

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 5 APRIL 1974

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advantage. The location is virtually in the central city and is more accessible to the general public.

It is a very satisfactory solution to the temporary problem of housing the gallery until its permanent home is completed on its own site, which is expected to be about 1978.

INVESTIGATIONS OF VARIOUS COMPANIES BY
MR. P. D. CONNOLLY, Q.C.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice) (11.4 a.m.): On 14 November 1972 the Governor in Council appointed Mr. P. D. Connolly, Q.C., pursuant to section 170 of the Companies Act, to be an inspector to investigate the affairs of the following companies:—

Queensland Syndication Management Pty. Ltd.,

Budget Finance Corporation Limited,

Queensland Syndication Pty. Ltd.,

Queensland Industrial Constructions Pty. Ltd., and

Queensland Groceries Limited.

On 21 December 1972, Mr. Connolly was similarly appointed to investigate the affairs of—

Queensland Home Loans Fund Limited,
Home Loans Management Pty. Ltd.,

together with a number of other companies, the reports of which I have already tabled in the House. Mr. Connolly has completed his investigations into the affairs of all the above companies and they are the subject of three separate reports.

It was not possible for me to present these reports to the House before this time because of District Court trials of certain persons charged with offences alleged to have been committed in the course of their dealings with the companies which Mr. Connolly was initially appointed to investigate. However, these trials have now been completed and I believe that it is in the public interest that the reports of Mr. Connolly should be made public and printed.

I lay upon the table of the House the following reports by Mr. P. D. Connolly, Q.C., who was appointed by the Governor in Council to investigate the affairs of the companies—

(a) Queensland Home Loans Fund Limited; and Home Loans Management Pty. Ltd.

(b) Queensland Syndication Management Pty. Ltd.; Budget Finance Corporation Ltd.; Queensland Syndication Pty. Ltd.; and Queensland Industrial Constructions Pty. Ltd.

(c) Queensland Groceries Limited.

and I move that, in the public interest, the reports be printed.

Whereupon the reports referred to by the honourable gentleman were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

FRIDAY, 5 APRIL 1974

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. W. H. Lonergan, Flinders), read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

The Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act of 1959,

The City of Brisbane Market Acts, 1960 to 1967.

The Fauna Conservation Act of 1952.

Fisheries Act 1957–1972.

The Milk Supply Acts, 1952 to 1961.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Treasurer) (11.2 a.m.): Following advice from Sir Leon Trout, the chairman, and trustees of the Queensland National Art Gallery, to the Minister for Education that serious structural problems were showing up in the Art Gallery, the Works Department was requested to make an immediate inspection and report on the gallery building. These inspections have been carried out and a report has been furnished to the Minister for Works, the Minister for Education and to me. The report says that the cost of placing the existing Art Gallery in a satisfactory condition, safe and secure, would be a prohibitive figure, especially as such renovated accommodation would be needed only for the period it would take for the Government to construct a new Art Gallery on the south side of the river.

Alternative premises were then sought for the gallery in the city area for display and storage of the Art Gallery collection. Very suitable accommodation has now been secured for it on the fifth and sixth floors of the M.I.M. Building in Ann Street, City. The space available on these floors is greater than the effective space in the present gallery. The area is air-conditioned and the valuable paintings and objets d'art of the gallery will be secure and able to be displayed to

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

BURANDA OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL AND NARBETHONG SCHOOL FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

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

(1) What are the detailed plans, short-term and long-term, under consideration for structural work to be performed at (a) the Buranda State Opportunity School and (b) the Narbethong School for the Visually Handicapped?

(2) When will the proposed work at these schools be commenced and finished?

(3) Will he supply me with copies of architectural drawings associated with these plans?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "Provision is made in the Forward Planning Programs before my Department of Works for the construction of new buildings at the Buranda Opportunity School and the Narbethong School for the Visually Handicapped. The drawing of plans for both projects is in hand. In accordance with usual practice, when the drawings are completed to sketch plan stage, the scheme will be referred to the Education Department for acceptance. Target dates for commencement and completion of works cannot be established at this time, because financial allocations for 1974-75 have yet to be determined. At the appropriate time, again in accordance with the courtesies usually extended by me, I will be advising the Honourable Member when the Executive Council approves of expenditure for the project and I will then be pleased to arrange for his viewing of the plans."

DUTTON PARK, EAST BRISBANE AND BURANDA STATE SCHOOLS

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

(1) What are the detailed plans, short-term and long-term, under consideration for structural work to be performed at (a) the Dutton Park State School, (b) the East Brisbane State School and (c) the Buranda State School?

(2) When will any proposed work at these schools be commenced and completed?

(3) Will he supply me with copies of architectural drawings associated with the plans for each school?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "In relation to Dutton Park State School the position is the same as set out in my reply to the Honourable Member's Question (1) as of today. No forward planning provisions are indicated to the Department of Works by the Education Department at this stage in respect of any project at Buranda State School. The Education Department has before it preliminary proposals for re-arrangement of accommodation at the East Brisbane State School. Again, at the appropriate time the Honourable Member will be advised when approval is given for the project to proceed and plans will be made available for his viewing."

QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY BUILDING

Mr. P. Wood, pursuant to notice, asked
The Minister for Education,—

(1) Which paintings at the Queensland Art Gallery have been damaged by water and what is the extent of the damage?

(2) Does section 14 of the Queensland Art Gallery Act give the trustees of the gallery the responsibility of the maintenance and administration of the gallery works of art?

(3) As the 1972-73 report of the trustees referred to the entry of water into the building, has there been any negligence by the Works Department or the trustees in the responsibility to maintain the gallery?

(4) As the chairman of the trustees has stated that the trustees had been aware for some time of the critical state of the building, why was this serious matter not referred to in the 1973 report of the trustees?

(5) When did the trustees notify him that the building could fall down without warning during another storm?

(6) Will the gallery be closed and, if so, when will it re-open?

(7) Why has the building been allowed to deteriorate to such an alarming extent?

(8) In view of the dangerous condition of the building, why was the information not made public at an appropriate time?

(9) When will construction of the new gallery commence?

Answer:—

(1 to 9) "In view of the Ministerial Statement made earlier by the Honourable the Treasurer, on the Queensland Art

Gallery, I feel that all the points raised by the Honourable Member in his Question have been adequately answered."

Mr. P. Wood interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member for Toowoomba South interjects again, I shall deal with him.

Mr. P. Wood interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable gentleman under Standing Order 123A. He might now take some notice of me.

SUPPLIES OF HORMONE 2,4-D FOR SHIRE COUNCILS

Mr. Bousen, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Is he aware that there is a shortage of the chemical 2,4-D and that shire councils are unable to obtain supplies for pest-control purposes but that ample supplies can be obtained through commercial channels?

(2) In view of this, will he take appropriate action to have supplies of the chemical made available to shire councils?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "There is a world-wide shortage of the raw materials required to formulate hormone weedicides of all types. It is difficult to obtain 2,4-D through commercial channels and recent investigations by officers of the Lands Department in various centres failed to locate supplies in any quantity. The Honourable the Minister for Lands and Forestry has arranged with a supplier to obtain a quantity of hormone weedicides and when this supply is exhausted it is not known when the next supply will be available. Such supply will depend on the availability from overseas of the raw materials. Back orders from shire councils for hormone weedicides are being supplied by the Lands Department, but it is not known whether fresh orders may be filled."

FIRE HAZARD FROM VEGETATION ALONG RAILWAY LINES

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

(1) Is he aware that following heavy rains in some parts of the State there is a prolific growth of grass and weeds along railway lines, particularly in the south-western division?

(2) As this growth is causing graziers some concern because of the fire hazard, what action is his Department taking to destroy it?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "The controlled burning off of grass and weeds has been commenced earlier than would normally have been the case and the assistance of primary producers' organisations, the Rural Fires Board and owners of neighbouring properties in combating potential hazards, has been invited. The action being taken by the Railway Department in this direction was outlined in a Press release published in the *Country Life* on March 28, 1974."

BAN ON FLAMMABLE MATERIAL FOR CHILDREN'S NIGHT CLOTHING

Mr. Bousen, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Development,—

Having regard to the fire risk of certain types of children's clothing, will he investigate the possibility of placing a ban on all children's night clothing which is not fire-proof?

Answer:—

"The question of flammability of children's night wear has been the subject of discussion by State Ministers for Labour and Industrial Affairs for several years and a decision was dependent upon a S.A.A. Code being produced. This has now been produced and as the Honourable Member knows legislation was introduced into this Parliament a short time ago."

URUBA BRIDGE OR CURREN CREEK CROSSING, MIRANI SHIRE

Mr. Newbery, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

In view of the desperate communication position which the residents of the Beatrice and Sybil Creek areas of the Mirani Shire are placed in due to washed-away bridges and bad roads, especially relating to the loss of schooling for the children and the inability of securing household and farming requirements, will he request his officers to investigate the possibility of bringing forward the programme for the crossing over Curren Creek or the extension of the Uruba Bridge?

Answer:—

"The scheme presently proposed extends from the junction of the Mackay-Eungella Road across Highams Bridge and then easterly past the turnoff to the Uruba Bridge. I realise the importance of road access in this area. The alignment has been approved and the survey is being carried out at present by departmental surveyors. On completion of the survey the design will be put in hand. On present

planning and the time necessary for resumptions, it is proposed to release the scheme early in 1975."

HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES FOR OWNERSHIP

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

In view of this Government's previous housing policy whereby needy cases were speedily provided for, what are the reasons for the refusal of immediate and choice of ownership of a residence for urgent, justifiable cases?

Answer:—

"Government policy remains oriented to assisting families of low or moderate means subject to availability of houses. If the honourable member has any particular case in mind and gives me the details I will investigate the circumstances. However, the 1973 agreement makes no distinction between applications to rent and applications to purchase and a common application form is used in all cases so that priority may be assessed. The houses are to be allotted, subject to priority of urgent cases, in the order of lodgment with, or acceptance by, the Housing Authority of applications for housing assistance. An applicant allotted to an agreement house may purchase provided he conforms to the Commonwealth means test and provided that no more than 30 per cent. of these houses have been sold."

ETON IRRIGATION SCHEME

Mr. Newbery, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Conservation,—

In view of the lapse of time since the first meeting of cane growers regarding the construction of the Eton Irrigation Scheme, what are the commencement and completion dates of construction and what are the areas to be serviced by the scheme and any other items of interest to the prospective consumers in the project?

Answer:—

"Surveys, designs and construction of access road, camp facilities and other preliminary works for Kinchant Dam have been seriously delayed by prolonged wet weather. They will proceed as soon as conditions permit. Delays have also occurred in detailed investigations for dam design. At this stage it is anticipated that tenders for actual construction of the dam will be called towards the end of 1974. The area to be actually served by the scheme is still under examination. Account has to be taken of views of landholders on whether they wish to be served or not,

and the amount of water that will be available after allowance for a large increase in areas licensed to be irrigated direct from the Pioneer River and tributaries. Final details of proposed areas to be served and proposed irrigation works are not now expected to be available for presentation to the Government for two to three months. Commencement of some irrigation works is expected in the 1974-75 year. Completion of works cannot be forecast at this stage, it will depend mainly on the amount of funds available each year for the scheme."

WYNNUM, CLEVELAND AND HEMMANT POLICE STATIONS

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

(1) Has he seen Press reports which state that police stations at Wynnum, Cleveland and Hemmant no longer issue learner-driving permits, renew drivers' licences, or inspect engine numbers for motor vehicle registration purposes?

(2) Has the procedure which was announced in this House on October 10 last year, whereby Brisbane motorists could renew their licences at the police station in the police division in which they lived or worked, now been abandoned?

(3) If this procedure has not been abandoned, under whose authority has this important police function been discontinued at the Wynnum, Cleveland and Hemmant police stations?

(4) What other Queensland police stations have also ceased responsibility for these duties?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) "I have viewed an article in the *Wynnum-Redlands Herald* which states that as from April 1, whilst the police stations at Wynnum, Cleveland and Hemmant will be open for the transaction of usual police business, they will not be open for: the transaction of business relating to the issue of learners' permits; Renewal of drivers' licenses; inspection of engine numbers for motor registration purposes and such kindred matters. Unfortunately the article appeared with three important words missing, namely 'on Saturday mornings'. Action has been taken to correct the article. This class of business will continue to be transacted at police stations during week day business hours and in special circumstances at other times at the discretion of the officer in charge of the relevant police station."

RE-ORGANISATION OF CAIRNS REGIONAL
ELECTRICITY BOARD

Mr. B. Wood, pursuant to notice, asked
The Minister for Local Government,—

(1) Does he acknowledge the problems faced by the Cairns Regional Electricity Board because of the extensive, sparsely-populated and remote areas it services and because of the difficult terrain it crosses?

(2) Did the re-organisation advisory committee give any consideration to these factors and, if so, what plans are proposed to reduce distribution costs?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "I am well aware of the problems which the Cairns Regional Electricity Board along with every other Regional Electricity Board and every other electricity distribution authority in Queensland encounters in servicing the needs of this vast State. It was for precisely this reason and with my encouragement that the State Electricity Commission's submissions to me on reorganisation have included from the start a strong emphasis upon the special needs of the ex-metropolitan consumer, recognising the higher prices he pays and giving attention to efficient organisation of the industry which supplies him. The recommended plan has been widely reported and all Honourable Members of this House have received a copy of the full report of the Reorganisation Advisory Committee set up to develop it. I really cannot add much to that document at the present time."

REPORT ON COSTS, NORTHERN REGIONAL
ELECTRICITY BOARDS

Mr. B. Wood, pursuant to notice, asked
The Minister for Local Government,—

With further reference to a report on costs prepared by northern electricity boards in 1969-70—

(1) Will he table a copy of this report?

(2) If the re-organisation committee is now supposedly concerned about economies, why did it give no consideration to this report?

(3) Why was no action taken during 1970-1973?

Answers:—

(1) "No. This was an internal report of the authorities involved."

(2) "I have already stated in reply to Questions asked by the Honourable Member on March 14, 1974 that the existence of this report and its contents were known to members of the Reorganisation Advisory Committee and were referred to in discussions where relevant."

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(3) "I do not necessarily accept that no action has been taken between 1970 and 1973. The Regional Electricity Board managers no doubt utilised during that time the information which the report brought together."

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT AID TO
MAREEBA SHIRE COUNCIL
FOR ROAD WORKS

Mr. B. Wood, pursuant to notice, asked
The Minister for Lands,—

With reference to Speewah Road which connects a State forest and other logging areas to the Kennedy Highway, approximately six miles from Kuranda,—

(1) What financial assistance has been given to the Mareeba Shire Council by the Forestry Department in each of the last ten years for (a) maintenance and (b) construction work on this road?

(2) What quantity of timber has been removed from adjacent forests during the period for which records have been kept?

(3) In view of the value of timber taken from this area, can financial assistance be given to make this road trafficable during the wet season?

Answers:—

(1) "(a) and (b) 1964-65, \$250; 1965-66, \$11.03; 1966-67, \$60.78; 1967-68, Nil; 1968-69, \$133; 1969-70, \$29.02; 1970-71, \$74.37; 1971-72, \$200; 1972-73, \$88.23; and 1973-74, \$1,600 offered, based on 20 per cent. of council's estimated expenditure for clearing and upgrading of road and construction of a bridge. Otherwise, amounts shown were predominantly for road maintenance. Over these years, the Mareeba Shire Council have not always taken full advantage of the Forestry funds offered on the basis of a percentage of expenditure. In assessing logging costs, allowances are also made to purchasers of Crown timber for payment of road maintenance contributions, a proportion of which is understood to be channelled back to shire councils."

(2) "Since July 1, 1960, 3,479,000 superficial feet of 'Crown' timber and an unknown quantity of privately owned timber was transported over the Speewah Road."

(3) "Financial assistance is offered to shire councils by the Department of Forestry on a subsidy basis having regard to road usage for the haulage of Crown

log timber relative to usage otherwise. This may provide for compensation for damage caused and for maintenance of stumpage values, or for assistance in improvement work with the object of enhancing stumpage values by reducing cost of haulage. Crown log timber hauled over this road has been comparatively minor, with only a small volume yet to be harvested in the area served in the present cut. The road was in fact not used at all for this purpose during 1972-73, and in these circumstances the subsidy offer made this year could be regarded as generous, with limited future use expected. It is considered that there would be no real case for contribution beyond this to cater for 'all weather' use by log trucks as the small volumes likely to be involved can be handled during dry periods, and in any case logging operations during wet weather are normally restricted by difficult conditions within individual sale areas."

HARVESTING OR CONTROL OF HYACINTH

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

(1) As hyacinth has become a threat to rivers and streams in Central Queensland, will he support a request to the C.S.I.R.O. for a comprehensive report on the harvesting of hyacinth on a commercial basis so that it may be used as stock feed in conjunction with other food concentrates during drought?

(2) As biological control seems to present problems, what effect does spraying with different poisons have on sources from which water is taken for cities and towns?

(3) Would the continued spraying of hyacinth present some dangers to humans or to fish life?

Answers:—

"Requests have previously been made by Central Queensland organisations to the Honourable W. L. Morrison, M.P., Federal Minister for Science, for C.S.I.R.O. to carry out research on the utilization of water hyacinth particularly for potential stock-feed and fertilizer purposes. The Honourable Minister has corresponded with me on this subject and has assured me that he has had a full discussion with C.S.I.R.O. on the subject. That organisation has, for very good reasons, declined to engage in the proposed research. I would like to add further comment on the three points made by the Member for Callide.

(1) "Officers of my own Department have studied chemical analyses of water hyacinth and while it contains useful nutrients in similar proportions to other medium quality forages, it has the serious disadvantage of containing up to 95 per

cent. water. No domestic animal can obtain its nutritional requirements from such high water-content feed. Moreover, the costs of handling, transport and drying of such watery material would far outweigh the value of the dry material recovered."

(2) "The spot spraying of nuclei of water hyacinth with approved chemicals on a large stream such as the Fitzroy River would have no deleterious effects on water supplies."

(3) "Following on the Answer to (2), preventive spraying with approved chemicals would present no danger to human beings or to fish life."

RAILWAY BUILDINGS AND TRUCKING YARDS, ETHERIDGE LINE

Mr. Marginson for Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

Further to his Answer to my Questions regarding the Einasleigh-Forsayth section of the Etheridge railway line that this section would be closed permanently, will he allow the rail buildings and trucking yards to remain?

Answer:—

"Consequent upon the decision to close the section of railway between Einasleigh and Forsayth, the Railway Department will, in accordance with normal practice, cease to maintain the railway and dispose of the assets."

GOVERNMENT VESSEL "MELBIDIR"

Mr. Marginson for Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Conservation,—

(1) On what date did the "Melbidir" return to service, has there been any interruption since that date and, if so, what was the cause?

(2) What was the total cost of repairs and how long was the vessel out of service?

Answers:—

(1) "As the result of an accident causing damage to propellers and shafts, 'Melbidir' was withdrawn from service November 18, 1973, and resumed normal service January 10, 1974. There have been no interruptions to the scheduled service since January 10, 1974."

(2) "Total cost of repairs was \$10,049. This includes an amount of \$2,106 for refurbishing damaged propellers and shafts which will be maintained as spares."

TRAFFIC LIGHTS, GEORGE AND ALICE
STREETS INTERSECTION, BRISBANE

Mr. Marginson for **Mr. Wallis-Smith**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

Further to a previous Question by the Member for Barron River concerning traffic and pedestrian lights at the corner of George and Alice Streets, Brisbane, as a second accident has occurred involving a pedestrian, will he have an inspection made of the existing operation of these lights to safeguard the pedestrian traffic between Parliament House and the Bellevue?

Answer:—

“Whilst this intersection is on Brisbane City Council streets, it is closely associated with the Alice Street approach to the Riverside Expressway. I will arrange for Main Roads officers to make a joint inspection with Brisbane City Council officers. However, this inspection should be delayed a month to gauge the effect of the proposed Easter Central City Streets reversals.”

COMMONWEALTH GRANTS FOR SPECIAL
PENSIONER ACCOMMODATION

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

(1) What funds were provided by the Commonwealth and State Governments for the first five-year plan for special pensioner accommodation and when does this first period expire?

(2) What funds has the Commonwealth provided for the second five-year period and has the State made any provision for the second five-year period?

(3) What total funds have been committed towards this project and how many units will be provided from these funds?

Answers:—

(1) “Commonwealth \$3,350,000 and State \$1,800,000. As these funds were all committed by June, 1973, the State has provided a further \$400,000 making the State total \$2,200,000. The five-year period will terminate on June 30, 1974.”

(2) “The Commonwealth has indicated that it will provide some funds for a further period. In August last I sought information as to the amount which would be forthcoming but beyond an interim acknowledgement I have not yet received any advice. To prevent a ‘stop-go’ situation and to enable the programme for aged persons to continue at least for the time being the State has agreed to repeat the \$2,200,000 provision.”

(3) “The Commonwealth and State funds in (1) and (2) amount to a total of \$7,750,000 and all of this has been

committed on 752 units already completed or for which building contracts have been let. In fact the total commitment to date is \$8,057,000 of which the Commonwealth has contributed only \$3,350,000. It is unfortunate that, as we are already into April and the second five-year term will commence on July 1, 1974, we must now slow down the calling of tenders and the letting of further contracts until we receive advice of the availability of Commonwealth finance to continue the scheme.”

HOUSING COMMISSION RENTAL AND
PURCHASE HOUSES

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

(1) How many applications are at present lodged with the Queensland Housing Commission for home ownership in (a) the metropolitan area, (b) provincial cities and (c) the rest of the State?

(2) What is the minimum deposit required for the following types of houses—(a) brick, (b) concrete, in both categories, (c) timber and (d) fibro in (i) the metropolitan area, (ii) provincial cities and (iii) the rest of the State?

(3) How many houses were made available for home ownership from (a) the Commonwealth–State Housing Fund and (b) the Queensland Housing Commission Fund from July 1, 1973 to April 1, 1974.

Answers:—

(1) “As the 1973 agreement makes no distinction between applications to rent and applications to purchase a common application form is used in all cases so that priority may be assessed. At that preliminary stage the applications are not classified as between rental and ownership.”

(2) “The deposit on houses selling at \$15,500 or less is \$500 and in other cases the deposit is the amount by which the sale price exceeds \$15,000.”

(3) “The funds were amalgamated from July 1, 1973. Purchase or loan accounts opened from July 1, 1973, to February 28, 1974, totalled 1,031.”

TRANSFER OF PRISONERS FROM
BRISBANE TO TOWNSVILLE;
PRISON ACCOMMODATION

Mr. Davis, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Tourism,—

(1) Is he aware of the concern which Townsville residents have expressed over the decision to transfer on March 25 a number of dangerous prisoners from Brisbane Prison to Townsville Prison?

(2) Did the absence overseas of three Members of this Parliament, who represent various Townsville electorates, influence this hasty decision in any way?

(3) How many prisoners were involved in the transfer, what costs were involved, including escort fees, and what were the reasons for the transfer?

(4) What is the present total accommodation at Townsville Prison and what is the daily average number of prisoners confined there?

(5) What is the present total accommodation at Brisbane Prison and what is the daily average number of prisoners confined there?

Answers:—

(1) "I am aware of statements reported in the Townsville Press which, no doubt, may have caused Townsville residents to have concern over the recent transfer of prisoners to H.M. Prison, Townsville."

(2) "The absence of the Honourable Members referred to had no bearing on the matter. Dependent on the availability of accommodation, prisoners are transferred from time to time to various prisons throughout the State. I might add that this was not a hasty decision and the transfer in question had been decided upon following an inspection of H.M. Prison, Townsville, by the Acting Comptroller-General of Prisons in February this year."

(3) "20. The costs cannot presently be advised but they would include costs of providing for officers and prisoners and air fares for officers from Townsville to Brisbane. The actual payments to the escort officers will be subject to determination by the Public Service Board. The reasons for the transfer were to reduce numbers at H.M. Prison, Brisbane, and to make use of available accommodation at H.M. Prison, Townsville."

(4) "330. The daily average during February, 1974, was 283 and during March, 1974, was 270."

(5) "As the Honourable Member was advised on March 12, 1974, in answer to his previous Question, the present total accommodation at H.M. Prison, Brisbane, is entirely dependent on the extent of accommodation used for multiple occupancy. During February, 1974, the daily average was 621 and during March, 1974, it was 630."

PASSENGER FACILITIES, BRISBANE CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION

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

(1) Is he aware of the atrocious conditions to which passengers are subjected when forced to use platforms Nos. 2 and 3 at Brisbane Central Railway Station during peak hours?

(2) Is he also aware of the marathon obstacle walk involved when the same passengers wish to depart via the Edward Street entrance?

(3) How long will these objectionable conditions continue before some alleviation is forthcoming?

(4) Are plans in hand for the provision of escalators to any of the platforms and, if so, which platforms are involved?

Answers:—

(1 to 3) "During construction work associated with the development of the Central Station site, ingress to and egress from platforms Nos. 2 and 3 have been restricted to the use of the subway approximately at the centre of the platforms. Tenders are expected to be invited next week for the provision of a stairway affording access between Nos. 2 and 3 platforms and the new pedestrian footbridge near Creek Street. In addition, the question of providing a stairway from platforms 2 and 3 to the ground floor level of the new Railway Administrative Building is under examination."

(4) "Immediate action in this regard is not planned but as a long-term provision in the development of the Central Station site, the insertion of escalators to serve platforms is envisaged."

TOILET FACILITIES, BRUNSWICK STREET RAILWAY STATION

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

(1) Are the only toilet facilities available to train travellers using Brunswick Street Railway Station situated outside the railway entrance in the Fortitude Valley shopping centre?

(2) Are the toilet facilities under the control of the Railway Department?

(3) Are these facilities available for use on Sundays and holidays and, if not, what facilities are available?

(4) Will he give immediate consideration to providing toilet facilities at platform level to assist all train travellers, especially the aged, invalid and infirm?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "No."

(3 and 4) "As I previously advised the Honourable Member, the new station at Brunswick Street was provided as part of a developmental project undertaken other than by the Railway Department."

LEAD-POISONING

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

(1) With reference to the newspaper article concerning the possibility of lead poisoning resulting from automobile emission, has there been any investigation into the possibility of lead from this source affecting Brisbane children?

(2) Has there been any improvement in the staff situation in the Laboratory Services Section of the Division of Industrial Medicines since the last report, thus allowing routine examinations to be carried out in relation to lead poisoning?

Answers:—

(1) "No, but I would point out to the Honourable Member that the Director-General of Health and Medical Services attends meetings of the National Health and Medical Research Council at which this subject is frequently considered. The council has agreed that, 'from available data, the inhalation of air containing lead from the emissions of motor vehicles using gasoline containing lead alkyls does not cause clinical human poisoning; however, exposure to such emissions adds to the total body burden of lead, the possible biological effects of which need much further study'. The council is supporting a survey of the lead burden in children living in areas of low and of high exposure by chemical analyses of hair and blood samples. This particular survey is being carried out in Sydney. Queensland has always led the rest of Australia in its health legislation which protects the public from any hazards to health which may arise from exposure to lead. It should however be pointed out to the Honourable Member that the combined knowledge and expertise available in the National Health and Medical Research Council makes it the appropriate level at which major matters of public health should be investigated."

(2) "The vacancy referred to in the Annual Report of the Health and Medical Services for 1972-73 has now been filled."

AIR AND WATER-POLLUTION AND LAND-
USE RESTRICTIONS, GREENVALE
NICKEL PROJECT

Mr. Burns, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

Will he supply to interested conservation bodies and members of the public a complete list of air and water-pollution and land-use restrictions placed on or proposed for the Greenvale nickel project, together with data and reasons for the decisions?

Answer:—

"I table the information sought regarding air pollution conditions. As indicated to the Honourable Member yesterday by

the Honourable the Minister for Local Government and Electricity, it is considered that the terms and conditions of licenses granted by the Water Quality Council are matters between it and the licensees. The council takes action to see that licensees observe the terms and conditions imposed by their licenses and appropriate action is taken in the event of non-compliance. So far as land use restrictions are concerned, I refer the Honourable Member to the *Greenvale Agreement Act 1970-1971*. The Yabulu Treatment Plant is subject to land use control under the town plan of the Thuringowa Shire Council."

Paper.—Whereupon Mr. Bjelke-Petersen laid upon the Table of the House the information referred to.

SPECIALIST, ROCKHAMPTON HOSPITALS
BOARD

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

In view of his indication that the Rockhampton Hospitals Board is experiencing difficulties in obtaining the services of a necessary specialist—

(1) Does the board offer to the applicants conditions of employment comparable with other areas?

(2) What are the terms of employment presently being offered and what are the qualifications required by the board and his Department?

Answers:—

(1) "The conditions of employment of visiting specialists at Rockhampton Hospital are the same as those applying at all other Queensland hospitals. The Honourable Member will, I feel sure, be interested in developments in this area in other States. When South Australia introduced the payment of visiting staff a few years ago, it followed the terms of service applying in Queensland. That State is now endeavouring to introduce changes which would alter the employer-employee relationship to a contractual one. The visiting staff are resisting the proposal. Hospitals in the Australian Capital Territory are also endeavouring to employ their visiting staff on a contractual basis. When the Commonwealth Minister for Health replied to criticisms of his proposals for the Canberra Hospitals, he referred with approval to the Queensland scheme in comments which implied that his proposals for Canberra were similar to what obtains in this State. Dr. Everingham's statement drew a very tart rejoinder from a spokesman for the medical profession which I quote: The Minister is apparently so far out of touch that he has forgotten that the Queensland conditions of service do in fact include long service leave, holiday

pay, sick leave, and study leave. In addition, the conditions in Queensland established in 1963 are currently being re-negotiated and updated. Queensland branch is determined that provisions for sick leave, recreation leave, long service and study leave will be retained. It will strongly oppose any attempt to delete these in favour of loadings on sessional rates."

(2) "Visiting specialists in Queensland are paid on a sessional basis depending on their experience. Instead of Dr. Everingham's suggestions for loadings on sessional rates, the conditions of service which have recently been re-negotiated include provision for long service, recreation, and sick leave as well as conference leave. Specialists are generally required to be registered as such with the Medical Board of Queensland. I have repeatedly drawn attention to the difficulty of obtaining medical staff for provincial cities and remote areas. It is a world-wide problem of supply and demand. Until more specialists become available it will not be possible to fill the approved establishments. I draw the Honourable Member's attention to a report in the A.M.A. *Gazette* of February 7 last captioned 'Germany is short of anaesthetists' which states *inter alia*: Experts estimate the Federal Republic needs 3,000 anaesthetists in hospitals. They have about 1,000; two of every three posts are reported to be vacant. More desperately, only one of four assistants' posts is filled."

SCHOOL PLAYGROUND AREAS

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

In view of the construction of additional classrooms and buildings at many primary and secondary schools, which causes in many cases a significant reduction in playground areas, has his department a definite policy regarding the playground space required per pupil?

Answer:—

"The policy of my Department in acquiring new sites for primary and secondary schools is to seek minimum areas of 16 acres and 30 acres respectively. The concept of a set area per pupil is unrealistic since, when sites are selected, it is not possible to predict exact enrolments. The current policy guarantees adequate playground areas even if extensive building operations have to be carried out. At some of the schools which were established before 1950 there have been difficulties because it was not realized at the time the schools were established that the school enrolments would grow to their present size. Where possible, however, additional adjacent land has been acquired and the co-operation of local authorities

has made available community recreation areas. Generally, the school site provision in Queensland is more generous than anywhere else in Australia."

APPRENTICESHIPS FOR SHEARERS

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

(1) As the current good season is conducive to severe blow-fly attacks on sheep which are now causing heavy losses and as the severe shortage of shearers emphasises stock-owners' labour difficulties, could apprentice shearers obtain the benefits of the National Apprenticeship Assistance Scheme and, with State co-operation, become indentured to approved contractors and be employed throughout the year with a reasonable wage guarantee?

(2) Is shearing recognised as a trade and, if not, as the industry is so important to this State, why has the Government not moved to combine with stock-owners and the industry to establish a basis of traineeship for shearers?

Answers:—

(1) "Shearing is not recognised as a trade in the State of Queensland under the provisions of the *Apprenticeship Act* 1964-1972. As it is not a trade under the provisions of this Act, the benefits of the National Apprenticeship Assistance Scheme would not apply."

(2) "As I have pointed out, shearing is not a recognised trade in Queensland. However, provision is made in the Shearing Industries Award—State for the employment of learners in this calling. The real problem of the dearth of shearers throughout Australia is recognised and was discussed at the recent Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers for Labor and Industrial Affairs, who will be again examining these matters at their conference to be held at the end of August. The Government is well aware of the problem and has already initiated moves with a view to seeing in which way it can be overcome, not only in Queensland but in Australia generally; hence my statement that the matter is on the agenda for the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers in August."

PACKAGING AND LABELLING OF SYNTHETIC MEAT PRODUCTS

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

(1) What are the requirements regarding the advertising and packaging of meatless meat products and may pies with synthetic meat be described as meat pies or synthetic steaks be described as steaks?

(2) As synthetic meats are emerging as serious competitors with red meats, could clarification be given to intending users of both products?

Answers:—

(1) "A so-called meatless meat product cannot be sold as such or as imitation meat. There is no prohibition in health legislation in respect to the advertising and packaging of products containing textured vegetable protein, provided they are properly described and labelled in accordance with the Food and Drug Regulations. No. Pies which do not contain a minimum of 25 per cent of meat would be adulterated if sold as meat pies and if they contain no meat, would be mis-described. In either case a breach of section 104 of the Health Act would be committed. Similarly, a food described only as steak and implying that it is meat would also be mis-described."

(2) "A standard is currently being prepared by the Food Standards Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council for textured vegetable protein and products prepared therefrom. It is anticipated that restrictive labelling provisions, including a percentage of such protein present, and the existing restrictions imposed under health legislation will be adequate to ensure that consumers know which products they are purchasing."

ARTIFICIAL REEFS

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

(1) How many artificial reefs have been built by his Government in order to create sea growth and establish permanent reefs?

(2) What proven results have been established in the growth of fish life by the creation of these reefs and has consideration been given to providing the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast areas with reefs as an aid to tourists interested in fishing and to commercial fishermen?

Answers:—

(1) "None, although advice and encouragement have been given to several citizen groups involved in establishing such reefs."

(2) "No specific in-depth studies have been carried out on local artificial reefs and no consideration has yet been given to establishing such reefs in the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast areas. Very little, if any, of the in-shore waters of these regions would be suitable for artificial reef construction. In the off-shore waters, while such reefs might be expected to function reasonably well in carefully selected locations, the cost benefit prospects are not bright and furthermore the question of their establishment would need to be very carefully considered in relation to the hazard which they would pose in the off-shore prawn fishery."

FINANCIAL AID FOR ARTIFICIAL LIMBS

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

(1) What financial assistance is given to persons requiring artificial limbs and how is an applicant's eligibility assessed?

(2) What Government assistance is available to organisations which help crippled children and similarly disabled adults?

Answers:—

(1) "My Department has for many years provided artificial limbs, and where necessary paid for the transportation of patients to Brisbane and return. A means test is applied. The Commonwealth Government has now advised that since September 27, 1973 it has accepted responsibility for the provision of artificial limbs without application of a means test."

(2) "Depending on circumstances, financial assistance is provided through my Department to approved organisations by endowment subsidy, capital subsidy, annual grant or by special grant. The endowment subsidy is paid on either a \$ for \$ or \$1 for \$2 basis on endowable collections. Maximum payments have been set for recipient organisations and are reviewed from time to time. Capital subsidy at the rate of 50 per cent. is now considered towards the cost of approved projects or equipment for which Commonwealth subsidy is not available. Free rail travel and in certain approved cases, bus and taxi travel is provided for disabled persons attending sheltered workshops. I am informed that the Department of Education assists schools for handicapped children and I would refer you to my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Education for further details. I am also informed that the Commonwealth Government through the Handicapped Children (Assistance) Act provides a \$2 for \$1 capital cost subsidy for training centres, equipment and accommodation established by voluntary organisations and local government bodies. The Sheltered Employment (Assistance) Act provides for financial assistance by the Commonwealth towards the provision of sheltered employment and accommodation for certain disabled persons."

PACKAGING AND LABELLING OF CERTAIN GOODS

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Development,—

Further to legislative action taken by him in the area of labelling and packaging, will he give consideration to (a) including on the wrappings of perishable goods specific instructions on storage and related information about how long such goods

can be kept, (b) insisting that specific washing instructions are recorded on the labels of all clothing, (c) stating on the outer packages of contraceptives the known failure rate and (d) having both the avoirdupois and metric weights indicated on goods, at least during the next two years?

Answer:—

“(a) The information requested appertains to the keeping quality of goods and not weights and measures thereof and therefore they do not come within the ambit of the Weights and Measures Act. (b) The question of washing instructions comes within the scope of care labelling which is a matter not coming within my jurisdiction. (c) Surely this Question is facetious. (d) I am informed that it is not the policy of the Commonwealth Metric Conversion Board and the Standing Committee on Packaging to require both avoirdupois and metric weights to be indicated on goods.”

DEVELOPMENT SURVEY, MOUNT MORGAN SHIRE

Mr. Hanson, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Development,—

(1) When will a report be made available concerning the recent survey taken by his Department in the Shire of Mount Morgan?

(2) As the report was to be tabled some months ago and as the people of Mount Morgan are most anxious about all matters concerning their future, when will the report be sent to the appropriate authority?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) “Certain technical aspects of the study in question have not yet been finalised. Whilst the report has taken longer than anticipated to complete, the Honourable Member can be assured it will be finalised at the earliest possible date and circulated to the authorities concerned.”

QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS

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

(1) As he is constantly decrying the Whitlam Government's performance and its lack of promised open Government, will he draw the attention of Mr. Speaker to Standing Order No. 68 relating to the asking of Questions?

(2) As many years ago when the Labor Government was in office Members asked fellow Members Questions and as this has since been denied and his Government has backed anti-Labor Speakers in their determination to prevent this order being carried out, does not this prove his statement regarding early Labor Governments as being false?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) “I suggest the Honourable Member make a closer study of the provisions of Standing Order No. 68.”

SALMONELLA INFECTION OF MEAT

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

(1) To what degree have meat exports been affected by regulations covering risk of infection by salmonella and is the rejection rate of meat proportionately high in local and export meats?

(2) Has the theory that long travelling, starving and holding of stock in yards prior to slaughter lead to a great incidence of salmonella in animals been proved and has a survey at Government level been established to create country abattoirs in strategic centres to minimise the infection?

Answers:—

(1) “I am at a loss to understand the Honourable Member's Question. Assuming he refers to salmonella infection of meat I do not have any knowledge of rejection of meat for export or local as a result of this. Salmonellosis, as a disease of animals, is not common in slaughter stock, but when detected, would result in condemnation for ‘fever’ or ‘septic conditions’ whether intended for local or export use.”

(2) “Scientific investigations have shown that travelling and starvation does lead to an increase in the number of salmonella in the gastro-intestinal tract of slaughter animals. No survey of the type suggested has been done. Slaughtering procedures are designed to avoid contamination of meat by salmonella.”

SITE FOR PRE-SCHOOL, ORCHID STREET, ENOGGERA

Mr. N. F. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

When will the houses be removed from the site reserved for a future pre-school facility at Orchid Street, Enoggera?

Answer:—

“Action is in train to have these houses removed as soon as possible but their removal is not impeding commencement of construction of the new pre-school centre which is included in a Draft Works Program for 1974-75 for which financial allocations have yet to be determined. I cannot indicate at this time the date on which the houses will be removed from the site.”

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PROPOSED STOP-WORK MEETINGS OF SCHOOL TEACHERS

Mr. FRAWLEY: I ask the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities: In view of the decision by 15 members of the executive of the Queensland Teachers' Union to hold stop-work meetings of school teachers throughout the State on Wednesday, 10 April, to consider further industrial action, could the Minister inform the House if this action by 15 men is democratic, in that many good, sincere teachers have contacted me and indicated that they will be remaining at their schools yet they wish to register a vote protesting against the recommendation of the executive of the Teachers' Union? Is it not significant that Mr. Costello, who is president of the union, and members of his personal pressure group should deny all teachers the opportunity of taking part in a democratic vote?

Sir ALAN FLETCHER: I think I share some of the feelings of the honourable member relative to the dilemma that many good and responsible professional teachers must be in over the suggestion that they knock off work on Wednesday next to discuss whether or not they should go on strike.

I saw the union representatives about their problems, and I told them that, if they were not satisfied with the findings of the Industrial Commission, they should prepare their case again and go back to the commission. After all, that is the established and continuing policy of the Government, and it has been accepted in most areas of employment. I told them also—and I honestly meant this—that I would be prepared to give full consideration to any fair and reasonable case that they put up.

They seemed to think that this was not unreasonable. I said also that I was in a position of some trust on behalf of the general public who, after all, provide the money to pay teachers' salaries and conditions. I have to consider both sides of the case.

Mr. Davis interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Brisbane might not be interested in the Minister's reply but other honourable members are, so I ask him to cease interjecting.

Sir ALAN FLETCHER: I adduced figures which I subsequently made public. I did that rather reluctantly because I do not think it is a good thing that I as the Minister for Education should publish the salary scales of teachers; but I thought that, in view of all that was going on, it was worth doing on this occasion. When I adduced the figures, I expressed the personal opinion that in most cases they were more than comparable with what applied in the rest of Australia. One thing that I said to them I will repeat now.

For years, attesting to my personal convictions, I have been trying to promote the image that teachers as responsible professional people should achieve greater status in the community and it would be a pity if any irresponsible action on the part of the union, probably against the great body of responsible people in the union—that is just my opinion—meant that there was any falling away of the public attitude towards teachers and of support and recognition of them. If I were to say anything to the teachers now—if I could say it—I would say, "If you are not able to attend the meetings because you feel responsible for the students under your control and to the parents who will not want their kids turned loose in the middle of the day, make quite sure that you get through to the union or the meetings that in your opinion a proper ballot of all teachers should be conducted before they enter into the realms of a strike, which would be a great pity and a sad thing for our education system generally."

ACCEPTANCE OF CHEQUES BY RAILWAY DEPARTMENT

Mr. R. JONES: I ask the Minister for Transport: Has any recent consideration been given to a review of the existing position within the Railway Department that does not permit the acceptance of cheques from bona-fide customers or for forward bookings and reservations? If not, in this enlightened age of telex and credit cards will he have the situation re-examined to allow this type of parity to operate, as it does within other forms of transport, notably the airlines?

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: There has been some investigation into this, but most certainly I will have it re-examined at the request of the honourable member.

COMMONWEALTH WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION SCHEME

Mr. NEAL: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: In view of recent Press reports indicating opposition by New South Wales to the new Commonwealth wheat industry stabilisation proposals, will he indicate the present Queensland position concerning these proposals?

Mr. SULLIVAN: As the honourable member would be aware, I have participated in discussions dealing with the new wheat stabilisation plan on three occasions at Agricultural Council meetings. The proposals of the Federal Government were not satisfactory to the Australian Wheat-growers' Federation, but a revised scheme has been accepted by it.

I have already advised Senator Wreidt, the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry, that the scheme is acceptable to Queensland. I have done this on the advice of the grain-growers' organisation. I have

been in very close contact on this matter with Mr. Les Price, as well as the Australian Wheat Board.

MULTIPLE LISTING OF HOMES FOR SALE

Mr. BURNS: I ask the Minister for Justice: Is it true that the Government intends to conduct a public opinion poll, similar to the one on the national anthem, to allow real estate agents to vote on the multiple listing scheme, which forces a home-owner to pay commission to an agent even though the home-owner has himself sold the home privately? If so, will he give vendors and home-owners equal rights with estate agents in such a poll?

Mr. KNOX: What the Government intends to do in this matter will be announced in due course.

SOYBEAN INDUSTRY, DARLING DOWNS

Mr. HARTWIG: I direct a question to the Minister for Primary Industries. No doubt he is aware of proposals for the establishment on the Darling Downs of a major plant for processing vegetable oil. Can he give the House some indication of the likely prospects for the soybean industry?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I am very pleased at the decision arrived at by Provincial Traders Pty. Ltd. to establish a solvent extraction plant in Toowoomba. In early discussions that I had with the company it readily agreed to establish it there, close to the source of supply of raw materials. This is, of course, consistent with the Government's policy of decentralisation. Mr. John Heeney and Mr. John Forsyth were very co-operative in this regard. I must be honest and say that I used all the powers at my disposal to try to persuade them to locate the plant at Dalby, which is, perhaps, a little more central than Toowoomba. I have no doubt that my colleague the Minister for Local Government and Electricity probably endeavoured to have it established at Goondiwindi. However, an economic feasibility study favoured Toowoomba, with the result that the plant is to be established there.

The latest figures indicate that this year there is an area of 72,000 acres, or 30 000 hectares, under soybean in Queensland, and the prospects for the season are very good. The Director of Marketing has told me that this year the yield is estimated at 51,000 tons, compared with 30,000 tons last year. There is a great demand for soybean and soybean oil, so the prospects are very bright indeed. I congratulate Provincial Traders on its decision.

MEEANDAH CEMENT WORKS APPEAL BILL

INITIATION

Hon. H. A. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon—Minister for Local Government and Electricity): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to provide for the application of clause 15 of the Town Plan for the City of Brisbane to an application made by The Queensland Cement and Lime Company Limited for the consent of Brisbane City Council or its delegate to the establishment of works at MacArthur Avenue, Meeandah in the City of Brisbane and to provide for the authorization of appeals against the proposal of the said council or its delegate to grant the said application and to provide for matters incidental thereto."

Motion agreed to.

CITY OF BRISBANE (FLOOD MITIGATION WORKS APPROVAL) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. H. A. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon—Minister for Local Government and Electricity): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the City of Brisbane (Flood Mitigation Works Approval) Act of 1952 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

CITY OF BRISBANE TOWN PLANNING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. H. A. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon—Minister for Local Government and Electricity): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act 1964-1973 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, read a third time.

SUPERANNUATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, read a third time.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS REGISTRATION
ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, read a third time.

TRUST ACCOUNTS ACT AMENDMENT
BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Knox, read a third time.

OATHS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Knox, read a third time.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT
AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Knox, read a third time.

SELECT COMMITTEE, PUNISHMENT
FOR CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (12.10 p.m.): I move—

“(1) That a select committee be appointed to inquire and to report and to make recommendations in relation to the punishment of crimes of violence in Queensland and in particular—

(i) whether the punishment for crimes of violence is adequate, effective and a sufficient deterrent; and

(ii) what measures are considered necessary or desirable to ensure that punishment for crimes of violence is adequate, effective and a sufficient deterrent.

(2) That the committee consist of Messrs. M. J. Ahern, R. J. Hinze, K. B. Tomkins, W. D. Hewitt, H. F. Newton, K. W. Wright, B. J. Davis, T. Aikens and the mover.

(3) That the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records, provided the committee ensures that a witness attending before the committee is not obliged to supply information, oral or written, which the Honourable the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, after consideration, determines to be confidential or privileged or otherwise against the public interest to disclose.

(4) That the committee have leave to sit during any adjournment of the House exceeding seven days.

(5) That the committee have power to continue its inquiry during the ensuing recess and to bring up its report in the next session of Parliament.

(6) That the committee report to the House within one (1) week of the commencement of the third session of the Fortieth Parliament.

(7) That the foregoing provisions of this motion, so far as they are inconsistent with the Standing Orders, shall have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders.”

I am very conscious of a more than usual responsibility in presenting this motion, because it is almost 60 years since a similar one was moved in this Chamber. It was in 1915 that the last parliamentary select committee was appointed. The motion represents the culmination of the aspirations and persuasions of quite a number of honourable members over many years, so it is a notable day for the Parliament.

I am confident that if the House accepts this motion it will not regret the bestowal of trust to an all-party group of nine members of this Parliament. I think all honourable members believe that the chilling escalation in both the quantity and the almost mindless savagery of so much crime today is something that disturbs us all. We ask ourselves what is to be done about it—how can a community extract itself from the jungle that seems to be growing around it from this constantly increasing state of aberrant behaviour? It is the hope of the House, I am sure, that the parliamentary select committee can help.

I am confident that, if the motion is accepted, all members of the committee will be conscious of the trust reposed in them, and that they will approach their task soberly, sensibly and objectively. I am certain that all of us are confident that in this area, which is one not for determination of any rigid party-political dictums, we will consider the matters that come before us, not as members of this party or that group, but only as members of the Queensland Parliament who are concerned only with diligently discharging, each of us to the best of his individual capacity, our responsibility to the House and to the people of Queensland.

I commend the motion to the House.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba—Leader of the Opposition) (12.12 p.m.): As I indicated to the Premier upon receiving the invitation to take part in this committee, the Labor Party supports all-party committees and believes that they represent one effective way in which members of Parliament can carry out their duties to the electorate of Queensland. We believe that they result in using to the maximum advantage the intelligence, ability and dedication possessed by members of Parliament.

Perhaps one of the weaknesses of the parliamentary system as it has been applied in this State over the years has been that back-bench Government members have little to do during sittings other than attend various committee meetings. At all times they are dominated by the Ministry, the Cabinet

and party philosophies. The same applies to those Opposition members who are not charged with the responsibility of being shadow Ministers. The time of the Leader and the Deputy Leader is certainly fully occupied. However, there are other members who have great talents that they cannot use to the maximum advantage under the system as we know it. I believe that, with the appointment of select committees, this defect in our system can be remedied. If the members elected to those committees have the requisite background, I do not think there is any doubt at all that the committees will be successful.

This is the first select committee for many years, and those who are members of it have a great responsibility, not only to themselves but also to the Parliament. If this committee fails to produce worth-while proposals that can be embodied in legislation or, from an administration point of view, recommendations that will lead perhaps to a change of attitude, members generally will be very disappointed. It does not matter what the report brings forward, as long as it is constructive and in the final result makes possible the achievement of our goals. As I said, the various committee members individually have a responsibility, and I have no doubt that they will accept that responsibility.

I wish to make one or two observations on the attitudes that I believe should be adopted by the members of this proposed committee. When a person has a religious or moral conviction about a particular matter, he is entitled to carry that through into his judgment. When he is bound by an ideology, again associated with his moral convictions, I believe he should also have the right to carry that through. I am referring particularly now to whether or not a death penalty should be introduced. I do not think any member of the committee could be, or should be, criticised if he has predetermined views on that question, because it is something that is governed by his own make-up and his own beliefs.

However, the situation is different in the case of attitudes on certain general subjects, and my only criticism of the personnel of the committee is that the Government has seen fit to have on it the Independent member for Townsville South (Mr. Aikens). I think it is well known that the honourable member has very strong views on the judiciary and the actions of members of the judiciary over the years. However, he is only one member of the committee, and I certainly am not going to object at this stage to any of the nine names put forward. I wish that the honourable member for Townsville South was in the Chamber so I could say this to him personally, but I hope he will put aside any prejudice he may have in his attitude to lawyers, barristers and the judiciary. I say that because of the views he has expressed here on many occasions. To my knowledge, the other eight members of

the committee have not indicated that they have any attitude of hostility towards the responsible people in our legal system.

It is to be expected, of course, that the points of view that will be expressed by those who are interviewed will vary. Therefore, it will be necessary for the committee to show good judgment in ascertaining which views it intends to accept. No doubt the terms of reference will allow the committee—and rightly so—to interview people. When it does that, it will have different points of view put to it. Members of the committee will then have to bring forward those points of view in either a majority or a minority report.

The only criticism I have to offer of the motion itself is that I think the terms of reference could have gone a little further. I am disappointed that they did not, and, to test the feeling of the House, I intend moving an amendment that has been drawn up after careful consideration. I trust that it will be acceptable to the honourable member for Toowong and to the Premier, because I think it will strengthen the terms of reference, if I might put it that way.

I refer the house to paragraph (1) (i), which says—

“whether the punishment for crimes of violence is adequate, effective and a sufficient deterrent; . . .”

Although the words themselves are quite acceptable, violence is increasing and, as the honourable member for Toowong said, it must be stamped out. What worries me is that people are being punished by being put into prison for committing a certain crime and then later, after being released, committing a crime of a similar type. That means either that the deterrent is not sufficient or that the correct methods of rehabilitation are not being used.

Although the motion states that the committee is to consider whether there is a sufficient deterrent, it does not contain any reference to rehabilitation. Perhaps it could be said that that can be read into it. However, as I said earlier, this is the first select all-party committee for many years, and we must ensure that it works well. I therefore move the following amendment:—

“Omit subparagraphs (i) and (ii) of paragraph (1) and insert in lieu thereof—

‘(i) whether the punishment for crimes of violence is adequate, effective, a sufficient deterrent and provides for rehabilitation; and

(ii) What measures are considered necessary or desirable to ensure that punishment for crimes of violence is adequate, effective, a sufficient deterrent and provides for rehabilitation.’”

I believe that in its deliberations the committee could well consider recommending to this House that the judiciary be advised that apart from imposing a sentence of so many years or months—this would have to be

provided for in legislation—they could ensure through the legal system that certain rehabilitation procedures were carried out. That does not mean to say that they are always going to be successful.

At the present time one of our complaints about the prison system is that rehabilitation is not adequate. The number of repeat crimes indicates the lack of it. I do not know whether that is where the weakness lies. We are setting up this committee to find out such things. Because of that I hope that my amendment will be accepted.

It is not my desire to delay the appointment of the committee. We welcome it, except for the inclusion of one person who we believe has fixed views on the death penalty. I accept, of course, that he has a right to his own opinion. This subject is outside party politics, and members of the committee should consider it objectively, leaving aside their personal attitude to crime in general. On other matters I feel that the members of the committee should be free to make decisions on the evidence placed before them.

I trust that the mover of the motion, with the support of the Government, will accept the amendment. In no way is it intended to weaken the motion. We are merely trying to broaden the terms of reference so that those who are asked to give evidence may also deal with rehabilitation.

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (11.24 a.m.), in reply: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the reasoned way in which he has approached this. Obviously he reflects the welcome that exists on both sides of the House to the establishment of this first select parliamentary committee for so many years.

The terms of the motion were not determined lightly, but were the subject of a great deal of consideration and argument, and eventual majority agreement by the Government parties. I think it goes almost without saying that aspects of the rehabilitative component of any punishment must automatically be fully considered by the select committee, both in terms of submissions that will be made to it, and in the committee's own deliberations that we would expect would follow any such submissions. For that reason I am not prepared to accept the amendment.

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) (12.25 p.m.): I rise to support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and to indicate quite clearly to the House that we welcome the opportunity of serving on this first select committee, set up to consider this very important matter. I also want to make it quite clear that any statements or views previously expressed by members of the committee in relation to the matters to be considered will not have any bearing on our future determinations under the terms of reference laid down in the motion submitted by the honourable member for Toowong.

We are moving this slight amendment to the terms of reference contained in the motion because we feel that if we are to investigate whether the punishment for crimes of violence is adequate, effective and a sufficient deterrent, we must also consider the very important aspect of rehabilitation. A study of cases determined by courts in this State over the years will disclose that frequently rehabilitation has been taken into consideration by the justice or judge handing out a particular sentence. We feel that it is very important.

The committee may have the opportunity to ascertain how select committees have performed in other States, and possibly New Zealand. We know that a lot of research and study is involved and, as indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, it is expected that voluminous evidence will be submitted to us. The committee will bear a very heavy responsibility and I feel that every aspect should be considered. For that reason we feel that nothing should be omitted from the terms of reference.

Acceptance of the amendment will ensure that it cannot be said later that rehabilitation was not part of the terms of reference and that we had no right to consider it or bring recommendations back to Parliament in relation to it.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (12.29 p.m.): It naturally goes without saying that I am pleased that this motion has come before the Assembly. As honourable members will realise, for a long time I have promoted the idea of select and standing committees in this Chamber. Admittedly I am not Robinson Crusoe in this respect because many members, both Government and Opposition, have advocated the committee system in the Parliament.

This is the first one appointed in over 50 years, and as the Leader of the Opposition said, it is vital because it will be watched very closely not only by members of this Parliament but also by the community generally and, I think, by the media. They will all be very keen to see how effectively members of the joint parties—A.L.P., Country Party and Liberal Party—can work together and take a non-partisan view of a very important problem. It might be said to be a victory for those of us who have advocated such committees against the thinking of rather conservative elements in some sections of the Government.

It is accepted that Governments rule, but many people believe that the Government comprises only those political parties that have a majority in Parliament. I suggest that inherent in the British concept of representative democracy is the principle that it is the Parliament that governs the State.

Certainly the Government parties here have agreed on the committee's terms of reference, and it is a great pity that on a matter

of such great importance the Opposition was not consulted on the scope of this joint-party study. It should have been.

The Leader of the Opposition has moved a valuable amendment. The honourable member for Toowong has indicated that he will not accept it, but I ask him to reconsider his decision. I stress that the Opposition is not playing party politics; all it desires to do is extend the terms of reference so that the investigation will be comprehensive.

Mr. Miller: If you are not playing party politics, why didn't you put this suggestion to Mr. Porter before he gave notice of his motion? You must have had an idea of what was going to come forward.

Mr. WRIGHT: The Opposition did not see the motion until an hour or so ago, and that was the only indication we had of what would be brought forward.

Mr. Miller: You have known for some time.

Mr. WRIGHT: As soon as those Opposition members involved read the proposal, they were struck by the absence of the third element of punishment—namely, rehabilitation.

The three basic elements of dealing with crimes of violence are: punishment, deterrent effect and rehabilitation. It was immediately obvious that only punishment and deterrents were included and there remained the serious gap in that rehabilitation was not mentioned.

Mr. B. Wood: The attitude adopted by the Government member is an indication of his view that we need not come in here at all and there is no point in raising it.

Mr. WRIGHT: I do not accept what he has said. It is a pity that he is trying to make an issue out of this. That is certainly not the objective of the Opposition. As my leader has said, it is not our intention to call for a division on the amendment; nevertheless we stress the desirability of extending the terms of reference.

Mr. Chinchin: Don't you think the system provides for rehabilitation? You cannot say that punishment provides for rehabilitation.

Mr. WRIGHT: I accept the honourable member's point; but naturally when the members of the committee get together we will look at rehabilitation because it cannot be divorced from punishment and deterrent effects. As punishment and deterrents should lead to rehabilitation, the third aspect should be included specifically in the terms of reference.

Mr. Chinchin: The system should provide for it. Your wording does not make sense.

Mr. WRIGHT: I think it does. The amendment states quite simply in part—

“(i) whether the punishment for crimes of violence is adequate, effective, a sufficient deterrent and provides for rehabilitation;”.

Mr. Chinchin: But punishment does not provide for rehabilitation.

Mr. WRIGHT: The honourable member has made his point, and I suppose that we could debate at length the merits of whether the terms should be tied in that manner. However, in this enlightened age surely we think of punishment as embracing rehabilitation.

Anyone who inspects the Brisbane prison does not examine only the confinement of an inmate in a cell. When Stewie Kerr was Comptroller-General, he was very keen on the education and the trade-training programmes that were included in the punishment system. No prison officer, prison advocate or comptroller could discuss a prison system without introducing the aspect of rehabilitation.

When I visited New South Wales, the Comptroller-General, Mr. Cunningham, was very keen to point out to me the rehabilitation projects that were under way there. Similarly, in Victoria the aspect that was highlighted was the rehabilitation of the prisoner within the punishment system—within the punishment context. I cannot see how we can discuss punishments and deterrents without coming back to the third, and most important, aspect—rehabilitation. Without becoming involved in political issues, I ask the honourable member for Toowong to reconsider the position. We have nothing to lose and a lot to gain.

Mr. DAVIS (Brisbane) (12.36 p.m.): As a person who does not believe in engaging in petty politics when discussing a matter as important as this select parliamentary committee (which, as the honourable member for Rockhampton said, is the first to be appointed for over 50 years), I wish to say how happy I am to be nominated as one of three members of the Australian Labor Party to serve on it. However, I should like to see the terms of reference broadened on the lines suggested by the Leader of the Opposition.

It seems that, if the recommendations in the report of the South Australian select committee on law, order and punishment (which were quoted yesterday by the honourable member for Toowong) were put into effect, they would go a long way towards preventing crime and ensuring proper punishment in Queensland. The South Australian committee was not a parliamentary committee.

I understood that the Queensland committee was to consider all aspects of violence in the community. If that is so, we must obviously consider the rehabilitation process, and the parole and probation system.

Yesterday, honourable members on both sides of the House asked if our probation system was weak, if we allow people who commit serious crimes to be discharged too early from prison. They also asked if parolees repeat their crimes. All these matters should be investigated by the committee. I hope that experts in these matters appear before it, and I look forward to having a good talk with some of the administrators.

The honourable member for Rockhampton referred to discussions he had with administrators in Queensland and other States. Some aspects of the administration of certain top gaolers in Queensland emphasise imprisonment rather than rehabilitation.

During one of my visits to the gaol with my parliamentary social welfare committee I asked a top administrator what he believed his role should be—a gaoler or a rehabilitation officer. I assure honourable members that he backed and filled in giving an answer. While he espoused belief in the theory of rehabilitation, it is clear that many gaol superintendents in Queensland and elsewhere are concerned mainly with ensuring that the person who is committed to prison remains there.

Mr. Wright: Would you agree that many of these fellows like to make out that they are involved in rehabilitation?

Mr. DAVIS: That is right. From the point of view of the public it is good for them to be able to say, "We have a young lad here; look what we are doing for him. We are teaching him a trade and so on." That is true of a very small section.

I hope the committee encourages visits to, and reports from, the various institutions to learn what happens to some people when they are imprisoned. If we are told that a person is in gaol for a violent crime, what do we envisage—murder, rape or assault? I suppose those crimes would be rated violent. What do these people do when they are committed to institutions?

This select committee is a step in the right direction. My party fully supports the joint-party system of investigation. I am certain that all members of the committee will carry out their duties diligently, and that their report will at least go some of the way—even if only a small distance—towards reducing violence and ensuring that we do not have the large number of recidivists that are found in other States.

This committee is a step in the right direction. Only good can come out of it. I consider it an honour to be one of the Australian Labor Party representatives on this select committee.

Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumba) (12.41 p.m.): I did not intend to enter the debate but, as certain A.L.P. members endeavoured to make political capital out of this subject, I decided to have my say.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: They are not going to get away with running this committee.

Originally I was against appointing joint-party committees. However, I changed my mind and voted in the Government party room in favour of such a committee. I thought that having A.L.P. members on it would achieve some good and show to the people of Queensland that we intend to exercise democracy and allow Opposition members to have their say on the committee.

I sometimes wonder how members of the A.L.P. can inquire into any matter with an open mind. It is well known that the A.L.P.'s policy is against capital punishment, and A.L.P. members are bound to abide by that decision of their party.

Mr. Houston: I have already explained the moral rights of my people.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I do not believe they will be allowed to abide by their moral rights.

Mr. Houston: If you want to place restrictions on it, you do it.

Mr. FRAWLEY: There are no restrictions on this at all. I agreed to it.

Mr. Houston: We don't need your support.

Mr. FRAWLEY: We will set it up, anyway. I think it is good to have this committee set up but it is well known that the Leader of the A.L.P. is under the complete domination of the Q.C.E. and votes as that body tells him to vote.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Porter: It wouldn't have happened if they had kept their agreement.

Mr. FRAWLEY: That is right. If Opposition members had honoured their agreement, I would not have risen to my feet. I do not intend to waste any more time. I voice my disapproval of the double-cross perpetrated this morning by members of the A.L.P.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. N. F. JONES (Everton) (12.43 p.m.): It appears that most honourable members feel we are taking a step forward in appointing a select committee for the first time in 59 years. It is a pity that one Government member tried to draw a red herring across the path of those members who were sincere in putting their propositions forward and expressing the thought that a broadening of the terms of reference would be in the best interests of Parliament and of the people involved and their investigations.

I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I think that rehabilitation is a very important factor in an investigation of this type. It is the normal flow-on from punishment.

It is not my intention to take up much time this morning but I believe that the committee should look at one other matter. If the committee is conscientious and works within its terms of reference and makes an open-minded investigation into crime and violence, I believe it should study the causes and possible prevention of violence as well. Before an opinion is formed as to whether a prescribed punishment is sufficient as the answer to crimes of violence, the causes of those crimes should be investigated. A close study should be made of the report of the National Committee on the Causes and Prevention of Violence published in America in December 1969.

It is a very long and comprehensive document from people who looked at crimes of violence from the point of view of rehabilitation as well as punishment. They considered also the cause and prevention of violence. It would take a very long time to examine the report in detail. However, if I refer to one section of the report, I am sure honourable members will easily draw a parallel between it and what is happening in Brisbane and the rest of Queensland. The report of the Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence in the United States of America—

Mr. Frawley: Are you speaking to the motion?

Mr. N. F. JONES: Yes. I believe that the terms of reference of the proposed committee should be extended to include an investigation of causes of violence in our community as well as the rehabilitation of those found guilty of violent crimes.

The report, which was sanctioned by the Senate of the United States of America, commented on the causes of violent crime. I wish to have included in "Hansard" those comments so that the members of the proposed committee might consider them and so that the Government might consider extending the committee's terms of reference. The report, which was handed down in 1969, states clearly—

"Violent crime occurs in many places and among all races, but we have just shown that it is heavily concentrated in large cities and especially among poor black young men in the ghettos. We must therefore focus on the conditions of life for the youth of the inner-city to find the root causes of a high percentage of violent crime."

Is it not reasonable to expect that we should examine the causes of crime before considering whether punishment is a complete deterrent? The report continues—

"Much has been written about inner-city slums where crime and delinquency are bred. Social scientists have analysed slum conditions and their causal link to crime and violence, writers and artists have dramatised the sordidness and the frustrations of life in the inner cities, and a

number of Commissions prior to this one have produced comprehensive reports on this subject. In its 1967 Report the Crime Commission described the linkage between violent crime and slum conditions in large cities as 'one of the most fully documented facts about crime.'

I believe that the proposed committee should closely investigate the causes of violence rather than look at punishment as a deterrent. Let us not accept that violence is necessarily here to stay. Let us examine some of the factors causing increases in violence throughout the State, but particularly in the metropolitan area. The report continues—

"Referring to numerous studies conducted over a period of years, the Commission found that violent crime, its offenders and its victims are found most often in urban areas characterised by"—

and it lists a number of factors. I believe the characteristics listed are parallel with those experienced in our community. It is for that reason that I think the terms of reference should include the consideration of causes of violence as a separate issue from rehabilitation. These are the main characteristics that the report concludes are connected with violent crime—

"Low income,
physical deterioration,
dependency,
racial and ethnic concentrations,
broken homes,
working mothers,
low levels of education and vocational skills,
high unemployment,
high proportions of single males,
overcrowded and substandard housing,
low rates of home ownership or single family dwellings,
mixed land use, and
high population density."

Any one of those could be related to the Brisbane metropolitan area or to many other parts of the State. I believe that, as this is to be the first joint committee to be established for 59 years, its terms of reference should be broadened to include an investigation of causes of violence. Let us not merely accept that violence is here to stay. After punishment has been meted out to people who have committed violent crimes, we should continue to the further point, which is a reasonable one, of considering rehabilitation.

Amendment (Mr. Houston) negatived.

Motion (Mr. Porter) agreed to.

WINE INDUSTRY BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Lickiss, Mt. Coot-tha, in the chair)

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.51 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced relating to the development of the wine industry in Queensland and for purposes connected therewith.”

This Bill is of major importance for the development of the Queensland wine industry. Wine has been made in Queensland now for over 100 years, and no doubt many honourable members have tasted the wines made by the oldest wine-makers in the State, the Bassett family of Roma. Bassett's, in fact, were winning gold medals at many national wine shows at the turn of the century. Many honourable members, I am sure, are also aware of the long-established wine-making industry centred on the Granite Belt, where wine has been made for over fifty years.

There are now nearly 50 wineries producing, in total, over 250 000 litres of wine. The most rapid period of expansion of this 100-year-old industry has only occurred in the last ten years. New growers have been experimenting with grape and other fruit wines. Much equipment has been updated and modern new sophisticated techniques introduced. Many acres of suitable land have been planted to specialist wine grapes.

My department is playing a major role in this expansion. Plant variety work and other horticultural experiments were initiated by my predecessor, the Honourable Sir John Row.

My department has also been very active in assessing market potential for the wine industry. Although some problems may arise from time to time concerning the disposal of poorer-quality wines, the market potential for high-grade table wines is excellent, both within Australia and in our rapidly expanding export markets. We feel that there is definitely a future for high-quality Queensland wines.

However, making wine is one thing; promoting the industry is another. This Bill sets out to assist the Queensland wine-maker by helping him to reach a greater purchasing public.

My colleague the Minister for Justice went part of the way to assist the industry with the amendments to the Liquor Act that he introduced last December. One of the major amendments introduced then was the provision made for vigneron licences. The present Bill will complement the Liquor Act by facilitating the promotion and sale of wine.

One of the most important means of promoting any industry is to ensure that the product is presented to the public in the

right manner. In two of the major wine-growing regions in Australia, the Barossa Valley in South Australia and the Hunter Valley in New South Wales, every attempt is made to encourage day-trippers and passing tourists to stop and buy at the wineries at week-ends.

From what I have seen in the Hunter Valley, week-end sales at the winery are very important to the local wine industry. The impact of their promotional activity has been such that a substantial tourist trade has developed. Thus the benefits have been twofold—a rapidly growing wine industry, and the development of the tourist trade.

The same situation exists in the wine-producing areas immediately surrounding Adelaide. Here, people go for week-end drives and picnics to the Barossa Valley to the north of Adelaide, the Southern Vales and the Coonawarra region to the south-east.

Western Australia also has a rapidly growing wine industry. In the Swan Valley, the nearest vineyard is only twelve miles from Perth.

By being in a position to cater for the tourist and holiday trade, the wineries themselves build up a strong and loyal clientele. In addition, distribution and packaging costs are reduced. Indeed, some wineries sell only from the winery.

A similar situation is developing in Queensland in the Stanthorpe area, but it is in need of further encouragement. Even now, however, one Stanthorpe winery averages about 500 to 600 visitors a week. During the vintage, this figure rises substantially.

We are also hopeful of similar developments in the Roma district and probably also the Ipswich-Lockyer area, and areas in between.

With vigorous wine industries in these areas, there should develop an increased demand for accommodation and other tourist facilities. This, in turn, will mean more employment and investment in these regions.

Although sales ex winery provide a valuable outlet, particularly for the smaller wineries, the larger wineries need additional outlets if they are to expand production. For these reasons, the Bill provides for vigneron vineyard licences for the larger wineries, as well as for ordinary vigneron licences for the smaller wine-maker who only sells ex-winery or through the trade.

The holder of a vigneron vineyard licence will be permitted to sell his wines at one other nominated premises apart from the winery. The trading hours at such outlets will be restricted to ordinary retail trading hours for the centre concerned, and sales will only be permitted unopened and in minimum quantities of nine litres or two gallons. Consumption will not be permitted on such premises, and the minimum quantity provision will ensure that any wine purchased there is taken away. As far as sales at the

winery are concerned, these may be in single-bottle lots, unopened. However, free sampling will be permitted and trading hours will be from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The Bill will also allow for the blending at a winery of up to 30 per cent of wines or grape spirit introduced from other areas. This is necessary for technical reasons, particularly in relation to the production of fortified wines.

The holder of a vigneron vintner licence will also be able to sell from his nominated premises (other than at the winery) wines made by him elsewhere in Australia. However, such sales will not be allowed to exceed 30 per cent of his total sales. Vigneron vintner licences will not, of course, be handed out indiscriminately. A person wishing to obtain such a licence will have to make application and satisfy my department that he has the prescribed minimum area and produces the necessary minimum quantity of wine. The minimum area will be 32 hectares (80 acres) and the minimum wine production required will be 50 000 litres (11,000 gallons) a year.

The Bill provides that my department will register all wine-makers who wish to be granted a licence by the Licensing Court. I stress at this stage that the Bill does not interfere with the Liquor Act with regard to the issuing of licences by the Licensing Court. The court will continue to be the body charged with the responsibility of all licences, including the new vigneron vintner licence. My department will merely ascertain whether the applicant is in fact a bona-fide wine-maker who qualifies in terms of the Bill. I will then issue a certificate to that effect to the Licensing Court.

I believe I have covered fairly fully the main provisions of the Bill. The remainder of it deals only with machinery matters.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

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

Mr. BLAKE (Isis) (2.15 p.m.): The Opposition considers that the establishment, or perhaps I should say the consolidation, of a wine industry in Queensland is very desirable. I say that after looking at the prospects of the industry. I believe it will be beneficial not only to Queensland itself but also to the over-all Australian wine industry to have widely dispersed wine-producing areas. It often happens in a primary industry that adverse weather conditions or disease problems are encountered in a certain location and interfere with the reliable production of certain commodities in that area or district.

The fact has been well illustrated in the Australian 1974 vintage figures. According to the March issue of the newsletter of the Wholesale Wine and Brandy Merchants' Association of New South Wales, called "Winews", the 1974 vintage certainly had its ups and downs because of climatic and

disease factors in various areas of the Commonwealth. In regard to bad seasons and disease it says—

"A round up of the 1974 vintage from the main wine grape producing areas in Australia reveals that while the prolific Barossa Valley in South Australia has had its worst vintage for years, the fast-growing Hunter Valley in New South Wales is expected to have a record harvest of about 12 000 tonnes of wine grapes.

"The cause of the trouble in South Australia, and also in the Murray Valley, Rutherglen, Tabilk and Milawa areas of Victoria has been downy mildew. It has cut the Barossa's production by 30 per cent and maybe more and the other areas will all be down on estimates (all mainly because of one disease, downy mildew).

"The highlights of a not-so-rosy picture have definitely been excellent tonnages in the Hunter Valley and in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, where, if frost hadn't hit early in the season, the vintage would have been outstanding."

This illustrates my point that it is advantageous not only to Queensland but to Australia as a whole to have the wine industry in widely dispersed areas.

Mr. Jensen: Can the Minister inform us whether the downy mildew in the grapes in the Barossa Valley was the type that wiped out the B11 type of sugar in Queensland?

Mr. BLAKE: I will ask the Minister that. I know he has a good knowledge of primary production. This is rather a specialist question but I will ask the Minister whether the downy mildew in grapes in the Barossa Valley was the same type that wiped out the popular B11 sugar-cane variety in the sugar industry in Queensland.

Mr. Sullivan: I can ask for technical advice from the honourable member for Bundaberg.

Mr. BLAKE: In any case, with a wider range of dispersed areas and varying climatic conditions, there would be more stability in the industry. I think I have just illustrated this in my reference to the 1974 vintage. The point here is that apart from simply being able to produce a product we must have reasonable markets or prospects of reasonably profitable markets for the additional production of the commodity. That leads me to ask: what is the over-all market picture for Australian wines? I think it is important to look first at that.

Wholesale sales of wine throughout Australia for the year ended 30 June 1973—the last for which there are figures—showed an increase on previous years of 12.34 per cent. That is quite a large increase. Figures released by the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics reveal that in 1972-73 the Australian consumption of wine rose to 2.19 gallons per head from the level of 1.97 gallons for the previous year. That, too, is a large

increase and one that reflects a great change in the wine-drinking habits of the community.

Whereas for many years going back to the depression the average Australian's concept of wine was that it was a very cheap product—and it was quite often referred to as “plonk”—more recently the community, with increasing affluence, have become much more discriminating. Our changing tastes are reflected in the figures that I have quoted.

Mr. B. Wood: Do you think that Barossa Pearl is the best that you can hope for?

Mr. BLAKE: No, I do not. Nevertheless, it is a very good wine in its class. I might add that numerous classes of Australian wine enjoy a very high reputation on world markets.

Australian wines have made a remarkable fight back on overseas markets, particularly in Great Britain. This is surprising, because, as we know, Britain has entered the European Economic Community, certain members of which are perhaps the most famous wine-producing nations in the world. I am led to believe that over the past three months the export of Australian wine to the British market returned to the high level that obtained prior to Britain's entry into the E.E.C.

Furthermore, last year Australian wine exports to the United States of America and Canada increased to a fantastic level. The United States export market has risen by approximately 150,000 gallons, and the Canadian market has increased by almost 1,000,000 gallons. Incidentally, Canada is our best customer.

On the surface the marketing prospects for the Australian wine industry appear to be very bright, and to meet the increase in demand acreages devoted to grapes and the production of wine have been expanded tremendously.

Australia's ability to meet the demand bears close examination. In fact, the supply side was looked at last year by the National Agricultural Outlook Conference at its March meeting. That body's report on the wine industry says, in part—

“In fact, the answer is to say that the industry was aware of these developments and set about finding ways and means of coping with the changed circumstances.”

Those remarks are related to supply, stocks on hand and market prospects.

The report continues—

“In order to determine the facts of the situation, the Australian Wine Board commissioned a study by a firm of consultants, and the findings of that study substantiated earlier forecasts that there was a possibility of supply running ahead of demand.

“One of the initiatives which the Board supported was the creation of a Commonwealth Grape Advisory Committee to inform State and Commonwealth Ministers through the Standing Committee on Agriculture on the industry's circumstances and needs.”

I wonder what communication there has been on this topic between the Minister and the Standing Committee.

Circumstances and needs are of great importance; the fact that an industry has the ability to produce is not of itself sufficient.

The report goes on to say—

“This Committee has continued to work well and has recently formulated a set of recommendations for transmittal to the Australian Agricultural Council which it believes would, if implemented, go a long way towards alleviating the likely problems of the future, particularly those which are expected to occur in the next three to five years.

“Unfortunately it must be acknowledged that the C.G.A.C. is very much a paper tiger. The most it can bring to bear on the unco-ordinated activities of individual States is moral suasion and where narrow considerations are paramount, moral suasion amounts to very little.”

In other words, that body believes that supply could be overtaking demand, and that if there is unco-ordinated action between the States—this is what we are worrying about in sugar production—the wine industry could run into trouble.

Mr. Jensen: This Bill was introduced to consolidate the seat of the honourable member for Roma.

Mr. BLAKE: I do not know whether that is so or not. Wine has been produced in the Roma area for quite a long time. I do not know if it has always been produced under the name of Bassett, but I do know that Mr. Bassett, senior, was quite aged when he recently died.

Mr. Tomkins: Wine has been produced in Roma for 111 years.

Mr. BLAKE: I knew that wine had been produced in Queensland for 100 years. The honourable member for Roma has beaten by 10 years the record referred to by the Minister. That is a remarkable achievement.

As I said, districts with different climatic conditions produce wines containing specific qualities. That is well recognised by the connoisseur. The Bassett winery is renowned for one of its sauternes, which is recognised throughout Australia as unique. Off hand, I do not know what the physical and climatic conditions would produce in the way of wine with more refined means of production, but this company has a reputation for producing one class of wine. Perhaps

its reputation could be expanded through the use of modern technology. Whether that is so or not, Australian wines are readily accepted on the world markets.

After listening to the Minister's introductory speech, I do not know if he is interested in making a huge impact on the world wine market, whether he is concerned only about catering for the Australian or, more particularly, the Queensland market, or whether he is interested in promoting a promising incentive for tourism in the area. I have visited all the wine-producing Australian States, each of which has wine of distinctive quality. Apart from the economics of the industry, wine-producing is a great stimulant to the tourist industry.

Mr. Sullivan: There are three points. We believe that Queensland should share in the Australian market and the expanding export market, and also that we should use the wine industry to try to develop the tourist trade.

Mr. BLAKE: I accept that those are the Minister's objectives, but I suggest that the first objective would be the easiest one to attain. I certainly hope that the industry succeeds in attaining its objectives.

I was very interested in the Minister's remarks about unco-ordinated State expansion in the wine industry. As Minister for Primary Industries he knows that if wheat-growers and other primary producers do not have agreements, surpluses are produced and frequently create economic hardship. No doubt that is what the National Agricultural Outlook Conference was worrying about when it referred to the unco-ordinated activities of States.

We have to learn to crawl before we can walk or run. In other words, we should first investigate the local market, then the Australian market, and finally the overseas market. I am not being pessimistic—indeed I am being realistic—when I say that I do not believe we can make a huge impact in the three spheres early in the piece. Perhaps it is well that this should be so. If we did, I am sure that the other wine-producing areas of Australia would have a very definite right to representation at a co-ordinating conference and in industry control.

I am not able to speak at any length or with any specific knowledge on the licensing proposals outlined by the Minister. The many specifics include areas planted with grapes and gallonage to be produced under certain licences. It would be better for me not to waste the time of the Committee by speaking in an uninformed way. I shall reserve further comment until the Bill is in our hands.

Mr. TOMKINS (Roma) (2.31 p.m.): I support the Minister in the introduction of this Bill. As he indicated, it will have some

impact on the area I represent. The honourable member for Isis also said that wine is grown at Roma. That is one reason why I have taken a particular interest in the Bill.

Romavilla Vineyards was established in 1863 and that is how I arrive at the period of 111 years. It has been owned by one family, and Mr. W. A. Bassett, who passed away recently, was only a second-generation Bassett, which indicates that they live a long time. When Romavilla was at its height he was assisted by his two brothers. I believe that one concentrated on the winery, another on the growing of grapes and the third on selling wine throughout Queensland and New South Wales. At about the time of the last war, they had a thriving business. Time caught up with them and they have all passed on. It is unfortunate that their sons did not see fit to follow in their footsteps. However, that is no concern of ours.

Romavilla Vineyards enjoyed world repute. As the Minister indicated, it won prizes at Royal Shows since the turn of the century. Unless something had been done in some way to continue its operations, it would have gone out of existence. Some four or five years ago I took a well-known representative of a Victorian winery to see the Honourable F. A. Campbell. He was considering purchasing Romavilla even though it was not on the market. However, when he surveyed the possibilities his reaction was that the marketing in Queensland was too restricted to make it worth his while coming here. He soon went back to Victoria and, as far as I know, he has not returned. It so happened that, within the past two years, I took another firm's representative to see the Minister for Justice, the Premier and the Minister for Primary Industries. Certain marketing conclusions were arrived at.

As the honourable member for Isis said, the wine industry in Queensland has a good future; but it is of no use growing something unless the product is promoted. The Minister put it very well when he said that making wine is one thing but promoting the industry is another. The wine industry in Queensland has a great future if the marketing problems can be overcome. Towards the end of last year I was hopeful that this could be done under the Liquor Act, but it was not to be.

For the benefit of the Committee, let me point out that Cabinet decided on 6 February last year that departmental officers should thoroughly examine the wine industry in Queensland and make a submission to Cabinet advising whether the industry should be fostered and, if so, the ways and means by which it would be best achieved. Subsequently, as a result of that recommendation, a report titled "Report on the prospects for a Queensland Wine Industry" was presented. It was written by Mr. G. S. Vinning, who is the marketing officer of the Marketing Services Branch of the Department of Primary Industries. I desire to read two or three of

the conclusions that he reached on wine-growing in Queensland. The comments in this report tie in exactly with what southern interests felt about engaging in Queensland wine-making. One finding of Mr. Vinning's was—

"Queensland's liquor licensing laws are more restrictive than those in other States. The major deficiencies, in comparison with other States, and with other countries, are in relation to wine bars, single-bottle licences, both for bottle shops and wineries, and wine sales on non-licensed premises, that is chain stores. In addition, Queensland is unique in the close relationship between the two brewing companies and hotels and the distribution of wine."

Further on he said—

"The main requirements for change would appear to be the need for licensed wineries to be authorised to sell in single bottle lots exwinery, and to operate wholesale selling depots elsewhere in the State from which sales may be made in 2 gallon lots (or the equivalent thereof) either to licensed retailers or to the general public."

I believe that the crux of the matter lies in the comment I have just quoted. As the Minister indicated in his speech, that is what this legislation is all about. The right to sell in single bottle lots ex winery was given under the Liquor Act that was enacted towards the end of last year. However, the other one "to operate wholesale selling depots elsewhere in the State from which sales may be made in 2-gallon lots"—was not included. From information I have been given, it would be nearly impossible for southern people to spend a lot of money in Queensland trying to develop a winery while at the same time attempting to market on reasonably equal terms.

The Bill provides that if one has a winery of 80 acres and a throughput of 50 000 litres a year, which is 20,000 gallons, one may be registered as a vigneron vintner, which is the name to be given to people who have a vigneron's licence and as well qualify to establish a selling place anywhere in Queensland—but one only.

Mr. Newton: Is that the formula?

Mr. TOMKINS: That is the way it is to be worked, yes. It means that they then have a method of selling direct to the public, which is the system operating in other States. The basis of the success of the Barossa Valley in South Australia is that one may have a day out and buy one bottle or a dozen. It is a very pleasant day indeed. One can do the same in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales, but not in Queensland.

Mr. Newton: Did you say you had a day out on one bottle?

Mr. TOMKINS: I said one could have a day out and buy one bottle or a dozen.

I am sure that in future years people in Queensland's wine-growing areas will say, "That was wise legislation that was introduced on 5 April 1974." The Bill will bring Queensland into line with the South.

The honourable member for Isis said he did not believe that legislation would have an earth-shattering effect on the development of the industry in the near future. I agree with that. However, most things begin in a fairly small way. According to the Minister's speech, it will be possible for any southern firm to come to Queensland and qualify for one outlet—and one outlet only—through which it may sell its own wines. It may also import wine to Queensland to blend in the proportion of 30 per cent to 70 per cent of Queensland wines. I hope no-one asks me why, but that must be done. I understand that wines have to be brought from the South in order to make fortified wines. When they are blended with Queensland wines, the result is very good. Some honourable member mentioned earlier in the debate Madeira and sauterne. They are fortified wines containing a blend of wine from the South. In order to provide a wider variety of wines, firms are also given the right to bring up 30 per cent of wine under their own brand name and sell it here.

Mr. Newton: Which do you like—the whites, or the reds?

Mr. TOMKINS: Personally, I like the whites. Be that as it may, development of the industry by anybody who is sufficiently interested should now be possible. I have no doubt that as time goes by it will be necessary to ease some of the present restrictions, although I am informed that, by the use of drip irrigation, soil-testing and the correct soil additives, grape-growing can be expedited greatly in Queensland and it is very desirable that it should be.

Queensland could perhaps have the greatest potential for grape-growing of any Australian State. It seems rather extraordinary to me that until now no Government has been asked to do anything to assist the wine industry in Queensland. There are quite a few small wineries in the Stanthorpe area, and I think there is also one near Texas. I know that grape-growing is carried on not far from where the Minister lives. All these activities probably will be developed now that people can see that marketing arrangements will enable development to take place, and that can only be for the good of the industry. I hope that firms take advantage of the opportunities offering.

In a trip that I made some years ago to Europe, I found that wine was virtually a national drink. Light wine was available for about the price of lemonade in France, Spain and Italy. It seemed to be very popular, and the people appeared to me to be fairly healthy. Perhaps wine is better for

people than some of the other beverages they drink. From the medical point of view, the development of a wine industry in this State may be good for all Queenslanders.

I am hopeful that, as a result of the introduction of this legislation, a viable wine industry will be developed in the Roma area, which I represent. Since 1863, which is a long time ago, Bassett's winery has employed many people. In fact, the names "Bassett" and "Roma" are inseparable. Possibly the industry will now really be put on the map in the area in which I live, and I know that people there are hoping that will happen. It has been said to me many times, "Whatever you do, try to save this industry." Of course, the old methods used in making the wine and the old casks used to store it give the wine a distinctive flavour. It is quite different from wine made in a winery under more modern conditions. If the industry is able to continue, I am sure that the blended wines made there will become more and more popular on world markets.

In my opinion, the proposed Bill is a very wise measure. It has had to run the gauntlet of public opinion.

I was particularly pleased to hear the honourable member for Isis say that the proposal looked all right to him. Irrespective of party politics, if it is possible to save an industry or help it, we should do so. It is so easy to kill an industry. If we can push an industry along, Queensland gets another industry.

I fully support the measure.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (2.46 p.m.): Events of recent days recall an incident when the present Ambassador-elect to Ireland, who was then Premier of this State, returned to Queensland many years ago after the coronation celebrations. At that time he suggested that we should adopt the French habit of wine-drinking in this State. What a very intelligent, pertinent observation! How fine it would be to see on a Saturday afternoon on the footpaths of Queensland's garden city, particularly the footpaths of Spring Hill, members of the populace sitting around tables under coloured umbrellas drinking the "fourpenny dark".

I view this measure with very grave suspicion. Although the motives as enunciated by the Minister might, as the honourable member for Roma said, be in the best interests of the wine industry of this State, the Opposition will take a very serious look at the import of the Bill. Frankly, my first observation is that it is purely a Bill to enable a southern man to increase the retail outlets of his wholesale liquor industry. It is a way in for him. He had to get in somehow. Previously he had sought a way in under the various provisions of the Liquor Act. He was evidently blocked in that direction, so he came with arms outstretched and interviewed a very fine, decent,

upright member of this Assembly, the honourable member for Roma. He sold him the story that in the interests of Roma he should try to preserve the industry in his own electorate. The honourable member took the bait. Quite frankly, he does not know very much about the ramifications of the liquor industry, and I think he would admit that. In his own pastoral industry, particularly in the breeding of stud stock, he is an expert, and conducts it in an exemplary fashion. The honourable member took the bait. He was blindfolded by the gentleman concerned. He went to see the Premier and the appropriate Minister and, as a result, this Bill is now before us.

Mr. Row interjected.

Mr. HANSON: I have no time for light-weights at the moment. I am dealing with a very important matter. The honourable member sits in this Chamber in sartorial splendour, but I do not think he would be similarly clad if he indulged in some of the products from Romavilla.

Until a discerning consumer market develops within this State, I do not think we will be able to be 100 per cent certain of the contents of a particular bottle of wine. For years to come I doubt whether we will be 100 per cent certain that Romavilla wines have been made from grapes actually grown in Roma. It is possible under the existing legislation in every State of the Commonwealth for producers to cut their wines with cheaper beverages, such as sultana wines from their own or some other district—false vintage wines that are not true to label. It is a product which, rather than fanning the flames of enthusiasm, could tend to turn the young aficionado to flagons of better value.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. HANSON: The honourable member has nothing to be proud of. I have heard about him on Saturday afternoons. I am told that he goes for a bit of the old Tintara, and thinks that all other stuff is rubbish.

The matter of labelling was mentioned in the House last night. We should get to the stage in industry where there is some honesty in this regard. The lack of demarcation in our wine industry has been a matter of concern recently in the Asian and United States markets. A certain member of this Committee would know something of what happened a couple of years ago. Some of the product was certainly not up to standard and caused quite a bit of concern on the Asian market. Admittedly it was limited concern; nevertheless it was significant.

If overseas people are willing to pay a good price, they are entitled to a good product. If they want a Hunter Valley red and are willing to pay \$4 or \$5 for it, they are entitled to the right product. This

legislation has no concern for a grower-operated guarantee within the industry. France, Italy, Portugal, Germany and many other countries have this form of control. In France it is known as "appellation controllee"—an appeal to control. While this is expensive to maintain, I believe there are possibilities in this country for having a form of grower-operation control; in fact one is already in existence in the small wine industry in Tasmania. In that State there is an association with the C.S.I.R.O. and a seal mark is placed on a bottle signifying that the wine is made 100 per cent from grapes grown in that State.

I mentioned earlier that we were going to have a very serious look at the proposal. The Minister's observations brought a few matters to mind. He spoke about the necessity for having retail outlets. Everyone would like to have something served up on a platter. The Minister also mentioned that wine could be sold at these vineyards between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., and that people would drive out there at week-ends. There was no mention whether it could be sold on Sundays. I want to know the answer to that point.

Mr. Sullivan: Yes, it can.

Mr. HANSON: It can be sold on Sundays?

Mr. Sullivan: Yes, every day.

Mr. HANSON: You could have been a little more specific.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr. HANSON: The Minister could have been a little more specific, instead of trying to cover the matter up. Everyone else has to shut down on some statutory holidays and I see no reason why plonk shops should be opened for 12 hours on the day of the Lord. It is absolutely scandalous.

The Minister spoke also of the blending of wines and of the introduction of 30 per cent of wine or grape spirit from other areas. This could be the thin end of the wedge. Anyone who has any knowledge of wine knows that in the wine industry distilled wine bears the name of "brandy". This is a thin edge of the wedge to boost sales. The Minister also spoke of retail outlets being able to bring in wine from other areas. Under section 92 of the Constitution, neither the Minister for Primary Industries nor the Premier will be able to prevent persons from bringing wine from other areas. No-one, including the Minister, and his officers, will know whether Hunter Valley wine or any other is brought from the South and put in the vats at Roma. It is absolutely impossible to detect, so the Minister is not hoodwinking anyone.

Furthermore, the Minister has not satisfactorily explained the selling procedures. I understand that people will be able to buy a single bottle of wine at the winery. As the honourable member for Roma well knows, this has been possible for years.

The late William Bassett was a very fine old man. For many years prior to his death he struggled to maintain his industry in spite of the fact that members of his family showed no interest.

I should like the Minister to indicate whether the second proposed retail outlet will be established in Brisbane. If so, I have no doubt that, true to form, the Government will establish it in South Brisbane—and honourable members know what I mean by that remark.

Sir Gordon Chalk: That's where you got all your money.

Mr. HANSON: I am not casting any reflections on anyone. If the Treasurer cannot get "over the odds" tomorrow he'll moan and groan. Will the city outlet be able to sell single bottles of wine?

Mr. Sullivan: No.

Mr. HANSON: I am glad to hear it.

Another very important matter is this: in your remarks—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Chair did not make any remarks. The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr. HANSON: Thank you for both your tolerance and your advice, Mr. Lickiss.

In his introductory remarks the Minister did not state specifically whether the Bill will relate only to a vineyard within Queensland. The possibility that it will also relate to products imported from other States could cause a ripple of discontent—it might even build up into a wave—throughout the retail industry. Because other provisions as outlined by the Minister cause us concern, the Opposition will scrutinise the legislation very closely.

I have no doubt that the honourable member for Roma is imbued with the highest ideals and motives. However, he has been blindfolded and led to the slaughter, as it were. As for the Minister—although he has a very distinguished career in the wheat industry, he should think twice about the wine industry and the retail liquor industry.

Sir Gordon Chalk: Which you got fat on.

Mr. HANSON: I worked damned hard in the industry, and I gave a lot of satisfaction to my customers. I have never been guilty of robbing anyone or of looking for "over the odds".

Mr. AHERN (Landsborough): I move—
"That the question be now put."

Motion agreed to.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

**COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT
BILL**

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Lickiss,
Mt. Coot-tha, in the chair)

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice) (3.1 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to approve the Interstate Corporate Affairs Agreement; to make further provisions with respect to companies incorporated in certain other States and in certain Territories of the Commonwealth which carry on business in Queensland; to validate certain matters; for these and other purposes to amend the Companies Act 1961-1972; and for purposes connected therewith.”

For many years the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General has sought to achieve uniformity in the field of company law throughout Australia. The introduction in the State of the Companies Act 1961 was a major step in that direction, and from time to time since subsequent amendments to that Act, and to the company law of other States, have substantially maintained that uniformity.

Late in 1973, agreement was reached between the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria and this State to establish an Interstate Corporate Affairs Commission. On 18 February 1974, the Interstate Corporate Affairs Agreement was entered into between those States. The purposes of the commission are—

(a) To achieve greater uniformity in the law relating to companies and the securities industry;

(b) To establish reciprocal arrangements and common standards and procedures in the administration of that law;

(c) To co-ordinate administration and avoid unnecessary duplication for the greater convenience of the public and greater efficiency in the over-all administration; and

(d) To increase the protection the law affords to the investing public.

I would like to mention that the agreement is also open to other States that may desire to participate. There is already an indication that another State wishes to join.

The principal objects of the Bill are to ratify the agreement which establishes the commission, and to introduce measures that will lead to further uniformity on company law and company administration between the participating States. The Bill will make provision for the registration of companies incorporated in a participating State to be immediately recognised in the other participating States. In this regard, it will no longer be necessary for a company to comply with the various procedures now included in the Act. In future a company, once incorporated and having signified its intention of carrying on business in another participating

State, will be permitted to carry on business in that other State simply by lodging a notice indicating its place of business.

Present company names will be safeguarded, and it will be possible to make ready checks between participating States where registration is sought in respect of a company proposing to carry on business in more than one State.

Where a prospectus is to be issued in more than one State, the Bill makes provision for its immediate approval in those other States, provided, of course, that they are participating States.

Provision is also made for current charges over the property of a company to be notified to the commissioners of the participating States where that company is carrying on business in more than one of those States.

Another very important proposal provides for an inspector investigating records of a company in a participating State to be empowered to investigate records of that company in another participating State.

In terms of the agreement, New South Wales and Victoria have already introduced into their Lower Houses legislation similar to the Bill. The ratification of the agreement and the establishment of the commission can only lead to the fulfilment of the ideal of uniform company law.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (3.6 p.m.): Few honourable members would not agree that legislation is required to overhaul the Companies Acts in this country. We all know the problems faced by many people, members of the public and shareholders alike, who are involved with companies. It has been said for some time that we need uniformity, and the Minister said that this was achieved in 1961. Fair enough. The need for uniformity was recognised in 1961, and all States introduced uniform Companies Acts. It is vital to remember that point. The States realised the need, and they got together and introduced uniform legislation.

Accepting that fact, after the States introduced uniform legislation, the system broke down, and the company laws throughout Australia are now in very great need of repair. Many differences have developed, mainly because individual States have introduced their own amendments without, in most cases, notifying the other States. Although they came to an agreement in 1961 after much discussion and deciding that uniformity was required, necessary and to the advantage of everyone concerned, the system broke down in a few years. Various States acted against the agreement with the result that today Australia has a so-called uniform company law that is far from what it is supposed to be. In fact, uniformity exists only in theory. In actual practice, the individual State enactments vary significantly, and they are very much open to criticism.

Much time could be spent in this Chamber discussing the various companies that have been investigated in Queensland. This morning, the honourable member for Lytton mentioned a company referred to in a report tabled by the Minister for Justice. Other investigations have been carried on by the Minister for Justice. The honourable member for Brisbane suggested investigations into some companies, and the honourable member for Kurilpa was involved in certain matters. The Treasurer took action to prevent a take-over of a certain company in this State. I could go on and on speaking of these problems.

I shall now deal with the technical aspects of uniform legislation. Under the present law, multiple registration of Australian incorporated companies is required. Although I do not know the cost involved, I do know that it creates great inconvenience and delay and is very costly. There are technical difficulties in the areas of take-overs and the registration of debentures. This should not be so. We cannot say that companies are a unique aspect of society, and that they pertain only to North Queensland, Central Queensland, or Queensland as a whole. Companies spread themselves far and wide. They have organisations and agencies—call them what you will—in every State of this nation.

There is unnecessary duplication in the lodgement of documents. Companies, regardless of where they are incorporated, have to lodge documents in all States in which they desire to operate. Conflict exists between the States, and problems have arisen in Queensland in the registration of business names. I intend to raise with the Minister for Justice a case concerning automatic washing machines and laundries. This problem arose in Queensland over the registration of names.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: You are about the fourth one to get onto the band wagon.

Mr. WRIGHT: I know that the honourable member for Chatsworth has also been involved. I think this matter needs to be aired—not at this point, but at a later stage.

The registration of companies is a difficult area, especially when New South Wales is able to decide that a certain company can have a special name and a Queensland company can slightly vary it. Some co-ordination is needed here. There is a need to regulate the incorporation, management and winding up of companies. The Minister for Justice has certainly been involved in attempts to wind up companies. We know that the very companies he was attempting to wind up in Queensland were having their activities acknowledged and recognised in New South Wales. Again, there was no co-ordination.

It is ridiculous that company law should be the subject of different Acts in six States and two Territories, especially as the activities of so many companies are Australia-wide. I am sure there is no need to develop the argument that compliance with so many different laws and separate administrations of the law is frustrating to the companies as well as to the public.

There has also been general agreement that the present company law is inadequate. It certainly is. It seems to me that it protects the companies more than it protects the shareholders. A tremendous amount of criticism has been directed at this and the lack of proper administration of the Companies Act in Queensland.

Only the other day I was reading an article written by Mr. F. W. Lippiatt that appeared in "The Australian" in November 1973. In his address to the annual convention of the Australian Institute of Credit Management he expressed grave concern over the lack of proper administration of the Act in Queensland. I will quote a few passages from the report of his speech, but not at length—

"He said a shoplifter convicted of stealing a minor article was more likely to go to gaol in Queensland than a man who promoted a company and then stole from it.

"In some important sectors little or nothing had been done to administer the Act. The State received substantial revenue from companies and there have recently been substantial increases in charges."

The article continues under the heading "Plunder"—

"The safest way of escaping the consequences of the law has been the promotion of companies and, in many cases, stealing from companies.

"There are more companies facing acute financial difficulties today than at any time since 1960 and the authorities must take notice of this fact."

That is very real and valid criticism. There is also criticism that the Companies Office in Queensland is presently understaffed, under-equipped and underpaid. I will not go into what we should be paying these persons, but let us make sure we have sufficient officers to supervise the requirements of the Acts. I do not believe we have.

The question is then posed—and this is the main point that the Opposition wishes to discuss—how best can we obtain uniformity, which is so desirable. That is what we are seeking. Honourable members can talk all day about the problems, but we need to come back to the crux of the matter, which is to achieve uniformity so that we may overcome the present multiplicity of requirements imposed on companies in the various States.

There are two choices. The first is uniform legislation by the States. The States and the Territories should have uniform legislation

that is exactly in line, one Act with the other. The second is to have a national Act. What is happening here today is the reaction to that suggestion. Whilst there has been much legislation in the last couple of weeks from the Justice Department through the Minister for Justice, most of it has been in the interests of Queensland. Most of it has been, if not of a technical nature, of a desired administrative nature. Today for the first time we return to a completely different motive—a political one. There is no doubt whatsoever what is behind today's Bill.

The Minister was involved in discussions among Attorneys-General in September. A headline appeared—"Murphy promises a national Companies Act." That was the statement. That was the requirement. In view of the problems that have arisen and in accordance with the recommendations of a special committee set up for the purpose, the Federal Attorney-General promised a national Companies Act. This was desired not only by the Federal Labor Government but also by the previous Government. Senator Murphy desired to take some action, and he gave notice that this was what he intended to do.

However, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, three non-Labor States—"Tory"; call them what you will—got together to bring down uniform legislation. How ridiculous can you get! How can we have uniform State legislation when only three of the six States are involved? They did not even bother to invite the Labor States.

They drew up terms of reference and said, "This is what we agree on. Now we will invite the Labor States to participate." Surely that is proof of the political motive behind this legislation. Since 2 December 1972, Mr. Lickiss, we have seen a desire on the part of the Government to bring about a confrontation between the Government of this State and the Federal Government, and it has certainly been evident in many areas. Time and time again there has been conflict, no doubt under the heading of "State rights".

Let us accept the fact that the States have a role to play in the administration of companies. It has been proved between 1961 and today that the States have not been able to achieve their purpose or carry out their responsibility. There has been too much conflict. Changes and amendments to legislation have not been passed on to other States. It has been proved that what the States are trying to do has not worked, and it will not work now because only three States are involved to begin with. I think the situation must be considered very carefully.

One of the arguments that has been used is, "We don't want centralisation in Canberra." Time and time again one hears honourable members opposite say that there is too much centralisation. If one reads the terms of reference of this particular

agreement, one sees that it is to be administered from Melbourne. So what Queensland is now saying is, "We don't want Canberra to have anything to say about it, but we are quite happy to let Melbourne do it." Eventually, of course, there is to be a secretariat in Sydney. It is said that Queensland will have representation. If honourable members opposite do not believe that that is so, I suggest they should read some of the articles that have been printed on this subject, which state very clearly that the administration is going first to Melbourne and then possibly to Sydney. In effect, the Government is saying, "We are not in favour of centralisation, but we are prepared to let some other State run it."

The Opposition has been criticised for giving things away. This is an example of what the Government is prepared to do. It is prepared to give this right away and allow the Act to be administered from some other area.

Mr. Knox: You have mis-stated the situation completely.

Mr. WRIGHT: I do not think I have mis-stated the situation. As I said earlier, this is no more than a political attack on the Federal Government. Honourable members opposite talk about State rights. I believe that eventually States will disappear.

Mr. R. E. Moore: That is your idea.

Mr. WRIGHT: I believe that will eventually happen. So many changes are taking place that eventually States will disappear. Whether or not State Governments will be removed, I do not know; but I believe that eventually a two-tier structure will emerge—regional Governments, which will be grass-root Governments with a tremendous amount of say, and a central Government that will take care of international and national questions. That is not bad in principle if there is to be a Federal Government.

I think one could say that there is a real role for a Federal Government to play today. In spite of the Opposition from the Government side of the Chamber to the type of Government now in office in the Federal sphere, there is a need for a Federal Government. That has been admitted before. The States have said, "Yes, we will set up a Federal Government and give it certain powers. We believe that such things as the Armed Forces and defence should be discussed and administered at a Federal level. We believe that things such as immigration should be dealt with at a Federal level. We believe that many matters should be cared for at a Federal level."

In my opinion, the commercial aspects of the activities of companies should also be cared for at a Federal level, for the reasons I have stated. One sees so many Acts in force, and so many companies spreading their wings through the various States. They do not believe in State boundaries; they do not say, "Yes, we will have a

completely separate organisation in Queensland and another separate organisation in New South Wales." It is one and the same organisation, with agencies and subdepartments throughout the nation. The companies of which I am speaking are national in both their identity and their administration. They do not adhere in any way to State boundaries.

Mr. Baldwin interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: I did not know that. I thank the honourable member for telling me.

Mr. Knox: You have a junior counsel to help you.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am prepared to admit that I can always learn, and I am always willing to learn. It is a pity that some honourable members opposite did not take a leaf out of my book.

Of course, it is very easy for the Opposition to say that this is a political move, and that there should be a national Act. It is very easy to say that it would be better to have a national Act in this instance. I stress that I am not talking about anything else at the moment. No doubt the honourable member for Murrumba, or some other honourable member opposite holding similar views, will get up and say, "This is centralisation." We want to keep this debate to the Companies Act. We believe this particular area of legislation should be controlled by the nation.

Let us come back to a non-political group. That is what we should look at. People do not always respect the Opposition's view, because they say, "You are expected to say that, anyway." So I bring to the notice of the Committee comments made by the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators as they were reported in "The Australian" of 27 November 1973—

"According to the Institute statement its policy on legislative change contained three main elements.

"In the interests of the community it is considered that there should be either an Australian Act, or an Australian Act acceptable to and administered by the States and territories . . ."

That is a very important point. I am not going to come in on the question of who should administer it. My personal belief is that it would be better administered by the States, but I believe again that it should be national legislation.

Reference is made to the problems that could arise through the conflict between the Federal and State Governments, and the article continues—

"While the institute remained strong in its support for an Australian Companies Act, it expressed reservations about the kind of legislation that might be brought in by a Federal Labor Government."

I admit that. It is no use referring only to extracts that suit one's argument. Later the article states—

"However, the institute pointed to the many problems which would be removed by the creation of a single national Companies Act . . ."

That is the final paragraph. While the institute discusses the whole matter, and while it talks about the pros and cons, it comes back and says again that it would prefer a single national Companies Act.

I believe that the Opposition has a firm case here. We realise the difficulties under the Companies Act. We believe that the office in Queensland has been understaffed and that many directors have used the loopholes to their own advantage; we believe that many shareholders have been disadvantaged because of the Companies Act here; we believe there have been high costs, duplications and delays because of the various Acts throughout the States; but we do not believe that we should have sectional legislation. The answer to the problem is a national Act.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT (Chatsworth) (3.22 p.m.): We are very grateful to the honourable member for Rockhampton for telling us that he, too, believes that State Governments will ultimately be phased out. From a Government point of view it is obvious that we on this side merely have to be patient and sooner or later we will have a declaration from every honourable member opposite that he feels the same way. The honourable member for Redlands has already done us the same favour by expressing himself in like terms. It is therefore apparent that clear lines for the philosophical clash ahead are now well defined. We believe in a continuation of the Federalist system, and we do not believe that the States will disappear even in the long term. We are happy to meet our opponents on those grounds.

The honourable member seems to think that he has unveiled some deep, dark secret. He spoke about the real motives in bringing this Bill forward. He had adverted to the Attorney-General, and laid bare his motives. Let us be honest and frank about this. We readily acknowledge that we find it necessary to pre-empt the overtures by the Federal Attorney-General. It is highly necessary, and I will tell this Committee why. The Federal Government has already put teeth into the Australian Industries Development Corporation. It presently has before the Federal House the Finance Corporations Bill. Those two pieces of legislation alone would almost entirely put the business community of the whole of the nation in a straitjacket. If additional to that it had control of corporations, then the take-over would be complete. So it is necessary, as it has never been necessary before, to ensure that company law remains vested in the

States. Therefore those of my political complexion are enthusiastic about this Interstate Corporations Commission.

In the course of his address the honourable member for Rockhampton said that present company law is slanted in favour of directors and against shareholders. I have never known a time when the exact opposite was more true. The last amendment to the Companies Act tied directors down to heavy responsibilities for disclosure. Now, if some extraordinary circumstance occurs between the printing of a balance sheet and its presentation to an annual meeting that fact must be made known to the shareholders. In other words, the directors cannot rest on their oars at the time of the annual meeting and say, "That was the situation at the time of the closure of the books." They must give an indication of what the situation is right up to the moment. Therefore, in terms of documentation, revelation and notes that have to be appended to balance sheets, a very heavy responsibility rests on directors of corporations these days. The doctrine of disclosure is now practised in a way in which it has never been practised before. Gone are the days when we saw the bulking of millions of dollars under some small heading. The doctrine of disclosure prevails, and it is quite wrong to say that company law these days is slanted in favour of directors.

If the Committee wants my comment on company law these days, I think it is over-heavy and if the whole Act could be amended it would play a very useful part in streamlining business procedures. There is too much insistence on filling out forms and lodging returns and other things that are very time demanding and very expensive in the process. On past occasions I have advanced the proposition that Government should help enterprise in reducing its costs as far as its requirements for documentation are concerned, and I look forward to the day when a deliberate attempt will be made by Government to get out of corporations and out of people's lives to as great an extent as possible.

Mr. Houston: Would you get out of the Works Department?

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: I would have a very close look at it.

The honourable member for Rockhampton spoke about the difficulties in having six company laws and the problems that arise in relationships between the States. The main difficulties are the relationships between the States. A company registered in New South Wales that also wants to register in Queensland is defined as a foreign company and has to re-register. It also has to lodge documentation here as well as in its own State. It has to lodge its prospectus in the various States if it wants to have issues extending into more than one State. These

are fiddling things that could easily be dispensed with, and the simple proposition here is that we can have reciprocity. We can have a situation where documents lodged in one State will be effective in other States, and, most importantly, inspectors will have the right to move interstate. I am very pleased about this.

Certain companies were reported on in this Chamber today, and I believe that those reports are very much to the detriment of the companies concerned. Had we had these provisions previously, inspectors could have moved interstate and conceivably that situation would have been avoided. With this measure we are proving that we can handle these matters on a national basis without surrendering the power to a central authority. That is the important thing to understand, and it is the optimistic note that we should strike in this continuing confrontation between centralists and those who believe in State rights. We can retain company control at a State level without hampering ourselves with heavy documentation and without unnecessary duplication.

This is a very useful measure, and one that gives the lie direct to centralists, who claim that everything must reside in Canberra. With the present power-hungry Federal Attorney-General it is more important than ever that these measures be retained within the State.

Mr. Knox: A power-crazed Federal Attorney-General.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: Indeed power-crazed.

This Bill is being introduced as the result of dialogue initially between the Attorneys-General for Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Because of the wisdom demonstrated by the electors last Saturday, Western Australia will also participate.

It is timely to recognise the significant role played by the Queensland Minister for Justice in the creation of the Interstate Corporate Affairs Commission. We are indeed indebted to him for the part that he has played, because the commission will do everything that the people have wanted done for a long time. It will move significantly towards achieving uniformity; it will reduce duplication; it will minimise documentation; and, of utmost importance, it will leave the powers vested where they rightly belong and where our founding fathers said they should belong—with the States.

For those reasons I recognise this measure as a very significant one. The Minister is to be commended for initiating it and for playing such an important role in its formulation.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 3.33 p.m.