

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 1971**

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**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to contain himself, and I also ask honourable members generally not to interject during question time.

BOOKLET, "THEY DIG QUEENSLAND"

**Mr. Houghton**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Has he seen the booklet "They Dig Queensland"?

(2) Who are the authors and what are their political affiliations?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Yes, I have seen the booklet."

(2) "The authors are Hugh Hamilton and Pete Thomas. Both are members of the Communist Party of Australia. Hamilton is a member of the State Committee and President of the militant Building Workers Industrial Union. Thomas is listed as a journalist on the *Tribune* which is, of course, the Communist newspaper. However, nowhere in the publication is reference made to their membership of the Communist Party. If these people are as sincere as they claim to be in their concern for job opportunities for Queensland workers, it is difficult to comprehend their reasons for attempting to destroy what private enterprise and the Government have built up for the same workers' benefit. Obviously, these men have no concern at all for the workers of Queensland, otherwise they would be devoting at least some of their energies to bringing pressure at the Trades Hall to eliminate the forced payment of \$5 to the Brisbane Trades and Labor Council for the right to work on the Peak Downs mining project."

**WEDNESDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 1971**

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

**PAPERS**

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

Report of the Commissioner of Police for the year 1970-71.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Order in Council under the State Planning and Development, Public Works Organisation, and Environment Control Act 1938-1970.

**QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE**

PRESS COLUMN, "CABINET MINUTE BY JOH. BJELKE-PETERSEN"

**Mr. Houston**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

Regarding the column, "Cabinet Minute by Joh. Bjelke-Petersen, Premier of Queensland," which has appeared in the Press throughout the State—

(1) Was the column approved by (a) Cabinet, (b) the Country Party or (c) the Liberal Party?

(2) Does this column purport to express the views of the Government?

(3) Who prepares the material and who authorises its publication?

(4) What is the total overall cost of each column published and to whom or what is this cost charged?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 4) "The newspaper column in question is simply a method of disseminating information about Government activities. It is non-political and is furnished at the express request of the news media concerned who, of their own choice, provide the space involved free of charge."

**FAUNA CONSERVATION LEGISLATION**

**Mr. Sherrington**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in the *Telegraph* of November 13 by the nature writer, Brian Harris, regarding the practices relative to the taking of protected fauna?

(2) In view of the need to improve many aspects of the Fauna Conservation Act and to ensure adequate policing of the provisions of the Act, will he ensure that amending legislation is brought before the House during the current session or indicate the reason why this is not possible?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "Yes, I have seen the article in last Saturday's *Telegraph* to which the Honourable Member refers. I can assure him that the proposed "*Fauna Conservation Act of 1952*" amending legislation will be brought before the House at the

appropriate time. I would remind the Honourable Member that individual Ministers do not usurp the prerogative of the Government in determining the priorities in relation to the order in which legislation is brought before this House. Despite what Mr. Harris says in his newspaper article, there will not be a decimation of native bird populations pending amendments to our fauna conservation laws. Although penalties require updating, the existing Act is considered adequate to meet present needs. The proposed amendments are aimed at meeting future needs."

#### MERCURIAL SEED DRESSINGS

**Mr. Sherrington**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

(1) Has any research been carried out in Queensland into the efficacy of substitutes for mercurial seed dressings? If so, what are the details of such research?

(2) How many types of seed packaged for home gardeners are treated with mercurial and other poisonous dressings?

(3) Is he aware that many of these seed packages are marked with the warning "Keep out of the reach of children"?

(4) In view of the increasing concern being expressed in many countries relative to the dangers of mercury pollution and the added danger to children because of the treatment of seeds for use by home gardeners, will he embark on a programme of sustained research into this problem to ensure that the possibility of contamination from this source will be eliminated?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Research is being made in Queensland to assess the efficacy of substitute materials. This research is co-ordinated with research trials being conducted throughout Australia."

(2) "Four kinds of treated seeds are sold as packeted seed for home gardeners in Queensland, namely, beans, peas, sweet-corn and sweetpeas, and these are treated with B.H.C. and Captan. Mercurial seed dressings are not used."

(3) "Warnings on labels attached to packeted seed which have been treated with pesticides are the province of the Health Department. All such packeted seed contains a warning that the seed has been treated and should not be eaten."

(4) "Virtually no seeds for use by home gardeners are now treated with mercurial dressing. However, a continuous programme is being conducted to find substitutes for mercurial dressings."

#### MERCURY CONTENT IN SEAFOODS

**Mr. Sherrington**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

Further to my previous Questions concerning the monitoring of mercury levels in seafoods—

(1) Has mercury sampling of Australian oysters been undertaken and, if so, what were the numbers examined, from what localities were they taken and what were the mercury levels in each batch examined?

(2) Were any consignments of canned swordfish or tuna received in Australia of the same brands as those withdrawn from sale in the United States of America and Great Britain because of the possibility of mercury contamination and, if so, what action was taken?

(3) Is he aware that the World Health Organisation has suggested a limit of 0.05 parts per million of mercury in fish in contrast to the level of 0.5 which was indicated in his previous Answer as being the acceptable level?

*Answers:—*

(1) "The following samples of Australian oysters have been examined:—

				Mercury in parts per million
17-3-71	Port Stephens, N.S.W.	..	..	.025
17-3-71	Georges River, N.S.W.	..	..	.035
10-9-71	Moreton Bay, Q.	..	..	.04
10-9-71	Port Stephens, N.S.W.	..	..	.04
10-9-71	Moreton Bay, Q.	..	..	.02
14-10-71	Port Stephens, N.S.W.	..	..	.03
14-10-71	Port Stephens, N.S.W.	..	..	.06
14-10-71	Moreton Bay, Q.	..	..	.02
14-10-71	Moreton Bay, Q.	..	..	.02
14-10-71	Port Stephens, N.S.W.	..	..	.05
14-10-71	Port Stephens, N.S.W.	..	..	.01 "

(2) "Health Department officers have not encountered canned swordfish on sale in Queensland until recently. A sample packed in Canada is presently under examination. All brands of canned tuna on the local market have been examined. The Commonwealth Department of Health has advised that an examination in all States of Australia of canned tuna revealed no mercury to the magnitude reported in the United States. It is concluded that none of the consignments referred to by the Honourable Member were shipped to this country."

(3) "The figure of 0.5 parts per million of mercury in fish, fish products, canned fish and crustacea was recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council at its meeting in Canberra on October 28, 1971. This standard was adopted after examination of reports of recent studies overseas. I am advised it has been accepted in Canada and the United States of America. I am aware that the recommendation involves an amendment of the previously prescribed standard."

REMEDIAL TESTS FOR CHILDREN WITH  
READING DISABILITY, TOWNSVILLE

**Mr. Aikens**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) What provision is made in primary schools for the testing of pupils in order to determine whether any of them have specific learning difficulties and may need remedial teaching?

(2) If no provision is made for the systematic testing of pupils, in what manner and by whom is it determined that a pupil may need this specialised teaching?

(3) Is there a section of his Department at Townsville whereat this particular type of pupil can be assessed and, if so, who is responsible for arranging the attendance of the pupil at the section, what are the detailed functions of the section and can it cope with all the pupils requiring assessment?

(4) After a pupil is assessed as needing specialised teaching, what facilities exist at Townsville schools to provide this type of teaching, how many teachers are qualified to give it and what provision is made to train such teachers to meet present and future requirements?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Children experiencing specific learning difficulties should be referred to the Guidance and Special Education Branch for testing if a need for specialised remedial teaching is considered likely."

(2) "Teachers are trained to recognize the symptoms of reading disability and if the disability is complex they are encouraged to seek specialist assistance."

(3) "Yes. There is a Regional Office of the Guidance and Special Education Branch in Townsville. Included on the staff of the Regional Guidance Office is an officer specialising in clinical guidance and two remedial teachers. Children referred because of learning problems are tested by officers of the Branch to determine whether placement is required in some area of special education or whether they can be best helped in the normal primary class. It is planned to increase staff over the next few years to enable the Branch to meet all requests for assistance without undue delay."

(4) "There are three remedial centres in Townsville, at the Regional Guidance Office, at Hermit Park State School and at Wulguru State School. Training courses for remedial teachers are conducted from time to time at the Guidance and Special Education Branch, Brisbane. The next course is planned for second term, 1972."

TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL LEVY ON  
EMPLOYEES OF FLUOR (AUST.) PTY.  
LTD., PEAK DOWNS PROJECT

**Mr. Aikens**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Tourism,—

(1) With regard to an agreement between the Brisbane Trades and Labor Council and the Fluor Company, under which employees are mulct of \$5 out of their first full pay, will he inform the House (a) the date on which the agreement was entered into, (b) the number of employees engaged at that time, (c) the manner by which it was ascertained that the employees approved of the agreement, as was stated by the Leader of the Opposition, (d) the manner by which it was ascertained that employees subsequently engaged approved of the agreement, (e) the number of employees at present covered by the agreement, (f) whether any provision is made for the termination of the agreement and, if so, by what means and (g) whether any person who refuses to sign the undertaking may be denied employment and, if so, whether there is any appeal to any lawful tribunal by that person?

(2) Does such an extortion racket apply to any other company in any other industry and, if so, will he give the full details?

*Answers:—*

(1) "(a) June 1, 1971. (b) An endeavour is being made to obtain this information. (c) The Honourable Member should address this part of his Question to the Leader of the Opposition. However, it is self evident that the raid on the workers' wages has the benediction of the Leader of the A.L.P. (d) It is suggested, here again, that the Leader of the Opposition may be able to supply the required information as it is not readily available to me. I have no knowledge that unionists on the job were consulted regarding the agreement much less given the right to approve or disapprove of the payment of a poll tax on their earnings in favour of the Secretary, Trades and Labor Council. (e) See Answer to (b). (f) As indicated in my reply to the Question by the Honourable Member for Mirani yesterday, legal advice is being sought in regard to all the aspects contained in this Agreement. (g) See Answer to (f)."

(2) "It is apparent that if the same extortionate rate of subsidy is demanded and received from every unionist whose organisation is an affiliated union with the Brisbane Trades and Labor Council, then the Council would receive not less than \$650,000 in addition to the affiliation fees being received by it from the unions to which the workers belong and would result in the Hoffa Organisation and the Teamsters Union in America becoming a respectable outfit by comparison. Since this matter was raised in the House by me, I have had

approaches from unionists stating that a similar situation occurs in regard to the firm with which they are employed. However, I have insisted that I will take no notice of any of these allegations unless a copy of the agreement providing for such deductions can be produced for my perusal. Again I stress that this extortionate charge is being milked from decent workers for some ulterior motive unknown, despite the fact that they are required to pay union fees and the unions of which they are members are also required to pay a levy to the Trades and Labor Council, Brisbane. To me, this iniquitous imposition represents no more and no less than a great steal from the pay envelope of the worker and from his wife and family."

**Mr. Davis** interjected.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I have already warned the honourable member for Brisbane this morning, along with other honourable members.

**Mr. Davis:** You have not.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! For interrupting me while I am on my feet, the honourable member will now leave the Chamber under the provisions of Standing Order 123A.

Whereupon the honourable member for Brisbane withdrew from the Chamber.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** I remind honourable members that the warning given by Mr. Speaker relative to interjections during question time still stands. I will not tolerate interjections while questions are being answered.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT IN QUEENSLAND, NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA

**Dr. Crawford,** pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Tourism,—

(1) What were the percentage figures for unemployment in Queensland for August, September and October, including the seasonal adjustment?

(2) Will he give a comparison of these figures with those of New South Wales and Victoria for the same months and also correlate the whole with the figures for August, September and October, 1970?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "The data requested by the Honourable Member for Wavell is set out in the attached schedule which I table. Comparison of the Queensland unemployment rate for August, September and October 1971 with the same period in 1970 shows that, although the overall rate has increased, the increasing trend present in 1970 is not present in 1971. The percentage of unemployed from August–October 1971 shows an increase in all States, as compared with the same period in 1970, but Queensland's increase has

been proportionately less than in all the other States compared. Comparison with other unemployment rates discloses that in 1971 Queensland's rate is substantially lower than the national average and second lowest to New South Wales in each of the three months. However, I would point out to the Honourable Member that the Commonwealth Statistician has stated that—"It would be neither reasonable nor prudent to regard seasonally adjusted series as in any way "definitive". They must be treated with caution as being no more than useful indicators of movements. They can without doubt be a useful aid to critical interpretation, but can in no way be a substitute for it."

*Paper*—Whereupon Mr. Herbert laid upon the Table of the House the schedule referred to.

#### KNOWLEDGE OF EFFECT OF ALCOHOL ON MOTOR VEHICLE DRIVERS

**Dr. Crawford,** pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

As it was announced in *The Courier-Mail* of November 16 that Queensland is to join New South Wales in implementing the compulsory use of seat belts in an attempt to reduce the road toll—

(1) Has he made any decisions regarding methods of having persons driven home when they are not fit to drive themselves because of their blood-alcohol levels?

(2) Has he considered methods of increasing the depth of the examination for aspirant driver-licence holders in order to embrace knowledge of the use and abuse of alcohol?

*Answers:—*

(1) "No."

(2) "Yes. I would refer the Honourable Member to further study of the problem by referring him to the publication *Behavioral Research in Highway Safety*, Volume No. 1-1970 and the article estimating the effectiveness of blood alcohol limits by Dr. Paul Hurst."

#### MEASURES IN NEW SOUTH WALES TO COMBAT ROAD TOLL

**Dr. Crawford,** pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

As he is no doubt aware that the New South Wales road toll has been reduced this year by approximately 50 while the Queensland road toll has risen by approximately 50 in the same period, will he detail exactly what measures are enforced in New South Wales and as yet are not implemented in Queensland, besides the compulsory use of seat belts?

Answer:—

"The actual figures of deaths on the road to which the Honourable Member refers are:—

—	N.S.W.	Queensland
January–October, 1971 ..	1,057	482
and figures for previous years back to 1965 are:—		
1970 .. .. .	1,309	537
1969 .. .. .	1,188	556
1968 .. .. .	1,211	477
1967 .. .. .	1,117	502
1966 .. .. .	1,134	466
1965 .. .. .	1,085	467

As will be seen the figures vary from year to year and no particular year compared with another year will give a reliable trend. It should be noted that Queensland was the only State to have less deaths on the road in 1970 as compared with 1969. There is no substantial difference in the Traffic Acts of New South Wales and Queensland."

#### BELMONT STATE SCHOOL

**Mr. Newton**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

Have plans and specifications been drawn up for additional classroom accommodation at the Belmont State School? If so, will this or alternative accommodation be available for the commencement of the 1972 school year?

Answer:—

"Approval has been given for the supply and erection of a demountable building of two classrooms to cater for the increased enrolment anticipated in the 1972 School year."

#### COMPREHENSIVE MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE PREMIUMS

**Mr. Bromley**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

In view of the recent steep all-round premium increases announced by the Insurance Commissioner, will he take action to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into all aspects of comprehensive motor vehicle insurance in Queensland? If not, what are the reasons?

Answer:—

"No. Section 16 of *The Insurance Acts, 1960 to 1968*" provides that the Insurance Commissioner, after conferring with the representative of insurers, shall deduce maximum premium rates from information furnished by insurers. The statistics furnished indicated that the increases were necessary. The maximum premium rates that may be charged in Queensland for comprehensive motor vehicle insurance were last changed towards the end of 1970.

This change was based upon the insurers' claims experience for the years 1967-69. Since 1969, a very substantial deterioration in the claims experience has occurred. In the case of motor cars, the number of claims per 1,000 cars has increased by about 21 per cent. and the average cost of each claim by about 16 per cent. Increasing claim rates and increasing average costs of claims appear to be a persistent feature of comprehensive motor vehicle insurance. Inevitably, they must force premiums upwards. The Insurance Commissioner and the representative of insurers reached the conclusion that these substantial increases justified the imposition of higher premium rates. The Insurance Commissioner has asked insurers to carry out a full analysis of all features of comprehensive motor vehicle insurance, with a view to deciding whether or not basic changes should be made to the existing systems such as the Safety Record Plan."

#### POLICE REWARD FUND

**Mr. Bromley**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) With regard to the \$12,000 expended in 1970-71 from the Police Reward Fund, as shown in his departmental Estimates, how was this money spent and to whom was it paid?

(2) What are the main purposes of the fund and how does it function?

Answers:—

(1) "The amount of \$12,000 was transferred from the Police Reward Fund in 1970-71 to the Police Superannuation Fund to be used in payment of Superannuation allowances."

(2) "*The Police Act 1937-1970* provides for a Police Reward Fund into which is paid penalties imposed on members of the force under this Act and all penalties or portion of penalties and damages awarded by any Justice on any summary conviction to any member of the Police Force as the prosecutor of any information or otherwise and shall instead of being paid to him be paid to the Treasurer of the State to be held in trust by him. The Police Reward Fund can be used for payment of rewards, bounties or other allowances as provided under police rules to members of the force or to widows of such members or for transfer to the Police Superannuation Fund to meet the commitments of that fund."

#### WOODEN CARRIAGES ON "INLANDER" SERVICE

**Mr. Inch**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

Further to his Answer to my Question on November 12 regarding air-conditioned "Inlander" carriages, where were these carriages used and for what purpose were they required?

*Answer:—*

"Certain Inlander carriages were used for the purpose of conveying guests from Hay Point to Goonyella to attend ceremonies at the opening of the mine."

#### EFFECT OF ROAD PERMIT FEES ON QUEENSLAND MANUFACTURERS

**Mr. Hanson**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in *The Courier-Mail* of November 15 wherein it is alleged that Queensland manufacturers were losing contracts to interstate competitors because of road-permit fees and the fact that the Government's plan to reduce road-permit tax fees for developmental projects was not working in practice?

(2) As the article reveals that a southern Queensland firm lost a valuable contract to a Melbourne firm because it was underbid by \$8 per ton for a Gladstone contract, will he investigate the matter on behalf of the State industry concerned?

(3) As there could be a serious setback to the future employment of the State's work force if the situation continues and as the article raises the doubt that this State's industry could be and is being severely disadvantaged, have there been any approaches to him or his Ministers to rectify the obvious anomalies mentioned in the article?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 3) "The newspaper article referred to by the Honourable Member has been drawn to my attention. I am advised by my colleagues, the Honourable the Minister for Transport and the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Development, that the claims concerning the incidence of road transport fees made by the Ipswich manufacturer mentioned in the article are currently being investigated. I should add that at the time of the allegation in the Press the person concerned had not submitted details to the Transport Commissioner although he had been asked to do so as a result of a telephone enquiry. In fact, his request has neither been rejected nor accepted. In this connection, the Honourable Member may be assured my Government is vigorous in its promotion of the interests of Queensland's industry and workers to ensure their maximum participation in the many major developmental projects presently being undertaken in the State."

#### OPENING OF GOONYELLA-HAY POINT RAILWAY PROJECT

(a) **Mr. Bousen**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) How many persons attended the dinner which was arranged by him and

held in Brisbane on November 4, prior to the opening of the Goonyella-Hay Point railway project?

(2) What organisations and companies were represented and what was the total cost of the dinner?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "I suggest the Honourable Member direct his Question to the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition, who was an invited and welcome guest to a function which suitably marked an important event in the State's development and which has advanced Queensland's progress and promoted its standing and reputation overseas."

(b) **Mr. Bousen**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) How many people were invited to the opening of the Goonyella-Hay Point railway project on November 5?

(2) Were there any overseas visitors and, if so, from which countries did they come and who paid their fares and expenses?

(3) Were any interstate visitors invited to the opening and, if so, from which States did they come and who paid their fares and expenses?

(4) What other companies or organisations were represented and who paid their fares and expenses?

(5) What forms of transport were used to convey the visitors to and from Goonyella?

(6) What was the total cost of the whole exercise?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 6) "I refer the Honourable Member to my Answer to his previous Question. My reply is equally applicable to both Questions."

#### CONSTRUCTION OF AIRPORT FENCE, WILSONTON, TOOWOOMBA

**Mr. Bousen**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

(1) Did he see an article in *The Chronicle*, Toowoomba, of October 27, to the effect that tenders had been called by the Toowoomba City Council for the building of a six-foot high fence around the airport at Wilton, Toowoomba?

(2) Are any of the costs incurred to be borne by the State and Commonwealth Governments and, if so, what amount will be payable by each?

*Answers:—*

(1) "No."

(2) "The Honourable Member should address the Question to the Honourable the Treasurer."

# MICRON-TESTING OF WOOL

**Mr. Aiken**, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

As trials have shown that the practised and practical eye has classed wool at 60's count and that mechanical-micron measurement has placed this wool at 70's count, will his Government urge Queensland wool-growers to press for micron-testing at Brisbane wool sales?

*Answer:—*

"Until the results of further study and evaluation are available, the Government considers it would be inopportune to make representations of the nature suggested until the confidence of wool producers, wool buyers and wool manufacturers in this method of sale by sample has been established."

# BOVINE BRUCELLOSIS

**Mr. Aiken**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

(1) Is brucellosis, the well-known cattle abortive disease, contagious and contracted by humans?

(2) Has the disease any known association with humans and is contaminated milk a possible source of infection, especially when it is used untreated on farms?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Bovine brucellosis is an infectious disease and humans may become infected if exposed to the causal bacteria. Because of the recurring rise and fall of body temperatures, the disease when it occurs in man is often referred to as undulant fever."

(2) "In an infected cow the causal bacteria are present in the greatest concentration in the pregnant uterus and in the foetus and foetal membranes. Soon after calving, the bacteria commonly localise in the udder and associated lymph glands where they remain until some time during the next pregnancy, when they may again invade the genital tract. Human infection most often occurs as a result of handling freshly calved or aborting cows or by drinking raw milk from infected cows."

# COW-FERTILITY RESEARCH

**Mr. Aiken**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

Because cow fertility and calf percentage is the yardstick to successful grazing returns and beef production, what research has been made by his Department in this direction, with what results and at what cost?

*Answer:—*

"The Beef Cattle Husbandry Branch of my Department recognises the vital importance of branding rates to the economic viability of both the industry as a whole and the individual producer. It also recognises that low branding percentages in many areas of the State represent one of the major industry problems. A considerable volume of research has been carried out at 'Brian Pastures' Research Station, Gayndah, 'Swan's Lagoon' Cattle Field Research Station, Millaroo and Brigalow Research Station, Theodore, to study the most favourable period of calving, the advantages and disadvantages of strategic weaning, continuous versus controlled mating, supplementation of breeders, use of artificial insemination as a means of disease control in extensive herds, synchronization of oestrus, difficult births in heifers and the causes of abortion and neonatal losses of calves. These studies have been supported by a large number of field trials. Research into reproduction in recent years is fully reported in a research report of the Beef Cattle Husbandry Branch which is available to members and details of some research projects were included in the 1970-71 Annual Report of the Department. It would be extremely difficult to segregate the costs of research into beef cattle reproduction."

# QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

## SUGGESTED AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDERS RELATING TO QUESTIONS

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I ask the Premier: As he is apparently very keen to have me available here to answer questions during question time, will he initiate moves to have the Standing Orders Committee meet so that the Standing Orders can be amended to enable me to answer "Dorothy Dix" questions, as Ministers of the Crown do?

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition knows quite well that his question is facetious. However, if the Premier cares to answer it, I shall leave it to him.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition knows quite well that there is no provision for questions to be directed to him. I shall leave it to the Premier to decide whether he wishes to answer the question.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Toowoomba West asked two questions in the House this morning—Nos. 16 and 17 on the Business Paper—and you, Mr. Acting Speaker, heard the answers given to them.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair is well aware of the answers given.

**Mr. Tucker:** Facetiousness?



**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will not interject while I am on my feet; otherwise, he will be dealt with. The answers given to both questions did in fact refer to the Leader of the Opposition, but they did not indicate that the questions should be asked in the House.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I rise to a further point of order.

**Mr. Sullivan:** Sit down and don't waste time.

**Mr. Bennett:** Mind your own business.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The Premier did not answer the questions as asked; he referred them to me. I would be very happy to answer my colleague's questions. What I now want to know is whether the Premier will convene a meeting of the Standing Orders Committee.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair will leave it to the Premier.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr. Bennett:** Where did you get that sida retusa in your coat?

**Mr. AIKENS:** Hello, the honourable member for South Brisbane is here. How did he get here?

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. AIKENS:** It has been ruled in this House over many years that there can be no discussion or debate on questions.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER!** Order! The Chair is well aware of that.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The answer to the question by the Leader of the Opposition is, of course, "No". I do not think he would suggest in his saner moments that he should answer in such a roundabout way questions that he could answer simply to his colleagues in private.

#### FAUNA CONSERVATION LEGISLATION

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: In view of his answer to my question this morning concerning the Fauna Conservation Act wherein he indicated that legislation would be introduced at an appropriate time, will he inform the House what he considers to be the "appropriate" time?

**Mr. ROW:** When Cabinet comes to a decision on the matter.

#### T.A.B. POLICY

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** I ask the Premier: As the T.A.B. claims that it is not within its charter to provide any amenities that will foster gambling, will he inform the House if it is within the province of the T.A.B. to advertise in order to encourage investment with it by the insertion in the Press of a

notice reading "T.A.B.—Tried a treble?", and is this advertisement in accord with Government policy?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The simple answer to the honourable member's question is that the T.A.B. determines its own policy and runs its own organisation.

#### LOCAL AUTHORITY REACTION TO REGIONAL PLANNING BILL

**Mr. CASEY:** I ask the Minister for Local Government and Electricity: Having noticed the statement he made yesterday to a meeting of the Institute of Real Estate Development in Brisbane that "a bit of a revolt" was being experienced from local authorities towards the State Government's Regional Planning Bill, I ask him to inform the House which local authorities are revolting and what are the main aspects of the Bill to which they object?

**Mr. RAE:** This was said during a speech I made last night at a function organised by the Institute of Real Estate Development.

**Mr. Bennett:** Were you trying to put something over?

**Mr. RAE:** No. I simply received an inquiry about how the Bill in question would affect the various shires. I told those present that from my knowledge all local authorities had shown a great deal of interest in how it will affect them. They wish to be associated with its administration.

**Mr. Bennett:** We want to know what local authorities are growling.

**Mr. RAE:** I do not intend to name them. I assure the honourable member for South Brisbane that I have expressed the thoughts that were conveyed to me.

#### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** I direct a question without notice to the Premier and "Minister for 'Dorothy Dixers'".

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! Does the honourable member want the question answered?

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** Yes.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Then I ask him to direct his question in a proper manner.

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** This being the final session of the present Parliament, does the Premier really believe that his image will be enhanced by making personal attacks in mud-slinging answers to "Dorothy Dix"-type questions?

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The question is out of order.

#### MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

##### LATE SITTINGS OF PARLIAMENT

**Hon. S. D. TOOTH** (Ashgrove—Minister for Health) (11.54 a.m.): I desire to take

a few minutes to deal with a matter that has evoked a considerable amount of public interest during the last few days or so. Every year to a limited extent, and to a greater extent every third year towards the end of each Parliament, we have witnessed an attempt by the Opposition—hitherto with some success—to delay legislation by every trick and device available under Standing Orders and create a bank-up of Bills for the last week of the session.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr. Sherrington:** If that is how you want it, that is how you will get it. We have co-operated on several important matters.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I remind honourable members that the Chair is attempting to restore order. I realise that the honourable member for Salisbury desires to take a point of order, and I shall accept it—but only when the House comes to order.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I rise to a point of order. As Opposition Whip, I take strong exception to this petty political speech, which is taking up time in this debate. In recent weeks, as Opposition Whip, I have co-operated with the Government on several important matters, including the introductory stage of the environmental control legislation. If this is how the Government wants it in future, it will not get the co-operation of the Opposition.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member has taken his point of order.

**Mr. Sherrington:** It is nothing but a cheap political speech to waste the time of this House.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I have already appealed to the honourable member for Salisbury. I appeal to him once again.

**Mr. Sherrington:** I am not going to sit here and “cop” this sort of thing.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member for Salisbury under Standing Order 123A for his consistent interjections and rude interruptions of the proceedings.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I rise to a point of order. I am challenging the Premier to get to his feet and tell the Minister for Health just how much co-operation he has received from this side of the House. I am not going to sit here quietly and “cop” this. You can suspend me if you want to.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member—

**Mr. Sherrington:** Never mind about that. You have had co-operation from this side of the House.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I am afraid the Chair will have to accept the honourable member's challenge. I ask him to retire from the Chamber under the provisions of Standing Order 123A.

**Mr. Sherrington:** I will do that, too—and I hope you can get a bit of truth in the House in future.

Whereupon the honourable member for Salisbury withdrew from the Chamber.

**Mr. Bromley** interjected.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! If he disobeys my call, the honourable member for Norman will be taking a course similar to that taken by the honourable member for Salisbury.

**Mr. TOOTH:** May I at this point say that there is no reflection upon the Opposition Whip. It is to be regretted that he has not remained to hear what I have to say.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I hope the Minister is not reflecting on the Chair.

**Mr. TOOTH:** I certainly am not reflecting on the Chair. I am at a loss to understand where the reflection lies. What I am saying is that I regret that the honourable member for Salisbury did not conduct himself in such a way as to permit him to remain long enough to hear what I propose to submit to the House.

It is a matter of record that, at the end of every year, we have witnessed attempts by the Opposition to delay the passage of legislation.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** I rise to a point of order. As the shadow Minister for Labour and Tourism, I deny unequivocally what the Minister is saying. I want to say that, in recent debates, particularly the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Tourism, we did co-operate with the Government.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr. BENNETT:** I rise to a point of order, as the shadow Minister for Justice.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. BENNETT:** Oh, no. I do not intend to allow Parliament to be denigrated in this way. It has been going on for too long. As a shadow Minister, I take strong exception to what the Minister for Health is saying.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. BENNETT:** It is untrue.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members on my left—in fact, on both sides of the House—have the opportunity of speaking in this debate. The Chair does not recognise shadow Ministers.

**Mr. Newton:** You are the ones to blame for it. Why don't you arrange the business of the House better?

**Mr. TOOTH:** That interjection is completely without foundation.

The purpose of this activity has always been clear to the Government and to discerning members of the Press and the public, namely, to try to present an image of the Government as lacking the capacity to arrange the parliamentary programme in an orderly and efficient manner. The honourable member for Belmont has underlined that last statement of mine by his interjection.

On Tuesday last, 9 November, we began what has been described in the Press and elsewhere as a marathon debate which continued till 4 a.m. on Wednesday, 10 November. That lengthy debate has been the subject of comment and criticism by various people, in particular the Leader of the Opposition, who has described it as "government by exhaustion" and has implied, and quite predictably, that it was the result of lack of planning of the legislative programme by the Government.

The fact of the matter is that it was part of a firm attempt by the Government to circumvent the annual effort by the Opposition, through a series of filibusters, to achieve the object that I outlined at the outset of my remarks. We feel that this regular attempt to create a situation in which the only way the legislative programme can be completed is by a series of long sittings in the final week of Parliament must be resisted, and so it is intended that, by some means or other, we shall reach an acceptable point in the legislative programme each day.

Hitherto the Opposition has been able to achieve its object because of the reluctance of the Government throughout its 15 years of office to make use of the provision of Standing Orders whereby debates may be limited. This has been a tradition with the Country-Liberal Government in Queensland—one that was established by a former Premier, Sir Francis Nicklin, who had a very strong distaste for the use of this provision in the Standing Orders—the gag—as he was so often the victim of its ruthless application during the years when he led the Opposition.

This tradition has been carried on up to the present time by this Government, and it is fair to say that its tolerance of persistent time-wasting by the Opposition in extending debates to inordinate lengths has been an annual event. Our tolerance has been scandalously abused. As I have indicated, in considering this problem a decision was taken that if the Opposition tactics were to be circumvented, one method would be to set fixed time-tables for the conclusion of various items on the Business Paper. This is being done with the object of covering a reasonable amount of legislation during each sitting day, and preventing the creation,

artificially, of a crowded final week, which has hitherto been the practice and the objective of the Opposition.

It is the Government's intention to take every possible step to prevent this from occurring in the future, and this is the explanation of what is a legitimate course of action to ensure that legislation will proceed in an orderly manner from day to day, and week to week, throughout the remainder of this session.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr. F. P. Moore:** You are an old woman.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the honourable member for Mourilyan to withdraw that unparliamentary remark forthwith.

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** I definitely will not withdraw. The Minister is attacking us. He ought to be utterly ashamed of himself, the hypocrite.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I appeal to the honourable member for Mourilyan to withdraw the remark.

**Mr. F. P. MOORE:** I withdraw the remark.

**Mr. HOUSTON** (Bulimba—Leader of the Opposition) (12.4 p.m.): I do not know what the circumstances were that brought the Minister for Health to his feet to speak on this matter. After all, he is the Minister for Health, and surely, if he wishes to spend 10 minutes speaking in the House, there are more important matters for him to discuss than a lot of propaganda relating to the sittings of the House.

**Mr. KNOX:** I rise to a point of order. I submit for your consideration, Mr. Acting Speaker, that, as this is a debate on matters of public importance, any honourable member, whether he is a Minister or a private member, is entitled to bring his grievance to public notice. I seek your guidance on that point.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair accepts the Minister's point. It is quite in order.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Let us consider who wastes the time of the House. The Government gives notice of Bills before they are finalised in the Government caucus. I challenge honourable members opposite to deny that claim.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. HOUSTON:** What are honourable members opposite going to discuss at their party meeting today? Surely they will meet to discuss the Bill relating to the valuation of land. A week ago the Government parties agreed in caucus to certain clauses. On Monday, Cabinet threw those clauses overboard, and today the Government parties

will meet again to discuss the matter. Let honourable members opposite deny that if they can.

I claim that Cabinet and the Government caucus is the cause of delay in the passing of legislation in the House. What happened to the Bill relating to electoral redistribution? The Government gave notice of it in the House before its details had been finalised in caucus.

**Mr. Tooth:** Do you suggest that there is no business on the sheet?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I suggest that there is business on the sheet——

**Mr. Tooth:** There is ample business.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I suggest that there is business on the sheet because the Government is prepared to bring it forward before it has been finalised in caucus.

**Mr. Tooth:** We will keep Parliament moving, provided you move along with us.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I ask the House to bear in mind what happened recently. A Bill came before the House and the Premier said, "This Bill is the result of great co-operation between the Government and local authorities." The Opposition accepted it on that basis. However, when honourable members on this side of the Chamber analysed the provisions of that Bill, they found that it was not the result of co-operation with local authorities, but that it was a case of standing over them. Why should not the Opposition debate a Bill such as that? Merely because the Government gags its members, that is no reason why the Opposition should gag its members. There will be no gagging of members of the A.L.P. while I am leader of the parliamentary party. They represent constituents and, therefore, are entitled to express in the House what they believe to be the views of their constituents.

**Mr. Tooth:** I am glad you have said that, because it conflicts with the statements made by the Opposition Whip.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** You wouldn't know.

**Mr. Lane:** Are you in favour of 4 a.m. sittings?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Oh, shut up!

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Interjections of that type do nothing but delay debate in the House.

One finds, also, that Government members are rising in the Chamber and criticising the Government. We have heard them say, one after another, "That isn't what you told us when you brought the Bill before the caucus meeting."

**Mr. Knox:** Members of the Opposition are not game to criticise you.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Aren't they? Let me make it very clear that although members of the Government parties have plenty of reason to criticise the honourable gentleman, Opposition members have no reason to criticise me.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I challenge the Premier to permit the business of the House to proceed in the normal way and allow Parliament to sit again next year to complete the Government's legislative programme. As I said to a newspaper reporter recently, late sittings do not worry the Opposition. Its members are younger and more capable than Government members, and they are quite prepared to carry out their duties. One does not see members of the Opposition sitting asleep in the House and, when a division is called, being grabbed by the scruff of the neck and carried across to the other side of the Chamber.

**Mr. Tooth** interjected.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** If the Minister for Health wants to get filthy and dirty about this, I will throw it around—and pretty heavily, too. What I am concerned about is his threat on behalf of the Government, at a time when the Premier is here, to gag the Opposition. If the Minister wants to play it rough, we will play it rough, too. No threat from him will deny Opposition members their rights and their opportunity to carry out to the full their obligations to the people they represent.

Let us consider what this means. The Government can have legislation before it for months. Notice was given of some Bills many months ago, but still the Government is arguing about their contents and the way they will operate.

**Mr. R. E. Moore:** Nothing of the sort.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** What happened with the State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organisation and Environmental Control Bill? Notice of it was given during the last election campaign, two years ago. It took two years to get the Bill before caucus. When it finally got there, it was said that everything was right. But what did the Premier do during the debate in this Chamber? I give him credit for it and I do not want to take anything away from him, but the point is that he accepted four Opposition amendments.

**Mr. R. E. Moore:** That shows how democratic we are.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is right. The last amendment the Premier accepted was at 5 minutes to 4 in the morning. If we had fallen into line with the suggestion of the Minister for Health, what would have happened? If we had said, "It is getting late, fellows, let's go to bed", those amendments would never have hit the deck. Thus, they would not have been accepted by the

Premier, and the legislation would have been weaker because it would not have been amended in the way we suggested.

**Mr. TOOTH:** I rise to a point of order. What I have said is in explanation of the action of the Government and the Premier in extending the sitting. There is no desire to curb the Opposition if it desires to—

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. HOUSTON:** What was the Minister's point in raising this matter? Is he trying to get "stuck into" the honourable member for Kurilpa? Is he the one he is really after? Did he use the time of the House this morning so that he can "do the honourable member over" at the caucus meeting? Is that the object behind it all? The only two honourable members who have said publicly that they will not remain here after midnight are the honourable member for Kurilpa and the Government Whip, the honourable member for Flinders. The Minister is simply trying to make sure that he stops a revolt within his own party ranks. He knows as well as I do that if Parliament sits after midnight the Premier will have a revolt within the ranks of his own party.

At a Government caucus meeting only a week or two ago, because of the influence of the Treasurer, a resolution was carried that there would not be any sittings beyond midnight. It appears to me that when Chalk is away the Premier and his gang will play. That is the way it must be looked at, as the Treasurer is presently overseas. It is remarkable that when the Treasurer is absent the Liberals have no back-bone at all.

**Mr. Lane:** You were asleep on your feet at 4 o'clock last Wednesday morning.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I might have been. Imagine how good I would have been had I not been asleep! Even in that condition, at 5 minutes to 4, I forced the Government to accept an amendment. Just watch out for me when I am fully awake!

**Mr. B. Wood:** Tell us what Lane's condition was at that time.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I do not want to belittle the honourable member in the eyes of the public. It would be unparliamentary for me to use the expressions needed to cover the situation.

I regret that it became necessary for me to rise to defend the Opposition. Surely it is the responsibility of the Government to arrange its own programme. But it is also its responsibility to see that every honourable member has ample opportunity to present his case as he sees it. If the Minister for Health threatens us, by one means or another, then he is denying honourable members that right.

The Government has time to study proposed legislation, and the various Ministers have public servants at their beck and call to give them advice. On Tuesday night of last

week, how often did the Premier seek advice? I have no fight with that at all, but he did have advice. Whom did I have?

(Time expired.)

#### TRADING HOURS IN SHOPS

**Mr. CHINCHEN** (Mt. Gravatt) (12.15 p.m.): Before dealing with the matter of public importance I want to raise, which affects all the people of the State, I think I should say that in my opinion the Leader of the Opposition is protesting too much.

I am prompted to speak because in yesterday's Press I saw an article headed, "Shop Hours Change Bid." This is important to all the people of this State because, at some time or other, everybody is a shopper. I think we all appreciate that in other States at the present time this matter is under consideration. In fact, in Victoria, it has reached the stage where a decision has been made. Habits are always changing, and it is necessary for us to adapt our attitudes to the changes. At the present time it is recognised that over 50 per cent of married women are in the work-force. This brings about a gradual change in habits and we must make sure that our arrangements fit in with these new habits. In this State the trading hours of city shops are fixed. We know that some shops are exempt and can remain open for 24 hours, but they carry a limited range of goods. We also know that the trading hours of small shops are different from those of major shops.

What disturbs me in the whole matter is that there seems to be no procedure by which the interests and wishes of customers can be taken into consideration. The bodies represented before the Industrial Commission are the retailers, organisations of shopkeepers and the unions. They are all interested parties, but who represents the other interested party, the people? How are their views heard? It has been suggested that this is the job of Parliament. Wages and conditions are the concern of the Industrial Commission and perhaps shopping hours should be in the hands of Parliament because we represent the people, but this would create complications as much detail would or should be involved. For instance, different areas should perhaps have different shopping hours. It is hard to see how the matter could be handled adequately at parliamentary level. At this stage, however, the people have nobody but us to turn to.

I would say that the people's interests are not being recognised in the matter although it is laid down in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act that in making an order in regard to trading hours the commission may have regard to the following considerations—

"(a) The locality concerned or part thereof and the needs of the tourist industry or any other industry in that locality or any part thereof;

"(b) The consumer and public interest." and so on. How on earth do the people get their message on consumer and public interest before the commission? Who has carried out an investigation of their shopping habits and wishes? I know of no organisation that does. At the inception of the Consumer Affairs Bureau I asked the Minister whether he would consider allowing it to operate in such cases in the interests of the public. I feel that this is a body that could carry out the necessary study in depth, because every area has to be looked at differently. Of course, this was not put into the legislation, although I think it is most important.

Victoria is opening the gates wide and now saying that shops can open at any time. I do not think that this is in the best interests of the people, because it must mean an increase in prices of goods. If one shop opens, they will all open. But there is no reason why there should not be a compromise. Certain suggestions have been made that city shops might open on Friday night and suburban shops on Saturday morning. This would give everybody an area in which to shop.

At the present time, the working woman does not have time to shop, particularly when she lives on the fringes of Brisbane. A case recently came to my notice of a butcher just outside Brisbane who opened until 6 p.m. He thought that was the normal time for closing. However, another butcher reported him and he now has to close at 5.30. Most of his customers arrive by bus between a quarter to 6 and 6 o'clock, with the result that they are now unable to shop. People working in premises in which there is no refrigeration cannot buy meat in the morning and keep it all day. And many of them cannot shop during the lunch break.

I think serious consideration must be given to consumers' interests. I read in the Press that the trading hours case is starting on Monday next, but the only organisations represented will be retailers and the unions. Who is representing the people? Although we are the people's representatives, we are not doing anything about this. The Consumer Affairs Council cannot look after their interests, so surely we, as a Parliament, must consider them. I suggest that a full inquiry, in depth, should be conducted by the Consumer Affairs Council. A thorough investigation needs to be made because no two areas are the same.

I shall deal now with hairdressers. They are permitted to open only while the people—their customers—are at work; they are not allowed to open during the hours when the people want to go to them. I can remember the time when I used to take fruit and vegetables to the Roma Street market and a hairdresser had a shop on the corner of Turbot and Roma Streets. He used to open early in the morning, probably at 5 o'clock, so that people who delivered their goods

to market could have haircuts before returning to their farms. However, that practice was stopped, with the result that he was forced out of business. By opening early in the morning he was serving a particular need, but he was not allowed to continue to do so. The law required him to open when nobody was in the immediate vicinity, so he went out of business. After that a farmer who wanted a haircut was forced to return to his property at about 7.30 a.m., have a shower, change his clothes, get into his vehicle, and then drive back to a city hairdresser. Instead of costing 80c, a haircut would probably have cost as high as \$2.80. This is crazy.

Look at the position of used-car salesmen. They are required to be on the lots when everybody else is at work. They are not permitted to be there when would-be customers inspect cars, which may be 7, 8 or 9 o'clock at night. Why can they not be permitted to operate in the yard at that time?

**Mr. Murray:** When the family could participate, too.

**Mr. CHINCHEN:** That is the point. Why should not night shopping be allowed? Maybe the penalty rates are at fault, but if somebody wants to work his eight hours during any portion of the day—from either 6, 7, 8 or 9 a.m.—why should he not be allowed to do so?

Queensland is behind the times. By way of illustration I point out that a recent issue of "The Sunday Australian" contained an article headed "What time should we shut up shop?", which concluded by saying—

"The portents are that the situation in New South Wales eventually will be duplicated elsewhere, although not so smoothly in Victoria and probably with great difficulty in Queensland."

What is wrong with Queensland? The desires of the people of this State are the same as those elsewhere. As the Minister for Labour and Tourism controls this matter, I ask him to give serious consideration to helping the people. Nobody else is helping them, and it is our duty as members of Parliament to do so.

**Mr. Murray:** In other words, if the community wants the service and someone is prepared to give it, let him give it.

**Mr. CHINCHEN:** That is the whole point. I realise, of course, that the large shops will not want to remain open any longer than at present, and that is their business. However, if smaller shops are willing to remain open, I see no reason why they should not be permitted to do so. We should be looking after the interests of neither the retailers nor the unions but the people. Let us have a common-sense decision made on this matter with the interests of the people at heart.

## CONTEMPORARY READING FOR SENIOR ENGLISH STUDENTS

**Mr. BOUSEN** (Toowoomba West) (12.23 p.m.): I rise to speak as a result of a special request made to me by a church group containing a number of parents whose children attend a State high school. They protest against the salacious nature of certain English textbooks that appear on the shelves of high-school libraries. Some of the books can only be regarded as corruptive and designed to exert a damaging influence on the minds of our youth in their most formative and impressionable years.

**Mr. Hinze:** The honourable member for Logan didn't say that. He said all of them were very good books.

**Mr. BOUSEN:** The honourable member for South Coast does not know which books I am about to refer to. The books are designed towards the giving of sex education in schools by teachers. Surely certain sickening portions of them are their own condemnation.

One wonders what is the real reason behind the inclusion of these books in school libraries. Is it a deliberate attempt to contaminate the minds of our youth and destroy their morality? Surely some of the results that we have seen and read of in overseas countries that have experimented with sex education in schools should be a warning to us. In some of the Scandinavian countries, where sex education in schools has been in operation for some time, we find that the number of brides between the ages of 15 and 17 years has increased by no less than 400 per cent—and one-third of all brides were pregnant before marriage.

Social diseases are also more widespread in Sweden than in any other civilised country in the world. Prominent Swedish doctors blame the education system for this. They have said that school-children are bombarded with sex instruction for which, because of their lack of maturity, they are ill-fitted. The result has been an unnatural "over-sexualisation" in which the young have confused instruction in method with encouragement to practice. Surely we do not want such a situation to develop in this State. We must not let it happen here.

I have been supplied with a list of books which are said to be the most objectionable, but three of them stand out more prominently than the others. They are entitled, "The Catcher in the Rye", "The Group" and "Cat and Mouse". I know that most honourable members, like myself, have read from time to time in the columns of the Press objections raised by people in almost every section of the community to the placing of these books in high-school libraries.

It seems to be the trend today that for a book to become popular the author must first write 50 per cent of it about sex, 40 per cent of it about crime, and about 10 per cent on the story, or on literary merit

within the story. When objection is taken to books of this type, surely it is the responsibility of the Minister for Education and his Cabinet colleagues to see that they do not enter our school libraries. I specifically request that the three books I have named be withdrawn from the shelves of the libraries in our high schools.

I believe it is necessary to quote the following extract from "The Catcher in the Rye", by Salinger—

"... if you want to know the truth I'm a virgin, I really am. I've had quite a few opportunities to lose my virginity and all, but I've never got around to it yet. Something always happens... for instance, if you're in the back seat of somebody's car, there's always somebody's date in the front seat, some girl I mean, that always wants to know what's going on over the whole goddam car... After you neck girls for a while you really can watch them losing their brains. If you really want to know the truth, when I'm horsing around with a girl I have a hell of a lot of trouble just finding what I'm looking for, for God's sake, if you know what I mean. Take this girl I just missed having sexual intercourse with, that I told you about, it took me a whole hour to get her goddam brassiere off. By that time she was about ready to spit in my face."

A quotation from a book by McCarthy, which is recommended at sub-Senior and Senior levels in secondary schools, reads—

"... she got the idea, and her body began to move too in answer, as he pressed 'that' home in her slowly, over and over, and slowly draw back as if repeating a question. Her breath came quicker. Each lingering stroke like a violin bow made her palpitate for the next. Then all of a sudden she seemed to explode in a series of long uncontrollable contractions that embarrassed her, like hiccups, the moment they were over... and he, as if he sensed this, pulled quickly away from her and thrust that part of himself on to her stomach, where it pushed and pounded at her flesh. Then he too jerked and moaned, and she felt something damp and sticky running down the hill of her belly."

Surely children should not be exposed to that sort of thing in books in high-school libraries. These books are part of the curriculum for sub-Senior and Senior students in secondary schools.

**Mr. W. D. Hewitt:** Has it ever occurred to you that speeches such as this tell the kids what sort of books to look for? Otherwise, they would simply browse through the library.

**Mr. BOUSEN:** I am not prepared to say anything about this type of speech, but it is necessary that these matters be brought to

the attention of the House and the people who are responsible for having these books in school libraries.

**Mr. Aikens:** Most of the people associated with the Trades Hall give the kids this sort of stuff.

**Mr. BOUSEN:** I have heard the honourable member say worse things in this Chamber, so he should keep his place for the time being.

These quotations are important, because they let the people know the type of material being made available in high-school libraries.

A quotation from "Cat and Mouse" reads—

"... a few deft movements from his right wrist and his member (penis) loomed so large that the tip emerged... and the sun fell upon it... 'Won't you let me just for a moment?'... Tulla's mouth hung open. He nodded and dropped his right hand, though without uncurving his fingers. Tulla's hands, scratched and bruised as they always were, approached the monster, which expanded under her questioning fingertips; the veins stood out and the glands protruded. 'Measure it', cried Jergen Eupka. Tulla spread the fingers of her left hand. One full span and another almost. Then somebody else whispered: 'At least twelve inches.' This was an exaggeration, of course. Schilling, who otherwise had the longest, had to take his out, make it stand up, and hold it beside Mahlke's; Mahlke's was first of all a size thicker, second a matchbox longer, and third looked much more grown up, dangerous, and worthy to be worshipped..."

I repeat that the responsible Government committee could not have had these books examined before they were placed in high-school libraries. If it had done so, it would not have allowed them to be where they are today.

(Time expired.)

#### REBATE ON ELECTRICITY CHARGES FOR PENSIONERS

**Mr. BIRD (Burdekin) (12.34 p.m.):** My purpose in rising is to request the Minister for Local Government and Electricity to consider introducing legislation to allow the granting of a rebate on electricity charges to pensioners who live alone. On 9 September this year I asked him, by way of a question, whether the department would give favourable consideration to the granting of a rebate on electrical charges to pensioners, either single persons or married couples, who maintain their own accommodation. I should like to quote the Minister's reply because it is apposite to what I shall say a little later in my speech. He said—

"The matter of electricity charges is one for the electric authorities and the State

Electricity Commission. However present legislation does not permit discrimination in the charges for electricity to similar classes of consumers. This means that any person supplied with electricity for domestic purposes is entitled to be supplied on the same terms and conditions as any other person so supplied for the same purpose... I am sure that the reasons for this will be clear to the Honourable Member, and whilst I am most sympathetic to the difficulties of pensioners and will always do what I can to improve their conditions, I am afraid that the granting of concessions in electricity charges which would involve electric authorities in discrimination between consumers according to their means, does not offer a practicable way of achieving this."

I draw the attention of the Minister and the House to the fact that many precedents have been set in the granting of concessions, particularly to pensioners. Certain concessions or rebates are granted by all branches of government, including shire councils and city councils. Local authorities grant rate rebates to pensioners, and the State Government grants them concessions in motor vehicle registration fees. The Federal Government grants pensioners concessions in radio and television licence fees, and telephone rentals. It will therefore be seen that concessions are granted to pensioners at the three levels of government in Australia, and consideration could well be given to amending the relevant legislation to allow the granting of the concessions I have mentioned.

**Mr. Tucker:** What about pensioners who use gas? Would you include them?

**Mr. BIRD:** I certainly agree that they should receive similar concessions, although it may be a little more difficult to do anything about concessions where gas is supplied by private companies. The State Electricity Commission and the various electric authorities are the bodies concerned with the supply of electricity, and I feel that legislation could be introduced to allow concessions to be granted.

It may be argued that there would be difficulty in deciding who were and who were not entitled to rebates. Such problems have been overcome by the Federal Government, the State Government and shire councils by the signing of statutory declarations by pensioners when they make applications for rebates. That problem is certainly not insurmountable.

It may be asked why rebates should be granted to pensioners living alone. A single pensioner living alone receives at present \$17.25 a week. If he pays rent and has no more than \$800 in the bank, he can apply for, and receive, supplementary assistance towards rent of \$2 a week, to make his total weekly income \$19.25. Many pensioners, particularly those who are single, are forced to pay rents up to \$13 a week. Those who have to pay that amount in



rent have \$6.25 left a week for food, electricity and all the other things necessary to keep body and soul together.

The position is not quite so bad for married couples, although they still have their problems. Each receives \$15.25 a week, giving a weekly total of \$30.50. They have two mouths to feed, and they need this type of assistance just as much as the single person living on his own. Then there is the pensioner who lives in his own home and does not pay a high rental. In most instances these people live in the homes that they have lived in and maintained during most of their working lives. As the homes get older, maintenance costs are high. In addition, of course, physical disabilities prevent many pensioners from cutting their own lawns and carrying out necessary maintenance on their homes. Therefore, they are saddled with additional costs that do not have to be met by those who do not own their homes.

Taking an over-all view of the question, I believe that the advantages and disadvantages balance out and that the need of pensioners who own and live in their own homes is as great as the need of pensioners who only pay rent. So I again appeal to the Minister for Local Government and Electricity to give favourable consideration, at the earliest possible moment, to introducing amending legislation to allow rebates of electricity charges to pensioners.

#### SUBSIDIES FOR MERINO SHEEP STUDS

**Mr. AIKEN** (Warrego) (12.41 p.m.): The tragedy that has occurred because of the vicissitudes in the wool industry over the past 15 years has had a marked effect on the number of wool-growers in business in this State. The decline in numbers can only become more noticeable and more pronounced because of the Government's sheer inability to recognise the important part played by merino stud breeders in maintaining the quality of the flocks in this State. The so-called assistance to stud breeders announced recently by the Minister for Lands, that is, the reduction in the number of rams that have to be sold each year, was inconsequential. He has failed to come to grips with the real problems of the industry.

The shock announcement recently of the sale of the world's largest merino sheep stud has highlighted the need for urgent remedial action to assist that section of the wool industry. If it is not taken, Australia's future as a producer of the world's top-quality merino sheep and wool is very bleak indeed. The huge establishment that all honourable members knew as the Falkiner breeding interests, run by the Falkiner family, was valued only five years ago at \$20,000,000 but was sold recently for \$2,600,000. Surely that reflects accurately the very serious slump now being experienced in the fortunes of merino stud breeding, one of the country's most important industries. The Falkiner interests were the

primary foundation of the industry and were really the parent stud of many others in Queensland.

Although the problems facing the wool industry are many and varied, the profitability of merino sheep studs is a matter of very great concern. The Government must get behind the industry and provide full and adequate subsidies to ensure that Australia continues to produce top-quality merino rams and the best merino wool in the world. The complex problems facing the industry have received great attention in words from politicians, economists and leaders of industry over the past few years, and have also been well aired in all the popular public news media. Unfortunately, not much attention has been given to merino stud breeders, who are a very important section of the wool industry. Australia, of course, is world famous for the quality of its sheep and wool. Top quality has always been the keynote of our production. I emphasise the lengths to which some countries have gone in order to get our rams. They have engaged in all sorts of nefarious and rotten schemes to try to obtain some of our rams.

Stud breeding, particularly in Queensland, has reached a record low in unprofitability. Soon much of the world's premier stock will have to be sold as mutton, and special stud leases, being uneconomical, handed back to the Government. Let there be no mistake; there is a great possibility of that.

It took the Government from the crash of 1965 to December 1970 to do something about rural reconstruction, notwithstanding that the Opposition had pushed the need for assistance for years. Surely we have not to go through that procedure again with the merino studs. Unless the Government wakes up and discards its negative and defeatist policies and attitudes towards wool, the breeding industry is doomed. It is facing doom now and requires assistance with much more haste than the Government showed in rural reconstruction. Let it not be forgotten that, if we crash as a wool-producing country, there are plenty of other countries striving to take our place. They will do that, too. Does industry have to encourage the Government to encourage industry? Do we have to keep encouraging the Government, and by our criticism lift it to the standard where it wants to help?

**Mr. Murray:** Would the honourable member tell us what South Australia is doing for the wool industry that we are not doing?

**Mr. AIKEN:** I can hear some bleating, but I would not know what it is.

Instead of frequently flying to Kingaroy, perhaps the Premier could send his thoughts flying and do something to assist Australia's premier industry. Merino studs in Queensland have reached a very high standard, having continued the process of improvement over the years. But what guarantee have we that the standard will continue to

improve or be maintained? Even with today's very high standards, I do not know how long merino studs can continue as viable units. With stud-owners being forced to sell their rams at any old price, they cannot stay in business very much longer. Rams that only a few years ago would have brought as much as \$200 are being sold today for as little as \$10 and up to a maximum of \$17. What a shocking state for the industry to fall into!

In the past the value of rams has been related to the price of wool. With wool now at a hideously low figure, it follows that the value of rams has fallen to an equally low level.

Studs with generations of selected breeders and accumulated knowledge that is so vital to the preservation and the uplifting of the industry will be lost in oblivion. What a waste—and all because of Government neglect! Government assistance by way of substantial subsidies is necessary and should have been forthcoming long ago. Does the Government have to be prodded all the time? Must the industry always keep the needle sharp to get the Government on the move?

**Mr. Murray:** Tell us what Don Dunstan did.

**Mr. AIKEN:** Does the honourable member want to rock the cradle or disturb the nursery of that mighty industry, and watch it crumble before his eyes? Or, as a member of the Government, does the honourable member intend to act as he did the other night when he got up and said that it did not suit him to sit here after 12 o'clock? Surely it does not suit him to see this great industry crumble. He should get up and use his voice in his Government's conclaves. Perhaps he does intend to act at his leisure, just as the Government did with its rural reconstruction scheme. Let me tell the honourable member that if he waits that long he will see us all in oblivion. Quality is of paramount importance if this vital industry is to be preserved. How do we achieve and maintain quality if we cannot get a decent price for our rams? I say that the Government must take steps now to make sure that this industry is substantially helped so that it can stay on its feet and remain viable.

I do not know how long this stupid and irresponsible Government thinks the industry can continue in this way. How can the owners of studs purchase top-quality stock when they cannot get a decent price for flock rams?

**Mr. Jensen:** Tell us what Henry is doing about it.

**Mr. AIKEN:** I know what is necessary from my own experience. I live in this industry. Unlike the Premier, I do not flit around the West for three days and then come back with solutions. There are many breeders today who are retaining their older sheep and rams because, firstly, they cannot

sell them and, secondly, the only stock they can sell is young stock. Is there any profitability in holding old stock?

(Time expired).

#### LATE SITTINGS OF PARLIAMENT

**Mr. HUGHES** (Kurilpa) (12.52 p.m.): Since the stand I have taken on what I term "the stupidity of early-morning sittings" has become public knowledge, I have received the encouragement and backing of the Press, the public and, in fact, the majority of M.L.A.'s on both sides of the House. Certainly I have my critics, but I simply say to them that they are entitled to their opinion and, although I may not agree with what they say, I will defend both their right to say it and to hold their opinion. That is fair enough. I do not apologise for any action I have taken in this matter, and I am dedicated to what I believe to be the correct move to bring some sanity into parliamentary procedures and to avoid early-morning sittings.

In speaking to this matter, I think I should quote, with the Government Whip's permission, what I said in my letter to him, as follows—

"I write to again protest at the sittings of Parliament extending until the early hours of the morning.

"The necessity to sit until 4 a.m. this morning could have been avoided, and I contend that members of Parliament and the legislation would have been the better had this been the case. Apart from the fact that Members cannot do justice to considering and debating matters in the early-morning hours, the toll, both physical and mental, is, to say the least, unreasonable and undesirable.

"Accordingly, I advise that I will be acting on the assurances given in the Party Room re late-night sittings extending to 10 p.m. as a general rule and ceasing at midnight."

I did not show that letter to anybody, but its contents got out. Of course, we know the result. However, the point is simply that I believe that no-one can do justice to the proper consideration of legislation in the early hours of the morning. I am concerned at the real damage that is done to the image of Parliament. People are critical of Parliament and parliamentarians. We know this because we see it and hear it in many walks of life, and it is something we must try to avoid and to put right.

The key to this matter is to foster people's respect for, and confidence in, Parliament, their legislators and parliamentary democracy. Justice must appear to be done. In our consideration of important legislation, since we are the cynosure of the public eye, we must be prepared to give it proper attention. I contend—and I believe that the great majority of people are with me in this—that this is not possible in the early hours of the morning, at the end of a

sitting lasting from 11 a.m. and extending throughout the night. No trade union would permit such a procedure. Why inflict on ourselves an injury that is also doing an injustice to legislation that may affect generations to come?

I say that, apart altogether from the mental and physical strain, since we are not able to do proper justice to legislation, it is necessary to have another look at the situation. Therefore, I submit a number of constructive suggestions to end this farce of legislation by exhaustion.

I suggest that all Ministers adopt a policy of implementing a dead-line for the preparation and presentation of Bills, firstly, to their public servants and, secondly, to the Government and to Parliament. Far too frequently Bills are not prepared in sufficient time for the Ministers to submit them to the Government parties before presenting them to Parliament. This problem goes back to the public servants.

**Mr. Bromley:** The Leader of the Opposition said that. Do you agree with him?

**Mr. HUGHES:** I have only a few minutes left to speak, so I cannot accept interjections.

Frequently Bills are held up in Government departments, and by the time they are submitted to the Parliamentary Draftsman it is too late for him to give them in-depth consideration before they are presented to Parliament. As a result, on some occasions legislation comes before Parliament in general terms and contains errors that require correction. Often, as a result of early-morning sittings, errors and omissions often go unnoticed simply because honourable members are neither mentally nor physically capable of, nor interested in, doing justice to the matter under consideration, under conditions which are ludicrous.

Of course, very late sittings are not fair to the Ministers, the Government or the people. As a first step towards effecting an improvement, I suggest that introductory speeches be dispensed with. In no other Parliament are such speeches made. For example, in the House of Commons a Bill is presented from behind Mr. Speaker's chair, the mover of the Bill makes a brief explanatory statement, one member of the Opposition speaks on it for 10 minutes, and then the Bill is simply printed and introduced. The whole thing is a formality.

It is reported in "Australian Senate Practice" that under Standing Order 189 a Minister, in moving the introduction of a Bill, simply moves that the Bill be read a first time, and the motion is put immediately by the President without debate. In the House of Representatives a Minister introduces a Bill simply by giving notice of his intention to present it at the next sittings, and so on. Again the introduction of a Bill is merely a formality.

I admit that it is not desirable to get to the second-reading stage immediately after a Bill is introduced, and such a practice can be avoided by the Leader of the Opposition moving the adjournment of the debate. If that is done, each honourable member takes a copy of the Bill home and gives it his earnest consideration. Such a practice ensures sanity in the introduction of legislation. As I have said, introductory speeches should be abandoned, and at the second-reading stage speeches should be confined, as they are now, to the principles of the Bill.

Furthermore, the Government could arrange the business of Parliament in a proper way by giving due notice of Bills and spreading parliamentary sittings evenly throughout the year instead of calling Parliament together for one or two concentrated sittings each year. I remember that, in Opposition, Sir Francis Nicklin complained bitterly about early-morning sittings, and similar protests were made by many other members of this Government when they were in Opposition.

In an emergency I will stay in the Chamber until the last member has left, but on a piece of ordinary legislation I do not believe that we should be required to sit into the early hours of the morning. Under such conditions, we simply cannot give legislation proper consideration. When an emergency arises, I have no doubt that every man Jack will be loyal to his political party and remain to debate the legislation under consideration to the bitter end.

**Mr. Murray:** The Leader of the Opposition would like to see the establishment of a second House in this State. Do you agree with him?

**Mr. HUGHES:** Certainly not. We have ample proof of the ability of a single House to conduct the affairs of State. In fact, it was the Labor Party that, in 1922, dissolved the Upper House.

As the Minister for Health has said, the Opposition has an obligation not to engage in filibusters or tedious repetition. Honourable members opposite cannot deny that, on occasions, they have done this.

**Mr. Tucker:** You are reflecting on the Chair now.

**Mr. HUGHES:** I am reflecting on members of the Labor Party. I do not need to substantiate my claims, because ample proof of them appears in "Hansard". I am suggesting that sanity should be introduced into Parliament, and the Labor Party has as much an obligation as the Government to ensure that it is so introduced. If members of the Opposition continue to engage in filibusters and tedious repetition, they cannot expect to improve the image of either the Labor Party or Parliament. Instead, they will simply denigrate everything that decency and parliamentary democracy stand for.

I conclude by saying that all people of common sense and goodwill agree that early-morning sittings of Parliament are not justified and do nothing to improve the image of members of Parliament.

**Mr. ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! In accordance with the Sessional Order, the time for discussion on matters of public interest has now expired.

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

## BUILDING SOCIETIES ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### SECOND READING

**Hon. A. M. HODGES** (Gympie—Minister for Works and Housing) (2.16 p.m.): I move—

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

I will not add to what I said in my introductory speech about the proposed amendment which is very minor indeed but is absolutely essential to enable me, the Government, and those associated with these Acts to have a committee to advise on all aspects of building covered by them. The amendment is designed to cover both Acts. It was received very favourably by the Opposition, and I therefore have nothing to add. It is a minute amendment which does not alter the main principles of the Acts.

**Mr. NEWTON** (Belmont) (2.17 p.m.): While this is a very short Bill, there are a few submissions that I should like to make on behalf of the Opposition to clear up one or two points that I raised at the introductory stage to put the record straight.

The amendment is designed to apply to the two Acts covering building societies, and it gives the advisory committee the power to observe the progress made by registered building societies throughout the State. The current report of the Registrar of Co-operative Housing Societies discloses that the advisory committee is to cover co-operative building societies and permanent building societies. In the past 12 months, the number of co-operative building societies has been increased by 52. There is now a total of 635 co-operative building societies, of which 388 operate in the metropolitan area and 247 in country areas.

Since the legislation governing permanent building societies was amended some time ago, a number of new societies have been formed. Some of them have changed their names, but the other Act that covers building societies now deals with 67 such societies that are operating in the State at present.

Today, the permanent building society movement is widespread in Queensland. As I indicated at the introductory stage, an examination of the financial position of permanent building societies in Queensland and the task they perform in providing houses discloses

that inflation does not affect deposits lodged with them. Because the red-tape procedures applied by the banks are not used by the societies, an increasing number of depositors are placing money with permanent building societies. They are becoming permanent banking societies as well as permanent building societies. Both large and small depositors are encouraged to invest money in permanent building societies as a result of the high interest rate and the fact that they can withdraw their money at short notice and still be entitled to the societies' rate of interest, which is more attractive than that offered by banks.

**Mr. W. D. Hewitt:** They have overtaken savings banks in the United States.

**Mr. NEWTON:** Whenever we have approached private lending institutions, particularly banks, for housing finance, they have indicated that there is this shift from banks to organisations such as permanent building societies and credit societies. While this is to the advantage of one organisation, it is to the disadvantage of another. As I pointed out earlier, the absence of red tape and the higher interest rate have an effect on this swing.

It is pleasing that this Bill has been introduced, because it gives the advisory committee power to review regularly the administration of all building societies in Queensland under the two Acts indicated by the Minister.

I do not know whether the Minister or the Government has heard them, but there are rumblings about the position of permanent building societies in this State, for instance, in the control of their directors, which is entirely different from the control under the Co-operative Housing Societies Act. Permanent building societies are booming, and we have been told that any surplus money they have is being invested in short-term loans in an effort to build up the funds they have available for housing.

In addition, we understand that there has been a change of attitude by permanent building societies in the holding of retention money out of advances made on the purchase of new homes. The two types of house on which permanent building societies and co-operative building societies lend money are those constructed under contract and under the supervision of an inspector, and those that I refer to as “spec built” and others as “ready-erected”.

With homes of that type, it seems that there has been a change of attitude in the holding of retention money. This matter must be looked at closely, particularly by the advisory committee. Anybody with experience in the building industry, particularly the construction of humpies, knows that certain problems can arise during the settling-down period owing to Queensland's climate, particularly in the summer months. Pressure is being applied by builders, particularly on

co-operative building societies, to have no retention money held, as is the case with permanent building societies and banks.

It has been indicated that, because business is business, many builders deposit their money with permanent building societies. There is nothing unusual in that; it would be done with other banking institutions throughout the State. If I were a builder and banked with the Commonwealth Bank, a person wanting to purchase a home built by me would have the right to obtain a loan from the Commonwealth Bank.

Whilst there is no inflationary trend at present in the operations of permanent building societies, the advisory committee must at all times make sure that it takes into consideration the economic factors influencing the operations of building societies and constantly watches the interest of both borrowers and depositors.

The principles sought by the Minister are similar to those that already apply to the advisory committee set up and operating under the Co-operative Housing Societies Act. That committee is given power to make submissions to the Minister, and, in return, the Minister is given power to refer to the committee any matter that he would like it to investigate.

**Mr. Hodges:** Up till now, he could not do that.

**Mr. NEWTON:** That is so. I made the point in my speech at the introductory stage that the Minister did not have this power.

There are also people in permanent building societies who are happy with the introduction of this type of legislation, because they have found themselves in the position in which the Government has at times found itself. They have had problems that they would have liked to refer to the advisory committee, but on making approaches to the Committee they have been told, "We have no power to do what you ask. Until amending legislation is introduced, our hands are tied."

I appeal to the Minister and the Government to give the utmost consideration to the appointment of the two additional members of the advisory committee. There are many who have played very important roles in the co-operative housing movement, and there are just as many who have been similarly prominent in permanent building societies. The permanent societies have been in existence for very many years—in some cases, for more than a century. It is my hope that the new appointees to the advisory committee will have the interests of all societies in this State at heart and will not carry out their duties on any sectional lines.

The Bill gives to both permanent building societies and co-operative housing societies equal opportunities to use to their advantage the services of the advisory committee, and the Opposition will not be opposing its second reading.

**Hon. A. M. HODGES** (Gympie—Minister for Works and Housing) (2.30 p.m.), in reply: The honourable member for Belmont has reiterated several points that he made at the introductory stage. I appreciate what he has said, because he is very closely associated with the building industry and also with the co-operative movement. The honourable gentleman is chairman of a model housing society in the Wynnum area, and it is doing such an exceptionally good job that we have very little trouble either with it or with those who deal with it. It is for that reason that I respect the opinions that he has expressed in this debate.

As I said by interjection, up till now the Government has not had authority to advise the permanent building societies and they have not had authority to come to it for advice. However, relations between co-operative building societies and permanent building societies have been very harmonious because some directors on the advisory committee belong to both types of society.

As to the additional two members of the advisory committee who will be required, I inform the House that I shall be seeking from the organisation concerned a panel of names from which I shall nominate the two persons, as provided in the Bill.

I again thank the honourable member for Belmont for his comments. As I said earlier, the amendment is very minute but means a great deal to both organisations. I commend it to honourable members.

Motion (Mr. Hodges) agreed to.

#### COMMITTEE

(Mr. Houghton, Redcliffe, in the chair)

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

Bill reported, without amendment.

#### POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

##### SECOND READING

**Hon. A. M. HODGES** (Gympie—Minister for Works and Housing) (2.33 p.m.): I move—

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

The Bill is designed to enable me to re-employ married women in the Queensland Police Force. I detailed its provision at the introductory stage, and there really is nothing that I can add. I again thank Opposition members for the manner in which they received it. They believe, as I do, that its provisions are essential because they will enable those who administer the Queensland Police Force to carry out their duties more efficiently than in the past. Women who have been trained very often serve for only 15 months or two years before they marry and are lost to the department. This amending legislation will make it possible for them to be brought back into the Police Force. I commend the Bill to the House.

**Mr. NEWTON** (Belmont) (2.34 p.m.): At the introductory stage, I pointed out on behalf of the Opposition that honourable members on this side of the Chamber would support legislation designed to build up the strength of the Queensland Police Force. The employment of married women should assist in that regard.

Of course, when amending legislation such as this is before us, we must ensure that all the rights of female members of the Police Force under the Act are preserved and protected.

Commissioner Whitrod has been in charge of the Police Force for 12 months, and for some months prior to that filled the office of Deputy Commissioner. If this legislation is an indication of the type of thing that he is going to bring forward, he will have the support of the Opposition. At all times we are mindful of the need for harmony between the Commissioner and the rank-and-file members of the Police Force.

The Commissioner has been sufficiently long in office to appreciate the problems, and we look forward to further legislation dealing with the Police Force. If it is along the lines of the present legislation, he will bring about improvements in the Force.

The Minister has indicated what this Bill could mean to the Police Force because of the employment of married women. Now that the Government's intention in this Bill has been made known, I have no doubt that applications will be received from female members now in the Force and from former female members who could not remain in the Force because of the Act provision.

**Mr. Hodges:** We have already.

**Mr. NEWTON:** That is interesting. We can look forward to an increase in the female section. It has been clearly indicated that women who have been in the service for a number of years should be entitled to promotion. That is something of which we have not had much experience in this State, because of the harshness of the Act provision that precluded women from continuing in the service after marriage. I understand that female police officers have risen to commissioned rank in other States. Knowing their worth, I am confident that female personnel could be of valuable assistance in the various ranks. In allowing female police officers to remain in the service after marriage, we should ensure that they are not restricted in their activities. Their work within the Force should be upgraded.

**Mr. Hodges:** We demonstrated that the other day by appointing one to Woody Point.

**Mr. NEWTON:** That is true. What I read in yesterday's "Telegraph" prompted me to raise the matter. We must make sure that there is an upgrading of the various duties in the Police Force to which women can be allotted. The Minister made a statement recently about "Q" cars.

**Mr. Hodges:** They will be out on point duty shortly, too.

**Mr. NEWTON:** That is right. We have spoken about that sort of thing many times in this House. Males and females do the same sort of training, and very often the dux of the class is a female, with most of the other females very close to the top. Under this amending legislation, I am happy to see, women will be upgraded rather than downgraded. The principle of the Bill already applies to women in the Public Service and it will correct a serious weakness in the present legislation which led to the Police Force losing policewomen who had been trained as well as other personnel, through the recruiting stage and up through the ranks.

I point out that the Opposition does not see any dangers in the provisions relating to a married woman's right to either resign from the force or continue in her employment. As a matter of fact, the period in which she must notify the Commissioner before her proposed date of marriage is six weeks, a shorter period than applies to other members of the force who wish to resign. However, although we are not in any way reflecting upon the Commissioner, we hope that prompt action is taken in connection with any application by a policewoman to be continued in employment after her marriage. The Bill provides that the Commissioner himself shall determine whether or not a female member shall be continued in employment after marriage, but no time within which he has to make his decision is prescribed.

I reiterate that I am not reflecting on the Commissioner, but sometimes, because of the amount of work performed by senior officers in Government employment, these matters are left lying on their tables for some time before a decision is made. It is to be hoped that in these cases, which affect the building up of the Police Force, the Commissioner or his assistants, or whoever is responsible for making the recommendation, will see that these decisions are not held up for too long. A woman who applies to be continued in employment in the force after her marriage must be contemplating seeking some employment, and, if a decision to continue her in the force is not made promptly, her services may be lost.

With most young couples being married today it is necessary for both to work in order to meet the high cost of land and the setting up and furnishing of a home. Therefore, I hope that the Commissioner will make sure that no delays occur in deciding these matters.

We have no reason to believe that serving policewomen will not be continued in employment. Their current strength in the force is 28 and, while we may encounter a problem with an individual policeman, to my knowledge during the time I have been in Parliament, no policewoman has ever been

involved in any trouble. I think this Bill should assist the Minister to build up the force. Young women will undoubtedly be attracted to the force if they know that when they marry they will, if they so wish, be continued in their employment. I am sure this will assist recruitment throughout the State.

It is to be hoped that, owing to her financial position, a married policewoman who becomes pregnant is not forced to work for five, six or seven months of her pregnancy. We are aware that in other fields of employment certain women who are at that stage of pregnancy are compelled to remain in employment, but I sincerely hope that a pregnant policewoman can be saved the embarrassment of having to work for that length of time.

The amendment that will delete the word "police" from the term "police magistrate" and insert in lieu the word "stipendiary" is to be commended, because certain problems could rise after it was arranged that a police magistrate visit a particular division to hear charges levelled against a member of the Police Force.

The Bill also clears up certain sections of the Police Act relative to regions, so on that score, too, it is to be commended.

Members of the Opposition were concerned about the provisions of the Police Superannuation Act, but as they are amply covered by the Bill there is no need for me to refer to them.

As the Bill will assist the Government to build up the strength of the Police Force, the Opposition gives it its whole-hearted support.

**Hon. A. M. HODGES** (Gympie—Minister for Works and Housing) (2.48 p.m.), in reply: Again I thank the Opposition for having accepted the Bill. As the honourable member for Belmont said, women who apply will be accepted without delay. I do not wish to comment any further because tomorrow my Estimates will be introduced and during their discussion a full-scale debate on all aspects of police administration will be allowed.

Motion (Mr. Hodges) agreed to.

#### COMMITTEE

(Mr. Houghton, Redcliffe, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 8, both inclusive, and schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

#### ABORIGINES BILL

##### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Houghton, Redcliffe, in the chair)

**Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT** (Mackenzie—Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs) (2.51 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to provide for the conduct of reserves for Aborigines and for the admission thereto of persons

who wish to reside there; for the grant of assistance to Aborigines who seek it; for the repeal of certain provisions of law; and for related purposes."

Laws made for a community must take into account what people want and the needs that they have. In a democracy, I believe these two aspects should be recognised and that special consideration should be given to the views of that part of the community to be directly affected by the legislation. These days, legislation on social welfare often departs from these basic principles. This happens because it can be influenced by pressure groups which, although well-intentioned, often are made up of people who are over-emotional or anxious to push a line of thought which might be currently fashionable.

I feel that honourable members should be aware that, in many cases, these attitudes do not have anything to do with the real situation and, in fact, probably represent what the particular pressure group wants, without any thought to what the people who are legislated for want. As a result of this, the solutions frequently presented have no relationship to the real problems of people and, in any case, they are quite often not the sort of problems that people see themselves.

I have noticed that this situation is becoming more and more common, and it seems to me that a number of people are anxious to insist that this country should have problems of the magnitude of those that exist in other nations and apparently they feel deprived if this is not so.

Personally, I am not able to see any particular advantages in starvation, squalor, violence and racial antagonism, but one does gain the impression that these are the things that are desirable in this day and age, and apparently a number of people feel they are left out of it if we do not possess these presumed advantages.

I am sure honourable members will agree that the importation of this sort of philosophy and what it means is not Australian and that it is our objective to ensure it shall never become so. Where situations of this type might exist, the Government prefers to take a positive attitude, and it is the intention of this Bill to assist and encourage, in a major way, the continuing development of the Aboriginal citizens of this State.

The Bill that will come before honourable members is of a social-welfare nature, and is therefore susceptible to the pressures I have described. I would, however, like to point out that only a minority of these groups and individuals who have shown an interest in the progress of Aborigines and Islanders fall into this category and adopt the paternalism of them.

I use the term "paternalism" advisedly, because it has, in the past, been applied to the policy of the Government in view of

the guidance given in material matters, such as employment, housing and the other physical aspects of life. The paternalism I mentioned a few moments ago is very different, and individuals and organisations who describe themselves as progressive are attempting to dictate to indigenous people what they should think.

This State has a small and valued ethnic minority and we are, I believe, quite capable of resolving minor differences that might exist and achieving, by mutual respect, the solution of these differences. I am definite, therefore, that any legislation presented to this Parliament will represent substantially an Aboriginal viewpoint, and that it will not reflect the attempts to import foreign problems, however inviting they may appear to be.

Aboriginal people born in this State are citizens of it and are Queenslanders, the same as you and I are. The Government wants this Bill to help them take the final step towards complete independence without the need for further special assistance.

#### BACKGROUND

Although honourable members will be aware of the history of contact between Aboriginal and European Australians, it would, none the less, be of some advantage if I sketched in brief outline some of the salient facts.

When the first settlers arrived, the Aboriginal population of what is now Queensland was comparatively numerous. Fertile coastal fringes were, of course, capable of supporting life more easily than far-western areas, but the continent probably contained an Aboriginal population as large as the manner of life and its customary practice would allow. Perhaps one could guess at about 50,000 people in all, divided into the units we have called tribes, groups, or families, varying in numbers and territory according to the productivity of the country to which they belonged. There were many languages, and the physical characteristics of the people varied noticeably from region to region.

Into this static, balanced and self-sufficient society came the convicts and settlers—an energetic influx, very much the products of that eighteenth-century British society into which they had been born. They were rough, forceful, and, by our standards, brutal in their pursuit of material success. They were violent in their protection of property. Hangings, floggings, and gaol sentences were accepted penalties for offences that we would have treated far less harshly. In the older settled areas throughout Australia, the cycle of contact and clash was repeated, but it is as well to remember that colonisation was a slow process.

In the northern part of the State, constant and close association has not yet taken place, and the life of the people of the tribes of Cape York and the Gulf is not that of people

in the South. For this and other allied reasons, I point out to honourable members that this Bill and its administration must take into account differences that do not seem to be wholly recognised.

There is a tendency to refer to Aborigines and Islanders as a group conforming to some predetermined pattern, all acting in a definite and quite specifically Aboriginal fashion. This is far from fact, and is true only inasmuch as it is true of any other group of people sharing a similar ethnic derivation. Queenslanders of European origin share this, yet no-one would expect that, because of this racial heritage, they must inevitably conform to some uniform and detailed pattern of daily behaviour and pursuit.

As with any group of people, the Aboriginal section of Queensland society includes people who differ widely in most aspects of life—in education, employment and financial security: basically, in the very attitudes and values that determine the practice of living. These differences have arisen in many ways. Perhaps some of the traditional differences have played their part. Certainly the length of contact with white Australian society is of overwhelming importance, and to this must be linked the quality of this contact. Any society is in a state of change, and past contact with eighteenth-century or early nineteenth-century Englishmen is different from that with twentieth-century Australians. This is a factor that has contributed its share to the development of Aboriginal society and to the components that are apparent within it.

These days, no excursion, however brief, into the history of this relationship seems complete without a detailed summary of massacres. I do not propose to adhere to this fashion, other than to comment that smallpox was almost certainly the mass killer of Aboriginal people, and however much some of us might lust for murderous forebears, whose sins we might repay in an orgy of self-abasement, the blame must be substantially allocated to their bacteria rather than to their muskets. It is always difficult and often impossible to apportion blame for past actions. Even worse, it is profitless. Men act in the context of their times, and to view the past from the standpoint of the present, although common enough, is not valid. There are lessons to be learned and this is generally sufficient. Aboriginal society has suffered from past associations, but it has also gained.

I see the responsibility of honourable members and the intention of this Bill to ensure, so far as possible, that the gains outweigh all other factors. This must involve a realistic view of Aboriginal society, major consideration for the voices of Aboriginal Queenslanders directly affected by the Bill, and an attempt to provide the means by



which these citizens might fully realise themselves and make their proper contribution to the life of this State. There is too much resource in this oldest portion of the population of Queensland that is frustrated and unused. We can ill afford to be without it.

Queensland has a large population of Aborigines and Islanders. Probably more than 50,000 of its citizens are of indigenous descent. In 1910 the figure was officially recorded as 15,000, so that there has been a huge increase in population in the past 61 years.

At the turn of the century, the Aboriginal population had been depleted by disease and exploitation. It faced virtual extinction. The policy of the Government then was one of protection and preservation, a policy recommended by Dr. W. E. Roth and the Honourable Archibald Meston, both appointed protectors for the two vast areas of the State. This policy was first legislatively accepted by the passing of the Native Labour and Protection Act in 1884, and by the Aborigines' Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act introduced in 1897. This latter legislation remained in force until 1939.

Protection now is an outmoded policy, and one that has been subjected to contemporary criticism. It must, however, be remembered that both Roth and Meston were men of brilliance, Roth particularly so. Both were perceptive and sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal people, and were far ahead of their time. Protection, with all its now perceived shortcomings, was, however, the only rational contemporary policy, and it is due to this, and to the dedication of men like these, to their few officers, and to the devotion of missionaries, that the Aboriginal people of this State have been able to regain their former strength.

I should like to warn honourable members of the seductions of hindsight. It is indeed a complicated affair. It involves all the satisfaction of saying, "I told you so" without the cost of being there to make the initial forecast. It endows the publicist with infallibility on his or her own assessment, and is becoming so common that I am surprised that its many exponents are not permanently equipped with rear-vision mirrors.

As I have mentioned previously, it is a profitless enterprise to make present judgments of past actions—to use our present knowledge for the purpose of discrediting. I recommend to honourable members the process of using this knowledge for the purpose of avoiding mistakes in the present day, and to reinforce a positive rather than a negative attitude to the work of our Government. This is the attitude I have adopted in my Ministry, and it is implicit in this Bill.

#### RECENT LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

The Aborigines Preservation and Protection Acts, 1939 to 1946, were designed to retain certain aspects of protection, but

included concepts embraced by the term "welfare". This was a step taken generally throughout the Commonwealth at this time, and was to a large extent influenced by the writings and efforts of Emeritus Professor A. P. Elkin. These Acts distinctly recognised that the need for strictly protective measures was past, and that the time for development had arrived.

In 1965 the Honourable J. C. A. Pizzey, then Minister for Education, introduced a Bill into this Chamber to "promote the well-being and progressive development of Aboriginal inhabitants of the State and of the Torres Strait islands." This legislation, the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act, was never intended to be other than transitional. It was aimed at, and has achieved, the abandonment of protection as a policy. It has placed much more emphasis on the process of development, and by this I mean the development of resources, both human and material.

With the 1965 Act the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs came into being, and it was the job of this department to put into administrative effect the changes and thinking implicit in the new legislation. Introducing the Bill, the late Mr. Pizzey said—

"The new Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs is not expected to be a maid of all work for Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islander Australians. However, the Department cannot content itself with merely building homes and providing reserves for them. Its real interest is, as indicated by the name, Aboriginal and Island affairs, which connotes everything to do with their economy and planned advancement."

I believe that this department has carried out most adequately the tasks set out by the Government. I am also convinced that its staff of officers will continue to work efficiently and effectively for the dignity and progress of indigenous citizens.

Since 1965, many things have happened. Community councils have been given greater responsibility in the management of their own affairs, and, without exception, these councils have responded to the reliance placed upon them.

#### ABORIGINAL COUNCILS

Honourable members will recall that community councils were established on Aboriginal communities by virtue of the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act of 1955. In his second-reading speech, the Minister of the day introduced the establishment of these councils by saying—

"Through their welfare associations, residents have become capable of developing and managing their own affairs, and it is considered the time is opportune for a much greater proportion of the responsibility for self-determination, self-development, and general well-being to

devolve on the Aboriginal residents themselves. Therefore, it is proposed to institute Aboriginal courts and councils on reserves, with powers outlined in regulations, which will be extended as opportunity warrants. It is our thinking, and I think the thinking of the whole of the House, that for too long there has been too much paternalism and not enough placing of responsibility on the shoulders of these people in the settlements."

It was intended then that these councils should play an increasingly responsible part in the administration of communities, and the probable extension of their powers was foreshadowed.

Membership of the council was by election and appointment—a safeguard that I consider to have been wise and necessary. Appointment has given women an opportunity to take part in local administration that otherwise would have been most unlikely. It also has ensured that small traditional groups within communities have been able to take part and constitute a council representing a full cross-section of the population.

Since 1965, councils have been established on all communities, and their responsibilities have, in fact, increased immensely. At first they were unsure of themselves, and it has taken time for them to overcome that uncertainty. At the same time, community residents have found it necessary to adjust to the gradual transfer of authority that was implied. People who for decades have been used to going to superintendents and their staffs for a host of personal reasons cannot be expected to wholly drop this custom simply because a new authority has arisen.

By 1967, however—a quite brief period—the community councils had gained sufficient experience and competence to successfully constitute a State-wide advisory body. They met at Palm Island in September 1967, and they were the first representative group of Aboriginal Australians officially called together by a Government to discuss and recommend on a variety of policy issues of their own choice.

It was during this historic conference that the Government of Queensland awarded certificates of merit to 13 individuals—12 indigenes and one European—for years of service to the cause of Aboriginal Queenslanders. The single Australian of European origin who was honoured in this fashion was Emeritus Professor A. P. Elkin, of the University of Sydney, a man who I believe has accomplished more than any other person for the progress of Aboriginal Australians.

Professor Elkin addressed the conference and spoke of the pleasure it gave him to observe, in the brief span of barely half a century, the immensity of the changes that had taken place in the stature and fulfilment of Aboriginal people. I bring this to the notice of honourable members and ask them to consider it earnestly.

Earlier in my introductory speech I drew particular attention to the diverse elements that comprise Aboriginal society in this State. Vast strides have been made by many peoples; others, because of their environment and their background, have held to a substantial residue of traditional values. Their progress is no less than that of others, but it has been along a different path and dictated by different influences.

People and the society that they comprise must take their own time considering their decisions and the consequences of them to that portion of society to which they belong. Few of us yet have the seniority to review properly a half-century from our own experience or have had the close association and professional experience of Professor Elkin upon which to assess what we have seen. We can, however, think back for half that period and compare the position of Aboriginal people then and now. We can reflect on the opportunities they have, the current attitudes, and the standards of housing and attainment to appreciate the magnitude of the changes that have taken place. From this, it may then be possible to understand something of the considerable pressures to which Aborigines have been subjected.

The most dangerous paternalism is the demand for conformity, and I thought it wise to warn of this earlier. It is my wish to work with Aborigines, not to increase existing pressures. We must allow them time and opportunity to make their own decisions relevant to the needs of each group. It is for this reason that councils were established, and it is apparent that they are serving adequately.

A proper extension of the conference of councillors was the introduction of their elected chairman at conferences and discussions at State and national level. That was accomplished and gave a greater sense of real participation to the conference body, as well as a great deal of background knowledge and experience.

It led to the formation of the present Advisory Council—a wholly elected body composed of the chairmen of all communities in Queensland. It is by the opinions and recommendations of the Advisory Council that I have largely been guided in framing the Bill that I propose placing before honourable members. This body is totally representative of the people who will be directly and closely affected by any new legislation, and it therefore is proper that its major significance should be recognised in this fashion. These are the men who are aware of the requirements and the special needs of each community because they are part of it, and I thank them for their hard work and unflagging advice and guidance to me.

## EDUCATION

Education is often regarded as the most important single aspect of work towards the full development of Aboriginal people. It certainly is of great importance. But before I tell honourable members something of what is happening in this field, I wish to point out that I am very anxious not to establish priorities of this sort.

Education is important; so is health; so is housing; so is employment; and so are a host of other things, all of which are closely related. To elevate one above another at a policy level is valueless, although there is plenty of opportunity to do so when working with individual families or communities. As all these aspects are related and dependent upon one another, it is important that the policy of the Government should, and does, endeavour to deal simultaneously with a great number of difficulties.

Even major headings such as education can be broken down into a number of distinct difficulties, each requiring specialist attention. New schools are of great value and assist greatly in furthering education, but it is no less important that particular difficulties in the whole process of education are being isolated and solved. Since 1965, eight new primary schools have been built on Aboriginal communities. All these schools now are administered by the Education Department and are staffed by teachers of that department. Next year a high-school complex will be completed for the 1973 year at Bamaga, on the tip of Cape York. This school will serve a widespread need in the far-northern areas of the State by providing secondary facilities in addition to those already available at Thursday Island.

Research into particular problems has been energetically taken up. This Government, with the help of the Van Leer Foundation and the co-operation of the University of Queensland, already has begun a meticulous and comprehensive research programme into the difficulties experienced by Aboriginal youngsters passing through primary-school systems.

Two major primary schools, at Cherbourg and Palm Island, have been transferred to the administration of the Director of Special Education Services. These schools have been staffed by selected teachers, backed by the facilities of the specialist branch of educationists set up within the Department of Education to analyse and correlate information on this special field. This represents a major and unique project from which we already have obtained heartening results which will, I feel, be of value not only to Aborigines but to other Australians as well.

Recently, lengthy seminars were held at Gatton and in Brisbane, attended by teacher representatives from each State primary school in Queensland with a significant percentage of Aboriginal or Islander students. Delegates from various Aboriginal voluntary associations also were invited to take part. At these

seminars it was possible for teachers to compare notes, discuss problems and contribute to conferences and to lectures by leading specialists in this field of education. This, I believe, is yet another example of the many ways in which the Queensland Government has taken the first step.

Kindergartens have not been neglected. Every Torres Strait island has a pre-school centre staffed by an Islander teacher who has received at least a year's training in Brisbane. A similar situation applies on the mainland. Positions have been created for the appointment of kindergarten college graduates to larger community centres, and cadetships also have been advertised, tenable from next year at the college. To achieve a general oversight and administrative efficiency, the appointment of a Director of Pre-School Education has been made within the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. Again, this was a unique and well worth-while step forward. The first action of this officer was to organise a pre-school teachers' seminar on Thursday Island, which attained a most pleasing success in every sense.

Torres Strait Islander teachers now have all completed their first year of a teacher-training programme at Kedron Park Teachers' College, and have begun the second year of their special programme. I bring this to the attention of honourable members because there has been some ill-advised criticism of Torres Strait education, which remains administratively the responsibility of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. This responsibility does not cover State schools at Bamaga and Thursday Island, which are under the guidance and oversight of the Education Department.

Rather than criticism, I believe some praise should be forthcoming. Here we see an attempt—and a successful one—to engage indigenous people wholly in a profession of status and importance with their own youngsters. They have had to overcome immense difficulties to achieve this, but they have achieved it. They are, on the whole, a dedicated, intelligent and sincere group of men and women, and it has been my pleasure to associate with them and observe their work. One of their number undertook study at the University of Queensland in 1969, and has been able to return to the islands and undertake a far wider range of responsibility. I do not see all this as a cause for complaint, but rather as a system without precedent in the Commonwealth and one of which all Queenslanders might well be proud.

The field of adult education has not been neglected. Officers of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs have co-operated with the Commonwealth Department of Education and Science in the administration of the study-grant scheme, as well as maintaining various other programmes. It was felt that very careful consideration should be given to the structure of any massive programme of adult education. Consequently,

the University of Queensland was approached and, being agreeable, given a grant sufficient to carry out this initial research.

One particular form of adult education that is very much allied to employment has been the particularly impressive careers-counselling and job-orientation programmes conducted by the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs and the Department of Labour and National Service. The initial impetus in the creation of these programmes stemmed from the lack of variety in jobs offering in remote areas and in the smaller country towns. Even in the larger cities it is possible for school students to be largely ignorant of the great diversity of work that can be available.

Apart from this aspect, there is always a difference in the quality of knowledge derived from books as distinct from that gained by first-hand experience. To overcome this disadvantage, the careers-counselling programme set out to give boys and girls a chance to experience at first hand the type of career they chose or for which they showed an aptitude. At first, participants came to Brisbane. They were accommodated by Brisbane families and Brisbane employers went out of their way to give small groups of students direct knowledge of the conditions and daily routine of a vast host of jobs.

From 1967 to 1971, the project has been expanded from 33 school-leavers to more than 150, and it has been necessary to decentralise it. This year programmes already have been held in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Cairns, Mount Isa and Toowoomba, and it is expected that Cairns will play host to another group before Christmas. The full value of programmes such as this is hard to estimate as almost every aspect of the week is important. Staying with a new family, travelling, seeing the city—all have their significance for those taking part.

Job orientation stemmed directly from the success of careers counselling. Once again it is a simple programme designed to fill a simple need and administered jointly by the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs and the Department of Labour and National Service. It seeks to give school-leavers the small items of information that help in securing work and keeping it. Dress, interview behaviour, and cosmetics are just a few of the items discussed.

Both projects originated in Queensland and are growing rapidly here and in other areas of their adoption. In the next few weeks the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs and the Department of Labour and National Service, with the enthusiastic co-operation of the State Department of Education, will sponsor a pre-employment training programme. This is aimed at giving immediate and saleable skills to young people who have found it difficult to secure work. In the first

instance, a group of interested girls are receiving concentrated training as clothing machinists, and I am confident this is just the beginning of a number of similar projects. It is also another unique proposal that, I hope, will prove of value to other statutory bodies throughout the Commonwealth.

All of these various programmes are to provide school-leavers with some idea of the great variety of employment available. They are designed to give an accurate idea of entry qualifications and ensure that school-leavers are able to cope with the small, but important, requirements any young person needs to know before taking up employment for the first time.

The sole aim of education is not, or at least it should not be, the attainment of better paid and more interesting work. It is, however, a most important objective and one that most people are able to perceive and accept. As this is so, it seems to me that it is highly important that Aboriginal Queenslanders do secure jobs commensurate with their educational attainment. If this cannot be accomplished, then it is quite likely that many parents and children will lose an important motivating factor in their attitude to education. This in its turn will affect school performance, with a consequent depressing effect on the social and economic structure of Aboriginal societies.

The entry of the Commonwealth Government into the field of Aboriginal affairs has added considerably to employment opportunities. I have already mentioned the close liaison between the Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service and the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs in this field. In order to provide honourable members with a clear picture of the present situation, I feel that they should be made aware of the employment-training scheme sponsored by the Department of Labour and National Service, which receives every co-operation from my Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. This scheme provides a subsidy under certain and very general conditions to any employer providing employment for Aboriginal and Islander people of any age. It is necessary that the job offered provides a degree of training. The intention is that a skill be learned and that a person with little to sell on the labour market be able, by this means, to acquire a needed qualification. Trainees in areas remote from their place of employment are fully subsidised for trips home during the training period, and receive other benefits by way of living and clothing allowances.

In speaking earlier on education, I did not acquaint honourable members with the secondary grant scheme administered by the Department of Education and Science. This is another Commonwealth statutory body with which my department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs works closely. Secondary grants are provided to any school-child of

Aboriginal or Islander descent who has reached the age of 14 years. The value of the grant is a minimum of \$509 for those children who live at home, and may reach about \$1,300 for youngsters from remote areas who are at boarding school or live elsewhere to attend school.

The study grant scheme is yet another project of this type and is administered in the same fashion as secondary grants. Study grants provide living expenses, books and fees for any post-school students, and embrace all approved institutions, such as universities, technical colleges, business colleges, and so on. As at 30 June 1971, in Queensland a total of 111 study grants had been made and 1,134 secondary grants had been approved. In addition to these Commonwealth grants, the Government of this State maintains and increases its own huge commitment to Aboriginal education.

Since 1965 continuing research and effort have been directed towards the health of indigenous Queenslanders. On occasions this State has been severely criticised after the publication of infant mortality statistics, which are derived wholly from research undertaken to clarify the problem. At this point it must be said that this basic research began in this State and was financed by State funds. I am aware that similar problems have been discovered elsewhere in the Commonwealth, but I would remind honourable members that the impetus to establish the situation, to investigate it, to seek remedies, and to implement them, took place in Queensland.

To undertake co-ordination of the many clinical and preventive programmes, a specialist medical officer has been appointed within the Department of Health. The Queensland Institute of Medical Research has appointed to its team an anthropologist, whose duty is to advise on traditional or contemporary and customary practices affecting the health of a community.

Since the previous legislation was introduced new hospitals have been built at Yarrabah, Palm Island, Bamaga, Lockhart River and Mitchell River. The first three mentioned are part of the relevant regional hospital board administration.

The Health Education Council of Queensland has been subsidised and has appointed the staff needed to produce a health education programme suited to the particular needs of individual communities and regions. To complement this, the council has produced a number of films, and a teaching curriculum for primary schools is nearing completion.

Since 1965 a massive re-housing scheme for Aborigines has been put into operation throughout Queensland. This project continues at an increasing pace, and in the period from the end of June 1966 to 30 June 1971 more than 629 families have been re-housed. Dwellings have been built on communities and bought or constructed in country towns in all parts of the State.

The Government's intention is to reduce and ultimately do away with substandard conditions characterising what have become known as fringe areas. Indeed, fringe areas no longer exist in some towns and in many others have been reduced substantially. There is now an increasing number of first-rate pre-cut buildings available from the Cherbourg workshops. These are made by Aboriginal Queenslanders and represent a direct contribution by them to the comfort and progress of their fellow-citizens. This is another major innovation by the people of this State and is well worth appreciation.

I would not like honourable members to gather the impression that implementation of these many projects and schemes is going to destroy what I might call the "Aboriginality" of Queenslanders who are Aborigines. The possession of a particular pattern of culture is something that is private and a matter for personal decision. However, we are one society, and it is as Australians that we either stand or fall. Appreciating this, honourable members will understand that the possession of cultural diversity within a nation demands certain minimal modifications and adjustments from all cultural groups present so that they might live harmoniously yet retain their distinctive ethnic flavour. We often speak of pride in tradition, without realising the importance of material things of the past. Queensland as a State has a short history, but as part of this continent its history is vast and can be recognised only by the material remains left by its inhabitants.

#### CULTURE AND ANTIQUITIES

Much has been done towards establishing a viable section in the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs to preserve the culture and relics of Aboriginal people. An advisory committee has been set up, and its function is to advise the Government on all matters relating to Aboriginal culture and relics in Queensland, including the authenticity of relics and the best way to protect them. An effective means of providing this necessary protection is gazettal of land as Aboriginal sites, with access allowed only with the written authority of the Minister. These areas are sign-posted so that the public is fully aware of the importance of the area to Aboriginal culture. All applications for survey and research work are considered by the advisory committee and appraised on merit.

A total of 72 honorary wardens has been appointed in various parts of this State, and their efforts towards preserving the Aboriginal heritage are commended. Wardens also have notified many previously unrecorded sites, thus ensuring that adequate protection is provided. Last April the department's first Aboriginal ranger was appointed to patrol the Carnarvon Ranges. He has the dual role of preventing vandalism and identifying Aboriginal relics and sites. This appointment already has

proved successful and the possibility of establishing similar mobile rangers in other important regions is being investigated.

An archaeological section has been established and will be housed in new premises on museum ground. Work has begun on the massive task of planning and mapping Aboriginal antiquities and collating information received with a view to establishing a research library. The knowledge of site distribution and type derived from these records should enable rational research programmes to be implemented.

The most extensive project being carried out by the department is the recording and removal of Aboriginal-rock engravings from the bed of the Burnett River near Bundaberg, before the area is inundated by water stored behind an irrigation barrage. This task is being undertaken jointly by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission and the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. The need for protection coincides with the role of stimulating public awareness of the unique nature of Aboriginal culture and engendering an attitude of responsibility.

The direction taken by the department concentrates on preservation and protection of relics, but also emphasises research and, where possible, interpretation of relics to determine their meaning within contemporary and pre-historic cultures. Attention also will be given to the much-needed conservation of relics to ensure their protection against the natural elements and, by so doing, preserve the Aboriginal heritage for posterity.

#### PROPOSED CHANGES

The Bill I am asking the Committee to consider repeals the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Acts of 1965-67, as well as paragraph (ii) of subsection (1) of section 4 of the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act 1931-1971. The Government now intends to legislate for Aborigines in two important areas. The first is continuation of the development and progress of Aboriginal communities for the benefit of the people who wish to live there. The second is an increase in the scope of welfare programmes which will benefit all Aboriginal people throughout the State.

As I mentioned earlier, a pattern of Aboriginal councils and councillors has been developed within the legislative structure. The Government intends to expand and consolidate the responsibility of community councillors, and their number and composition will be constituted by regulation. The councillors have met in general conference from time to time, and earlier this year a full conference recommended the setting up of an Advisory Council made up of the chairmen of all of the Aboriginal community councils.

This was approved administratively and the Advisory Council has met twice to discuss development of the present Bill and

other matters. This Advisory Council will be firmly established by the Bill and will be available at all times to provide advice and means of representative consultation. The collective wisdom of the Advisory Council, representing all people of the major Aboriginal reserves, has been utilised, and their ideas, hopes and aspirations are incorporated in the Bill now under consideration.

Some previous measures do not appear at all. For example, the previously held authority for the transfer of people from reserve to reserve, or to the general community off a reserve (which was rarely used) is not mentioned. The new legislation provides, generally speaking, a social welfare programme drawn up in consultation with the Aboriginal councils and, of course, the Advisory Council.

The concept and status of "Assisted Aborigines" is abandoned. Reference to an Aborigine will be related to any person who is a descendant of an indigenous inhabitant of the Commonwealth, other than the Torres Strait Islands.

Aboriginal reserves will, of course, continue, as well as the communities established on them. The only people allowed on reserves will be those entitled to be there—such as resident Aborigines, visitors or staff members. The authority of an Aborigine to be on a reserve—other than, of course, those already living there—will result from an application to the Aboriginal council. The council and the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs must be satisfied that residence on the reserve is in the best interest of the Aborigine. It must also be clear that such residence will not be detrimental to other residents on the reserve or to the reserve itself. Therefore, residence on a reserve will, in fact, be determined in terms of a partnership between the council and the department. But for visitors to the reserves for periods of up to one month, either the Aboriginal council or the department may approve.

It is proposed also to include a clear statement of the fact that a person on a reserve may leave the reserve at any time except, of course, when he is being lawfully detained. This will place beyond argument the fact that the residential status on a reserve is a purely voluntary act.

It is proposed to continue Aboriginal councils and courts, and to provide legislatively for the Advisory Council.

Aboriginal reserves have been restricted by area in relation to liquor, but at the request of the councils it is proposed to provide, in principle, for beer to be available within licensed areas, subject to the wishes of the residents as conveyed through their Aboriginal council. I particularly emphasise that this is an approval in principle only, as some councils have indicated opposition to beer on reserves and their wishes must be respected.

Grants of aid, in terms of previous legislation, are being continued. The compulsory concept of management of property, including trust accounts, has been abandoned. Some provisions, however, are proposed for inclusion to ensure those people who so ask will be afforded services now provided by the department. These provisions also will ensure that management ends on request except in very special circumstances requiring the approval of a stipendiary magistrate. I should mention that, once ended, management will not be resumed unless there is a special reason for so doing.

General provisions have continued to respect traditional racial status and practices. Although these cover isolated instances where male and female Aborigines live within a traditional racial customary state, the integrity and status quo of the union and the lawful issue therefrom will be preserved.

Provision is made for a department officer to appear in court on behalf of an Aborigine under particular circumstances. Alternatively, the Aborigine may make whatever arrangement he wishes.

It is proposed to include general powers for appeal conferred on a stipendiary magistrate should Aborigines feel aggrieved by council decisions or the Director. This will cover the few instances where some authority is extended for decisions with regard to residence.

The policy of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs is the policy of assimilation agreed to by all State and Commonwealth Ministers and I will read this definition—

"The policy of assimilation seeks that all persons of Aboriginal descent will choose to attain a similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community—enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities and influenced by the same hopes and loyalties as other Australians.

"Any special measures taken are regarded as temporary measures, not based on race, but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their social, economic and political advancement."

My opinion is that this definition, together with the policy flowing from it, is perfectly realistic and fair, but, despite wide publicity, there still appears to be a considerable amount of misinterpretation.

It is apparent from what I have said before that the Government is not seeking to remove identity from Aboriginal or Islander people. Rather every attempt is being made to encourage them to make full use of their many talents and capacities, for the benefit of all Queenslanders. I believe this is being achieved and that the State as a whole will profit.

I have pointed out that that portion of the population in Queensland derived from Aboriginal and Islander people is a group differing widely from individual to individual and from family to family and I urge honourable members to keep this in mind.

It is important that we should be realistic and face the many problems evident, and I hope that my detailed summary of the activities of my Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, with the proposed changes in the legislation now under consideration, will convince honourable members of this.

Aborigines and Islanders now have a variety of opportunities and it is necessary that they should be able to make rational judgments of these in their own time. It is not intended that they should be pushed or coerced into situations or have decisions foisted upon them by the intellectual paternalism of which I have warned.

It is my objective that the legislation we are debating should finally represent the interests of these, our fellow citizens, and help them and help all of us to achieve, within Queensland, a society within which mutual respect for the ethnic derivation of each member will be accorded.

Honourable members will note that the Bill is transitory in nature, and it is proposed that the Act will cease to be in force five years from its date of commencement unless continued as prescribed.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH** (Tablelands) (3.34 p.m.): It is one thing for the Minister to introduce a Bill and another thing to present an annual report. The Minister had quite a responsibility to present this Bill. However, I think his speech contained too much padding. There was no mention of the 1965 Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act being transitional, although quite a lot resulted from its introduction.

The Minister saw fit to build up the story of the Aborigine in our midst. If this were a subject in which we had had no experience, the Minister could be excused for doing that. I have only 20 minutes to speak, and I can do no more than comment briefly on this subject. I was a little disappointed that the Minister included so much "padding" in his speech, particularly at a time when Opposition members have been taken to task for allegedly doing the same thing. It is not my intention to "pad" my speech.

The removal of authority from reserve to reserve is a good thing. I hope that when we see the Bill we will find no loopholes in this part of it. The Minister said that what is proposed is virtually a social-welfare programme. That is as it should be. I hope that Aborigines will be assisted within the community, not isolated and given special treatment that is not given to our own people.

Apparently the Bill will place considerable emphasis on Aboriginal councils and the Advisory Council. On this matter, I sound

a word of warning. I am sure, from my experience in my electorate, that there has not been the expected degree of communication between the Advisory Council, Aboriginal councils and the department and the Minister. In saying that, I am not denigrating the council one iota. In fact, I am very proud of the efforts of council members to cope. But they are not able to cope, and the Minister knows that full well. I ask the Minister and the department not to take the view, "The Advisory Council agrees to this, so it must be all right." I urge them to be a little more realistic, and to ensure that the Aborigines do understand what is put to them, even if they have to communicate to their people in their own tongue.

Since the setting up of the Advisory Council, I have been to the Edward River and Mitchell River Aboriginal Communities in my electorates, and I know full well that the Aborigines there have communicated in their own tongue. But can they translate exactly what they have been told by the department and their various advisers? As an example of what I am saying, I point out that one chairman was told that if there was any trouble in his village he could take the matter to the "minister". It was not the Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs who was referred to; it was the minister from the church. There have been similar misconstructions in other places. It is quite wrong to have the church suddenly intervening in troubles at various communities. I know that the Director, who gave that advice, did not mean it to be construed in that way. Nevertheless, that was how that advice was interpreted by one council member, and a good member at that.

While I was at that community, I also found that one member of a council had been replaced by a person who could not read or write. He is a good man and a good leader, but can he communicate? Can he understand what he is being told by other people? These are things that can produce ridiculous situations in some localities.

It is a little difficult to accept that the Bill will differ very greatly from the present legislation. I know that Aborigines must have guidance, although I acknowledge that over the past five or six years they have made considerable progress. I only hope that, as a result of this further transitional Bill, they will make more progress in the next few years. But I appeal to the Minister to try to embrace not just a few Aborigines but all people of Aboriginal descent.

The councils and the Director are to decide residential qualifications. I think I have understood correctly what the Minister said on that point. I wonder why the Director comes into the question of residential qualifications of Aborigines on reserves or in communities. If councils are elected by the people, I believe they will take the correct

action. If they do not they will be voted out of office, just as a member of this Assembly is voted out by his constituents. I should like the councils to have more say on the question of residential qualifications. In my opinion, it is a question that they could understand and decide. They know the person who will cause trouble and refuse to take any notice of authority. I think they would be able to deal with the question very well, without the assistance of the Director.

Several provisions relating to the visiting of reserves seem acceptable, and the fact that residents will be able to leave a reserve at any time will be very much appreciated. It has hurt Aborigines greatly to know that they cannot leave their reserves without permission, because they like to be able to move about. Do not honourable members like to plan their holidays? We like to go on our "walkabout", but in a different way. Aborigines will now be permitted to leave a reserve, unless, of course, they are under detention for some reason.

**Mr. Aikens:** We could give them a gold pass.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH:** It will not be long before some of them have gold passes.

I do not intend to develop very far the question of the supply of liquor. Since a change was suggested, I have received letters from several church organisations saying that they favour a change, instead of retaining the present method of breaking the law to obtain liquor and, at the same time, having people incensed because, just across the street in the staff quarters, drinking can proceed without any interruption because they have been excised from the reserve.

The compulsory management of property and of keeping trust accounts is to end. I am pleased to know that those who wish to make use of the present system may do so. I hope that more and more Aborigines will ask for assistance and that they will not rush in and ask for free use of their money and property, because I know that in many instances they will not be capable of retaining it. Again they are being given the right to make a decision. It will no longer be compulsory for them to have their property and their trust accounts managed by the department.

**Mr. Thackeray:** Some sly operators might sell them second-hand cars that are "bombs".

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH:** That is true, and it is a very important point. It not only deprives the Aborigines of their money; it leaves a trail of broken-down cars over the reserves and over the countryside at a time when we are all trying to avoid that sort of thing.

The approval of a magistrate in special circumstances was mentioned in the Minister's introductory speech. When the Minister



replies, I should like him to give the Committee examples of some of the circumstances he has in mind. Some areas are a long way from a magistrate, and I think the circumstances would have to be very special before the provision would apply.

The Minister said that traditional practices would be respected. I do not know whether the point that I am about to make is covered in the Bill, but I hope it is. Not many tribal marriages are performed within this State. The brief survey I made showed that there probably would not be more than 20.

**Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt:** That is covered in the Bill.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH:** I am pleased to hear that. For the information of the Committee, I point out that tribal marriages are still celebrated, and I believe that a certificate of some sort should be issued to show that the couple concerned are man and wife.

That would mean that when their children subsequently went out into the world they would not be considered illegitimate. I do not think that this marriage practice will continue for very long—probably it will fade away—but meanwhile it would be the right gesture for the Government to make to those people who retain their traditional form of marriage.

There is a need for legal aid, but I do not think it should be provided by a departmental man. The Minister spoke about the right of appeal to a magistrate against a decision of the council or the Director. If a departmental man was appealing against the Director on behalf of an Aborigine, the Director would be at a decided advantage. Legal aid, as we know it in the Australian community, should be provided.

**Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt:** It is optional—whichever way he wants it.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH:** Legal aid should be provided when it is required.

I am wondering whether this is uniform legislation. I know that it is legislation of a transitional nature, and probably it can be argued that each State is in a different phase of transition. In the Northern Territory, I saw the transitional houses. As I have often said, we must not have a system of trial and error dealing with people; we must be absolutely sure that we do the very best for them in all circumstances. If the Bill is heading towards uniform legislation, so much the better. Maybe one State is ahead of another, and perhaps different States have different problems.

The Minister spoke about Aborigines attaining the standard of living of other Australians. I hope he really means it. When I, and other honourable members who have Aborigines in their electorates, strive to get better conditions for them, I hope we will not be told, "It will be done when funds

are available." We are not given that reply when we ask for something that is our right. We are not given that answer when we ask for something that we normally expect and accept from local government and the State Government. I hope the Minister will not hide behind the words "when funds are available" when action is required to attain the living standards to which he referred.

I will not labour the point, but there is evidence of discrimination between the Australian population and the Aboriginal population.

The Minister mentioned temporary measures in special cases to assist in transition from one level to another. He said he was aiming at social, economic and political advancement. That is going a long way past the few years of the required transitional period. I do not think the transitional period is long enough in view of the way we are educating these people piecemeal. I say "piecemeal" because, when the 1965 legislation was being introduced, I had this to say to the late Jack Pizzey—

"I therefore say that we should dispense with this second-class standard of education and make available to them the type of education given to all other citizens in Queensland."

Mr. Pizzey said, "They do get that", and I then said—

"They do not, and the Minister knows they do not—and I am speaking of places that I visited last week."

Six years later, I am able to say that, for some months, several of the schools have been staffed with Education Department teachers, while others, only 200 or 300 miles away, are still staffed with Aboriginal and Islander teachers. That is why I appeal to the Minister and the Government to do something for the whole community; to try to get the missions to hand over the education system to the Education Department, and to let us do the job as it should be done. At the same time, the Education Department should be asked to provide suitable school accommodation.

I have photographs of schools in my own area in which teachers in any other school would never think of teaching. The climate is very hot; the ceilings are low; the accommodation consists of demountable classrooms; the toilets are bad, as honourable members saw recently in a Press photograph; and drinking facilities and the like are very poor. These are some of the things I hope the Minister really means to correct. I honestly think he does, but can he bend the Treasurer's arm and obtain the necessary money? Probably the answer will be "No". Can we then go to the Commonwealth Government, which the Minister has mentioned in his remarks, and get further assistance without handing over control to the Commonwealth? Here I sound a note of

warning to the Minister. Please do not hand over control to the Commonwealth. I know that pressure may be brought to bear in this direction and that the Commonwealth is anxious to take over control, but how remote would Bamaga, or places like Port Hedland in Western Australia, be from Canberra?

It is our duty to see that the job is done properly and in the best interests of the Aboriginal people. It is quite right that they should be encouraged in their efforts, and the only way to do this is to see that they get a suitable return. Very often their work and their crafts are downgraded because people get the chance to buy their products a little cheaper if they deal directly with them..

This is one of the ways in which the easing of the control of visitors into these areas could have repercussions. I suggest that the councils alone should be allowed to decide who should or should not visit the areas. At the present time there is virtually a brick wall against visitors, which is probably understandable. When the councillors have the right to decide, they may make one or two mistakes. However, they have their own ways and means of keeping people out, particularly in isolated areas.

Finally, the period of a few years that the Minister has mentioned as the transitional period for this Bill may not be sufficient. I hope it will be, but I do not think it will. However, it will appreciably assist in making it a satisfactory and workable transitional period if each and every one of us is not afraid to speak out in public on behalf of Aborigines.

**Mr. PORTER (Toowong)** (3.54 p.m.): The honourable member for Tablelands, who led the debate on this Bill for the Opposition, seems to feel that, in introducing it the Minister had spoken at too great a length in giving something of a report, and so on. We all know, of course, that the matter of what Governments should or should not do as regards our indigenous people is an area of debate where very strong emotions are aroused. Very often it is a classic example of generating heat without light. The Minister was quite proper in giving us a full picture of the Bill. Many of those who take up this matter purport to see it only as a disadvantage to Aborigines, and take great delight in painting a picture that suggests that the Aborigines have been treated like the inmates of some Belsen-type concentration camp. They most certainly do not want their impassioned outbursts to be in any way confused by having regard to the facts.

The Minister suggested that many people feel a certain sense of guilt from the past, and that is why they take strong attitudes. I am inclined to agree with him, because I believe that many people have a sense of guilt by inheritance. I must say that I do not share it. It certainly does not help the people concerned and serves no useful purpose, because if real help is to be

given it is essential for things to be seen as they really are in the context of our times. Most certainly we should be looking forward, not backward.

Although a lot of good has been done by both this Government and earlier Governments, nobody will pretend that there have not been some failures, some deficiencies and some injustices. After all, these are human areas where compassion more than realism has to predominate, and it would be unnatural if some errors were not made. However, by and large, within the obvious limits that I think are imposed when we are dealing with people who, for a variety of reasons, are not prepared to help themselves, the administration of the Aborigines—and also of the Torres Strait Islanders, to whom the next Bill refers—has been carried out with great respect for the people concerned and very sincere intentions for their best interests.

In this area we face a great problem in that some people pretend that if we do not agree that every vestige of paternalism should be removed we are some sort of racists. This is rubbish. It is a type of emotive and irrational name-calling, which only clouds the issue and prevents us from finding useful solutions to so many problems.

It is noteworthy that Senator Neville Bonner, whom the Liberal Party chose as the first Aborigine to enter the Senate, strongly supports the methods that the administration of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs has used in terms of residence and conduct on the reserves, with regard to savings, and so on. He has had very long personal experience and knows far more about what really happens than those who, in order to build up a wild and suggestive case, merely want to pretend that something has happened.

The Bill makes very great changes and enormous advances. It provides, if I might put it this way, that whereas previously indigenous people had to opt out of a situation, they can now opt in for protection and help. This is both an enormous and a beneficial change. It still retains some element of control if they opt in, but this is delineated in terms of current attitudes and situations. I know, of course, that some people use "paternalism" as though it was some sort of dirty word and claim that we should leave the indigenous people entirely alone to work out their own destiny, and, by so doing, enable them to develop a new dignity, a new capacity and a new adaptability born out of this total and new independence.

I am bound to say that recent world history in so many places totally disproves this, because wherever people of any race or colour have been suddenly and summarily thrust from a sheltered position into so-called independence, they have landed in very real trouble. Unfortunately, this notion just does not work out as so many dreamers and idealists hope it will.

As I see it, the prime problem in this matter—the Bill goes a long way towards establishing it—is that a great many of us have not decided in our minds whether we want for Aborigines separation or assimilation—in other words, their development inside our society as a separate group, or their eventual assimilation. Many people passionately demand this kind of separation, believing that the indigenous people, as an ethnic group, can sustain much of their own culture and remain a separate group inside the turbulent, changing, materialistic and modern Western world. I doubt that very much indeed. Those who so advocate are trying to stem a quite inexorable tide.

I am certain that, in the long haul, assimilation will occur. But that does not mean total abandonment of the Aborigines' own cultures. Every nation in the world today is an amalgam of what were once very different peoples, with vastly different cultures. I am certain that there will eventually be assimilation, and I am equally sure that this is the only real and abiding solution to some of today's problems.

All honourable members on this side of the Chamber—and, I am sure, on the other side—are deeply concerned with this problem. It is pointless to say, as is so often said—I have addressed public meetings where this has been hurled at me—that those who urge separation are racists and hate black people, and that white communities in general are hostile to coloured people. My own conviction and experience in this matter is that in very many cases where there is trouble in communities it is certainly not because of skin colour. It is simply because there are different standards of living and behaviour. Where indigenous people are able to share common standards with white people they are welcomed and respected, and they have an integral and affectionate place in the community of which they are a part.

**Mr. Miller:** That is being proved every day.

**Mr. PORTER:** That is quite true. It is being proved constantly.

To the extent that we can help, in self-determination, to raise their horizons and hence their standards, we must do so. In this matter the Minister outlined, very properly at length, the things that are being done in terms of looking after the children, because it is the children to whom, in this problem, we must attach prime importance for its long-term solution. So much has been done for education, but we know that it will assist our indigenous people considerably in the future to make the great step forward into being a happy and successful part of a total community.

The Bill is wise; it is sympathetic, helpful and flexible. It would be a great pity if the humanitarian advance it represents were denigrated by those people—perhaps outside

this Chamber—who want to deliberately aggravate the relationships between white people and the indigenous people, not because they want to help—not in the least—but only because trouble is their natural environment.

**Mr. Bennett** interjected.

**Mr. PORTER:** Unfortunately, the honourable member for South Brisbane has interjected. The plain fact is that the Labor Party, by association, is tied in with many of these groups who want to exploit the problems of the indigenous people in their relationships with the white community. There are groups that pursue quite sinister ends, believing that they can do so better if they fish in muddy waters. Therefore, they deliberately exploit and worsen the situation of the indigenous people, poison the proper relationships that should occur—and that this Bill is developing—all for their own miserable, fanatical purposes, which are far removed from the issue they pretend to serve.

I certainly support the Bill. I cannot see that anybody who is sincerely seeking the best for our indigenous people could possibly oppose it.

**Mr. B. WOOD** (Cook) (4.4 p.m.): The honourable member for Toowong concluded his speech with a lot of rot. For his own purposes he tried to claim that members of the Labor Party were associated with fanatics who wanted to exploit people and were trying to worsen the situation.

**Mr. Porter:** How many Communists do you find in those groups? They are sprinkled everywhere.

**Mr. B. WOOD:** The A.L.P. is interested in Aboriginal welfare.

**Mr. Miller:** How long have you been interested?

**Mr. B. WOOD:** I ask the honourable member for Toowong if he will finally, after all the years he has been in the Chamber, make a trip with the Minister through the Torres Strait and the northern part of Queensland. I do not think he has been there yet, although he has been in Parliament long enough to have made such a trip and demonstrated some small interest.

The Minister has introduced a completely new Bill and will today introduce a similar Bill covering Torres Strait Islanders. A year ago today, in the debate on the Estimates of this department, I called for the complete abolition of the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act because I believed that the Aborigines in this State disliked it and, indeed, found it totally unacceptable. I was not the only person to do so. Some of these so-called disreputable people called for its abolition. It is interesting to note that the Minister regarded my statement at that time as a negative approach. In addition to calling

for the abolition of the existing Act, I called for the introduction of a new Act. At that time I said—

“Naturally the major responsibility of a new Act should be the welfare of Aborigines and Islanders.”

I am pleased that the stand I took, and that taken by many people outside Parliament, has been vindicated by the Minister's action today. He described this as social welfare legislation. I said at that time that the desired changes could not come about by amendment. It is evident that the Minister, having looked into the Act and consulted with perhaps a limited number of people, found this to be the case.

I shall be interested to receive a copy of the Bill and see how far the changes go. I am prepared to say at the moment that it seems to be quite a radical review of the existing legislation and that a greater change is to take place than I thought would be made as I followed news announcements during the past year.

I hope that the Bill will incorporate certain policies. Generally, it should be recorded that Aborigines are equal to all other Australians and have the same rights, privileges and responsibilities. At the same time, the Government should recognise that particular help will be necessary in many respects to enable Aborigines to adopt this new role. Aborigines should have the right to choose their own modes of life. They should have the right to choose whether they will live on reserves, be assimilated, or remain nomadic.

I recall northern Press publicity to the effect that a very remote and small tribe in Western Australia was taken into some mission in the centre of that State. I do not say that that is necessarily the best thing that could have happened to them. They were living quite happily in their own environment. They followed a way of life that no other Australians, or for that matter few Aborigines, might choose. But if it was their desire to live in that manner, it was their right to do so. I admit that this did not happen in Queensland. However, I am concerned to know that those Aborigines' wishes were fully respected and that they were not unduly enticed to enter that mission.

The changes that the Minister foreshadowed at the end of his speech seem to indicate that many of the reforms that have been advocated in past years, including those needed to overcome what the Minister referred to as intellectual paternalism, are to come about. In particular, I am anxious to have Aborigines given responsibility for the conduct of their own affairs. They should be able to make decisions for themselves. It seems that that will be so under the Bill. The Aborigine himself will have to decide where he is going to live, what job he will take, what movements he will make, and what he will do with his own money.

**Mr. Thackeray:** And abide by the rules applicable to the white man.

**Mr. B. WOOD:** Yes, and accept them. His actions, of course, will depend to a large extent on his means. He cannot, for instance, move anywhere if he has not the money to do so. This is a problem that I shall refer to later. He must be able to assume this responsibility very soon, if not now, as he becomes self-supporting.

It seems that the arbitrary provisions in the existing legislation referring to forced removal of Aborigines are to be removed. That is good. All provisions under which Aborigines can be directed to undertake certain action should disappear. It seems that there will be no such provisions in the Bill now being introduced. Each Aborigine should manage his own property. Some may not do it successfully, but can it be said that every European can manage his own property successfully? Learning by trial and error can be a hard road, but we cannot continue to protect Aborigines in all things when they start to stand on their own feet.

There is great need for the Aborigine to regard himself as free. It is my experience, gained from moving round my electorate in which about a third of the people are Aborigines or Islanders, that they regard the word “free” as very important indeed. In fact, I have been involved in one or two fairly heated arguments that started after one Aborigine stood up and said, “I am free, and you are not.” Presumably he meant that he was beyond the control of the Act. The fact is that under the current legislation an Aborigine cannot live on a reserve, which is land set aside for the exclusive use of Aborigines, and still regard himself as free. He needs a certificate of entitlement to remain there. In other words, he has to have permission to live on his own land. I was therefore very pleased to hear the Minister say that he will have the right to move on or off a reserve at any time he desires—again, of course, depending on his financial ability to do so.

Aborigines should play an important role in administration on the reserves, and generally in regard to legislation on policy matters concerning Aborigines. I know that the Minister consulted with a representative group of councillors from Aboriginal reserves prior to introducing the Bill. He listened to their views, and I am sure that he heard some things that were of great assistance to him. But there were no representatives of the Aborigines who live in Brisbane, provincial towns, or fringe areas of towns, and he did not hear their points of view. Even those who have reached such a state of assimilation that they need no protection and are able to conduct their affairs—in many cases better than some Europeans—still have an identification with the interests of Aborigines, and therefore

have a right to be consulted. The Bill does not see into take into account the views of Aborigines who live away from reserves.

Unless I misunderstood the Minister's remarks, the provisions of the Bill relate only to people who live on Aboriginal reserves. I have some doubts about the wisdom of that, especially in view of the Minister's statement that it is a piece of social welfare legislation. Legislation of that type must not be confined to people who live on reserves.

I did not hear in the Minister's introductory remarks any reference to land rights. I believe that it is the right of the Aborigine, either as an individual or collectively with other members of his community, to own the land remaining in Aboriginal reserves. Recently I sent a letter to the Minister on behalf of an Islander who told me that he had bought the necessary materials and built his own house on a Torres Strait island. I do not know whether that house legally belongs to him. In another part of the State, if a person builds a house on someone else's property, the house does not belong to him. That is why I asked the Minister to consider the position. I believe that an Aborigine or a Torres Strait Islander has the right to own land, especially land that is regarded as a reserve for Aborigines or Torres Strait Islanders. It has been a very vexed question for some time, and I would be disappointed if provision for it is not made in the Bill. Aborigines, no less than anyone else, desire to own land, especially as they have had such a close affinity with it in their past.

**Mr. R. Jones:** Do you mean individual title?

**Mr. B. WOOD:** Individual title—one Aborigine to own a small parcel of land—or a community as a whole to own it.

**Dr. Crawford:** They are more interested in a community as a whole owning it. That is the major issue at the moment.

**Mr. B. WOOD:** That is the major issue throughout the nation.

Very important, too, is the question of wages. No Aborigine anywhere can play his full role in society, or even work towards playing such a role, if he does not receive adequate wages—or allowances, to use the departmental term for those who work on reserves. Let me take Lockhart as an example. No-one there could hope to move to the south, even if he desired to do so, under the present set-up. He does not earn enough money to enable him to move. He is held in the community there, pleasant as it may be, by his lack of means. The time must come when wages are increased. I know that they were increased in the recent Budget and that they will be increased again early next year. They must eventually be increased to the point where the wage paid to Aborigines is the same as that paid to anyone else in Australia doing similar work.

No Aborigine can accept full responsibility, and cannot be expected to accept it, until he receives such wages.

The Minister said that this is a social welfare Bill. As I said earlier, I hope it is not for the benefit only of the residents of reserves. Although the conditions on reserves could be improved in many ways, they are still infinitely better than the conditions in some of the fringe communities, and certainly better than those under which some Aborigines live in this city. If my interpretation is correct, we should not exclude any groups of Aborigines. We should not separate those who live on reserves from those who live off reserves, because in many instances those who live off reserves need treatment far more urgently than those who live on reserves.

The basis of this social welfare legislation should be research and statistics. I have said that before in the Chamber. We do not have enough detailed knowledge of some of the problems. On other occasions I have asked for statistics, particularly on education, but they have been refused. My brother, the honourable member for Toowoomba East, has asked for health statistics, but he, too, has been refused. We have been told in reply to our questions that the Government does not discriminate on racial grounds. That is fine, and I have no argument about it, but I refer to what the late Hon. J. C. A. Pizzey said when the previous Bill was being debated. He said, "We are discriminating in favour of Aborigines." Of course we discriminate.

The Minister controls the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs—a whole department set up for one specific purpose. The previous Act even defined categories of Aborigines and categories of Islanders. Of course, a distinction is made, and there is no reason why there should not be. There is nothing distasteful at all in recognising those distinctions. Until we have much more detailed knowledge than we have at the moment, we cannot really attack the problem and help these people as much as we desire.

Repeatedly I have made reference to the education of these people. The desired results are not being achieved. The Minister referred to the Commonwealth grant of slightly in excess of \$500 a student. I have very grave reservations about the wisdom of that grant, and I do not mind saying so. That money is provided to keep Aboriginal children at school. That is fine, but there is no concern about what happens to those children in the school. In any case it is administered rather too severely and without sufficient flexibility.

**Mr. McKechnie:** You would need a better pupil-teacher ratio, too.

**Mr. B. WOOD:** Yes.

There is no point in providing all that money unless the desired results are being obtained. From my experience on examinations I have made, the desired results are

not being attained. We are providing \$500 a student, but I would much rather see that money spent in the schools, or put towards teacher education or research. I am quite prepared to admit that, too.

The same argument applies to health. Over a period of five years my brother has tried to get statistics on Aboriginal child health. Time and time again he has been told, "We don't discriminate. Those figures are not available." Today the Minister finally vindicated the demands of the honourable member for Toowoomba East by referring to the work of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research.

**Mr. Bennett:** It is scandalous. He should have said that over all these years.

**Mr. B. WOOD:** That is right. I have no doubt that that institute is working in co-operation with the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, but it is still independent of it. As the honourable member for Toowoomba East has said repeatedly, the Minister for Health must take a much greater interest in obtaining statistics so that the problem can be thoroughly understood and properly attacked.

I had listed a number of fields in which I should like to see research carried out to ensure that any social welfare legislation is effective, but I do not have the time to go through them in detail.

(Time expired.)

**Dr. CRAWFORD** (Wavell) (4.24 p.m.): When we engage in this debate we bring ourselves into a situation where we can examine in detail a problem which, over the years, has been either ignored or dealt with in such a manner that the indigenous peoples of our land have been classed and treated as second-rate citizens.

I believe that the legislation that this measure is to replace was brought into the Statute Book in good faith, but there is no doubt that that legislation, and similar legislation in other States, has set up a repressive organisation with so much of a paternalistic approach that as a result that word itself has fallen into disrepute. Unfortunately, when dealing with any Aboriginal group of citizens through Government, or church, or from an educational angle, it is difficult to avoid an attitude that brings about the paternalistic, so-called solution.

I do not doubt that, with all the good will in the world, over the years this very attitude has, in effect, reacted to the detriment of any real development in our indigenous people. It has led, as all honourable members are aware, to the clamour during recent years for the freedom to which the honourable member for Cook referred.

I, too, have had many conversations with Islanders and Aborigines in which this word "freedom" was reiterated and looked to as the ultimate goal at which they must aim.

Therefore, we have two alternatives: The first is to retain the status quo; the second is to remove all restrictions from our legislation and that of the Commonwealth and to say to the Aborigines, "All right. We will make you citizens of equal status, without any protection whatever, equal to white citizens throughout Australia, and see how you manage."

I do not believe, as has been pointed out today, that either of those alternatives is tenable in 1971. I believe that this current Bill is the first step towards a real solution of the problem that has plagued this land since the first white settlers arrived.

If we allow the tearing up of Acts and the complete assimilation of the native peoples into our society, it will not be to their advantage; if we allow the present situation to continue we can only look forward to exactly the same situation continuing in a process where, from their angle, no real advancement to nationhood really occurs.

The dictatorial attitudes that are complained about by various groups of our indigenous people are naturally an end result of the type of legislation under which they have been restricted, and it is necessary that, progressively, we should aid them to gain the freedom which they value so much. I believe that the Bill will take the necessary first steps towards this end.

As far as movement to and from reserves is concerned, I was pleased to hear the Minister's remarks because this again has been a contentious issue. It is also important for us to realise that however well restriction on the entry to and the departure from reserves is worded in an Act, in practice it never really works out in the way intended.

Again, financial control of Aborigines' whole living and being has, no doubt, been administered as well as imperfect human beings can administer anything, but it has meant that situations have arisen where the person whose finances were being controlled has received less than justice. As far as job opportunities are concerned there are, in effect, after many years of quite painstaking attempts to improve them, very few real job opportunities for the average Aborigine in our State.

Even in Weipa, where all the male Aborigines are employed by the alumina company, in spite of their having normal jobs, as have the local white men, they are not able to become full members of the community.

One very bad aspect of previous legislation has been its tendency to remove a native person from a reserve and leave him on his own in some other community simply because he is regarded as a trouble-maker. No doubt one can understand how this occurred, but it is, nevertheless, to be deplored. I trust that the Bill will remove the old rules that apply to the movement of Aborigines to and from reserves.

**Mr. Aikens:** What will you do with the trouble-maker?

**Dr. CRAWFORD:** It is necessary in any society to have rules and regulations, and the treatment of an Aboriginal trouble-maker should be no different from that of a trouble-maker in our own community. He has to abide by the laws of the land. I do not see any difference between a trouble-maker on an Aboriginal reserve and one in a factory or at a university.

**Mr. Aikens:** What an analogy!

**Dr. CRAWFORD:** What I have said is true. One thing that has distressed me over the years is the difficulty, from both health and education angles, of steering our Aboriginal children into correct education streams and ensuring that their health needs are properly attended to. On previous occasions I have referred to surveys undertaken in various parts of Australia by my profession. I well remember the shock I received when I read that a survey that was conducted among Aboriginal children in the northern part of South Australia in 1969 found that the health of those children at that time was equivalent to that of white children in 1915. This fact must be faced up to squarely.

The reason for this is twofold. First of all, in spite of efforts by Governments, churches and others, the lack of education is such that the average Aboriginal parents are not able to feed their children correctly. By the time the children are in their second year, at least a third of them are suffering from malnutrition.

It is extraordinarily difficult to work out a satisfactory solution to this problem. The only real solution will be found by imbuing the parents with the necessary factual knowledge so that they can cope with the feeding of their children. In the meantime, we must provide food, vitamins and other necessities for them; it is no use waiting until the children are five to six years of age. If we wish to have a healthy community of children from Aboriginal stock, we must tackle the problem while they are babies; there is no value whatever in waiting. This contention has been proved over and over again by medical surveys. We do not need, either in this or in any other State, to undertake more medical surveys or safaris.

Plans are in hand to establish a new child-care centre in Alice Springs to improve the health of Aboriginal children. It is expected to be in operation in the very near future. The plans were recently announced by the Commonwealth Minister for Health, Senator Sir Kenneth Anderson, who said it would provide specialised facilities for the convalescence, nutritional improvement and rehabilitation of Aboriginal children, as well as training for Aboriginal mothers in child care. In my view, that is the crux of the whole situation.

The centre I speak of is to be established in a large motel that is being purchased from Ansett Industries and is to be converted for its new use at an estimated cost of \$275,000. It is within half a mile of the Alice Springs hospital, and will be staffed and conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Health as an annexe to the hospital. It will be converted to provide two wards with accommodation for 36 children. It will have 16 rooms, each providing accommodation for a mother with one or two children. This is the modern concept of child care, particularly the care of small children and babies, under which the mother rooms with the child and is therefore able to provide continually the tender, loving care that a mother should normally give her child.

The new institution in Alice Springs will also provide accommodation for a staff of trained nurses, nursing aides and hospital assistants. In addition, a staff of 15 rural-health sisters, who are already working in the fields of health education, nutrition and hygiene among Aborigines, will be installed in the Alice Springs region and will be accommodated at this centre.

Sir Kenneth Anderson said that the establishment of the centre was being undertaken as a matter of urgency to improve the health facilities available for the treatment and care of Aboriginal children in the southern part of the Northern Territory. This is the area from which the sample of the health of the Aboriginal children that I mentioned before was taken. Sir Kenneth said that the children's section at the Alice Springs hospital was severely overcrowded at present—I wonder how often we have heard that statement in recent months—mainly because of the attention now being diverted to the treatment of Aboriginal children.

The physical overcrowding is causing great difficulty in the treatment of all acutely ill children, and cross-infection is present in the wards. Honourable members are probably interested in the fact that these children die from diseases that are contagious, particularly respiratory and gastro-intestinal diseases. This area is making a real effort to implement radical reforms that can cope with the prevention of cross-infection. That, again, is where the main basis of attack lies in the prevention of illness.

The establishment of a child-care centre as delineated will enable many children to be removed from the hospital as soon as they are over the acute phase of their illness, but at the stage where they require convalescent care and special nutritional attention before returning to their homes. This brings us again to the concept in modern medicine of half-way houses between the acute-illness hospital and discharge back to the community. This applies everywhere—in psychiatry, child health and many other spheres. I wish that I could manage to persuade those responsible for government

that this half-way house is not something located half way between Brisbane and Redcliffe.

The centre at Alice Springs will allow the acute-care facilities of the hospital to be used to greater efficiency. It will reduce the risk of cross-infection between acutely ill children and those in the convalescent stage, and will enable the whole programme of health care for Aboriginal children to be drastically upgraded.

At present, many of the Aboriginal children in the area in question who do not need intensive medical care are being cared for in the hospitals at Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. They have recovered from the acute stage of their illness, but the medical staff do not feel that they can be discharged to their home environment. I have already mentioned the reasons for this lack of faith on the part of the medical staff. The specialised facilities at the new child-care centre will not only help solve crowding at the hospitals, but will also present a significant step forward in preventive medical help.

This new Queensland legislation will probably become, from a practical angle, a compromise between the optimal and the maximal freedom for all coloured people, I believe that the institution of elected councils in the local areas is vitally important. I also believe that we need a central elected council to co-ordinate the actions of the local councils under a system that approaches the idea of a parliamentary system, where there is a further Government agency over and above the local authorities.

It would be interesting to hear, if this comes about, how many Government nominees would be appointed to a central Aboriginal council. The number should be kept at a minimum. I have told people who have lobbied me in this respect that it is no use, at this time, their attempting to have a council set up with no Government nominees on it because, after all, the Government must accept responsibility for how funds are spent.

A fairly large amount of Government funds should be given to the various councils so that they can make their own decisions as to how to spend them. I suggest that 40 to 60 per cent of the amount allocated from the over-all budget of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs should be given to the councils to see how well they can manage their affairs by spending it wisely.

We must allow individual Aborigines and Islanders, as soon as possible, to make major financial decisions for themselves. We could well use trustee companies, which are located throughout the State, as obligatory extra-financial adjudicators in this matter. It is probable that it would not be wise to write the power of veto into either the Act or the regulations. However, if an individual Aborigine or Islander wishes to spend a large sum of money, either his Aboriginal council or the trustee company, after attempting to

persuade him that he is not making a wise move, should have some authority to veto in an emergency or an unusual situation.

I do not believe that this is yet the time to consider giving tribal lands back to Aborigines. We should allow Aborigines in our community to prove to themselves, over the next two to five years, that they can manage their own affairs. That would be the correct time to tell them we will also give them some land to manage. If this move can be taken along in that series of steps, we will accomplish something worth while.

Legal aid should be available and should be brought into the fabric of the trustee companies and over-all general supervision, preferably without a right of veto, if that is practical from the administrative angle.

**Mr. MELLOY** (Nudgee) (4.44 p.m.): It would appear that this Bill will make some radical changes in the treatment and control of our Aborigines. In view of its importance, I hope that the Minister will not rush the second reading through Parliament. On previous occasions we have been given a month to study a Bill such as this one, and we should be given at least a couple of weeks to make a close study of this Bill. The Minister said it is transitory in nature. It will lay down the pattern of our attitude to Aborigines for the next five years, and it appears to me, will make radical changes more in administration and procedure than in policy. I understand, from what the Minister said, that the Bill does not make it clear whether the policy of the Government is integration, assimilation, isolation or segregation. Apparently the Government is still adhering to a policy of segregation for the Aboriginal people. I think that as long as Aborigines are segregated, they will continue to have social and economic problems. I do not think that their segregation in reserves and communities will do them any good. I think that the aim should not be so much to improve conditions in Aboriginal communities, as to move Aborigines from such places into the general community. I do not think that the problem will be solved by maintaining Aboriginal settlements and communities.

I do not know if the policy of the Government is to continue with settlements of this type and develop them further, or phase them out. There has to be a definite policy adopted, because two sets of communities cannot be allowed to develop in this State. I know that Aborigines place great store on their traditions and history, but they are living in a modern and changing world and I am not sure that they can continue to preserve those traditions. I think the stage will be reached when they will have to become part of the general Australian community. The policy of the Government seems to be to preserve Aboriginal communities as havens for those who choose to go out into society, and then return to a community. I do not think that that is in



the interests of Aborigines themselves. They have to move into society generally, and become part of it.

Years ago, Aborigines were brought from their nomadic state to communities, because the feeling at that stage was that the Aboriginal race would gradually fade out, and it should be allowed to do so in comfort. Today, with the help of modern medical science, the trend has been reversed. Despite a death rate that has been reported by the Institute of Medical Research as very high, the Aboriginal population is increasing. It therefore has to be recognised that Aborigines cannot be maintained in communities pending the disappearance of their race. They are becoming part of the Australian population, and they cannot be segregated. After all, they are more genuine Australians than Europeans are.

In order to maintain Aboriginal communities and the Aboriginal race, many people have suggested the establishment of industries in, or adjacent to, reserves and communities. I do not think that that can be done. No-one has been able to tell me what type of industries could be established in the Gulf country of Queensland, and the Cape York Peninsula area in particular. Those areas are too remote from markets, and the source of supply of components required for industrial production. Freight would be a problem, and I do not think it would be economic to establish secondary industries on or near Aboriginal reserves or communities.

It has been suggested that pastoral industries should be established for the Aborigines in these areas. What will happen to the young boys and girls who receive a secondary education? Where will girls who are taught to be secretaries and typists find positions in pastoral industries? Such a scheme would not work. It comes back to the question of integration—not so much assimilation as integration—and of their becoming part of the general community.

I was asked whether I would tolerate an Aboriginal family living next door to me. My answer, of course, was that I would tolerate it to the same degree as I would tolerate any white family. If I had a white family living next door to me who were drunkards, I would object to them as much as I would object to a family of any other race. If I had an Aboriginal family living next door to me that did not conform to the general standard of the community, or to the standard of living that the community endeavours to give them, my objection would not be any greater than it would be to a white family of a similar type. My objection would be based on behaviour, not on colour. If an Aboriginal family comes into a white community, and its behaviour is similar to that of any other family in that community, it is entitled to the same degree of tolerance as a white family. Good or bad, tolerant

or intolerant, Aboriginal families should be treated as white families of a similar type are treated.

I wish now to say a few words about health. The report by Dr. Best of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research on Aboriginal communities is very alarming. In a statement that he made on Thursday, 11 November, the Minister for Health said that the State Health Department had undertaken a campaign to improve health and hygiene at Aboriginal settlements. He said that films and posters dealing with health matters were now available at communities with a predominantly Aboriginal population. What a lot of hogwash! Let me relate that to the report of Dr. Best.

She said that the commonest recorded causes of death of infants and children at Mitchell River were pneumonia, malnutrition and gastro-enteritis, and that at Edward River the main causes were prematurity, malnutrition and gastro-enteritis. She said also that examination of the children at the two settlements this year revealed a high prevalence of these conditions. At Mitchell River, 17 per cent of children had active ear infections, 14 per cent had moderate nasal-sinus infections and 14 per cent had moderate dental decay. At Edward River, 9 per cent had ear infections, 25 per cent had nasal-sinus infections, and 17 per cent had dental decay. Thirty-eight per cent of children at Mitchell River and 42 per cent at Edward River required treatment for anaemia. And the Minister for Health says that he is going to distribute films and posters to the people of these communities!

The majority of the people living there will not be able to read the posters, although some will. Some will be too young to read them; others in the older generation could not care less. They have known only one way of life for many years. Unless people are sent to these communities to ensure that satisfactory health conditions are established and maintained, sending films and posters for the benefit of the people living there will be useless. One cannot blame the people themselves. They have not yet achieved the standard of education necessary for assimilation of advice of that nature. That is one of the problems.

Part of the answer is the provision of a greatly expanded health service in those communities. It is one aspect of the Aboriginal problem that must receive great consideration. What is required can only be done by expert teams of medical men and the provision of substantial hospital services. It is no use saying, "We cannot afford to do this or that." If we accept responsibility for these people, we have to do it. It is no use bringing down a Bill to improve their conditions if we are not prepared to upgrade the standard of health services that are essential to effect any improvement in Aboriginal settlements.

What are we going to do with the Aboriginal settlements? Are we going to maintain and expand them, or are we going to gradually close them down and phase them out? The Government has to determine its policy on that. The Minister said, "We have to take into account what the people want." But that is very difficult to ascertain. A few years ago when I was on a trip with the then Minister—the Director of Native Affairs will remember this—I spoke to a number of Aborigines, but I found it very hard to get any clear indication of what they wanted to do. I think they have ideas on what they want to do, but are not sufficiently advanced to pluck up the courage to do it. They want the security of the settlements behind them, but at the same time they want to move out. The people I spoke to were concerned not so much for themselves, but for their children. Great improvements have been made in the education of the children, but more is required. Incidentally, single school-teachers should not be sent into Aboriginal communities. Only married teachers should be sent to the settlements because it is not fair to young single fellows to send them there.

The Aborigines can be encouraged to form opinions by educating them. They must be made fully aware of conditions outside the settlements. I do not blame those who, having left the settlements for a time, crawl back with their tails between their legs, as it were, knowing they will be secure. We have to overcome their fear of the white community. Not only do we have to educate the Aborigines to live in the white community, but we have to educate the whites to accept them into their community. The whites must be educated to realise that Aboriginal citizens, if treated properly, can be just as good as any member of the white community, and, in many cases, better. After all, there are some poor citizens in the white community.

As I say, many Aborigines are fearful of the white community and life outside the settlements. They lack the necessary spirit to make the move into the white community. At the same time, there are many white people who suffer similar fears. We have to educate the Aborigines to a realisation that, if they adjust to the white community as a whole, they can build a life for themselves and be accepted in that community. That has to be the answer. Unless we do that we will have problems with two races. The tendency is to look upon those people as a race apart, which leads to trouble. Very smartly we have to get them into the white community and have, as it were, an amalgamation of white and black. That is the only logical solution to any racial problems we have. I still fear that there is an element of racism in the attitude of this Government towards Aborigines. There is still a tendency to segregate them and to treat them as a race apart—to keep them within the confines of the settlements and

communities for fear of the problems they may create if this is not done. I think this is something that has to be faced up to.

I turn now to the health of Aborigines and I should like to refer to the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the attention it provides for Aboriginal people. Last year, 1970-1971, the Royal Flying Doctor Service treated a total of 24,290 patients in Queensland. Of this number, 12,360, or more than 50 per cent, were Aborigines, and it cost the Department of Native Affairs not one cent because it is an entirely free service provided by the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

I understand that the Royal Flying Doctor Service has approached the Department of Native Affairs for a grant of approximately \$40,000. Although this may be impinging on the Estimates of the Health Department, I want to raise it here because it may be of interest in this debate. This sum will be needed and I think the department has to give very serious consideration to the matter.

In the Torres Strait Islands where accessibility to patients is not the best—it is principally by boat—the Royal Flying Doctor Service proposes to establish a helicopter service. This will be a very expensive undertaking and I think it is a matter on which both the Health Department and the Department of Native Affairs should co-operate on a financial basis. These departments should help to provide this service, which will mean so much to these people. Lives may be saved by the use of a helicopter, which can land on any island. No other aerial service is available where there are no landing facilities.

**Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt:** There are airstrips on two islands.

**Mr. MELLOY:** That is right, but not many could have an airstrip. However, with a helicopter the doctor could land where he wished and pick up a patient at any time, probably other than at night-time. That is why a helicopter service is most essential and important to the health of these people. I conclude by appealing to the Minister, as I know he has been appealed to by the Royal Flying Doctor Service, to provide a grant or some form of assistance for this facility.

**Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt:** The Health Department is having a look at that at the moment.

**Mr. MELLOY:** It will need to do more than that. It has been looking at things for the last 13 years, and we are still in the position we were in 13 years ago.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South) (5.4 p.m.): The problems of the Aborigines will never be solved by exhibitions of sentimental rhetoric such as we have just listened to from the honourable member for Nudgee, sincere and all as I know he is. As a matter

of fact, he has not the faintest idea of what is happening to the Aborigines, or what has been happening to them over the last 12 to 14 years.

It is true that in the last 50 or so years there has been tremendous progress towards development among Aborigines. I said on a previous occasion that when I was a boy, no Aborigine was allowed into a town at night-time. He could come into the town at daylight, but he had to be out by night-fall. His sole function in the community was to carry around a lot of clothes props, with the ladies—the “gins”, as we called them—and the dogs and piccaninnies behind him, but they all had to be out of town by nightfall. Since then, we have progressed a long way towards absorbing Aborigines into the community. Over the past 12 years, since this Government has been in office, a tremendous amount has been achieved. Nevertheless, a lot more needs to be done. And I hope it will be done.

Without fear of contradiction, I claim that, in Queensland, the two people who have done the most to prevent the Aborigines from achieving what most Aborigines themselves desire are Senator Keffe and Pastor Brady. Not long ago they held a meeting in Townsville and gathered around them the riff-raff section of the Aborigines and publicly burnt the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act of 1965. Senator Keffe gloated, and was proud to have his photograph taken while he was doing it. Later, the photograph was published in the Press.

On this occasion, Senator Keffe and Pastor Brady had around them the scum of the Aboriginal community. One of them was a notorious liar, who had come to me seeking assistance. He told me a terrible story about the alleged burial of his little child on Palm Island. Because I was sympathetic towards him I fought his case and had the matter investigated, only to learn beyond any shadow of doubt that he was the most debased mongrel liar in this State—and that is saying something. Yet he was the type that Keffe and Brady gathered around them when they incited the Aborigines and tried to tell them that they are a race apart and have to be developed apart. All that Keffe and Brady want to do is establish apartheid in Queensland, with the dice loaded in favour of the Aborigines.

Recently an illustration of that occurred in Townsville. An aborigine broke into a house at night and bashed and twice raped an old lady aged 86 years, thereby making himself liable to imprisonment for life on both charges. He was later arrested for the crime, but the do-gooders in Townsville rallied round him and provided him with legal assistance. He was brought before the court and appeared for trial in the Supreme Court. Believe it or not, because of the influence of these do-gooders he was released by the judge on his own recognisance in the paltry sum of

\$250. And that for two crimes that carry a sentence of life imprisonment! The moment he was released he signed his name on the document, and then “went bush”. He later failed to appear before the Supreme Court. He will “stay bush” until the old lady dies, as she must eventually, and then he will return. The local do-gooders will give him the \$250 and take him back to court, so that, after paying that sum, he will walk away completely free. These do-gooders say, “That is the way to show the Aborigines we are on their side and against the whites who persecute and intimidate them.”

I know a great deal about Aborigines. I talk to them every day in Townsville. There are two types of Aborigine in that city—those who have not yet been absorbed into the white community, and have no desire to be absorbed, and those of whom we feel proud. I refer to the men who will set up their homes and rear their children. They live in modern homes with attractive surroundings. Of course, they face the biggest problem of all, posed by what we call the “settlement” type of Aborigine who walks around the town as a no-hoper, just like his counterparts in the white race.

Recently I was having morning tea in one of the large cafes in Townsville, and a well-dressed Aborigine who has a lovely wife and three or four kiddies came up and spoke to me. He is a credit to his race and the city of Townsville. I told him that this Bill was going to be introduced, and asked him for his views on it. He replied, “Tom, we have no time at all for the Keffes and the Bradys and all the others who want to put us on tribal lands and to take our clothes from us so that we will be made to wander around naked with a handful of nulla-nullas and spears, knocking over a goanna or a few 'roos. We do not want to go out there eating grubs and sending our wives out into the swamp in the cold hours of early morning looking for lily bulbs. We do not want to go backwards; we want to go ahead.”

The “nongs” at the university, of course, cannot be convinced of that. Recently they challenged me, and I “took them on”. I told them, “You are like 90 per cent of the members in the Queensland Parliament; you have never seen an Aborigine in his native habitat. You don't know how he lived in years gone by, and you don't know what he wants now. All you want to do is put him onto a reservation—not a Government reservation—and say, ‘This is your tribal land; go to hell in your own sweet way.’”

There are many fine Aboriginal families in Aitkenvale and I am sure that, equally, the honourable member for Townsville North has many in his electorate. At Aitkenvale we have what is called an Aboriginal holding centre to which all sorts of Aborigines go. They are free to come and go as they wish. We also have some very fine, well-tended homes with gardens, where Aborigines who have been absorbed in the community live with their

fine wives and children. Recently an Aboriginal woman came to me and said, "I am having trouble with some of the men from the holding centre. My husband goes to work and my children go to school. We lock the big gate and the little gate, but no sooner is my husband out of sight than they come along the footpath and sing out and try to open the gate."

This is at the bottom of all the trouble with Aborigines. The Aborigine who does not want to be absorbed—who does not want to be a decent citizen—walks up to the one who has been absorbed and is a decent citizen and says, "You my cousin, you know; me your cousin. Me come and live here. Me your cousin, you know." If we could only get that out of the Aboriginal vocabulary, half our problems would be solved.

This woman said to me, "Mr. Aikens, what am I going to do?" I said, "I was out at your place the other day. You have a double-barrelled gun. Load both barrels and tell them that if they try to interfere with the lock on either the big gate or the small gate you will shoot them, and that Mr. Aikens told you to do it." She did that, and that is the last she has seen of them.

I repeat that that is the trouble with the Aborigines today. Those who do not want to be absorbed—the blood brothers of Senator Keeffe and Pastor Brady and the "nongs" at the university—want to "bludge" and sponge on those who have been absorbed. They go around saying, "Me your cousin, you know. Me going to move in on you."

There is always some confusion in the use of the word "Aboriginal". We are told by the philologists that the word "Aboriginal" means one Aborigine, while "Aborigine" applies to the group. But what does it matter?—The "Hansard" writers will get it right.

The trouble with Aborigines is simply that, because of a century of brutality, oppression and condescension, most of them who are still on the settlements or are walking around and have not really settled themselves are at heart, afraid of the white man. It is not that they are unintelligent, but that they are timid, docile and reticent. When a white man, or a white woman, with all the good intention in the world—I do not know of anyone more highly intentioned than the honourable member for Nudgee—goes to them, they raise their guard and say to themselves, "This man is not my friend although he pretends to be."

We should not worry about those on the settlements. They will work out their own problems in their own way. What we need to do is to go to those off the settlements who are trying to rehabilitate themselves. We should first go to them in the shacks and the squalor in which some of them live; we should go among their children, who are dying of malnutrition and various other diseases, as Ruth Miller of Mt. Isa did

recently, and gain their confidence. The best way to do that is to train and educate Aboriginal men and women. I do not care where they are trained and educated, as long as they are kept away from the university. Let us train and educate them in the schools and the hospitals.

The main trouble today with Aborigines who are not on a settlement—of course, this is rife on the settlements themselves—is that they know nothing about diet and hygiene. They are being killed not by the ignorance they want to retain but by the ignorance they are not prepared to overcome because they are afraid of us, and are a little diffident towards those who want them to overcome it.

I suggest to the Minister that if this legislation does not contain a provision for the education and training of Aboriginal men and women by social workers and other people with whom they come in contact—such as doctors—it should. If we can get these people to go out and work among Aborigines, they will gain their confidence and convince them, as Ruth Miller did in Mt. Isa, that they are their friends. It may take months to do so, but once these people can convince them that they are their friends, they can start from the ground roots and teach them the elements of diet and personal and domestic hygiene, and also how necessary it is to get their illnesses and ailments treated at the outset. If we do that and convince the Aborigines that white people are prepared to help them, half our trouble is over.

One honourable member claimed that I knew nothing about Aborigines. In Townsville this year, the All Black football team—it comprises nearly all Aborigines, with a sprinkling of whites—went very close to winning the premiership in its grade, and it is proud of that fact. In addition, there are Aborigines in the other premier A-grade, B-grade, and junior teams. There is complete integration in Townsville of white and black. White men are prepared to accept the Aborigines, and the Aborigines are prepared to be accepted. It is a wonderful example of integration. There are no Senator Keeffes or Pastor Bradys there. These Aborigines do not run onto the field naked carrying nulla-nullas, spears and boomerangs, dragging a dead goanna behind them. They look, act and speak like white people. They are entitled to be treated as such, and they are treated as such. We are proud to have them as Australian citizens.

The council on Palm Island is doing, to the best of its ability, the job it can do. Over the past 12 years, Aborigines in Queensland have been given the right to vote, drink and walk off the settlement. However, they have not been given the right—I hope they never are—to walk back onto the settlement whenever they think they should. More methylated spirits can be found on Palm Island than in the store of

Burns Philp, Samuel Allen and Cummins & Campbell combined. I know it is a problem, but the council is dealing with it. It can send local people to Townsville whenever they want to go. It can give them the training and advice they need.

I repeat that all this integration of the Aborigines cannot be achieved in the short space of a few years. I doubt if the Aborigine will be completely absorbed in Queensland by the year 2500. At least we are moving towards that goal pretty quickly, and I am proud that we are.

What happens on Palm Island? These people become either nuisances or pests. They say, "I am going to the mainland. I will get a job." I do not want to embarrass the honourable member for Townsville North, but I have no doubt that he runs into them as much as I do. They come to Townsville from Palm Island and get jobs. They earn good money, and they spend it as quickly as they get it. They do not send any money back to their wives, children or parents. They let them starve. After five or six months, during which they have had five or six "benders", nobody will employ them. They then say, "I will go back to the island and 'bludge' on my wife and kids or my parents." The people on the island say, "You aren't coming back here. You were a big enough nuisance when you were here. Your wife and children are living on social service. They are doing well and are happy and contented. They are well fed and well clothed, the children are being educated, and they have a roof over their heads. You aren't coming back to the island to spoil all that." The moment that occurs, Senator Keeffe, Pastor Brady, or the Trades and Labor Council stages a 24-hour stoppage over this infringement of the rights of Aborigines who cannot return to Palm Island whenever they want to. They only want to go back to sponge on their wives and children or their parents.

It is true that there are drunks and no-hopers among the Aborigines in Townsville, although there are not very many of them. It is also true that there are drunks and no-hopers among the white people in Townsville. Anybody who walks around the Central Hotel corner any day will see white no-hopers and black no-hopers. The other night I went to the Theatre Royal to see a show by a company of which I was president. When the show was finished, I walked around the corner of the Central Hotel and I saw what I used to see as a child in the West. A big "boong" was standing there with a demure little Aboriginal girl no more than 14 or 15 years of age, with her head bowed down. The big Aborigine was arguing the point with a half-drunk sailor, saying, "No, two dollars not enough. Four dollars, or you can't go to the park with her." It would not be proper to judge all Aborigines by that standard; that is something that they learnt from the white man years ago. I can

remember in the back country that if anyone wanted an Aboriginal girl or woman, it was common for him to go to the man and conduct his business with him. That is a relic of the horrible state in which the Aborigine lived many years ago.

I shall have a good look at the Bill. If it takes the Aborigine only a few short steps along the road to complete emancipation and absorption with white people, I shall be happy. But, I say to other members of this Committee, do not think, as apparently the honourable member for Nudgee thinks, that all Aborigines are on reserves and stations. They are not.

**Mr. Melloy:** I didn't say that.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The honourable member said, "We must absorb them. We must bring them in and give them the same rights as white men." There are thousands of Aborigines in that category now.

**Mr. Melloy:** I know that.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Then why did the honourable member not make himself clearer? I do not doubt his sincerity for a moment. I know, of course, that among his mates he is known as "Bum steer" Jack, because he has published so many "bum steers" about hospitals. However, that does not matter. I have never doubted his sincerity.

**Mr. Hanson:** Where did you come in contact with Aborigines in their wild state?

**Mr. AIKENS:** I was almost born among them. I was reared among them. I went out and played and hunted with them. I was reared among the wildest Aboriginal tribe in Australia, the Myall Kalkadoons. And there is a man sitting in this Chamber—the Government Whip—who frequently went with me. The honourable member for Flinders and I have a better basic knowledge of Aborigines than any other two men in this Chamber. Other honourable members might have had superficial meetings with them. They might have met them, for instance, in the cane fields. They may know a couple of kanakas who were brought out by old Robert Burns. These fellows do not know a kanaka from an aborigine.

**Mr. F. P. Moore** interjected.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The honourable member for Mourilyan would not know a kanaka from an Aborigine. These people think that because they know some kanakas who were left here after the others went back to the South Seas, they know all about Aborigines.

Let us forget about the past; let us remember only that during the last century Aborigines have received frightful treatment from white people. Let us confine ourselves to the clear, inescapable fact that today Aborigines are much further advanced than they were 10 years ago, which is something we can all be proud of.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. BALDWIN** (Logan) (5.24 p.m.): It was not my intention to enter the debate till I heard the introduction of this very important Bill being so blatantly used for personal and anti-Labor propaganda. Even though a member may claim that he has had years of experience of personal contact with those whom the Bill purports to assist, that is no substitute for common sense and rational thinking, based upon an appreciation of history and economic growth, about the situation facing Aborigines in this State today.

The year 1967 saw an unprecedented occurrence in this country. I refer to the referendum, carried by an overwhelming majority of the people of the Commonwealth, that gave to the Federal Government sweeping powers to move in and assist Aborigines in many ways. The powers given to the Commonwealth override those of the States.

Somewhere in the tragic history of misdirection, good intention, and wasted effort and money, there must be just one or two instances in this State in which there has been no question of absorption, integration or assimilation. Surely there must be one instance in which, because of some peculiar change in the environment of the people concerned, Aborigines and their descendants and other coloured people are on an equal footing, both socially and economically, with white people.

In fact, one finds instances in which that is happening close to Brisbane. On North Stradbroke Island, in the Logan electorate, there is an instance that would reward close scrutiny by any legislators or their advisers, no matter how well-intentioned they are or how complete their theoretical knowledge may be. I know that it is not the only instance, but I shall deal only with it because I assured the Committee that I would be brief.

North Stradbroke was an island to which Aborigines and other unwanted people—I include the old people at Dunwich—were relegated. It was a case of “out of sight, out of mind”. Then something queer happened. Dense black mineral sand was discovered, and the whole character of settlement on the island changed. The men at Dunwich were too old to work, and the only labour-force on the island was the outcast coloured people and their descendants and several outcast white people. As the economy of North Stradbroke Island was built up by the world demand for mineral sands, more white people came to the island. For four or five years these new white residents were regarded as interlopers. The usual situation was reversed. Anyone looking at it from the outside and from a theoretical point of view similar to that taken by me as a result of the knowledge I have gained of Aborigines in the 45 years that I have been able to think about them—since I was a boy of five—would regard what happened on North Stradbroke as integration of white people. In fact, on North Stradbroke Island

there is no integration, assimilation, rejection, or ejection. That tended to be the situation even in the fishing industry on the island, but I shall have more to say about that later.

The establishment on North Stradbroke Island of an industry suited to the peculiar attributes of the people, both white and black, who knew the country well resulted in people of all colours living together in harmony. Admittedly, small groups are still on the “outer”, but about 90 per cent of the people live there in harmony and have equal social status. An attempt by the Government or anyone else to establish a false basis of integration or assimilation on North Stradbroke Island would be as catastrophic as an attempt by some so-called “do-gooders” to establish tribal councils there and create something that has never been there.

I say that, Mr. Lickiss, for a definite purpose. One can no longer speak of assimilation and integration in their old connotations, because the whole face of the problem changed with the introduction of the Federal Act in 1968. The wealth and resources of the Commonwealth are now being used to inject Aborigines, no matter what their stage of social evolution, technology, or education, no matter what their standards of hygiene or anything else, into the white society. That had its beginning in a situation in the Northern Territory, at Wave Hill and Wattie Creek, that still faces us today.

We can go further back in history, and I refer to one of those “terrible” books on the Senior list that has been so shamefully black-guarded—“Coonardoo”, written by world-famous Australian literary artist, Katherine Susannah Pritchard. That book contains a lesson for all the pruders and “locked-up” white people who talk in terms of integration and assimilation. It is a book of great literary merit. It covers a situation where the white man is the interloper and has to be integrated into the black man's society of the Far North-west. It shows how he rather than the black man has to educate himself to the other's ways. That world-famous story will live longer than all the prudish, misconceived ravings about the harm we are doing to Australian children by including it on the Senior list.

I hope that I will not see the words “integration” or “assimilation” in the Bill. I also hope that I will see nothing that smacks of the injection of the black man into the white man's society. That could breed racial trouble of another kind. I do not want to see Aborigines, without proper preparation, placed in houses the like of which many white families do not have. I do not want to see anything in the Bill to suggest that Aboriginal children will be sent to schools where they will have to compete with others at a level beyond many white children.

Down in Woodridge we see the cast-offs of the city blacks. Believe me, that category is getting pretty low. Honourable members

have heard what has been said about the city's dark-skinned people. Imagine what their cast-offs are like! No-one would want to live with them unless he wished to die young. To talk about bringing them back into the society that has rejected them is just utter rubbish.

If my information is correct, something like 3,000 Torres Strait and Pacific Islanders have been trained to fish, at great cost to the taxpayers. The other day the Minister for Primary Industries said that the fishing industry was beyond the point where it could be built up into a viable, competitive industry on an international basis. Those things do not link up. Are there too many people on those islands? I have heard that said in this Chamber. Improved medical services and better food and clothing—some due to their own efforts but certainly a lot at the expense of the taxpayers—have resulted in a population explosion. The islands will no longer maintain the population.

Is the Minister thinking in the same terms as his crazy Canberra cousins? Is he going to inject the Aborigines into our society on boosted-up businesses and good houses that they will not retain very long because the Government has failed to do the basic things? Is this legislation aimed in that direction? If so, then the Minister is sowing the nucleus of a whirlwind. I am talking about things I know in general, things I have picked up over a long period of time. Do not let anyone say that I do not know what I am talking about, because I was born on the Atherton Tableland and the first black people I ever saw were escapees from a reserve, walking around in their birthday suits. I never knew one of them to harm a white child or any white person. They were kindly people. They knew the bush backwards. When a white child became lost, they found him and returned him. The only fear of them up there was that these black people might come in and perhaps do some harm, the major harm sown in people's minds being that they might ask for their land back.

We have had problems of rejection and segregation, and the subsequent problems of integration and assimilation, coming one after another over the years. Our first problem was to reject these people and to keep them there, to create reserves on worthless desert and swamp that we never thought would be of any use to us. But as soon as we found some minerals there, we took the land back. Of course, it was cheap to do that. It was too dear to put soldiers and police up there, so we sent in church missionaries, maintained by dipping into the people's pockets, with a bit of largesse from the Government. They looked after them, kept them on the reserves and educated them in some form or other. The main thing was that they kept them there, and they were kept there on all kinds of wierd arguments such as the one that while they were there they would "tip" us off if an invasion force

came. I have heard such malarky as that, and it is written in some of our history books. That is how stupid it is.

Now we are faced with Wattie Creek, over-population, and Groote Eylandt. We are faced with an entirely new problem and unfortunately the Government is going to tackle it in the same uninformed, unsympathetic, dollar-based way, as it has always been tackled. I fear the Government is going to follow its Canberra counterparts and start a policy of injection. They are going to inject the black people and their problems back into white society. The law says so. The law says now that none of this money will be given for housing unless a certain proportion of it is spent in establishing houses for these people in cities and provincial towns. Why not establish some of them for those who know sheep and cattle on some of the lands in the West that are being sold to foreign countries? Why not try that instead of wasting money in the way mentioned above? Why not give them a chance to choose? How much element of choice will there be in this legislation? Every member on both sides of this Chamber and the people in the street will be looking at this matter much more sympathetically than it was ever looked at before, but we will be looking for the note of sympathy and understanding, with a view to education and help in all ways—from the first lesson, "one and one make two" up to how to live in a house, how to become unionists, how to work with white men—but with no talk of assimilation or of teaching the white man how to understand the black. This matter has to be started on both sides of the front, not just the dark side.

**Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT** (Mackenzie—Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs) (5.39 p.m.), in reply: Generally speaking, the Bill has been well received. I will certainly have some comments to make later, but at this stage all I have to say is that I do not go along with the last speaker.

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

#### FIRST READING

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

### TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS BILL

#### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Lickiss, Mt. Coot-tha, in the chair)

**Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT** (Mackenzie—Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs) (5.42 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to provide for the conduct of reserves for Torres Strait Islanders and for the admission thereto of persons who wish to reside there; for the grant of assistance to Torres Strait Islanders who seek it; and for related purposes."

Much of what I have said in my introduction of the Aborigines Bill applies equally to Torres Strait Islander citizens.

Those services within the scope of the department are available to each group and are sought by each. There are, however, differing needs that are implied by differences in culture and environment requiring, of their own choice, separate legislation to ensure that they are met.

The islands of the Torres Strait and their people are Queenslanders. They are proud of their race and equally proud of their nationality. It is extremely important that honourable members are aware of this fact and know something of the history of this portion of our State. The Torres Strait people possess a culture that is very much their own. Although they were never a numerous people, this does not detract from the value of their way of life or from their dignity as human beings with definite rights and privileges protected by their birthright as Australian citizens. These citizens are not Aboriginal Australians, nor are they Papuans; they are Torres Strait Islanders and Australians, and have lived for countless generations on the islands of the Torres Strait, which are portion of this State.

There is a close link between the island people and their home; no less close than that which exists between any other Australian and his birth-place. They have made their own contribution to Queensland in many fields of work and they have traditionally been the mainstay of the pearling and culture-pearl industry at many skilled levels.

After Torres passed through the strait in 1606 there was only spasmodic contact with representatives of races other than those in the immediate area of the strait until 1871, when Samoan members of the London Missionary Society landed at Darnley Island. This year is the centenary of that occasion, and on 1 July 1971 representatives of the churches, Government, industry and, indeed, of organisations and private individuals throughout the country, met at Darnley Island to join with Torres Strait Queenslanders in celebrating not only 100 years of Christian activity but a century of what has been described as remarkable progress.

Legislation relating to the island people dates from 1881, but in 1939 major impetus was given to the Torres Strait by the introduction of the Torres Strait Islanders Act, which provided virtual self-determination through local government function. This responsibility was increased even further by the 1965 legislation, which particularly gave further administrative function to the group representatives who are elected by the councillors of each of the three island groups into which the Torres Strait Islands are divided.

In addition to this, the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act of 1965 established yet another duty of local government administration by extending to island councils the right to levy a rate and therefore make funds available for general community benefit. The Island Industries Board also was extended to include as board members the three island representatives. As a result of this, the island people have had the opportunity to participate directly in the management and direction of their co-operative business enterprise.

Almost all the Islander teachers who staff the primary schools of the Torres Strait have completed one year of training at the Kedron Park Teachers' College. Indeed, a group of men and women from the Strait are now at Kedron Park undertaking the second year of this training programme. Next year will see scholarships granted to a further group for the second year of the course. In addition to this, one Torres Strait Islander teacher, who has spent time at the University of Queensland increasing his professional competence, has been appointed in a supervisory role to the Torres Strait schools.

Pre-school centres have now been established on all populated islands and are staffed by Islanders who have received their training at the Kindercraft Association's City Hall establishment in Brisbane.

Seminars for the island teachers have been held regularly on Thursday Island each year, and during these periods the teachers are introduced to any revised teaching techniques, the use of newly introduced aids and other material that would add to their professional competence.

With the co-operation of personnel from the Kindercraft Association and the Director of Pre-school Education appointed to the staff of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs early this year, a seminar for pre-school teachers was convened at Thursday Island in January 1971. This was the inaugural seminar and received an enthusiastic response not only from the teachers, but also from Islander and European parents who live on Thursday Island. These parents gave valuable assistance to those taking part in the seminar by providing youngsters for a demonstration kindergarten.

Honourable members will note that considerable effort and research have gone into advancing education at both the pre-school and primary school levels in the outer islands of the strait. The secondary school on Thursday Island has been developed and a start has been made on a residential secondary-school complex at Bamaga.



Since the first and continuing contact with European-Australian society, island people have made immense gains in their development, and at the same time, have preserved much of the traditional culture of the area. They have been able to achieve with relative ease a high degree of self-government and it is the purpose of this Bill to increase and accelerate the progress they have already made. They are not a numerous group within the broad society of this State, but, like any other group of Queensland people, they deserve the support and encouragement that is their right.

The proposed Bill has been developed consistent with the wishes of the Torres Strait Islanders' Advisory Council, who have made very clear to me that the wishes of the Torres Strait people necessitate separate legislation, and, of course, I am happy to meet their needs. The earlier legislation is being repealed by the Aborigines Bill. It is now necessary for legislation to provide for the Torres Strait people and, of course, to increase again the scope of welfare programmes which will benefit all Torres Strait Islanders throughout the State, particularly those who, of choice, continue to inhabit the islands.

As honourable members are aware, for some years, group representatives have functioned and administratively these representatives have formed themselves into an Advisory Council. It is proposed to formally establish this council by the Bill, thus ensuring the ready availability of a consultative body which can provide necessary advice and a means of appropriate representative consultation. This group of councillors is in very close contact with its own people and I have drawn on its ideas, hopes and aspirations in the development of the Bill now under consideration.

It is intended that the legislation be transitory in nature, terminating within five years, unless extended as prescribed. Numbers of changes have been effected, some being significant by the fact that they do not appear at all. This has particular reference, for instance, to the designation and concept of assisted Islanders and the transfer of Islanders from reserve to reserve, which have been abandoned.

Future reference to Islanders will be related to any person who is a descendant of an indigenous inhabitant of the islands and overall the legislation provides for a social-welfare programme drawn up in consultation with the Islanders themselves.

Security of the reserves is, of course, preserved while the people living there will be limited to those so entitled. Such authority for an Islander will result from an application to the Island council so that the council, with the Director, is satisfied that such residence is in the best interests of the Islander, but also preserving the status quo of other residents already on the reserve.

Visitors to the reserves for short periods may be approved directly by the council as well as by the department.

It is proposed to include a definitive statement of the fact that a person on a reserve may depart at any time, except, of course, where he is being lawfully detained. This will place beyond argument the fact that residential status on a reserve is purely a voluntary act. The island councils and groups will be continued. As honourable members are aware, in the past, the island reserves have been restricted by area in relation to liquor, but the councillors have requested, and it is proposed to provide, in principle, for beer to be available within licensed areas, but subject, however, to the particular wishes of the local residents as conveyed through their council. I must emphasise, however, that this is an approval in principle only, and each council must signify agreement or otherwise to beer being available on the reserve, and legislatively their wishes must be respected.

Grants of aid as previously established will be continued whilst the compulsory concept of management of property is being abandoned, with, however, some provision to ensure that those persons who ask for it will be afforded services now provided by the department.

The provisions will ensure that management ends on request, except in particular special cases which will require the approval of a stipendiary magistrate to continue. I will, however, mention that, once ended, management will not be resumed unless there is special cause for so doing.

Provision is made for assistance in court in particular circumstances. However, an Islander may choose to make any arrangement he wishes. It is proposed also to include powers of appeal in various circumstances and through several avenues, particularly in regard to island court decisions, where appeal rights lie through the group representative, the Island Advisory Council and ultimately, if desired, to a stipendiary magistrate.

The policy of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs is one of assimilation agreed to by all State and Commonwealth Ministers, which I read in this Chamber earlier, and I emphasise again that this definition, together with the policy flowing from it, is both realistic and fair and has equal application to Islanders as it has to Aborigines.

It will be clear from what I have said that the Government is not seeking to remove identity from the Islander people but, rather, that every effort is being made to encourage them to make full use of their many talents and capacities for their own benefit and for the benefit of all Queenslanders. I believe that this is being achieved and that the State as a whole will profit.

It is my objective that this legislation will represent the interests of these, our fellow-citizens, and that it will help them and help us all to achieve, within Queensland, a society within which mutual respect for the ethnic derivation of each member will be accorded.

I commend the Bill.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH** (Tablelands) (5.52 p.m.): The general impression of Islanders is that of a swaying, nice, easy movement. I do not think they would be happy to hear the Minister rushing through his opening remarks like a torrent. At the beginning of the session I expressed the hope that this Bill would not be rushed through Parliament, that we would not be sitting in the early hours of the morning debating it, and that we would be given sufficient time to consider it before the second-reading stage. I still hope that part of my wish will come true. We are dealing with these two Bills in a hurry, and I hope that in this Bill the Minister has not departed greatly from the intention of the previous Bill.

**Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt:** I have not.

**Mr. WALLIS-SMITH:** In that case, I do not mind the Minister rushing through his opening remarks.

I am happy to know that the centenary of the landing of the Samoan missionaries on Darnley Island has been celebrated. From my knowledge, Torres Strait Islanders, as a people, are very different from Aborigines, both in physique and in mental outlook. Whenever they come to the mainland, much of their culture is really accepted by the Aborigines. This is very good. However, there is one point that has always concerned me. The Islanders have always had the happy knack of getting the good jobs at the various communities, mainly because of their aptitude for such work as being in charge of boats, engines and so on. Now that Aborigines are catching up with them in this respect, they are losing the feeling of being the underdog in getting jobs.

Torres Strait Islanders and Aborigines are being trained in fishing. I understand that Mr. Whittaker is still their tutor. They could not have a better man. He is well known for his ability in this regard. I hope this training can be extended to cover more than the people who are on the fishing trawler, otherwise only a certain number can be trained at one time.

I have met the supervisor of schools. He is a striking person who is doing good work. A secondary school is to be built at Bamaga.

I ask the Minister to give consideration to the provision of more hostels in other parts of the State. I do not mean hostels exclusively for Aborigines. I instance specifically the one at Normanton, which is taking so long to become established. I hope that other similar hostels can be built for the children of the Outback, both Aboriginal children and those of the people on stations.

The Minister mentioned development of the Torres Strait islands. There are three things that will develop them quicker than anything else. The first is the provision, wherever possible, of airstrips on the islands. I know that some have already been built. The second is the provision of a Royal Flying Doctor helicopter service, as was mentioned in the Press recently. The third is a dependable and more frequent "bus run", if I might so describe it, around the islands, so that the people are able to keep in touch with the outside world and the administrative centre. This will be particularly important when the Islanders have more freedom of movement than they have had in the past.

I shall cut my remarks short to allow the Minister to get the Bill printed, and reserve further comment till the second-reading stage.

**Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT** (Mackenzie—Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs) (5.57 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for Tablelands for allowing the Bill to be printed. I agree that I did rush the introduction through, but I think it was in the best interests of all. All honourable members will now be able to study the Bill.

I am fully conscious of the points raised by the honourable member. I quite agree that there is a great need for more hostels, and that the more we can provide, the better it will be for the people concerned. The honourable member has my assurance that I am doing my best in this direction.

I mentioned earlier, in reply to another honourable member on the previous Bill, that two airstrips have been provided in this area, one on Badu Island and the other on Yorke Island. They are proving very valuable assets to the people of Torres Strait. Naturally, consideration will be given to the provision of more airstrips, although in many places there is no suitable land.

The provision of a helicopter service comes back to the amount of finance available and whether money would be better spent in this or in some other way. Last night I heard Mr. Gordon Daniels, the manager of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, speaking on the radio. I agree with the honourable member for Tablelands that Mr. Daniels has done a wonderful job, particularly for country people and those on Aboriginal communities and settlements. The Government is certainly conscious of that fact.

I again thank the honourable member for allowing the Bill to be printed.

Motion (Mr. Hewitt) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 6 p.m.