian price. Mt. Morgan raised its price by less than one-half this amount.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. HANSON: Their price was approximately the price at which refined copper could be returned to Australia from Japan. In answer to the hon. member for Roma—this is very pertinent to the Bill. This is very dear to the heart of mining people in this State. Mt. Morgan is the most significant gold producer in the State, and it is a significant copper producer. As the Minister said, this legislation will facilitate the wider search for gold and minerals. Mt. Morgan is a company very much associated with exploration for further mineral resources. In recent years it has allied itself with Rio Tinto and has carried out a large exploration policy at great expense. I trust that one of these days it will be successful and will be able to extend its facilities. Many leaders in this field tell me that they hope it will continue until the year 2000, but I hope that it may continue until the year 3000. Small towns like this make up our great State and assist it to grow in greatness.

I was saying before I was interrupted, that copper was being imported at £224 a ton above the Australian price. Mt. Morgan raised its price by less than one-half that amount, to equal approximately the price at which refined copper could be returned to Australia from Japan. This is the proposal that was put up by the company to the Commonwealth Government, but it was refused. In January of this year a release from the Commonwealth ban was again sought. The company waited six weeks but no reply came; inaction was in evidence. The company realised that certain interests—I said earlier certain southern interests—were out to scuttle the negotiations with the Japanese people. Mt. Morgan was accused, by rumour, of flouting the ban. I concede that there has been a considerable stockpiling of copper at the mine. The company does not like to see it. It would like to be able to sell its product and carry on the normal functions of a mining company. The working people at the mine do not like to see it. They are anxious to see the company reach the stage where it can engage in greater mineral research to ensure the continued life of the field. I repeat that Mt. Morgan was accused by rumour of flouting this ban, but it offered its entire production to the Purchasing Pool at a price lower than the free world price. This was a great offer. Hon. members can see the different stages. Surely to goodness the company has discharged its responsibility when it has come forward with an offer to the Purchasing Pool of this country to sell its copper at a figure below the world market price. The offer was refused and the pool made a counter offer that would have given the company far less than the Sumitomo price.

Today, because of this iniquitous ban, Mount Morgan Limited, one of the largest mining companies in the State, can sell to only one buyer in this country. It is absolutely disgusting. That buyer to which the products of this mineral field are committed is holding both hands around Mt. Morgan's neck, slowly but surely choking it, at the same time bleeding it to death. I think it is absolutely disgusting.

I thank you, Mr. Hodges, for allowing me to bring this matter to the attention of the Committee, and to acquaint the Minister with this disgusting state of affairs. I trust that, in decency, and in the interests of the mining activities in this State, he will see, through his various representations to the people in the South, who should know better, that this is rectified.

Mr. LICKISS (Mount Coot-tha) (7.51 p.m.): First of all, I pay tribute to the Commonwealth Bureau of Mineral Resources for its great assistance in the geological and geophysical surveys it has undertaken not only in Queensland but also in other parts of Australia, and also the valuable contribution of our own geological survey attached to the Mines Department.

I should also like to pay special tribute to the Department of National Mapping and the Queensland Lands and Survey Section for the excellent maps made available by them, which assist greatly in the exploration of our hinterland which we must admit has not been traversed from the point of view of mineral exploration as much as we would have liked in the past.

The issuing of authorities to prospect is a somewhat recent development. It has been occasioned or made necessary by the new approach to mineral exploration in this country, entailing the employment of a great deal of capital, scientific know-how and investigation over fairly long periods. It has become necessary to safeguard large areas for those prepared to undertake these rather costly surveys.

While we are studying this new development and this new approach to mineral survey, we should not overlook the part that has been played in mineral discoveries in Australia by the lonely prospector possessing not much more than his swag and his miner's right. In comparing the relative merits of the two forms of discovery, we should remember Rum Jungle, Mary Kathleen, Iron Range in Western Australia, Mt. Isa, Mt. Morgan, and some of the large mining projects in New South Wales, which have, in the main, stemmed from the discovery of the prospector who, as I mentioned previously, possessing not much more than a miner's right, has gone out often under difficult circumstances and discovered these large deposits.

There still remains a place in our community today for the individual prospector. Not many years ago Australia needed uranium and, as I said, it was the small prospector who provided us with that mineral.

I was interested to hear the comments of the hon. member for Cook about mineral leases in Queensland. His criticism applies not only to Queensland; elsewhere people apply for leases, and think up all the excuses under the sun for exemption from working the leases, merely to hold them. I think that is against public interest. An almost dog-in-the-manger attitude is adopted by these people who sit on leases for a great number of years and refuse to work them or who try to obtain exemption so that they do not have to work them. I suggest that the department should take a very critical look at this matter.

Mr. Hanton: Some of the big companies are as much at fault as anybody else.

Mr. LICKISS: I agree with that. I do not think that anybody should be entitled to do that. Of course, large companies have to plan ahead. In sand-mining, for example, the amount of capital involved is fairly large and consequently plant cannot be taken to an area on an island or beach for which only a single lease is held. The economics of such a venture depend on volume and a large number of leases are often required

to sustain such a plant. There are, of course, other instances, and I was referring mainly to the type of activity mentioned by the hon. member for Cook, where people merely sit on areas in the North hoping that someone will take an option so that a company can be floated to mine the ore. If a person is not prepared to show his bona fides and work a lease, I think it should be forfeited.

The Minister mentioned prospecting on Crown leased land, and he said that compensation would be payable to lessees. I should like to ask the Minister what rights landholders will have in claims for compensation. I should like to know to whom they can appeal and, if it is the Wardens Court, whether he considers that to be the proper authority to hear an appeal on such grounds as injurious affection, bearing in mind that the lease will probably have been issued under the Land Act and claims for compensation in respect of valuation claims would ordinarily be dealt with by the Land Court. I ask the Minister if he considers it sound to have such appeals made to Mining Wardens Courts.

I believe that the future development of Queensland will depend largely on the discovery of minerals. The possibility of discovering suitable rock phosphate in quantities large enough to warrant mining should not be overlooked in the interests of our rural industries. Over the years I have looked into the subject of mining, though not as deeply as I would have liked to, and I must admit that my own experience of prospecting is something that gave me a lot of pleasure. I shall remember it all my life. I have been interested in the history of mineral discovery and development in Australia for many years. The tract of country along a line drawn from Darwin through Mt. Isa to the Cloncurry field probably holds many minerals awaiting discovery. I believe that, with the scientific approach now being made to mineral exploration, minerals will be discovered in this area.

In congratulating the Minister on his introduction of a Bill of this nature, I nevertheless make a plea for the small prospector. I ask that these authorities to prospect be granted with discretion, and that the periods of time allowed will be sufficient to permit a thorough investigation, bearing in mind the capital investment required by large companies to assess all available data and secure the findings of such exploration. Nevertheless, I hope that the land will not be tied up for long periods, so precluding the small man from wandering over the surface, because I believe that he still has a very vital part to play in the discovery of minerals in Australia. We can be assured that history will be repeated in his field of endeavour.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Main Roads) (8 p.m.), in reply: I thank hon. members for their ready acceptance of the Bill. There

are a few matters to which I shall reply now, and I will go into greater detail at the second-reading stage.

The hon. member for Ipswich East, the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha and the hon. member for Cook all made a plea on behalf of small prospectors. I assure the Committee that their rights are not interfered with in any way and are fully protected under the provisions of the Bill. They can still obtain a miner's right for 5s. and go out and prospect. However, when an authority to prospect over a large area has been given to a company, a small prospector will be able to exercise his miner's right only with the concurrence of the company.

The hon. member for Ipswich East mentioned aboriginal reserves. The right to grant an authority to prospect on aboriginal reserves already exists, but it is subject to the consent of the Protector of Aboriginals. Royalties on ore won on aboriginal reserves are paid to the Government, which contributes substantial amounts to the Protector of Aboriginals. At places such as Weipa, aborigines have benefited substantially under special agreements. Of course, the Government spends a good deal of money on aboriginal reserves and part of that could well come from royalties paid on mining on reserves.

The hon. member for Cook raised the question of prospectors holding leases for their own working. The Act provides for the granting of leases for a specified period, and, as long as the conditions of the lease are complied with, the renewal is automatic. The amendment will enable the Minister to issue a lease for a certain number of years, after which a new lease will have to be applied for.

When anyone makes application to the Mining Wardens Court for exemption from the conditions of a lease, the hearing is open to the public and anyone can object to the granting of the exemption. In fact, the hearing is advertised so that anyone who is interested may come along and appear in the court.

Compensation is dealt with very fully in the Bill. In reply to the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha, I might add that the amounts of compensation are determined by the warden; but a further claim may be made in a civil court if the owner is not satisfied with the compensation awarded by the warden.

The hon. member for Port Curtis spoke mainly about the Commonwealth Government's control of the Australian price and the export of copper from Queensland. This is not affected in any way by the proposed legislation. I think he will concede, however, that this control has resulted in a reasonable, uniform price to Australian consumers.

I feel that that answers most of the matters that have been raised by the various members, and I will deal further with the Bill at the second reading.

Motion (Mr. Camm) agreed to.
Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Camm, read a first time.

PHYSIOTHERAPISTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Hon. S. D. TOOTH (Ashgrove—Minister for Health) (8.7 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Physiotherapists Act of 1964, in certain particulars."

The measure contains only two amendments. They are simple but nevertheless important.

The first proposal has to do with the age at which a person who has qualified by the successful completion of his course of study in physiotherapy may obtain registration as a physiotherapist by the Physiotherapists Board of Queensland.

The majority of legislative enactments covering the recognition of professional qualifications contain a provision that the attainment of the age of 21 years is a condition of eligibility. Accordingly, the qualification of being 21 years of age was written into the Physiotherapists Act of 1964. The effect of this qualification of 21 years of age is to debar from registration a number of students now at the university who will complete their course of study in physiotherapy before attaining the age of 21 years. If these students are denied registration until reaching the age of 21 years, they will be unable to take or use the name or title of physiotherapist until such time as they become 21, which could be 12 months later than the time of their graduation, or even more.

I am informed that the number of students now pursuing their course of study who could be affected by the age-21 limitation is between 40 and 50. This creates a hardship which was never intended, and I feel that, although the amendment may create a minor problem with respect to reciprocity with another State, it will command general acceptance. So, to ensure that there is no legal obstacle to persons under 21 obtaining registration in Queensland as soon as they qualify, the provision requiring the attainment of 21 years of age is being removed from the Act.

The second amendment contained in this measure relates to section 25 of the Act, which, as it now stands, prohibits the practice of physiotherapy by any person other than a physiotherapist.

The purpose of the prohibition was to afford a registered physiotherapist protection against unregistered and unqualified persons.

After careful examination of the effect of this prohibition, it became clear, on reading it in conjunction with the definition of "physiotherapy" in section 4 of the principal Act, that, if strictly and literally applied, it could mean that a trainer who applied methods of massage, manipulation and the like to athletes under his care was guilty of a breach of the Act. Similarly, a barber or beautician administering face or scalp massage, or even a physiotherapy student applying his teachings during his course of training, could be committing a breach of the Act. Naturally, such an interpretation of section 25 was never intended.

The simplest method of solving this problem is to remove the provision prohibiting the practice of physiotherapy by any person other than a registered physiotherapist.

The amended section of the principal Act will still afford protection to registered physiotherapists by prohibiting any unregistered or unqualified person from assuming the title of physiotherapist or any title of similar import, or in any other way creating the impression that he is registered or qualified.

I commend the Bill to the consideration of the Committee.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (8.12 p.m.): The amendments certainly are very simple in character. I was rather surprised to learn that the Act required amending following its introduction only 12 months ago. I should have thought that this possibility might have been anticipated then by the Minister's advisers. Had there been only one or two cases, I could imagine their having escaped their attention but, if the number is as great as 40 or 50, it is rather surprising that this was not considered at the time the Bill was introduced last year.

It must be a very popular profession when 40 or 50 are likely to graduate before attaining the age of 21 years. It is an important profession and one that many girls like to embrace. Unquestionably a good deal of value attaches to the skilful use of physiotherapy by trained physiotherapists.

Mr. Melloy interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: I think it is regarded as being very desirable socially. Occupational therapists do quite a good job of work in their particular sphere but if you ask a physiotherapist, "Are you an occupational therapist?" she is likely to look down her nose at you for putting her in that classification. As the hon. member for Nudgee points out, physiotherapy is regarded as rather a glamorous profession.

I see no reason why it should be regarded as a type of job calling for a good deal of experience. Perhaps one would hesitate to allow a person 20 years of age to carry out a major surgical operation, preferring someone with more training and experience. However these days, when we stress the importance of youth, when young people are

asked to assume responsibilities at an earlier age in many fields, including the executive field, and are liable to be called up for service in the armed forces at 18 years of age, if such a young person can demonstrate ability to compete with older students and attain the required standards, I do not see any reason why she should be a prohibited from practising the profession.

The second amendment seems to be a sensible one. Naturopaths, chiropractors and people of that kind do not have to demonstrate that they are qualified registered practitioners. They merely demonstrate to the satisfaction of some of their friends that they have acquired a certain skill which justifies their asking people to come for treatment. With a satisfied following they are able to demand a very big fee.

Some of the masseurs who attend to rugby league and cricket teams are fairly highly-trained people. In their particular field, I suppose, they would be as successful as trained physiotherapists. There could be an opportunity for some people to practise without in any way contravening the regulations. It would certainly be unwise to prevent various organisations from availing themselves of the services they have been using for a long time.

It seems that the amendments are quite simple and that they are not quite so important to the individual. I do not think they are controversial, or important enough to justify a long and involved debate and at this stage the proposals are acceptable to the Opposition.

Mr. SMITH (Windsor) (8.16 p.m.): The amendments proposed by the Minister recognise a developing trend in our community. By this measure we are recognising that, at least in this vocation or calling, there may be a qualified person who is available to practise before reaching the age of 21. That, of course, brings minors into contractual relations with other people. Side by side with that recognition goes the earlier recognition in this Chamber of the right of 18-year-olds to hold land under certain conditions. We have seen a gradual breaking down of the age-old concept of infancy. We have reached the stage when minors of 17 or 18 years of age are receiving large pay packets. They are able to drive motor vehicles at the age of 17. They receive high wages from the age of 17 until they are 21, when they attain their majority. During those four years many minors enter into contractual relations with people, sometimes getting themselves involved in situations which, because of our concept of infancy—and majority being attained at 21—are anachronistic.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SMITH: I am quite well aware that hon. members opposite do not know very much about minors, or about this legislation. If they had any common sense at all they would realise that there is a growing tendency for minors to contract.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SMITH: In the common law concept, only contracts for necessities were binding on an infant. Of course, what was a necessary was a question of fact, I suppose, to be determined each time.

Mr. Bennett: What about when making wills?

Mr. SMITH: What about making wills? That has nothing to do with contracts. I am afraid my friend does not understand that. I am dealing with the ability of a minor to enter into contractual relations with other people. I know that it is very difficult to tell the age of some young girls. A girl of 16 is very often confused with one of 17 or 18 in various matters.

Mr. Tucker interjected.

Mr. SMITH: I wish the garrulous members of the Opposition would go and talk elsewhere. If the hon. member does not understand the reference to 16-year-old girls, it is obvious that he must have been in danger at some time. With hotel lounges open to the public, it is certain that from time to time girls under 21 years of age enter them and are served with liquor. It becomes more and more difficult today to identify a minor by appearance, and equally it becomes more and more difficult to maintain the contractual concept of the common law because quite often people do not know they are dealing with a minor.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SMITH: I know that to both factions on that side of the House the word "minor" would conjure up the C.M.C. or the Trades and Labour Council. I know there is a Mackie group and a Johnno Mann group.

Mr. Hanson interjected.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member for Port Curtis is so cranky that he should see a physiotherapist and get a massage.

Mr. Hanson: I do not need any assistance.

Mr. SMITH: I think the hon. member does. That becomes more obvious every time he speaks. That applies not only to him but also to many others on that side of the Chamber.

The recognition in this Bill of the ability of a person to command registration under the age of 21 is a recognition of the concept that the common law idea of infancy

persisting until 21 should be reviewed. While this is not the most appropriate time, it is at least appropriate to foreshadow some investigation of this problem to consider whether we might be well advised to lower the age at which minors can legitimately contract not only for necessities but also for other things. In this case we have physiotherapists desiring to enter into contracts. No doubt they will be desirous of obtaining premises. It is obvious that many of their dealings would not involve necessities, and any person dealing with them would do so at his peril. This does not happen in the professions because the time of study is generally so long that it would be a practical impossibility for a minor to be qualified in a profession. This is a matter that should be investigated thoroughly with a view to taking action along those lines.

Mr. HUGHES (Kurilpa) (8.24 p.m.): I support the remarks of the hon. member for Windsor, for whom I have the greatest respect. If, under this Bill, a person is entitled to registration, as the hon. member for Windsor said, there has to be a contractual commitment. To what extent will the public be safeguarded? If there is negligence on the part of a professional man or woman an injured person can take action, but to what extent is the public safeguarded in the case of treatment given by a physiotherapist who is a minor? The Minister may be able to give us some information on this point and at the same time enlighten the public.

In the community today great stress is placed on education and the teaching of business principles, and parents are constantly urging their children to strive for the higher things in life. As a result, many young people are entering the business and professional world at a much earlier age than was the case years ago. Whilst they may be altruistic in some ways, and genuine and sincere, they still lack the maturity and wisdom that comes with years, and even from making mistakes.

Although there may be many young people registered and well qualified theoretically, in choosing a physiotherapist the public may well show the attitude that it demonstrates by preferring to go in legal matters to a barrister with a great knowledge of certain matters, or in medical matters to a doctor with certain specialised and recognised skills. In time, these young people will gain experience. Whilst they are recognised in land dealings and other matters, I wonder to what extent they may be protected in—

Mr. Bennett: You fail to understand that negligence is a question of tort, not contract. You can sue a teenage driver for negligence at any time.

Mr. HUGHES: I thank the hon. member for South Brisbane for making that point. In common with most people in the community, I do not have specialised knowledge on these matters. I believe that the public should be acquainted with these things so that they may know exactly where they stand.

Not only on higher education, laudable as it may be, does the accent seem to be placed. The Australian Medical Association and many similar organisations seem to want to create a monopoly for themselves and make theirs a close preserve in many regards. There is division among their ranks on some matters, though not so much on this one because physiotherapy is now recognised as a university course and those completing it have the necessary skills and qualifications. But what about chiropractors or, as some call them, "chiroquacks"? It must be recognised that there are many people in the community who make use of their services. I was at a meeting on one occasion at which a parliamentary colleague of mine who was present said, when he knew that I was suffering great pain, "Go and see so-and-so. He will fix you." I went to him, and I venture to suggest that my 9-year-old son could probably have done a better job. I have never met a greater quack.

There are these people in the community, and people in pain will try anything to get relief. They go to them in the hope of receiving some help, and pay them huge sums of money. The position here is unlike that existing in the United States where chiropractors are university-trained and are professional men.

I believe that the Minister could well look at this question. I know it is a vexed and controversial matter, but it is one that must be faced up to. I know that this subject does not come within the scope of this Bill, and I shall therefore not traverse it to any extent. I believe that the Minister and the Government could study this question in the immediate future. If there is to be recognition of these people, let it be on proper grounds. We know that there are black sheep in every family, so let there be certain university or other recognised form of training laid down as a requirement. I shall not pursue that argument any further.

I commend the Minister for the action he is taking. Where there are defects in our statutes, it is the responsibility of the Government to correct them. A certain principle may have been overlooked, but we must ensure that no harm is done because of this. In my opinion, the Minister is acting correctly in making possible the registration of minors, but he will have to allay the suspicion or fear in the minds of some people that the change may leave some victims in its wake.

Hon. S. D. TOOTH (Ashgrove—Minister for Health) (8.31 p.m.), in reply: I thank hon. members who have contributed to the debate. In relation to the doubts expressed by the Leader of the Opposition about the protection of physiotherapists, I point out that section 25 of the principal Act will read, subject to the adoption of the proposed amendment—

“No person other than a physiotherapist shall take or use the name of or title of physiotherapist, physiotherapeutist, physical therapist or physical therapist . . . or assume, take or use any name, initials, word, title, addition, symbol or description which, having regard to the circumstances in which it is assumed, taken or used, indicates, or is capable of being understood to indicate, or is calculated to lead persons to infer, that he is a physiotherapist, or is qualified . . . or is competent . . . to practise physiotherapy . . .”

So the safeguard is still fairly comprehensive. The omission of those two words “practise physiotherapy” will not compromise the profession, but it will permit people such as strappers, masseurs, and so on, to practise.

Mr. Davies: Will this overcome the shortage?

Mr. TOOTH: The shortage of physiotherapists?

Mr. Davies: Yes.

Mr. TOOTH: I am not certain about that. Much will depend upon the regulations that the board, when it is constituted, will suggest. But let us face the fact that the greatest cause of erosion in the profession of physiotherapist is the little god Cupid. I understand that this particular faculty at the university is referred to as the matrimonial faculty, and this is where the greatest wastage occurs—if “wastage” is the right word.

The hon. member for Windsor referred to the anachronism in our attitude to minors, and the hon. member for Kurilpa posed a legal problem to me, and I can only say that I listened to them with interest. I am grateful to the hon. member for South Brisbane for his clear and lucid opinion on the matter.

Mr. Smith: That is the one I gave you a couple of weeks ago.

Mr. TOOTH: Does the hon. member wish me to tell the story? The background to it is that I listened to certain legal advice from medical men and my good friend the hon. member for Windsor was able to correct that advice, for which I thanked him at the time and thank him again now.

Motion (Mr. Tooth) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Tooth, read a first time.

TRAFFIC ACTS AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Main Roads) (8.37 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Traffic Acts, 1949 to 1962, the Main Roads Acts, 1920 to 1964, and the Local Government Acts, 1936 to 1964, each in certain particulars.”

The existing Traffic Acts provide in general for the control of traffic and the provision of traffic engineering facilities by a Traffic Commission and a Traffic Engineer.

The Traffic Commission consists of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, as chairman, with the Commissioners of Police and Main Roads and the Town Clerk of Brisbane as members.

Enforcement of the provisions of the Acts is a matter generally for the Commissioner of Police, but the present Acts also give some enforcement powers to the Traffic Engineer, who is the executive officer of the Traffic Commission. When the Acts were amended in 1959 to create the Traffic Commission and the position of Traffic Engineer, there were almost no trained traffic engineers in Queensland and it was necessary for the Government to give some lead in the matter. The 1959 amendment was based on Victorian legislation which was required to cope with traffic problems in metropolitan Melbourne, consisting as it does of a number of separate local authorities. This position does not apply in Brisbane, where one local authority administers the whole of the Greater Brisbane area.

As a result of the present provisions of the Acts, traffic engineering measures have been introduced and a great deal has been done to obtain more efficient usage of the existing streets and roads in our cities, as well as providing countless safety facilities. The Traffic Commission has published a manual of traffic control devices and has handled a number of problems. The manual sets out a standard means for dealing with signs, lights, parking and other traffic devices. Nevertheless, I think the working of the Traffic Commission has shown that traffic engineering is a local problem, and, in point of fact, nearly every local authority in Queensland has assumed, under the Acts, delegated powers from the Traffic Commission. Whilst this is the case, the Brisbane City Council has not done so except for metered parking.

The practice has grown up whereby the Traffic Engineer provides the signs, lights, etc., which may be needed in outside areas, and the local authority concerned carries out the work of installation. In Brisbane, however, the Traffic Engineer installs and operates

lights; erects and maintains signs; paints and maintains line marking on roads and streets; and administers and operates parkatarea parking, the proceeds of which must be spent in Brisbane.

At the present time we have in Queensland a number of qualified traffic engineers, and traffic engineering itself has developed considerably since the Traffic Acts were amended to provide for the existing arrangements. Minor traffic engineering works are now familiar to most local government engineers and can be capably handled by them. It has also been shown that even smaller urban areas can deal with problems of regulated parking, though some may need a little advice to assist with its installation.

Under the present Acts, the traffic engineering required is provided by the State Traffic Engineer, who, as well as being the executive officer of the Traffic Commission, as I said before, also has certain statutory powers of his own.

Originally, the Traffic Engineer reported to the Minister for Labour and Industry, but at present the Traffic Engineer's Department is under the control of the Commissioner of Main Roads and is responsible, through him, to the Minister for Mines and Main Roads.

The control of even minor traffic engineering works in this State is, therefore, exercised by a Government instrumentality. However, the kind of work involved is such that it should, without doubt, be done on the local plane with only the policy being determined at Government level in order to provide uniformity.

The experience of the Traffic Commission has shown that particular governmental control of these local problems is not appreciated, and the delegation by the Traffic Commission of a number of its powers to local authorities has had a good effect and works well.

As I have indicated earlier, this delegation has not been accepted by the Brisbane City Council. Consequently, the Brisbane City Council enjoys considerable relief from the responsibilities of what is a local problem. This extends even to the control of parking on the fringe of the business areas, which is carried out by the Traffic Engineer as parkatarea parking.

So far as the provision of major traffic works is concerned, there has been a big development in methods and techniques since the arrangements made six years ago were considered adequate. In the first place, as I stated earlier, there were at that time few trained traffic engineers available, but this does not apply at present. Several city engineers have now had traffic engineering training, whilst most local government engineers have some knowledge of the elements of traffic engineering.

In the Main Roads Department itself there are several engineers with specialised traffic engineering training, and some have had experience in this field abroad.

Over the past five years there has been a big development in the technique of the transportation survey, which is now regarded as essential for the planning of major trafficways. This method determines the travel desires and habits of an urban area and relates them to land usage. By projection, future requirements can be estimated and assigned to the various modes of travel. From this, the cost of providing the necessary routes can be estimated and various proposals examined and compared.

As city routes have to be tied to the State road system and, in any case, it is necessary for the State to assist with the provision of city routes, such transportation surveys are best done by joint Government and city effort.

A technical planning group has to be assembled and a technical co-ordinating committee is needed to guide the study. At present in Queensland such studies are being done in Brisbane and Toowoomba, and one is about to start in Townsville.

The Brisbane study is being done by Wilbur Smith and Associates, an American firm of consulting engineers with a world-wide reputation in this field. They are also doing studies of this nature in Hobart and Melbourne.

The Toowoomba study is being performed jointly by engineers of the Main Roads Department and the Toowoomba City Council, with the use of the services of a consulting firm to carry out and process the origin-and-destination survey work.

In Townsville, the Australian consulting engineering firm of Rankine and Hill will do the project.

In the case of each city, there is a technical co-ordinating committee consisting of local authority and Main Roads Department personnel. Transportation studies need to be checked from time to time, and consequently the services of the technical co-ordinating committees need to be kept available.

It is because of the developments I have mentioned that the amendments to the Acts as proposed do not carry on the idea of a Traffic Commission controlling traffic throughout the State. Instead, they place the responsibility of traffic engineering on all except gazetted roads with the local authorities. Traffic engineering on gazetted roads will be handled by the Main Roads Department.

An Opposition Member: That is, outside the metropolitan area.

Mr. CAMM: Yes.

Under the provisions of this Bill, therefore, the powers to deal with local traffic matters, in accordance with the policy laid down in the Acts, will be handed over to the local

authorities, except in respect of gazetted roads. The Traffic Commission, as such, will cease to exist.

Another reason for this is that the design of traffic engineering works is something that should be done at the same time as the design of the road. For this to be so, the designing and constructing authorities—that is, the local authorities and the Main Roads Department—are the authorities which should have the responsibility for traffic engineering. Maintenance of traffic engineering works should be done in conjunction with normal road maintenance work, which is also the responsibility of these authorities.

Another factor to be considered is that the transportation survey is now one of the necessary operations in the design of a town plan, as a properly planned city or town must have an efficient system of communications.

The Bill provides, broadly speaking, that in the absence of a Traffic Commission advice on matters dealing with traffic engineering will be tendered to the Minister by the Commissioner of Main Roads, whereas matters of enforcement and other matters not in the nature of traffic engineering will be the responsibility of the Commissioner of Police. In addition, the two Commissioners will constitute an advisory committee to report to the Minister from time to time on the operation of the Traffic Acts and regulations.

The Traffic Engineer will become a member of the staff of the Main Roads Department. He will be mainly occupied in advising on policy as it relates to traffic engineering and in ensuring that the policy is maintained. For this purpose he will be engaged on inspections of works implemented by local authorities and, where necessary, his services will be made available to local authorities who need advice or assistance in solving their local problems of a traffic engineering nature.

Enforcement of the provisions of the Traffic Acts is something which can best be done by the police, and the amendments provide for the continuation of this except for the provisions dealing with regulated parking. This is already being successfully controlled by the councils in several of our cities.

The Manual of Traffic Control Devices, as amended from time to time by the Commissioner of Main Roads, will continue to lay down the standards to be applied in respect of traffic engineering facilities.

If the Bill is passed, local authorities will be able to carry on regulated parking under their own by-laws provided it is done in accordance with the policy laid down in the Manual of Traffic Control Devices.

The Bill provides for a firm basis for funds for traffic engineering works by stipulating that a portion of the annual driving fee is to be paid into a Traffic Engineering Trust Fund. This Fund will be used to

assist local authorities in defraying the cost of traffic engineering works. As the numbers of registered vehicles increase, the amount of income transferred to this fund will also increase. I shall refer to the driving fee again shortly.

Receipts from regulated parking fees are still required to be used for the purpose of providing works to facilitate the flow of traffic. The natural growth in the numbers of vehicles on the road will mean that more regulated parking arrangements will be required in the public interest. As a result, increased funds from this source will become available also.

Besides transferring the responsibility for traffic engineering, the Bill covers several other matters.

It provides for an increase in the annual driving fee from 15s. to £1 for each vehicle registered. It is the cheapest driving fee in Australia. Of this, it is proposed that the increase of 5s. yielding in total approximately £130,000 annually, will be used to provide extra traffic police (estimated at 32 to 34, with their vehicles, initially) while 20 per cent. or 4s. of the fee will be paid into a Traffic Engineering Trust Fund.

Besides this, provision is made for the payment of a fee of £2 on the initial issue of a driver's licence to a person who is not the owner of a registered motor vehicle. This fee will help to defray some of the financial burden of maintaining a staff for the testing of applicants and the issue of drivers' licences to those who are allowed to drive motor vehicles but do not pay a driving fee with the registration fee. Arrangements are made for joint owners or companies to nominate one person as a driver who may receive a licence by virtue of the driving fee paid annually with the registration fee.

The Government considers it is necessary to deal with the penalties at present laid down in the Acts for certain offences.

Subsection (4) of section 15 of the Acts refers to a person who drives a motor vehicle on a road when he is under disqualification from holding or obtaining a driver's licence. At present, the maximum penalty for an offence against this subsection is a fine of £100, or six months' imprisonment, or both. The Bill provides for the maximum penalty to be increased to a fine of £200, or 12 months' imprisonment, or both, as might be imposed by the court.

Subsection (1) of section 16 of the Acts relates to a person driving under the influence of liquor or a drug. The Acts provide for a maximum penalty of £100, or six months' imprisonment, or both, for a first offence, and a maximum penalty of £200, or 12 months' imprisonment, or both, for a second offence. It is provided also that, if an offender has previously been convicted twice under the subsection, imprisonment must be imposed as the whole or a part of the punishment.

The Bill increases the penalty for these offences by 50 per cent., but contains a proviso that the court, when it is considering the mandatory sentence of imprisonment as a result of a conviction under the subsection, shall take no regard of any conviction for a similar offence 10 clear years prior to the date of a further offence under the subsection.

Section 328A of the Criminal Code provides penalties for persons convicted of the dangerous driving of motor vehicles. The dangerous driving of a vehicle (other than a motor vehicle), such as a tram, a train or an animal on a road, is covered in subsection (1) of section 18 of the Traffic Acts. The present provisions of this subsection differ from the provisions of section 328A of the Criminal Code. The Bill, therefore, defines maximum penalties for offences against subsection (1) of section 18 to bring them into line with the Criminal Code provisions relating to the dangerous driving of motor vehicles. The penalties will be a fine of £100, or six months' imprisonment, or both, for a first offence, and a fine of £200, or 12 months' imprisonment, or both, for a second offence. It also provides discretionary powers for the court in the punishment by imprisonment for third offences as outlined in the proposed amendment to subsection (1) of section 16.

Section 20 of the Acts relates to the disqualification of drivers of motor vehicles convicted of being under the influence of liquor or drugs, or dangerous driving. It is at present provided that if a person convicted of one of these offences has not been convicted of one of them during the preceding three years, he will be disqualified from holding or obtaining a driver's licence for three months. The Bill provides for the time immediately preceding a conviction to be extended from three years to ten years, and for the period of disqualification to be six months in such a case. If he has been convicted of one or more of the offences during the preceding three years, the disqualification is for 12 months. Again the Bill provides for the preceding period to be extended from three years to 10 years.

Provision is made in the Bill for local authorities to be empowered to deal with abandoned vehicles and to control vehicles standing on footpaths, rights of way and gutters, painting and cleaning of vehicles on roads and streets, stacking and storing of goods on roads, and regulation on roads of stalls, booths (other than for political purposes), stands, or standing vehicles for the sale of goods in the course or conduct of business or trade.

The Bill contains measures to facilitate the use of radar for the measuring of vehicle speeds.

Transitional arrangements are also provided, and amendments to the Main Roads Act and the Local Government Act bring them into conformity. There has been due liaison with the departments concerned.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (8.57 p.m.): If ever there was a volte-face in this Chamber, we have witnessed it tonight in the action of the Government in introducing a Bill to abolish the Traffic Commission. I did not know what pattern this debate would follow, nor could I anticipate exactly what the Minister had in mind. Whilst he was speaking, I quickly perused the report of the debate that took place in 1959 when this matter was before Parliament. It is contained in Volume 225 of "Hansard" for 1959-60. The then Minister in charge of this matter, who incidentally was awarded an O.B.E. for his distinguished contribution to the Government and development of the State, said—

Mr. Herbert: He was awarded a C.M.G.

Mr. DUGGAN: That is a little higher, which merely emphasises what I have to say.

Mr. Morris said, at page 1688—

"In the policy speech of the Country and Liberal Parties prior to the 1957 election we expressed concern at the evident reluctance of the previous Labour Government to give serious consideration and attention to the traffic problems, which were becoming more and more serious through the great increase in the population of Brisbane and other cities in this State, and the tremendous increase in the number of motor vehicle registrations since the end of the 1939-1945 war.

"We charged the then Government with failure either to recognise or even understand the increase in gravity of this problem of which we were acutely conscious and which we considered must be quickly dealt with; and so we promised that if elected to power we would establish a State-wide Traffic Commission . . ."

He went on to say (and this is where the Minister has to some extent misled us)—

"Information was obtained concerning the methods being adopted overseas and in other States, to grapple with this problem."

He referred not only to Melbourne but to overseas countries.

He continued—

"After full and careful consideration of all information available on this matter it was recommended by me as the Minister responsible for such matters that we should follow the pattern of traffic administration which has proved and still is very successful in the majority of the American States and cities and which has been adopted so successfully in Victoria for over 3 years."

He continued—

"This Traffic Control Advisory Committee has met from time to time and has been functioning very effectively and there is no doubt of the benefit which has been accruing to the State concerning traffic problems by the establishment of this body, and the soundness of the Government's decision to establish it has been confirmed."

He continued—

“As mentioned earlier, the ramifications of the work of the Traffic Commission and the Traffic Engineer extend to the whole of Queensland but at the moment neither the Commission nor the Traffic Engineer has any statutory authority in connection with their appointment or functions.”

He then went on to mention various other matters, and he concluded by saying that these various views had been expressed in various parts of the world. He mentioned the congestion in London and the great volume of funds that would be required to implement this proposal.

The Press gave big headlines at that time to the Minister's speech and described it as being the first constructive approach to the undeniably important problem of traffic congestion in capital cities and important provincial cities in Australia. That was in 1959. Now we find a complete turn-about by the Government in this matter.

Mr. Dewar: No.

Mr. DUGGAN: The Government is handing it over to the local authorities.

Mr. Dewar: They want it.

Mr. DUGGAN: Why?

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: It is not a question whether or not the local authorities want it. There are many things they want that they do not get, including money. The main reason is that the findings of the Traffic Commission have been directed, very properly, at some of the engineering requirements of Brisbane and the provincial cities of Queensland, and now that the Government has become aware of the financial obligations that these will entail and that the time has arrived for it to do something, it wants to get out from under.

Government Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order! I remind hon. members that interrupting an hon. member while he is speaking is an offence under the Standing Orders. If it continues I will deal with it as disorderly conduct under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr. DUGGAN: Thank you, Mr. Hodges. If we are going to have interjections such as that which came from the lips of the Minister for Industrial Development—that local authorities asked for this amendment—I might ask this: did the people of Queensland ask for the increase of 5s. in driving licence fees? Only about 10 minutes ago we were considering a Bill designed to give recognition to young people in the community, and the hon. member for Windsor spoke about the sanctity of contracts and the lowering of the age limit and said that more young people should participate in the life of the

State. Now the Government is going to “sock” every one of these young people £2 in addition to the original licence fee.

Mr. Ewan: No.

Mr. DUGGAN: That is what the Minister said.

Mr. Ewan: Not when he has a registered vehicle.

Mr. DUGGAN: How in the name of goodness can a boy of 17 have a vehicle registered in his name? In any case, what will happen? The Minister said that the increase in the driver's licence fee from 15s. to £1 will return the Government £130,000. Much of that will be absorbed by the appointment of between 32 and 34 traffic policemen, and 20 per cent., or 1s. out of this 5s. increase, will be put into a traffic engineering trust fund.

Mr. Camm: I said 20 per cent. of the licence fee, which is 4s.

Mr. DUGGAN: Well, that will be put into a traffic engineering trust fund. How much will that return to the State? We will be able to get that information by means of questions at a later date, but I suggest that it will not solve the problem.

I have asked questions, as have the hon. member for Salisbury and other members who are interested in traffic problems, about the traffic bottle-neck that has been created near the markets at Rocklea. I pointed out when the new markets were being opened that the old markets at Roma Street were being removed because of traffic congestion in the inner city, but that new traffic problems would be created at Rocklea. The Government said that it wanted the Traffic Commission to make an overall survey, and that had to be delayed because millions of pounds might be involved in the implementation of recommendations that might be made. Now it is talking about a miserable £130,000, or less, to deal with this problem.

The Government is passing the buck—there is no doubt about that—and it deserves the strongest censure for doing so under the guise of giving the local authorities what they want. The local authorities want better roads; they want more money for roads. The Government cut down the subsidies to local authorities. Hon. members opposite talk about what they are doing for local authorities. The volume of subsidies may be greater than when Labour was in office but it is true to say—and no-one can truthfully deny it—that the percentage of subsidies available to local authorities is less now than when the Labour Government left office.

Mr. Hughes interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: Of course there is money for education.

There is the reimbursement from the Commonwealth Government. What is this nonsense the hon. member is talking, because

the actual monetary sum is greater today? This Government has had £80,000,000 to £90,000,000 more made available to it than we had.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: The hon. member can have his say in due course. I say quite definitely that the Government has fallen down on this very important job. Traffic congestion is increasing. It is compounding the whole time. When this Act was originally introduced, the first thing I said was that many years previously I, as Minister for Transport, realised the desirability of a Traffic Commission and the only reason I did not put forward such a proposal to my colleagues in the Government was that, overall, the Government's commitments left available insufficient funds to make it work successfully. I said I was not going to make a farce of it by giving high-sounding titles to a few men appointed to the commission unless we could do something about it. This Government undertook in its policy speech to do something. Now hon. members opposite can come squealing and screaming as much as they like but everybody knows what the truth is. Mr. Leitch trod on everybody's corns for a while and then people revolted against the number of penalties. The Government now wants to get the thing off its hands and transfer it to the Brisbane City Council.

I think it is about time that somebody raised a voice in protest against the motorist being continually sluggish. One would think that today every motorist was a millionaire. Every time the Government wants more money it imposes an additional tax on the motorist. It imposes a high sales tax; it taxes him on spare parts. Every requirement of the motorist bears a heavy impost. This sort of thing cannot continue indefinitely. I say that this is the last straw that will break the motorist's back, and he will protest against this Government and display his indignation in no uncertain fashion. I think it is a shocking admission of failure. It is one of the few public acknowledgments of failure and an admission that this Government has not been able to solve the traffic problem.

Hon. members opposite talk about Brisbane and are continually claiming that the Brisbane City Council has done nothing. The Government has starved it for financial help in some of its big programmes. I do not think any fair-minded person who casts aside the mantle of party membership can deny the fact that every metropolitan city in Australia should receive some contribution towards the cost of widening its roads, because people from all over the State come into the metropolitan area. People from all over the State do not come to Toowoomba continuously or to Townsville or Cloncurry continuously, but every day of the week there is an influx of motorists and tourists and people from various parts into

the capital. Simply because it is the capital. Although I would be the last to deny the right of country areas to funds for development I think it is about time that it was recognised that the State must do something to help large municipalities to deal with the difficult problem of traffic congestion. On top of that, I want to say that all Ministers for Transport—I am including myself and Ministers before me—when taking part in discussions at the Australian Transport Advisory Council, have had the objective of trying to standardize practices and signs on public highways, and of obtaining a uniform traffic code so that a motorist driving from Melbourne to Cairns or from Cloncurry to Bendigo would not be confused by a multiplicity of signs, regulations and conditions that often bring him into conflict with the law.

We have tried all along the line to achieve standardisation. In this move the Government is destroying standardisation and leaving it to the local authority. The Minister talks about how successful this has been in Toowoomba. I do not know that there has been any great success there. I fell foul of a policeman in Toowoomba the other day. I was coming down Margaret Street where the roadway is marked with arrows. I got in the inside lane, intending to right turn so that I could go where I usually park my car before meeting my constituents on Saturday mornings. I suddenly remembered that P.M.G. Department employees had been working in that lane on the previous Saturday. They had been working there for several weeks. For that reason I decided to continue straight along. Then a policeman jumped out and stopped me. He told me I had broken the traffic regulations. I said, "I am terribly sorry," and told him what had happened. He accepted my explanation. I do not want any preferential consideration because I am a member of Parliament, but he accepted my explanation. He said, "I am warning you." I objected to that because he had accepted my explanation. If he had not accepted the explanation I would not have minded.

After I had met my constituents, as I do every Saturday morning, I went back at about 12 o'clock and watched the traffic until about 2 p.m. or 3 p.m. I have been motoring in Brisbane a long time now but I have not seen one single case of a motorist being apprehended by a policeman, even though there have been hundreds of them on duty, for driving straight ahead where an arrow directing a right turn is painted in the lane. In other words, they use common sense. It is a different matter if a person is travelling in a lane which takes the traffic to the left and he decides to turn right, thus holding up the traffic behind him.

I must say that I think this is wrong in a place like Toowoomba which is blessed with wide streets. The capital cities of Australia are spending millions of pounds in resuming land so that they can widen their streets, yet in Toowoomba—I hope the hon. member for

East Toowoomba will agree with me on this—the authorities are deliberately reducing the use of the street by enforcing a single-lane traffic flow. It is completely absurd in my opinion.

I protest against this control being transferred to the various local authorities. In my opinion the police in Brisbane enforce the provisions sensibly. I do not know the experience of other hon. members but I have seen any number of motorists who do not strictly observe these rules. After all, they should be applied with common sense. There should be early warning signs.

Because of the publicity given in "Sunday Truth" to the so-called enforcement of traffic regulations by the Toowoomba magistrate a motorist in Toowoomba asked me how he could go to Mt. Kynock, a place outside Toowoomba. He said he did not want to break the traffic regulations because he understood the magistrate there was fairly strict. Very often a motorist does not know until he reaches an intersection what the sign on the road is.

I am opposed to this alteration. There is no doubt at all in my mind. I have not discussed the matter with Opposition members but I think they would share my view. I think the Government would have been very happy to continue the present traffic arrangements but for the fact that it realises it has created a Frankenstein monster that threatens to kill it because of its financial implications. It is merely a question of finance. The Government is trying to put it back on to the Brisbane City Council whom it is trying to whip the whole time. The people of Brisbane, and of Queensland, are sick of the Government's political manoeuvrings in trying to extricate itself from this problem.

Mr. Dewar interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: The Council had these same views before 1957. It asked for this before. Local authorities in various parts of Queensland wanted this traffic control before 1957.

Mr. Dewar: You were the Government then.

Mr. DUGGAN: Yes, and they wanted control of these various matters.

Mr. Dewar: You did not do anything.

Mr. DUGGAN: I am talking about what this Government did. In its policy speech it said it had a mandate to do it. This scheme was flourished before the public with all the trumpets at the Government's command. However, the moment the Government got into a hot spot it got out from under. It has done that on every major political decision it has made. In relation to the transport fees the Government was going to play merry hell—and I ask to be excused for the vulgarity—but as soon and there were protest meetings at Kingaroy and Roma the Premier could not jump into his

Pontiac quickly enough to get back to Brisbane. The same applies to all the other hot potatoes that the Government has handled.

When the people in Queensland realise what the Government is doing most of them will be extremely indignant and I hope that they will show it in the appropriate way. This is a most retrogressive measure. I feel that there are ulterior motives in it. It is a complete repudiation of a very important and positive declaration of Government policy. It is not just something that cropped up suddenly, as was the case with Bills we have discussed earlier. At times an examination of legislation discloses that there are little defects in administration or little points that require amendments, but in this case no such thing is involved. The Government is trying to hand this responsibility back to the local authorities, but there are many things that the Government wants to hand over that they will not accept.

If the Government wants a plea on behalf of local authorities I can advance plenty of them from time to time. However, the Government will reject them principally because of the financial obligations involved. That is the Government's attitude. Let us be realistic. Any sensible person must know that Brisbane is becoming extremely congested. On the admission of the Government we know that a man was brought from America to carry out a traffic survey. When we asked questions—as we did from time to time—about what was being done to alleviate the problems at Petrie Bight, at the end of the Story Bridge, at the Normanby intersection, or at other important places in the city, we were told, "Please be patient. We are having a survey made." Later on, the Minister said that the Government realised the financial limitations of the Brisbane City Council, and that through the Main Roads Department the Government would negotiate and have a friendly discussion with the council to see what contribution should be made to help meet the cost of major engineering works. It is all poppycock! It is words, words—propaganda! We have public relations statements but no action. When we get down to taintacks, or when the Government has to deliver the goods we find it has nothing to deliver.

I will be very surprised if, when this Bill is printed, it meets with the approval of the Opposition. Whether we vote against it or not, and I think we will—not at this stage, but at later stages—depends on what we think when we have an opportunity to look at it. I think every member on this side is entitled to voice the strongest opposition to, and condemnation of, this change-about by the Government. It is one of the most revealing political reverses in the history of responsible Government in this State.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (9.18 p.m.): It is necessary for members of the Opposition to support the very strong words of the Leader of the Opposition on this matter. With due respect to the hon. member for Warrego, I

should like to tell a story about an Irishman and a bear. With your permission, Mr. Hodges, I think this story depicts the Government's liaison on traffic matters in the inner-city area of Brisbane in 1957. An Irishman walking through the forest ran into a bear. He grabbed the bear and the bear grabbed him. His friend came along and said, "Pat, would you like me to give you a hand to hold him?" Pat said, "No. Will you give me a hand to let him go?" That is typical of the Government's attitude to the administration of the Traffic Act in Brisbane.

It is remarkable that the then Minister for Labour and Industry, Mr. Morris, gave notice of this legislation on 7 November, 1957, a few months after the Government was elected to power. Naturally we can consider that this Act was about to be initiated by the Labour Government prior to the election of this Government.

When the Labour Government introduced traffic meters into the inner-city area of Brisbane, those on the Government side who were in Opposition at the time will recall that the then Minister for Labour and Industry, Mr. Jones, said that the revenue received from parking meters would be used to overcome the traffic problems in the inner area of Brisbane. He said it would be used to establish off-street parking and to overcome many of the traffic bottlenecks at that time.

A Bill was introduced by Mr. Morris on 28 November, 1957, a few months after this Government was elected. To give an indication of the complete reversal of form in the Government's attitude to traffic, mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, I shall read from Mr. Morris's speech at that time. He said—

"For years all Governments and Parliaments in Australia have been disturbed at the mounting toll of the road and irrespective of their political views they have made suggestions to reduce it. About 12 months ago a Bill was introduced into this Parliament by the then Minister for Labour and Industry to amend the traffic code in Queensland. It went through this Chamber late at night towards the end of the session and it was approved by the people generally. Many suggestions were made from both sides of the House for the solution of our traffic worries and fatalities. I want to make it quite clear that this Bill is not the final effort to solve the problem;"

It was to operate in the interim period until a final Bill was introduced, as was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, a year or so later.

He continued—

"... it is to deal with certain emergency matters. Next year I hope to bring down a more comprehensive Bill on the problem. The provisions of this measure are important, but they are not contentious, and they should lead to some improvement in our traffic problems."

That Bill started the move towards overcoming the anticipated problem of the ever-increasing number of motor-cars, the increasing population, the threat of a traffic overflow, the threat of a concentration of vehicles slowing down the traffic, and the necessary result—traffic fatalities.

The Government at that time accepted the responsibility for the traffic code and for the appointment of a traffic engineer and a traffic commission. The Government indicated to the people that the installation of parking meters and parkatareas in Brisbane would produce revenue to the State and to the Brisbane City Council sufficient to enable many of our traffic problems to be overcome. The Government appointed the Traffic Commission. There were many arguments. Some decisions made by the Traffic Commission have been contentious, for instance one-way traffic, the installation of traffic lights in the city area, and the arbitrary method by which the Traffic Commission, in its frustration at the lack of activity on the part of the Government, had to bring about a system of no-parking areas where business people were trading and people were living, for instance, in Coronation Drive. All of these things came about because the Government was not prepared to accept its responsibility under the 1957, 1958 and 1959 legislation.

As a Government we can refuse to accept responsibility for the flow of traffic and for the correction of many of the problems in the capital city and elsewhere in the State. This has been attempted in other capital cities where there is an ever-mounting population with worsening traffic conditions. Sydney and Melbourne are at present embarrassed by the problems that confront them. Within five years Brisbane will have to face the same problems. The Government will not be facing up to that problem by transferring to local authorities the powers given by it in 1958 to the Traffic Commission.

The Minister has stated that traffic engineers are now to be at the disposal of all local authorities in the State. I ask the Minister to name one qualified traffic engineer in any city of Queensland, or in any town or local authority area, who has been trained in the overcoming of traffic problems.

Mr. Hughes: There is Lionel Guthrie at the Brisbane City Council.

Mr. LLOYD: Mr. Guthrie's main duty seems to be to frustrate many industries who want to come to this city.

Mr. Hughes: He is a good man.

Mr. LLOYD: He is, but these duties are too onerous to be included among the others that he has. As I understood it, most of his duties now are concerned with insisting that industries undertake certain work that will cost them far too much money.

I am being quite honest in this matter. I have criticised other Brisbane City Councils on this part of their administration.

Unfortunately the local authority administration of Brisbane has grown to such an extent that overcoming many of these problems is too great a task for one man. My main criticism in this matter has been of the Groom and Chandler administrations. If industry is to be attracted to this city and to other parts of Queensland, all facilities that the local authority and the State and Federal Governments can make available should be provided. At no time should industries be frustrated by having impossible demands made upon them.

The Brisbane City Council, and every other local authority in Queensland, is now being asked to establish its own traffic authority. Regardless of the size of towns, the local authorities controlling them will have to install parking meters and tax motorists. To undertake the tasks imposed upon them within their areas, local authorities will have to tax motorists over and above the taxation imposed by this legislation. I believe that the Government is asking every town council in Queensland to carry the burden of enforcing traffic regulations in its town area, and outside it there will be another local authority area that may or may not be on a main road. Town council authorities will be in conflict with the Main Roads Department. In the last few years, many roads have been constructed to by-pass towns. I suppose this indicates how the Government is going to operate; it will ignore traffic control within towns and cities by-passed by highways and concentrate only on the revenue that can be grabbed by additional taxation upon people who own motor-cars. The Government will grab all of that revenue and use it for its own purposes.

Let it not be forgotten that since this Government assumed office taxation on motorists has been greatly increased. There have been increases in fees paid for drivers' licences, registration of vehicles, comprehensive insurance policies, and third-party insurance policies. Every time Parliament sits some legislation is passed under which owners of motor vehicles are charged something extra.

The Government has refused to accept its responsibility, and I believe that this is very important as it relates to the city of Brisbane. I have mentioned already that the Traffic Commission has issued very definite but very frustrating instructions to many people who have business premises or homes along a number of the arterial roads leading to the inner-city area—traffic regulations, "No Parking" Regulations and so on—because of the increasing number of accidents occurring on those roads. Although the commission has done this, the Government has not made one attempt since the Act was brought down in 1957 to overcome the major problem by constructing roads, additional bridges over creeks, and so on, and improving traffic flow in an endeavour to prevent fatalities on the roads.

The traffic congestion in the inner-city area in 1956-57 is in no way comparable with the present congestion, and seven years hence the Government will face an even greater problem in the capital city of this State. It is all very well for people in country areas to regard expenditure on schemes to relieve this congestion as unnecessary or another indication of Queen Street Government. They must be made to realise that in cities such as Brisbane, Townsville and Rockhampton, through which the majority of the State's exports and imports pass, there must be adequate road access. It should be kept clearly in mind that if we can reduce transport costs to industry we are taking a major step towards the development of the State and its industries. Brisbane is fed by Southern Queensland and the Northern Rivers of New South Wales, and if we can speed up the traffic flow and save time in moving goods to the harbour and the railhead, we will encourage the establishment of new industries. Lower transport costs will assist to reduce the cost of production and give a greater incentive to local industries to compete with industries in other States and other countries on the export markets of the world. Reduced transport costs will be reflected in the cost of production in primary industries, too.

Brisbane will play a very important part in the future development of Queensland, and the Government must accept its responsibility and endeavour to overcome the traffic problems that exist here and in many of the other major cities in the State. Now we are told that the Government, after seven years in office, has decided to relinquish this responsibility and transfer it back to the Brisbane City Council and other town councils and ask them to bear the financial burden involved. The rates being imposed on rate-payers in every local-authority area in Queensland are already fairly high.

Mr. Camm: Small local authorities have always accepted that responsibility. It is only the Brisbane City Council that has not.

Mr. LLOYD: It is not confined to the Brisbane City Council. I expected the Minister to realise that Queensland is the most decentralised State in the Commonwealth. Only 33½ per cent. of the population of this State is in Brisbane, and we have more harbours along the coast of Queensland and more large provincial cities than any other State in the Commonwealth. Every one of those cities carries a large measure of the transport and production of industry in this State. Townsville, Cairns, Rockhampton, Mackay, Bundaberg—almost every town from Cairns to Brisbane—every day of the week, is exporting much of the production of this State either by sea or rail. In addition, processing industries are starting in those centres, and there is an added responsibility upon the Government as a result.

We do not think that cities and other local authorities should continually have to accept the responsibility of the State Government in these matters. They are too important. The position will eventually arise in which every city in Queensland will have to impose an additional rating upon people living in the area until the impossible position is reached where every person who owns his own home is paying rent on it to the local authority. I think we have gone far enough with this form of taxation and the State must accept its responsibility in the matter.

This applies in Queensland more than in other States. Let us compare Queensland with South Australia. South Australia has 80 per cent. of its population in the city of Adelaide and every road in the State leads into Adelaide. In South Australia, however, the State Government accepts full responsibility for the overcoming of these problems, which at present are being forced upon local authorities in this State.

This is the most regressive legislation I have seen since I have been in Parliament. The Government should have some sense of responsibility and help in the endeavour to overcome traffic problems with the formation of roads, by-pass roads around cities, and so on, thus giving industry ample opportunity to transport its goods through harbours and over railheads, thus expediting transport and cheapening transport costs on very essential commodities. But the Government is going back to 1957 and before that and handing the whole problem back to the local authorities. This will put Queensland back 20 years so far as transportation is concerned, but the Government does not see these things.

In 1956 we planned this legislation. We then handed over and the then Minister for Labour and Industry, Mr. Morris, introduced the plan three months after this Government came to power.

Mr. Ewan: You claim this is your legislation?

Mr. LLOYD: It was. It was planned when we anticipated the problems that would be encountered within a few short years. We anticipated many of the problems in connection with education and other matters of administration in this State. We anticipated those problems and planned for them and in 1957 this Government realised the advantages that would be gained for the State by putting our plan into effect. But now, at this late stage, Government members are realising that it will be expensive, and no doubt many of the country representatives are saying, "We don't want this money spent in Brisbane. We want it spent somewhere else." So now they are going to absolve themselves of the responsibility and hand over to a local authority that will not be in a position to implement the plan.

I think it is very necessary to make the point that the Minister has given no indication to the Committee that the Government, through the Treasurer, will make available to local authorities, including the Brisbane City Council, additional allocations of loan money to enable them to carry out the necessary works that will be required in a few short years. As was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, we have been told in answer to questions that a traffic survey is at present being conducted by the Government into Brisbane's road construction requirements. The answer to all our questions has been that the matter is under survey.

Why, at this time, before that investigation is completed, are we asked to approve of legislation handing back responsibility for traffic to the Brisbane City Council and every other local authority in Queensland? When we ask questions one would think that every decision the Government had to make about traffic in this State depended upon the result of the traffic survey, particularly in the Brisbane area, yet before the survey is completed we are asked to approve of what is obviously most regressive legislation. It can do nothing to assist in overcoming the many traffic problems of this city or to prevent fatal accidents which have become so rampant of late.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: You are a little bit skew-whiff.

Mr. LLOYD: Obviously the whole of the Ministry is very much skew-whiff in its attitude towards the general administration of public affairs in Queensland. This is not an isolated case. Legislation similar to this has been introduced before. This is not the only occasion the Government has shelved its responsibilities on to local authorities. It is not the only occasion it has failed. It is not the only occasion it has not had the guts to face up to its responsibilities.

The Government has very definite responsibilities to every industry in this State to overcome Brisbane's traffic hazards. By planning five or 10 years ahead it should be ensuring that the cost of transporting goods in and out of Brisbane is cheapened as much as possible. When goods are being transported from one side of the city to the other, or from outside the city into the city, during peak periods, why should it take three-quarters of an hour to make the trip? That must have the effect of adding £1, £1 10s. or £2 to production costs. Is it not natural that with that added cost of production we are further disadvantaged in competing on the overseas market and with southern industries? These things will continue to occur until the Government accepts its responsibility in this very important matter.

Mr. EWAN (Roma) (9.43 p.m.): First of all, I congratulate the Minister on bringing down perhaps the most progressive legislation we have had in this field for years. I was

somewhat amazed to hear the simulated rage of the Leader of the Opposition when he so trenchantly criticised and read from "Hansard" statements made by Hon. K. J. Morris in 1957, 1958 and 1959. Apparently his greatest complaint is that there has been a change of policy. Yet we had the Deputy Leader of the Opposition say that Hon. K. J. Morris's legislation was based on legislation handed down to him by Labour when we came to office. Now we know why hon. members opposite are objecting—because, in effect, it was Labour's policy, as admitted by the Deputy Leader.

Mr. Lloyd: I don't follow you.

Mr. EWAN: The hon. gentleman made that statement. Now, because of the advances in technical methods in controlling traffic, building roads, and the like, hon. members opposite object to any alteration. They even go so far as to try, with every means at their disposal, to distort the intention of this Bill. They even forget that at the present moment Messrs. Wilbur Smith and Associates are carrying out a complete survey of the traffic requirements in Brisbane, that the Toowoomba City Council and officers of the Main Roads Department are carrying out a similar survey in Toowoomba, that Messrs. Rankine & Hill are at present carrying out a survey in association with the Main Roads people in Townsville, and that in each city a technical committee consisting of local authority officers and Main Roads officers are carrying out a survey of traffic and engineering requirements all over the State.

Hon. members opposite say that is wrong. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that nothing has been done for the last six or seven years. He has been asleep; he does not realise what is going on. Opposition members must admit that there has been a considerable increase in the density of traffic since 1957 because of the great prosperity brought about by the administration of this Government. It is therefore necessary to adopt different methods for the control of traffic in Brisbane and other areas than those that were necessary before the great wave of prosperity came over the State.

The Leader of the Opposition tried to distort the facts, despite what the Minister said in relation to the payment of £2 for the initial driver's licence fee. Let me quote exactly what the Minister said—

"Provision is made for the payment of a fee of £2 on the initial issue of a driver's licence to a person who is not the owner of a registered motor vehicle. This fee will help to defray some of the financial burden of maintaining a staff for the testing of applicants and the issue of drivers' licences to those who are allowed to drive motor vehicles but do not pay a driving fee with the registration fee."

I submit that that is an excellent measure. It places a degree of responsibility on a person who can get the use of a vehicle and

an authority to operate a vehicle without paying anything. Under this provision he must pay a fee of £2 on the initial issue of a driver's licence.

In keeping with his previous remarks, the Leader of the Opposition sought with every means at his disposal to distort the intention of the Bill. The Leader of the Opposition continued, with his usual great flow of words and rhetoric, by saying that this Government gives local authorities very much reduced subsidies. He chooses to forget the great increase in the volume of loans and consequently the great increase in the volume of subsidy on an overall basis. I hazard a guess that over the period this Government has occupied the Treasury benches it has provided loans and subsidies to local authorities, after taking into consideration the depreciation in currency, equal to at least four or five times the comparable amount provided by any Labour Government, particularly in the rural local-authority areas.

He continued in his usual way and said we are handing this responsibility over to the Brisbane City Council. He tried to bring in the idea that Brisbane is the only local authority to be affected. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition did not say that. He tried to bring in all the other places, but again the position was distorted. All local authorities are affected. Brisbane is but one of them.

It was then said that the Government was trying to avoid its responsibility. By interjection from Opposition members we were asked where local authorities were to get the money. In his introductory remarks the Minister gave an indication of where they would get the money. Let it not be forgotten that the Brisbane City Council at present collects the parking-meter fees in the inner-traffic area of Brisbane and under this legislation the Government is handing over to the council the parkatarea fees to help it carry out its responsibilities. According to my information, in 1963-64 the parkatarea fees amounted to £118,000.

Mr. Lloyd: Peanuts!

Mr. EWAN: Of course it is peanuts, according to the hon. member.

All local authorities—not only the Brisbane City Council—must act within the State laws. They must act in accordance with the standards laid down in the traffic manual as referred to in the Bill. I think we can safely leave aside the inane, unjust, and unworthy criticism by the Leader of the Opposition, backed up by the Deputy Leader, of the splendid provisions of this Bill.

Let us consider these provisions more fully. This Bill gives power to local authorities in all traffic matters. They are handed over to the local authorities, and that is where they should be, except in the case of gazetted roads, which will be looked after by the Main Roads Department. The Commissioner

for Main Roads will advise the Minister on engineering problems, standards, and the sort of things that are necessary.

The enforcement of the law will remain in the hands of the police. The Traffic Engineer will become a member of the Main Roads Department, and his services will be available to all local authorities if and as they need them. The Minister indicated that in 1957 we had very few traffic engineers in the State; there are now quite a few. Mr. Leitch's services will be made available if any local authority needs his help. That is envisaged in the Bill.

Then we have the old cry that the annual driving fee is to be increased from 15s. to £1 for each vehicle. That is estimated to bring in about £130,000. As the Minister said, 4s. in the £1 will be paid into the Traffic Engineering Trust Fund. Despite what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, there has been a great deal of agitation from the people of this city, and indeed, from people all over Queensland, for the employment of more traffic police.

Mr. Lloyd: How much will be got in this way?

Mr. EWAN: It is estimated that the increase of 5s. in the driver's licence fee, from 15s. to £1, will provide extra police estimated at 32 to 34, with their vehicles. This has been done at the request of numbers of people throughout Queensland. Somebody has to pay for the employment of these extra police. The extra 5s. will be money well invested in this way, and I think that the great majority of people who have a driver's licence would be only too delighted to agree, especially if they have had the experiences I have had on many of our roads. On a 12-ft. road built to a 50-miles-an-hour standard I have seen lunatics trying to travel at 90 miles an hour, and I have seen the carnage that has taken place. We should have the greatest pleasure in accepting the method envisaged in this legislation to bring about that increase in the number of police.

I subscribe wholeheartedly to the increased penalties contained in the Bill. For driving while under disqualification the penalty is increased from a maximum fine of £100, or six months' imprisonment, or both, to a maximum fine of £200, or 12 months' imprisonment, or both. It is usually people under disqualification or those who have not a licence who illegally use motor-cars and go for joy-rides and cause most of the deaths and smashes on the roads. I hope that those penalties will be imposed to the maximum in relation to the gravity of the offence.

The penalties for driving while under the influence of liquor are increased from a maximum fine of £100, or six months' imprisonment, or both, in the first instance, or a maximum fine of £200, or 12 months' imprisonment, or both, in the second

instance, by 50 per cent. I am wholeheartedly in favour of giving the court the right to impose a sentence of imprisonment after the third offence.

Mr. Bennett: That has been in the Act up to date.

Mr. EWAN: That is right, and I say that I would like to make it absolutely mandatory for the court to inflict a gaol sentence after the third offence. It will be noticed that in this legislation the Government has tempered justice with mercy and has tried to provide an incentive for the person who mends his ways. After all, I suppose most hon. members would like to extend a helping hand to those able to be put on the straight and narrow path. As an indication of this attitude, a person who has not committed an offence for 10 years starts off, as it were, free again. If he keeps to the straight and narrow path for 10 years, we want to provide an incentive for him to continue to do so and not commit any more of the stupid offences that are endangering life and limb all over the State. That is a very humane provision.

I believe that the Bill will be received very favourably by all the thinking people of the community, and very definitely by those who have suffered from the stupid actions of a small section of the community who, once they get a steering wheel in their hands, become potential murderers.

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) (9.57 p.m.): It was very interesting to listen to the hon. member for Roma, who was the first speaker from the Government side. He endeavoured to mislead the Committee by saying that the cost of the various surveys carried out should be borne by the Government and the Main Roads Department, even though local authorities, including the Brisbane City Council, are part of them. I point out to the hon. member that local authorities in the areas concerned will have to meet their share of the cost of those surveys.

He also spoke of the revenue obtained by the Brisbane City Council from parking meters. Finance obtained from this source has been used by the Brisbane City Council for other projects that the council believed would help to overcome traffic congestion in this city. This money has already provided off-street parking at the parking station on Wickham Terrace, and work has started on the provision of another parking station on the south side of the city so that people will have somewhere to leave their cars when they come to the city.

He also said that parkatareas will be handed over to the Brisbane City Council. Again, certain finance will be made available from them. Anyone who likes to go round areas where parkatareas are installed will find very many of them not being used. People have to leave their cars outside the city and use public transport provided by the Brisbane City Council to reach the city.

Mr. Ewan: Would you deny that they have collected £118,000 from them?

Mr. NEWTON: I would not deny that at all.

Mr. Ewan: So they must be used.

Mr. NEWTON: In my opinion, revenue from parkatareas will, if anything, decrease still further.

The hon. member referred to the increased fees imposed by the provisions of the Bill. The only thing I can say is that nobody seems at all concerned about where the money is to come from. It is merely another increase that is being passed on, and no-one on the Government side is the least bit concerned about how the working people of the city will be able to meet the increases. The Government would be the first to scream if those people went to the Industrial Commission and asked for an increase in their wages. It would say they had no right to do that. Yet when the Government brings down Bills of this type in which increases are imposed, it does not even stop to consider where the people will get the money to meet them.

On numerous occasions the Opposition has warned the Government to think twice about setting up new departments. Hon. members on this side of the Chamber pointed out to the Government that although the setting up of a State Traffic Commission in Queensland was necessary, a considerable amount of finance would be needed for its operation. It seems that the Government, having shouldered the responsibility for a number of years and planned a number of things for the Brisbane City Council and for the councils in provincial cities, it now ducking out from under and leaving someone else holding the bag.

As the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have said, local authorities will have to bear a very heavy burden. Legislation is being brought down in March 1965. Local authorities bring down their budgets in June, long before the Budget is introduced in this Chamber, and they will have only a couple of months to consider the problem that is now being handed over to them by the Government and decide how they can raise the finance to meet their commitments. I assure the Government that it is not only the motorists who will be concerned about this increase; ratepayers in local-authority areas will be very worried about increased rates. There is no doubt that if local authorities cannot get from increased rates the finance that they need to overcome the problem, they will have to find other ways and means of getting sufficient money to enable them to carry out the work. If we examine the problem and see the work that has been done, it is obvious that a considerable sum will be required for maintenance, quite apart from dealing with other problems that will have to be overcome in Brisbane.

I am worried, too, that this could be only the start of action that the Government has

in mind in relation to the Main Roads Department. I wonder what the next step will be. We might find the Government getting out from under in its responsibilities in the metropolitan area, and in other local-authority areas, in other respects. As hon. members realise, the Main Roads Department takes over responsibility for roads at a certain distance from the inner city.

Mr. Morris, who was then Minister for Labour and Industry, was able to convince Cabinet that a Traffic Commission should be set up and that a Traffic Engineer was required. The position of Traffic Engineer was advertised, and I believe that the present occupant of the office came from Melbourne. The Government has some responsibility to that man. Surely it could not bring him from Melbourne to fill such an important position as this and then dump him overnight.

I think the crux of the problem—I do not think anybody has mentioned it yet—is that in the setting up of the State Traffic Commission in Queensland the Traffic Engineer was given powers by the then Minister that should never have been given to him. That is what is worrying the Government today, and it is the reason for the introduction of this Bill. That problem could easily have been overcome. I have had experience with work being carried out by the Main Roads Department in my electorate. I approached the previous Minister, who was a very approachable man. I had deputations to him in regard to a certain four-lane highway. The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt was there also, as he was affected. Mr. Evans called his engineers in and discussed the problems with them but we could get nowhere. Eventually he said, "I will get the Traffic Engineer to have a look at this problem." He did not say so, but I knew immediately that as soon as the Traffic Engineer was called in and gave a ruling, whatever ruling he gave would be final. The Main Roads engineers could not override his decision, even though they may not have agreed with it. The only way the decision could have been overridden was by a Cabinet minute, and I do not think any Minister would continually go to Cabinet and say, "We have to reverse a decision made by the Traffic Engineer."

I think that is one of the main reasons for the introduction of this Bill, but, as I say, the position could have been easily met and the State Traffic Commission retained. That would have avoided the burdens that will be placed on local authorities when this Bill becomes law. All that would have been necessary was to bring the Traffic Engineer and the State Traffic Commission under the direction of the Minister and give the Minister the power to override its decisions. If the Minister or his engineers in the Main Roads Department were not happy with decisions of the Traffic Commission he could use his discretion and reverse them.

We have been told that the Traffic Engineer will be given a position in the Main Roads Department, where he will still carry out certain works and act in an advisory capacity throughout the State. I should like to know what is going to happen to his staff. Will they receive the same treatment? A number of people are involved. The Traffic Commission has grown. There is a secretary and his staff, and many other people who are employed in Brisbane and throughout the State. A number of painters will be displaced, as well as some truck-drivers. They have been working day and night to carry out their work. Because of the type of work that has to be done they have to work long hours, very often at night-time, sometimes because the weather has not been suitable for the work.

I ask the Minister what will happen to those people. What will happen in regard to their long-service leave, their sick-pay entitlement and their holidays? They have worked some years in this department and if they are now going to be thrown on the scrap-heap what will happen to those entitlements? Some of them, believing the department to be established, may have booked holiday accommodation a year ahead. What will happen to that? I appeal to the Minister to make sure that these people are transferred to other Government departments so that they will not lose these entitlements.

The Minister spoke about how the increased fees were to be applied. I have said in the Chamber many times that I could not understand why, when the Traffic Commission was set up, the police in the Traffic Department, who had been carrying out work of vital importance, were assigned to other duties. Now the Minister says that these police have done the job before. I can remember the feeling between Inspector Risch and the Minister for Labour and Industry when the change-over was taking place. Prior to the setting-up of the Traffic Commission, if a member wanted anything done about traffic in his electorate he got in touch with the traffic police. Normally they would come out and make an inspection, and then submit recommendations as to how the problem should be tackled. They would look after such things as the siting of taxi-ranks and bus bays, the erection of "Stop" signs and the painting of traffic lines.

Frequently I have had to draw the attention of the Traffic Commission to danger spots in my area. Nine times out of ten I would not get what I wanted. As traffic accidents continued to occur at the same danger spot I had to take the same matter up with them time and time again. The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt would know the dangerous intersection at the corner of Newnham and Broadwater Roads. Once that road was bitumen-surfaced it became almost a main highway to the inner-city area. It is more or less a short-cut because motorists have no problems with trams along that route. When

I made representations to the Traffic Commission all I got was the erection of a "Give Way" sign on the bottom side of Newnham Road. There was a blind spot in Broadwater Road, and accident after accident was occurring at the intersection. After I made further representations the "Give Way" sign was replaced with a "Stop" sign. About 200 yards back at the blind spot an "Intersection" sign was erected. Possibly the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt was wondering whether I was fair dinkum. Knowing me, he should have known that I was. I finally took the matter up with the Treasurer when he was opening the Mt. Gravatt East State School.

Mr. Murray: A very good member, too.

Mr. NEWTON: At least he is understanding when it comes to traffic problems. He pointed out that he often uses that road when going to the Gold Coast on Sundays. He realised how dangerous the intersection was and he would support my representations. No doubt other hon. members have had similar experiences in their own electorates.

I could never see any reason for dividing these responsibilities as they have been divided by the present Government. We have to try to get back to the basis where we have looking after these problems people who know the way the job should be done. I, with all hon. members on this side, cannot agree to this principle of slugging the family man and his sons and daughters for a licence fee to drive a motor vehicle. I am a family man with a number of sons and daughters. At any time three of them might want to drive my vehicle and straight away we must pay £6. So help me, I had a phone call the other day from a man who had gone for three driving tests under the new traffic set-up. I think it cost him £1 a time for the use of the car for the tests, so it cost him £3. I know him, and he is a pretty sound type. I am sure he would take to driving normally, but he still has not passed the test.

A Government Member: There is no charge for a driving test.

Mr. Herbert: He is being "touched" by someone.

Mr. NEWTON: I am sorry if I am mistaken on this matter. Every person who has a registered motor vehicle should note what I have to say about the cost of running a car, although a very small vehicle may not cost as much. The charges to be met by a motorist amount to £1 a week, with the vehicle simply standing in the garage.

Mr. Smith: It is more than that.

Mr. NEWTON: I am pleased that the hon. member said that. I am putting the proposition forward on the basis of third-party insurance, comprehensive insurance, traffic licence fee and registration fee. Those charges have to be met by every motorist in the State.

If the Government had to take the steps it is taking in this Bill it would have been better to delay it until the next session. If it had been delayed, at least the local authorities would have been given more time to look into their finances and see how they can take over this task and handle the problem that will be theirs when the Bill is passed.

Mr. PILBEAM (Rockhampton South) (10.18 p.m.): I support the Minister and applaud the Bill, which is handing over to local authorities the power to deal with local traffic matters in accordance with the policy laid down in the Act, except in the case of gazetted roads. I stress that the Bill seeks to hand over local traffic matters only. There are no fears on the part of local authorities. Each local authority will not set up its own traffic laws; it will act in accordance with State laws, but naturally it will deal with local matters.

I do not profess to be able to speak for Brisbane because it has a separate Act, but I am well qualified to speak for local authorities outside Brisbane. I assure hon. members that we accept this responsibility gladly, without any fear of extra work and certainly without any fear about extra cost. That is definitely not the case.

The Traffic Commission, as such, will cease to exist, although we will still retain the expert services and advice of Mr. Ken Leitch. Local authorities in recent years have learnt a lot from him. He has proved to be well skilled in his profession and has made his services available to local authorities at all times. They needed educating and they profited by it. They are now well able to look after local traffic matters.

I do not share the fears of Opposition members that this will put a tremendous responsibility on local authorities.

Mr. Bromley: You are speaking only for Rockhampton. You cannot speak for this city.

Mr. PILBEAM: I cannot speak for parrots like the hon. members who are always speaking for themselves.

The local authorities are already doing this work. From hearing members of the Opposition speak tonight, people could be under the misapprehension that Mr. Leitch has been doing the work for the local authorities. I assure the Committee that this is not so. The local authorities initiate nearly all of these matters and only seek the approval of Mr. Leitch. In most cases they are well versed in the requirements of the Traffic Engineer and do not need much information; but they have to get his approval. That is the main reason they will welcome this Bill, because in these simple local matters the local authorities often have to wait a considerable time before they can get the approval of the Traffic Engineer. Members should dismiss from their minds the thought that this change will place a great financial burden on

local authorities, because it will not. It will make very little difference because they are doing the work already. The only difference is that they have had to seek approval, whereas they now can give the approval themselves.

They are dealing adequately with many of the local traffic requirements. In cities like Rockhampton where meters are installed, they are controlling parking very well. I see no reason why they should not be able to deal with such simple matters as parking in streets, setting up "Stop" signs, and determining where a bus stop should be. If we have State laws to guide us and still have available the advice and services of Mr. Leitch, even though he will be in a different department, I do not see why we should fear the change.

Mr. Mann: He has been sacked.

Mr. PILBEAM: He has not been sacked. This Government looks after its employees. It even looks after defeated politicians.

I am afraid I cannot shed any tears of sorrow for Brisbane. Surely the income received from parking meters and parkatareas is ample for the financing of traffic requirements here. The provincial cities get ample income from parking meters to look after their parking requirements.

There are other principles in the Bill which, although small, will be welcomed by local authorities. One matter which has agitated us for some time is the parking of derelict vehicles in the street. A determination has been made in this regard by the police that if the registration fee is paid the vehicle can remain in the street. We have had experience of cars standing in the street for several months and we could not shift them. They were an eyesore. Now we have power to shift them.

Another matter worrying local authorities is the practice adopted by stock carriers and other people of washing down trailers in the street. This has irritated the local authorities. Now we will be able to deal with this matter.

The Bill mentions licences for street booths or stands. In Rockhampton we do not believe in allowing street booths at all. Anybody who pays rates and sets up an attractive shop in Rockhampton is entitled to share in the trade in that street. On one occasion there was a fruit seller who was allowed to put up a fruit stall just off the main street. Without any recourse to the council he was given a licence for 12 months. That irritated the shopkeepers, who paid rates. The authority to determine whether this would or would not be permitted was not left with the council at all. Under this Bill, it will be.

I regard the Bill as a very good one. I think it will be welcomed by every local authority in the State. I do not propose to speak for Brisbane; there are others here who can do that. I do, however, have a right to speak for local authorities elsewhere

throughout the State who will welcome the Bill and carry out its requirements without any expense or inconvenience. It will now be possible to obviate many of the delays that have occurred because of the numerous calls made on the services of Mr. Leitch. Nothing but good will come from the Bill, and I support it completely.

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (10.26 p.m.): I can see in the Bill only a clear indication that the Government likes to have authority but absolutely no responsibility. By its legislation, particularly that relating to traffic, it has clearly shown that it is a gutless Government and will pull the chain on the mandate given to it in 1957, and referred to by the then Deputy Premier, who, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, said that the electors gave a mandate to the Government to set up the Traffic Commission in the manner outlined then by him as Leader of the Liberal Party and Deputy Premier in this coalition Government. Hon. members opposite got rid of him, of course, for obvious reasons; they have got rid of two leaders in the short time that I have been here.

The fundamental reason why the Government does not wish to persist with the Traffic Commission is a financial one. The Government will pursue only those courses that produce revenue, such as their booze-and-betting authority, which is returning millions of pounds. They see in the matter of traffic control some pre-election dangers. With the next State election not far away, the Government has sought to disown all responsibility for traffic. It has been recreant to the trust that Mr. Morris said was imposed in it in 1957. It is selling out its soul because of the fear of what the electors might do to its members if they continue their chaotic mismanagement of traffic control in Queensland, particularly in Brisbane.

Knowing that there are in the Brisbane City Council men with brains and a sense of responsibility who are competent to handle this matter, the Government is handing this thorny problem over to the Labour administration of the Brisbane City Council. The electors should therefore not be deceived by the snide attempt being made by the Government to disown its responsibilities. They should acknowledge the fact that the Government can see that only a Labour administration can handle traffic in the city of Brisbane.

Mr. Morris, when Deputy Premier, said—

"We charged the then Government with failure either to recognise or even understand the increasing gravity of this problem of which we were acutely conscious and which we considered must be quickly dealt with; and so we promised that if elected to power we would establish a State-wide Traffic Commission so that all those most intimately concerned with the problem, that is the Government, the Police Department and local authorities, could work together to eliminate many of the difficulties which already existed and

which were sure to develop due to the increase in population and the large increase in the number of motor vehicles on the road."

He went on to say—

"The procedure adopted by that committee has been that either the Traffic Engineer, the Brisbane City Council, the Police Department, or the Main Roads Department, according to the location of the proposed works, initiate proposals or consider proposals submitted to them to improve the traffic control in the metropolitan area . . ."

Mr. Morris pointed out that in 1959 the number of motor-vehicle registrations had increased to the huge figure of 383,779. I point out now that motor-vehicle registrations as at January 1965 had increased to 528,761. In introducing the legislation, Mr. Morris said that the population of Queensland had increased from 1,076,610 in 1945 to 1,414,362 in 1958. As at 30 September 1964, the population was 1,592,544. Therefore, using the argument then used by Mr. Morris, the former Leader of the Liberal Party, there is an even greater need now for the Traffic Commission set up by the Government eight years ago, because the number of cars on the highways has increased and the population of the State has increased.

He went on to say—

"The various local authorities of Queensland, as the constructing authority, the authority controlling land development, and the planning authority, have also a very great interest in traffic.

"The Police Department, as a State-wide enforcement agency, must also have an active voice in measures affecting traffic control.

"Lastly, it is realised that sooner or later large amounts of capital expenditure will be required to provide adequate facilities. These, therefore, must be co-ordinated and integrated with other large State development projects.

"In considering these aspects, it is evident that a co-ordinating authority which represents the various organisations concerned should be established. It is therefore proposed that a Traffic Commission, comprising the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, the Commissioner of Main Roads, the Commissioner of Police, and the Town Clerk of the City of Brisbane, be established in order to provide, on a State-wide basis, uniformity and standardisation of methods."

He pointed out how important it was to have that authority, and he committed the taxpayers of Queensland to great expense in order to implement the Traffic Commission and to introduce a traffic engineer. A great deal of money has already been spent solely on investigations. They will now be scrapped and thrown into the wastepaper basket, and many of the staff who have been employed, again at considerable expense, will either

have their services dispensed with or be directed to other avenues of employment in the Public Service.

I wish to make one final reference to what Mr. Morris said, and what he said at this stage indicates clearly that the Government is dropping the hot potato of traffic because it knows that traffic in Queensland, particularly in Brisbane, will soon be brought to a jarring halt because of its unwillingness to face up to its task and implement the proposals that have been recommended to it by its technical experts. He said—

"The article referred to the almost unbelievable traffic problems of London and many of the other large cities in the United Kingdom. The problem is so acute that the authorities are considering the closure of certain London streets to traffic. The problem is so great that sometimes it takes one hour to travel a mile through many London streets. That is something I hope we will never experience here. We should look ahead and introduce an overall approach to the problem before it becomes so severe here."

It has become as severe here, and in some instances even more severe. As a result, the Government wants to dump all its traffic problems into the laps of local-government representatives, but it is not prepared to allocate to them an equitable amount of finance to enable them to meet their responsibilities.

I venture to say further that one of the reasons why the control of traffic is being handed over to local authorities is that much of the equipment that has been installed is faulty. We see traffic lights breaking down from day to day. We see traffic policemen having to be put on duty at control points because of the failure of traffic lights.

Mr. Hughes: If that is the best you can do, it is a weak argument.

Mr. BENNETT: We know that the equipment is expensive. I have correspondence to show that the Government cannot obtain the necessary equipment to implement decisions that have been made for the installation of traffic lights around Brisbane, so it is quite apparent why this Government is trying to shelve its responsibilities.

I also make reference to the provisions relating to penalties under section 16 of the Traffic Act, which deals with driving under the influence, and those under section 328A of the Criminal Code, which deals with dangerous driving. What I say in relation to these matters is clearly my personal opinion and belief unless I am subject to persuasion on reading and studying the Bill. This Government is forever ready to increase penalties savagely. It has done that with rare abandonment in relation to section 16 of the Traffic Acts, yet the number of drunken drivers in this city has increased tenfold in spite of the penalties. So heavy penalties are not the answer. I fully believe

that this Government is afraid of the accusations made in this Parliament, and at other places, from time to time by the hon. member for Townsville South. He is blackmailing the Government into amending legislation to increase penalties. Why he can do that and what hold he has over the Government, I do not know, but the savage increases in penalty have not proved anything, and the Government must know it.

Section 16 of the Traffic Act, which is often colloquially referred to as the "drink-driving" section, has overtaxed our traffic courts. I venture to say that one could not get a case set down in the next three months despite the fact that there are always two courts, and sometimes three, sitting regularly in dealing with these matters. So the savage increases in penalties is not the answer.

There is a medico in the ranks of the Cabinet. Unfortunately he has been allocated to a legal portfolio, but surely he can tell this Government that if a man is caught under that section—that is, repeatedly under the influence—three times, he is not a villain or a criminal; there is something wrong with him medically or pathologically, and we should find some other way of dealing with what obviously is an alcoholic. Anyone who suffers the pains and penalties of going before the court at least three times, paying the heavy fines involved and the substantial legal fees that have to be met, is not a criminal; he is a sick man and we should find some other way of dealing with him than fining him, casting him aside, and letting him go to rot. I feel that this Government is not facing up to the problem. It should do something to help that section of the community rather than treat them as criminals. They are not criminals.

In making that reference to the Traffic Act, I must also refer to the Criminal Code. This Government has amended the Traffic Act no fewer than eight times since its accession to office. The Government is in a state of confusion in the field of traffic control.

Mr. Windsor: It is a progressive Government.

Mr. BENNETT: If it is, it is taking a long time to reach a final conclusion on traffic problems, because there have been eight amendments in nine years. The Traffic Acts are like a pakapu ticket. They have to be interlined with amendments from time to time until it is difficult to read them. As I say, there have been eight amendments to the Traffic Acts and the Government has not yet reached a conclusion on them. This is the ninth amendment since the Government came to office in 1957.

In amending the Traffic Act the Government has been tinkering with the Main Roads Act, the Local Government Act, the City of Brisbane Act and the Criminal Code. Why can we not get some codified system

of traffic law and traffic control that we can read in one Act, instead of having to refer to the various statutes I have mentioned, and the various amendments thereto?

When dealing with the position, Hon. K. J. Morris said that motorists should be properly informed of the Government's intentions in the legislation it had introduced. With that in mind he printed, at the taxpayers' expense, a costly manual informing them of the law and telling them what their rights, obligations and responsibilities were. That manual is now of no value to them because it is completely out of date. For all the good it is it could have been printed a century ago, the Government has changed the law so much. Furthermore, this Government has not even been consistent in the Ministers it has had controlling traffic. In my time I can recall four of them who have had a go. Each of the four has made a great mess of it. Because of the Government's present state of embarrassment it foists this legislation into the hands of the newest Minister in the Cabinet for him to introduce in Parliament. I sympathise with the new Minister for having to try to cover up for the past mistakes of the senior Ministers.

Mr. Camm: I'd say I'll get it through, just the same.

Mr. BENNETT: That is an indication of the dictatorial methods of this Government. It will gag it through if necessary as it usually does. It will push it through with its numbers. That is almost a threat. I would not bet the Minister because he only bets on certainties.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister did not use the word "bet". He said he would get it through.

Mr. BENNETT: I thought he used the word "bet". In 1957 the Government envisaged that by changing the traffic laws it would lessen the accident toll that prevailed at that time. There again the Government has failed. I could give statistics showing that the accident rate has reached a record high during the regime of this Government. Even unsolved offences have reached a record number. In every phase of traffic control, no matter where one looks, whether it be under the Main Roads Act or the Criminal Code, or in the Police Department this Government has failed.

Previous speakers, particularly the hon. member for Belmont, have referred to the unjustifiable tax on the family man and his children in the increased licence fee of £2 for the first licence in a family. The average teenager who obtains a driving licence is 17 years of age. Very often he is not earning anything, sometimes only a modicum of income. It means that the father has to pay the £2. Probably his wife would have to pay her £2 licence fee out of the house-keeping money. But again the Government is looking after the firms and big companies.

They do not have to pay for the first licence. As I understand the Minister, they are getting a free licence.

Mr. Hughes: It is looking after the worker who drives the truck.

Mr. BENNETT: He has to pay his licence fee, anyway.

The Minister has indicated the exorbitant charges to be extracted under this Bill. There will be a paltry increase of 34 in the number of traffic policemen in the State. We need 50 more in Brisbane alone. The 34 are to be dispersed throughout Queensland. By the time they are split up amongst the three shifts that have to be worked the effective increase per shift is cut down to 11 throughout Queensland. In effect, Brisbane will not get one of them and, if Brisbane gets any, other cities like Rockhampton, Maryborough, and Townsville will miss out entirely. It is only a fleabite to appoint an extra 34.

In his last annual report the Commissioner of Police demanded an increase in the numerical strength of the force but to date the Government has not been prepared to grant his request. As a result there has been inadequate police protection not only for traffic, but for all criminal offences. That is why we have so many unsolved crimes. This paltry attempt to get extra revenue (from the workers in the main) will not bring the strength of the Police Force up to the standard presently demanded by the Commissioner, and certainly will not result in any effective increase in the traffic police.

I shall mention the name of a constable—Constable Doyle. I am sure he will not mind. He has had about six or eight years' service as a traffic policeman, on a motorcycle. He has never committed an offence in the whole of his police career but within the last two or three weeks he was transferred to beat duty; he is pounding the pavement. He is one man who is available.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BENNETT: I accept your ruling, Mr. Hooper. The Government will not allow me to discuss police transfers.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is the ruling of the Chair that the hon. member cannot discuss police transfers on a debate dealing with the Traffic Act. I remind the hon. member for South Brisbane of my ruling.

Mr. BENNETT: I misunderstood the situation. I will have to accept your assurance, Mr. Hooper.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member for South Brisbane is reflecting on my ruling I ask him to apologise. I am not here to be dictated to by the Government. I am here as Chairman of Committees. We have before us a Bill dealing with the Traffic Act. It has nothing to do with transfers in the Police Department.

Mr. BENNETT: I accept your ruling. I said that I misunderstood the position.

When this legislation was introduced in 1957 it was brought down with a lot of clap-trap and a fanfare of trumpets. Parliament was told that it was imperative; that the whole of traffic control would fail unless it was introduced. Although the present Minister was not here at the time, will he tell us why the Government has completely somersaulted in its policy? Is he prepared to deny that the somersault has been brought about in anticipation of next year's election, that Government members are trying to foist their responsibility onto the Labour Brisbane City Council, which polled so well at the last election, and that Liberal members of Parliament are afraid of the results they may obtain? That is one of the reasons why they are continually in the party room, as they were today, when only three Government members were left on the Government benches.

Mr. Windsor: Stick to the Bill.

Mr. BENNETT: I understand why the hon. member for Ithaca is getting out of Parliament.

The hon. member for Rockhampton South said that there is no power to move cars that are illegally or improperly parked in any of the cities throughout Queensland. That is a lot of rubbish. If he is uncertain he should ask his local police inspector to study the Traffic Acts. The police have a right to shift any car. They have a right to tell a Parliamentarian to shift his car if they want to—and they do. They shift Cadillacs from outside Lennox Hotel if they decide it is necessary, and I agree that very often it is necessary. If they can shift a grazier's Cadillac from outside Lennox Hotel with this Government in power, surely they can shift an old "bomb" from outside the local authority hall in Rockhampton when they think it should be removed. I do not accept the claim of the hon. member for Rockhampton South that they have no authority to shift cars.

Surely in the interests of the community and in the interests of Queensland there should be some uniformity in our parking laws and traffic controls. When we go interstate from Brisbane we have to acquaint ourselves with the traffic laws in those States, but if we are going to travel throughout the local authority areas, and from city to city in Queensland, and there are different regulations and rules, it will be most confusing.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HUGHES (Kurilpa) (10.51 p.m.): I believe that the Bill recognises the necessity to cope with the needs of our modern society.

Mr. Bromley: You were against this when you were an alderman. Will you admit that?

Mr. HUGHES: I could say a lot of things about the time when I was an alderman. The hon. member for South Brisbane would turn

red with embarrassment if I told all I know about how he frustrated the Traffic Commission in this city in its efforts to bring about sanity on our roads. We have just witnessed the spectacle of the hon. member for South Brisbane, who is charged with the responsibility of upholding law and order—I shall leave out dignity—carrying a brief for the drunken motorist. He does not want these people to have imposed on them heavy and savage penalties befitting the crime. Drunken drivers are causing carnage on our roads and are maiming people. Why does the hon. member for Ipswich East and others defend them? If they had any semblance of responsibility they would get up on their feet and applaud the Government for having the courage to deal with this problem, not in terms of the votes that the Opposition might gain or the Government might lose from the section it penalises, but simply because it had the courage to face up to the problem.

Opposition members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: We have done this in all honesty, having the courage of our convictions.

Opposition members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: I think it is for that reason that hon. members opposite will be occupying that side of the Chamber for many years to come.

It has been said that the Government was blackmailed into increasing the penalties; and many other charges have been laid. I cannot find it in myself to believe other than that the hon. member for South Brisbane, in the dissertation we have just heard, did anything but prove that he was carrying a brief for drunken motorists, although I must admit that he was not up to his usual standard in his knowledge of the application of the law. To say the least, the people of this State must be disappointed that a man of his responsibility should be carrying the torch for these miscreants, who should be penalised to a greater extent than they are.

Mr. Bennett: They can read what I said in "Hansard".

Mr. HUGHES: If this Government took a full page spread in the newspaper and printed how the hon. member had defended these folk and had not supported the Government in the application of a penalty befitting the crime, the public would be better able to judge the attitude that has been adopted by him and his party.

The Bill provides for increased penalties, which the Minister outlined. There is a pertinent point that I feel I must introduce at this time. It provides also that if an offender has been previously convicted twice under the subsection that I mentioned, imprisonment must be imposed as the whole

or part of the punishment. The Bill will increase the penalty for offences by 50 per cent. I could go on and on, but I do not propose to deal with all those details as they have already been outlined by the Minister.

It is about time that we had in this Chamber people of responsibility who will see that heavier penalties are applied and a "get tough" attitude is adopted towards drunken drivers. This is one of the most positive ways in which the carnage on the roads can be reduced. I believe it is pertinent for me to quote from the Queensland Year Book for 1964. Road traffic accidents reported in the whole of Queensland for 1962-3 totalled 22,123, in which there were 6,345 casualties. In the Brisbane metropolitan area alone, there were 128 killed. By comparison, the number of traffic deaths for the same period in American cities with populations comparable with that of Brisbane, as contained in a publication of the American National Safety Council, were—

Pittsburgh, Pa.	50
Seattle, Wash.	63
Columbus, Ohio	48
Denver, Colo.	62
San Antonio, Tex.	62
Dallas, Tex.	96
Cincinnati, Ohio	62

Those figures are to be compared with the figure of 128 in the Brisbane metropolitan area. Is it not the responsibility of those charged with government to make laws which will fit the needs of the community and which will have a disciplinary effect on those most responsible for this shocking situation? It has been proved that the one most responsible is the drunken driver.

Mr. Hanson: It is an indictment of your administration.

Mr. HUGHES: It is an indictment of a lot of things and a lot of people, including those to whom I have listened on my right who defend drunken drivers and do not want increased penalties. I believe that there is a need for education in this matter and a common-sense approach. There is a need for the imposition of heavier penalties, and a tremendous need for various organisations and societies to cope with the problem.

I believe that in introducing the Bill the Minister has done something that the people of Queensland will applaud and, in so doing, echo their confidence in the Government. I believe that the gaol sentences and heavy fines to be imposed will act as a deterrent. They are not so much savage as realistic. All that is needed is proper policing and for the members of the judiciary to do their job. Members of Parliament, in passing Bills that become law, are able to lay down terms of fines and imprisonment; it is then up to those who sit in judgment to apply them realistically. I certainly hope that the judiciary get the message from the sentiments expressed in this Parliament.

There is to be an increase in the fee for a licence from 15s to £1, and a charge of £2 will be made when a licence is applied for. Hon. members must realise that it costs money to provide these services, which must be paid for by the taxpayers of the State. It is anomalous that the taxpayers of the whole State, including those who do not own vehicles, must contribute to the upkeep of a department whose function is testing applicants for driving licences and issuing them. It think it is only fair that those who use that service and obtain their licence should pay something towards the cost of administering the department. I do now know why the Leader of the Opposition charged the Government with savagely fleecing the people. Surely an increase of 5s. cannot be described in that way in this day and age, especially when it will enable 34 more policemen to be put on the roads. In my opinion, extra police are required to cope with the greater number of cars on the roads, and to ask those who make use of the service to contribute something towards the cost of this policing is not unreasonable.

I believe, too, that an incentive should be provided for people to be good drivers. I do not hold any brief for drunken drivers and I believe that heavy penalties should be imposed on them; on the other hand, I believe that the Government should investigate the possibility of introducing incentives for accident-free driving. People should be able to look forward to paying lower driving fees if they exercise tolerance and restraint and fulfil all the requirements of the law when they are driving on the roads. I suggest that in the future, when the Act is under review, a reduction of up to 10 per cent., or a reduction on a graduated scale, might be considered as a reward for accident-free and offence-free driving. Motorists will get the benefit of this if they have a proper regard for the law, and, as I said earlier, I believe that more policemen on the roads will also assist to reduce the number of accidents.

The Bill provides for local authorities to take over responsibility for parking meters, road works, and so on. It should be clearly understood that this is what the local authorities want.

Mr. Houston: Not the Brisbane City Council.

Mr. HUGHES: I was at a function recently at which Alderman Dent was boasting about how much the Brisbane City Council was going to receive in fees. This was before I knew what provisions the Bill contained. Alderman Dent and others have been saying for quite a long time that not only was the council going to take over these powers but that it wanted them. They have stated this publicly. This is another instance of the Parliamentary Labour Party being out of step with its colleagues in the Brisbane City Council.

A local authority has the responsibility of making possible the most effective use of its roadways. The hon. member for Sandgate and the hon. member for South Brisbane were members of the Brisbane City Council and members of the party that blew out the brains of the city council, sacked the engineers and technical officers, and—

Mr. BENNETT: I rise to a point of order. I resent the remark made by the hon. member for Kurilpa. We did not blow out anybody's brains at the City Hall. The only ones we got rid of were the members of the C.M.O.

Mr. HUGHES: I did not mean to say that the hon. member actually picked up a gun; I meant it metaphorically. A Labour city council sacked the technical brains. It sacked officers of the council who had the ability to put Brisbane where it rightfully should be and improve it from the hick city of days gone by. When it did that it made a fatal mistake. The city council is not a good place to work. We had evidence of that the other day when some employees met the Lord Mayor on his return from overseas, protesting at the delay in meeting their wages claims. The present obsessed Lord Mayor is the dictator of all time.

In 1955 the C.M.O. came back to office and it took a long time to bring technical men back into the City Hall, men with the ability to cope with the problems of the city. Today it is acknowledged that the council has qualified engineers. I said by interjection when the hon. member for Kedron was speaking that Mr. Lionel Guthrie was one of the council's most able men. He was brought along and fostered by the C.M.O. council, who assisted him in attaining his technical ability. All the Labour council did in the City Hall was sack 2,000 workers and blow out the brains of the technical staff. Today the name of the City Hall authority still stinks as an employer. The men presently in the council are on tenterhooks. They will not look sideways, they are suffering under the dictatorial hand of Lord Mayor Jones.

If the traffic problem is discussed with anyone who knows anything about it, as many opinions as there are motor vehicles on the road are obtained. One thing must be admitted by anyone who is fair-minded. This Government took over from the city council following the debacle and chaos caused on the roads through Labour maladministration as well as by economic circumstances such as the higher standard of living and people's ability to buy more motor-cars.

Mr. Bennett: Answer this question: If the Labour Party is so bad, why do you want to hand over authority to them?

Mr. HUGHES: Because they ask for it, just as they asked for the parking meters, and the responsibility is where it should belong. I shall deal with that in a minute.

To clarify the point I was making, the city council had this city in a terrific mess in the control of traffic. The problem was accentuated by the increased number of motor vehicles on the road, due to the higher standard of living. The motor-car had become a modern metal microbe on the roads. That being the order of the day, the Government had to do something about it and this Government, of necessity, stepped in to fill the breach. It provided many things for the more efficient use of our existing carriageways and introduced necessary safety measures.

We must all admit that the local authority is charged with the responsibility for the construction and maintenance of roads. Roads often get no maintenance, sometimes because the city council has problems with funds; but that, to a great extent, is due to maladministration, and in some cases to the obsession of one man for grandiose schemes rather than attention to the bread-and-butter needs of the city. The Labour Party stands condemned. Motorists are not the only ones being neglected by the council because of the grandiose schemes of one man—such schemes as riverside drives and a city square. There is a need for some of these things in a city but not all at the one time. They should be provided gradually over a period of time, when the people have the ability to contribute to them.

Mr. Bennett: What has that to do with traffic?

Mr. HUGHES: It has a lot to do with traffic, for the simple reason that the city council has not done its job. It did not measure up to its responsibilities and this Government stepped in at a time when it was needed. Otherwise, traffic on our roads would have halted.

Mr. Houston: When was that?

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member has been asleep for so long he would not know. I ask him to compare the traffic position today with what it was a decade ago. As I said at the time, this Government should never have entered the field of parkatareas or parking meters. However, the council was not doing its job at the time. The Government had to husband some of its funds for hospitals, education and other urgent needs. It therefore utilised parkatarea money on urgent and necessary works. Our record has been second to none in that regard. Hon. members opposite should be ashamed of their record in the education field. They have been judged on it already.

I have always felt that we should never be a constructing authority and build up an empire in this sphere of public service. I do not believe that it was our responsibility. It was the council's responsibility. Indeed, it is written into the City of Brisbane Act of 1923 that the council shall construct and maintain roads, with the exception of gazetted main roads. We know that gazetted main roads usually end a

few miles inside the city limits. We had to raise money to do these jobs—to provide safety crossings, traffic lights, and the like. The hon. member for Belmont said that the Lord Mayor had brought in parking meters and built parking stations. All I can say is that he was wrong. The Gair Government brought in parking meters and said to the council, "Take them or else. We will run them." The Lord Mayor has abused the Act with his grandiose schemes and ideas of city squares and parking stations. He has not provided what he should have by way of truncations to remove danger areas. The council has not provided for road widening and adequate roadways. In this way it has been very neglectful.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. HUGHES: I know this is embarrassing to hon. members opposite. They have to go to the people with all this hanging over them because of their dictatorial, black-mailing Lord Mayor. It is amazing how many Labour members say they are ashamed of what is going on in the city of Brisbane. We are returned to office because the public has confidence in us. This is the sort of measure that creates that confidence. Although this Bill makes a change in the administration there is confidence in one person—Mr. Leitch. He brought to this city and State technical ability and skills—

Opposition Members: What are you sacking him for?

Mr. HUGHES: We are not sacking him. We are retaining his ability. We are even lending him to local authorities throughout the State. However, there is a case for the local authorities in regard to financial aid and I would champion their request to the Federal Government for a greater share of the petrol tax.

It has been said that we have cut down on subsidies to the local authorities. This Government has been more generous than any of its predecessors to the Brisbane City Council. Over £6,000,000 in subsidies was paid to it in the previous year. It can never be said that this Government has been irresponsible in not recognising the needs of the Brisbane City Council. It has been a most generous Government, so generous that on many occasions the council has capitalised on it and taken credit for work carried out with money supplied by the Government. I instance Hamilton Road and Pinkenba. However, I may be getting outside the ambit of the Bill.

I join issue with the hon. member for South Brisbane. Almost every other local authority has assumed powers and responsibilities, but Brisbane has not although the council is asking for them. The main roads which are gazetted will still be the responsibility of the Main Roads Department. When the council assumes responsibility it will be aided in the proper implementation of the town plan in Brisbane. This legislation

will bring about uniformity of control in the matter of origin-and-destination surveys and such matters as planned traffic control and the proper implementation of the town plan. Why should there not be proper control? It is time we had uniformity. The council desires it. The Government is handing over a revenue-producer to the council while protecting the motorist and people in confining parkatareas to the existing central traffic area.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) (11.16 p.m.): I must put the hon. member for Kurilpa on the right track in his guessing game about the parking station on Wickham Terrace. It was built by the C.M.O. The hon. member's time expired and, because of this legislation, the Government's time has almost expired. I have never listened to so much rubbish from any hon. member as came from the hon. member for Kurilpa tonight. In his own small way he tried to rubbish the hon. member for South Brisbane for introducing the matter of increased penalties under the Act for drink-driving. The Government is helping to increase drink-driving.

Mr. Bennett: Of course it is.

Mr. BROMLEY: There is no doubt about it. That is evident by the recent legislation to amend the liquor laws. I think the hon. member for Kurilpa should be put on the right track. He indicted the Government when he quoted figures showing the tremendous increase in drink-driving charges in the last few years under this coalition Tory Government. By the figures he quoted, I repeat that he indicted the Government—there can be no argument about that—and at the same time he destroyed his own argument. He said that increased penalties decreased dangerous driving and drink-driving. Through you, Mr. Hooper, may I ask a question? Does the penalty of hanging prevent murder? Everyone knows it does not. Statistics prove that it does not.

I think the hon. member's tedious repetition about the C.M.O. was quite out of order but, as he introduced it, I will answer him. He said that the Labour council blew the brains out of the council administration. The citizens of Brisbane blew the C.M.O. out of office in the city council.

Mr. Hanson interjected.

Mr. BROMLEY: As the hon. member for Port Curtis points out, the C.M.O. had no brains.

In my opinion accidents are caused by many factors, one of them being the condition of our roads. Because of the lack of finance allocated by the Government for this purpose, the condition of roads inside and outside the metropolitan area has deteriorated considerably, resulting in an increased number of accidents. The Country Party-dominated Government gets £9,000,000 a year from the Federal Government as its

share of the petrol tax. In its miserable approach to the Brisbane City Council, the Government allocates it a mere pittance of £71,000 towards the maintenance of roads. It has been reported that officials of the Brisbane City Council claim that £71,000 would not even cover the cost of surveys. In "The Courier-Mail" of 3 March, Mr. Hamm said that, according to preliminary estimates, Brisbane's traffic in 1981 will be about 2½ times its present volume. We know what the volume is today. That is why we on this side of the Chamber believe that the Government, after making such an unholy mess of traffic in Brisbane and doing nothing to alleviate the motorists' problems, is now passing the buck to the Brisbane City Council.

Mr. Ewan: In that case, you should be delighted.

Mr. BROMLEY: I am not delighted with anything this Government does or any legislation it introduces, whether it deals with anti-picketing laws at Mt. Isa or anything else. I am only drawing that analogy, Mr. Hodges, because the hon. member for Roma interjected. The Government is passing the buck because it has been inefficient and has got into a jam. It has done this on innumerable occasions, and it is most unfortunate for the people of Queensland that this has happened.

Mr. Ewan: You are being one-eyed about this.

Mr. BROMLEY: I am not being one-eyed at all. The hon. member for Roma spoke as a country member who knows little about traffic problems in the metropolitan area. It is strange that only one city Liberal Party member has spoken in favour of this legislation. One of the two Country party members who spoke in favour of it, the hon. member for Rockhampton South, deals only with a small volume of traffic compared with that in Brisbane. Of course he would be in favour of this Bill because the money received by the cities or townships outside the metropolitan area from parking meters would more than cover their expenses. When we realise the tremendous number of tourists coming to Brisbane we can see that traffic is grinding slowly to a halt.

There should have been more co-operation between the Traffic Engineer and the former Minister controlling traffic. On many occasions Mr. Leitch has given me tremendous assistance in the inner-city area that I represent. At the same time, for many years I have been endeavouring to get some control of traffic in the Ipswich Road area, where it is now a rat-race, as everybody knows. Nothing has been done to prevent the accidents that happen there. No money has been spent from the Story Bridge right through to the traffic lights at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Although statistics may not show that there have been many accidents there,

they do happen because they have been reported to me. Not one penny has been spent on this most important area.

When I spoke of this on several occasions to not only the previous Minister but to Mr. Ken Morris, when he was the Minister in charge of traffic, he said, with an airy wave of his hand, "Of course, we have inherited this from the previous Government." The previous Government was, of course, also a Country-Liberal Party coalition. Still nothing has been done to decrease the accident rate.

I am sure that the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland, with its tremendous say in the public affairs of the State and its large membership, will not receive the increases in licence fees very happily. This organisation has on numerous occasions said that the motorist has been slugged too much by the Government. We say that since 1957 the motorist has been hit time and time again by increased fees. There can be no argument about that. All hon. members drive cars, or at least pay registration fees for them. The motorist has received nothing in return. The Treasurer said in the Press that the finances of the State are good. If they are, why cannot money be allocated to increase traffic control? In "The Sunday Mail" of 5 July last year appears this heading: "Hiley Pledges Millions for City Roads." All he does is pledge it; nothing has been done to assist the city council to improve roads. The article contains this passage—

"On State Government resources, Mr. Hiley said: 'The money has been rolling in. Our resources are more favourable than we ever dared to hope. . . We cannot see any slowing-down in the economy in the foreseeable future.'"

He speaks about revenue, and then the article goes on to say—

"The Treasurer said that, as a result of its buoyant revenues, the State should be able to take over a much heavier share of the main roading in the city."

What has been done? After the terrific mess that the Government has made of things, the whole matter is being handed over to the Brisbane City Council.

I think that we should take a leaf out of the New South Wales State Labour Government's book. They are spending the tremendous sum of £100,000,000 on a plan for transport in Sydney. This farmers' Government in Queensland would be aghast at the mere thought of having to raise that sum for such a purpose. The New South Wales Government will produce a transport co-ordination plan, which is what we should have here.

Mr. Ewan: And their transport is a disgrace. You go down there and ride in a bus and see how you get on.

Mr. BROMLEY: Whether or not we agree that it is a disgrace, no-one can deny that New South Wales is the most progressive State in the Commonwealth in every respect, including transport.

The £100,000,000 that I mentioned is to be spent over six years. If the hon. member for Roma can divide six into £100,000,000—I should be very surprised if he can—I think even he can imagine the tremendous improvement that will be effected in Sydney, which has a population twice as large as that of Brisbane and, according to statistics, more than twice as many cars.

Over the last seven or eight years we have seen criticism in the Press from time to time of the Government's attempts to solve the traffic problem and comments about unsightly traffic lights. I believe that traffic lights are very necessary and that more should be installed for the protection of pedestrians. I know that motorists might curse when they see a red light against them, but I am concerned mainly with pedestrians.

Mr. Ewan: They have pulled a lot of them out in Sydney.

Mr. BROMLEY: They have not.

Mr. Ewan: They have pulled a lot of them out in Sydney.

Mr. BROMLEY: They have not.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order!

Mr. BROMLEY: The number has increased in suburban areas. It might have decreased in the inner city.

Mr. Ewan: That is what I am talking about.

Mr. BROMLEY: Whenever I try to put the hon. member for Roma on the right track he says, "That is what I am talking about."

Government members have said—I believe that the Minister said it by interjection at one stage—that the Brisbane City Council asked that these powers be transferred from the Government to the council. The council did not ask for it; it did not want to be saddled with this responsibility, particularly after the Government's handling of it in the last seven or eight years. Perhaps local authorities outside the metropolitan area may have asked for it. The hon. member for Ipswich East says that the people of Ipswich do not want it, and I believe that what he says is true. Rockhampton and other country towns may want it, but the Brisbane City Council certainly did not ask for it or want it.

Mr. Ewan: You say we have made a mess of it.

Mr. BROMLEY: There is a statement in the Press that proves what I have said.

Mr. Ewan: You say we have made a mess of it, but you do not want the Brisbane City Council to improve things.

Mr. BROMLEY: The present traffic chaos has been caused by lack of advance planning. I believe that there should be a five-year-old plan or a seven-year plan—it does not make much difference which—for Brisbane. If such a plan is not implemented, traffic will grind to a standstill. Strangely enough, I agree with the hon. member for Roma that we have seen traffic travelling bumper to bumper in the City. Of course we have seen it. Five years ago, if the House rose between 5 and 6 o'clock in the evening, we could drive up George Street and get through fairly comfortably. There is no way in the world that we can get through now. It may take 20 minutes to get from Parliament House to North Quay, and sometimes up to half an hour, and that is the result of a lack of planning by the Government.

This Government should have foreseen what has happened. I am pleased that we are living in an affluent society in which we have a fairly high ratio of cars to population. I do not think anybody would disagree with that but surely when we know these things are going to happen, there should be a plan to meet them. In countries overseas motor traffic is banned from the inner city areas, and there is a point I wish to make in relation to that. In my opinion trucking and transport companies should be completely banned from the inner-city area. One can go down to Albert Street and other streets adjacent to the Gardens and see large transport trucks, trailers and semi-trailers backing across the roads and holding up traffic right down to the end of the street. I say that these companies should be banished from the inner city areas and made to move at least 7 miles outside of the city. Where vehicles are involved a few miles are neither here nor there.

Mr. Chinchen: That is a city council problem.

Mr. BROMLEY: In the inner city area transport is a problem for the Government. What is more, it is an unsolvable problem for them and that is why they are handing over to the Brisbane City Council. I am sorry that the council will be saddled with this responsibility.

Mr. Hanlon: After the Government has sucked all the revenue and propaganda it can get out of it.

Mr. BROMLEY: I agree with the hon. member for Baroona. The Government has sucked every possible penny of revenue out of it and is going to suck more out of it by increasing driving licence fees.

Mr. Hanlon: And don't forget it doubled those same fees in 1959.

Mr. BROMLEY: I mentioned that. What is more, I believe it will do it again because it is the Government's policy that the ordinary worker in the State should pay the piper.

Mr. Chinchen: Don't you want to see more police on the roads?

Mr. BROMLEY: I have been advocating that for five years. I believe I am responsible for this increase. On every opportunity I have assailed the Government on this matter. I believe that it is the only way to prevent or decrease traffic accidents. The Minister himself would know that the sight of a policeman in uniform is a deterrent to reckless driving and it is certainly a deterrent to anybody who might be thinking of driving a car while under the influence of alcohol. I have, on many occasions, said that there should be more policemen on the roads. The Treasurer has stated that finances have never been more buoyant so why is some not made available to put more policemen on the roads? One may be doing everything right driving a car on the roads but, at the sight of a patrolman one immediately checks to see that the right thing is being done. I believe everybody in this Chamber who drives a car commits at least 10 traffic breaches a day. It is unavoidable. If one is driving along at the regulation speed of 35 miles an hour and wants to pass another vehicle one must exceed the speed limit of 35 miles an hour in order to pass and in doing so a breach is committed. I repeat that everybody in this Chamber who drives a motor-car would commit some breach or other at least 10 times a day, no matter how good a driver he may be.

Until there are more police on the road I shall continue to hammer this home. In a State the size of Queensland, 34 is a mere bagatelle. The Police Union claims that the Queensland Police Force is 350 under strength. There is no way in the world this Government would be prepared to spend the money to employ 350 additional police. It is not interested in preventing crime or solving crime.

(Time expired.)

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (11.41 p.m.): I intend to be very brief but I wish to voice my protest on behalf of Townsville against the legislation. The reason for the abolition of the Traffic Commission and the placing of the burden of traffic control on the local authority can be found very easily in the Estimates placed before us last year. I refer to page 89 of the Estimates. Under the heading of "The Trust Fund—Traffic Engineer", for "Salaries, Wages, Incidentals, etc." an amount of £42,835 was allocated, and for "Traffic Facilities—Works, etc." an amount of £105,000 was allocated, making a total of £147,835. In the previous year, 1963-64, a total of £97,454 was expended by the office of the Traffic Engineer. That means that there was an increase of approximately £50,000 between 1963-64 and 1964-65. I take it for granted that most of that would have been spent this year. That is a rather startling increase.

I do not set myself up as a financier, or consider that I have any more knowledge than anybody else about this matter, but I sincerely believe that increased expenditure would

continue to increase. Most certainly the Government would have before it evidence that the department's expenditure would continue to increase in this manner. If, year after year, it was going to have the same steep increase it meant that something had to be done about this department. I do not care if some other reason is put up, or how much dust is raised, the cold hard facts are that the expenditure of this department was increasing at a phenomenal rate.

I believe the Government understood that and it had to do something about it very quickly. It could see what would happen in the near future with the same percentage increase, or a sharper increase. The Government shrewdly anticipated that this steep and necessary rise in expenditure would continue and they have handed over this rather embarrassing baby to the local authority. The figures prove my submission to be correct.

Townsville is a city with a population of nearly 60,000 people. The last figures released by the Townsville City Council reveal that there are 57,000 people in Townsville. The Commonwealth Government has announced that an Army unit of 4,000 men is to be established outside Townsville. However, with the 4,000 men, will come their wives and families. I forecast, as do local authority members, that by 1970 we may well have a population of 70,000. We are fast outstripping all other cities in the State, and we are well established as the second city in Queensland. When the population increases sharply, the problems increase at the same rate. That has happened in Townsville in the last few years.

Townsville should have had traffic lights long ago. I advocated this before, and I say very sincerely tonight that traffic lights are necessary in a great, growing city. With the continued increase in traffic volume traffic lights are essential in the inner city and on some of the arterial roads feeding the city. They have been advocated for a long time by responsible bodies such as the R.A.C.Q. and other associations in the community. We have been treated very badly by the Traffic Commission. There should have been a greater expenditure on traffic control in Townsville.

Traffic lights afford protection for pedestrians and motorists alike. Anyone who has sat in a car for minutes waiting to try to poke the radiator of his car through a line of pedestrians walking across a street knows the frustration of motorists at such times. Eventually there is a frantic dash by one or other and someone is liable to be hurt. I believe that pedestrians have the same right as motorists to use the road. By regulating traffic flow in the inner city we do away with many dangers facing members of the community. We must cope in a proper, decent, and responsible way with the problems of a continual increase in population and the inherent dangers. Up to the present we have not done so although we should have tackled the problems years ago.

Some of the money which has been spent in the State should have been used to provide traffic lights in Townsville. On the precedents already set our share of the £130,000, which the Minister announced will be taken from the general public by the 5s. increase in the cost of the driver's licence, and the £2 to be paid by those who get a driver's licence who do not own a vehicle, will be very small, and will not nearly cover the cost of the urgently needed traffic control measures in Townsville.

I do not know whether Townsville's share of the £130,000 has been calculated. I know what should be and must be done in Townsville. If other cities and towns in Queensland are to have their bite at the cherry, by no means can Townsville expect much out of the £130,000 a year. I do not say that we should get more than our fair share. But if we are not going to get any more than the share we can expect with our population, a further burden will be added to those of the Townsville City Council, which is the local authority.

Mr. Pizzey: We will give you all you had before 1957 ten times over.

Mr. TUCKER: I am putting this forward in a reasonable way. I do not know what the Minister for Education is trying to say. This concerns the ratepayers of Townsville. If a burden is thrown onto the Townsville City Council, a burden is thrown onto the local authority, and if it has to cope with this and pay out an extra £100 or £1,000, it does not pull that amount out of the hat; it pulls it out of the pockets of the people of Townsville who finance the Townsville City Council. If the local authority is to measure up to this, and install these particular devices, in point of fact the people in the area which the Townsville City Council covers will have to contribute. This has not been so before.

Most of the people of Townsville will be hit once and some people will be hit twice, because if Townsville does not get the kind of money that will allow it to pay for everything, the money will have to come out of the revenue which the Townsville City Council obtains from the people of Townsville, and this will be an added burden on the people. It could mean a rise in rates some time or other, and it could mean a further impost on the motorists of Townsville, and in that way the motorists who are taxpayers will be hit twice.

There will be a sharp increase in the population of Townsville in the next few years by reason of the influx of more Army personnel.

The Estimates of Expenditure last year show that in the office of the Traffic Engineer there was one traffic engineer, a deputy traffic engineer, an administration officer, assistant traffic engineer, two engineers, two traffic engineering assistants, traffic signal mechanic, draftsman, four assistant draftsmen, four cadets, four clerks, six clerk typists and an assistant.

If it was necessary to have that number of personnel to administer the whole of the State, Townsville will have to have one of those people to cope with the matter. If that is not so, then these people should not have been here, and I could not claim that. In our city we will have to bear not only the expense of installing lights and other devices, but also the expense of a traffic engineer. Possibly he could be called a traffic engineering assistant. But no matter what he is called we will have to have someone with a good knowledge of traffic.

I would not say that those officers of the Townsville City Council do not have some knowledge, but perhaps they do not have the necessary specialised knowledge of those whom I mentioned a moment ago who have been for years in the office of the traffic engineer. Again this could mean that the Townsville City Council will have to bear the cost of installing traffic lights, marking roads, and erecting other devices for the control of traffic. It may also be necessary to appoint one of these people of whom I spoke a moment ago. All of this adds to the expenditure of the Townsville City Council and the mounting cost to the ratepayers.

I must also voice my protest at the further fee increases imposed on motorists. No doubt it does not matter very much to a person on a high salary whether another 5s. is added to the cost of his driving licence, because that is for him merely a drop in the ocean. I and my colleagues speak for the fellow who has tried very hard to obtain a motor-car for his wife and family to enjoy, so that he can take them driving at week-ends. He probably finds difficulty in maintaining it and keeping it on the road. The man on the small salary does his motoring on a very small margin, and the 5s. means very much more to him than it does to hon. members opposite who speak of it as though it is nothing. To the man just keeping his head above water and trying to provide his family with the pleasure of owning a car, 5s. can be a very considerable amount.

These increases seem to go on and on. Since 1960, there have been increases each year. There have been additions to premiums for third-party insurance and also comprehensive insurance, and the motorist has to have himself covered by both. All these added charges have mounted up against the ordinary battler who is trying to keep his car to make life a little better for his family.

It is all very well to say, "Let the car go, and that will be one less car on the road." Those on high salaries can afford to smile if they are not worried about others; I am concerned for my fellow man, as is anyone who has in him the milk of human kindness. I believe that each one of us realises full well the little extra that a motor-car means in the life of a family. I therefore voice my protest against this further impost.

If there have to be increases, I think they should be borne by the Government. Why should they not be a charge on the whole community? The motorist constantly has these burdens placed on him, whilst all people in the community use some form of transport. There is no doubt that when any safety measures are installed they are set up for the benefit of everyone. Traffic lights affect the safety of pedestrians as well as motorists. They are installed for the safety of buses that may, in crossing intersections, be hit by cars approaching from the other side, resulting in many people being injured.

Everybody uses some form of transport and I believe, therefore, that this impost, if it had to be made, could safely have been placed on the whole community. However, in my opinion it should be borne by the Government. I believe that any tax which is sectional in its application is wrong, and this tax on motorists is wrong. The Government has anticipated a continuous increase in expenditure on this department and is very shrewdly endeavouring to vacate the field. I say that in spite of any argument that the Minister may put forward to the contrary.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (12.1 a.m.): It is obvious that much of the legislation that the Government brings down imposes some additional charge or penalty on the community. Recent amendments to the Liquor Acts, the Racing and Betting Act and other Acts have provided for such additional charges, and the amendment to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act provided for increased penalties on unions. Tonight the Minister has brought down a Bill that will impose further charges on the people of Queensland.

I disagree to some extent with the hon. member for Townsville North in his opposition to sectional legislation. I believe in it, because I believe that those who have the most money should pay the most. In my opinion, the Government should not increase its revenue by hitting the ordinary man in the community, but the man who has only an old "bomb" on the road is paying to run this State by the additional amount he contributes in imposts such as this.

I think that the Government is getting out from under its traffic problems by introducing this Bill. The problem is becoming worse as each week passes, and I do not think that the Government has the ability to face up to the situation. It will become worse over the next five years, and many traffic authorities have forecast that in that time Brisbane's traffic will be in chaos. In my opinion, it is because the Government realises this that it is handing over its responsibility to the Brisbane City Council.

Many statements have been made about the traffic problems that exist at places such as Lutwyche Road, Kemp Place, the

Normanby, the Story Bridge, Victoria Bridge, and Barry Parade, and all those problems must be solved. There have been various suggestions as to how the Government should tackle them, and I want to read to the Committee an extract from an article that appeared in "Sunday Truth" on 6 July, 1964. I think it indicates the Government's state of mind in regard to traffic problems, and it says—

"In October last year the then Minister in Charge of Traffic, Mr. Alex. Dewar, said that all necessary surveys and preparation had been completed.

"The job would be done in the financial year just begun, he said, and improvements costing £150,000 would be financed from parkatareas.

"Now the Traffic ministry has passed to the Mines and Main Roads Minister, Mr. Ernie Evans.

"From his home in Mackay last week Mr. Evans said emphatically that no plans were in hand for the Normanby. He had no idea when any work would possibly start, he said."

There we have a conflict of opinion about the Normanby. One Minister said that surveys have been completed whereas his successor said that no plans are in hand for the Normanby intersection and that he had no idea when any work would be done there. That is an indication of the Government's state of mind on our traffic problems, and they are now handing over to the Brisbane City Council with those pressing problems still unsolved. They are going to impose this task upon the Brisbane City Council which will not be as well prepared and will not have the necessary staff to cope with the problem. It is a very big one that has to be dealt with immediately.

The Government is not prepared to face up to it and attempt to get something done and has decided to disband the Traffic Commission and hand responsibility over to the Brisbane City Council. It is significant that it is not handing over a profit-making proposition. There is virtually no revenue from the control of traffic which is rather an expense. It was stated by the Minister for Industrial Development tonight that the city council had asked for it and that that was one of the reasons for handing it over, but when has this Government ever given anything to the Brisbane City Council on the ground that they had asked for it? The city council did not ask for any cut in subsidies, and they did not ask for any cut in loan allocation. These are important matters.

Mr. Pizzey: What about the Wynnum sewerage scheme? There were millions for that.

Mr. MELLOY: The millions for the Wynnum sewerage scheme were not a gift for this Government. At the time they gave that money to the council the council could not use it for any other purpose.

The hon. member for Belmont commented on the staff situation. I think at present there are 28 on the staff of the Traffic Commission. They are trained staff and I do not know what the Government is going to do with them. The Minister has not given us any indication. Whether or not comparable positions will be found for them in the Government service I do not know, but perhaps we might get that information from the Minister at a later stage.

I think we must consider what the handing over of this problem will cost the city council in carrying out the traffic work that has been done in the past by the Traffic Commission. In the Estimates this year the estimated expenditure for the commission was £319,000. If the traffic problem is going to be dealt with as the Government intended it should be when the Estimates were framed, how in the name of heaven is the Brisbane City Council going to raise approximately £300,000 to carry out the work envisaged by the Government at that time? I make a reservation there. I now realise that the £300,000 was for the whole of the State but I should say that at least half of it or more would be incurred in the Greater Brisbane area, which means that at least £150,000 would have to be raised by the Brisbane City Council to carry out traffic work.

We might well ask whether this was a move by the Government to squash the city square scheme. If the council has to meet these traffic expenses from parking-meter money it would mean that the money intended to finance the city square would not be available for that purpose.

If the Government wants the traffic problems adequately handled it has an experienced man in Mr. Leitch, who has grown up with the present traffic situation. Why does the Government not make a gesture and second Mr. Leitch to the Brisbane City Council until such time as it sets up its own organisation? Why not be generous and pay Mr. Leitch's salary so that he can assist the council in this manner? It will take the Council a considerable time to set up the necessary organisation, and it will be done only at tremendous expense.

The hon. member for Kurilpa said that the Brisbane City Council had failed to cope with the development of the city in providing the necessary traffic and parking facilities. He said the situation was chaotic when compared with about 10 or 12 years ago. Actually there is no comparison because at that time there was not half the number of vehicles on the road, and the costs of administration were not half what they are today. During the time the present City Council has been in office I think it has done a tremendous job in this direction.

With the passing of the Traffic Commission I hope also passes the policy of constructing raised concrete areas at road junctions. They are merely obstructions. When corners are

truncated to establish large areas of roadway, instead of leaving those areas available for traffic, raised concrete areas are put in which virtually confine the traffic to one lane in all directions. At one intersection at Albion there is a concrete block about 40 ft. wide by 80 feet long. Had it been left as an open area there would have been plenty of room for cars to manoeuvre in an emergency. To realise what a menace these concrete areas are one has only to look at the number of stanchions holding road signs that have been knocked over, and how the sides of the concrete blocks have been chipped away by vehicles coming in contact with them. These obstructions are not necessary. Paint markings on the road would be just as effective as concrete blocks, and would not be such an obstruction to traffic.

When the Government reduced the speed limit in built-up areas from 40 miles an hour to 35 miles an hour, it said that it was bringing the Queensland traffic laws into line with those in other States. I do not think that contributed in any way to road safety. The lair driver, the mug driver, or the fast driver will drive recklessly and fast whether the limit is 35 miles an hour or 40. Once he exceeds 40 miles an hour it does not matter what the limit is, for he is exceeding the limit. The man who exceeds the limit will not drive at 41 miles an hour but at 50 or 60. The limit of 35 miles an hour only tends to slow the traffic flow and makes no contribution to road safety.

The Minister said that the finance received from the increase in driving licence fees and the fee for new licences for those who do not own a car will pay for the services of 34 new traffic control officers. I hope that when they are appointed there will not be a reduction in the number of police on ordinary duties.

There are not enough police on ordinary duties for protection of the public, by any stretch of the imagination. As the hon. member for Norman pointed out police officers believe that an extra 300 officers are needed for traffic and general police duties. Last week I had brought to my attention what is happening because of the lack of police protection. I drew the Minister's attention to an incident at Pinkenba. I can assure you, Mr. Hooper, that we have not heard the last of this incident. The truth will be told.

Mr. Pizzey: By whom? You are not suggesting that I gave you false information this morning?

Mr. MELLOY: No, but I am suggesting that either the Minister did not give all the information or he was not given all the information. The Minister's answer was right to a certain degree. I know I am getting away from the subject, Mr. Hooper, but I must reply to the Minister's interjection. I assure the Minister that there is

more to it than the information he gave in his answer this morning. I believe that we can defer any further comments on this measure until we see the Bill.

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (12.19 a.m.): At the outset, I heartily agree with the very excellent way in which our leader led the debate for the A.L.P. in opposition to this measure. Several references have been made in this debate to what seems to be the main purpose of the Bill. Apart from handing over the traffic control to local authorities there is an increase in costs to motorists. I do not wish to be accused of tedious repetition at this stage of the debate but I feel I much echo some sentiments in relation to this matter.

During the years that this Government has been in office the motorist has been consistently slugged and possibly, as other speakers have said, the hardest hit has been the young person. The motorists have been slugged by an increase in licence fee, an increase in registration fees, payments to the nominal defendant fund, and the insurance companies have been allowed to further slug the motorists under 25 by making them pay the first £20 of any damage. Then there is third-party insurance.

Mr. Camm: How much has the registration fee been increased?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Am I expected to quote offhand the increase in registration fees? There has been an increase in registration fees during the life of this Government. In addition there has been the imposition of parkatarea charges. Any young wage-earner who has the good fortune to own a car has to pay 10s. a week to park his car when he goes to his place of employment. On top of this there has been the imposition of savage comprehensive insurance premiums when a vehicle is being bought under hire purchase. Is it any wonder that any Opposition worth its salt would express resentment against any legislation which places a further imposition on the motoring public? There is an old saying; beware of the Greeks who come bearing gifts. If I were on a local authority today I would adopt that attitude to this gift to the local authorities to solve the traffic problems by means of this legislation.

Mr. Ewan: Even if they asked for it?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Before I have concluded my speech I will say that the hon. member for Roma is asking for it.

I want to go through the history of the Traffic Commission and find out why this Government at times of elections and at every other opportunity has made quite a play on what it has done through the Traffic Commission in solving the traffic problems in Queensland, and then suddenly decided it wants to get rid of it. There must be some reason why this has happened.

"The Courier-Mail" of 28 September, 1957, reports that a special committee set up by this Government was believed to have recommended that a permanent Traffic Commission should not be formed in Queensland. Instead it suggested that a co-ordinating body be brought into being, but only at a certain time. The committee comprised Mr. Holt, the Co-ordinator-General of Works, Mr. Slaughter, the Town Clerk, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Harold, representing the Commissioner of Police. The committee members said that the principal need in Brisbane was the injection of more trained technical men to advise on traffic matters, that is, traffic engineers in the Police Department and the Brisbane City Council.

In 1957, this committee appointed by the Government recommended that there should be no permanent Traffic Commission in Brisbane; rather that traffic experts should be employed in the Police Department and the Brisbane City Council. We must also remember that Mr. Ken Morris was the Minister controlling the portfolio of traffic.

Mr. Ewan: Didn't Mr. Lloyd say—

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I do not know what Mr. Lloyd said or what Mr. Ewan said. I am informing hon. members what the committee said.

I am going to tell hon. members how the then Minister for Labour and Industry rode roughshod over the decision of this Committee because he had elected himself to be the sawdust Caesar of traffic problems in this State. Putting aside the recommendations of a committee that had gone thoroughly into the question of setting up a traffic commission, he proceeded, against the advice of the experts, to set it up.

What has been achieved by that action? I do not want to criticise the members of the Traffic Commission because I feel that they applied themselves honestly in the limited manner in which they were allowed to function by the policy of the Government. I have no quarrel with the genuine efforts made by Mr. Leitch and those who assisted him in this period. I do say that it was because of the narrow, restricted attitude of the Government, because they lacked the broad vision necessary to tackle the problem, that their efforts have been curtailed over the years.

What has been done? We have gone round putting up what a former Lord Mayor referred to as "hideous yellow gibbets". Tonight we see the body of the Traffic Commission hanging from them. We have gone round painting lines and doing all sorts of other things, but we have not got down to the basis of what is wrong with the movement of traffic in Brisbane. We have not recognised that there is a lack of bridges. We have not recognised that our roads are not adequate. If we want to go into the question of how Brisbane's traffic problems are to be solved, here is the opinion of a consulting economist, Mr. H. W. Herbert.

He said, whilst addressing a summer school of the Australian Planning Institute, that the cost of solving Brisbane's traffic problem was estimated at £250,000,000. That was his opinion as recently as 11 October, 1964.

Here we are talking about collecting amounts of 5s. and £2 and the £130,000 that the Government will receive in increased revenue, when there are such problems confronting us as the bottleneck at Normanby, the lack of bridges, and the problems that flow from that. There is also, as my Leader mentioned this morning, the traffic bottleneck at Rocklea. Let hon. members opposite realise that 11 years ago, when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Transport, land was resumed for the realignment of that road. Eleven years later, the bottleneck is still there, except that it is now a much more important intersection since the Government has transferred the municipal markets to that area.

Quite frankly, from what I have heard in the Rocklea area the junction of Fairfield and Ipswich Roads presents a problem of great magnitude. Traffic from the Cleveland area has to pass over two major roads and two railway lines. Providing a solution to this traffic situation will cost millions of pounds. Again I repeat that 11 years ago straightening of the road was planned, yet today the Government is speaking in terms of taking £130,000 from the already over-taxed motorists.

I want to say further that it is quite evident that the Government has floundered on this question of traffic congestion when even its own Commissioner for Main Roads said in October, 1964, that the Government had allowed traffic to build up until the main arteries were congested and the intersections overloaded. When this situation had come about, he said, it suddenly had woken up to the fact that something had to be done.

What has been done? The Government has not measured up to its responsibilities and has not recognised that the solution to our traffic problems does not lie in traffic lights or white painted lines, but in an approach to the Federal Government to obtain the necessary finance to enable us to reconstruct roads, design extra bridges, and so on. Instead of doing that, we are merely handing over to local authorities responsibilities that should be shouldered by the Government.

When Mr. Morris formed the Traffic Commission, he had no intention of allowing a local council or local authority to have anything to do with traffic. It is quite remarkable that when the C.M.O., a party of the same political kidney as the Minister, controlled the Brisbane City Council, Mr. Morris told the Lord Mayor, Alderman Groom, that as far as he was concerned the city council would not have any say in the matter. Alderman Groom said that the council was responsible for the planning of the city and traffic control came very much into the sphere of planning, and it was not illogical, therefore, that the council should have an interest

in the movement of traffic within the city. He said that the council was willing to co-operate on traffic matters and to give any assistance. At that time the Traffic Commission was Mr. Morris's baby, and this was his reaction—

"On Saturday Mr. Morris said that 95 per cent. of the opposition to one-way streets had come from the council. He said he had remained silent 'because I thought the council were my friends'. Mr. Morris said: 'But from now on I'm going to give it and they can take it.'"

That was the attitude of the Government to a local authority's controlling traffic in the city. It was one of a long list of "famous last words" by the Minister for Labour and Industry. When one considers these matters, the Governments sudden decision to change its attitude and hand over the control of traffic to local authorities is quite remarkable.

Alderman Groom was so incensed by the Minister's attitude on that occasion that he said that attempts by Brisbane City Council to assist the State Government on traffic control in Brisbane had been rebuffed. A report in "The Courier-Mail" of 22 February, 1960, reported him as saying—

"Traffic control would derive no benefit from controversy 'at the hysterical level' of a statement by the Deputy Premier (Mr. Morris)."

The report continued—

"He denied the council had refused to co-operate with the Traffic Commission.

'It had been made quite clear to the council that as it had no statutory authority in traffic matters it must stand aside from the one-way traffic operation,' he added.

'It would appear that if the Council would give a humble yes-man approval to one-way proposals its co-operation would be welcomed'."

It is obvious that when the Traffic Commission was the baby of Mr. Morris and something on which the Government pinned its hopes of currying favour with voters in the metropolitan area, as far as the Government was concerned the Brisbane City Council could go and jump in the lake.

Then the Premier brought into the argument and accused the Lord Mayor of ignorance of world-wide developments in traffic control. This report appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 31 March, 1960—

"Mr. Nicklin said that one-way traffic in Edward Street had justified the confidence of the Minister in Charge of Traffic (Mr. Morris and the State Traffic Engineer (Mr. Leitch).

'It has been a pronounced success, despite the predictions of those who desperately wanted it to fail,' he said.

"Mr. Nicklin said the general system of traffic control that was being introduced in Brisbane would be just as successful.

"The Government was convinced that at last the solution to Brisbane's traffic problem had been found, and Mr. Morris should be commended on his foresight."

Mr. Ewan: Do you disagree?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: It would not have been hard to disagree with Mr. Morris. The hon. member for Roma went on record as saying that he did not particularly admire him. It would not be hard to disagree with a man who issued the sentiment that when he saw a head he would hit it. He had no compunction whatever in hitting the head of Lord Mayor Groom in regard to the traffic laws.

Mr. Lee: You were running down Mr. Leitch; now you are defending him.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I am not defending Mr. Leitch. I told the Committee at the outset that I was not attacking Mr. Leitch or his officers, that it was an attack on this Government for its narrow-mindedness and incompetence in solving the traffic problems of Brisbane. It is no good the hon. member for Yeronga or the chairman of the Bandywallop shire council telling me that I attacked any public servant in this State. I make it quite clear that I have great sympathy for the fine band of public servants who have had to suffer this Government so long.

Mr. Sullivan interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I am grateful for the interjections in that I have at last awakened the members on the Government benches from their slumbers. I know it is difficult for them at this time of night to keep their eyes open and I am grateful for having been able to stir them up, thus enabling them to get their names in "Hansard."

My attack is on the Government's narrow thinking—not the thinking with broad vision as the Premier said when addressing electors at Maroochydore. The Government has always shown the tendency to go overseas and import experts to tell us how to control our traffic problems. They employ these "fancy pants" to tell us these things, but never on any occasion have they sought the advice that could be given by men in our own community. I refer particularly to the ordinary traffic policemen on points duty and those on motor-cycle patrol. These people have been responsible for administering the traffic laws of this State and have built up a wealth of knowledge of traffic problems. They have a wide understanding of the adequacy of our traffic rules and so on. They have been the men on the spot who have witnessed the failings of our legislation governing traffic, yet, not on one occasion have we seen evidence of the Government's seeking their advice. These are people who would probably be more qualified to give advice on local problems than would the "fancy pants" brought in from overseas.

I feel that I must refer to the attitude that has been adopted towards the protection of school children crossing roads. It has been a continuing problem in my electorate.

Government Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I do not mind them interjecting, Mr. Hooper, but when I am discussing the safety of young children I should think that members of the Government would refrain from levity. Although I approach some matters in a spirit of levity, I can never approach the safety of young children on the roads with the hilarity displayed by hon. members opposite.

In common with other hon. members representing outlying electorates I have never been able to obtain assistance for the safety of children, either by the mounting of a policeman at a crossing or the installation of pedestrian lights. Indeed, I have several cases on file where I was refused even the protection of a pedestrian crossing for use by school children. It would appear that unless an area has an accident history, unless there is a sufficient number of children crossing the road, unless there is a sufficient volume of traffic using the road, it is considered there is no danger to the children.

Repeatedly when I have raised such matters with previous Ministers in charge of this portfolio I have been met with the reply that the accident record did not justify the installation of a crossing. How many children have to be killed in an area before a crossing, police protection, or the installation of traffic lights is deemed to be warranted? Surely we do not have to wait until a number of children are killed or maimed to prove that it is dangerous for school children to cross the road. Repeatedly I have been refused police assistance at crossings.

For the benefit of the hon. member for Roma, who is interjecting, as recently as three months ago I was refused a crossing for schoolchildren. Surely we do not consider the lives of children only on a statistical basis. It would not matter if only half a dozen children were crossing the road, if the crossing of that road was considered to have any element of danger every possible traffic device, or any safety device, that could be provided for the children should be available to them. If that is the attitude of the Traffic Commission I am constrained to say that we have achieved very little indeed.

Because traffic control will be handed to the local authority, and because of what is contained in the report I referred to in which it is estimated that £250,000,000 is needed to be spent on the roads, I feel this move will result in the increased rating of the ratepayers of our State.

(Time expired.)

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Main Roads) (12.44 a.m.), in reply: I have listened with interest to the contributions from both sides. I must confess that I consider that several speakers on the other side have not got a clear appreciation of the Bill. It specifically refers to traffic. It does not refer to the building of roads, financial assistance for road construction to the Brisbane City Council, or many of the other matters that have been raised. It provides for the transfer of traffic control to the Brisbane City Council from the present Traffic Commission. Every other local authority in Queensland has accepted the responsibility of traffic control in its area; the Brisbane City Council is the only local authority that has not accepted that responsibility.

The Leader of the Opposition criticised our abolishing the Traffic Commission. We believe that the Traffic Commission has done a good job in Brisbane and now is the time, when the traffic control is set up, for the Brisbane City Council to take over the control itself, and assume all the responsibilities attached to it.

During the life of this Government the commission trained many traffic engineers in the State. It established uniform traffic control devices. I should say that the proof of the commission's work in Brisbane is the flow of traffic through the city today. Some hon. members may say that it is in a chaotic condition but I ask them to visualise, just for one moment, what it would have been like if the Traffic Commission had not been in operation in the last few years.

We believe that the responsibility should be transferred to the Brisbane City Council. That is the purpose of the measure.

In talking about passing the buck, does not the Leader of the Opposition consider that the Brisbane City Council is capable of running it? Does he consider it has not the men with ability to take over the control? Is he trying to shield the Brisbane City Council from accepting its responsibility for traffic control in this area? I have the utmost faith in the ability of the men who have been employed in the Traffic Commission, in the ability of the men whom they have trained, and I am sure that the Brisbane City Council will be able to find personnel in Brisbane quite capable of undertaking control of traffic in this area.

The multiplicity of signs, which the Leader of the Opposition referred to, will not cause any trouble. Under this legislation all traffic controls will be covered by the manual of traffic control devices which has been established and formulated by the Traffic Commission.

We had a long discourse by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about no money being spent by the Government in Brisbane. At the present time a transportation survey in Brisbane is being carried out, of which the Department of Main Roads is paying 80 per cent., and the city council 20 per

cent. A similar survey is being undertaken in Townsville. Such measures indicate how the Department of Main Roads assists local authorities.

Mr. Houston: Have you any report on that?

Mr. CAMM: No, the report is not yet completed. It will be presented in a short time. For the information of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Traffic Commission is not a constructing authority for roads and bridges in this area. He claimed that the A.L.P. Government anticipated this. Might I add that it anticipated many things. It anticipated the problem associated with traffic; it anticipated the problem associated with education and it anticipated the problem associated with main roads, but it never did a thing about them. It never did a thing but wait until this Government came to power to try to right all the problems which had existed for so many years.

The Leader of the Opposition claimed that registration fees had increased. The hon. member for Norman made the same claim, as did the hon. member for Salisbury who also reiterated, by interjection, the claim that registration fees had been increased by this Government. I can find no evidence whatever that registration fees have been increased by this Government since it has been in power. I have all the resources of the department at my disposal. Even so, I have found no evidence that registration fees have been increased although three hon. members opposite claimed that they have.

Mr. Houston: You are using the technicality that driving licences are not part of registration fees.

Mr. CAMM: I am talking about registration fees. The hon. member for Salisbury referred to registration fees. I asked him, "Can you tell me by how much they have been increased?" He said, "I know they have been increased but I cannot tell you the exact amount." Someone else supported him.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition doubted that any traffic engineers had been trained in the State and challenged me to name how many there were and where they are. Of the traffic engineers trained in this area the Brisbane City Council has, at least, five and the Main Roads Department has 10. There is one at Townsville and another at Toowoomba. The Main Roads Department conducts courses in traffic engineering for local authority engineers, so there will be no shortage of traffic engineers when this authority is passed over.

The hon. member for South Brisbane criticised the Government for punishing alcoholics and said that we should sympathise with them. We do, because it is a disease. But should they be allowed to drive a motor car? Should they not be punished if they know that they are affected in this way by

alcohol and deliberately drink alcohol and then get into a motor car and drive it? Has he no consideration for the people who may be injured by these drivers, or for the damage they can cause to other vehicles? I thought that Opposition members would at least be in favour of that principle.

The hon. member for South Brisbane quoted from "Hansard". He referred to Mr. Morris's remarks, when introducing the measure dealing with the Traffic Commission, that there was traffic congestion in London, how it had built up over the years, and that we could have the same in Brisbane. The hon. member for South Brisbane said that we have got it now, that it has to be fixed up, and that the way we are fixing it up is by passing the responsibility to the Brisbane City Council.

I have here an editorial published in the February, 1965 issue of "Traffic Engineering and Control" which reflects the opinion of the Institute of Traffic Engineers in London. The British Government is handing over the powers to control the traffic of London to the London County Councils. That is what we are doing. The hon. member said that the conditions here are becoming as bad as they are overseas. The British engineering section will provide advisory services to the London County Councils. That is what we are doing.

Mr. Houston: The population in London is as big as that of Australia.

Mr. CAMM: Population does not matter. What applies there applies here just as much. They are now conducting a transportation survey in London. We are doing the same in Brisbane, Townsville, and Toowoomba. They believe that they must have that survey and that is essential for adequate traffic control in that city. The same firm is conducting the survey here and in London. They are implementing a policy of uniform traffic devices. We are doing that. It appears that the Traffic Commission we formed in Brisbane served a very good purpose, because Britain is adopting much the same measures that we are adopting in Brisbane.

Mr. Duggan: What circumstance or condition has changed since 1959 to justify this changed attitude on the part of the Government?

Mr. CAMM: We feel that traffic control in Brisbane has been set on right lines and that the chaotic conditions have been fixed up, and now the Brisbane City Council can continue with the good work of the Traffic Commission. The hon. member for Roma has a good knowledge of what is contained in the Bill.

The hon. member for Rockhampton South spoke of local authority affairs and the control of traffic, and pointed out many advantages that would accrue to local authorities.

The hon. member for Norman said, in a somewhat facetious vein, that the meter was expiring for hon. members on this side of the Chamber. All I can say is that there will be many, many more shillings put in to keep it running for years to come. He referred to increased registration fees and made the ridiculous claim that the Government has spent only £71,500 through the Department of Main Roads in Brisbane. This has not much to do with traffic control, nevertheless I have, for his information, figures showing that the expenditure by the Department of Main Roads on permanent works and maintenance for 1963-64 was £373,948. Ordinary Commonwealth aid was £71,500. Special grants were for the markets access road, £50,150; the road to the Ampol refinery, £30,000; from Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Fund £167,640. The total is £693,238. That does not include money spent by the Traffic Engineer. When hon. members opposite quote figures it would be pleasing if they were a little honest and quoted those of all the expenditure of this department.

The hon. member for Belmont claimed that income from parkatareas has not been maintained. He had the feeling that it was reducing each year, and that that was one of the reasons why the Government was passing control to the Brisbane City Council. The income from this source has in fact increased in three years from £45,000 to nearly £120,000. The returns were £45,579, £101,618, and £117,958. That does not show the income to be reducing. If one reads the figures in the reverse order, it might; from what I have heard tonight, I would not be surprised if that is how the hon. member reads quite a lot of figures,

Some concern was expressed about the personnel of the Traffic Commission. The Government shares that concern, and the Bill provides that the Traffic Engineer, the Commission secretary, and all staff employees will be employed in the Main Roads Department. They will remain employees of the Crown and will not lose any long-service leave. It will thus be seen that we, too, have regard for the men in our service, and appreciate valuable employees.

There has been much criticism of the proposed increase in the driving licence fee. I do not think that anyone could claim that a rise of 5s. is exorbitant. If a licence was worth 15s. a few years ago, surely it is worth £1 now.

Mr. Hanlon: It was only 7s. 6d. and you doubled it.

Mr. CAMM: I paid for a driver's licence nearly 30 years ago; I did not get it for nothing. I did not have a motor car, but I had to pay for the licence. A fee of £2 is now to be charged for a licence. That will be the initial charge only. They will pay £2 and have a driver's licence for life.

Mr. Hanlon: That is £2 for openers; next year you will make it a fiver.

Mr. CAMM: I ask the hon. member to listen to what I have to say. In New South Wales the fee is £2 per annum.

Mr. Houston: But this is Queensland.

Mr. CAMM: I am just showing how good Queensland is compared with other States. I realise how good it is; that is why I stay here. In South Australia the fee is £1 per annum; in Victoria it is £3 for three years, which is £1 a year; in Western Australia it is £2 for a test and £1 per annum; and in Tasmania it is £1 10s. for a new licence and £1 for annual renewal. Therefore, I do not think a fee of £2 is unreasonable when a person requires a driver's licence in Queensland. It must cost £2 to conduct a test, make the necessary entry, and issue a licence. Every other State makes an annual charge; we are giving young people in Queensland the privilege of obtaining a licence for life for £2.

The hon. member for Kurilpa also has a clear appreciation of the Bill and its advantages, and he does not share the Opposition's view that penalties for drunken driving should not be increased. I agree with him.

The hon. member for Townsville North was worried about the expense that will be incurred by the Townsville City Council when the provisions of the Bill are implemented. There probably will be similar concern in every provincial city, but there is really no reason for it because the local authorities have already assumed this responsibility and will not incur any additional expense. They will have the benefit of the advice of the Traffic Engineer, who will act in an advisory capacity to local authorities throughout Queensland. Townsville now derives some revenue for traffic work from its parking meters, and when the Bill becomes law it is possible that part of the work will be subsidised from the £130,000 that will be transferred to the Traffic Engineering Trust Fund.

The problem is already recognised, because a transportation survey has been authorised and will start next month. It will be financed on the same basis as the one in Brisbane—80 per cent. by the Main Roads Department and 20 per cent. by the Council—and will be controlled jointly by the Main Roads Department and the Townsville City Council.

Mr. Duggan: If it is a council responsibility, what justification is there for the State's paying 80 per cent. of the cost?

Mr. Hiley: If you object, we need not.

Mr. Duggan: All I am saying is that it is not logical.

Mr. CAMM: I think it is logical in this respect: that there must be co-ordination of the traffic flow on main roads, which are under the control of the Main Roads Department, and the traffic flow in city areas. In

my opinion, the Main Roads Department should contribute to the cost of the survey so that there will be overall control of traffic in Queensland, instead of local authorities in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville conducting surveys and each one finishing in its own area. There would be chaos if that were done. The Main Roads Department is doing a very good job by contributing 80 per cent. of the cost of the survey.

I shall reserve any further comments till the second reading. I am quite sure that when the Bill is printed and is in the hands of the Opposition we will not hear nearly as much criticism as we have heard tonight.

Motion (Mr. Camm) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Camm, read a first time.

RAILWAYS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer—Minister for Transport) (1.7 a.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Railways Acts, 1914 to 1964, in a certain particular.”

The purpose of the amendment is to facilitate adjustments to the salary of the Commissioner for Railways and follows the lines of legislation introduced earlier in the session by the Premier in respect of the salary of the Public Service Commissioner.

The maximum annual rate of salary payable to the Commissioner for Railways is specifically defined in section 7 of the Railways Acts, 1914 to 1964 and it is because of this provision that it is necessary for any adjustment in the Commissioner's salary to come before this Chamber by way of a special Bill.

As hon. members are aware, increases in salary were granted to public servants and railway employees some time ago retrospective to 20 July 1964.

Briefly, the Bill authorises the Governor in Council to grant increases from time to time in the salary payable to the Commissioner for Railways, thus obviating the necessity for the introduction of what, in effect, are machinery amendments of the relevant legislation to ratify the granting to the Commissioner for Railways of salary increases commensurately based on increases approved by the Governor in Council for payments to other high Crown officials.

Although, as I shall explain later, provision is made in the amending legislation for the Commissioner's salary to be increased or decreased in accordance with the basic wages for males declared by the Full Bench of

the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, no authority is provided whereby the Governor in Council may reduce the annual rate of salary payable to the Commissioner for Railways.

The amending legislation will eliminate any delay which the need to legislate might occasion in having extended to the Commissioner for Railways the benefit of salary increases to which he might become entitled.

Under the terms of the amending legislation the minimum salary entitlement of the Commissioner for Railways from 20 July 1964, is prescribed at £6,000 per annum. There is embodied in such minimum salary an increase of £350, to which the Commissioner became entitled in consequence of the granting of salary increases dating from 20 July, 1964, to a number of Crown officials.

The provisions of the previous legislation are preserved in relation to the application of basic wage adjustments to the Commissioner's salary and the appropriation from Consolidated Revenue of the amount of salary payable to the Commissioner.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (1.11 a.m.): We have in this measure a repetition of the reasons given when Bills were introduced within the last few days to make adjustments in the salaries of certain people for whom statutory authority was required.

We have been twitted over here with being somewhat obstructionist in our attitude, but it is more than passing strange that there has been a series of Government party meetings since this matter was raised. I am quite certain that there is a lot of trepidation in Government circles because of this series of party meetings.

Instead of twitting us about these matters the Government should be doing something about the domestic crises it has on its own hands as a result of its inability to convince its own supporters of the need for these adjustments. There has been a Press report which has not been denied by anybody—everybody knows it to be true—that the Government parties rejected Cabinet's recommendations for increases along these lines.

Then a second meeting was held at which the matter was resubmitted, but at that second meeting there was the noticeable absence of some people who were apparently engaged on other duties that had been allotted to them, possibly to prevent their voicing opposition to these proposals. That sort of thing should be known in the public interest. I am prepared to retract the statement if I am wrong but I do not think all the other adjustments referred to in the Bills in the last few days were made retrospective to 20 July, 1964. The Minister for Transport will argue that certain adjustments were made in the Railway Award dating back to

20 July last year. What is going to be the position with the adjustments made to the award a few days ago?

If I heard the Minister correctly, there will be no power to reduce the Commissioner's salary. The Government did not do that in 1961 regarding the bonus provisions. The Industrial Commission was given power to reduce the workers' wages. That is the very point we are complaining about.

On the question of the various amounts, as I pointed out yesterday, there does not appear to be any logic at all. In the case of certain officers on comparable salaries it might be argued that there was £300 or £250 or £350 increase. In the case of the Governor's salary where there is a difference of £100 between his salary and that of the Chief Justice, the Government lifts the Governor's salary £150 above that of the Chief Justice. It gives the Chief Justice £500 and the Governor £650, despite the fact that one was getting £7,000 and the other £7,100, claiming that it wants to maintain the domination of the Crown over the Chief Justice. That could have been done by an increase of £600 or even £500, and the margin would still have been maintained.

Because of those things we feel that we should voice our protest. We pointed out the other day that for heads of departments, the highest increase awarded by the Industrial Commission was £175 but these increases are for £250, £300, £350 and £500, as the case may be. That is what we object to. If the Government granted an increase of £175 we would agree. We do not wish to deny these people covered by statutory provisions the opportunity to get the increase awarded by the Commission to heads of departments. With an amount of about £175 we would have no quarrel; we would support it.

Whether we are charged with being wage slashers, and so on, or not, we will test the sincerity of the Government by moving an amendment in Committee that the various increases be limited, in accordance with what the Government likes to call a scientific examination by the Industrial Commission, to a figure of £175. When talking about these retrospective payments, does the Government intend to say that judges of the Supreme Court, Land Court members, and the Auditor-General have responsibilities less exacting than the Commissioner for Railways, for his increase is being backdated to 20 July? I do not think there is any logic in that because these men were all doing the same sort of work with corresponding responsibility before and after the increases were granted. However, for the Commissioner for Railways the Government is going back to 20 July. If the Government is so keen on identifying itself with justice why was not the Bill introduced between 20 July and now. Why has the Government waited almost 12 months to make a retrospective payment for nine months? What justification is there in going back nine months in a salary determination at £6,000?

I believe that not only is it desirable to focus public attention on this, but that it is essential. I do not wish to keep repeating these remarks but no-one seems to have the slightest concern about these matters. The Government just swishes these amounts about as if they were quite easy to calculate.

I repeat the Parliamentarian's argument in this case. In their case Mr. Justice Webb was appointed, and a well-known accountant and a public man, to determine the matter. By their very searching examinations extending over a long period—much longer than is taken by the Commission in these matters—they arrived at a figure of £148 10s. The Government did not bring it up to the nearest round figure of £150. It said that the £148 10s. would apply. I am not making a case for Parliamentarians.

Mr. Smith: I think you could.

Mr. DUGGAN: The hon. member thinks I should?

Mr. Smith: I said I think you could.

Mr. DUGGAN: In this case the Government has made provision for wage adjustment; in addition to this round figure the Government is making arrangements for the basic wage adjustments to be passed onto the Commissioner. I do not know what it will amount to, but I think it will be about £39 10s.

If the Government is so keen to protect the rights of these people, all these things should be taken into account; the Government is so keen to see justice done but it does not apply the same principle in respect of all remuneration from the Crown. I have no doubt that in the apparently interminable arguments in the Government Caucus—although it would be difficult to ascertain—that some reasoning along these lines has been advanced by members of the coalition parties in a place not very far removed from here.

In this instance we are not opposed to the Commissioner's getting £175 which was the highest amount awarded by the Commission in determining rates for heads of departments. We will move, as we propose to do with the other Bills, for an amendment on those lines. Again as a matter of principle, to focus attention on this most unjust method, in view of all the circumstances, and the spiralling costs in all places, I indicate our intention to vote against the measure.

On behalf of the Opposition, I commit members on this side of the Chamber to that course of action.

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer—Minister for Transport) (1.20 a.m.), in reply: There were only a few matters of principle raised by the Leader of the Opposition to which I need reply. Firstly he indicated that there was nothing in the Bill which would

provide for a reduction in the Commissioner's salary. He referred to the position in relation to the bonus issue in 1961. What this Bill provides is that the Governor in Council cannot reduce the Commissioner's salary. But there is nothing to prevent Parliament, as it has done in the past, reducing the Commissioner's salary by amending the Act. All we are doing is placing in the hands of the Governor in Council the right to increase the salary of the Commissioner for Railways at a time when other salaries are increased, and we are saying that the Governor in Council is not permitted to reduce the salary of the Commissioner.

The Leader of the Opposition also referred to the fact that the increase in the salary of the Commissioner is being made retrospective to 20 July, 1964. So were the salaries of the Public Service Commissioner and the Auditor-General. Again we are doing exactly what the Leader of the Opposition did when he was in power, namely, to pay to the Commissioner for Railways and to the other public servants whom I have mentioned, increases in salary dating from the time the particular award was varied to the benefit of employees associated with that department. We have taken that and are following that as the basis. I believe that that is only fair and just.

The only other issue raised by the Leader of the Opposition was the quantum. He indicated certain steps that will be taken by the Opposition in Committee. Again we are adopting a pattern in relation to the salaries of the persons concerned. If the Leader of the Opposition and those associated with him desire to reduce the salaries we are suggesting, let them do so. We have, as the basis, the increases granted to certain officers under the Commissioner for Railways, the Public Service Commissioner, and the Auditor-General, and all we are doing is endeavouring to maintain relativity.

I believe that the legislation increasing the salary of the Commissioner for Railways is fair and just, and for that reason the Bill is being introduced.

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

AYES, 35

Mr. Anderson	Mr. Lonergan
.. Armstrong	.. McKechnie
.. Bjeike-Petersen	.. Munro
.. Camm	.. Murray
.. Carey	.. Nicklin
.. Chalk	.. Pilbeam
.. Cory	.. Pizzev
Dr. Delamothe	.. Richter
Mr. Dewar	.. Row
.. Ewan	.. Smith
.. Herbert	.. Sullivan
.. Hiley	.. Tooth
.. Hodges	.. Wharton
.. Houghton	.. Windsor
.. Hughes	
.. Jones, V. E.	
.. Knox	
.. Lee	
.. Lickiss	

Tellers:

Mr. Chinchin
.. Low

NOES, 20

Mr. Baxter	Mr. Marsden
„ Byrne	„ Melloy
„ Davies	„ Newton
„ Donald	„ O'Donnell
„ Duggan	„ Sherrington
„ Hanlon	„ Thackeray
„ Hanson	„ Wallis-Smith
„ Houston	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Inch	
„ Jones, R.	Mr. Bromley
„ Lloyd	„ Tucker

PAIRS

Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Gunn
„ Ramsden	„ Graham
„ Campbell	„ Mann
„ Rae	„ Dufficy
„ Harrison	„ Dean
„ Gaven	„ Bennett

Resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Chalk,
read a first time.

The House adjourned at 1.32 a.m.