

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 6 MARCH 1975

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

LIMESTONE DEPOSITS, THE CAVES AREA

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (11.1 a.m.): I take this opportunity to acquaint honourable members with my policy decisions regarding limestone deposits in The Caves area, near Rockhampton.

A major deposit of limestone at Mount Etna, 24 kilometres north of Rockhampton, is held under mining leases 281, 307, 326, 340 and 899, Rockhampton, by Central Queensland Cement Pty. Ltd., and is presently being worked for cement and lime manufacture. The limestone is crushed at Mount Etna and hauled by road a distance of 18 kilometres to Parkhurst.

M.L. 281 was granted from
1 June 1954, for 21 years;

M.L. 307 was granted from
1 July 1958, for 21 years;

M.L. 326 was granted from
1 May, 1960, for 21 years;

M.L. 340 was granted from
1 August 1961, for 21 years; and

M.L. 899 was granted from
1 November 1973, for 19 years.

Of these, it has been approved that the terms of mining leases 281, 307, 326 and 340 be extended for further terms of 21 years in each case, from the dates of expiry, on conditions to be determined.

Another major deposit at Limestone Ridge was previously held under mining leases 236 and 243 by Central Queensland Cement Pty. Ltd. and mining lease application 306 by Mount Morgan Limited. Following negotiations between my department and the companies, action has been taken by the companies for the respective surrender and abandonment of the leases at Limestone Ridge.

M.L. 236 was granted from 16 December 1937, and was renewed on 2 August 1956 for a period of 21 years. M.L. 243 was granted from 30 September 1942, and was renewed on 2 June 1960 for 21 years.

For over a decade various conservation groups have conducted a public campaign against mining at Mount Etna and Limestone Ridge. Both areas are cavernous, and the aim has been to preserve the areas because of their speleological interest and for ecological reasons. Both have been the subjects of national park proposals.

Environmental pressures forced the cessation of operations in the small quarry operated by Mount Morgan Limited in mining lease application 306, adjacent to Johannsen's

Caves on Limestone Ridge, and that company has subsequently drawn its limestone requirements from Central Queensland Cement Pty. Ltd.

In 1971, following negotiations with my department, Central Queensland Cement Pty. Ltd. stated that it would not be prepared to surrender any of its leases on Mount Etna. However, the company agreed not to mine within 66 ft. of known caves in Mount Etna for a period of three years, pending the investigation, in conjunction with my department, of possibly suitable alternative deposits of limestone as an acceptable replacement for this area

During 1971 to 1973, officers of my department carried out studies on the limestone deposits of the Rockhampton area, involving geological mapping, drilling and sampling, and taking into account environment aspects of the various deposits. These studies indicated that The Caves area contains the only suitable deposits of limestone for cement and lime manufacture close to Rockhampton. Other major deposits of various qualities occur in the Rockhampton-Gladstone hinterland, but an assessment of these in comparison with those of The Caves area indicates there is no satisfactory substitute in terms of reserves, availability of tenure and transport costs.

The deposits in The Caves area may be considered in three groups—

(1) Mount Etna

(a) This constitutes the present source of limestone for cement and lime manufacture carried out by Central Queensland Cement Pty. Ltd. Reserves are 31,000,000 tonnes, but this figure would be reduced to 14,000,000 tonnes by the exclusion of the cavernous part of the mountain, which the company agreed not to mine for a period of three years from February 1971.

(b) Production of limestone for 1973 was 230,707 tonnes and, with estimated expansion of 7 per cent per annum, projected consumption for a 40-year period would total 46,000,000 tonnes. Any upsurge in industrial development in Central Queensland could lead to rapidly increasing demands for limestone, considerably exceeding these figures.

(c) The restriction on mining the cavernous part of Mount Etna represented an unsatisfactory and, at the best, only an interim solution to the problem. Apart from the inadequacy of reserves, bench design in the quarries was restricted and the resultant steep gradients are understood to have made access difficult in wet weather. Because of the irregular development of the cave system, it was very difficult to avoid accidentally infringing this restriction.

(d) The mountain is already scarred by quarrying and is consequently no longer a natural scenic feature. Its caves are not suitable for examination by tourists, but are of interest to speleologists. They are also

of zoological interest, mainly for their bat fauna. However, the bat fauna is not unique, being found in other caves in The Caves area and of widespread occurrence elsewhere. Claims have been made that one cave on Mount Etna is of great ecological significance as a nursery habitat for Bent-Winged Bats, but the record of one nursery in a stormwater tunnel at Rockhampton and the wide distribution of the species indicate that, while they are gregarious in their breeding habits, they appear also to be adaptable.

(2) Limestone Ridge

(a) This ridge contains reserves of 45,000,000 tonnes of high grade limestone.

(b) The area is highly cavernous and Johannsen's Caves are reputed to be one of the largest cave systems in Queensland, while Cammoo Caves at the southern end of the ridge are operated as a tourist enterprise. The ridge is largely in a natural condition and is a good example of 'Karst' topography produced by erosion of the limestone.

(c) The caves support a large bat fauna, and marsupials, birds and reptiles are numerous on the slopes of the ridge.

(3) Departmental Area 30D

In this area a discontinuous belt of deposits contains in the aggregate significant reserves of limestone, totalling approximately 25,000,000 tonnes (excluding the deposit containing Olsen's Caves). These deposits could provide a useful supplement to limestone reserves of the Rockhampton area, but the individual deposits are regarded as being too small to provide a substitute for that being worked at Mount Etna. This area is being held in reserve by my department.

A report on investigations of the limestone deposits of The Caves area and others in the Rockhampton area is being prepared for publication later this year.

Following consideration of my department's assessment of the limestone deposits of the area, negotiations were continued with Central Queensland Cement Pty. Ltd. and Mount Morgan Limited in an effort to resolve the issue.

These discussions had as their primary objectives the guaranteeing of adequate supplies of limestone for the present and future needs of an established industry employing some 120 people in Rockhampton, while safeguarding, where possible, significant natural areas for environmental purposes. An overriding consideration was that Central Queensland Cement Pty. Ltd. had a legal right to mine limestone at Mount Etna under the terms of the leases already granted to it, and it had indicated it intended to exercise this right. The company had claimed that no suitable alternative deposits existed in close proximity to Rockhampton to meet its requirements for cement and lime manufacture in terms of reserves (both tonnage and

grade), availability of tenure and transport costs. The investigations of my department support this view.

These discussions culminated in an approach by my department to the companies to relinquish all leases on Limestone Ridge so that lands held or under application as mining leases could be made available for national park purposes. Cabinet endorsed this policy, and subsequently Central Queensland Cement Pty. Ltd. proceeded with its surrender of the two leases concerned and Mount Morgan Limited with its abandonment of one lease application.

The solution is a compromise one, which, while acknowledging existing rights, has been designed to achieve a balance between conservationists and developmental interests.

The response from conservationist groups to this decision has been disappointing. It is apparent that they feel any decision that does not meet their aspirations completely is wrong and accordingly unacceptable. I have been subjected to a barrage of claims about the availability of alternative deposits. These claims have also received a certain amount of Press publicity.

I do not doubt that conservationist groups are well meaning, and I can assure them that their representations in this matter have received, and in all future matters will receive, detailed and sympathetic consideration. However, I hope their ecological claims have more substance than their obviously limited appreciation of mining matters. For example, we have been told that there is a deposit of 5,000,000 tonnes of limestone at Parkhurst, half a mile from the cement works, and another large deposit nearby. Both these deposits are unsuitable for quarrying for environmental and other reasons—one abuts the main North Coast railway and the other a water treatment plant. The fact that neither has been drilled nor is under lease, despite their proximity to Rockhampton, is indicative of their lack of economic significance.

Furthermore, the Queensland Conservation Council Incorporated has expressed the view to me that deposits at Bracewell, near Gladstone, will provide an economically and environmentally acceptable alternative to that at Mount Etna. However, the same organisation has lodged written objections to the granting of mining lease applications in the Bracewell area.

It is true that the Rockhampton-Gladstone hinterland is well endowed with limestone deposits, some of them large and of high grade, but the more significant of these are held under authorities to prospect and mining leases or are under application by a number of companies. In this context it should be appreciated that mining in Queensland is still conducted under a free enterprise system, not a nationalised one, where companies could be shifted from one deposit to another, regardless of economics or their existing rights.

The matter is one that has received much publicity and one which I have considered deserving of this somewhat detailed comment.

DISPLAY OF BRISBANE TOWN PLAN

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (11.14 a.m.): Further to a question asked in the House yesterday morning by the honourable member for Sandgate (Mr. Dean), and later discussions at a meeting of the joint Government parties, I have now arranged with the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Alderman Clem Jones, that a complete copy of the Brisbane Town Plan will be made available to my department on Monday next, 10 March. It will be under the control of the Director of Local Government and available for inspection by parliamentary members only, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on week-days. Officers of the Department of Local Government will be in attendance to answer members' queries concerning the Town Plan. Honourable members desirous of inspecting the copy of the Town Plan should contact the director by telephone and make an appointment for the inspection.

I thank the Lord Mayor for his assistance in making the plan available for the viewing and convenience of honourable members.

I would stress that under the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act 1946-1974 objections to the Town Plan have to be lodged with the Town Clerk, Brisbane City Council, within the time prescribed by that Act.

Mr. Dean: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under The Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Acts, 1944 to 1967.

Regulation under the Sawmills Licensing Act 1936-1974.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

LIMESTONE RIDGE NATIONAL PARK

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

(1) With regard to the Limestone Ridge National Park proposal now under consideration by his department, were the boundaries of the proposal suggested by officers of the National Parks Branch or were the boundaries in fact set by the Mines Department on a take-it-or-leave-it basis?

(2) Does the Limestone Ridge proposal meet either Queensland or international standards for a national park?

(3) Would it better meet these standards if Mt. Etna were included in the proposal?

Answers:—

(1) "As is the case in all such proposals, the boundaries will be decided after receipt of the views of other Government Departments, whose interests may be affected."

(2) "By being of scenic, scientific and historic interest the proposal conforms to the requirements of the *Forestry Act* 1959–1974. As with many other parks in this State and elsewhere, it will not embrace the relatively large area of 1 000 hectares, as mentioned in the criteria of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (I.U.C.N.) for international listing. The proposal will add an extra cave system to the National Park Estate with a viable habitat for the fauna concerned."

(3) "Mount Etna is not available for National Park reservation and no recent assessment of its suitability has been made."

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS COMMUNICATIONS, MARYVALE AND KINGAROY

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

(1) With reference to a joint statement issued by him and the Commonwealth Minister for Defence on February 3 announcing the upgrading of communications at local emergency operations centres, does the proposal include the construction of a transmitter at Maryvale or the upgrading of existing facilities at that place?

(2) Is it also proposed to construct a broadcasting studio at Kingaroy?

(3) If so, what is the purpose of this construction, is it in any way connected with the fact that Kingaroy is the home of the Premier and will he use it for publicity purposes?

Answers:—

(1) "No."

(2 and 3) "These are not matters under the ambit of my portfolio."

DILLINGHAM MINING COMPANY LEASE ON FRASER ISLAND

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

(1) Is the Dillingham Mining Company seeking to have changes made to clauses 24 (b) and 24 (c) of their lease on Fraser Island?

(2) Will he make sure that, before any decision is made on the proposed amendments to the clauses, an environmental impact study is commissioned by the company to ascertain any damage that might be done to the ecology of the area?

Answers:—

(1) "The company has not made any application to have Special Condition 24 (c) of Mining Lease No. 95, Maryborough, varied. Special Condition 24 (b) states 'he shall not take or divert water for mining purposes from Lake Boemingen, First Creek, Second Creek or Third Creek'. However, the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, which controls the use of water, has granted the company licenses to remove water from Second Creek and the company has asked for the variation of Special Condition 24 (b) to allow it to take water from this creek under the conditions laid down by the Commission."

(2) "As there will be no disturbance of the environment, an Environmental Impact Study is not necessary."

ACCIDENT PREVENTION MEASURES FOR SCHOOL BUSES

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

In view of the tragic accidents which have occurred in the past fortnight involving children disembarking from school buses, will he consider amending the Traffic Regulations to (a) require all school buses to be fitted with hazard warning lights, which should be used when the bus is stopped to allow children to embark or disembark, (b) have all school buses clearly marked and painted a unique colour, e.g. day-glow orange, (c) prohibit any traffic from overtaking a school bus whilst it is stopped to allow passengers to disembark, except when the bus is in a designated parking area and (d) regulate all on-coming traffic to a speed of 25 km/h whilst the bus is stopped to embark or disembark passengers?

Answer:—

"Following a similar Question directed to me in this House on the 27th of last month by the Honourable Member for Clayfield, I undertook to take urgent action to see what could be done to prevent the tragic accidents involving children alighting from school buses. A preliminary examination has indicated that the solution by traffic regulation is not as simple as that adopted in many States of the United States where I am advised most school bus services are operated only by the schools themselves or solely as school buses by private operators. I am examining the possibility of identifying school buses operating in country areas by a distinctive colour where they are used solely for conveying children under arrangements by local School Conveyance Committees and I will be consulting my colleague, the Honourable the Minister for Education in this regard. However, in the Brisbane metropolitan and provincial city areas where both adults and school children are carried on the same buses,

which are also used for commuters generally, a major problem of identification arises. This also is consistent with the experience of the cities of the United States where school children also use the general urban-type bus which is used for other purposes. I am sure Honourable Members are fully aware that I am deeply concerned with road safety, particularly in relation to children, as well as aged, infirm and disabled persons, and will appreciate the Road Safety Education Campaigns being pursued in the schools. As a matter of interest, Queensland is the leader in road safety education in this area. In co-operation with the Education Department and the Commonwealth Department of Transport, a new system for the education of young school children in road safety, which it is hoped will lay the basis for the future, has been developed. Apart from this, I have asked the Traffic Advisory Committee, constituted under the Traffic Act, to urgently consider all aspects of the safety of children carried by school buses and to suggest for consideration any action which can be taken by the Government, including amendments to the Traffic Regulations. The specific suggestions which have been made by the Honourable Member have been directed to the committee for its examination into this problem."

POLITICAL DISCRIMINATION ON IMMIGRATION

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

Has he any recent evidence of discrimination and favouritism on political grounds by the Commonwealth Immigration authorities in the granting of entry permits to intending immigrants including, in particular, applicants from Cyprus?

Answer:—

"The State Migration Office concerns itself principally with the reception of migrants from the United Kingdom and is not involved in the processing of applications by intending migrants from areas such as Cyprus. The basis on which entry permits are granted to intending migrants is one entirely for consideration and decision by the Federal Government. However if the Honourable Member has a particular case in mind I will be happy to represent the matter to the appropriate Federal Minister if he will let me have the necessary particulars."

BRISBANE RIVER DREDGING, HIGHGATE HILL AND HILL END REACHES

Mr. Doumany, pursuant to notice, asked
The Minister for Marine Services,—

(1) As the activities of gravel-dredging barges continue to cause great concern amongst riverside residents in the Highgate

Hill and Hill End reaches of the Brisbane River, will he seek immediate moderation of the intensity and hours of operation of these barges until the report on this subject currently in preparation by his department is completed and released?

(2) When will this report be released?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "The activities of gravel dredging barges including hours of operations have been the subject of a study by an inter-departmental committee. This committee has reported to the Honourable the Premier and this report is at present being considered by Cabinet. The study being undertaken by my department relates only to the river bank stability following the January 1974 flooding. Whilst this study is not complete, I am advised there are no grounds at this stage to relate bank instability to the operation of gravel dredging barges."

INSPECTION OF DOMESTIC ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

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

In the interests of safety, will he investigate and report on the mooted intention of the Brisbane City Council to terminate the practice of official inspection of new electrical installations in domestic premises?

Answer:—

"The Honourable Member's question appears to relate to a matter which falls within the administration of the State Electricity Commission. I would therefore suggest that he direct his question to my colleague the Minister for Mines and Energy."

BRISBANE FLOOD MITIGATION WORKS

(a) **Mr. Miller**, pursuant to notice, asked
The Minister for Local Government,—

As the Minister for Local Government stated during the introduction of the City of Brisbane Flood Mitigation Works Approval Act Amendment Bill that he had informed the Lord Mayor of Brisbane that legal advice indicated that the Brisbane City Council has powers under the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act to exercise control of filling and other development in flood-prone areas and that if the council had obtained legal advice to the contrary a copy of the advice should be supplied to the Minister, has the Lord Mayor or any Alderman or any officer of the Brisbane City Council advised him or his department of any legal advice contrary to the advice supplied to the Government? If so, will he take immediate steps to introduce necessary amendments?

Answer:—

"No such legal opinion has been supplied to me or my department up to the present."

(b) **Mr. Miller**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Water Resources,—

What works have been submitted by the Brisbane City Council for his approval under the City of Brisbane Flood-mitigation works?

Answer:—

"The works to which the Honourable Member refers come under the provisions of the City of Brisbane (Flood Mitigation Works Approval) Act. This Act is administered by the Honourable the Minister for Local Government and I suggest the Honourable Member refers his Question to that Minister."

BALANCE SHEET, RADIO STATION 4KQ

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

Does radio station 4KQ publish a balance sheet in accordance with the Companies Act and, if not, what steps can be taken to ensure that this organisation complies with the law?

Answer:—

"Labour Broadcasting Station Pty. Ltd. which operates Radio Station 4KQ is an exempt proprietary company. This company has elected to appoint an auditor and as a result is not required to file a balance sheet with the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs. The company is required by the *Companies Act* 1961–1974 to produce each year a profit and loss account and balance sheet for the benefit of its shareholders. There have been no complaints received by the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs that the shareholders have failed to receive a copy of the above accounts."

REDCLIFFE CONNECTION ROAD

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

(1) Have any steps been taken with regard to the re-naming of the road known as Redcliffe Connection Road?

(2) As the matter has been drawn out for two years, will an early decision be made?

Answers:—

(1) "A proposal has been submitted to re-name this road in conjunction with the Road Plan Review and this proposal is likely to be adopted."

(2) "Finalisation of the review was delayed because the new Commonwealth road categories have not yet been finalised

by the Commonwealth Minister for Transport except for National Highways. It is expected the review will proceed later in 1975."

PLAYING FIELD, KIPPA-RING STATE SCHOOL

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

Will the proposed new playing field at Kippa-Ring State School be constructed as soon as possible, as the playing areas are now inadequate?

Answer:

"Funds are not presently available for the extension of a main drainage line through the school grounds to collect run off water from Henzell and Church Streets, which presently flows through recently acquired land via the old roadway. Replacement of a concrete cricket pitch lost by building development would be dependent on such work. Clearing of the recently acquired land has been completed generally but grading to place the land in a condition suitable for free play purposes cannot be commenced until the drainage work is completed. Further development of this land as a playing field is a matter for the Parents and Citizens' Association under the School Improvements Subsidy Scheme."

MORETON REGION GROWTH STRATEGY INVESTIGATION

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

With reference to the Moreton Region Growth Strategy Investigation, what is the extent of the staff and facilities engaged in this exercise and who is responsible for meeting the cost of the organisation?

Answer:—

"The staff of the investigation comprises the Project Director, of Wilbur Smith and Associates, fifteen officers of State Government Departments seconded or temporarily seconded to the project, three staff members of the Commonwealth's Cities Commission and fifteen temporary staff. Naturally, other State departments supply back-up and liaison services as required. The study team is located in offices in Transport House in Fortitude Valley. Departments meet the wages costs of their seconded staff and the Co-ordinator-General's Department meets the cost of temporary staff, rent, office materials and equipment. That department and the Commonwealth Cities Commission share the cost of the Project Director's services. The commission also contributes to the cost of some services being provided by other Commonwealth authorities and to the cost of some project activities such as printing, etc."

BINGO PERMITS

Mr. Lane, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

(1) How many permits to play bingo have been granted since the game was legalised last year?

(2) What is the total revenue from the permit fees?

(3) Have any permit fees been revoked and, if so, for what reason?

Answers:—

(1) "377."

(2) "\$33,680."

(3) "Nil."

FINANCIAL AID TO REDUCE PRICES OF URBAN LAND

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

(1) With reference to the Second Annual Report of the Department of Urban and Regional Development wherein it is stated that following a meeting between State and Commonwealth Ministers held in Melbourne on October 22, 1973, agreement was reached as to the basic objectives and purposes of Land Commissions, is he aware that these objectives include the provision of urban land at the lowest prices possible with the use of Commonwealth Government financial assistance?

(2) Has such financial assistance yet been made available to the Queensland Lands Commission and, if so, has it been applied for the purpose outlined?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "The State decided a year ago that it was prepared to consider entering into a financial agreement with the Federal Government to finance cheaper land for those, particularly the young marrieds making a start in life, who needed assistance to get a home together. Unfortunately for those in need, the Federal Government has attached 'strings' to the finance it offers. One of the more important 'strings' applied by the Federal Government is that if the State borrows the money (and the money is a repayable loan) the State must then implement Labor land policy. The Federal Government is attempting to interfere further with State rights by flatly refusing to advance funds unless the State accepts the forms of land tenure spelled out by the Federal Government. Land tenure is purely a State matter and the Federal Government has no right whatever to force Labor land policy as a condition in financial agreements. The State is obliged, if it borrows the money, to make all commercial sites leasehold; the State is obliged, if it borrows the money, to make all industrial sites leasehold; and the State is further obliged to force a new type of land tenure of the young people we are all supposed to be worried about. The new land

tenure for residential land is called a 'restricted freehold'; this is a conditional or a restricted freehold which reserves to the Crown the rights of development and re-development. It is not a freehold title at all but is a play on words. Under this new brain child of the Labor Government, a young married will be given a title which will specify the use to which the land may be put. The title will say the land may be used for single-unit or ordinary dwelling purposes. If and when the land becomes suitable for small flat development or for large-scale residential purposes, or if it becomes suitable for a commercial or industrial use, the owner will find himself in a deal of trouble. He will find that in spite of his capital investment, his work and maintenance on the site, his payments for roads, drainage, sewerage etc., his contribution to the community through his church, his club, his schools and so on, in spite of all of his contributions in the various forms, he does not really own the site at all. To retain his title he must pay to the Government the difference in value for flats or for larger-scale residential use, or for a commercial purpose or industrial use. If he refuses to pay up that difference in value, all sorts of funny things can happen. Some new bureaucracy, which the Federal Government wanted us to call a 'Development Corporation', can issue a development order, ordering that the owner pay up and also re-develop to the new land use. If the owner fails to observe the order, this new 'super power' can resume the land at the lower residential, single-unit value or, alternatively, the owner can cut his losses by getting out, by the sale of his home to somebody who will observe the order. Somewhere in the South at the moment there is a fear that a young married, by industry and effort, might improve his opportunity for a better quality of family life. I say firmly that these socialistic concepts have no place in financial agreements between Governments; they are wrong in principle and, I venture to say, almost impossible of proper public administration. There is a multitude of reasons why the State, as the agent of the Federal Government, should not force this land tenure policy upon Queenslanders. I would say that agreement between the two Governments will quickly come about when the Federal Government agrees that the individual home owner should have the right to choose whether he wants leasehold, freehold or restricted freehold land tenure."

S.G.I.O. INSURANCE FOR BUILDING SOCIETY BORROWERS

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

Will he consider amending the Acts relating to building societies to permit borrowers to insure with the S.G.I.O. if they so desire, as the difference in premiums is fairly substantial in some cases?

Answer:—

"I am giving consideration to the matter of regularising insurance policy by building societies and point out to the Honourable Member that society procedures might now be governed by the Trade Practices Act. It would be difficult, however, to invoke legislation depriving a lender of his right to select the insurer of his property."

LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTROL OF R.E.D. SCHEME MONIES

Mr. Jensen, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

As the Bundaberg Show Society and many other organisations not under the control of either the State Government or the respective local council have received large sums of money under the R.E.D. scheme, will he use his influence with the Commonwealth Minister, Mr. Cameron, to have the funds controlled by the local authority of the area, which will prevent any haphazard or wasteful spending of public funds?

Answer:—

"The State Governments of Australia have repeatedly pointed to the mountain of shortcomings of the Federal Socialist Government R.E.D. Scheme designed primarily to control from Canberra the work force of the nation. The Federal Labor Minister (quite often he personally) selects the projects and directs the labour. The local authority puts in its share of the cost of the project, accepts the labour sent to it and lines up at the Labour Office in due course to get the Federal hand-out for the balance of the wages. This is after months of delay while the unemployed numbers grow to record levels and after mountains and mountains of paper accumulated in the R.E.D. offices in Brisbane and Canberra. (After the first four months of the scheme we had approximately 40,000 unemployed in Queensland and only about 200 working under the R.E.D. Scheme.) Political favourites are played by the Federal Labor Government and councils are not being chosen and provided with funds in relation to the number of people unemployed in their area. Some councils despite high unemployment registrations have had no R.E.D. money, others with higher unemployed numbers have had only small amounts of R.E.D. funds while others have scored well compared with their neighbours. The Queensland Government right from the start offered to co-operate with the Federal Government in the administration of the unemployment scheme but this offer was refused outright until the February Premiers' Conference when the States finally got through for a very small portion of the total Federal money being poured into unemployment relief. The State administered scheme works fairly,

with minimum R.E.D. tape, with maximum authority in the hands of local authorities in the selection of the projects most needed in their districts and with provision for immediate employment of labour. With the Federal Minister closing his eyes and ears to the major shortcomings in his R.E.D. scheme, I can't see that he would listen to a further plea from me with respect to the R.E.D. money the Honourable Member for Bundaberg says is being wasted by the Bundaberg Show Society. I suggest the Honourable Member might direct his Question to his colleague in Canberra, the Honourable Mr. Clyde Cameron, who has taken to himself the full responsibility for fostering the R.E.D. Scheme for its funding and for its administration. He must also of course take full responsibility for its shortcomings. I am afraid that if the R.E.D. Scheme ever gets to the stage where it works, we won't be far from the labour camps of the Communist system that Federal Labor seems to prefer."

BURNETT RIVER IRRIGATION SCHEME

Mr. Jensen, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Water Resources,—

(1) Has he taken any positive steps to expedite the completion of the barrage over the Burnett River to avoid the Bundaberg City Council's investment of \$2.8 million on the city's water supply scheme being a "white elephant" for approximately two years?

(2) Will he do all possible to speed up the work on phase 1 of stage 1 of the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme, which appears to be about five years behind schedule, in order to catch up with the backlog and to ensure water for irrigation in future drought periods?

Answers:—

(1) "Construction of Burnett barrage was programmed to be built over dry seasons in consecutive years. Due to financial limitations, money could not be made available until early 1974. On present planning, providing finance is available, the Burnett barrage should be completed by late 1976, which is within the original planned completion date. The Bundaberg City Council has shown foresight in constructing the pump-well prior to storage of fresh water in the barrage."

(2) "Constant efforts are being made to obtain finance to speed up the work on phase 1 of stage 1 of the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme, but with present inflationary trends annual finance available from State resources has restricted the amount of work that can be achieved on this and numerous other water conservation works throughout the State. It is expected that water will be available in May this year from a temporary pump station on the Kolan River upstream of the Kolan barrage

for initial supply for irrigation to the Gooburrum area. It is to be noted that phase 1 of stage 1 was originally to be completed by 1976-77 as set out in the construction programme in the report presented to Parliament when the undertaking was established. However, funds available have not kept up with escalation of costs and the final completion date will be dependent on finance that can be allocated annually from limited State funds, bearing in mind numerous other worthwhile projects throughout the State."

BRIDGE OVER BARRON RIVER, STRATFORD

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

What action is proposed for the construction of a new bridge over the Barron River at Stratford and when is the work to commence?

Answer:—

"Plans for the bridge are complete but it is unlikely that funds will be available in the next financial year. It should be clearly understood that in the next two years the Commonwealth has reduced rural arterial funds from \$14.64 million in 1974-75 to \$8.9 million in 1975-76 and \$9.8 million in 1976-77. With rising costs this severely reduces the new work that can be programmed."

KURANDA RANGE ROAD AND KURANDA-MAREEBA ROAD

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

What has happened to the widening of the Kuranda Range road and the road between Kuranda and Mareeba, which was to commence in June, 1974?

Answer:—

"Plans have been completed but release cannot be made at present because of the general lack of rural arterial funds. It should be pointed out that the additional funds recently made available only overcame cost rises on existing jobs. This work will be considered when finalising the programme for the next financial year."

REX RANGE ROAD, MOUNT MOLLOY-MOSSMAN

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

What is the situation regarding the Rex Range Road from Mount Molloy to Mossman and has a decision been reached to complete the widening and bitumen-surfacing? If not, when will a decision be made?

Answer:—

"There are no plans for widening and surfacing this road in the near future since rural arterial funds have been severely

reduced by the Commonwealth in 1975-76 and 1976-77, as I have stated in my Answer to your Question on the Barron River at Stratford."

BARGE UNLOADING NEAR WILLIAM JOLLY BRIDGE

Mr. Young, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Marine Services,—

As I have again received complaints from residents along Coronation Drive that the unloading of barges near the William Jolly Bridge is disturbing them late at night and as barges were being unloaded from 11 p.m. on March 4 until the early hours of the morning, does this contravene the hours of operations set out by the Harbours and Marine Department?

Answer:—

"Unloading operations are dependent upon the operation of shore based plant. I understand the hours of operation of the plant referred to by the Honourable Member conforms with the ordinances of the Brisbane City Council."

CLEARING OF ENOGGERA CREEK

Mr. Young, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Marine Services,—

As local flooding in the Ashgrove and Newmarket areas is a continuing worry and concern to local residents and many are suffering from extreme nervous complaints from living near the creeks, who is responsible for the dredging and clearing of Enoggera Creek near Ashgrove Avenue and Quandong Street?

Answer:—

"Dredging of the Enoggera Creek for drainage purposes comes under the provisions of the City of Brisbane (Flood Mitigation Works Approval) Act and subject to that Act, responsibility for these works rests with the Brisbane City Council."

SHARKS, CROWN OF THORNS STARFISH AND SEA WASP

Mr. Casey, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

What amount has the Government spent in each of the last three years on (a) the shark-meshing programme, (b) research into the Crown of Thorns starfish and (c) research into the deadly sea-wasp or jellyfish?

Answer:—

"The amounts for the financial years 1971-72, 1972-73 and 1973-74 are respectively—(a) \$108,709; \$116,252; and \$121,043; (b) \$45,000; \$55,000; and \$65,000; (c) Nil; \$4,000; and \$7,900."

SUBSIDIES TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR
SWIMMING POOLS

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

(1) What subsidy does the Queensland Government provide to local authorities for the construction of swimming pools?

(2) In the last five years, what has been the total financial assistance for the construction of swimming pools given to (a) the Brisbane City Council, (b) cities, towns and shires lying generally east of the Great Dividing Range and south of the Tropic of Capricorn and (c) cities, towns and shires lying generally north of the Tropic of Capricorn?

(3) Is any special consideration given to cities, towns or shires north of the Tropic of Capricorn where the ocean waters in summer are dangerous because of the deadly sea stingers, which can cause death in a matter of seconds, and, if not, will he have this matter investigated with a view to giving considerable financial assistance to local authorities in those areas to construct more swimming pools?

Answers:—

(1) "Under the approved subsidy scheme, the State provides a subsidy of 25 per cent. towards the capital cost of swimming pool projects undertaken by local authorities. This subsidy is applicable only to approved projects where there are no existing facilities or where existing facilities in the area concerned are inadequate for teaching swimming. Subsidy is limited, according to size of pool, as follows:—50 metre—Est. Cost, \$140,000; 33½ metre—Est. Cost, \$105,000; and 25 metre—Est. Cost \$70,000. In addition, an Education Department subsidy of 25 per cent. of cost (with a limit of \$10,000) is available for pools in certain small township areas of under 5,000 population and subject to certain conditions. Separate diving pool and caretaker's residence are not eligible for subsidy. Enclosed wading pools are eligible for subsidy where depth ranges from two feet minimum at shallow end to a maximum of three feet to three feet six inches at the deep end."

(2) "(a) Brisbane City Council has constructed two pools over the last five years and has received \$35,000 subsidy on each. (b) South of the Tropic of Capricorn 11 pools have been constructed by local authorities in the last five years. Subsidies paid in respect of these pools were—Treasury subsidy, \$240,190; Education subsidy, \$84,276; Total, \$324,466. (c) North of the Tropic of Capricorn 14 pools have been constructed by local authorities. Subsidies paid in respect of these pools were—Treasury subsidy, \$278,986; Education subsidy, \$100,644; Total, \$379,630."

(3) "The construction of municipal swimming pools is a matter for decision by the local authorities concerned. As already explained, the State provides substantial subsidies towards the capital cost of such pools and it is felt that these subsidies offer an inducement to local authorities to proceed with such projects."

SUGAR-STORAGE FACILITIES

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

In view of the proposed increase in Queensland's sugar production and the recent call for additional buffer storage by the Executive Director of the International Sugar Organisation, what additional sugar-storage facilities will be constructed in Queensland, at which bulk terminals, when will they be built and what will be their capacity?

Answer:—

"I am advised that the Sugar Board, in co-operation with the marketing agents (CSR Ltd.) and its consulting engineers (Macdonald, Wagner and Priddle) have been conducting an intensive study of the future bulk sugar storage requirements of the sugar industry in association with a study of future port requirements. The Sugar Board has already informed the sugar industry that it is contemplating additional storage of about 150,000 tonnes at Bundaberg and at least 85,000 tonnes to handle Herbert River sugar and has indicated a need for urgency in the construction of these facilities. However, final decisions will have to await the outcome of these studies which are nearing completion."

QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY ORIENTATION
WEEK PUBLICATIONS

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

With reference to the publications distributed at the Queensland University during orientation week, particularly the article inciting students to break the law and to try prohibited dangerous drugs, will he ensure that the police take action to see whether charges should not be laid against those responsible, in terms of section 7 of The Criminal Code and section 33 of the Health Act?

Answer:—

"The matter has been under investigations which are still in train."

RAIL LINK, WACOL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

What was the frequency of use of the spur railway line into the Wacol Industrial Estate during the first six months of this financial year?

Answer:—

“The shunting of sidings served by this spur line is performed in conjunction with the carrying out of shunting generally at Wacol. A precise record of the time occupied in shunting on the spur line is not maintained, but it is estimated that at least one hour per day would be so occupied.”

FLOODING OF IPSWICH ROAD, OXLEY FLATS

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

(1) Is he aware that after the lightest fall of rain Oxley Creek cuts the two out-bound lanes of Ipswich Road at the Oxley flats?

(2) As this is the main road into and out of Brisbane, what plans has his department to remedy this very bad design fault?

Answers:—

(1) “Yes, with moderate to heavy rain not the lightest rain as the Honourable Member stated.”

(2) “Main Roads Department is well aware of the problem but have been unable to programme the work. The reduced funds in Urban Arterials has been required to complete existing projects. It is possible to switch traffic onto the inbound lanes in flood emergencies.”

LIMITATION ON PERIOD OF RESIDENCE IN CARAVAN PARKS

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

Can he give some assurance to the thousands of concerned and distressed pensioners and residents living in caravan parks that they will not be subject to six-weekly moves or evictions and that their life styles in community, sporting, school and social organisations, particularly in relation to young children, will not be thrown into upheaval because of the proposed new Brisbane City Council caravan-park regulations?

Answer:—

“I understand the Honourable Member’s question springs from a recent Press statement relating to an ordinance proposed to be made by the Brisbane City Council under the provisions of the *City of Brisbane Act 1924–1974* dealing with the conduct and operation of caravan parks

in the City of Brisbane. Should the council decide to proceed with the making of the ordinance it will have to advertise its intention so to do in a newspaper circulating in the city and interested persons will have a right of objection. The ordinance will not have force and effect until such time as it receives the approval of the Governor in Council and is published in the *Government Gazette*. The regulation of the use of existing caravan parks in the city is a matter within the sole discretion of the Brisbane City Council under the provisions of its legislative powers. I am therefore not in a position to comment on the matters raised in the Honourable Member’s question since they are ones for determination by the council.”

SUGAR MILL FOR FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND

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

If the present world demand for cane sugar continues to the point of justifying the establishment of new sugar-milling facilities in this country, will he continue to support my previous representations for the establishment of a new sugar mill in Far North Queensland, which is an area with the greatest possible overall potential for the expansion of the production of sugar cane?

Answer:—

“The Honourable Member’s question must remain largely theoretical while continued increases in the productive capacity of existing mill areas can service improved market opportunities. However, I would assure the Honourable Member his strong representations in this matter will receive due consideration at the appropriate time.”

TEACHER ACCOMMODATION

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

(1) What accommodation is available in Rockhampton through his department and the Works Department for teaching personnel engaged at primary and secondary level?

(2) If no accommodation is available, has consideration been given to providing this type of accommodation in provincial cities?

(3) Is any such accommodation supplied in the provincial cities on the coastline? If so, what type and where is it situated?

Answers:—

(1) “Principals’ residences are provided at the following State schools:—Allens-town; Berserker Street; Crescent Lagoon; Lakes Creek; Depot Hill; and Port Curtis Road.”

(2) It is the policy of my Department to provide accommodation in centres where suitable private accommodation is either unobtainable or excessively expensive to purchase or rent. Such is the case in rapidly expanding mining centres. No reports have been received to date that would indicate that suitable accommodation is difficult to obtain in Rockhampton."

(3) "The situation in provincial cities located on the coast is similar to that of Rockhampton. The exception to this is Gladstone where my Department provides the following accommodation:— Three residences for Primary School Principals; A residence for the Principal of the Opportunity School; and Nine dwellings for occupation by married or single subordinate staff, primary and secondary. The Department of Works provides:—A residence for the Principal of the Secondary School; Two residences for married subordinate secondary staff."

REFRESHMENTS ON QUEENSLAND TRAINS

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

In view of a much wider service being supplied to passengers on interstate railways by way of liquor supplies, food and other refreshments, has he given any consideration to updating these facilities on Queensland trains and, if not, what are the reasons?

Answer:—

"It is considered that the facilities available to passengers on Queensland mail trains adequately meet present requirements."

POLL BY COMPTON ASSOCIATES ON JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

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

(1) Has a southern firm named Compton Associates been employed by James Cook University to conduct a canvass of northern people to assess the public standing of the university and, if so, at what cost?

(2) Will ex-employees of the university, particularly those who were employed in the office, be questioned and, if not, why not?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes, although Compton Associates is, I am told, a Brisbane firm. The cost is \$7,500. The survey will cover the whole range of activities of the University."

(2) "I am informed that the survey will be a random one. Ex-employees of the University could be among those chosen to take part in it."

ANIMAL RESEARCH STATION, OONOOBBA

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

As the staff of the Animal Research Station at Oonoonba have been working under great difficulties and stress since the partial destruction of the station by fire over two years ago, will the station be rebuilt and, if so, when, and will the equipment be restored to permit full-scale operations to be resumed?

Answer:—

"I am concerned about the delay in rebuilding the main laboratory at the Animal Research Station, Oonoonba as is the Honourable Member. Soon after the old building was burnt, appropriate officers of my Department together with architects from the Department of Works were sent interstate to observe and report on designs of modern laboratory structures with comparable functions. A new building was designed and a contract with K. D. Morris and Sons was accepted on October 4, 1973. The anticipated completion date was March 4, 1975. When the structure was about one-third finished the contracting firm encountered financial difficulties, as the Honourable Member will know. The Department of Works has now arranged to complete the project with its own day labour force."

COST OF METRIC CONVERSION OF SHOP SCALES

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in *The Townsville Daily Bulletin* of March 1 headed "Deadline for Metric Shop Scales", in which it was stated that after December 31, 1977, only shop scales and measuring instruments graduated in metric units will be permitted to be used in public trading?

(2) If so, what will be the approximate cost of the conversion of all these measuring instruments and scales in Queensland and what was the cost of conversion of all cash registers to decimal currency?

(3) Has all this cost been or will it be borne, in the final analysis, by the unfortunate customers and how much, if any, was borne by the Commonwealth Government?

Answers:—

(1) "I have seen the article."

(2) Because of the large variety of weighing and measuring instruments used in trade in Queensland, and in view of the varying costs associated with the conversion of each, it would not be possible to give an approximate total cost of conversion

of all such instruments. The re-imbusement to industry of the cost of the conversion of cash registers to decimal currency was a matter directly controlled by the Commonwealth Government and so I am unable to give any figures or further information to the Honourable Member in this regard, except to say that some of the costs incurred were borne by the Government."

(3) "Conversely, when the legislation for the conversion of weighing and measuring instruments to metric was introduced by the Commonwealth Government, that Government stated that all costs of conversion are to be borne by the owners of the weighing and measuring instruments concerned."

OPERATION OF T.A.B. AT TUESDAY RACE MEETINGS

Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

(1) Since September 30, 1974, which Tuesday race meetings were covered by the Queensland T.A.B.?

(2) What was the T.A.B. hold on each race meeting?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "I table details of the information sought by the Honourable Member."

Paper.—Whereupon Sir Gordon Chalk laid upon the Table of the House the information referred to.

FOSTERING OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Dr. Crawford, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Community and Welfare Services,—

(1) How many children are currently fostered from the department from (a) the mentally-handicapped and (b) the physically-handicapped groups?

(2) Were citizens who were prepared to foster such children paid \$15 weekly from the State Department to assist with the upkeep of each child?

(3) Has the State Department reduced its contribution to \$5 since the Commonwealth decided to contribute \$10 weekly, as has been definitely attested to me by one of the foster mothers?

(4) In an age of rampant inflation and considering the real medical problems and expense involved in providing the correct care for such children, which is estimated in children's homes to be \$90 weekly, is it reasonable to suggest that the State subsidy to foster parents be not only restored but increased?

Answers:—

(1) "Statistics relating to foster children do not classify them to show whether they are mentally or physically handicapped."

(2) "Foster parents, in addition to other benefits, receive \$15 weekly for each foster child, irrespective of whether the child is handicapped in any way or otherwise."

(3) "It is not true that the \$10 paid by the Commonwealth as a handicapped children's benefit is deducted from the fostering rate. Foster parents who are caring for handicapped children may receive the Commonwealth benefit in addition to the full State fostering allowance. It is regrettable that some person or persons have mischievously circulated false information in this regard, causing foster parents considerable worry as well as embarrassment to the Department of Children's Services. That such irresponsible persons are in our midst makes it necessary for me to advise foster parents to await official advice from the Department in these matters and to ignore the rumours from unofficial sources."

(4) "The rate of payment for foster children is regularly reviewed. It was last increased to \$15 per week as from November 3, 1974."

FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION

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

(1) As his department has resisted for years the use of departmental property for private enterprise sponsored services such as the Family Planning Association, will he detail how he is prepared to assist that association and similar associations by allowing the use of departmental facilities, thereby reducing specific costs to the associations and increasing their efficiency?

(2) As the Family Planning Association needs to charge patients on a medical benefits refund level for the medical services provided at the clinics by lady doctors, will his department encourage the continuation of this system with its necessary free enterprise connotation, as all fees accrue to the association and not to the individual doctors?

(3) Will his department arrange to increase automatically its overall subsidy to the Family Planning Association in line with escalating costs so that the association can expand its services drastically to less prosperous areas without having to indulge in a regular "Oliver Twist", cap-in-hand routine?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "The Honourable Member is obviously aware that the Department of Health subsidises the operations of both the Family Planning Association of

Queensland and the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau. In view of the differing philosophies of these two organisations, the Department is pursuing a policy of subsidising these organisations, thereby allowing them freedom of movement to determine their own programmes and methods of operations. The North Brisbane Hospitals Board has been given approval to establish a Family Planning Clinic at the Royal Women's Hospital to which patients may be referred from the specialist staff of the hospital. Its use as a medical teaching facility would be obvious to the Honourable Member. The Family Planning Association of Queensland has had approved a subsidy of \$25,000 for the current financial year but has recently submitted to my Department for consideration, a further application for additional financial assistance in 1974-75. I have had discussions with the Family Planning Association and I have also arranged to meet representatives of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau in the near future. The Honourable Member will no doubt be aware that the Family Planning Association of Queensland is eligible for financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government also. I can assure the Honourable Member that this Government is fully committed to continuation of a total health programme involving all sections of the community and all aspects of health services. I have recently submitted to Cabinet certain proposals in the field of family planning and details will be announced in the near future."

TRANSFER OF YOUTH, LINDSAY KERN,
TO WESTBROOK

Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Community and Welfare Services,—

(1) Who authorised the transfer of a 16-year-old boy named Lindsay Kern to Westbrook, when he had been remanded by a magistrate at Mount Isa to Wilson Youth Hostel?

(2) When did the transfer take place?

(3) Is the lad receiving the treatment which the magistrate recommended?

Answers:—

(1) "The Director, Department of Children's Services, on the recommendation of the Medical Director of the Wilson Youth Hospital, ordered the transfer of Lindsay Kern to Westbrook Training Centre. The Magistrate ordered the boy into the temporary custody of the Director until April 10, 1975, for certain investigations and medical examinations. The Magistrate's order did not mention the Wilson Youth Hospital."

(2) "The boy was received at the Wilson Youth Hospital on February 19, 1975, and was transferred to the Westbrook Training Centre on February 21, 1975. The transfer of the boy to Westbrook was considered to be in his best interests, taking into consideration the period of the remand. He enjoys much more open conditions and freedom at Westbrook than he would at the Wilson Youth Hospital."

(3) "The Court in remanding the boy ordered him into the temporary custody of the Director pending certain investigations and medical examinations, but not treatment. Arrangements can be made at Westbrook for the investigations and medical examinations and these will be available for the Court on April 10, 1975."

DISTURBANCE BY BIKIE GROUP, ELDRIDGE
STREET, AUCHENFLOWER

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

With reference to complaints to police on February 27 by a number of residents of Eldridge Street, Auchenflower, regarding the actions of a bikie group, which included the making of threats against the residents, abusive language, riding motor cycles whilst consuming liquor, the breaking of dozens of beer and wine bottles over the footpaths and roadway and endeavouring to overturn a parked motor vehicle, how many of this group were charged and what charges were laid against them?

Answer:—

"Six motor vehicles containing police were promptly diverted to the scene and in fact the first of such vehicles had arrived at the scene within ten minutes of the initial complaint being made. No persons were arrested although two motor cyclists were intercepted leaving the scene. The first motor cyclist who was intercepted by Taringa Police was not affected by liquor and was not in possession of any offensive weapons. The second motor cyclist who was intercepted by Toowong Police was given an alcotest and then conveyed to the City Police Station where he was tested on a breathalyzer machine. As the specimen of breath supplied indicated that he had only .07 per cent. alcohol in his bloodstream, he was released. On arrival of police no offences were detected and the persons gathered at the flat were then quiet and orderly."

EGG PRICES

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

As poultry farmers are receiving less than half the price paid by the public for eggs, when will the demand-supply movement scheme, which was to be operating from January 1 this year, be enforced?

Answer:—

"The price paid for eggs by the consumer includes transport, handling and retail costs in addition to the return the producer gets. It is expected, however, that the margin between the retail price and the return to the producer will be reduced when the demand-supply management scheme is in full operation. Most egg producers have already reduced their flocks to their quota levels, but there are still a number of appeals to be heard by the Hen Quota Appeals Tribunal and reduction of flocks to quota levels cannot be completed until all appeals have been heard. Further producers have to be given a reasonable time to dispose of surplus birds in order to avoid disruption to the chicken meat trade."

EYE CANCER IN STOCK

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

Is the incidence of eye cancer in stock increasing, is the disease transferable to other stock and to humans, is it hereditary and what efforts are made to identify strains in order that the disease can be minimised or obviated?

Answer:—

"Eye cancer in cattle is decreasing in incidence. There is no evidence that this disease is transferable to other stock or to humans. Cancer of the eyelid, the more common form of eye cancer, is less prevalent in cattle with pigmented eyelid margins. To the extent that eye pigmentation is moderately heritable, susceptibility to eye cancer is hereditary, but the disease itself cannot be regarded as an hereditary condition. Adequate control has been achieved in many herds by selection for red eye pigmentation and by culling affected animals and their progeny."

OIL DRILLING

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

(1) What is the present number of oil wells being drilled in Queensland?

(2) How many holes have been drilled in each of the past five years?

(3) How many oil-exploration rigs are presently operating and how many have been operating for each of the past five years?

(4) How many companies are actively exploring for oil at present and how many were actively exploring in each of the past five years?

(5) How many oil leases are held at present and how many were held in each of the past five years?

Answers:—

(1) "None."

(2) "Wells drilled were—1974, 12; 1973, 12; 1972, 23; 1971, 19; and 1970, 57."

(3) "None operating at present. Drilling rigs located, not necessarily operating, in Queensland were—1974, 6; 1973, 2; 1972, 5; 1971, 4; and 1970, 7."

(4) "The position as to titles held onshore is—1974, 26; 1973, 31; 1972, 27; 1971, 26; and 1970, 26. The numbers of titles held do not necessarily reflect the degree of activity—which at present is at a very low ebb."

(5) "At present there are thirteen petroleum leases in Queensland. The first two cover Moonie and Alton Oilfields, while the remaining eleven include fields producing natural gas in Roma area. One was issued in November 1971, the rest have all been in force more than five years."

STONEY CREEK BRIDGE

Mr. M. D. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

(1) Is he aware that two teenage girls were killed and their father is seriously ill as a consequence of a car accident on the Stoney Creek bridge, approximately 10 miles north of Townsville, early this week?

(2) As the dangerous approaches to this bridge have claimed several lives in recent years, will he urgently make funds available for the construction of a new bridge on a new road alignment?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes. There are signs at this site and I have requested further signs be provided to a maximum extent for safety's sake."

(2) "Plans for this work including a new bridge on an improved alignment are well advanced and it is expected that funds will be available for construction in the next financial year."

ACCOMMODATION, PIMLICO STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. M. D. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) Is he aware that the number of students enrolled at the Pimlico State High School this year exceeds 2,000, which is heavily overtaxing the accommodation and causing inconvenience to teaching staff?

(2) If so, what action does he intend to take to provide immediate alternative accommodation for students and staff?

(3) Can the James Cook University be induced to hand over the buildings on the Pimlico campus which are directly opposite the high school and are said to have limited usage for the university?

Answers:—

(1) "I am aware that the student enrolment at Pimlico State High School exceeds 2000."

(2) "Extra accommodation, including staff accommodation and specialist Manual Arts accommodation has been provided, and staff and students should now be adequately housed."

(3) "An investigation has been carried out concerning the use of the Pimlico campus, and a preliminary plan for school use has been drawn up. Negotiations with James Cook University are continuing."

ROAD TRANSPORT PERMIT FEES

Mr. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

(1) When will the abolition of or any reduction in road tax be initiated?

(2) With the phasing-out of road tax, will he give his assurance that private motor-vehicle registration fees will not be increased in any way to compensate for the loss of road tax as a revenue earner?

Answers:—

(1) "The abolition of or reduction in road transport permit fees is a matter to be considered in relation to the preparation of annual State budgets. The Government's Election Policy Speeches promised the abolition of these fees, such promise being in respect of the term of office following the election. I am hopeful that the forthcoming budget will provide an opportunity for at least partial implementation of such promise but until completion of the current negotiations with the Commonwealth Government concerning the level of Financial Assistance Grants to apply after the term of the current Agreement expires at the end of the present financial year, I am not in a position to give assurances in this regard."

(2) "The phasing out of transport permit fees is not connected with the level of motor vehicle registration fees. The Honourable Member should know that transport fees are paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund towards meeting the annual revenue needs of the State while motor

vehicle registration charges are paid to the Main Roads Fund for use in construction and maintenance of the State's road system."

STAFFING, CAIRNS POLICE DISTRICT

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

(1) Is he aware that an acute shortage of police staff exists in the Cairns District, particularly in the C.I.B., which cannot cope with the volume of work, individual complaints and minor offences?

(2) Is it mooted that the officers in charge of the C.I.B. and other sections, presently under the charge of senior sergeants, will be downgraded to sergeants first-class in the near future?

Answers:—

(1) "No. Staffing of the Cairns Police District is constantly reviewed in the light of a continuing survey of workloads conducted by the Planning and Research Branch of the Police Department and is considered to be adequate at present."

(2) "The ranks of Non-Commissioned Officers in charge of branches and sections are graded in accordance with the responsibilities and duties of the positions concerned, and in keeping with the relevant provisions of the Police Award—State. This principle is being applied to police stations generally, including Cairns."

CAIRNS OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL

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

(1) Has he been informed that the Cairns Opportunity School was again broken into on March 4, which is the second time within a week, resulting in typical serious vandalism and loss of school property and equipment?

(2) Have security gates and lighting been applied for and, if so, when will approval be granted for such preventative measures?

Answers:—

(1) "The Principal reported this incident to the District Supervisor of Works, Cairns who arranged for necessary repairs to the building to be undertaken on March 5."

(2) "The request for the provision of security gates and lighting is presently receiving consideration in relation to Departmental policy."

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS FOR STATE SCHOOLS

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

(1) Does his department have a regulation prohibiting the installation of fire extinguishers in any of its schools?

(2) If so, will he assure the House that he will take such measures as are necessary to have the regulation altered?

(3) If not, will he assure the House that State schools will be enabled to receive such extinguishers, at the department's expense, for the extra safety of the school children?

Answers:—

(1) "No."

(2) "See answer to (1)."

(3) "It is not the policy of my Department to provide fire extinguishers to State schools, except in secondary school science laboratories. Our general policy is that, in the event of fire, the responsibility of the staff is to evacuate all the children quickly and safely and to ensure that no child re-enters the school until it is safe to do so. It is worth emphasising the point that the staff must evacuate all children. In an average school there is constant movement between classrooms, toilets, sickrooms and the like and it is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure that the youngster who may have been sent to, say, the sickroom half an hour earlier is not overlooked, and left in the burning building. I would ask the Honourable Member to consider a situation where an extinguisher is provided at a school and where, one day, a comparatively minor fire occurs in a classroom. The teacher, perhaps young and inexperienced, makes the decision to try to extinguish the blaze instead of evacuating the children. He or she is thus distracted from what is, in our view, the most important duty—evacuation of the children. I think the Honourable Member would agree that a very dangerous situation could develop quickly if a teacher, called upon to make such a decision, decided wrongly. Teachers are neither trained to nor required to fight fires. Regular evacuation drills are compulsory in State Schools, with principals being required to produce records of such drills if called upon to do so."

MARKING-UP OF PRICES IN CHAIN STORES

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

(1) What action has been or is being taken to eradicate the practice of marking-up old stock to new prices in chain stores?

(2) As the alleged co-operation between the Consumer Affairs Bureau and the Retailers' Association of Queensland,

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announced by the previous Minister in charge of Consumer Affairs, has apparently broken down and as the practice of putting up to three price stickers on products is still common, will he consider introducing legislation to outlaw this practice?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "I have no evidence which would suggest that the Retailers Association of Queensland Limited has changed its policy in this matter. However, should the Honourable Member furnish me with specific details of instances where this agreement is not being honoured, I will have them investigated."

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BENLUX

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

(1) With reference to an advertisement in the *Sunday Sun* of March 2 advertising a product called Benlux, as this advertisement clearly states that the product supersedes paint and thus infers that it is not itself a paint, does it come within the provision for the seven days cooling-off period of the Door to Door Sales Act?

(2) As the advertisement states that Benlux carries a 12-year warranty on workmanship and material, yet no mention is made of such a warranty in the contract undertaken by consumers, (a) does the contract contravene Queensland law and (b) does the advertisement fall into the category of misrepresentation?

(3) As it has been stated that the company distributing this product, namely, V. & N. Home Improvement, is only a "two-dollar" company, what association has this company with Vynaflex (Australia) Pty. Ltd., Marvin Industries and Festa Industries and are these companies also of the "two-dollar" type?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "As the Honourable Member is aware, previous questions have already been asked in respect of this matter by his colleague the Honourable Member for Rockhampton North. Having studied the history concerning complaints in regard to coatings, held by the Consumer Affairs Bureau, I repeat my concern of the implications contained in advertisements such as the one referred to by the Honourable Member. Similar advertisements in the past have in some cases been the cause of grievous financial losses to unsuspecting persons. I have already directed that the matters to which the Honourable Member refers be investigated and following the finalisation of these investigations, I shall inform both the Honourable Member and the Honourable Member for Rockhampton North of the outcome thereof."

COMPANIES EXEMPTED FROM MONEY
LENDERS ACT

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

Why were the companies, Hooker Rex Pty. Limited incorporated in New South Wales, American Shopping Centres Pty. Ltd. incorporated in New South Wales, Hooker Rex Administration Qld. Pty. Ltd. incorporated in Queensland, Hooker Town Developments Pty. Ltd. incorporated in New South Wales, Mimosa Developments Pty. Ltd. incorporated in Queensland, New-castle Guarantee Corporation Pty. Ltd. incorporated in New South Wales, Palm Gardens Estates Pty. Ltd. incorporated in Queensland, Portland Developments Pty. Ltd. incorporated in Australian Capital Territory, Tallebudgera Garden Pty. Ltd. incorporated in Queensland, Hooker Centenary Pty. Ltd. incorporated in Australian Capital Territory, M.I.M. Holdings Limited, Capel Court Corporation Limited, Capel Court Securities Limited, and Hill Samuel Australia Limited, exempted from registration under the *Money Lenders Act* 1916-1973?

Answer:—

“With one exception, these companies were exempted from registration as they do not engage in money lending in the usually accepted sense of the word. Their transactions are not the kind intended to be regulated by the Act. Their activities include subdivisional development of property and the sale of property following subdivision, lending on the short term money market to companies only in minimum amount of \$500,000, dealings with corporate bodies involving borrowing and lending money, holding and trading in Commonwealth Government and other securities, and discounting bills of exchange. The exception refers to Hill Samuel Australia Limited which is establishing an office in Queensland, makes advances generally of a short term nature in excess of \$50,000 to corporate borrowers, and proposes to apply for registration when it has established itself in the local financial community.”

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CLOSURE OF KARUMBA OWING TO HIGH
PRICE OF PETROL

Mr. DEERAL: I ask the Premier: Does he know of a threat to close Karumba because of the rise in the price of petrol and, if so, have any steps been taken to prevent this happening?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I did receive information yesterday that the management of one of the processing plants at Karumba was contemplating such action because of high costs, particularly that of fuel. The State Government has been doing everything possible to help the people in this very

isolated part of our State. As the honourable member knows, I was there during the election campaign and have been there many other times. During the past weeks I have been in constant communication, as often as three times in one day, to assist the people there in other directions. I have done this following statements and requests coming from the honourable member for Cook.

In relation to the whole question of petrol prices, as I said to the Prime Minister the first time he announced in Canberra that he was going to wipe the petrol-price differential, I will never let up on him. I told him it was a terrible thing he was doing to so many people in the isolated areas of Australia.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I again said this to the Prime Minister at the last Premiers' Conference. It is entirely unjust and ruinous.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have requested honourable members not to interject when Ministers are answering questions. I seek the co-operation of the House in this matter. If that situation does not prevail, I shall take appropriate action.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I draw the attention of the House to the seriousness of the situation confronting the people in Karumba. The last thing that all Government members and, I am sure, honourable members opposite want to see is this rapidly growing and developing place come to a crisis point because of Commonwealth action of this nature. It is a very real problem, and I have been trying to find some way of doing something about it.

I say to the honourable member for Cook that not once have I heard Mr. Fulton take up the cause of the people at Karumba. Not once have I heard any Federal Minister or the Leader of the Opposition here say to the Commonwealth Government, “You have been completely unjust and wrong in doing away with the petrol price differential scheme.” This is one of the main reasons why the company I referred to and the people of Karumba find themselves in such a serious plight that they are contemplating whether they should remain in Karumba or pack up and leave. I can assure the honourable member for Cook that it is the Commonwealth Government that is solely responsible for this situation.

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT ACT
AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (12.17 p.m.): I gave a full outline of the Bill at the introductory stage on Tuesday. All honourable members then had

ample opportunity and time to express their thoughts and views, which have been recorded in "Hansard".

I therefore move—

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

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (12.18 p.m.): I am surprised that the Premier has not replied today to the matters raised in the introductory debate. It ranged so widely and so many things occurred both inside and outside the House as a result of it that I felt sure that the Premier would have attempted to reply.

As I said on Tuesday last, the Bill authorises the predetermined decision of the Premier and five of his cronies—two of whom are not even elected members of the House—to increase the size of the State Cabinet from 14 to 18 Ministers.

The Opposition will at all stages vote against this wasteful legislation. I will not be an agreeing party to the intrigue, connivance and extravagance of the secretive six—a secretive six that is using the Bill and the Cabinet control it provides to pursue personal paths of political power.

This increase in the size of the Cabinet is unnecessary and unwanted. During the introductory debate, the Premier attempted to justify this exercise in jobs for the boys by talking of the tremendous work-load on existing Ministers.

Mr. AIKENS: I rise to a point of order. Is the honourable member for Lytton in order in reading his speech? It is a breach of the Standing Orders of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of the honourable member for Townsville South to the fact that this is a matter for consideration by the Standing Orders Committee. Nothing relative to it appears in the Standing Orders of this Assembly, but certain procedures are laid down in that great book Erskine May's "Parliamentary Practice". I am giving instructions that the matter be considered at a future date. At the moment, there is nothing in Standing Orders covering it.

Mr. BURNS: I am referring to copious notes, as the honourable member for Townsville South did in his early years in Parliament, but I am not like him beyond that. He has committed to memory each speech that he has made in the past 28 years so that he can rattle off in the House parrot fashion a speech about judges or some other pet subject of his. Anyone who looks back through the "Hansards" of the past 20 years will see there the speech that we heard from the honourable member for Townsville South last Tuesday and the speech that we will hear from him today. The vintage member for Townsville South rises to a point of

order about my speech; I simply suggest that honourable members read some of his earlier speeches.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable gentleman will come back to the Bill.

Mr. BURNS: I do not question that there are pressures on Ministers of this Government or any other Government. But does anyone seriously argue that the Cabinet Ministers of this Parliament have heavier work commitments than their counterparts in New South Wales, Victoria and Canberra? Of course they cannot!

If we were disturbed over this legislation before, we must be even more concerned following the introductory debate in this Chamber last Tuesday. The Liberal member for Townsville is opposed to both the size of the Cabinet increase and the manner in which it was manipulated. Unfortunately, his courage on Tuesday was confined to his tongue. He was unable to fulfil his pre-announced intention to vote against this legislation of his own Government and contented his outraged pride with abstention. The Independent member for Townsville South who is so vocal this morning, like his neighbouring Liberal colleague, also settled for abstention.

Even more damning and even more disturbing was the speech of the honourable member for Clayfield—one of the more senior Liberal members of this Chamber, a former member of the Australian House of Representatives who was highly regarded by none other than the founder of the Liberal movement, Sir Robert Menzies. He not only spoke critically of the increases but he doubted the capacity of the Treasurer to continue as the leader of the Liberal Party. He doubted the leadership capacity of one of the secretive six who made the selections that have prompted this legislation we are asked to pass today. In other words the honourable member for Clayfield made it as clear as possible in this Chamber that he has no faith in the ability of his own leader; no faith in one of the men who has had a major say in determining the composition of a Cabinet that must help control Queensland's administrative affairs for the next three years.

Of course, when the issue was aired in the Liberal Party room the Treasurer survived, but there was one vote against him and three members abstained from voting. Five members of the Liberal Party did not feel that a meeting at which a motion of confidence in their leader was to be moved was worthy of attendance. So it is clear that the honourable member for Clayfield had supporters for his submission that the people who were involved in bringing down this legislation were not worthy of support.

There are people within the Liberal Party, both inside and outside this Parliament, who believe the Treasurer should go as leader—people who, with this point of view, must consider him an unsuitable person to be allowed the power of helping to determine a major portion of the State Ministry which we are increasing today.

I believe that the majority of Queenslanders are against the Bill. They are against legislation that promotes cronyism; legislation that practises inflation when the Premier tells the Australian Government to cut spending.

As I said at the introductory stage, from the passage of this Bill we will have as many Ministers as New South Wales. We will have more than Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, and only a few short of the Australian Government.

It is legislation that has evolved from outside intrigue and distrust. Surely the people of Queensland should not have to foot the bill simply because two coalition partners who pretend co-operation cannot, in reality, confidently tolerate each other.

This is legislation that was drafted by a secretive six, including the non-parliamentary president of the National Party, Mr. Bob Sparkes, and the non-parliamentary president of the Liberal Party, Mr. John Moore. The parliamentary wings of the Liberal and National Parties had no say on the size of the Ministry or the proposal in clause 2 of the Bill to extend the Ministry. They had no say in its composition. With other members of this Parliament they were presented with a fait accompli in which they had no influence. This is outside control, outside extravagance, outside direction.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable gentleman to get back to the principles of the Bill. He spoke at some length at the introductory stage. The Bill contains only two clauses and I ask the honourable member to come back to it.

Mr. BURNS: I am speaking to clause 2.

Mr. AIKENS: I rise to a point of order. I can see from here that the Leader of the Opposition is reading a carbon copy of the speech he read at the introductory stage.

Mr. BURNS: I am speaking to clause 2 which reads—

“Section 3 of the *Officials in Parliament Act 1896–1971* is amended by, in subsection (1), omitting the word ‘fourteen’ and substituting the word ‘eighteen.’”

I am talking about the four persons whose names were announced in the Press, before the proposal was introduced in Parliament, the four who will be admitted to the Ministry tomorrow as a result of the passage of this Bill. Surely in speaking to the second reading of the Bill we should be entitled to refer to all the stories the

people of Queensland have been told about what is going to happen in this Parliament as a result of the Bill.

Parliament has no say in the composition of the Ministry. It has no say in the number of Ministers to be appointed. The number 18 was decided because a member of the Liberal Party and a member of the National Party—two persons who do not have a vote in this House and who have never stood for the Queensland Parliament—met with the leaders of the two Government parties and made a decision on who the Ministers would be. When they made up their minds on who the Ministers would be, they said, “Let’s draft a Bill to provide for 18.” The Press contained statements about an increase to 16, and “The Courier-Mail” also published the story that the number would be increased to 17 or 18. This whole exercise is a classic example of outside control, outside extravagance, outside direction and outside interference in the affairs of the elected Government of our State.

No doubt Mr. Sparkes and Mr. Moore were there to crack the party whip around any members who rebelled against this outside arrogance. I suppose that threats of loss of endorsement and of other action will be quietly breathed down the necks of the members for Clayfield and Townsville to make them toe the party line. Mr. Sparkes has been quoted in the Press as “making National Party Ministers jump” when he cracks the whip. He has been glorified in “The Telegraph” as the man who makes National Party Ministers do as they are told. He has attended conferences of that party and the papers have said just that.

The threat of loss of endorsement will hang over the heads of those Government members who, although claiming to be opposed to outside control, quietly sit there, as they did in the division called at the introductory stage, without a murmur.

This legislation is lopsided. The proposed Cabinet will be the largest in the history of this State as well as the largest in that of any other State. In spite of that, however, it will provide no representation for the Far North, the North West, the Central West or South West. The only member of the proposed Cabinet who will represent any area near the North will be the honourable member for Ayr, who was, of course, the last member to be elected to Cabinet.

On 22 December Mr. Wally Schulz, the chairman of the National Party’s Mulgrave electoral council, described the failure to appoint a Far-northern Minister as a “kick in the teeth” for the people of the area. How can this Parliament be asked to endorse a Bill that is opposed by such wide sections within the Government that proposes it? How can we be asked to endorse a Bill that is sectional in the rewards it bestows and is so obviously based on political patronage?

Government members should not delude themselves. Parliament is being asked to support a Bill that is just that, yet Government members will support it during the division today. We are asked to be the enactors of the Government's patronage under legislation designed by people who have not risked their chances at the hands of the electors by standing for Parliament. They use their party machine power to get to the top, but they are not prepared to nominate for a seat in this Chamber to help govern the State.

Instead of complaining about written speech notes, those members who support the Government should get down to the nitty-gritty. I'll bet that when the division is called the honourable member for Townsville will leave the Chamber again, and in so doing he will be running away, scabbing on the decision, and leaving it to someone else to take a stand. To anyone who wants a fight, I say that there will be a fair bit of fight coming from the Opposition benches on any issue that is not in the best interests of the State.

Mr. Aikens interjected.

Mr. BURNS: There is a man who has been wrapped up in all the conniving, intrigue and manipulation that have gone on in this Parliament. He has asked "Dorothy Dix" questions day in and day out. All of a sudden he becomes the disciple of good behaviour—a man who is concerned about written words.

This legislation is necessary to regularise arrangements that are totally unnecessary. They have been made on the Government side of the Chamber to build up the numbers in the Ministry simply because the coalition parties could not agree on the composition of Cabinet. The number was increased first to 16 and then it was lifted to 18. We are being asked to approve a Bill that involves excessive amounts of money and, furthermore, is totally irresponsible, extravagant and arrogant. Queenslanders are being asked to pay for ministerial growth, which they do not need and of which they were not told in the pre-election campaign.

This legislation has already led to revolt in the Government's own ranks. Some members, showing just a little bit of courage, have spoken against it. As a result of this legislation the Deputy Premier of Queensland, three months after his endorsement as Leader of the Liberal Party, was forced to put his leadership on the line. And Government members claim to be united! Within 24 hours of the introduction of the Bill, the Liberal Party was forced to call a meeting of its members to determine whether or not the Deputy Premier should continue to be its leader. As a result of clause 2 of the Bill, there was a revolt by some Government members.

Mr. Moore: You should not be referring to the clauses at this stage.

Mr. BURNS: I am glad that the honourable member is bringing the House to order. He is always a valuable asset around the place.

Mr. Jensen: He helps Mr. Speaker.

Mr. BURNS: He helps him a lot.

We are being asked to endorse a hand-picked Ministry, to endorse a selective, sectional Cabinet, to approve public expense that is unwanted and unwarranted, to say yes to ministerial expenditure that is in contrast with the Premier's call for restraint by the Australian Government, to approve jobs for the boys designed for political favour rather than administrative advantage.

We are asked to unite on legislation that the Premier's own coalition parties are disunited upon.

This is greedy legislation of greedy men, some of whom have not sought and do not hold elected positions in this Parliament. It is the hungry conception of people who thirst for control but are unwilling to test themselves in the State elections, people who fail to put their names before the people but are prepared to sit with the other four, in secret, to devise the Ministry and tell us what sort of legislation we are to vote upon in this Parliament.

Let me turn to the portfolios. There will be new departments, new public servants and new controls. Education is demoted to a junior portfolio. Environment remains an administrative back number.

Mr. Katter interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BURNS: The honourable Arab from Flinders is making a few remarks.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The leader of the Opposition will refer to honourable members by their correct titles. I ask him to withdraw that comment.

Mr. BURNS: I withdraw it.

The honourable member for Flinders referred to direction; but his father went around the electorate standing over the voters in the preselection ballot; he stood over them time and time again. The honourable member is not game to go out to the mud hut in Richmond and talk about direction; the boys would throw him out on his ear.

This legislation is the result of outside direction. Even the honourable member for Windsor, who started to tell us about the Standing Orders, said that he favoured the increase but did not like the way it was being done. When the Committee divided he voted for it and then acted as a teller, despite the fact that he had spoken against the measure.

Tremendous courage is now being shown by honourable members who for years have paraded around the State talking about outside control and direction, men who have

said from the stump, "We do not believe in it!" But Mr. Sparkes has spoken, and you will jump through the hoop today when we call a division. I call on each Government member, particularly those in the Liberal Party who have been so noisy about this in the past, to cross to this side of the House to show us that they are fair dinkum. Let them put their money where their mouth is!

You have been speaking about these matters for years. We intend to give you an opportunity to come over to this side of the House and vote with the Labor Party to keep the Ministry as it is today.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. BURNS: I call on National Party members to support their National Party chairman from Mulgrave in the Far North, who said that the Far North was not getting a fair go. I call on them to cross to this side of the House and vote with us in censuring Cabinet, which refuses to give a vote to the very people the National Party claims to represent. Before the counting was finished in Cook and Mt. Isa, the Premier and others had announced who was to be in the Ministry. And there was nothing for the Far North and the Far West. Far northern and far western members can cross to this side of the House and vote for their own people, vote for what they have been seeking for years while they have been rigging the boundaries. They have been saying that the people in the West should be given a greater say than city dwellers. Let us see whether the people in the West and the people in the North are getting a greater say than the people in the city. I ask them to cross the floor and vote with us. The Opposition challenges them to state where they stand, not to go home to their electorates and say, "We are fighting for the North and the West. Our party is fighting for you." If you have not got the courage of your convictions—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable gentleman will address the Chair.

Mr. BURNS: They challenged me to get away from a few prepared notes that I had. Now that I am away from my prepared notes you can hear how quiet they are; you can hear how well behaved they are. Suddenly the people who were issuing challenges have stopped talking and are keeping their mouths well and truly shut! Their courage has suddenly waned from when they were able to use the Standing Orders to advantage, or to pull a little trick which has been pulled 25 times in this Parliament by the same elderly, antiquated, gentleman. He is now as quiet as a mouse. I call on the Independent member for Townsville South to show where he stands. He says that he will not vote for the Bill and that he will not vote with us. He will run away as he has run away on every other occasion when it is time to vote.

Don't let him tell us he goes home to Townsville and tells the people he is on their side. He is not on their side. There is no Cabinet representation for Townsville, the second largest city in this State, in the Cabinet that will be nominated tomorrow. And he is on the side of the people of the North!

We are against the Bill, which is designed to pay for political favouritism from public funds. As I did on Tuesday, I again ask the Premier to reconsider, re-examine and, if necessary, reshuffle the portfolios. There are viable alternatives that can be placed before the Parliament and before his Cabinet. There are alternatives that some members within his own party would support. I implore him to forget the extravagance that must flow from expansion; forget the favouritism he feels is necessary to consolidate personal power; and to reject his outside directors.

He should remember that on this occasion he has no mandate for the legislation. It was not proposed in the recent election campaign and is not unanimously endorsed now by those who were elected within the coalition on that date. We, as an Opposition, are opposed to the measure and we are united in our opposition. Honourable members opposite, as a Government, are divided. The people of Queensland, who will pay for the scheme, want nothing of it. It is probably the most unwanted, unsought, unnecessary, undemocratic legislation that has been initiated, let alone pressured, through this Parliament—although I suppose it could be coupled with that other undemocratic piece of legislation relating to the Brisbane City Council, which blew up in the Government's face. It may be found that this also will blow up in its face.

We will vote against the Bill, and I hope every member with a shred of conscience or economic responsibility will join us in our opposition to the scheme.

Mr. SPEAKER: I call the honourable member for Townsville South.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not need any assistance from any member in the conduct and operation of the House, not even the honourable member for Archerfield. I have called the honourable member for Townsville South.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (12.37 p.m.): I did not intend saying anything at the second-reading stage of this Bill—I thought I had said enough at the introductory stage—but I would like to reply to a couple of remarks made by the alleged Leader of the Opposition. How fortunate I am that in this House I do not represent any particular clique or section of party bosses. I represent the people who send me to Parliament, and the people who send me to Parliament are the electors of Townsville

South. Every day I am in Townsville I am in the streets talking to the people who send me to Parliament. At the end of every session of Parliament I address a big public meeting and I tell the people what legislation was introduced, how I voted and why I voted.

The Leader of the Opposition wants to know why, if I am opposed to this legislation (as I am), I walk out of the House and do not vote with the A.L.P. I think I can sum that up by an old western saying, "If you lie down with dogs, you can't blame people for thinking you've got fleas."

Mr. Burns: Mr. Casey, who sits next to you, has just got up and walked out.

Mr. AIKENS: If I were to vote with the A.L.P. on this matter, I could excuse the people for thinking——

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will refrain from persistent interjections.

Mr. AIKENS: The honourable member for Lytton, of course, is the Leader of the Opposition and he thinks that that is a very honourable position. I would remind him, too, of another old western saying that in a flock of sparrows a crow looks like an eagle.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Townsville South will return to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. AIKENS: Frankly, I was amused to hear the Leader of the Opposition fulminate against members of Parliament being directed and ordered to vote this way or that by back-room party bosses. Fancy a remark like that coming from him! If we lifted up his shirt, we could see the whip marks of the Q.C.E. on his back. Nobody is, shall we say, more a toady or a sycophant of back-room party bosses than the Leader of the Opposition, yet——

Mr. WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order. Mr. Speaker, earlier you ruled that members must keep to the Bill being debated. I ask for your ruling on whether the honourable member is speaking to the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! For the information of the honourable member for Rockhampton, I will make that decision.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am asking you if you think he is.

Mr. AIKENS: What's it got to do with you?

Mr. SPEAKER: No.

Mr. Wright: He is not?

Mr. AIKENS: Thank goodness we have some semblance of democracy in this House. It does not exist at the Q.C.E., the Trades Hall or the A.L.P. headquarters, where certain people dominate the proceedings and cannot get it into their ossified heads that they cannot dominate proceedings here.

We read in last Sunday week's "Sunday Mail" a big article on the leader of the A.L.P. in Queensland—not the honourable member for Lytton, but "Barramundi" Jack, who launched a vicious attack on State parliamentarians.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will return to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. AIKENS: I am dealing with the Bill. I am speaking of State parliamentarians, including Ministers.

"Barramundi" Jack said that our salaries and allowances were a lot of lurks and perks and that he would never stand for Parliament. What a bare-faced lie! In the 1957 elections he was the A.L.P. candidate for Fortitude Valley. Old Bob Windsor knocked him over the boundary fence for six. Having been defeated, he now sits in judgment of the members of this House who may or may not vote for this particular Bill.

Whilst all of these leaders to whom the Leader of the Opposition genuflects and grovels are very vociferous about what goes on in this Parliament, they are cravenly silent about what goes on in other Parliaments. I should like to have the viewpoint of the Leader of the Opposition on the recent salary increases granted by the Whitlam Government. Let us hear him on that. If he is game to express any opinion on it, I will be happy to listen.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will return to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (12.42 p.m.): I rise to fully support the Leader of the Opposition in his contributions at both the initiatory stage of this Bill and the second-reading stage. I agree entirely with the statements he made on this very important piece of legislation.

I am surprised that Her Majesty's representative in this State does not take a stand in regard to this legislation. The Bill deals solely with the increase from 14 to 18 in the number of Ministers. This is scandalous at a time when the Government, particularly the Premier, is appealing to outside interests to curtail wage increases and all other expenses in an effort to improve the economy of this country. Despite that plea, the Government is making this very extravagant move. I am casting no reflection on the honourable members who will receive the portfolios. I consider them to be quite capable persons. We are not arguing about the ability or the integrity

of the honourable members concerned. We know them well. The Leader of the Opposition pointed out how unnecessary this move is in the present economic climate.

Like the Leader of the Opposition, I sincerely believe that pressure was brought to bear on the Premier. We know he is a very determined man in many directions. I am convinced that he is doing something on this occasion against his own determined will. You, Mr. Speaker, know him probably better than I do, not that I am asking for your opinion; I know you would not express it. However, I support my leader in his contention in this regard.

As I said earlier, it is a slight on Her Majesty's representative to be used as a rubber stamp. And that is all he is going to be assenting to this legislation. I hope that His Excellency will give it very serious consideration before allowing it to become part of the statutes in the present state of our economy.

The Premier referred to the pressure and work-load on present Ministers. Over the past 18 months or two years, honourable members—and not only back-benchers but also Ministers—have been given assistance in their electorates. Surely this must have relieved Ministers of much of the pressure on them. If it has not, there must be something wrong somewhere.

From time to time honourable members point out in this House the shortcomings in the community, and the many areas that are crying out for the expenditure of large sums of money. In spite of those needs, the Government is prepared to spend an enormous amount in enlarging the Ministry. As I said earlier, many people outside the House support the Australian Labor Party in this contention. In the last few days, since the Government's intention was made known in the Press, I have received many telephone calls about the extravagance of the Government in increasing the Cabinet.

Mr. Aikens: What about Whitlam's salary rise?

Mr. DEAN: The honourable member for Townsville South mentions a salary rise. No-one in this House is more eager for salary rises than the honourable member. To digress briefly, I may say that on many occasions over the years—perhaps not lately, because parliamentary salaries are now at a reasonable level—the honourable member for Townsville South has said that parliamentarians were underpaid. I am prepared to work for nothing for the community, but the honourable member twists and turns all about the place. No-one has been more persistent in calling for salary rises.

This legislation is quite unjustified at a time when there is an urgent need to spend more money for the benefit of the community. Many projects on which money should be

spent were part of the policy of the Government parties at the last State election, and they should be implemented before the Ministry is increased in size. I refer, for example, to a new "Eventide", and new hospital complexes in many provincial towns. Instead, another four Ministers are to be appointed.

Accommodation problems will also arise. Where are the extra four Ministers to be placed? Members are already complaining about the accommodation available in Parliament House. Does the Government propose to rent costly space in new city buildings? If so, that, too, will be an added burden on the taxpayers of the State. If the economy was in a reasonably good state, neither I nor the Opposition would mind the additional appointments. But that is not the economic position at the moment, which is why the Opposition is so strongly against the proposal. Perhaps we would not have objected to an increase of one or two, but the proposal to make four appointments is absolutely ridiculous. It is quite scandalous when money is required for other purposes.

There is another very important aspect of political life that should also be considered. You know as well as I do, Mr. Speaker, that in the community today there is unfortunately a mounting disrespect for politicians generally. I am not saying that we are solely to blame for this; also concerned are others well away from here. But there is this disrespect among the people for their representatives, and this move by the Government will add to that feeling.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: When the Prime Minister dumps the Federal Speaker, it is no wonder.

Mr. DEAN: I am referring to the Bill before the House. It will only increase the disrespect of the community for politicians generally. We may not see its repercussions, but I am afraid that some of today's children may see them. I certainly hope that they do not. I assure the House that the feeling against politicians is becoming very strong within the community, especially in certain sections of it.

The Leader of the Opposition compared the size of the Queensland Cabinet with ministerial representation in other States. From the few meagre notes that I made whilst he was speaking, I think he said that in New South Wales there is one member of Cabinet for every 8.7 members of Parliament, and 260,000 of population. Queensland is a vast State, with wide open spaces. However, the present state of the economy does not warrant an increase in the Ministry, and I am sure that honourable members on this side of the Chamber will get full outside support for their opposition to the Bill.

Although it is only a small Bill, it will have a very important and potent effect upon the finances of the State. When people outside the House have a chance of reading in the public Press the full implications of the increase in the Ministry—and I repeat that personally I have nothing against the gentleman concerned—and the cost to the taxpayers, they will be incensed to such an extent that many honourable members will receive additional mail from people in the community wishing to express in writing their indignation at the increase of the Ministry from 14 to 18.

I reiterate that the Opposition is completely opposed to the Bill.

Mr. LAMONT (South Brisbane) (12.52 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Bill, I am reminded that one of the most important conditions of democracy is the division of the powers of Government, that is, the separation of the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. I am reminded also that, under the Westminster system, it is unfortunate—unfortunate in some respects, although fortunate in others—that the Executive and the Legislature do overlap and that Cabinet Ministers have legislative functions to perform which in other democracies are not given to them. Because Ministers have these functions to perform, it is necessary that honourable members should give careful consideration to expanding the Cabinet whenever it is found that the growing mass society demands these changes.

I agree, perhaps, with the suggestion made earlier by the Opposition that there are not enough opportunities for back-benchers to assert themselves, and if honourable members opposite were on their feet asking that consideration be given to setting up more committees, or even all-party committees—if they have enough members to staff them—then perhaps I might support them. But in this instance they are not talking about that; they are talking about the size of Cabinet.

I believe that the size of Cabinet is a matter of expertise. It is a matter for the Cabinet and the leaders of the Government parties to decide amongst themselves. The expertise can come only from these men, because they are in a position in which they lead the Executive side of government. It is probable that the Leader of the Opposition was excluded from these deliberations because it is a matter of expertise.

I was amused to hear the honourable member for Rockhampton speak at the introductory stage about the size of the bureaucracy and say that he was not interested in seeing the bureaucracy increase. At the Federal level, a Government of his own political party has increased the bureaucracy to such an extent that more than one in four persons in the work-force in Australia is now a Government employee.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LAMONT: I take the interjection; I seek no privileges.

Representation by back-benchers is very much at stake in the Bill, because traditionally back-benchers have not had enough access to Ministers. In the last Parliament, one Minister was Minister for Sport, Minister for Tourism, Minister for Prisons, and also had a wide range of other responsibilities. A Minister with such an important list of responsibilities could be forgiven for being more difficult to see than the "Phantom". It is necessary for a Minister to be able to perform his executive duties as well as his legislative duties and still be accessible to back-bench members of the House.

This is not legislation that the Liberal Party "copped", if I may use the word of the Leader of the Opposition. It is something that we have accepted; it is something that was needed to give back-benchers access to Ministers.

Speaking about "copping" things, I must say that I am amused—in fact, I am astounded—that the leader of a party such as the Australian Labor Party should talk about legislators "copping" something from the leaders of their party. The Labor Party has in its constitution a clause which makes its members but a tool of their party machine. It is a party bound by and strait-jacketed to decisions made at party conferences every two years.

I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition, a former Federal president of the executive of that party machine, should have forgotten so readily how, as president of that executive—president of those 36 faceless men—he himself bound legislators to what they would do in the Houses of Parliament in this country, both Federal and State. He has readily forgotten the control of the executive over the parliamentary members when we are talking about party systems. His was the executive that kept Mr. Calwell and Mr. Whitlam out in the street while they waited to be told the decision whether they would be allowed to alter their party platform, and whether or not they would be allowed to take Australia to war. Yet the Leader of the Opposition asks us to accept the idea that the executive should not control parliamentary members! It was the executive of the Labor Party that wrote the speech that was read earlier by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to come back to the Bill.

Mr. LAMONT: It has been implied that so many back-benchers of our party were against this Bill that there was a crisis in the party over the leadership. I reserve the right to rebut that. We, the Liberal Party back-benchers, have shown our faith in our leader, Sir Gordon Chalk, and so, I would remind the House, has the Leader of the Opposition, because less than a week ago he offered the leadership of this State to just that man. Here today he is suggesting that

members of Sir Gordon's party are not prepared to back him in supporting this Bill, which so very necessarily expands the State Cabinet. Unless, of course, the Leader of the Opposition was deliberately misleading this Parliament and the people of Queensland when he made that comic-opera offer last week, and also deliberately misleading the 10 men of his own party who follow him so blindly, I suggest that he knows why we did support Sir Gordon, because he, too, has shown faith in the leadership of the man.

We have confidence in our leader's decision that the Cabinet should be expanded. There was no motion of no confidence moved against our leader. The fact that five people stayed away from the party meeting at which the Leader of the Opposition seems to think a no-confidence motion was moved was probably because five members believed there was no no-confidence motion that needed deliberation. That would be it.

If the Leader of the Opposition believes that there is opposition to Sir Gordon, I wonder why that opposition did not show itself at the party meeting which unanimously elected Sir Gordon Chalk unopposed only 78 days ago. If there was a move to replace Sir Gordon Chalk that the Leader of the Opposition knows about, I did not see it. If it was there, it was the greatest retreat since Napoleon left Waterloo.

An increased Cabinet, as anybody in the Opposition ought to know, if he knows anything about economics, must be looked at on a cost-benefit ratio. Regardless of the cost of a greater number of Cabinet Ministers, it is a small cost when we look at the benefit that will accrue to the State and to the members of this Parliament through greater access by the people and members of Parliament to Ministers. The benefit is so great that the cost is minimal by comparison.

All of us here would agree that housing, works, and the quality and diversity of education and health services have to be increased. With this demand on the executive, added to the parliamentary duties of Cabinet Ministers, I believe that the expansion is warranted.

Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who represents the party machine, I represent the people of South Brisbane. I represent the people who elected me.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. LAMONT: I represent 55 per cent of those who cast their vote.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members on both sides of the House will refrain from persistent interjections.

Mr. LAMONT: Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I do not represent the party machine. I represent the people of my electorate. On 7 December those people showed very clearly—and I campaigned very clearly

on this issue—that Sir Gordon Chalk was a person they had confidence in. Therefore, bound to my electors—bound to the people who put me here—I must stand up on this occasion and support Sir Gordon Chalk and support his judgment. As I also represent the people of Queensland, and not just the people of South Brisbane. I must support, too, the judgment of the Premier who overwhelmingly led this State to the greatest victory of the joint Liberal and National Parties that has ever been seen. I heartily endorse the Bill.

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

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (2.15 p.m.): There is no necessity for this Bill. This became patently obvious from the pathetic effort of a new Government member trying to justify something for party's sake, something that the Parliament obviously has no stomach for. We saw a newcomer vainly trying to prop up a wobbling piece of political compromise. Where were the elder statesmen? Where were the Government members who have been in this Chamber over lengthy periods?

The present proposal is to increase the Cabinet from 14 to 18 members. In 65 years of the Queensland Ministry its number was increased from 8 to 11, and in only six years we are seeing an increase from 14 to 18. We will have a record number of Ministers in the Queensland Cabinet.

I believe that this proposal was courted in an air of party jealousies devised through the relationship between the coalition parties, betrothed in the dubious arms of suspicion and double-dealing, consummated at the direction of party officials who took advantage of the dereliction of parliamentary representatives, conceived in a bed of mistrust and discomfort, and born amid a gathering of frustrated midwives in the National-Liberal Party coalition. This afternoon it is being christened but the flock of relatives who surround the proud parents have no say in the choice of name. The quadruplets look well and happy. And why wouldn't they be? Their legacy is rather fat and opulent and they are in for an easy ride.

But there is no mandate for this Bill. No Government candidate mentioned it during the election campaign. It is worth remembering that in late December these proposals were being discussed by party officials while the electors' votes were still being counted. At that time preferences were still being allocated in electorates such as Cook and Mt. Isa.

The chairman of the National Party's Mulgrave electoral council, Mr. Wally Schulz, pertinently pointed out that the proposal was a kick in the teeth for Far North Queensland, and when it was announced that the Ministry would be

increased the Liberal member for Townsville, Dr. Scott-Young, said that in all conscience he would not be able to vote in favour of the move.

"The Courier-Mail" of 11 December carried headlines to the effect that the Liberals demanded the Treasury "or else!" If this measure was not born out of compromise, we have a lot to learn.

I would ask the Premier the question posed by Mr. Wally Schulz, "Why wasn't Mr. Armstrong elected to Cabinet?" Mr. Schulz expressed disappointment at the Premier's decision to exclude from the new Cabinet the honourable member for Mulgrave. With an increase in the number of Ministers to 18, why wasn't Mr. Armstrong elevated to Cabinet? After all, he has given 15 years of loyal service to the National Party. He has represented the Mulgrave area, to the best of his ability, as a member of the National Party. We in North Queensland want to know why the Far North has been neglected. Previous Cabinets have not included any North Queenslanders, although we will concede that the former member for Hinchinbrook (Johnny Row) was a North Queenslander. But he was in Cabinet, I think, only between 1966 and 1972. Since then no North Queenslander has been in Cabinet. The North deserved more than one Cabinet Minister in the period since 1957.

The bulk of Queensland's agricultural, live-stock and mining exports are produced in the North. The northern per-capita production is double that of the rest of the State—\$291 compared with \$145 for the rest of the State. In North Queensland 49 per cent of the State's miners produce 70 per cent of the State's mining production.

If Government members claim that the honourable members for Mirani and Whitsunday are North Queenslander members of the Cabinet, we will concede that, but it still gives the North only 16 per cent of Cabinet.

The specious argument that North Queensland is represented by Cabinet Ministers from Mackay or Sarina does not carry much weight in Far North Queensland. To the people of the Far North, they are Central Queenslanders. The last man in, the lantern carrier, the honourable member for Burdekin, has been nominated to succeed as a representative of North Queensland. A simple exercise in relation to the Burdekin electorate (which is approximately 293 miles from Cairns by road), involving putting the point of a compass on Cairns and drawing a circle with a 250-mile radius, reveals that most of Far North Queensland is covered, including the electorate of Burdekin. If the point of the compass is placed on Brisbane and a similar circle is drawn, it will be seen that two-thirds of Cabinet is encompassed. Although the Government claims to represent country areas, it also says that two-thirds of the Cabinet will be

within 250 miles of Brisbane. The rest of North, West and Central Queensland is represented by six Cabinet Ministers. If we draw more circles we find just how much of the State is not represented by the National-Liberal coalition Cabinet. Do we hear far northern, north western or western members objecting to this situation? They are not concerned about it or how it affects North Queensland. Yet they have the temerity to say that they represent North Queensland and other country areas of the State, and return to North Queensland and piously tell people that they represent the North.

Mr. Moore: We have the member for Cook. How much higher than that can you get?

Mr. JONES: If the honourable member were to draw a circle from the centre of the Cook electorate he would find that it would have to extend about 600 miles before it encompassed a Cabinet Minister. A similar circle drawn from Brisbane would leave very low Cabinet representation for other areas of the State. You must remember that the member for Cook, who is from North Queensland, is 500 miles north of Cairns. You are talking about Cabinet representation, yet you have two-thirds of your Cabinet—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must address the Chair.

Mr. JONES: I challenge all Government members from the North—the member for Mourilyan, the member for Barron River, the member for Cook, the member for Flinders and even the member for Burdekin—to indicate their feelings to this House by voting on this occasion for Cabinet representation from the northern area. I would like to hear how they will justify their vote today.

Mr. Lickiss: Could you tell me what principle of the Bill that comes under?

Mr. JONES: For the honourable member's edification—and he should know because he has been Chairman of Committees—the principle of the Bill is to increase the Cabinet from 14 to 18 Ministers. I believe that this afternoon we should be able to debate the matter of who will receive the additional four portfolios. I believe that the composition of the Cabinet should be open for debate this afternoon. I believe that the people of Queensland want to know why the country areas of our State are not to be adequately represented in the Cabinet and why since 1957 there has not been one member of Cabinet from the Far North.

The people of Queensland want to know how much it is to cost them for this compromise of four new Ministers—how much it will cost in personal staff, the creation of departments and in ministerial cars and chauffeurs. How many of these portfolios will be dormant and how many appointments to the Ministry will be inactive members of

Cabinet and merely portfolio holders? They will have the rank and the prestige, but that is about all. They will not be doing very much.

I do not often support members of the Country Party, but in this case I support Wally Schulz, as other members from Far North Queensland should. Why shouldn't they rise to their feet and support him? They have been kicked in the teeth. Do you like being kicked in the teeth?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. JONES: Because when you are representing Far North Queensland—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Cairns will resume his seat if he does not behave himself and address the Chair.

Mr. JONES: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I say that these people representing Far North Queensland will have to answer to their electors for their actions this afternoon.

How can this Parliament be asked to endorse a Bill that is opposed by such a wide section of the Government that proposes it? How can we be asked to endorse a Bill that is sectional in rewards that it bestows so obviously and that is a blatant excursion in personal political conniving? Members of the Government should not delude themselves. That is what we are being asked to do here today. We are being asked to enact patronage—Premier patronage and Deputy Premier patronage, because members of the Government have no say in who will be the Cabinet Ministers. The Legislative Assembly has no say this afternoon in who will become Ministers. Government members are voting for something about which they have had no say whatsoever. Ministerial rank is merely a pat on the shoulder by the Premier or the Deputy Premier. There it is—political patronage by the Premier and the Deputy Premier. We are asked to be the enactors of a preconceived plot that for no valid or logical reason will rob the public purse of millions of dollars.

The Bill is a legislative aftermath of negotiations that have already taken place. The Premier has to present it to the House, and Government members sit there like dummies but, in connivance and intrigue, upholding the manipulation that took place outside the House. It is a legislative necessity to regularise this arrangement which most people, except those who will gain from it, believe is totally unnecessary. I am sure that, if the people of Queensland are not already aware of the facts, they soon will be and will agree that it is totally unnecessary.

We in the Opposition intend to vote against the measure. We will not be a rubber stamp to be used for deception of this nature. The Bill involves the expenditure of an excessive amount of public money. It is irresponsible,

extravagant and arrogant. Queenslanders are now being asked to pay for ministerial growth that they do not want or need.

This legislation has already led to revolt and remorse within the Liberal Party and to criticism within the National Party. Its introduction led to an almost unprecedented event in the Parliamentary Liberal Party. Within weeks of Liberal members unanimously electing the Deputy Premier as their leader they were forced to confirm their confidence in him. A short time ago he was elected unopposed, but the vote taken following the introduction of this legislation was not unanimous. This legislation has incited more vocal criticism than support even within the ranks of the Government that presents it. This has been obvious this afternoon. I do not wish to continue much longer on a measure that I know will be passed. (Government laughter.)

I know this is embarrassing you. I know it hurts you very deeply and it will hurt you more as you become aware of your responsibilities as members of Parliament in the next three years. You will see how you have been deceived for a long period. You will find out how, over a long period, you have been hoodwinked as members of this Legislature.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr. JONES: Government members have failed on this occasion. They will live to regret it because they are endorsing political patronage and will become subservient to the party machine and their leader.

Three months ago the Deputy Premier was re-elected unopposed as the leader of the Liberal Party in Queensland. The reaction following the introduction of this Bill will build during the next three years. Since the introduction of this legislation the Deputy Premier has lost a fairly sizeable proportion of the support he had in his parliamentary ranks following the election on 7 December. And that was only three months ago!

No Opposition in this Parliament or in any Parliament can support a Bill that is clearly controversial and has divided the Government that initiated it. We are being asked today to endorse a hand-picked Ministry—a selective, sectional Cabinet—and to approve, at public expense, what is unwanted and unwarranted.

We are being asked by the Premier to agree to this ministerial expenditure, which is sharply in contrast with his calls on the Australian Government for restraint. The Premier, in asking for approval of this legislation is contradicting what he has said on previous occasions, particularly during the election campaign. By sheer weight of numbers, jobs for the boys will be created. It is designed purely for political favour rather than administrative advantage.

We are being asked to unite on this legislation that has caused disunity in the coalition parties. It is greedy legislation brought down by the greedy men in power in Queensland today. It is legislation that was not mentioned during the election campaign, and neither I nor the Opposition agrees with it. What we have to remember is that these are, or should be, positions subject to election in Parliament.

The legislation is the hungry conception of people who thirst for control, but who are unwilling to test their capacity to win it. It is legislation that means new departments for more Ministers, and more public officials. Education has been demoted to a junior portfolio, and Environment ranks administratively as a back number. We are being asked today to vote for expansionary, personal, political patronage, and I say on behalf of the Australian Labor Party that we oppose it, as we believe that it is not in the best interests of Queensland or this Parliament.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (Mulgrave) (2.37 p.m.): Because, by reason of circumstances beyond my control, I did not have the opportunity of discussing the Bill in other places, I did not intend to take part in this debate. However, as quite a lot has been said about North Queensland not having ministerial representation, I feel it incumbent on me to say something about it.

I listened attentively to my friend the honourable member for Cairns, who has just resumed his seat, and I must say that I think he put up a pretty fair argument why Cabinet should be increased. He pointed to the increased production in various industries in North Queensland, and the wealth earned in that area. I think we must accept that Queensland is on the march. Admittedly, it has been slowed down in the last two or three years by a Government in the Federal sphere that we could well do without, and indeed can ill afford to have.

I feel that the increase in the strength of Cabinet has been justified. In the last few months, a Minister has had to retire through overwork, and the House is the poorer for his retirement. Another Minister, quite a young man, was told by his doctor to take it easy. The Government is subjected to pressure from all directions. All manner of problems are presented to the Government, and they have to be examined.

As a North Queenslander, I would not be human if I did not share the view of the honourable member for Cairns and say that I was disappointed that North Queensland remains without ministerial representation. Although I have been a very good party man for many years, I have always held the view, in the years in which I have been in this House, that my first loyalty is to the people whom I represent. I am in this respect unlike my friends of the Opposition whose first duty is to the Trades Hall, or to

any others who direct them. If they do not listen to those who direct them, they do not remain here for long. We have all seen quite a few examples of that situation. The feelings of the people in North Queensland can be understood, because I do not think that the Government received anywhere better support than it received in the North. It is only by the grace of God, and his own hard work, that the honourable member for Cairns is still with us. He is now like a shag on a rock, and a long way out.

Mr. Jones: The position is only reversed. You were in the same position before.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No; I have a few mates closer than those of the honourable member. He will have to work pretty hard to look after his interests in North Queensland.

As I have already said, I would not be human if I did not say that North Queensland people, like me, are disappointed. Naturally we would have liked representation in Cabinet. However, the system that prevails in the Government parties is such that this is beyond the say of those who elected me, and beyond us as parliamentarians. Although I do not support the system, the majority of members do; therefore it prevails. If I were in the Premier's position and had his prerogative, I might do as he has done.

Mr. Jones: Haven't you any mates to help you?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Unfortunately, my mates have not been here long. As time goes by, I think the honourable member will see them give me all the support and assistance that I need. He will also see increased assistance given to North Queensland because of their efforts, once they get their feet on the ground.

Mr. Wright: Were you reprimanded for what you did for "Old Bill"?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No-one has ever said anything to me about it. We are not reprimanded in the great party to which I belong. On that occasion, as a means of drawing attention to our wants in North Queensland, we did something that had not been done before. It did not seem to do much good, anyway.

As I said earlier, the people in the North think that, to some extent, justice has not been done to them. But, be that as it may, I believe that the increase in Cabinet is well and truly justified. There is no doubt that North Queenslanders are parochial. Perhaps if we were not as parochial as we are, we might think differently. As the honourable member for Cairns said, what one is up against is that the people of North Queensland think that North Queensland begins at Townsville.

I would not like any honourable member to think for one moment that I have any hard feelings towards the honourable members who have been chosen for appointment. They are all very good friends of mine, and I know they will make very good Ministers. They will have my whole-hearted support, and I expect that they will also support me in my endeavours.

As I said, North Queenslanders are parochial people. In my opinion, the principal aim should be to appoint able and capable Ministers. I do not think it is of very great importance to the administration of the State where they live. As long as they do their job well, the net result will be the same. However, politics is a numbers game and we have to win elections. Naturally, the people who elected me are not very happy about the position, and I think all honourable members would understand why.

The honourable member who preceded me in the debate mentioned jobs for the boys. In his position I think I would have remained silent on that subject, as well as the additional expense that will be incurred by the State Government. Queensland is up and marching and requires a little more attention. No-one knows that better than some honourable members on this side of the House who have found it difficult, because of the amount of travelling that Ministers do, to put a case to a Minister, and I hope that the position will be much easier as a result of the increase in the size of Cabinet.

Getting back to jobs for the boys, Mr. Speaker, I think that some names were mentioned in this Chamber at the introductory stage. I do not intend to repeat them, but it is interesting to note that eight defeated A.L.P. members from various parts of Australia have all been placed in Government jobs.

Mr. Lee: Grassby and Murphy.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Yes. Honourable members have even seen a Senator promoted to the High Court recently. In addition, some defeated candidates have been given jobs. What disturbs me more than that—and I think I should have a few words to say about it—is that—

Mr. Aikens: Even Fabian Sweeney has a cushy job overseas. He is in Asia now.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I was not aware of that, but it might be a good thing that he is there. It might be a good thing, too, if a few more of these fellows were given jobs overseas—preferably in Russia or Red China.

What I want to draw attention to is something which should concern each and every one of us much more than the shindy that is being kicked up about the increase in Cabinet. I refer to the many known, devout and self-confessed Communists, leaders of unions, whom the Federal Government has promoted.

Mr. Jensen: Would you name a few?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Yes, but I do not want to take up too much time on this because there are others who want to speak. I am disturbed that Jack Munday should get a job. He was appointed to the Advisory Cities Commission Board. Norm Gallagher is a member of the Advisory Council of the Australian Code for Residential Construction. Max Ogden is jointly employed by the A.M.W.U. and the Arts Council. John Halfpenny is a member of the Federal Government Advisory Committee on the Environment. Paddy Troy is one of the five members of the Western Australian Committee on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation. That is just to mention a few.

I have not been able to ascertain just how much money these fellows get, but I presume they include a few more like our good friend Mr. Egerton. I do not know how many jobs he has now. I can remember the days when the policy of the A.L.P. was "One man, one job". That seems to have gone by the board today. The more jobs they get the more they seem to enjoy it, and the more critical they become of Governments in both the State and Federal spheres that have made some of these things possible.

Mr. Aikens: How many jobs has Barramundi Jack got?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I have lost count of them.

The only reason I rose was to point out that I have mixed feelings about the areas from which Ministers are being appointed. That has already been brought out by previous speakers. I suppose this is quite natural. A member must expect that the people who support him will support him in all his endeavours. Unlike honourable members opposite we have enjoyed that sort of thing. The people in North Queensland think that they have been hardly done by. Be that as it may, I am still prepared to lend my support to the Bill.

Hon. A. M. HODGES (Gympie—Leader of the House): I move—

"That the question be now put."

Motion agreed to.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen's motion)—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 60

Ahern	Knox
Armstrong	Lamont
Bertoni	Lane
Bird	Lee
Bjelke-Petersen	Lester
Byrne	Lickiss
Camn	Lindsay
Campbell	Lockwood
Chalk	Loves
Chinchen	McKechnie
Deeral	Miller
Doumany	Moore
Edwards	Muller
Elliott	Neal
Frawley	Newbery
Gibbs	Porter
Glasson	Powell
Goleby	Row
Greenwood	Simpson
Gunn	Small
Gygar	Tenni
Hales	Tomkins
Hartwig	Turner
Herbert	Warner
Hewitt, N. T. E.	Wharton
Hewitt, W. D.	Young
Hinze	
Hodges	
Hooper, K. W.	
Hooper, M. D.	
Katter	
Kippin	

Tellers:
Lamond
Akers

NOES, 10

Burns	Melloy
Casey	Yewdale
Dean	
Hanson	
Houston	
Jones	

Tellers:
Wright
Jensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth, in the chair)

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of s. 3; Governor may declare what Ministers may sit in Legislative Assembly—

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (3.6 p.m.): Today we have heard a tremendous amount of repetition of what was said on the introduction of this Bill. So far we have heard nothing new.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: Hear, hear!

Mr. CASEY: I do not think that the Premier should say "Hear, hear!" too much. We have heard nothing from him today. There has been plenty of comment and criticism of certain aspects.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not intend to permit another second-reading speech. This clause refers to an increase in the size of the Cabinet from 14 to 18. The honourable member will relate his comments to that aspect alone.

Mr. CASEY: Fair enough. As I said earlier, I intend to introduce something new.

Mr. Knox interjected.

Mr. CASEY: I believe, Mr. Hewitt, that you rather than the Minister for Justice are the person to decide that matter. Every member of this Committee is entitled to put forward any points he desires.

A lot of comment has been made on increasing the size of the Cabinet from 14 to 18. I believe that is a rather gross size. I do not intend to delay the Committee greatly but, looking at the various portfolios that are to be allotted to the 18 Ministers—and much comment has been made about some of the various new departments that will be formed—I see no reason why, for instance, the portfolio of Urban and Regional Affairs and Minister assisting the Premier could not have had the portfolio of Police tacked onto it. Instead, Police is to be a separate portfolio.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not intend to accept that as pertinent comment. If I did, I would have to allow discussion on every Ministry.

Mr. CASEY: If you will allow me to continue, Mr. Hewitt, you will realise that the point I am making relates to clause 2. If accepted, it would allow the number of Ministers to be reduced by one. For many years the portfolio of Police was attached to the portfolio of the Premier as you, Mr. Hewitt, and many other honourable members know.

I feel that the portfolio of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement could well have been handled together with the portfolio of Community and Welfare Services. I firmly believe that one of the big problems in the State today is that Aborigines and Islanders are not accepted in the community as equals on the basis applicable to all other persons in the community. They should be, and matters concerning them could be handled by that department.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. CASEY: The portfolio of Fisheries could have remained with the Department of Primary Industries.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I said that there is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. CASEY: Therefore, I move the following amendment to clause 2—

"On page 2, line 3, omit the word—
'eighteen'
and insert in lieu thereof the word—
'sixteen'."

I feel that an increase of four is completely unnecessary. We heard much comment on this point from even Government members during the debate. I now give the Committee the opportunity of indicating whether it feels that what I have moved is desirable or otherwise.

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (3.11 p.m.): I am surprised, after all the talk in the Chamber this afternoon, that the Leader of the Opposition did not take the initiative and do what has just been done by the honourable member for Mackay. After all the talk, wind, objections and criticisms, the Leader of the Opposition apparently did not feel justified in moving an amendment to restrict the number in Cabinet to 16.

Mr. Burns: We support 14.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Irrespective of what Opposition members say, their actions belie what the Leader of the Opposition is attempting to say now.

Before concluding, I want to say that to get results it is necessary to spend money. The Government wants to give greater service to the people of Queensland, and it intends to do so irrespective of what the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Mackay might say. The honourable member for Mackay, like the Leader of the Opposition, obviously talks one way and acts another. They talk in terms of no Cabinet representation for the North. The honourable member for Mackay cannot get out of it; he has been trying to prevent the Government from providing greater Cabinet representation for North Queensland.

Mr. CASEY: I rise to a point of order. If the Premier had been in the Chamber at the introductory stage, he would know that the points that he is attempting to attribute to me were not discussed in any way by me at that stage of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no valid point of order.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: There was no need for the honourable member even to speak; his action in moving his amendment indicates his thinking. He does not want greater representation for North Queensland or any other part of the State. He cannot get out of that, and I shall let the people of North Queensland know his general attitude. In spite of the Opposition, the Government is determined to give greater opportunity for the people of Queensland to have access to Ministers and to the Government generally. For a long time Opposition members have been saying that the Government should get closer to the people. What a lot of hypocrites they are! When they have the opportunity to help bring this about, they set themselves against it and, for political purposes, talk as they do now. They then go out into the electorate and say that the people never see Ministers, and that there are not enough of them.

I move—

“That the question be now put.”

Question put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 56

Akers	Knox
Bertoni	Lamond
Bird	Lamont
Bjelke-Petersen	Lee
Byrne	Lester
Campbell	Lickiss
Chalk	Lindsay
Chinchen	Lockwood
Deeral	Lowes
Doumany	McKechnie
Edwards	Moore
Elliott	Muller
Frawley	Neal
Gibbs	Newbery
Glasson	Porter
Goleby	Powell
Greenwood	Row
Gunn	Simpson
Gygar	Small
Hales	Tenni
Hartwig	Tomkins
Herbert	Turner
Hewitt, N. T. E.	Warner
Hodges	Wharton
Hooper, K. W.	Young
Hooper, M. D.	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>
Kaus	Ahern
Kippin	Miller

NOES, 10

Burns	Melloy
Casey	Wright
Dean	
Hanson	<i>Tellers:</i>
Houston	Jensen
Jones	Yewdale

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted from clause 2 (Mr. Casey's amendment) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 56

Akers	Knox
Bertoni	Lamond
Bird	Lamont
Bjelke-Petersen	Lee
Byrne	Lester
Campbell	Lickiss
Chalk	Lindsay
Chinchen	Lockwood
Deeral	Lowes
Doumany	McKechnie
Edwards	Moore
Elliott	Muller
Frawley	Neal
Gibbs	Newbery
Glasson	Porter
Goleby	Powell
Greenwood	Row
Gunn	Simpson
Gygar	Small
Hales	Tenni
Hartwig	Tomkins
Herbert	Turner
Hewitt, N. T. E.	Warner
Hodges	Wharton
Hooper, K. W.	Young
Hooper, M. D.	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>
Kaus	Ahern
Kippin	Miller

NOES, 10

Burns	Melloy
Casey	Wright
Dean	
Hanson	<i>Tellers:</i>
Houston	Jensen
Jones	Yewdale

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Honourable Members interjected.

The **CHAIRMAN**: Order! Honourable members must realise that when the Chairman is on his feet there will be no movement in the Chamber.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

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

AGENT-GENERAL FOR QUEENSLAND BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth, in the chair)

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (3.31 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to provide for the office of Agent-General for Queensland.”

This Bill gives statutory recognition to the position of the Agent-General for Queensland in London. For many years the appointment of Agent-General for Queensland and the terms of his appointment have been matters dealt with by the Governor-in-Council as an executive action. There has been no legislative recognition of the position itself or of an appointee thereto. In addition the position of an Acting Agent-General (when the emergency has arisen) has been a matter of administrative action.

It has been decided that if the positions of Agent-General and of Acting Agent-General were recognised and provided for in the law of Queensland, support or strength would be afforded the appointees in the handling of their functions.

Recently attention was focused on the position of State Agents-General by Press reports of the Prime Minister's intention to raise with the U.K. Government the question of the status of Agents-General. While the Prime Minister subsequently denied that any such discussion on that question took place or that he had intended to raise that question, nevertheless, such a possibility emphasises the desirability that the position of the Agent-General should be recognised under the law of the State.

It is opportune to point out once again the undoubted constitutional position, namely, that Queensland is a sovereign State and its representation in the United Kingdom by its Agent-General is but one expression of that position. I might add that the same constitutional position applies in the case of each and every other State in Australia.

When it was apprehended that the question of the States' Agents-General would be raised by the Prime Minister, it was made clear to me that all States were adamant

that the status of their respective Agents-General should not be interfered with. This pervading concern in itself is sufficient to warrant the introduction of this Bill.

While taking the step to have the position of the Agent-General recognised in law, advantage is being taken of the opportunity to define the functions of the office which have hitherto been understood, at the administrative level, by both the appointees and the Government.

On those occasions when it is necessary to appoint an Acting Agent-General, it is essential that it be understood that his functions and duties are the same as those of the Agent-General while he acts in that office.

I feel that I should emphasise the importance of the Queensland Agent-General's Office in London. It serves two important purposes, in that it has a representational role and a commercial responsibility. Anybody who has had any experience with our London Office would readily acknowledge that it renders valuable service in both these fields of activity. Obviously the history of its performance and the recognition of its significance demand that its continuance be ensured by all means in our power.

Our one-time colleague, Wally Rae, is doing an excellent, first-class job in London.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (3.34 p.m.): We are rather mystified about this Bill. Queensland has had an Agent-General in London since 1864, that is, about 111 years ago, but suddenly, almost immediately after the opening of Parliament in 1975, when we are worrying about the economy, the cost of living, people out of work and the problems facing the beef industry and the other rural industries (which we hear so much about), the second Bill in importance, so it seems, to be introduced in this House is designed to give legal recognition to the position of Agent-General—a position that has been in vogue for 111 years. It is small wonder that we are suspicious about the motives prompting the Bill. I must agree that every other State has similar legislation and, on that basis, we do not intend to oppose the introduction of the Bill. However, we will examine it before we declare our attitude at the second-reading stage. We are probably giving legislative assent to what I termed the Premier's “junket to London” in January this year. He was reported as saying—

“I must emphasise that we don't know what he (Mr. Whitlam) said to the British Government. We only know what we have seen in the London Press reports about him wanting to get rid of the Agents-General, the State's right to appeal to the Privy Council and the appointment of State Governors.”

That was the statement the Premier used to justify a rushed trip to London to see the British Government, which he had already been to see once before on a similar pretext.

The Heath Government had rejected an approach from the Australian Premiers. Following the rejection of that approach, we had another rejection on this occasion when the British Prime Minister would not even see the Premier and his colleague from West Australia but left it to one of the foremost socialists in the British Labor Party to talk about the subject of Agents-General.

Before the Premier left for overseas and before there was any justification for this Bill the Prime Minister issued a Press statement on 13 December 1974, which said—

“The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, today denied reports that he had any intention of raising with the British Government the position of the State Agents-General in London.

“Mr. Whitlam said he appreciated that the Agents-General had a role to perform in relation to commercial and related matters to which the States attributed considerable importance. There was, however, no suggestion that Agents-General exercised diplomatic functions, as these were the sole concern of the Australian Government.”

Now a Bill is being introduced at a time, as I say, when we have expressed concern about the economy, with people out of work and a slump in the beef industry and other industries; yet the Bill apparently regarded as the second most important to be introduced in the Queensland Parliament in 1975 is one to give legislative backing to the office of the Agent-General.

It is my view that we should not just be giving legislative effect to the Agent-General. He has control of a commercial operation. The annual report of the Agent-General for Queensland for the year 1973-74 refers to the image of Queensland, industry, commerce and investment, shipping and travel, migration, reception and hospitality and legal matters such as Public Curator services.

We ought to be giving legislative effect to the Premier's promise in 1969 to set up a Trade Commissioner in Tokyo. That was five years ago, but nothing has yet been done about it.

When the beef industry is having problems continually with the United States Government with changes in health regulations and the like, we ought to be legislating for an Agent-General or Trade Commissioner there. I suppose as the term “Agent-General” is a relic of old colonial days it would not be the appropriate term for the United States. We should appoint a Trade Commissioner to New York, or somewhere else in the United States, and one to Tokyo, or somewhere in Japan.

Mr. Jones: Brussels.

Mr. BURNS: Yes, one to Brussels to take care of our affairs with the European Economic Community. If we did not do that, we should appoint one to Hong Kong, China, Singapore or one of the other Asiatic countries with which we carry on so much trade these days. It is time we accepted the realities of 1974, when our trade is no longer with Britain only. The trading relations between this country and other parts of the world have shifted markedly. In 1975 we should be legislating for closer ties in trade and commerce with those areas by means of Agents-General or Trade Commissioners.

It seems to me that that would be more in keeping with the problems of 1975 than the introduction of a Bill to regularise a position that no-one has challenged since 1864. Even the Prime Minister has denied that in 1974 he challenged the position.

I repeat that the Opposition does not want to delay the House at this time, when country members want to return to their electorates; but we will consider the Bill before the second-reading stage and state our attitudes then.

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah —Premier) (3.39 p.m.), in reply: The Leader of the Opposition referred to the trip I made to London with Sir Charles Court to see the British Government, as a junket. Certainly nobody wants to travel overseas, spend only a day or two there and then come back. There is no pleasure or satisfaction in that.

Every one of us knows that not many people in the nation are prepared to place credence on any remark made by the Prime Minister. First, a report was released that he was going to speak to the British Government about the status of Agents-General. He has in another area moved to take away diplomatic passports from State Ministers of the Crown in Australia. In view of the type of Government we have in Canberra, we could not afford to sit at home and take any risks. We had to go to London because he would not reply to me before he left for London.

Mr. Burns: He did.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: He refused to reply to my letter. The Leader of the Opposition is referring to a Press report to the effect that the Prime Minister was going to speak to the British Government. I do not know who put out that Press report. All I do know is that he did not give me, as the Premier of this State, an undertaking that he was not going to discuss these things. I sought that assurance from the Prime Minister weeks before he went overseas and he refused to give it. Who in his right mind would stay here when the Prime Minister, who had acted in the way he has acted in so many other directions, would not tell me anything before he left? How could we say we could trust him? I am not prepared to trust him when

he will not give an assurance before he goes. So Sir Charles Court and I, representing Victoria and New South Wales as well as our own States, went to London and told the British Government—

Mr. Houston: How much did they give you towards the cost of your trip, if you represented them?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The cost was infinitesimal compared to the value and importance of what was involved. We are not so miserly or mean that we would say to Victoria and New South Wales, as the honourable member evidently would, "Please give us \$1,000 towards the cost of our tickets to London." Honourable members opposite apparently have no idea or conception of what the Commonwealth Government is costing every State Government in Australia in legal and other fees. They run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

We went to London and said that we were sovereign States. We said to the British Government, "You must not act in these matters unless you get our consent." We got that assurance from the British Government, regardless of what Opposition members say or would like to say.

Mr. Houston: From whom?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Bulimba will have an opportunity to speak at the second-reading stage if he wants to.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member is trying to draw red herrings across the trail.

Sir Charles Court and I came back quite satisfied in our own minds that we had a certain understanding with the British Government on these issues. The Office of Agent-General is important to our trade in sugar, immigration and many other things.

Mr. Burns: Didn't the British Government say it was a matter to be settled at home and not over there?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That is correct. We told the British Government, "This is what we want you to do. Don't you come in and exercise certain powers under the Statute of Westminster."

Mr. Burns: Did you say that before, though?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes. I have said that all along. The Prime Minister went to London and said, "I speak on behalf of the people of Australia. I want you to do this." We do not trust him. I do not know whether Opposition members do or not. He did not invite the Leader of the Opposition to dinner as he invites me.

I think all of us understand that we are cementing more firmly in the laws of our land the status and position of Office of Agent-General, which has meant so much

to this State over the years and will mean much in the future. We decided to confirm it. We are achieving conformity with the other States.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, read a first time.

SUPREME COURT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth, in the chair)

Debate resumed from 4 March (see p. 99) on Mr. Knox's motion—

"That a Bill be introduced relating to the number of Judges of the Supreme Court and, in connection therewith, to amend the Supreme Court Act of 1921."

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (3.46 p.m.): This is a very important Bill. Down through the ages, I do not suppose there has been any institution of government around which such an aura of sanctity and perfection has developed as the English judicial system. Its growth to a position of great power, prestige and authority at the commencement of the present century was due to many causes, and the influence of many lawyers from Coke in the 17th century, to Blackstone in the 18th century, Dicey in the 19th century, and judges such as Parkes, Bramwell, Blackburn and Willes of the Victorian era. All these men were masters of the English common law which served the needs of an agricultural people, and later the industrialised nation which, in the 19th century, was built upon laissez-faire conceptions.

But apart from its qualities of independence and impartiality, it is an open question how far over the centuries the judicial system gave a proper measure of satisfaction of all human and community needs with reasonable expedition and without excessive cost and undue technicality. Students of legal history—and there are some in this Chamber—will know that during this period there were abuses, anomalies, and anachronisms aplenty, not only in the substantive law which defines the rights and obligations of parties, but in the laws and rules regulating the procedures of courts and the trial of criminal and civil causes, as well in the law of evidence. I give an illustration. It was not until 1731 that provision was made by statute for proceedings in all courts to be conducted in English, and court documents to be written in legible characters instead of the mediaeval "court hand". Until 1838, a creditor could have a debtor arrested and imprisoned before proving that any debt was legally due,

although imprisonment as a means of compelling payment of a judgment debt remained until much later.

In the field of criminal law, it was not until 1855 that free cross-examination of Crown witnesses was allowed, and only just before the turn of the century was the law amended to allow an accused person to give evidence in his own defence. Prior to 1832, the procedure in civil matters was fragmented into a variety of jurisdictions and covered by a series of archaic forms of action which made the institution of any suit in the common law courts a hazardous and risky enterprise. But, under the influence of men such as Bentham, some amelioration of the position resulted in that year. At about the same time, the delays and injustices in the Courts of Chancery were so serious that a royal commission of inquiry was appointed to investigate "scandalous abuses" in that jurisdiction. In the ensuing 20 years, other royal commissions were appointed to recommend amendments in procedure, which became the subject of legislation in 1852 and 1854.

A fourth royal commission, appointed in 1867, made a series of reports which resulted in the establishment under the Judicature Acts of a single superior judicial body in England, the Supreme Court of Judicature, which from 1875 provided what, for those times, was a relatively simple and uniform procedure for the institution and conduct of all causes of action in the superior courts.

That legislation represented a major step in the reform of judicial procedures in England; but, in spite of its virtues, it fell far short of achieving a complete integration of all the previously existing courts, or an assimilation of all causes of action, regardless of their origin. A Chancery Division was established, separate from the Queen's Bench Division, to deal with matters which formerly would have been heard in the Courts of Chancery; a Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division was created to deal with matters formerly heard by Ecclesiastical Courts and the Courts of Admiralty; and no step was taken to integrate the County Courts, which dealt with cases of minor importance, into the Supreme Court of Judicature, to modernise some of the ancient tribunals which had existed for centuries, or to re-form the many courts and tribunals which were constituted by magistrates and justices of the peace.

Under the Judicature Acts, different procedural forms and incidents for the three divisions were still necessary, and judges were appointed to sit in one division only and mostly heard matters normally identified with each division—that is, matters of common law in the Queen's Bench Division, matters of equity in the Chancery Division, and probate, divorce and admiralty cases in the division having that name.

Mr. Lane interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I will not allow persistent interjections.

Mr. MELLOY: Moreover, the influence of the old forms of action and procedure still persisted; as Sir John Salmon said, even though "the forms of action are dead . . . their ghosts still haunt the precincts of the law. In their life they were powers of evil and even in death they have not wholly ceased from troubling." Thus it is that many esoteric questions of the conflict between, or the relative application of, the ancient rules of the common law and those of the chancellors continued to beguile the English courts, even into the 20th century, and Masters of the Rolls, who head the administration of the Chancery Division, still write and speak of equity as if it were a separate system of law.

But Coke was in earnest when he described the wisdom of the common law as "the perfection of reason", as was Blackstone when he characterised the procedure of a new trial of a jury cause as "rendering perfect that most excellent method of decision which is the glory of the English law".

In more recent times many authors and judges have continued to eulogise the common law and judicial procedures. Judge Pitt Taylor, the author of a famous work on evidence, waxed lyrical about "the symmetry and beauty" of the law of evidence, the principles of which, he said, "are founded in the charities of religion—in the philosophy of nature—in the truths of history—and in the experience of common life". Sir Frederick Pollock, a scholar and author of broad outlook, paid homage to the common law as "a goddess . . . like the fortitude of the Florentine master, armed and expectant, her battle mace lightly poised in fingers ready to close at one swift motion to the fighting grasp", and Mr. Justice McCardie, normally respected for his down-to-earth approach, said that "the record of the common law of England would stand for ever on the noblest pages of history" for "nothing has left a deeper or more beneficent effect upon the western world".

The last generation has seen the emergence of more critical analyses of the legal system; but these have come mostly from writers outside the practical administration of the law, for those who work within, or are part of, the system seem blind to its defects or practise a measure of self-deception.

Professor R. M. Jackson has remarked that "the peculiarity of the English legal system is its blind devotion to its own shortcomings", and Anthony Sampson has said that "the law is the most striking example of a profession which has become trapped in its own conservatism and mystique . . . It still likes to cling to its old authority and prestige, rather than to interest itself in the exciting new developments of

society . . . More than any other profession it is imprisoned in its own myths and shibboleths". One of these is the myth of perfection of the judicial system. So said Mr. Justice Else-Mitchell in a lecture entitled "The Myth of Perfection of the Judicial System".

In most discussions about the law and its reform, the subject of legal procedure seldom attracts much attention, nearly all law reform being concentrated upon amendments to, and modernisation of, the substantive law which creates and regulates rights and obligations, but it is, I think, beyond question that many of the injustices under which litigants suffer and many of the anomalies which, from time to time, are ventilated publicly, and most grievances which are expressed about the high cost of litigation and delays in the courts, are a result of the existing structure of the judicial system and the rules of procedure and evidence which have to be applied.

I venture to say, too, that attention to fundamental reforms on these matters would not only be of immeasurable benefit to litigants and the public generally, but is a more pressing need than reform of the substantive law. Upon this question I would adopt the observations of C. P. Harvey that although "the substantive law which defines our rights and duties is . . . important to all of us, unless the adjective law of procedure is a working machine, constantly translating these obligations in terms of court orders and actual execution, the substantive law might just as well not exist."

Mr. Lane: Who do you think you are kidding, Jack?

Mr. MELLOY: I would not attempt to kid the honourable member. He would not be able to take it in. I would be wasting my time.

In discussing the adjective law it is possible to identify in the judicial system of the State a legion of procedural and evidentiary anomalies and anachronisms. A categorisation of these, or even a selection of them, would be tedious and I, therefore, find that generalisation is unavoidable and that I must take the course merely of focusing attention on some major deficiencies in the structure and operation of the judicial system, especially in relation to civil matters.

Having introduced the discussion by quoting extensively from an eminent Australian jurist, I now want to emphasise some major points which I believe ought to be said about the Supreme Court in Queensland. These follow on from the contribution made by the honourable member for Rockhampton.

There must be more specialisation within the court. Specialised divisions must be created and more particularly, the Commercial Causes Act must be allowed to operate.

Mr. Lane interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I ask honourable members to co-operate. I will not allow the continued interjecting that has been going on for the last few minutes. I ask for the co-operation of the honourable member for Merthyr. If it is not forthcoming, I will have to name him.

Mr. MELLOY: I do not object to the honourable member interjecting. He has not heard of the saying that it is better to keep quiet and be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and confirm it.

As I have said, the Commercial Causes Act must be allowed to operate, which it is not doing now. A Family Law Division should be created so that the State can take advantage of the new Family Law Bill, which is on its way through the Federal Parliament, and a Common Law Division should be set up so that, if a system of "no fault" liability comes into the law, the State will have an expert panel of judges versed in the operation of such a system.

It will be seen that the thrust of the Opposition case on this Bill is that the Supreme Court must be given the status and efficiency the topmost court in the State should have.

A further matter I should mention at this point is that Queensland must be given a permanent court of appeal in the near future. At the moment, appeals, both criminal and civil, are heard by benches of judges who are chosen in an ad hoc fashion by the Chief Justice at the beginning of the judicial year. This is not satisfactory for the third-ranking State in the Commonwealth. It is my information that the permanent Court of Appeal in New South Wales works very well, and that the High Court of Australia has praised that court's operation on many occasions. Why does Queensland always have to wait until other States have proved the benefit to be gained by an innovation in the judicial system? I ask the Minister: Will he give serious consideration to the creation of this court as soon as possible so that Queensland litigants can be given a court of high calibre in their State?

One final matter that we in the Opposition feel to be of some importance is the fact that, as the member for Rockhampton has emphasised in his contribution to this debate, the body from whom our judges are selected is relatively small. There are only some 100 or so barristers within Queensland who are eligible for the great number of judicial appointments to be made. Isn't it time that Queensland developed a professional judiciary which allows for promotions from the Magistrates Court bench to the District Court bench and from that bench to the Supreme Court? The Opposition noted with satisfaction the appointment of Mr. Justice Andrews from the District Court to the Supreme Court. We suggest that more appointments of this type should be made. This will help build an expert judicial system in Queensland.

The present system allows people who have had no expertise in one field of the law for many years to be pushed into a court without any prior training in their office whatever. This is particularly obvious when one considers the criminal work done by the Supreme Court.

In conclusion, we will support the Bill if other innovations are made within the Supreme Court structure, and we will oppose the enlargement of the court if the Minister intends no further improvements in its operation. So the ball is in the Minister's court, and if he can inform the Parliament at a later date of his views on matters I have raised, we will be satisfied.

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (4.4 p.m.): It is my great privilege to come to this Assembly as the representative of the people of the focal electorate of Brisbane. I believe it is appropriate that, as the Supreme Court of Queensland is situated within this electorate, I as a lawyer should accept the kind invitation of the honourable members for Nudgee and Rockhampton to speak to the Supreme Court Act Amendment Bill. I am grateful to the honourable members for such an invitation, but I accept that given by the honourable member for Rockhampton with a certain feeling of uneasiness. I am reminded of the people in the Gregory electorate who say, "When our neighbour talks religion, we brand our calves early." I hope that my uneasiness is unwarranted.

So far, the only opposition to the Bill has been by way of criticism of the process of the law, its cost and delay. As to its cost, I refer honourable members to the legal assistance system, which has been introduced by the practising profession of this State. Its cost is met by members of the profession out of their own pockets and it is encouraged by the Government. In fact the Government has extended it throughout this State. The further this legal assistance scheme goes, the more the people of Queensland appreciate it.

I can assure honourable members that any suggestion of affluence of the legal profession is quite mythical. As to delays—I submit that this Bill is designed to overcome such delays by making provision for the appointment of additional judges. It is only from the Opposition that we have heard such criticism, and it is quite unfounded.

It is impossible for me as a lawyer not to join issue with the honourable member for Townsville South. It is well known that he has profound animosity—so profound that it borders on obsession—towards the legal profession. It is a well known maxim at law that ignorance of the law is no excuse. While ignorance of the law does not afford an excuse, it may afford some mitigation. Nothing, however, can be said to excuse or mitigate that honourable member's mammoth misunderstanding. I could refer to it as abysmal ignorance, but that would be unkind. He has a mammoth misunderstanding of the process of the law,

and it would be indeed unfortunate if any person reading his speech should believe its contents to be true.

Mr. Houston: You have woken up to him already.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I wish Opposition members would extend the normal courtesy to the honourable member for Brisbane. This is his maiden speech and I hope that they adhere to the time-honoured procedure of hearing him in silence.

Mr. WRIGHT: Mr. Miller, this point was raised with Mr. Speaker this morning. I went to him personally and asked him for his ruling on it. He said that if newly elected members enter a debate on legislation they do not have the right to be heard without interjection—honourable members have a right to interject. That was the ruling given this morning.

Mr. LOWES: It would be indeed unfortunate if any person reading the speech made in this place on Tuesday last by the honourable member for Townsville South should believe the contents of it to be true and correct. People may be misled into believing so because the speech was made in this Assembly, or they may be led to believe the statements to be true because of the antiquity of the honourable member who delivered the speech. I think it my duty to this Assembly and to the people of this State to correct those parts of his speech which are so blatantly wrong.

Firstly, he said that trial by jury was a sickening farce. Trial by jury is not a sickening farce. It has been well tried and tested for centuries as a system of justice—as far back as Magna Carta, or earlier. And it would be in societies that had trial by jury and have lost it, that it would be most appreciated. Whatever the honourable member had to say about the abolition of trial by jury, the Government is bitterly opposed to it.

Secondly, the honourable member's misunderstanding of what is known as a "voir dire" is lamentable. On a voir dire, when the defence is entitled to have excluded from the evidence that it is proposed to put before the jury such evidence as is prejudicial to the accused and has been improperly obtained, the public is not excluded, and the transcript of such evidence is not withheld. On this occasion, too, the honourable member was blatantly wrong in what he told the Committee and I believe he should be corrected. If the honourable member prefers conservation of time in hearings to the protection of the freedom of the individual, I must say that his attitude is not shared by the public of Queensland.

The honourable member alleged scandalous behaviour on the part of former Supreme Court judges. This Assembly has the remedy in the form of censuring and removing

from office such a judge. But to my knowledge no judge has been called before the Bar of this Assembly. On the other hand, I submit that the duties of judges are many and onerous. Their duties include presiding over Cane Prices Board hearings, royal commissions and so on. Whenever anything of a special nature arises, Ministers of the State look to judges of the Supreme Court because they believe in their integrity, knowing that they are men of good conscience who will hold a fair and proper hearing and will listen to the evidence and act on it as it is brought before them.

It is significant that few judges live to enjoy their retirement. In fact, very few judges live to retire. The honourable member for Townsville South refers quite frequently to W. S. Gilbert. If I may be allowed the same privilege, I would say that a judge's lot is not a happy one.

Lord Justice Denning has said—

“There is a time when in criticising the judiciary that silence is no longer an option.”

I say that there is certainly no ground whatsoever for any destructive criticism—and that is all we have ever had from the honourable member for Townsville South—of the judiciary. There is no call for any destructive criticism of the judiciary. On the other hand, constructively we are doing what is necessary; we are increasing the size of the judiciary, and I therefore support the Bill.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (4.11 p.m.): The purpose of this Bill is to increase the number of judges of the Supreme Court. At the outset I stress that we on this side of the Chamber have at no time berated the Judiciary. We have the highest respect for the judges of our State and the Commonwealth of Australia; they hold one of the highest positions under our constitution. We have always expressed our respect for any man elevated to that position, irrespective of his religious persuasion or the political party to which he may have previously belonged.

It was a matter of great distress to many people that there were such outrageous outbursts when ex-Senator Murphy was elevated to the bench of the High Court of Australia. No-one would doubt the ability of Mr. Justice Murphy. He was recognised within the legal profession as one of the most highly trained legal men in Australia. One could understand such outbursts if there had not been any precedent for such an appointment, but such a precedent has been established in our own Parliament. My mind goes back to the late Mr. Justice Hart, who was elevated to the Supreme Court directly from here. So I want to put it on record that we have a precedent set in this State, if any precedent were needed. Opposition members see nothing wrong in

the appointment of ex-Senator Murphy to the position of justice of the High Court of Australia. He will be a very good one.

I intend to speak for only a few moments, but there are one or two points I wish to raise. The first is the long delays experienced by litigants in court proceedings. This subject has been mentioned many times, but I do not think it can be repeated too often. Most honourable members have interviewed people who complain about the long delays in the hearing of cases in which they are involved. If this increase in the judiciary will overcome that, I believe everyone will be happy about it. I have no doubt that every member of the Parliament has had to listen to the sad tale of someone who is waiting to have a matter heard.

Mr. Houston: It is quite interesting that this Bill increases the judiciary by two but the Government has increased its Cabinet by four.

Mr. DEAN: That is so.

Moreover, the cost of Supreme Court litigation is enormous. I hope that in due course many of these shortcomings will be remedied. I have discussed the matter with my colleague the honourable member for Rockhampton, who is of the opinion that many of our judges should specialise in one branch of the profession. I refer to criminal and commercial cases. If judges specialised in various fields, a good deal of the time lag could be taken up and waiting time could be cut down considerably.

I felt impelled to make those remarks and this short contribution on behalf of the many people outside who continually contact parliamentarians and complain bitterly about long delays and the excessive cost of litigation. I hope the Bill will go some way towards alleviating that distressing experience suffered by so many constituents when they are involved in litigation.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice) (4.16 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions. As usual, any proposal dealing with arrangements in the Supreme Court is of considerable interest in this Chamber.

I was pleased that the honourable member for Brisbane saw fit to enter the debate. I congratulate him on his maiden speech. No doubt we will hear a great deal more from him as he will be a very articulate member of this Assembly. I think it was a very valuable contribution, unlike that of the honourable member for Nudgee, who delivered a very erudite address, learned discourse and academic submission which lost not only other honourable members but also the honourable member for Nudgee himself. Nevertheless, it was delivered with great dignity—with considerably more dignity and aplomb than that of the honourable member for Rockhampton.

Mr. Houston: Don't you like him?

Mr. KNOX: I was so impressed by the contribution of the honourable member for Nuđgee that I intend to read it in great detail and examine it tomorrow.

Certain matters were raised that I feel I should answer briefly. First of all the honourable member for Rockhampton referred to a permanent court of appeal. He obviously has been talking with some of the barristers in Queensland who have been recommending this for some time. It has for some time been a matter of discussion between the Bar Association and me. When such a court of appeal should be established is hard to determine. Consideration must be given to the growth of the State, the increase in litigation and in the size of the bench as well as the expertise available to the bench. In addition there is the use to which members of the bench are put by the Chief Justice in the arrangement of the courts throughout the State.

Mr. Wright: With 16 Supreme Court judges you could start thinking of it now.

Mr. KNOX: We have not got 16 yet. When this should be done in the history of any community is hard to determine. We may have reached that stage in Queensland. I raise it because the honourable member for Rockhampton tried to give the impression that he is the first person to think of it, while members of the bar and indeed of the judiciary have been thinking about it for some time. If we subsequently read in a journal that the honourable member for Rockhampton thought of it first, I should like it to be remembered that I have put the record right by pointing out that the people who thought of it first are intimately associated with the practice of law in our State and that the honourable member has received information from that source in exactly the same way as I receive it. There is no particular merit in having mentioned it in this Chamber simply to tell people somewhere else that he thought of it first.

Secondly, I refer to commercial causes. This is a matter that has been exercising my mind and the minds of members of the judiciary. Here again, the timing of specialisation of the bench has to be carefully considered.

Mr. Wright: It is provided for in the Act. Why haven't you moved in that direction?

Mr. KNOX: The honourable member has made representations for extra judicial appointments in Central Queensland. He continues to forget that the use to which members of the bench can be put is limited by the distance between centres in this State. A certain amount of time is taken up in travelling and attending to other court matters. In a highly centralised community such as Victoria or even the United Kingdom, it is easy to specialise and make optimum use of the judiciary. In making efforts to specialise, great care has to be

taken not to overload the bench with members and neglect the great body of work of a general nature that is required of the judiciary. Queensland could probably have had a very specialised bench years ago if the State had been prepared to increase the judiciary substantially and sacrifice the work that judges have to do in many areas in many parts of the State. I point out that whilst specialisation is well supported and I am not against it, the timing of it has to be considered with great care.

Mr. Wright: Couldn't you start with some specialist division and gradually introduce the scheme?

Mr. KNOX: I think the honourable member is sufficiently aware of the discussions that I have had with the bar to know that I would not discuss these matters in detail here. At some later time there will be an opportunity to do that.

In his usual way, the honourable member for Townsville South took advantage of this debate. I think he was effectively answered by the honourable member for Brisbane. Perhaps it should be said for the benefit of new members that regrettably the honourable member for Townsville South takes advantage of debates of this nature to pour his particular type of cynicism and scorn on the judicial processes of this State. The only thing to be said about his contribution is that it was consistent. If honourable members read the speech that he made the other day, they will find that it is virtually the same speech that he has made over many years. We who have served in the Parliament for some time have become used to it. Members of the legal profession and others become concerned when some of his derogatory remarks concerning the judiciary and the judicial system are spread widely in the community.

Mr. Houston: You encourage it, of course. Your Government backs him, encourages him and laughs with him.

Mr. KNOX: We do not encourage that sort of thing; the honourable member knows that to be so. I had reason during the course of his speech to protest at some of the remarks that he made, and I make no apology for interrupting his speech on that occasion.

I believe that members of the Committee support the measure, and I commend it to them.

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 4.26 p.m.