

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 5 MARCH 1975**

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Supporters of the project have said that it will provide much-needed employment in the area, that it will improve local amenities, that the land is immovable no matter who owns it and that, if Australian investors are not willing to provide a similar project, overseas investment should be allowed.

To try to resolve the conflicting statements and to reach a consensus of opinion in the area about the project, State Cabinet instructed the Co-ordinator-General, Sir Charles Barton, to institute a study. A committee headed by Sir Charles and comprising the Director-General of Primary Industries (Dr. J. Harvey), the Secretary of the Land Administration Commission (Mr. L. Lawrence), the senior planning officer, Department of Local Government (Mr. A. Muhl), the Director of the Department of Harbours and Marine (Mr. J. Peel) and the Director-General of Tourist Services (Mr. J. Wilson) held public hearings in Brisbane and at Rockhampton and Yeppoon.

Interested organisations and individuals were invited to make written submissions and then to put oral statements to the committee. The list of people and organisations who did so is listed in Appendix 1.

Cabinet has considered the report and has decided to adopt its principal recommendation that Mr. Iwasaki be required to provide a detailed plan for the proposed project for consideration. This plan will have to outline, amongst other things, the engineering basis for the project, proposed environmental safeguards, an environmental impact study and the arrangements for financing it. Only then will a decision be made.

For the information of honourable members, I table the report of the committee.

*Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the report on the table.*

## WEDNESDAY, 5 MARCH 1975

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. E. H. Houghton, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

### PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

The State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1965.

The Southern Electric Authority of Queensland Acts, 1952 to 1964.

The Northern Electric Authority of Queensland Acts, 1963 to 1964.

Regulation under the Mental Health Act 1974.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### REPORT ON PLAN FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURIST RESORT, YEPPOON

**Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier) (11.3 a.m.): As honourable members are aware, in December 1973, Mr. Y. Iwasaki presented to the Queensland Government a plan for an international tourist resort near Yeppoon in Central Queensland. The plan envisaged a development that eventually would employ some 1,000 people, most of them from the surrounding area. Mr. Iwasaki has been involved in the development of similar projects in Japan and Hawaii.

The area he was considering north of Yeppoon is undeveloped. There had been no similar proposal in this area by any other group, nor has there been any proposal since by any other group, Australian or overseas, or a group comprising both.

As I said, what Mr. Iwasaki submitted was essentially a sketch plan. The proposed project has aroused considerable controversy. Opponents of the project have criticised foreign ownership of land involved in the project. They have claimed that the ecology of the area will be disturbed, that Australians will not be able to visit the resort, that staff will be imported and that there is insufficient Australian equity in the project.

### QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

#### BEEF LOAN SCHEME

**Mr. K. J. Hooper** for **Mr. Wright**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Lands,—

(1) With reference to the State Government Beef Loan Scheme announced on February 18, which indicated that producer loans would be made available at 2½ per cent. interest, what is the total amount available and how much of this amount is being provided from money distributed to Queensland at the recent Premiers' Conference by the Commonwealth Government?

(2) What are the specific details of the terms and conditions of such loans, in view of the lack of information presently available to beef producers?

(3) How many applications for loans have been (a) received and (b) granted to date?

Answers:—

(1) "(a) \$10,000,000. (b) Nil."

(2) "The scheme will be administered by the Rural Reconstruction Board as a supplement to the Rural Reconstruction Scheme and the broad principles of that scheme will be applied in determining eligibility. Loans will be made available for 'carry on' requirements including local authority rates, stock assessment fees, land rents and similar commitments plus limited debt reconstruction where this is deemed essential for the maintenance of viability of the property under present circumstances. Loans will be repayable 'on demand' and subject to annual review. An interest rate of 2½ per cent. per annum will be applied for the first year of the loan and then as determined by the Rural Reconstruction Board having regard to the applicant's financial viability at the time."

(3) "To date four applications have been considered under the supplementary scheme and loans to these applicants total \$39,000."

#### HOSTESS SERVICES

Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Police,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the article in *Sunday Sun* of March 2 relating to the engagement of housewives in the hostess racket and the threats of bashings if they did not charge certain rates?

(2) What action does he propose to take to investigate and clean up this racket?

(3) Is the provision of hostess services subject to any police supervision and, if not, will he introduce some form of supervision to prevent it from becoming another prostitution and call-girl service, as the massage-parlour service has become?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "The matter of enforcement of laws, including those relating to prostitution, is and will continue to be one of the primary functions of members of the police force. Where sufficient evidence is obtained, appropriate prosecution action will be instituted."

(3) "No. Having in mind the recent publicity given to the operation of 'hostess' and 'escort' organisations in Queensland, particular attention is being given to the subject by police to obtain evidence of offences committed against the laws of the State as they presently stand. I have no information which would suggest that appropriate action cannot be taken within the framework of those laws."

#### EXTENSION OF BRISBANE ABATTOIR FRANCHISE

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

(1) Is the extension of the Brisbane Abattoir franchise to include the City of Redcliffe another attempt by the Queensland Meat Authority to close country abattoirs and slaughtering establishments, which have been subjected recently to a number of unreasonable and stringent conditions?

(2) Will this action result in an increase in the price of meat at Redcliffe?

(3) What are the reasons for the extension of the Brisbane Abattoir Board into country areas?

(4) Will country-killed meat still be allowed the same access to the Brisbane market?

Answers:—

(1) "The Metropolitan Public Abattoir at Cannon Hill does not have the franchise for the Brisbane metropolitan area. Accordingly, there can be no question of an extension of a franchise. The fact of the matter is that no less than 17 abattoirs in Queensland have the right to supply meat for sale in the metropolitan area and there is no restriction on quantities."

(2) "There is no reason to believe that this action will result in an increase in the price of meat at Redcliffe."

(3) "The recent extension of the Metropolitan Public Abattoir Area was agreed to because there were no slaughter-houses operating in the extended area and the time was therefore opportune to ensure that the public therein are supplied only with fully inspected meat killed under abattoir standard hygiene conditions."

(4) "There will be no change in the circumstances under which country killed meat will be allowed access to the Brisbane market."

#### WATER LEVEL, SOMERSET DAM

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

Can the Brisbane City Council be compelled to keep the water level at Somerset Dam to a height of not more than 340 feet above sea level in order to avoid a repetition of the flooding of many areas between Kilcoy and Woodford, such as occurred in January, 1974, owing to the irresponsible action of the Lord Mayor of Brisbane in refusing to open the release valves and lower the water level?

Answer:—

"In my opinion there is no power under existing law whereby the Brisbane City Council can be compelled to keep the water level of Somerset Dam at a certain height. Under *The City of Brisbane*

(Water Supply) Act of 1959, the Brisbane City Council is required and empowered to maintain, manage, control, operate and safeguard the dam and accordingly the regulation of the height of water in the dam is considered to be a matter within the sole discretion of the council."

#### ROSS RIVER DAM

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

Is he aware that considerable inconvenience and distress is being caused to landholders whose land has been acquired to enable the building of the Ross River dam, because his department is assessing compensation without reference to the city council, which body will have to pay the cost, and that this has caused understandable resentment and confusion? If so, can something be done, in the interests of all concerned, to ensure that simple justice is done?

Answer:—

"The Townsville City Council does not possess the statutory power to resume under the provisions of the Land Act leasehold land for the purpose of the Ross River Dam. The Crown, in accordance with section 307 of the Land Act, has carried out the resumptions on behalf of the council. The council has, in accordance with law, furnished an undertaking to bear all costs in connection with the resumption, including such compensation as may be agreed upon or, failing agreement, determined by the Land Court. The amount of such compensation is required to be paid in full by the council as a debt due and owed by the council to the Crown and may be recovered in a court of competent jurisdiction. I am aware that considerable inconvenience and distress is being caused to landholders whose land has been taken simply because the Townsville City Council will not honour its obligation and forward to my Department the amount of compensation payable to the respective lessees. The matter of the negotiation of compensation is one entirely between my Department and the lessee and any settlement reached is not subject to verification or concurrence by the council. There is no conflict between my Department and leasehold claimants regarding amounts of compensation and in cases so far dealt with agreement has been readily reached. In proceeding to settlement for compensation, my commission relies on valuations by experienced registered valuers, such values being checked by senior valuing staff of my Department and any settlement reached with the lessees is after careful consideration of all rights of the lessees to compensation. My Department carries out numerous resumptions for constructing authorities other than the Townsville City

Council and no difficulty has been experienced in the past in obtaining the compensation moneys from the party requesting the resumption. I stress again that the inconvenience and distress to some landholders has been caused by the refusal of the Townsville City Council to honour promptly its statutory obligation and undertaking to bear all costs in connection with the resumptions."

#### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

##### PRESENCE OF PREMIER'S PRESS SECRETARY AND GOVERNMENT PILOT IN PREMIERS' CONFERENCE ROOM

Mr. BURNS: I ask the Premier: Is it a fact that, although a decision was taken by the Prime Minister and the Premiers that the Press be excluded from the Premiers' Conference and that only advisers be present, Mr. Callaghan (the Premier's Press Secretary) and Miss Young (the Government pilot) remained in the conference room during a major part of the conference? Further will he inform the House of Miss Young's qualifications and expertise in economic matters, and advise why Miss Young occupied a position that could have been taken by a Treasury expert in an effort to obtain additional finance for Queensland?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: In the first place, the honourable member is quite wrong, of course, when he speaks of various members of my staff and those who accompanied me being there for a considerable time. They were in the room for only a short time in the morning, as they had been many times in the past. Later in the morning I drew their attention to the decision and they were not there after that time.

##### UNEMPLOYMENT IN FLINDERS ELECTORATE

Mr. KATTER: I ask the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that the official unemployment figures for January reveal a 20 per cent unemployment rate throughout the electorate of Flinders?

(2) Further, is he aware that when circumstances existed in the sugar industry similar to those now prevailing in the beef industry the then Country Party Leader, John McEwen, negotiated a world price agreement?

(3) In the light of the total inaction and lack of interest of our southern-city-based Federal Government, will the Queensland State Government again have to do the Federal Government's job for it by providing jobs for rural workers of whom one-quarter are now unemployed?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: We are mindful of the unemployment in the Flinders electorate. That is one of the reasons why Cabinet took the decision on the distribution of certain funds and the making available of certain moneys at a low interest rate to those who cannot acquire funds from other sources. Of

course, this is well known to local authorities and people generally in the honourable member's area.

I think the position in the meat industry is well known to all honourable members. The Commonwealth Government apparently did nothing or took no interest. When Mr. Crean came back from Japan a few weeks ago, he said that there were no prospects whatsoever of an early resumption of meat trade with Japan. That report, which appeared in the Press throughout Australia, came from a responsible senior Minister of the Commonwealth Government. Another Minister—I cannot recall his name—who came back to Australia just prior to Mr. Crean, said the same thing. Irrespective of that, we as a Government and I as the Premier initiated a move in Tokyo to start trading with the people over there. We have sent overseas Mr. Sullivan, as a Minister of the Crown, members of the community and members of Parliament.

It was quite clear that the Commonwealth Government was doing nothing. Apparently it was not able to do anything, so as a Government we initiated our moves. That is why we have the delegation overseas. The Commonwealth Government is incompetent and unable to do anything about the issue. We will achieve something. As I see it, the steps we have taken will lead in the very near future to trade with Japan.

#### DISPLAY OF BRISBANE TOWN PLAN

**Mr. DEAN:** I ask the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads: In view of the importance of the new Town Plan now on display at the City Hall, Brisbane, and the desirability of everyone having easy access to view it, will he have a copy of the plan placed on display in Parliament House so that the 82 members can inspect it in comfort and detail?

**Mr. HINZE:** As the honourable member has just said, the Brisbane Town Plan is on display at the City Hall, and it is there for everyone to see. I understand that a copy of the Town Plan costs in the vicinity of \$644, and I have no doubt that the honourable member would not wish the Government to spend such a sum merely to satisfy 82 members of Parliament, who can view the plan at the City Hall just as the people of Brisbane have to do. It will be on display for 60 days, and surely the honourable member will find time in that period to go to the City Hall to view it.

#### BANNING OF IMPORTS OF CANNED, CHILLED AND FROZEN MEATS

**Mr. HARTWIG:** I ask the Premier: Is he aware that imports of canned meats into Australia increased from 40 tonnes in 1972-73 to 295 tonnes in 1973-74, under Federal Labor Party policies, and that imports of chilled or frozen meats increased from 70 tonnes in 1972-73 to 317 tonnes in 1973-74?

In view of this, will he approach the Prime Minister (Mr. Whitlam) and request that because of the serious plight of the beef industry a complete ban be placed on the import of tinned meat, frozen and chilled beef and steak and kidney pie so that these products do not enter this country when our own producers cannot sell their beef?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I am very much aware of what is happening in Australia because of the importation not only of meat but also of canned vegetables and similar products, which detrimentally affects producers and others in this State and the nation. I am aware, too, that some of the imported meat entering Australia from Brazil and Argentina is in the same sized tins with the same types of label as used here so that it seems identical in every respect with the Australian product, and it is not until one reads the very small print at the bottom that one discovers that it is from another country. I consider it a serious matter as it damages the Australian trade. Because of the slump in the beef industry, it is particularly significant now. I believe it behoves the Commonwealth to recognise the importance of doing what many other countries have done, when Japan cut off overnight the import of Australian meat when it suited its economy and as the French did with fish and other products, even from E.E.C. countries. The Commonwealth Government should face up to its responsibility and initiate steps to protect local primary industries that are facing economic difficulties.

#### V. & N. HOME IMPROVERS PTY. LTD., BRISBANE

**Mr. YEWDALE:** I ask the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs: In view of the Minister's answer to a question on notice yesterday morning relating to a company known as V. & N. Home Improvers Pty. Ltd. and the fact that many complaints and criticisms have been made of that firm, how does he justify his refusal to supply details of complaints when an annual report does in fact set out complaints that have been received by the Consumer Affairs Bureau and have become public information? Does he realise that his attitude and that of his department are only allowing further persons to become involved in commitments under rather unsatisfactory contracts with this firm and that the contents of these contracts are known to his department?

**Mr. CAMPBELL:** I acknowledge that these matters are released at the time of the publication of the annual report. It was partly because of that that I made my statement yesterday. I repeat that generally speaking it does not follow that, because the Consumer Affairs Bureau receives more than one complaint against an organisation, that organisation is in conflict with the law. I promise the honourable member that I shall maintain a

very close watch on the activities of this organisation and the possible effects they might have on the community.

**MINISTERIAL INSPECTION OF COMET RIVER AND DAWSON RIVER BRIDGES**

**Mr. LESTER:** I ask the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads: When he comes to Emerald shortly, will he be so kind as to travel over part of the Capricorn Highway with me in my car to Rockhampton, and, in so doing, inspect the Comet River Bridge and the Dawson River Bridge?

**Mr. HINZE:** I should be pleased to travel with the honourable member in his car, and to inspect the Comet River Bridge.

**DAYS ALLOTTED TO ADDRESS IN REPLY**

**SESSIONAL ORDER**

**Hon. R. E. CAMM** (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy): I move—

“That the House may, on the Tuesdays and Thursdays allotted to the debate on the Address in Reply, continue to sit until 10 o'clock p.m. Each of the periods between 11 o'clock a.m. and 4 o'clock p.m. and between 4 o'clock p.m. and 10 o'clock p.m. shall be accounted an allotted day. All provisions of Standing Order No. 17 shall, *mutatis mutandis*, continue to apply.” Motion agreed to.

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**MEDIBANK HEALTH SCHEME**

**Dr. CRAWFORD** (Wavell) (11.53 a.m.): I feel it incumbent on me today to carry out a more detailed survey than was possible on the first sitting day of this session of certain aspects of the social services activities emanating from Canberra at this time.

A decision has to be made by all State Governments in the near future as to whether they will accept or reject the Medibank scheme of the Minister for Social Security. The record in Queensland for opposing socialism in health services is not so good that one can assume that the recommendation coming through to Cabinet from the Health Department will automatically be against the acceptance of Medibank, but a firm stand must be taken for the welfare of patients and the citizenry of this State in general.

I made quite concerted efforts some years ago to secure an extra \$20,000,000 for public-hospital patients through the medical benefits insurance agencies, but what was proposed was not accepted by the Government and, as a result, money which should have been geared into the hospital system over the years was not made available. The risk now is that the \$16-\$18 a day which all other States receive as their right through medical benefit organisations—something which for

various administrative reasons we do not receive in Queensland—will be used as a bribe to be taken by State health authorities to persuade them to accept Medibank as it stands.

E. S. Knight and Co., consultant actuaries, estimate the 1975-76 cost of Mr. Hayden's plan to be \$1,680 million. Mr. Hayden is denying this, but Knight and Co. have an expertise and, unlike his own department, which has repeatedly been responsible for making mistakes over the years, do not make mistakes. I draw the attention of the House once again to the \$10,000,000 error in doctors' salaries made by Scott and Deeble some 18 months ago and which no-one seemed to think was of great significance.

The Budget cost which was recently promulgated from the Commonwealth departments in Canberra supporting the present medical schemes throughout Australia is \$575,000,000, so there would be an increase of \$1,105 million if and when the Medibank scheme is implemented throughout the country.

A personal income tax levy to raise this amount of money would mean an increase in taxation of between 7 and 8 per cent. Some people say the increase will be as much as 10 per cent. Although the 1.35 per cent original estimate of the costing from Mr. Hayden's department has now been refused a football guernsey by the Senate, all Consolidated Revenue comes from taxes in some form. Therefore this 8 to 10 per cent increase in taxation is inevitable.

One may well ask how various socialist schemes have worked in practice throughout Australia as implemented by the Minister for Social Security. In Canberra, Mr. Stewart East, a partner of Fell and Starkey, chartered accountants, compared the cost per treatment by general practitioners in private practice in Canberra with the cost per treatment by salaried doctors in Canberra health centres, which are set up under the auspices of the Department of Social Security. The salaried treatment cost 61 per cent more, or \$6.83 compared with \$4.24. This was because the salaried doctors saw fewer patients each day and their costs were inflated by higher rents, greater ancillary staff salaries and a large sum for the cost of administration. This is always the nigger in the woodpile. This comparison did not take account of unknown hidden charges accruing to health centres, such as the city parks administration caring for their grounds, legal advice from the Attorney-General's Department, the expenses of public relations and of services and property departments.

This series of proposals from the Department of Social Security at a time of inflation is a complete indictment of any real attempt to plan an attack on the inflation which is ruining our economy. Taxes have been increased by 65 per cent in two years, and it would appear that if the whole of the social

services programme is to be implemented there will be a 90 per cent increase, or possibly more, in taxes.

Professor Richard Downing, the distinguished Melbourne economist who was appointed chairman of the A.B.C. by the present Government, in his recent George Judah Cohen Memorial lecture at Sydney University, looked at the cost of three of the Government's major welfare proposals—the health scheme, the national compensation and rehabilitation scheme and the national superannuation scheme. He found them admirable in some aspects, but pointed out that between them they would increase Government spending, based on the Government's own estimates, by a net amount of \$2,800 million, or some 5.7 per cent of the gross national product. This would require a tax increase of 25.5 per cent, an additional burden that would fall mainly on low-income people not now contributing to private insurance schemes.

Professor Downing said—

"It is (however) painfully clear that the people of this country will not take a sharp, sudden increase in taxes without pressing for equally sharp, sudden increases in their money incomes in an effort to ease the incidence of these taxes. Since the schemes are all costed in terms of percentages of gross domestic product, any such inflation of money incomes will lead directly to increased expenditures on these schemes and will thus set off a vicious inflationary spiral."

If we are going to fight socialism in this country, it is absolutely vital that all arms of non-socialist Government resist all overtures with respect to proposals which are socialistic in type. We can accept in Queensland any moneys which are offered to us with no strings attached, but under no circumstances must we be persuaded to accept the Trojan-horse type gift which will destroy our entire economic fabric. Medibank is this type of process and must not be condoned in any form.

Sam Clemens, who is better known as Mark Twain, once stated, "Get your facts first and then you can distort 'em as you please." Mr. Hayden is a past master of the 1975 version of this art. Socialisation of medicine is purely a vote-buying gimmick with over-use of the word "free".

The average Australian will quickly work out for himself when the extra millions of taxation are taken from him how the money is being spent, as it cannot result in an improvement in health care. It has never improved health care in other countries. It will therefore only line the pockets of the new army of bureaucrats in the Public Service throughout Australia.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION PREMIUMS

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER** (Archerfield) (12 noon): I would not expect any member of this House to condone corruption, least of

all corrupt practices in Government or under the auspices of Government authority. It is therefore with great concern that I bring to the attention of the Parliament matters that have been raised with me during the past few weeks by respected members of the business community. As I shall explain later, I have taken steps to notify other authorities.

The matters in question centre on workers' compensation and, more specifically, on what I believe to be a premium-assessment scandal perpetrated by the State Government Insurance Office, which is under the control of the Treasurer. I have spoken many times in this House about the unsatisfactory nature of workers' compensation under the administration of the S.G.I.O. The S.G.I.O. which handles almost 100 per cent of workers' compensation in Queensland, deals in secretive, questionable ways under the administration of the present Treasurer and Government.

For the special benefit of new members who should be appalled at the growing public controversies surrounding the administration of the S.G.I.O., I recall that it was a Labor Government which set up the State's own insurance office to give sound and honest insurance to the people of Queensland. It was a Labor Government which recognised the need for such a company to counter the growing influence of overseas incursion into the many areas of the insurance industry.

But what happened? A Country-Liberal Government changed the Act and allowed the name of the S.G.I.O. to be linked with every extra insurance slug to the community that its establishment was designed to protect and assist. Consistently, the present Treasurer has refused to give this House details of the S.G.I.O.'s operations, and consistently since 1968 the Auditor-General has condemned the S.G.I.O.'s unsatisfactory accounting.

The matter I raise today is, I believe, the most serious charge yet made against the S.G.I.O.'s administrators. Here I hasten to emphasise that I am not attacking in any way the large body of public servants who carry out this Government's instructions concerning the S.G.I.O. My remarks are directed to the Treasurer, the Government, and the S.G.I.O. financial-advisory echelon in that they have allowed the S.G.I.O. to become little more, to sections of the business community, than a standover, racketeering monolith which grabs at their funds without proving justification at the same time as it engages in curious, unsatisfactory speculation in shares, land deals and leaking hotel rooms.

It is a matter of record that workers' compensation premiums rose in February after months of newspaper speculation obviously based on leaks to soften the blow. But the rise was still a knock-out and I called on the Treasurer, publicly, to justify the increases. Throughout the State businessmen were calling for the same justification. Of course, in line with the Treasurer's policy

of secrecy over the S.G.I.O.—except when it can be of political advantage to the Treasurer—these calls received no response.

Typical of the complaints was a letter which appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 4 February, from which I read the following extract:—

"The announcement by Sir Gordon Chalk that workers' compensation premiums are to rise by a further 25 per cent highlights the weakness in the legislation.

"When the Government agreed to pay full wages to injured employees it was accepted that premiums would probably rise by from 20 per cent to 30 per cent. Our increase in 1974 was 80 per cent and we are now faced with a further 25 per cent on the balance of the year."

Mr. Moore interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I do not intend to reply to interjections. What I have to say is very important to the State.

The letter continues, but that extract is sufficient for honourable members to see the trend in what has taken place. I do not see any pleased faces, and no wonder, and the examples get worse so that the overbearing tactics of the S.G.I.O. are readily revealed. If the S.G.I.O. had not become so arrogant in its dealings with businessmen we probably would never have learned of the intimidation to which the business community is subjected.

In an example brought to my attention, a company with a relatively accident-free record found that, although its wages bill for 1973-74 rose by just more than 60 per cent, premium assessment based on that figure rose by more than 340 per cent—not including the new 25 per cent increase. When the company wrote to the State Government Insurance Office it received no reply. So it sought a re-assessment by appealing personally to the Treasurer. The least I can say in the Treasurer's favour is that he replied. After three weeks he told the company he could be of no assistance. And in a backhander to the management of this company he stated that, although he acknowledged the S.G.I.O.'s monopoly on workers' compensation in Queensland, there was an attractive merit bonus scheme which further reduced the ultimate cost to the safety-conscious employer.

The Queensland Chamber of Manufacturers was then asked for assistance, in view of the severe financial nature of the premium increases. I would like to quote from the Chamber's reply, signed by the general manager, Mr. Blucher, who is well known to many members, particularly on the Government side of the House. It said—

"We have for many months been fighting (and that is the correct word) with both the S.G.I.O. and the Treasury on what we regard as exorbitant premiums which are these days payable to the S.G.I.O. I am afraid the reply you received from Sir Gordon was very much

the standard one others have been receiving. Unfortunately we cannot report any progress ourselves in our dealings on the matter. I suppose this is one of the problems of dealing with a monopoly situation—but I can assure you that this Chamber will continue to press the matter as hard as possible."

That is the extent to which I will quote from Mr. Blucher's letter, although I could have been tempted to comment on a rather political remark which might not have pleased all members of the Chamber of Manufacturers.

While this correspondence was taking place, the wheels at the S.G.I.O. were turning, and the company received a formal demand from the Crown Solicitor for premiums due under its policy. That demand arrived only a few days after the company again wrote to the Treasurer saying that, while it was reluctant to pay such a large premium, it was concerned about the cover for its employees during investigation of its application for reassessment.

After the demand for more than \$12,000 within seven days over the threat of legal action, the company, which in its own words was concerned about insurance cover for its employees, sent a part-payment to the S.G.I.O. and asked that the balance be paid by instalments based on a reassessment. I am advised that the S.G.I.O. then told the company that no consideration would be given to reassessment of the premium charged and legal action would be instigated immediately.

It was about this time that the company was made fully aware of the Australian Government's Restrictive Trade Practices Act. The managing director phoned the S.G.I.O. and said he intended investigating the provisions of the Restrictive Trade Practices Act in relation to the S.G.I.O.'s role with workers' compensation in Queensland. Action followed very quickly. An S.G.I.O. official phoned the company to seek an appointment for a personal discussion. After examining exactly the same evidence for reclassification as the S.G.I.O. had previously rejected, the official decided to reduce the assessment.

To show the House the extent of the reduction, I think it is relevant to mention that rates of assessment at 5.09 per cent were reduced to as little as .26 per cent, which the company acknowledges means a substantial saving in premiums. It was wonderful, Mr. Speaker, to see what could be achieved by the mention of the Restrictive Trade Practices Act.

However, the official who made the reassessment advised the company that the new figures would be submitted to the Treasury—a fact, I believe, to be very significant indeed. What is the Treasury's role in this standover affair? Some might suggest that on Treasury instructions the S.G.I.O. is charging excessive, unjustified premiums.



I am now in a position to inform the House that today I drew the attention of the Commissioner of Trade Practices to these matters, requesting an investigation.

I believe the S.G.I.O.'s role in standing over businesses for money to which, by its own admission, it is not entitled is the last straw in its unhappy association with Queenslanders, whom it charges excessive motor insurance and excessive flood insurance, and whose money it squanders. The S.G.I.O. can remain the Treasurer's secret enclave no longer. It's time for a full investigation. A private insurance company in a monopoly situation which used standover tactics would be run out of the State. The same must happen to whoever is responsible for allowing the S.G.I.O. to bully business for money it refuses to justify.

We must never condone question marks over the integrity of Government instrumentalities. They must be beyond reproach. But while the S.G.I.O. is successfully bluffing business, it is not beyond reproach. Only a public house-cleaning can restore this lost confidence and I call on the Treasurer to order an independent inquiry immediately.

I wish to make one more general comment about workers' compensation. I have already been told that some employers intend to lay off staff rather than pay the premium increases. If premiums can be reduced—as I believe they can—this must be done immediately in order to save unwelcome additions to an already overcrowded dole line.

The S.G.I.O. is very versatile in presenting the few figures it does make public in such a way that the man in the street can be misled. Figures presented to the Commonwealth Statistician showed a premium income of \$25.4 million in 1972-73 and a payout of \$28.3 million in claims—which is an excess of claims over premiums of 11.5 per cent. However, to arrive at this premium income figure, the S.G.I.O. first subtracted \$8.58 million which it paid back to employers as merit bonuses which it says are awarded for safety. This is shown in the S.G.I.O.'s own report.

The report shows, too, that the premium income of the workers' compensation fund in 1972-73 was \$33,800,000, and claims were \$27,500,000. Stamp duty, management expenses and incidentals took the total liabilities, including claims, to \$31,600,000. The underwriting surplus of \$2,100,000, an investment income of \$1,800,000, plus a portion of net income of the general reserve fund made a total net surplus of \$4,800,000. Goodness knows what we will find when the latest S.G.I.O. report, due six months ago, finally hits the deck. By then, I trust, the whole shoddy affair will be aired.

Let us give the S.G.I.O. back to the people. It was part of Labor's election policy which the Treasurer could well adopt, as he seems to have found other measures

there which have taken his fancy. We must never allow the S.G.I.O. to get into this unsavoury mess again.

#### QUEENSLAND BEEF INDUSTRY

**Mr. HARTWIG** (Callide) (12.11 p.m.): I shall confine my remarks today to the state of the beef industry. Primarily I refer to the economic plight of thousands of beef producers and associated workers such as transport operators, stock and station agents, meat workers and business people whose future and that of their children is being threatened by the extreme depression in the industry and the depressed prices being offered for cattle throughout the nation today. Bullock beef is being quoted at 10c a lb. and cow beef at 6c a lb. From those amounts must be deducted commission, transport costs and many other charges.

On Friday, 21 February, approximately 700 people attended a meeting at Yeppoon. A fortnight earlier some 530 met at Emerald and 300 or 400 met at Richmond and Mackay. This indicates that something is significantly wrong within the industry. In many instances people have virtually walked away from their debts and their properties to seek employment in the mining industry or find some other form of work. I mention the case of one couple at Yeppoon with four children. They are buying stale bread at 10c a loaf so that the children can take cut lunches to school.

#### Opposition Members interjected.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** I hear faint noises from the Opposition benches. However, there was hell to play when something like 5,000 car industry workers looked like losing their jobs. Mr. Whitlam nearly went into a twist when he heard of it. A conservative estimate is that owing to the slump in the beef industry 15,000 people are unemployed. What do we hear from the Commonwealth Labor Party Government? What is it trying to do? It made a token gesture—I should not call it that because it was an insult to our mentality—of making available a \$20,000,000 loan at 11.5 per cent.

Anybody wishing to avail himself of that money had to prove he was viable. Of course, that allowed some pretty big enterprises in the primary industries in Queensland to avail themselves of that money. I will not name them. However, I believe one prominent overseas company in Queensland availed itself of much of that money.

Overdrafts, as we know them, are virtually advances against assets. Owing to depressed prices, overdrafts have overnight become unrepayable debts of some great magnitude. A small grazer running 500 head could have a debt of \$50,000, which would not be unusual. At \$25 a head—and that would be a conservative figure—he is worth \$12,500, yet his debt is something like \$50,000.

Therefore he has no equity left; he is virtually bankrupt unless assistance is forthcoming within a short period.

I should like to quote what was said by Mr. Arthur Bassingthwaite, who has a great interest in cattle-marketing and the production of beef in Queensland. He told us at Yeppoon that hundreds of thousands of stock will be allowed to die in the Gulf country and the western areas of Queensland because it is not profitable to transport them to the Cairns and Townsville markets. Anyone sending stock there would have to send a cheque with them to cover expenses. He also told us that at the Cairns meat-works the hides of cattle treated there are being buried. And this at a time when shoe leather is being imported; when a saddle, with mountings, costs approximately \$250; and a pair of bridle reins costs \$14! In this country hides are in fact being buried because the cost of handling them has become too great.

In 1973, 600,000 tonnes of beef were exported from Australia but in 1974 only 339,000 tonnes, a decrease of almost 100 per cent, were exported. It was during this time that Federal leader Whitlam made his famous statement that primary producers had "never had it so good." The beef industry faces a catastrophic situation. I believe that the position has been aggravated by the Australian Government's relaxation of tariffs on canned meats imported from Argentina, Brazil, France and Italy. A total of 40 tonnes of canned corned meat came into this country in 1972-73, and in 1973-74 the amount imported was 295 tonnes. In addition, other prepared or preserved meats in offal form imported in 1973-74 totalled in value \$1,439,000. Canned sausages worth \$80,000 and steak and kidney pies worth \$688,000 were brought into Australia from countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Italy.

I might mention, too, that chilled and frozen beef is being imported from New Zealand. In 1972-73, 70 tonnes were imported, and the Australian Labor Government allowed that quantity to increase to 317 tonnes in 1973-74. At a time when beef producers were on their knees, the Federal Government was allowing into this country fresh chilled and frozen meat from overseas.

Let us now consider the influx of canned vegetables from other countries. In 1972-73, canned vegetables worth \$3,100,000 were imported, and in 1973-74 the value of such imports was \$8,500,000. Sweet corn, asparagus, tomatoes, mushrooms and sliced mangoes were imported from Taiwan, where cheap labour is employed and where many products are grown with the use of fertiliser obtained from human excreta.

These facts cannot be denied. The Federal Government, which supposedly champions the cause of the worker, is allowing primary

industries to wither and die in Australia. Although the products that I have mentioned can be produced in this country, they are being imported from cheap-labour countries. This is scandalous, and it is well nigh time that all imports of this nature were banned from Australia.

#### ASSISTANCE FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

**Mr. YEWDALE** (Rockhampton North) (12.20 p.m.): The subject that I raise in the debate this morning is, I believe, of vital public importance. It is the need for greater assistance for handicapped children in Queensland.

In my opinion, the first requirement is detection of the disability and the second is assessment of the needs of the children. By "assessment" I mean a study of all factors—physical, emotional, educational, and environmental. Early assessment is vital in the interests of the child and should definitely be made no later than when it is three months old. Regular reviews should take place, and in some cases these could establish the need for a fresh full assessment.

Again, in some cases only one disability is identified where several exist. For example, examination of the child may disclose that it is suffering from some form of deafness. That particular disability may have some effect on other attributes of the child and, consequently, it should be looked at too.

Over-all assessment should be undertaken by a team of people such as a doctor with pediatric experience, a child psychiatrist and a senior officer from either the department carrying out social work or a voluntary organisation. A child attending for a diagnostic appraisal should be accompanied by a person who will be in immediate contact with him from day to day—preferably a parent, a teacher or a tutor. That is very important, and I do not think that the point needs any further elaboration.

In effect, this area of assessment is essential to the child because his whole way of life can be guided in the right direction if disabilities are detected early. Regrettably, this procedure is in no way far enough advanced in Queensland.

The next aspect on which I wish to touch is that of accommodation. In many cases, one finds handicapped children in ordinary children's homes that are not designed for special purposes. It is highly desirable that handicapped children be housed in accommodation that is as near as practicable to that of an ordinary family. It need not be a large house in a residential area, but adequate indoor and outdoor play space is a distinct advantage.

Broken homes are disastrous for children with disabilities. One problem arising from broken homes relates to children suffering from physical handicaps such as epilepsy, rheumatic heart disease or asthma who require special medical attention but who could manage to attend school daily. Of course, provision for schooling of that type would have to be assessed on numbers. Nevertheless, the problem has never been investigated in Queensland.

It is also essential for handicapped children to mix as often as possible with people in the outside world, and when such children reach school-leaving age, it is important that such leaving does not coincide with the leaving of the home in which they are domiciled. In a situation of that nature, a double-barrelled readjustment has to be made. One can appreciate, Mr. Speaker, what a problem it would be for a child who has been brought up in an environment of handicapped children to have to leave home and at the same time leave school and move out into the field of work and business. We should look at the problems of the hospitalisation of these children and the terrific impact on them of a complete change of environment.

The approaching difficulties of finding employment for these persons must be considered. They are innumerable; yet it is one of the most important periods in the working lives of handicapped persons.

Generally, I have covered a period of time from when a handicapped person is assessed until he or she moves into the work-force. I believe that the many problems I have mentioned are real problems, and again I say that we, in Queensland, have not even scratched the surface in this field.

Let us look, Mr. Speaker, at what is happening in other parts of the world in relation to handicapped persons, and I take California in the United States of America as an example. There it is provided that the Director of Education shall provide consultant services in connection with education of hard-of-hearing children in areas where such services are not available. The services shall be provided through an expert in the field of organisation and planning for the education of the hard-of-hearing, who shall be employed for that purpose by the Director of Education.

In California, the governing board of any school district maintaining secondary schools shall have power, with the approval of the State Department of Education, to establish special classes for adults designed to serve the educational needs of handicapped adults. Such classes are to be directed to providing instruction in civic, vocational, literary, home-making, technical and general education.

In addition, special classes for handicapped adults may be conducted under the direction of the governing body of the school district

in workshop and training facilities provided by non-profit organisations or in public school facilities. I emphasise the last point—"in public school facilities." We have heard a lot about the utilisation of public school facilities. People are now starting to get around to the idea that these facilities should be used to a far greater extent.

The Department of Rehabilitation may establish orientation centres for the blind in such locations as may be deemed necessary to provide on a State-wide basis the services to be rendered by such centres.

What I want to refer to now is very interesting and of vital importance in this field, namely, what is happening in Japan. A glance at what is happening there regarding the disabled shows that the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (Tokyo) utilises a joint radio-TV station which is bound by law to cover Japanese culture and people's welfare. The programmes are presented twice weekly on both TV and radio. Programmes are specially prepared for mentally retarded children at elementary school level, covering children ranging from 7 years to 10 years with I.Q.'s on a much lower scale. The programmes are of 20 minutes duration and are rebroadcast. This most progressive approach to a most serious problem within society is probably the only one of its kind in the world. The service covers some 200,000 mentally retarded children in Japan. I cannot sufficiently commend that particular service.

In Queensland the Government will not accept its responsibilities to these less fortunate people. The A.L.P. as a Government would accept full responsibility for all forms of education in the State, and co-operate with all interested groups and committees, and, most importantly, would provide all the necessary finance to educate handicapped children.

From day to day we hear about the actions of the State Government, particularly the Premier, in regard to his public relations programmes on TV. I sincerely believe that, through the Minister for Education and the Minister for Health, the State Government should embark on a programme similar to that of the Japanese Government. The organisations that are doing what they can for handicapped children should be assisted by the expenditure of public money on television and radio programmes, particularly the former which is probably the most popular medium today. We hear so much about what the Premier is doing for people in Queensland but he is not telling the people what can be done for their handicapped children, nor is he providing the required facilities for them through the various departments.

When we look at what is happening on a Federal basis we find that recently the Federal Opposition leader asked the Minister for Social Security what he was doing about a 15-point programme for handicapped people. Apparently Mr. Snedden received an

answer forthwith. He was told that the Federal Government had embarked on a very extensive 15-point programme for handicapped people in the community. Subsidies are being made available on a very generous basis to service organisations for the handicapped and for the establishment of services for handicapped people. Provision is made for sheltered workshop incentive allowances and aged persons homes for handicapped persons. Other points in this programme include capital equipment in activity centres, maintenance subsidies, rehabilitation and recreational assistance for the handicapped, replacement of equipment in centres for the handicapped, rental subsidies and an increase in the handicapped children's benefit.

The Federal Government has embarked on a very ambitious programme for these people in need. The State Government is not doing anywhere near enough. My suggestion to the Premier and his Cabinet colleagues is that some of the money that is being spent by the Premier and his party on political propaganda should be spent on handicapped persons in the community who are really in need.

#### TRANSPORT OF DONKEYS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (12.30 p.m.):** The matter of public interest I wish to raise concerns the cruelty that is occurring in the transportation of donkeys from Western Australia into the Northern Territory and then into Queensland. Recently there have been instances of large numbers of donkeys being transported into this State in double-decker trucks. Many of the animals were pregnant and dropped foals on the way. Some of them get down in the trucks. The beasts have atrocious acts of cruelty inflicted on them by heartless transport operators, the dealers and the consignors in Western Australia who send them thousands of miles in these trucks.

I urge the Police Department to take some action in this matter. The Animals Protection Act quite clearly makes it an offence for any person to convey, carry, pack or cause to be conveyed any animal in such manner or position as to subject that animal to unnecessary pain or suffering. The Act gives to the Royal Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty and to the Police Force the responsibility of enforcing the Act within the State of Queensland.

In recent months a number of donkey sales have been held in Queensland. The animals are brought from the Outback in Western Australia as well as from the remote areas of the Northern Territory, where they run wild. They are descendants of a comparatively small number of donkeys introduced to work on farms and in mines in the late 19th century. They carried supplies from the Carnarvons to the Kimberleys, from the Victoria River depot near Timber Creek to Victoria Downs Station. In the years since then the numbers have

grown. In 1956 it was estimated that 150,000 donkeys were running wild in the Victoria River district alone and that the animals had spread far and wide from the centre of Australia.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** I thought they were all in the Liberal Party.

**Mr. LANE:** The honourable member for Archerfield can wag his long ears, but that won't get his interjection recorded.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper** interjected.

**Mr. LANE:** The honourable member can keep up with his hee-haws, and we will see how he goes.

Since 1961 bounties have been paid on donkeys, and it was claimed that this contributed towards their decimation in Western Australia. Donkeys were declared by the Western Australian Government to be vermin, so naturally station-owners were bound to attempt to exterminate them.

The number of donkeys exterminated is astronomical. On one particular station, in the short period of three weeks a total of 1,000 donkeys were shot and in another two-week period two men shot 888 donkeys. In one year a total of 10,000 donkeys were killed on one Northern Territory station, and over the same period a total of 12,000 were shot on a Western Australian station. In spite of this, however, the donkey in Australia is not extinct.

Recent indications are that the problem in these areas is far from under control, and the Western Australian Government, through its Vermin Control Board, is happy to renew permits on an open-ended basis, that is, with no expiry date, to anyone wishing to export an unlimited number of donkeys to the eastern States. It is a fact that a large northern meatworks intends clearing its properties of donkeys with the idea of transporting them to Queensland, where the prices they are bringing when sold as pets exceed those obtained on the depressed beef market.

In view of the longevity of the donkey and the fact that the breeding life of the jenny, the female donkey, is in the vicinity of 40 years, it has been calculated that, on the basis of one such jenny bearing her first foal now, by the year 2010 she could be responsible for a family tree of approximately 650 animals.

With the sanction of the Western Australian Government, callous profiteers are loading and transporting ever-increasing numbers of donkeys without any consideration to type, health, age, sex or hereditary weaknesses due to inbreeding. These animals are being offered in Brisbane at public auction in shocking condition and are advertised as being "ideal pets for children". They are, of course, wild and dangerous animals in their healthy state, but many are sick as a result of the suffering endured during their long period of transportation. A wild donkey jack is no more an ideal pet than a wild bull.

May I point out that, with the increasing cruelty in wild donkeys, the instances of cruelty during transportation over long distances are increasing alarmingly. Many people from overseas who come to live in Australia must be horrified at the way we treat some of our wildlife species. If this treatment is part of our national character, our society stands condemned on the criterion stated by Plato that the degree of civilisation of any people can be judged by their attitude to wildlife, which is entirely at their mercy.

It was only recently, at the instance of the Royal Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, that the consignors of wild donkeys at Derby in Western Australia were investigated by that State's Department of Primary Industries. Some supervision has since been introduced by permits for transporting animals from Derby.

In Queensland the task of checking on such consignments and policing the Animals Protection Act falls mainly on the Royal Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty and the Australian and New Zealand Donkey Breeders Society. The job is too big for these two voluntary organisations. They do not have the necessary transport or communication facilities to cover the ruthless truck drivers and transport operators. The present situation is not good enough. I call on the Police Department to fulfill its moral and legal responsibility under the Animals Protection Act relative to cruelty to animals. The Department of Primary Industries also, through its stock inspectors and system of stock permits, has a responsibility that it must shoulder in this instance.

At the sale conducted in December last, 80 donkeys, brought from Derby to Dalby were auctioned. In all, 163 wild donkeys were transported on that occasion in one double-decker road train. Many of the jennies were heavily pregnant. No doubt they were loaded on the truck in the hope of making double profits in Queensland. Losses during the journey were reported to be 31 out of 163. The suffering of the animals would be indescribable, but they were auctioned shortly after arrival and, as I said, advertised as ideal Christmas gifts. A wild donkey is not an ideal Christmas gift.

I can only hope that the Government will do something about this trade in donkeys. While double-decker trucks are an economic means of transport for cattle up to a certain size, they are highly unsuitable for animals such as donkeys. They do not permit easy access for drivers to get fallen animals up again. Trampling is therefore inevitable. The wooden floors with their steel cleats can cause horrible injuries. What livestock carrier would take the trouble to cover them with earth and hay to minimise injury? They have not been doing so in recent consignments. Surely a heavily pregnant jenny is unfit to travel long distances. Why are they being loaded and transported? Quite

frequently they abort during the journey, and if the offspring are born alive they are trampled to death by the other donkeys.

The Police Stock Squad is the ideal body, through its mobility and knowledge of travelling stock, to enforce the Animals Protection Act.

More recently, on 16 February a donkey sale was convened by Queensland Primary Producers Co-operative. The animals were in slightly better condition on arrival because Western Australia had invoked some control. However, one jenny was shockingly emaciated, with large quantities of mucus pouring from her nose. She was obviously experiencing great difficulty in breathing. In her infirmity she had apparently fallen and hurt her mouth. She was clearly marked when put on sale.

(Time expired.)

#### DENTAL THERAPISTS SCHEME

**Hon. L. R. EDWARDS** (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (12.40 p.m.): I rise today to speak on a preventive health scheme which is being introduced in this State and is of importance for all Queensland children and their parents. This scheme is being progressively introduced and the first primary school-children are now receiving treatment and care under this scheme. I firmly believe that it will be one of the great success stories of preventive medicine in this State because, as honourable members are no doubt well aware, Australian children have a very poor history of dental hygiene. This will be a welcome extension of the State Health Department's School Health Service, which has been keeping a check on our school-children for the past 60 years.

The dental therapists scheme to which I refer is one of joint co-operation with the Commonwealth Government, which is very graciously earmarking taxpayers' money for it. The programme is being planned and maintained by officers of my department. Our aim is to provide free dental care and treatment at least once a year to all primary school children by 1980. This will be provided in the larger schools in static clinics and by means of mobile caravan clinics in the smaller schools. We hope to expand the scheme to provide a similar service to all school-children up to the age of 15 years.

This scheme is just one of the progressive initiatives that the Queensland Government is introducing in our private health programme, which, along with our widely based community medicine programme, will certainly raise even further the health standards of the people in this State.

I take this opportunity this afternoon to detail to honourable members the progress that we are making with our dental therapists scheme. I am very pleased to report that initial acceptance by parents approached by the department for the scheme has been most encouraging and also that school-leavers

have jumped at the chance to take on this new career of training as school dental therapists.

Last year the training course began, with 24 dental therapist trainees starting at the temporary training centre at the Kangaroo Point Technical College. This year these girls will go into their second year, at the two new clinical training centres which are just being completed at an approximate cost of \$919,000 in the grounds of the Holland Park and Stafford State Schools. I invite honourable members to visit these centres at any time.

Early this year a contract was let for the first permanent training centre, to be built at Yeronga, at a cost of more than \$2,000,000. This centre will allow us to train 72 first-year students and will have accommodation for 36 second-year trainees next year. Planning is presently being undertaken for a third clinical training centre to be built at the Mt. Gravatt East State School, for another 12 second-year trainees, to be completed by 1977.

Following Commonwealth approval of the plans, we intend to call tenders for a combined first and second-year training school at Townsville, for 30 first-year students and appropriate facilities for second-year trainees. This centre is planned for operation in 1976.

The Queensland and Commonwealth Governments have combined in the provision of two 14-seat mini-buses to take pupils from primary schools to the training centres at Holland Park and Stafford. As I mentioned earlier, letters sent to parents seeking approval to have their children examined by the trainees under supervision have been well received. Once the dental therapists are qualified, they will be visiting the primary schools throughout the State and actually working in the schools.

Selection of sites has been made at a number of schools throughout the State for the construction of school dental clinics. Tenders have been accepted for the building of a one-surgery dental clinic at the Inala West Primary School at the cost of \$35,697 and for a three-surgery dental clinic at Richlands East High School at a cost of \$56,946, and a \$49,416 tender has been accepted for a two-surgery dental clinic at the Serviceton South Primary School.

At present we have five mobile dental caravans under construction and these are expected to be completed in March. These units will be utilised in the Bundaberg area, the North Coast area, the Boonah-Beaudesert area, the Brisbane Valley and Helidon area and the Warwick district at schools which would not warrant the construction of a school dental clinic.

The programme for construction of school dental clinics is immense. In the 1975-76 financial year our plans call for the building of 24 clinics; in 1976-77 a total of 21 clinics is planned while in 1977-78 construction of 62 clinics is planned. The actual schools at

which these dental clinics are to be constructed have not yet been finally determined. As the scheme expands, our planners envisage the need for more buses, at Townsville and for Yeronga, and for up to 45 more dental clinic caravans which will be used throughout the State.

From this brief rundown, honourable members will now be well aware that this scheme is making historic inroads into one of the major health problems in this State, and it is certain to make a very positive contribution to the improvement of dental health standards throughout Queensland. I ask for the co-operation of parents and honourable members to make the scheme well known and for its acceptance by parents throughout Queensland.

Not only will there be at least one annual routine check of the developing teeth of every school-child but there will also be a greater awareness of dental hygiene by children in our school and education programme. The fact that the dental therapists will be in the actual schools taking part in this programme will help in the education of the children in dental health.

It is also planned that the therapists will actually lecture the children as part of the health education programme during school time. Let us therefore hope that some of the enthusiasm that school-children are showing already for this scheme might rub off onto their parents, with a more positive preventive health programme and more dental hygiene and teeth care.

It would be most unfortunate if this extremely costly development of the school dental health scheme were not supported by parents in encouraging their children to be examined under it. We may very well have the best clinics in the Commonwealth and the very best trained therapists, but the scheme will fall far short of its target if the parents at home do not keep up the enthusiasm for it.

Therefore I take this opportunity to appeal to all parents of young children to support the initiatives we are bringing forward at this time and to encourage a positive dental health programme in their homes to complement the new scheme being introduced. Positive action will bring positive results with an improvement in the dental health programme and the dental health of future generations. This will mean that our very heavy investment now, involving the co-operation of the Commonwealth and State Governments, will prove to be a very worth-while venture.

#### LIMITATION ON PERIOD OF RESIDENCE IN CARAVAN PARKS

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (12.48 p.m.): Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! As this will be the honourable gentleman's maiden speech, I ask the House to extend to him the usual courtesies.

**Mr. BYRNE:** I ask for no privileges on this occasion. I rise to speak on the matter of the attitude of the Brisbane City Council towards caravan parks and to deal with the gross injustice and complete disrespect by the Brisbane City Council for the rights of the individual in this regard.

The two major points of the issue that are relevant at present are the imposition of a maximum of six weeks' residence in caravan parks and also the concept of imposing a \$20,000 bond upon people wishing to open new caravan parks. I consider both of them to be unjust and unwarranted.

I shall quote one of many letters that I have received from caravan park residents in my electorate. This letter was written by an eight-year-old girl. I hope that honourable members will appreciate the sentiments expressed in it and realise what is intended by it. It reads—

"Dear Sir,

"My name is Michelle and I live in a caravan. It is a nice big caravan and I have my own room. I have many friends in the caravan park. One friend I have comes from Fiji. I belong to the Belmont Brownies. My brother belongs to Cubs. I belong to the Carina Swimming Club. I am also very lucky because Mummy can afford to have me taught piano accordion. Mummy says that if we have to shift I will not be able to do all these things. I am very happy living in a caravan and I know Mummy and Daddy are too.

"I do not want to leave Carina school as I am in the school band and softball team. Please, sir, do not make us shift all the time. I want to make something of myself my Mummy and Daddy will be proud of."

In that letter are expressed sentiments that are indeed very important, and they are sentiments that the Brisbane City Council has completely ignored.

In these economic times in which it is so difficult, because of actions of the Federal Government, for people to obtain their own homes, I ask why the Brisbane City Council is introducing these regulations. Proprietors of caravan parks called for years for the introduction of high standards, but, as nothing was forthcoming, the proposals were shelved. Finally, when something does happen, what is to be the position? A situation will arise which will only make things far more difficult for people living in caravan parks.

I do not recommend caravan parks as the eternal dwelling places of any people. I do not claim that they are the perfect places in which to live. But I do say that in the present economic climate it is important that people be allowed to make that choice. It is unjust to insist that people move every six weeks, and that children change schools and lose the communal and social connections that are so necessary for their development.

Pensioners also have to be considered. I have visited caravan parks in my electorate, and in several of them there are many pensioners. They are very happy to be there. They have their own small homes that they are able to maintain. They have gardens around their caravans. They grow vegetables, and they are contented. It appears to be the desire of the Brisbane City Council to destroy this contentment, and again I ask why.

In one caravan park proposals were made two years ago to raise the standards of Brisbane City Council caravan parks. The proposals proceeded through the various channels until finally they reached the council, where they were rejected. There was in those proposals a desire to provide for people in caravan parks pre-school, shopping, sporting and recreational facilities. They reached the top echelon of the council, where they were knocked back. Why did this happen? It is alleged that Alderman Brusasco said, "We cannot have people in caravan parks better off than the rest of the community." Must we conclude from that statement that caravan-park dwellers are second-rate citizens? If that is the case, the council is falling down in its duties and responsibilities as a representative form of government for a democratic people.

Those overtures that were made to the council were followed up at a later date. Six months later, a well-known real estate salesman brought some prospective purchasers to the same caravan park. They went to inspect the back blocks of the park, the parts in respect of which the new proposals had been made. The owner of the caravan park informed them that there was no point in looking at that area because the council would not give approval for what was proposed. The reply was, "We are the council."

The situation becomes reasonably obvious. It is the intention of the council, as Alderman Brusasco said the other night, to attempt to take over and monopolise caravan parks, and eliminate the free-enterprise structure. The council previously controlled caravan parks and failed in conducting them. It appears to have no thought for, and no understanding or appreciation of, the rights of the people in caravan parks. It has no appreciation of the situation of children, or of the turmoil that the need to change their place of living will bring to people who have lived happily in caravan parks for several years. The alternative for these people will be to move from caravan park to caravan park every six weeks.

I then ask how the Brisbane City Council intends to implement this proposal. Does it intend to produce eviction notices and eviction orders? Does it intend to institute legal actions that involve costs for the council? All these things create immense difficulties of a bureaucratic nature.

Perhaps in the long term caravan parks are not the most desirable places of residence, but some people find them so and choose them over and above houses in the suburbs.

In one recent instance, a subject master from a grammar school and his wife, a beautician, lived quite happily in a caravan in one of the caravan parks in the metropolitan area. The caravan was air-conditioned and had all the facilities they required, and more. It enabled them to live out their lives happily, and they were pleased with it. But now it appears that the council has no desire to appreciate the situation in which individuals within the community find themselves. Rather it is its desire—for its own ends, presumably—to inflict upon the people concerned changes, problems and difficulties that they have no desire to receive.

I say again that the present economic situation is an important factor—indeed, a critical factor—and people are unable to obtain homes or home finance because of the high costs entailed. There are people in caravan parks who have had homes but, because of the prevailing economic circumstances, have been unable to meet the mortgage repayments. What do we do to these people? Push them out? Perhaps that is what the council wants to do, but that is not a desirable situation.

These people are able to live happily in a community, and their happiness would be destroyed completely and utterly if they were not allowed some degree of permanence in caravan parks. If people are forced to move every six weeks, they will no longer be concerned about their environment. At the end of the first, second, third or fourth week they will say, "Why worry about our surroundings? We will be out of here shortly, and they can clean it up." That is an undesirable situation.

Then I come to the question of the \$20,000 bond. One might think that it would be somewhat in restraint of trade that such a bond would be imposed. It is hard to visualise people wishing to build houses or a block of units with such an enormous bond imposed upon them. The proprietors of caravan parks are endeavouring to provide a service for the community; the community is desirous of having that service provided. The council is endeavouring to frustrate it in order that the caravan parks may find their way into its hands.

I conclude on this point, and it is the crucial point: why does the council choose to act now, in these times of economic difficulty? I say that it chooses to act now because it does not have at heart concern for the individuals in the community.

The House adjourned at 12.58 p.m.