

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 20 MARCH 1975

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

THURSDAY, 20 MARCH 1975

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

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamation under the Acquisition of Land Act 1967–1969 and the State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971–1974.

Orders in Council under—

Mines Regulation Act 1964–1968.

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

Racing and Betting Act 1954–1974.

PETITION

REINSTATEMENT OF MESSRS. K. O'MAHONEY AND W. MCKENNARIEY AT THE QUEENSLAND INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) presented a petition from 5,524 electors of the Brisbane area praying that the Parliament of Queensland will arrange for the reinstatement of blind persons Kevin O'Mahoney and William Theo McKennariey in their former employment at the Queensland Industrial Institution for the Blind and for permission for them and other blind persons to be accompanied at all times by their guide dogs.

Petition read and received.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

LEGAL AID FOR BAIL APPLICATIONS

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

(1) Is he aware of the Report of the Victorian Law Reform Commissioner of October, 1974, wherein it is advocated that legal aid be made available for bail applications at the discretion of the Victorian Public Solicitor?

(2) Will he investigate the report with a view to amending the *Public Defence Act* 1974 to make this desirable social reform available to Queenslanders?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "There are now other avenues through which legal aid may be obtained. However, the need for extending the scope of the Public Defence Act is being kept under review."

QUEENSLAND ALLOCATION UNDER R.E.D. SCHEME

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

(1) With reference to the wide publicity given to the \$17 million to be distributed in Brisbane under the R.E.D. Scheme, did a Commonwealth Government spokesman itemise details of the expenditure in the Commonwealth Parliament two days after the meeting between the Brisbane Lord Mayor and Members of the House of Representatives from the Brisbane area?

(2) Is this consistent with the Lord Mayor's alleged purpose in meeting with the Members, viz., to call for suggestions of priorities for the expenditure?

(3) Is the sole responsibility for the expenditure to be left to the Lord Mayor, independently of his City Council, as the sole administrator? If so, will the Queensland R.E.D. Scheme Committee, which comprises both Commonwealth and State officials, be officially by-passed?

(4) Will Commonwealth Government relief money be allocated on the sole judgment of an A.L.P. official acting in that capacity only?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) "The State has little knowledge and no influence in the allocation of funds under the R.E.D. Scheme. It is for this reason I suggest that the R.E.D. Scheme has had no regard for relevant needs of the various areas as far as the unemployment in those areas is concerned. It is for this reason also that many of the approvals have political overtones. I have no knowledge of who in the Brisbane City Council will nominate the schemes for the Brisbane area. It is the responsibility initially of the whole Council although I suspect it will be in the hands of the Lord Mayor who will ensure allocations are made to the best advantage of the Labor Members at Federal, State and local authority level."

RAILWAY DISPUTE OVER WAGON OF PIGS

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the report in *The Courier-Mail* of March 18 which stated that the smell from a wagon-load of pigs caused a rail dispute which stopped all north-south trains through Gympie?

(2) If so, will he ascertain who gave the order for the pigs to be placed behind the locomotive instead of further back in the train and why such provocative action was taken when it was known that the driver had objected?

(3) Will he ascertain if the action was a deliberate attempt to create an industrial dispute?

(4) What action has the Commissioner taken in this matter?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "There was no provocative action. The wagon of pigs was not placed behind the locomotive at Gympie as the Honourable Member's Question implies. The pigs were consigned from Emerald to Brisbane and the wagon had travelled behind the engine from Rockhampton to Gympie. A request was made by the driver of the train to the foreman shunter at Gympie for the wagon to be placed further back in the train. The foreman shunter pointed out that he had three other trains to attend to and was unable to re-marshall the wagon on the southbound train, as requested. This train had previously been shunted at Gympie from the rear. The driver was subsequently suspended by the Fitter in Charge, Gympie, following his refusal to move the train with the wagon of pigs located next to the engine. I would mention that the only depot at which the Department has experienced trouble in regard to the positioning of wagons of pigs on trains is the Gympie depot."

(3) "See (2)."

(4) "There has since been a return to work by striking enginemen at Gympie. I would also like to mention for the Honourable Member's benefit that I too have had a similar encounter with a consignment of pigs. On one of my official visits to the country last year, a wagonload of pigs was placed directly in front of a flat-top carrying my Ministerial vehicle, and a rail coach carrying members of my party. Although the rather characteristic odours did pollute the air and make conditions in the rail coach somewhat uncomfortable, neither Mrs. Hooper nor I found any reason to officially complain about the placement of the wagon of pigs, nor did any of my staff take strike action. In fact, the 'pig smell' was impregnated into the ventilation system of my vehicle and took several months to completely clear."

FINANCES OF CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS; TEEN CHALLENGE

Dr. Crawford, pursuant to notice, asked
The Treasurer,—

(1) Is he aware of the parlous financial position of various charitable organisations, largely caused by inflation-inspired lack of money available from public charity funds and earnings?

(2) In the case of "Teen Challenge", which is disadvantaged because of the escalating costs in the work of attempting to rehabilitate drug addicts, will he examine this organisation's funding as a matter of urgency as its valuable work in the community could well collapse rapidly without massive State Government financial assistance?

Answers:—

(1) "I am aware that in the present situation of the national economy the financial position of many Queensland organisations, charitable and otherwise, is not good."

(2) "I understand that the Honourable the Minister for Health is meeting with the Director of this particular organisation next week to discuss the matter of financial assistance."

COMMONWEALTH GRANTS CALCULATION BASE

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

(1) Under the grants arrangements in force since 1965, is an amount of \$2 million each year added to the base on which the Queensland grant is calculated, on the grounds that the State has a large area and a relatively small population?

(2) As changes have been made since 1965 by additional moneys being added to the base by calculating the percentage change in population up to and including December 31 in the year of payment, by taking the percentage increase in average wages up to and including March 31 in the year of payments and by increasing the betterment factor to 1.8 per cent., has he ever submitted to the Premiers' Conference the desirability of increasing the amount of the base money due to the State because of universal escalation of costs in wide and sparsely populated areas of Queensland and, if not, is he prepared to do so at the next opportunity?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "It is pointed out to the Honourable Member that, with the cumulative effect of the annual addition and the compounding effect of the formula, the additional sum received by Queensland each year under the particular section of the formula is now many times the extra \$2 million and, of course, the compounding effect does take care of increasing cost. The State will continue to press for the retention of this factor in the formula as it relates to Queensland."

MAIN ROADS OFFICE STAFF,
BUNDABERG

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

In view of the Minister's Answer to my Question on September 26, 1974, that the issuing of vehicle number plates and registration stickers would be implemented at the Bundaberg Main Roads office as soon as systems, organisation and staffing could be arranged, what is the present position with regard to this matter?

Answer:—

"Investigations are still proceeding. A section, including public service inspectors, to work full time on the implementation of proposals recommended by management consultants including decentralization, is being set up this week. There is a considerable amount of work to be done and this will take some time."

SUBSIDY FOR TRAINING OF
OBEDIENCE DOGS

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

As his Answer to my Question on March 13 was completely misleading and in contradiction of a letter dated February 17 from the Director of Sport, will he now answer the Question as asked on March 13 so that the Obedience Dog Club can submit an application for a subsidy?

Answer:—

"As stated in my Answer on March 13, 1975 to the Question of the Honourable Member, no application for financial assistance has ever been received by my Department from a club for the training of obedience dogs. However, a letter dated February 6, 1975 was received from the Bundaberg Obedience Dog Club enquiring as to whether the Club was eligible for any type of Government grant. The Club was informed that the guidelines laid down to be followed in the allocation of funds made available for encouragement to sport made no provision for assistance to clubs such as this whose activities would not be classed as a sport. The training of obedience dogs does not come within the definition of sport and therefore is not eligible for assistance."

UNEMPLOYMENT GRANT TO
BUNDABERG

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

Why was the City of Bundaberg classified among the small western shires and given only \$8,000 from the State grants for unemployment totalling \$3.4 million?

Answer:—

"The distribution of unemployment relief funds was not made by classifying local authorities according to size or geographical location as is suggested by the question. Funds were distributed on the basis of the number of registered unemployed males in each authority and account was also taken of the funds being made available in each district under the Commonwealth R.E.D. Scheme. As the R.E.D. moneys were allocated without regard to relative unemployment figures, the basis adopted corrects so far as is possible the inequity of the R.E.D. Scheme. No State grant was made where the R.E.D. grant equalled or exceeded the *pro rata* entitlement from the R.E.D. and State funds in total. A minimum grant of \$8,000 was made to those Local Authorities which qualified for a grant of a lesser amount than this minimum. This was the position with respect to Bundaberg City Council where substantial unemployment moneys have already been approved or recommended under the R.E.D. Scheme."

HIGH SCHOOL FOR SPRINGWOOD

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

(1) Is he aware that between 600 and 700 students in the Eight Mile Plains-Rochedale-Springwood-Slacks Creek areas of the Redlands Electorate will require secondary-school facilities next year?

(2) Does he realise that at present students from this area have to travel to five or six high schools outside the electorate, at considerable inconvenience to both students and parents?

(3) Is he aware that the electorate, which is the second largest numerically in the State, has only one high school at Cleveland to serve the population of over 50,000?

(4) In view of the position, will he undertake to provide a high school in the Springwood area in time for the next school year?

Answers:—

(1) "Departmental records indicate that 286 grade 7 students are enrolled in the primary schools at Eight Mile Plains, Rochedale, Springwood and Slacks Creek as at February 28, 1975."

(2) "It is realised that students from these areas would attend high schools at Mansfield, MacGregor, Woodridge, Beenleigh and possibly Cavendish Road. Each of these schools would be served by approved transport services."

(3) "Yes."

(4) "It is unlikely that High School facilities will be available in the Springwood area for the commencement of school in 1976, but it is hoped that, subject to the availability of funds, work will commence some time during the 1975-76 financial year for the opening of a new High School at Springwood in 1977."

COURT CHALLENGE TO COMMONWEALTH PETROLEUM AND MINERALS AUTHORITY LEGISLATION

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

(1) Is he aware that contingency plans have been made by the Commonwealth Minister for Minerals and Energy in expectation of the States winning their High Court challenge on the validity of the Petroleum and Minerals Authority legislation?

(2) Is he aware that Mr. Connor is considering the registration of a Government-owned company to hold the shares which the Petroleum and Minerals Authority has acquired in Wambo Collieries, Mary Kathleen Uranium and Delhi International?

(3) Is he aware that these moves would circumvent an unfavourable High Court decision for the Commonwealth Government and has he noted a criticism from a Commonwealth Labor backbencher, Mr. Chris Hurford, M.H.R., who recently referred to the Commonwealth Government requirement for the production of petrol from the Cooper Basin natural-gas field as "wasteful and expensive"?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "I appreciate the Honourable Member's concern if, as he indicates, a Commonwealth Minister is so recreant to his trust as to anticipate a decision of the High Court of Australia and to make alternative plans designed to circumvent the binding implication of that Court's decision. Since December, 1972, we have been told that the High Court of Australia should be the final authority in all of this nation's judicial considerations. What a shameful and sham ideal this could be seen to be if the Commonwealth A.L.P. Minister referred to by the Honourable Member is pursuing the line of action stated."

TAKE-OVER OF NORTH QUEENSLAND SUGAR MILLS

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

(1) Is he aware of a statement by Dr. Rex Patterson criticising the State Government for not blocking the take-over of the three North Queensland sugar mills by the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company?

(2) Did Dr. Patterson make any approach to the Queensland Government with suggestions as to how the take-over could have been blocked? If not, will he ascertain from Dr. Patterson how this could have been achieved by this Government?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Dr. Patterson did not approach the Queensland Government with any suggestions as to how the take-over of the Australian Estates Company Limited could have been blocked nor reasons why this course should have been pursued. It is noted that in the press article referred to by the Honourable Member, Dr. Patterson stated that the take-over did not infringe the present Trade Practices Act in that it did not substantially lessen competition in the sugar industry. I accept his assurance on this point. Whilst it may have been the desire of cane growers in the three mill areas concerned to purchase their mills, the fact of the matter is that these mills were not for sale separately from the pastoral and other assets of the Australian Estates Company Limited. As regards the Honourable Member's further enquiry, the answer is no. Dr. Patterson had ample time and opportunity to put forward suggestions to the Queensland Government if he had so wished."

BRUCE HIGHWAY, BABINDA

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

As the Commonwealth Minister for Transport has now had the experience of driving over the Bruce Highway from Cairns to Brisbane and has met him and many local authority officials and had lengthy discussions, is he now in a position to indicate when the realignment of the highway through Babinda and the new bridge over Babinda Creek will commence?

Answer:—

"We did not get down to discussing priorities for construction of various highway sections, of which the realignment in the vicinity of Babinda is one that merits early attention. Unfortunately, due to pressures to further investigate possible alternatives to a selected route this project is still in the planning stage. It is intended that an item for Investigations and Preliminary Engineering will be included in next year's National Highway Program for Commonwealth approval but a commencement date for construction cannot be given at this time."

FLOOD DAMAGE RESTORATION OF
SMALL BUSINESSES

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

(1) Have repayments commenced of loans advanced to re-establish small businessmen and manufacturers hit by last year's flood?

(2) How much money was advanced and what interest was charged?

(3) How many applications were received, approved or rejected?

(4) What were the financial arrangements under which the Commonwealth Government made money available?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) "Yes. Repayments are now being made on the loans approved to help re-establish small Queensland businessmen and manufacturers hit by last year's flood. Of the 496 applications for assistance considered, 413 involving loans totalling \$4,321,465 were approved. Applications ranged from the Gold Coast to the Gulf. Each was investigated, on site, by an assessor, and then by the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development, which administered the scheme on behalf of the Industry Flood Relief Committee, comprising representatives of the Government, commerce and industry. These actions and steps represented a sizeable factor in assessing the administration charge of 5 per cent. on advances. The Queensland Government is of course required to repay in full all monies made available by the Commonwealth under the flood relief scheme. No allowance is made in the agreement for costs or losses which are required to be borne by the State. In short, the State Government virtually underwrote small businesses and manufacturers at a time when finance at 10 per cent. or more, was not available from recognised sources. The loans were spread over three to five years with the first repayment being deferred for one year. It would be true to say that many businesses would have gone out of existence, with great personal loss, without this aid—the first of its kind in Queensland. The many letters of appreciation received from beneficiaries under the scheme testify to its efficacy."

DESERTED AND SEPARATED WIVES

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

(1) In consequence of the continuing failure of the Commonwealth Department of Social Security to meet the urgent and critical needs of deserted and separated wives during the first six months of their

deserted or separated state, how many such women were assisted by the State Government during last year?

(2) What was the associated expenditure on such assistance, which represents a substantial saving to the Commonwealth Government?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "As well as deserted and separated wives, the State Department of Children's Services also assists other women with children living in a one parent situation similar to deserted wives. The six months embargo period imposed by the Commonwealth Government also applies to such women as unmarried mothers, deserted de facto wives and wives and de facto wives of prisoners. There are no separate figures available for each category. The information furnished therefore includes all categories of families and is as follows:—(1) The total number of families assisted during the year ended June 30, 1974, was 5,273. (2) The total expenditure by the State during the year ended June 30, 1974, was \$1,952,201, 50 per cent. of which was recoverable from the Commonwealth Department of Social Security in pursuance of the *Commonwealth States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act 1968.*"

CENTRALISATION OF METROPOLITAN
POLICE SERVICES

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

(1) As attacks by prowlers on women in the Highgate Hill and Dutton Park areas in the past week highlight the increasing isolation of suburban householders from police surveillance and protection as a result of the drive towards centralisation of metropolitan police services, particularly during night hours, is such centralisation based purely on economic grounds or is it a result of deliberate planning towards specific performance objectives?

(2) If the reason is based on performance criteria rather than on economic factors, what are the criteria and are they subjected to regular review in the light of actual results?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "There is no move towards centralization of metropolitan police operations. Every possible effort has been and will continue to be made towards increasing the number of police on operational duty in suburban areas at all hours. With the establishment of Brisbane mobile patrols improved police services have been provided in suburban areas at night. These units have centralised control to enable quick and effective assistance to be rendered when necessary. Planning of police operations is based principally on the

specific objective of providing effective police services with the least possible delay. The Brisbane operations officer is charged with making a continual review of results to ensure that the above objective is being achieved. There are many fine examples exemplifying the efficiency of the present system when compared to the previous system, particularly during hours of darkness, which have been brought to my notice, e.g.:—1. Between the hours of 2300 and 2339 hours on January 29, 1975 a service station at Sunnybank was broken and entered and property stolen. At 2345 hours on the same date three offenders were intercepted in Orange Grove Road. 2. At 0320 hours on February 9, 1975 information was received that a break and enter was in progress at St. Lucia. A police car was on the scene at 0325 hours and three offenders were pursued and intercepted. 3. This morning at 0149 hours a call for assistance was received at the Police Operations Centre concerning an incident near Brisbane Gaol. The first police unit was on the scene at 0150 hours."

RACING TIPSTER ADVERTISEMENTS

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

(1) Is he aware of the provisions of Section III, Part 4, of the Racing and Betting Act?

(2) Have Brisbane's Sunday papers for months past carried advertisements, some full-page, inserted by race tipsters in direct contravention of Section III, Part 4 of the Act?

(3) Having regard to the confidence held by him in the secret methods of Inspector Arthur Pitts and the Licensing Squad as expressed in *The Sunday Mail* of January 19, will he give the House the assurance that all possible lawful police action will be taken to protect the public from exploitation by tipster parasites?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "No."

(3) "Yes."

POLICE LICENSING SQUAD

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

(1) What is the numerical strength of the Licensing Squad and the respective ranks of the members?

(2) Were 18 members of the squad transferred to other duties during the two months ended March 15?

(3) If not, how many were transferred, what were their respective ranks and to what duties were they transferred?

(4) For what reasons were the transfers made?

Answers:—

(1) "The established strength of the Licensing Branch, Brisbane, is twenty-one, made up as follows:—Inspector, 1; plain clothes senior sergeant, 1; plain clothes sergeant 1/c, 1; plain clothes sergeants 2/c, 3; plain clothes constables (of all grades), 14; and constable (uniform), 1. At present vacancies exist at the Licensing Branch for one plain clothes sergeant 1/c, one plain clothes sergeant 2/c and five plain clothes constables. Applications for those positions have now closed and it is expected that appointments will be made at an early date. In addition to the established strength, one constable is at present seconded to the Licensing Branch."

(2) "No."

(3) "The following transfers have been approved from the Licensing Branch:—One inspector to Southport Police District (in charge); one P.C. sergeant 2/c to Mundingburra (uniform); one detective senior constable to Moorooka (uniform); one P.C. senior constable to Moranbah (uniform); and one to Adavale (uniform); one P.C. constable 1/c to Winton (uniform) and one to Toowoomba (uniform)."

(4) "It is accepted good police administrative practice that police officers engaged on this class of duty be regularly rotated to other duties."

RAILWAY CORRIDOR, KURABY-ROCHEDALE AREA, IN BRISBANE TOWN PLAN

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

As the new Brisbane Town Plan shows a proposed transportation corridor leaving Kuraby Railway Station, passing through Rochedale and joining another railway line, and as this therefore can be presumed to be a railway corridor, which has created great concern to those people whose land is affected and effectively frozen, and as the Minister for Transport has informed this House that the State Government has no intention of planning a railway line in this vicinity, will he use his reserve powers to remove this corridor from the plan?

Answer:—

"I am unable to indicate at this stage what recommendations I will make to the Governor in Council regarding proposals contained in the proposed new Town Plan for the City of Brisbane. Under the *City of Brisbane Town Planning Act 1964-1974*, interested persons have a right of

objection to the Town Clerk against the proposed new Town Plan within the time prescribed by the Act. All objections duly lodged will receive full consideration before the Town Plan is submitted to the Governor in Council. In view of these provisions, I do not think it would be appropriate for me to state what action I propose to take on proposals contained in the new Town Plan, including the one raised by the Honourable Member, until such time as objections have closed and been evaluated."

TRAFFIC LIGHTS, JAMES AND NEIL
STREETS, TOOWOOMBA

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

As James Street is the main highway through Toowoomba on which many accidents have occurred over the years, the latest seriously injuring a school pupil in November, 1974, and because of the large volume of traffic it carries, will he give urgent consideration, for the protection of children attending the South Boys State School, the South Girls State School and St. Saviour's Convent, to the erection of traffic lights at the corner of James and Neil Streets?

Answer:—

"Yes, consideration will be given to this proposal. The Main Roads Department has received much correspondence in the past concerning pedestrian crossings in this vicinity but warrants for a signalised intersection have not been fully investigated."

ROAD TRANSPORT FEES FOR LETTUCE
CASES

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

(1) Is he aware that a permit fee is required to carry one or more new lettuce cases but no permit fee is required for used cases?

(2) As growers use the return trip to load both used and new cases as a combined load, will he have the permit fee for new cases amended?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "I am advised that the carriage of second-hand fruit cases is exempt under the State Transport Acts from the payment of permit fees. New cases are regarded as empty containers which attract liability but have a concessional permit fee rate of .6 cents per tonne per kilometre. In addition, primary producers carrying their own goods in their own vehicles of a capacity not exceeding 4.1 tonnes are exempted from the payment of permit fees. However, the Honourable Member's request will be given every consideration."

CROWN LAND FOR JUNIOR SPORTS
CLUBS

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

(1) Is Crown land available to junior sports clubs?

(2) Is Crown land available in Toowoomba for this purpose?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "I am aware that there is a need to provide areas of Crown land for recreation purposes to meet the growth of provincial centres of population. Any application by a junior sports club for land would be investigated by the Land Commissioner at Toowoomba who is the officer with the expert knowledge of what areas may be available in the locality. Such an application would receive sympathetic consideration depending upon the availability of suitable land. Should the Member have any specific application in mind and advise my department of such, I will request the Land Commissioner to commence investigations."

TAKE-OVER OF HAUGHTON SUGAR
MILL

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

(1) Adverting to the Answers which I received at the time concerning the manner by which Australian Estates Co. Ltd. acquired the majority of shares in the Haughton sugar-mill by making payments of \$4 a share to the holders of big parcels of shares, while leaving the small shareholders to sell, if they wished, on the open market at \$2.15 per share, what is the plight of the small shareholders who held their shares consequent upon the take-over of Australian Estates Co. Ltd. by C.S.R. Ltd., as the take-over was for Australian Estates shares only?

(2) Is he aware that no less than thirty-six per cent. of shareholders in the Haughton sugar-mill were left "holding the bag" because of the actions of Australian Estates Co. Ltd. and its vicious discrimination between small and big shareholders and, if so, what action is proposed to ensure that these battlers, many of whom were farmers compelled to take shares in payment for their cane, share in the C.S.R. bonanza?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "I can inform the Honourable Member that the shares of the Haughton Sugar Company Limited are currently quoted on the stock exchange at buyers \$5.50, sellers \$5.55, which prices are well above the levels quoted by him. If in fact small shareholders were left 'holding the bag' (to use the Honourable Member's

expression), it has become an attractive bag. It does not seem to me in these circumstances that any action is necessary to protect the interests of small shareholders. Also, the small shareholders' position may well be further improved as a consequence of the transfer from foreign to Australian ownership of the Australian Estates Company Limited which, through a subsidiary, is part owner of the Houghton Sugar Company Limited."

COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

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

With regard to compensation awarded by the Justices of the Supreme Court to persons injured by illegal acts of others—

(1) What amounts were awarded in the last 12 months and to whom?

(2) How much did the unfortunate victims receive after the solicitors and barristers who appeared in the cases took their cut?

(3) Why is it necessary for the unfortunate, seriously injured victims to provide a golden harvest for solicitors and barristers and then be fobbed off with the financial scraps of the judicial award under the State Criminal Code?

Answers:—

(1) "Statistics of this nature are not maintained centrally but in the respective court registries."

(2 and 3) "In answer to a similar Question by the Honourable Member on September 25, last I stated 'I am not in a position to comment on whether any amount ordered to be paid would be substantially reduced by the fees paid.'"

STATEMENT BY DR. MOSS CASS ON YABULU WORKS

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a statement in *The Townsville Daily Bulletin* of March 19 by Dr. Moss Cass, a Commonwealth Minister, that there is an air of secrecy about the Yabulu works of the Greenvale undertaking and, if so, has the company been secret in any way in its dealing with this Government, and in what respect?

(2) As the policy of the Australian Labor Party in the Townsville area has always been one of uninhibited "knock Greenvale" and this must have been known to Dr. Cass, did Dr. Cass consult with him before going to Yabulu or is his statement merely political propaganda?

Answers:—

(1) "I have perused the newspaper article mentioned. For the information of the Honourable Member, I point out that the plant at Yabulu is not on a mining lease but on a title granted by the Land Administration Commission. I would mention, however, that in the company's dealings with the Mines Department in regard to its authority to prospect and preliminary discussions concerning this project there has never been any suggestion or suspicion of secrecy."

(2) "Although Dr. Cass is reported as being in Queensland to check on mining projects such as Fraser Island and Mount Etna, as well as Yabulu, apparently he preferred to examine these projects personally and did not seek discussion with me."

HOUSING FOR ABORIGINES AND ISLANDERS

Mr. Ahern for Mr. Row, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement,—

In view of the intense degree of apprehension and concern being expressed by residents of country towns in North Queensland as a result of the seemingly impetuous activities of the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs in setting up co-operatives with the take-over, by purchase of occupied residences and premises, with the inevitable displacement of local residents, what is the attitude of his department in regard to the acquisition of housing for Aboriginal people?

Answer:—

"In keeping with its policy of progressive development of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement has developed a re-housing programme both on Aboriginal Reserves and in conventional urban areas. During the past six years, more than 1,400 families have been re-housed in conventional three-bedroom homes with minimal breakdown in family or local social relationships. In the conventional urban areas the department's policy provides for both the acquisition of existing homes by purchase and the erection of new dwellings. In the case of home purchase of established premises the department generally explores the suitability of the suburb to ensure that prospective tenants will fit comfortably into the community having due regard to all circumstances including social and economic development but equally the department assesses the local environment to ensure that tensions are not created for the established residents. Due regard is also given employment needs or prospects. Following occupation a Home Advisory and Counselling Service maintains contact with the family and any indications of developing social

problems are followed up immediately to avoid embarrassment either to the incoming family or established resident. Regular visits are made and progressively the contact service is withdrawn as the need reduces or ceases. This has had, in the vast majority of cases, outstanding success because generally local residents have significantly encouraged the incoming family who have responded to their improved conditions. Where new homes are being erected, they are usually in situations of a developing suburb so that in fact the suburb absorbs the home occupied by the Aboriginal or Islander family. Not more than two such homes are usually established proximate to one another or indeed for that matter in the same street. The department is very conscious of and endeavours to respect at all times, the rights and privacy of all citizens and will continue to do so. Until recently only isolated complaints reached the department and in most cases these were speedily overcome. However, I am aware of the Honourable Member's concern resulting from events engendered by Aboriginal Housing Societies sponsored by the Commonwealth Government, and it is a matter of extreme regret such activities are creating areas of tension and concern where hitherto none existed, using funds (usually an unrestricted grant from Commonwealth sources) in a manner which can only aggravate the so-called 'backlash'. The Honourable Member is assured that the State department will continue to carefully observe its policy which has the approval of the Aboriginal and Islander Advisory Councils, and is comfortably achieving a progressively successful assimilation of so many people. I must say, however, that I am unable to control the activities of independent organisations but as I have indicated earlier, I am sadly aware of the embarrassments being occasioned so many fine citizens."

FOUR-LANE HIGHWAY, COOKTOWN— MELBOURNE

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

Following his meeting with the Commonwealth Minister for Transport, was he left with the impression that the previously proposed construction by the Commonwealth Government of a four-lane highway from Cooktown to Melbourne, *via* Albury and Wodonga, may never eventuate and that Mr. Jones was distracting attention from the matter by advocating forms of transportation other than road transport?

Answer:—

"It is difficult to have a clear impression of anything after the meeting with Mr. Jones when subsequently he makes statements with complete disregard to the discussions we had. I do not see a change

though in the Commonwealth emphasis on the construction of national highways although there may be some reappraisal after his visit of the 10 year period mentioned for their construction. The National Highway along the coast terminates at Cairns and four lanes are proposed only on the section Warwick to Gympie. I did not sense any likely de-escalation in road funding in his references to other forms of transportation and I hope I got across to him our need for extra funds on national highways to cover escalation in costs and our urgent need for additional funds in other categories particularly rural and urban arterials."

MITSUBISHI AUTOMATIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM

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

(1) What were the terms of the invitation extended to John Holland (Constructions) Pty. Ltd. to submit a detailed proposal regarding the Mitsubishi Automatic Transport System (M.A.T.)?

(2) Is the proposal to be an "in-depth" one and will it involve specific plans applicable to the City of Brisbane?

(3) Will the preparation of the proposal be paid for by the Queensland Government?

(4) Was any time limit placed on the submission of the proposal?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) "The position has not changed since my reply to the Honourable Member's Question on March 4 this year."

POLLING AT STATE ELECTIONS

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

(1) What was the total number and the percentage of informal votes cast at the General Elections on May 18, 1972 and December 7, 1974?

(2) What percentage of persons eligible to vote actually recorded votes at the two elections?

(3) What action is being taken concerning people who failed to vote at the last election?

Answers:—

(1) "(a) 14,817 or 1.61 per cent. informal votes were cast at the General Election on May 27, 1972; and (b) 16,742 or 1.57 per cent. informal votes were cast at the General Election held on December 7, 1974."

(2) "(a) General Election—May 27, 1972, 92.41 per cent.; and (b) General Election—December 7, 1974, 89.42 per cent."

(3) "Action is being taken now for the forwarding of Notice to Elector who appears to have failed to vote at the General Election held on December 7, 1974. Replies to these notices will be assessed on return to the Principal Electoral Officer and appropriate action taken."

REMOVAL OF DEBRIS FROM
BRISBANE RIVER

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

Does the Department of Harbours and Marine or any other Government department regularly clear floating rubbish from the Brisbane River?

Answer:—

"The Department of Harbours and Marine conducts regular patrols of the Brisbane River with its launch Q.G. *Beatrice* for the specific purpose of locating and removing debris."

AIR-CONDITIONING OF ELECTORATE
OFFICES

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

(1) With reference to an article in *The Australian* of March 14, wherein the Member for Belyando claimed that the Works Department quote for air-conditioning his electorate office was \$1,950 when he could have had the work done privately for \$800, is this claim accurate?

(2) Is it intended to air-condition all Members' electorate offices?

Answers:—

(1) "The Department of Works estimate of cost for the air-conditioning of the electorate office of the Honourable the Member for Belyando is \$1,950, but I am not aware of the extent of work which is involved in the figure of \$800, neither am I aware of the source of the quotation of such work."

(2) "No."

HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES, CENTRAL
WESTERN QUEENSLAND

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

(1) How many Housing Commission houses have been built in the years 1968 to 1974 in Mitchell, Charleville, Cunnamulla, Augathella, Tambo, Blackall, Barcaldine and Longreach?

(2) Is a demand for houses now existing in these towns? If so, how many buildings are scheduled for erection?

Answers:—

(1) "At Mitchell six houses were completed in 1969-70. These western areas suffered severely in the drought and this was reflected in a falling away in the need for new housing. Improved conditions have produced some reversal of this situation."

(2) "The latest returns from these towns show the following applications:—

—	With priority	Without priority
Mitchell ..	2	2
Charleville ..	1	8
Cunnamulla ..	nil	1
Blackall ..	nil	1
Barcaldine ..	1	4
Longreach ..	5	6
Tambo	(2 houses available but no applications).	

In respect of Augathella there were discussions last week by the Commission with the Murweh Shire Council and the position is under review. When framing the programme for 1975-76 every consideration will be given to the towns named by the Honourable Member having regard to the overall requirements of the State."

WOOL-PROCESSING WORKS FOR
COUNTRY CENTRES

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

Has the viability and local economy impact of the recently established wool-processing works in country centres of southern States been fully examined by his Government with a view to similar works being established in the industry-starved areas of Western Queensland?

Answer:—

"The Department of Commercial and Industrial Development has afforded every assistance to companies that have investigated the feasibility of establishing wool processing plants in decentralised areas of Queensland. Offers of land for such a project have been made and advice has been furnished regarding the provision of financial assistance and the other incentives that are available to encourage the establishment of industry in this State. Unfortunately, our efforts in this direction have not been successful to date."

ELIGIBILITY FOR EDUCATION
ALLOWANCE

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

(1) Is it proposed to update the requirements for eligibility to obtain an education allowance?

(2) As the increase in pensions has created some hardship, e.g., an invalid pensioner with a wife and three children receives \$3,156 per year and the maximum allowable income in respect of an education allowance is \$3,098, if there is no proposal to update the requirements, will he give an assurance that he will have the matter investigated?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "The maximum allowable income of \$3,098 for a married man with three children to receive student allowance applies to the eastern district of the Southern Division in Queensland only and represents an increase of \$270 per annum on the 1974 rates. This income is calculated by deducting from the gross income the following expenses:—doctor, chemist, dental, hospital, optical, funeral, union fees and cost of tools of trade. This matter is being kept constantly under review, but there is no immediate proposal to change the requirements for eligibility. However, I will discuss the matter with my officers."

WATER SHORTAGE, THALLON

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

In view of the current drastic water situation in the township of Thallon, will he have officers of his department liaise with the Balonne Shire Council with a view to carrying out urgent discussions on the ways and means of overcoming the present shortage, including the possibility of the diversion of tail waters from the St. George irrigation area?

Answer:—

"I am advised that four inches of rain recently fell in the township of Thallon and the water shortage mentioned by the Honourable Member is now over. If the Balonne Shire Council desired investigations to be made by the Department of Local Government into the water supply scheme serving the township, the necessary arrangements will be made upon receipt of a request in that behalf from the council. I appreciate the Honourable Member's interest for when he asked this Question there was indeed need for concern. However as Honourable Members will now appreciate the situation is now relieved."

HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES AND
LAND, LOGANLEA

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

(1) How many Housing Commission houses are being constructed at Loganlea in the vicinity of Meredith Street?

(2) What area of land is owned in this locality by the Housing Commission?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "The Commission has 11 house sites in the vicinity of Neridah Street, Loganlea. Contracts have been let for the construction of six houses."

HOUSING PROBLEMS, MORANBAH AND
BLACKWATER

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

(1) In view of the important part that private persons play in town development, what can be done to overcome the acute housing problem in the new mining towns of Moranbah and Blackwater?

(2) Will it be possible to programme more Housing Commission houses?

Answers:—

(1) "The Housing Commission has absorbed all land currently available to it in these towns. Development of land at Moranbah is arranged by Utah Development Company and at Blackwater by the Land Administration Commission. The Housing Commission has requested further sites and subject to their availability, the Commission has programmed to let contracts for general purposes for seven houses at Moranbah and 10 houses at Blackwater. This is in addition to three houses at Moranbah in a current contract."

(2) "I recognise the needs of these towns for housing for persons other than direct employees of the coal companies and provision will be made in future programmes subject to the availability of land and finance."

SYNTHETIC MEAT

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

(1) What is the position regarding the sale of synthetic meat in Australia?

(2) Do sausages have a high content of synthetic meat?

(3) Is the quantity of synthetic meat damaging to the cattle producers at this time and could it be damaging in the future?

Answers:—

(1) "Only very small quantities of meat substitutes, usually referred to as textured vegetable protein (T.V.P.), have been imported into Australia during the last few years, mainly from the U.S.A. and U.K."

(2) "It is not true that sausages have a high content of synthetic meat. There is a small use of vegetable meat additives, which are essential for good formulation, flavour and binding of sausages."

(3) "Simulated meats at the present time are not a threat to the beef industry. This threat has subsided because of the drop in meat prices which has resulted in the use of T.V.P. being uneconomical. However, should meat prices again rise to high levels then there could be a greater threat. This position is being continually reviewed by the Animal Production Committee of the Australian Agricultural Council."

ALPHA HOSPITAL

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

In view of the age of the Alpha Hospital and as Alpha will one day be the centre for the Galilee Basin bituminous-coal project, will he investigate the possibility of allocating money for a new hospital?

Answer:—

"Consideration has been given by the department and the Barcaldine Hospitals Board to the hospital facilities required to serve Alpha and districts. Information has been obtained from the Department of Mines that the coal resources of the Galilee Basin are subject of feasibility studies by two companies. No indication can be given as to likely date of production since this is dependent on the outcome of the feasibility studies and the degree of self sufficiency of Australian crude oil production in the next decade. It would therefore appear desirable for the board to await finality as to development of the Galilee Basin before giving further consideration to the re-development of Alpha Hospital. The board has been given approval to having holding repairs effected and at the present time, quotations received for the work involved are being examined."

DISTRICT AND MAGISTRATES COURTS, BRISBANE

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

How many District and Magistrates Courts are provided for in the new Central Courts Building at North Quay and how many inner-city District and Magistrates Courts are still located in other buildings?

Answer:—

"There are nine court rooms for District Courts and 12 for Magistrates Courts, including the Coroners Court, in the Brisbane Central Courts Building. The Coroners Court is not expected to be ready for occupation until April. In the meantime inquests continue to be held at 370 George Street, Brisbane. Four court rooms are provided in Hothlyn House, Herschel Street and two in Stanley Street, South Brisbane for Magistrates Courts. No other court rooms are used for District Courts purposes."

SURVIVAL HANDBOOK DISTRIBUTED AT MT. GRAVATT TEACHERS' COLLEGE

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a booklet entitled "Q. 2—Survival Handbook—Edition 75", which has been distributed to new students at the Mount Gravatt Teachers' College by the Queensland State Teachers' Union?

(2) Is this organisation a duly registered industrial union with the State Industrial Commission?

Answers:—

(1) "I am aware of the booklet and have examined a copy. However, it was not distributed by the Queensland State Teachers' Union, but by the Queensland Student Teachers' Union."

(2) "The Queensland Student Teachers' Union is not a registered industrial union. The term 'union' is one used traditionally by students' groups."

MINISTERIAL DUTIES OF HON. W. D. LICKISS

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

(1) As the Hon. W. D. Lickiss recently assumed the responsibilities of Minister assisting the Honourable the Premier, will he explain the specific duties which will be allocated to him in the Premier's Department?

(2) Will the Honourable Minister, as chief ministerial assistant to the Premier, perform the normal duties and functions of the Premier during the Premier's absence from the State and from his department? If not, what is the reason for this specific appointment?

(3) Is it anticipated that during the Premier's absence the Hon. W. D. Lickiss will assume the task usually allocated to the Honourable the Treasurer and, if so, has the Treasurer been consulted and has he agreed to the arrangements?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "I know the Honourable Member has not only a considerable amount of Parliamentary experience but that he is also widely regarded as a man of some intelligence. It is therefore with some diffidence and reluctance that I draw his attention to the import and contents of my Ministerial Statement to the House of March 11, 1975, and of the copy of the *Government Gazette Extraordinary* of March 10, 1975, which I tabled therewith."

EFFECT OF MEDIBANK ON REPATRIATION PATIENTS

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

(1) Will he indicate the position of Queensland repatriation patients in the event of Queensland joining the Medibank Scheme?

(2) Would acceptance of Medibank mean that the State would take over the operation of repatriation hospitals and that incapacitated ex-servicemen and women would have to wait in queues with the general public for treatment of their war injuries and be taxed for this imposition?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "I am advised that the Medibank Scheme does not apply to hospitals conducted by the Commonwealth Repatriation Department."

REGIONAL HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

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

(1) As the Co-ordinator-General's report to Parliament for the year ended June 30, 1974, indicates that a State-wide projection of housing requirements has been undertaken, has it been completed and, if so, what needs did it establish, what are the priorities for the State's 10 regions and what action has been taken to implement the findings of the study?

(2) If the projection has not been completed, when will it be finished and will it be made available to all Members of this House and the State's regional councils?

Answers:—

(1) "The State-wide projection of housing requirements was completed in July 1974. This projection of housing requirements was based on a forecast of population prepared by the Co-ordinator-General's Department in 1973, which projected that the State's population could be in the range of 3,045,000 to 3,394,000 in the year 2000. Housing requirements for the whole State in the year 2000 have been projected in the range 1,083,000 to

1,299,600 dwellings. For comparison in 1971, the Bureau of Census and Statistics estimated that there were 563,677 dwelling units in Queensland. Separate projections of housing requirements have not been made for regions within the State. The report has been distributed to other departments, particularly the Queensland Housing Commission, and has been made available to other interested bodies and persons on request."

(2) "The Co-ordinator-General will arrange to make a copy of the report available to the Parliamentary Library. Copies are available to members of the Regional Co-ordination Councils through their chairmen."

HOUSING COMMISSION ACTIVITIES, MACKAY

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

(1) How many applications for Queensland Housing Commission houses, in each priority, are presently held by the Clerk of the Court at Mackay?

(2) How many applicants are pensioners?

(3) How many houses are currently under construction at Mackay and what additional land for future construction does the commission own?

(4) What action has been taken to purchase additional land for housing at Mackay, along the lines suggested to him in considerable correspondence from me?

Answers:—

(1) "For houses—100 points, 6; 80 points, 4; 60 points, 6; 40 points, 33; nil priority, 62."

(2) "For aged persons units—couples, 3; singles, 8."

(3) "25 houses are under construction; 69 houses and 6 aged persons units have been completed in the past 2½ years. No vacant land is held. In addition, an allocation of \$213,000 has been made to the Mackay Co-operative Housing Society for 1974-75."

(4) "The Commission is currently negotiating with the Land Administration Commission for some sites at Slade Point. This is subject to confirmation by the Pioneer Shire Council that it will provide adequate arrangements for disposal of sewage until such time as the council's sewerage scheme is in operation. As the Honourable Member is aware, the council previously desired that development at Slade Point be deferred pending the provision of sewerage."

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COURT
HEARINGS

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

(1) How many cases have been heard by the Local Government Court this year and how many cases are currently listed for hearing?

(2) At what centres, apart from Brisbane, are sittings of the court held?

Answers:—

(1) "As this information will have to be obtained from the registry at each of the towns mentioned in (2) it will be supplied to the Honourable Member as soon as it is available."

(2) "Bowen, Bundaberg, Cairns, Charleville, Charters Towers, Clermont, Cloncurry, Cunnamulla, Gladstone, Goondiwindi, Gympie, Hughenden, Innisfail, Ipswich, Kingaroy, Longreach, Mackay, Maryborough, Mount Isa, Rockhampton, Roma, Stanthorpe, Toowoomba, Townsville and Warwick."

EXTENSION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
BUREAU ACTIVITIES

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

(1) In view of the growing number of consumer complaints being made to the Consumer Affairs Bureau, especially from areas outside Brisbane, will he give urgent consideration to the appointment of full-time consumer-affairs officers in the major provincial cities?

(2) Will he also give serious consideration to attaching a legal-advice section to the bureau?

(3) How many officers associated with the bureau work full-time on consumer-affairs matters and are not involved in other departmental functions associated with industrial affairs?

Answers:—

(1) "The staff of the Bureau is under constant review and two additional full-time officers have recently been appointed to the Bureau's staff in Brisbane. There is no evidence that the number of complaints received from country centres has increased significantly, nor is there evidence that the Industrial Inspectors and Inspectors of Weights and Measures who are also Inspectors under the Consumer Affairs Act are unable to perform their duties adequately but should this at any time become evident a review of the situation will be made."

(2) "The offering of legal advice to consumers is not one of the functions of the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs and in this regard I would refer the Honourable Member to Section 19 of the *Consumer Affairs Act 1970-1974*. The Legal Advice Section of the Public Curator is the agency set up by the Queensland Government to give free legal advice and it is not proposed to duplicate this service."

(3) "Twenty-three."

PRE-SCHOOLS IN QUEENSLAND

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

For 1973-74 and 1974-75, (a) what finance has the Commonwealth Government provided for the development of pre-schools in Queensland and (b) what costs have been incurred by the State Government in its provision of pre-schools?

Answer:—

"The Commonwealth entered the Pre-school field in 1973-74 with an interim program which applied to the period, 1st January, 1974 to 30th June, 1974. During the financial year 1973-74 capital expenditure on State Pre-schools totalled \$3,664,000 which included Commonwealth funds of \$571,000. For 1974-75 provision has been made in the budget for expenditures of \$6,545,000 including Commonwealth funds of \$2,045,000. Submissions have been made to the Commonwealth seeking an increase in the program as originally approved but to date approval of this request has not been received. Recurrent expenditures on State Pre-schools in 1973-74 were \$1,026,000 which included Commonwealth funds of \$137,300. For 1974-75 provision has been made for expenditure of \$2,320,000 of which the Commonwealth is expected to contribute some \$500,000 depending on its acceptance of submissions made to it."

SUBSIDY FOR SCHOOL SWIMMING
POOLS

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

(1) How long has the present subsidy of \$30,000 been operative for the construction of school swimming pools?

(2) Has any thought been given by his department to increasing this subsidy, in consideration of the effect inflation and rising prices have had upon it?

Answers:—

(1) "Since December 1973. The stated amount of \$30,000 is the maximum applicable for a State primary school but the figure for a State high school is \$36,000."

(2) "The subsidy limit is regularly reviewed by the Department of Works, taking into account actual costs of construction and funds available."

PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE, CARINA

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

(1) When is the Carina pre-school centre due for completion?

(2) When will the centre be able to receive children?

Answers:—

(1) "The Carina State Pre-School Centre is now nearing completion."

(2) "It is anticipated that the centre will be in operation from the start of second term this year."

POLICE INTERROGATION OF CITIZENS

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

(1) Further to his Answer to my Question on March 12, what is the manner of instruction and methods of compilation of field interrogation reports by his department?

(2) Are the reports forwarded from all centres and, if so, does a section in Brisbane scrutinise, computerise and file them, along with other known data on criminals and their associates?

(3) Is he aware that there is a build-up of resentment by the ordinary law-abiding citizen enmeshed, without cause, in the necessity to meet requirements of these quota reports and district and regional objectives and, if so, will he review the instructions?

Answers:—

(1) "Field Interrogation Report cards are to be completed by a police officer when he or she has occasion to question a person under circumstances where there is any indication whatsoever that the individual's name, description, companions or the time and location of the person questioned can be of interest to police. There is no rigid and firmly fixed rule to govern when a person ought to be the subject of a card. The police officer's decision to question a person must be based on the circumstances of each case. Generally those circumstances will involve the elements of time, locations, appearances and activity of a person. When one or more of these elements appears to be out of the ordinary, it may indicate to an active police officer that the person should be questioned and a card furnished."

(2) "All such cards are forwarded to the Information Bureau at Police Headquarters where they are checked against records and then filed separately from criminal records. Information Bureau records are not computerised."

(3) "No quotas are set by the Police Department as to the number of Field Interrogation Report cards which must be submitted, nor for that matter, are any quotas set as to the number of traffic offences which must be reported, or arrests which must be made. It is, however, quite reasonable to assume that an active police officer will come into contact with persons who at a particular time or location, or because of appearance or activity are such as warrant police inquiry in the public interest. It is in the interests of the community at large that police make use of all lawful measures available to them to prevent crime and detect offenders. Any failure of a police officer to make use of all lawful measures must result in complaints of laxity and neglect of duty of members of the Police Force by the public at large, and can only benefit the criminal element supported by the A.L.P."

Mr. JONES: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is imputing improper motives. I ask that his comment be withdrawn. It is provocative as well as offensive to me and to my party. I do not think it should have been made in this context. The remark is shocking—nearly as shocking as the field interrogation reports themselves.

Mr. HODGES: Mr. Speaker, I did not mention the honourable member's name.

Answers (contd.):—

"The use of Field Interrogation Report cards is not and never has been directed at 'enmeshing' ordinary law abiding citizens. These cards have proved to be a most useful tool in efforts directed by the Police Department towards providing more effective protection to the ordinary law abiding citizen, his family and his property."

ROAD TRANSPORT PERMIT FEES

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

(1) In view of the announced proposals for reduction and/or abolition of road transport permit fees, does he anticipate any fall-off in rail traffic and loadings upon implementation of the measures?

(2) If so, has any appropriate action been taken to estimate the effect which such moves will have upon railway staff and operations?

(3) If not, does he consider that the jobs of any railway employees will be in jeopardy or that the closure of any branch line is imminent?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "I refer the Honourable Member to the Answer given by the Honourable the Premier yesterday to the Question on this subject by the Honourable Member for Mackay."

COMPULSORY IMPRISONMENT OF
PERSONS DRIVING WHILE
DISQUALIFIED

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

(1) Has he received submissions indicating public concern at apparent injustices occurring under the new amendments to the Traffic Act, wherein a prison term of six months is mandatory for a person found driving a vehicle while disqualified?

(2) Has it been sought to allow equity and consideration with other aspects of the law and has his attention been drawn to anomalies arising, consistent with withdrawal of the Magistrate's discretionary power, under these circumstances?

(3) If so, is he considering any review and, if not, following implementation and practice, has he considered any revision or amendment?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "This is a matter of Government policy. If required an announcement would be made at the appropriate time."

IMPRISONMENT OF MAINTENANCE
DEFAULTERS

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

(1) Why must a woman sign a form directing the Magistrates Court to send her ex-husband to gaol for failure to honour maintenance payments ordered by the court?

(2) Why do courts not automatically gaol the offenders when they fail to do as directed by the court?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) "This practice is followed as a safeguard for a number of reasons including—(a) Those cases where the defendant and the woman had been reconciled or had resumed cohabitation and a Warrant of Commitment had been issued without the woman's knowledge; (b) Those cases where proceedings are requested to be commenced by the woman following pressure by the Department of Social Security or the Department of Children's Services. The woman is generally more interested in protecting her pension or allowance. She is generally not interested in, and sometimes directly opposed to, the defendant being committed to prison; (c) Even though the defendant may not be complying strictly with the Court order, any payments he may be making, though less than required, will cease."

RAILWAY CONTRACTS WITH PRIVATE
CARRIERS

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

(1) In what areas of Queensland does his department have contracts with private carriers for the delivery of parcels and goods received at parcel offices and goods sheds?

(2) What are the terms and conditions of the contracts and are delivery fees set at any level?

(3) Do the consignees of any such goods or parcels have the right to redirect the goods to the Railway Department?

(4) Will he make a public statement regarding the procedures in order to enlighten the people of Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) "Arrangements have been entered into for delivery of parcels at Brisbane, Toowoomba, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns, and of goods at Brisbane."

(2) "The agreements basically provide for a delivery service for items required by the department to be delivered. There is an agreed level of charges at each place."

(3) "Unless at the time of consignment the waybill and the parcel have been endorsed 'To be called for', the consignee is required to accept the consignment when delivered and to pay the delivery charges and any railway freight not prepaid."

(4) "Railway Department By-laws provide that, at places where delivery services exist, parcels arriving at such places will, unless the sender or consignee otherwise directs, be delivered to the consignee's address. It is further provided that the charge for delivery, in addition to any railway freight not prepaid, must be paid on delivery. Where delivery is not desired, it is a requirement that the waybill and the parcel be endorsed 'to be called for'. Similar provisions exist for goods traffic."

ACCOMMODATION FOR BLOCK-RELEASE
APPRENTICES, ROCKHAMPTON

Mr. K. J. Hooper for **Mr. Yewdale**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Industrial Development,—

In view of my several inquiries, what is the present position regarding accommodation in Rockhampton for apprentices during their block-release training?

Answer:—

"The provision of residential accommodation is one for my colleague, the Honourable the Minister for Education and

Cultural Activities. However, I am informed and as the Honourable Member will appreciate, even if finance were immediately available it would be some considerable time before residential accommodation could be erected at Rockhampton. In an endeavour to overcome any immediate accommodation problems, I arranged for an appropriate advertisement to be placed in the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin* seeking suitable accommodation for apprentices undertaking Block Release Training. Several replies were received and to date no problems concerning accommodation in Rockhampton for these apprentices have been brought to the notice of my officers. There appears to be no insurmountable problem in regard to this matter but I have instructed my officers to watch the position closely. They are available to give all possible assistance. I might add that with a view to assisting in this accommodation problem at Rockhampton 13 apprentices are being accommodated in the State Migration Hostel at Rockhampton."

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRISONERS

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

- (1) What education-improvement opportunities are available to prisoners?
- (2) Are such opportunities available in all prisons and, if not, where are such courses conducted?
- (3) How many and what percentage of prisoners undertook courses during 1974?

Answers:—

(1) "Education improvement opportunities are available for prisoners in relation to general educational subjects to primary and secondary standard, as well as University or Certificate studies for suitably qualified inmates. In addition, apprentices admitted to prison have their indentures transferred wherever possible to enable them to continue their apprenticeship training. In other cases, the opportunity has been given to prisoners to commence apprenticeships. A number of apprentices have completed their courses while in prison."

(2) "Opportunity for study by correspondence is available in all prisons. Additionally, the services of primary, secondary and remedial teachers who conduct evening classes are available at H.M. Prison, Brisbane. At H.M. Prison, Wacol, classes are conducted in metalwork and woodwork. The teachers in both prisons are selected officers of the Education Department. I might mention for the information of the Honourable Member, that the matter of improved apprenticeship opportunities is presently under review."

(3) "Exact figures are not readily available in relation to all prisons in Queensland. However, from a perusal of superintendents' reports for the year 1973-74, it has been indicated that 137 prisoners were engaged in study ranging from primary to tertiary level and including technical and trade courses but excluding remedial teaching. This figure would represent a percentage of 9.15 per cent. when applied against the total daily average of prisoners confined during 1973-74."

At 12 noon,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 17, the House proceeded with Government business.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—SEVENTH ALLOTTED DAY

Debate resumed from 18 March (see p. 396) on Mrs. Kippin's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (12.1 p.m.): I once again join with other honourable members in this debate on behalf of the electors of Bulimba to pledge our loyalty to Her Majesty and the Throne.

I thank the electors of Bulimba who supported me in the last election campaign, and trust that as time goes by I shall prove that I have been able to present their case in this Parliament on matters associated with the operation of our legislation or on matters of a personal nature.

I regret some of the circumstances that arose in the recent election campaign. It was an extraordinary one in that, in the main, the issues did not concern the operations of the State Government. Irrespective of what Labor Party spokesmen said, the news media thought fit to make Federal issues the dominating issues. Perhaps we would not have minded that so much if the truth, and nothing but the truth, had been spoken by our opponents. Unfortunately, every time a Federal issue was raised, statements were made that were not in accordance with fact. As some time has passed since the many statements by Government spokesmen, it might be more apparent now that many of their statements were far from the truth. However, the people have given their verdict and naturally we accept it, but with great confidence, that if they do not already understand that they were hoodwinked, they very shortly will. The next election will certainly show a complete change on the part of the electors.

I was interested to hear the Governor's Opening Speech. When we associate ourselves with loyalty to the Crown, naturally we certainly associate ourselves with the Crown's representative. On many occasions I have spoken to His Excellency. I believe that he and his wife are very worthy persons to hold such high positions. However, I

regret that on occasions, in my opinion, he has seen fit to voice words that can be construed—and I construe them so in his latest speech—as critical of another Parliament in this land. I am particularly concerned, knowing as I do that the Parliament concerned—that is, the Australian Parliament—is of a different political colour from the Parliament in Queensland, which he was then opening. It is indeed unfortunate because one of the bulwarks that have retained the British monarchy has been the fact that at all times the monarchy has been able to keep itself above party politics, or politics of any kind. Certainly members of the Royal Family have expressed views on matters from time to time, but to my knowledge they have never referred to a parliamentary decision, or parliamentary policy. I regret that this happened here.

I should now like to refer to a few of the Governor's statements which, I believe, substantiate my point. I am aware that, in the main, the Governor's Opening Speech, like those of any other person in his position, is prepared for him by the Government of the day. I refer to that part of his speech in which he said—

“Although the immediate future looks far from bright, I am confident that, with hard work on everybody's part, co-operation between private industry and government and consideration and assistance from the Commonwealth Government, the future of Queensland, and of all those who live here, holds great promise of prosperity and security.”

The weakness in that is that at no stage has the Governor called on the Queensland Government to co-operate with the Federal Government, but he asked the Federal Government to give consideration and assistance to the Queensland Government. In the last two years particularly, since Labor took office in the Federal sphere, it has given this State Government tremendous assistance. But for the Australian Government's financial assistance, the last Budget of the State Government would have been shown to be the great farce that it really was. It was a State Budget that was designed for an election. It was not a Budget designed to manage the affairs of our State. Naturally the Government had to go to the Federal Government for financial assistance, which of course it obtained.

It is essential that the State Government co-operate with the Federal Government. Later in my speech I will show how there has been a deliberate attempt in this State to ridicule every activity of the Federal Government. During the election campaign it was quite pronounced that the Treasurer said that he believed in co-operation with the Federal Government, but he was then speaking as a Liberal wanting to become Premier. By innuendo, he criticised the Premier for opposing everything put forward by the Federal Government.

Later on in his Speech the Governor said, referring to the Queensland Government—

“It will continue to oppose, however, the Federal Government's unnecessary intrusion into everyday State consumer protection affairs.”

That is just a wide statement, because there is no evidence to show that the Federal Government has unnecessarily intruded into the State Government's authority on price control.

Mr. Campbell: Why didn't you quote the offer for co-operation first?

Mr. HOUSTON: What co-operation?

Mr. Campbell: The Governor's Speech referred to co-operation with the Federal Government.

Mr. HOUSTON: If the Minister had been listening, instead of falling asleep, he would have heard what I said.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: The point is that there has been no “unnecessary intrusion”. In fact, the State Government campaigned—and campaigned vigorously—against the Federal Government's being given powers to control prices and wages.

Mr. Moore: Rightly so, too.

Mr. HOUSTON: Maybe so, but it was a political decision. Honourable members opposite campaigned against it because of the politics of their parties.

Mr. Lamont: That is not correct. We campaigned against permanent control constitutionally given.

Mr. HOUSTON: The last interjector is only a boy in this Parliament. I don't want to waste my time talking to boys. When he has been here a bit longer and knows what is going on round him and gets to the front bench, I will be prepared to listen to him.

The issue of prices was fought constitutionally. Not only did the State Government campaign against constitutional control of prices and wages by the Federal Government but it also refused to voluntarily hand such control to the Federal Government for a short period. That is the difference between the real facts and the statement by the honourable member for South Brisbane.

Prior to the referendum, the Prime Minister, at the Constitutional Convention, invited all State Premiers to dine with him for the purpose of discussing whether the States were prepared to hand over price and wage control on a temporary basis. Every Premier in Australia except ours attended that dinner and gave an undertaking at the meeting that—

Mr. Moore: It was a shirt-tail agreement.

Mr. HOUSTON: You weren't there. You weren't even around.

Mr. Moore: I wasn't invited.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course you weren't. Only intelligent people were invited.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: The point I wanted to make, Mr. Speaker, is that when Governments are in future preparing speeches for a Governor to use at the opening of Parliament they should avoid matters that are purely party political.

Today I shall speak on a couple of matters that I hope are of general interest, as well as being of concern to this House. Firstly, I refer to some statements quite often made in this Chamber about receiving more money from the Commonwealth Government. It is suggested of course that, because Queenslanders are paying taxation, massive amounts should be returned to us. It is true that, in common with citizens of every other State of the Commonwealth, Queenslanders pay taxation. However, if we demanded of the Federal Government that we receive back a set proportion of taxation that Queenslanders pay, we would be on the losing end. It is completely wrong to suggest—it would be an impossibility—that every cent Queenslanders pay in taxation to the Commonwealth should be returned for use by the State. Surely we in Queensland have some responsibility to help pay for the defence forces and other Commonwealth activities.

New members enter Parliament with the idea that they know all about the operation of both State and Federal Parliaments. May I give them some advice that I think is worth taking? If they do not know all about a subject, they should sit and listen, refer to it later and check it, and then mention it in their own speeches.

Let me now deal with Commonwealth expenditure in this State. If it had not been for Federal Government assistance with our budgetary problems, Queensland finances would be in a chaotic state. There is no doubt that the last State Budget presented by the Treasurer was based on the knowledge that an election was to be held within a month or two. It was designed to include no increases in taxation and so allow the coalition to criticise the Federal Government as much as humanly possible, regardless of whether the criticism had substance or not. Before the Budget was passed by this Parliament, both the Premier and the Treasurer were calling for Federal Government assistance.

The Leader of the Opposition took quite a deal of time to draw the attention of the House to the gerrymander of the electoral boundaries and the effect it has had on the election of members to this Parliament. I thoroughly endorse his statements.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: Honourable members might think that I am delivering a sermon or lecture. They can take it as they like, but I think they should consider these matters. What happened to the Australian Labor Party under the last redistribution could happen to the Liberal Party in a future redistribution. If the Young Liberals in this House want to become the Government, their first step is to give themselves a chance under the electoral system.

When the second last Electoral Districts Bill was before this Parliament, six or seven Liberal members crossed the floor and voted against it because they considered it was so bad. However, they agreed to a subsequent Electoral Districts Bill. After the commissioners made the redistribution, some 30 changes were made and every one reacted against either the Liberal Party or the Labor Party. However, we had to accept it because nothing could be done about it.

One great difference between Commonwealth and State redistributions is that the Commonwealth redistribution determined by the commissioners goes back to the Commonwealth Parliament for ratification, and that Parliament can amend it, alter it or send it back to the commissioners. In Queensland, a blank cheque is given to the commissioners to make a redistribution and it does not come back to this Parliament.

Mr. Jones: It comes back to the Premier.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Bill provides that it goes to the Premier.

There is a great weakness in this, and anybody can get caught up in it. It did not happen in my electorate, but it did happen in some electorates close to mine. A candidate studies the redistribution and considers that it is fair enough, so he does not lodge an objection. However, somebody else does and a change is made without reference to the other persons concerned. They are not given an opportunity to argue the case for the other side. So that under the present Electoral Districts Bill it pays a candidate to regard the redistribution as bad so that he can lodge an objection.

Then a change might be made to suit him and the other people interested who thought it was good in the first place would be adversely affected.

For a Government to be democratic, members of Parliaments must be chosen directly by the people who are to be governed, and as most laws, regulations and Government decisions affect all citizens, not just a minority, it is essential that the voting system be such that the Government of the day represents the views of the majority of the people.

Mr. Moore: Are you talking proportional representation now?

Mr. HOUSTON: If the honourable member is quiet, I will tell him all about it. He is certainly one of the people who need to be told.

Members of Parliament must represent the people. I hope that is clear enough. It would be ideal if every person were able to cast a vote and express an opinion in a referendum on all matters that either do or could affect him. However, this is not practicable, so a Parliament is elected consisting of representatives of the people. Surely the first standard must be the basis of equality. Therefore electoral Acts that govern the election of Parliaments should contain no inequities or injustices. A Parliament should collectively represent the views and hopes of all the people in the community that it serves. The voting strength on all issues should also surely cover the collective views of the people who are represented. There is no justification for other than human beings being represented in Parliament. Trees, farms, and open spaces are surely part of the environment, but they are not part of the community that has to be represented.

If it is true that laws concerning primary industries and those living in country areas affect those people only, it is equally true that industrial laws and laws concerning cities and towns affect only city and town dwellers. Of course, all laws, either directly or indirectly, affect all the people. If financial assistance is given to one sector, there is less for others. There is no doubt that to the extent that a citizen's right to vote is debased, he or she is that much less a citizen.

In the election of a Parliament, surely the most democratic method would be to establish the total population, determine the number of persons who could reasonably be represented

by one representative, then divide that number into the total number of people. The resulting figure would be the approximate number of members of the Parliament. However, by custom it is now the practice to decide initially the number of members required, and then to divide that number into the number of people who are qualified to vote in the State or nation. That number is different from the total number of persons who are to be represented, but it is an acceptable and practical way of dividing a total area into the required number of electorates.

From time to time States undertake electoral redistributions, in some instances with increases in the number of members. In any redistribution, certain fundamental principles should not be ignored. Equal suffrage must be paramount. However, a redistribution should be designed for more than one term of Parliament. In determining the number in any specific electorate consideration must be given to the movement of population based on reasonable assumptions of increasing development. Provision must also be made for possible decreases in population as a result of changing circumstances.

Where distances and sparseness of population make it difficult for a member to service his electorate, some loading could be acceptable, but surely it should be no more than 10 per cent from the average. In the drawing of boundaries, communications within the electorate should be of paramount importance, as should the community of interest among those living in the electorate.

I have set out these basic requirements because I want to refer to the situation in Queensland which contravenes most of the principles which I believe must be followed before it can truly be said that Queensland is governed by a democratically elected Parliament. I cannot accept as justification for a redistribution, which, for want of a better term, is described as a gerrymander, the statement that it has happened before.

Mr. Moore: Is this some-one else's material you are reading?

Mr. HOUSTON: Certainly not. The honourable member knows me better than to suggest that.

But let us now look at some information that is taken from the reports of others. I am about to refer to the report that we all have containing details of polling at the last State election. Those who have studied this document will know that it gives the

areas and enrolments of all electorates. As a Minister said today, there was a vote of just under 90 per cent, and I think that the figures in this document could be classified as fairly accurate. Let us see the situation as it was just prior to 7 December. No doubt it has changed for the worse in some areas since then. The smallest electorate numerically was Gregory, with 7,087 electors, whilst the largest was Pine Rivers, with 24,539 electors. Other electorates with more than three times the number of electors in Gregory were Redlands, with 23,173; Albert, with 21,354; and Salisbury, with 21,464.

Surely no fair-minded person would believe that one electorate should have three times as many electors as another; surely no-one would believe that the vote of one member of this Assembly should have three times the power of another. It should not be forgotten that, where there are small electorates, three small electorates with a total of about 24,000 electors have three representatives in this Assembly, whereas a large electorate with the same number of electors has only one representative. Who governs in Parliament is determined, of course, by the number of electorates that a particular party represents.

Mr. Lindsay: Do you want the boundaries changed in Everton?

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes. I want the boundaries of all the electorates in Queensland changed. If the honourable member listens to what I have to say, he will hear plenty of evidence to support my argument.

Mr. Gygar: You want a gerrymander.

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not want a gerrymander. I want a redistribution under an Act that gives the power of redistribution to a commission headed by a Supreme Court judge; I then want that commission's recommendations referred to Parliament so that all members of this Assembly—not only members of the Liberal Party and the National Party—can control the redistribution.

Mr. Moore: But for the so-called gerrymander last time you would not be here.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is rubbish. As a matter of fact, the electorate that I represented formerly was known as Bulimba. If the honourable member wants to refer to history, I should point out to him that the people living in the former electorate of Bulimba were predominantly waterside-workers, abattoir employees and others

engaged in similar occupations. It was considered to be rather a safe Labor electorate, and the voting figures confirmed that.

The honourable member for Windsor should also be aware that in the new electorate all that was retained of the former electorate was the small district of Bulimba and the name. The new electorate of Bulimba is in fact almost entirely the old Hawthorne electorate. If the honourable member for Mansfield were here, he would tell the honourable member for Windsor that what I say is correct, because he was formerly the member for Hawthorne.

Mr. Moore: I was here, too; I know it.

Mr. HOUSTON: Mr. Kaus was formerly the member for Hawthorne. There is no doubt that he decided to contest Mansfield instead of the new electorate of Bulimba because he knew the standing that I had in that part of the State. The Hawthorne electorate lost its name but retained its substance in the new electorate of Bulimba, and that was why Bill Kaus stood for Mansfield.

Mr. Moore: Just as well for you. You would have done if he hadn't.

Mr. HOUSTON: I would not have been done.

The number of electors in each of the largest six electorates is more than twice the number of electors in each of the smallest six electorates. The largest six electorates are Pine Rivers, Redlands, Albert, Salisbury, Surfers Paradise, and South Coast, and all of them have more than 20,800 electors. The smallest six electorates are Gregory, Balonne, Cook, Flinders, Roma, and Warrego, and Warrego, which is the largest, still had only 9,064 electors on the roll at the last election.

It is claimed by those who do not want a redistribution that the largest electorates should have the smallest number of electors. I suppose there is a certain amount of logic in that, if one wishes to argue that way.

Mr. Katter: Justice, not logic.

Mr. HOUSTON: Sometimes logic and justice become rather confused. However, I take the honourable member's point. He is one of those who believe in large electorates having a small number of electors.

Mr. Katter: I agree.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course the honourable member agrees. But if he agrees with that, how does he justify taking his seat in the Chamber and looking at the electorate of

Mt. Isa, which is the fourth largest in the State and even larger than Flinders. It has an area of 51,820 square miles and 16,001 electors.

Mr. Moore: But nearly all are within about one square mile.

Mr. HOUSTON: They are not. Comments such as that by some members of the Liberal Party annoy me. They are one of the reasons why the Liberal Party cannot sell itself in country areas.

Mr. Lamont: I will sell it.

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member could not sell himself anywhere. The only time he sold out was to the Chinese in Hong Kong, and he had to get out before they took his head off. He should not try to tell me about justice or anything else.

The point is that people in country areas never see a Liberal. If members of the Liberal Party travelled the State as members of the Labor Party do, they would realise that hundreds of people in the Mt. Isa electorate live outside the city of Mt. Isa. The National Party member for Flinders thinks that it is all right for the member for Mt. Isa to travel over 51,000 square miles.

Mr. Katter interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member said it was all right. He said he believed in the principle, yet he supports the present distribution.

Mr. Katter: No way in the world.

Mr. HOUSTON: I hope the honourable member will cross the floor when the time comes. That will be at least one Government member who will vote with the Australian Labor Party.

I said that there were 16,001 electors in Mt. Isa, which has twice as many electors as Gregory and Balonne. As we know, Balonne is 20,000 square miles smaller. The electorate of Roma is much less than half the size of Mt. Isa, and it has 8,981 electors or 56 per cent of the Mt. Isa enrolment of 16,001.

Mr. Katter interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: For God's sake go back and attend to your camels, and let me—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the honourable member's attention to his unparliamentary language, and ask that he withdraw his remarks.

Mr. HOUSTON: Me?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. HOUSTON: What did I say that was unparliamentary?

Mr. SPEAKER: I understood the honourable member to say, "For Christ's sake—"

Mr. HOUSTON: I did not say that. I said, "Go back and attend to your camels." Someone said, "He's not a camel driver." I do not know whether he is a camel driver or not, but the point is that he has camels in his electorate.

Take the electorates of Carnarvon and Somerset. In area Carnarvon is 3,930 square miles and Somerset 3,910 square miles. Carnarvon has 9,979 electors, and Somerset has 40 per cent more with 13,979 electors. Surely that is not real representation.

Mr. Moore: A good member.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am not decrying members at all. I am not talking about parties or anything else. All I am saying is, "Let us have a fair dinkum distribution so that every member in this House will know that he is speaking on behalf of a similar number of people."

Further examples are Murrumba covering 660 square miles with 19,867 electors and Brisbane covering 5.3 square miles has 11,607 electors—a difference of more than 70 per cent. There is no sound basis. These were the figures set up by the electoral commission. One of the principles the Act laid down was that the electoral commissioners would take into account change of population.

Mr. Moore: Did you put in a submission?

Mr. HOUSTON: The party put a submission in.

Mr. Moore: I was told you didn't.

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member is often told wrong things.

As a further comparison let us take the three country electorates of between 2,000 and 3,000 square miles—Port Curtis, Isis and Fassifern. They all have over 13,000 electors. In the Brisbane area alone there are 31 electorates with under 17,000 electors on the roll. Even within the zones there is a large percentage difference. In the South-eastern Zone Pine Rivers has 24,539 electors and Redlands has 23,173 electors. They are both many times the area of the Brisbane electorate and yet their enrolments are many times as large.

Mr. Powell: Do you want fewer electors in Brisbane?

Mr. HOUSTON: All I want is a fair and equal distribution throughout the State. I have not gone into the figures to see whether Brisbane or some other electorate should get more. The point is: let us represent people and not trees and cows. As I have said, I have no fight with a loading of up to 10 per cent to allow for communications. All honourable members now have electoral offices in their electorates. Communication is almost unrestricted with the availability of air travel to members. Telephone calls are paid for by the Government. Constituents can reverse telephone charges. So all the old arguments that used to be advanced as to why some electorates should be so much bigger than others have gone by the board. I am saying here and now that we must have a redistribution if we are going to say that we are a democracy.

In the Provincial Cities Zone, the electorate of Mt. Isa contains 16,000 electors whereas the three electorates of Port Curtis (with an area of over 3,000 square miles), Isis (with an area of 2,300 square miles) and Barron River (with an area of 1,800 square miles) all contain in excess of 17,000 electors. At the bottom of the scale in terms of area and electors, there is Bundaberg, containing an area of nine square miles and 11,753 electors.

A ridiculous situation exists in the three electorates in the Townsville area. Let Government members try to convince me that there is justification for this. To illustrate my point—the largest electorate in the area is Townsville, with an area of 1,660 square miles and 18,387 electors. In size the second electorate is Townsville South, covering an area of 36 square miles and having 14,508 electors. The smallest Townsville electorate is Townsville West, with an area of only six square miles and having 13,895 electors. Government members ask me why I want a redistribution. There is the answer in the Townsville area. The electorates are totally out of balance both in size and in the number of electors.

In the Western and Far Northern Zone the electorate of Belyando, which is slightly larger in area than Balonne, has over 73 per cent more voters than Balonne. Furthermore, in the Country Zone there is a disparity of as high as 25 per cent between some electorates.

So I say that a redistribution is absolutely necessary to enable this Parliament to operate efficiently as a democratic Parliament. A redistribution would ensure that members spoke on behalf of approximately the same number of electors. I fully realise that the numbers cannot be exactly the same; but surely there is no justification at all for having one electorate three times as large as another.

A Government Member: Don't you think distance has something to do with it?

Mr. HOUSTON: Distance plays some part in it, but, as I have said, with modern means of communication long distances are not the problem they used to be.

I turn now to a matter that has recently received wide publicity in the Press, namely, the plight of the cattle industry. Everyone has sympathy for any industry that is facing financial difficulties. This is particularly so in the case of an industry that has played a vital role in the development of our State, in terms of both people and revenue. The meat industry is such an industry, and one that provides employment for a very large work-force in meatworks as well as in associated industries.

Mr. Lane: Would you endorse Percy Tucker next time?

Mr. HOUSTON: If he nominated for Parliament, I most certainly would.

Mr. Lane: You would?

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member should return to where he has just come from. I do not wish to be nasty—that is not in my nature—but I do not want to hear from the honourable member in his present condition. Let him remain silent for a while.

Mr. Lamont interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: It is obvious that the Liberal members for South Brisbane and Merthyr have no interest whatever in the welfare of country people. But, of course, they are typical Liberal members. They are not welcome in country areas. In fact, they are afraid to go to those areas without police protection or police backgrounds. They want nothing whatever to do with country people.

I was dealing with the problems that confront the meat industry. To overcome these problems it is essential, firstly, that the industry reorganise itself. Some primary-producer organisations within the industry

have existed for many years. Unfortunately, however, they have taken good seasons without looking forward to the future and to the possibility of prolonged bad seasons. The result is that in prolonged droughts the industry suffers terrible hardship. It asks for financial assistance and, quite rightly, is given it, but it is necessary for the industry to learn from its mistakes. In times of meat shortages and high prices, the industry is happy to take the money, but it does not provide for the time when things will not be so good.

Mr. Moore: What about Whitlam's tax racket?

Mr. HOUSTON: I'm glad the honourable member mentioned that. I would point out to him that sometimes the cattlemen set a certain pattern.

Government members criticise the Whitlam Government, but the following appeared as the headnote to a report on 19 August, 1971,

"The economic gloom cast over the entire rural community by the collapse of the sheep industry and high production costs and low profits was reflected in the show beef cattle sales yesterday."

In 1971 it was admitted that there was gloom in primary industries, but there is always gloom in a primary industry when it is in a state of collapse—irrespective of the Government. That happened under a Federal Liberal-Country Party Government and a Country-Liberal Government in Queensland.

Reference has been made to interest rates. Two years ago, when there was a boom in beef, when sheepmen were switching from sheep to cattle, anyone could go into a country area with an old milking cow past its breeding age and expect to get a massive sum for it because sheepmen were doing what they thought was best and trying to change over to cattle. That took place, I repeat, under a Federal Liberal-Country Party Government.

A Government Member: What's wrong with that?

Mr. HOUSTON: Nothing at all, but don't blame the Federal Government for it. These things were going on then. The graziers, and those who wanted to go into grazing, were borrowing money at 8½ per cent from the stock and station agents. At present, according to a report by Hugh Lunn, they are paying 12½ per cent to the same sources. If Government members do not believe me, they should tackle him about it.

Mr. Katter interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: But I have not heard a peep out of anyone on the Government benches in objection to the stock and station agents—

Mr. Katter: That is untrue. I made such a statement only two weeks ago.

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member had better tackle Hugh Lunn because that report was published on 12 July 1974 in "The Australian", and it has not been challenged in either the last Parliament or this Parliament.

One of the things that we have said for years—I said it in the 1969 and 1972 election campaigns, and Mr. Tucker repeated it in the 1974 campaign—was that we had to get overseas markets, and that we should open trade offices overseas, particularly in Japan. The Premier said that he would open a trade office in Japan, but the Minister for Police said, "I want the job." Because he wanted the job, and the Premier wanted him here, the office was not established. The Minister is in the House and he may deny my statement if he cares to. That office in Japan has not been opened. There is no doubt about it that if offices had been opened in Japan and elsewhere, we would not be in the situation we are in today.

Mr. Katter: They won't let any beef in.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is a lot of nonsense. Japan acted as it did because we had no-one over there to present our case. That is why the quota system was introduced.

Mr. Katter: You are shockingly ill informed. You don't know what you're talking about.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Premier thought that there was great publicity value in saying, "Without beef, you don't get our coal." What a lot of nonsense that is from a man who talks about free enterprise with everyone having the right to do what he wants to under the Government's policy. He said to a Government with which he has no standing, "Unless you buy our coal, you won't get our beef."

Mr. Katter interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, will you get the boy to keep quiet?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! The honourable member will listen in silence from now on.

Mr. HOUSTON: The other day, when the Premier found out that he was caught out in his statement that his phone was tapped, he told a Press conference that he had known for some time that the Japanese would resume their imports of beef from Australia. If he knew that for some time, who was he trying to fool? What propaganda was he trying to make by going on for weeks and weeks? Only a week ago he said, "I told the Jananese, 'No beef, no coal.'" But when he had to tell the truth he said that he had known for some time.

As to the alleged phone tapping, either the Premier or the Deputy Premier of the State has not been factual in his statements. The Premier said, "I only said as a joke that the phone was tapped.", yet in this House on the same day the Deputy Premier, on the Premier's behalf, said that the Premier had expressed concern at a Cabinet meeting.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! There is too much loitering in the lobbies. I call the honourable member for Mt. Isa. As this is his maiden speech, I ask the House to afford him the usual courtesies.

Mr. BERTONI (Mt. Isa) (12.40 p.m.): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my honour to speak on behalf of the finest citizens of the State, the people of the Mt. Isa electorate. I thank the honourable member for Bulimba for praising my electorate so much.

Mr. Houston: You had a good member before you.

Mr. BERTONI: I thank the honourable member.

I have no hesitation in expressing the loyalty of my people in the North West to Her Majesty the Queen and her worthy representative in Queensland, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Colin Hannah.

Unlike the members of the new era socialist movement, I firmly believe that there is an important role in our society for a monarchy which is above politics and which warrants the respect of people of all political persuasions. The monetary costs of such an institution are minor compared with the contribution of stability which it makes to our society. The monarchy-breakers of the Labor Party should take note of such a

contribution before they advocate its abandonment in favour of frail and transient Gough-like kingdoms.

As the honourable member for Bulimba, said, the politics of the North West are the politics of personalities and people. Therefore, I take this opportunity of paying tribute to Alec Inch, a man who earned the respect of his whole electorate. He was a man of high personal principles and I dare to say that they were very often too high for the colleagues with whom he had to sit for many years.

As a member of the National Party, I now represent the cause of the workers of the Mt. Isa electorate in this Parliament, and I am proud of it. I represent the miners of all classifications, railway workers, station hands, primary producers, council employees, public servants, and others who make their living with their hands. In no less a manner, I represent those workers who exert another kind of initiative and have established themselves in free-enterprise activity—those people in business large and small, and very often very small. Our community in the North West thrives because it is made up of men and women with the courage to have a go.

Our electorate is a free-enterprise electorate to the core, and the socialists of Canberra and the hangers-on now sitting in the ragged ranks of the Opposition should recognise this and take note of it.

I am here in this Parliament to represent the people of the North West, embracing the major centres of Cloncurry, Mary Kathleen, Mt. Isa, Gunpowder, Burketown and Camooweal. However, I have not come here to be patronising to my own party. I have come here to fight for the continued growth and improved living conditions of the people of my electorate, which represents some 43 different nationalities.

Our Aboriginal people, too, are becoming integrated with the community at their own rate. Sure, we have our fringe dwellers, but that is part of integration. For the Aborigine fringe dwelling is a period of observation and appraisal. It is a period of new experiences, when he can stand aside from our community and make his own decisions. Many Aborigines have proudly established themselves in industry, Public Service and local government jobs. They have proved themselves to be able and trustworthy in many fields.

It is worthy of note that the Australian Broadcasting Commission took the trouble some time ago to send a team of newsmen to my electorate to film Aborigines living on a reserve in what they described as substandard conditions. Certainly they were inferior, by our standards, but were in the process of gradual improvement. I note, however, that no publicity has been given to the upgrading of their facilities through the co-operation of the Mt. Isa City Council, the State and Federal Governments and Mount Isa Mines. But this is just one more example of the negative presentation of facts by that section of the media with pro-Labor bias.

Let us not fool ourselves. There are battles to be fought by the members of every electorate for their specific needs. But I have a unique problem—that of remoteness—and honourable members will hear plenty about it while I am in this Assembly. We live a very long way from Brisbane. We do not have reporters in Mt. Isa in the ever-present search for a front-page story. Similarly we lack the ear of roving reporters from the radio stations and the TV channels 0, 2, 7 and 9 who could drive home to the Government the pressing needs of an area.

But there is no need to point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that people become fed up if they are ignored, and they will show this—they have shown it, and will continue to show it—in the ballot box. I repeat, the people in the Mt. Isa electorate will not be ignored while I am their representative.

So may I apologise right now to my Premier, Deputy Premier and the members of Cabinet for the necessary vigour, and perhaps at times even viciousness, that I must put into my submissions to have the same impact as those in electorates close to the city. Let me illustrate with this point. Before this session began, I submitted a sample of the water that we have to drink in Burketown. I have a glass of it here. I should like honourable members to take a good hard look at it and I invite any of them to drink some of it.

A Government Member: I wouldn't be game.

Mr. BERTONI: Well I am, and I will now drink some of it.

I quote from a letter from the Shire Clerk of the Burke Shire Council as follows—

‘The reports from the Department of Health, to my knowledge, has never been acceptable and always notes the water

is ‘unfit for human consumption’. It is dirty, unhygienic, and leaves a stain that is difficult to remove”.

Just imagine what this water does to our little children and our clothes! Wash linen in it for a few weeks and a Brisbane wife would not be game to hang her clothes on the line.

The new proposed water-supply scheme was estimated to cost \$280,000 last year. Today, that estimate must be increased considerably. In the past, the State Government offered a grant of \$120,000 and a 50 per cent subsidy on the remainder. This is a very fine offer. However, the estimate was then something like \$210,000 and the council would have been obliged to borrow \$45,000, which was then the amount of total general rate receipts. The council did not accept the offer. Surely good, clean, clear water is the right of every person in Australia.

In front of me I have two photographs of a section of road between Hughenden and Cloncurry on what is known as the Flinders Highway. One photograph shows one of the usual buses that travel out that way and a car, both of them bogged up to the axles, with half a dozen or a dozen people standing knee deep in mud trying to move the vehicles. The other photograph shows a car that has been abandoned. It is possible to see for 400 or 500 yards that there is mud about 3 ft. or 4 ft. deep.

This road is our lifeline to the coast, yet, year after year, we are inconvenienced by its being cut for periods of up to 12 weeks at a time. As a matter of fact, the road is cut right now, and has been for the past week. This is where our supplies come through, and this is our holiday route to the coast. This particular road has caused more dissent among the people of the North West than any other single factor. Because of this, we have shortages of food, milk, petrol, raw materials and medical supplies every year. This is no exaggeration. Last year we had to fly in emergency supplies to a stranded electorate at great expense to this Government and our people. Imagine the people of Brisbane being without milk for eight weeks! There would be an outcry from all sections of this Parliament. Are we second-grade citizens in the West that our pleas go unheard? Are we not pulling our weight? Are we not contributing our share to the national economy? No; in fact, we contribute more than our share.

I present some figures to the House. Last year, the revenue obtained, directly and indirectly, from Mount Isa Mines alone was in the vicinity of \$90,000,000. This amount included income tax from employees of \$11,200,000, rail freights of \$6,500,000, royalties of \$6,700,000 and company tax of \$53,000,000. With the continual increases that have occurred this year, no doubt the 1974-75 figure will be somewhere in the vicinity of \$100,000,000. The tax revenue from the total area of this electorate would be in excess of \$120,000,000 a year. It is clear that we are subsidising other areas of Australia, and receiving little in return.

It is of interest to note that of every dollar collected in taxation in Australia, the people get a return of only 25 to 30c. This is the result of bureaucratic inefficiency, with its overheads, administration costs and salaries.

I invite Opposition members to read the inaugural speech of my predecessor Mr. Alec Inch in which he said—

“The Federal Government are absolutely heedless of the developmental requirements of North Queensland.”

I wonder if his present colleagues in Canberra have been made aware of that plea that he made to Parliament?

Mr. K. J. Hooper: When did he say that?

Mr. BERTONI: He said it in his inaugural speech. The honourable member may check it if he wishes. The Federal Minister for Transport (Mr. Jones) did not give me the impression that he was very concerned about North Queensland when he made a martyr of himself in surveying the road along the coast in the luxury of a limousine. I will be convinced of his sincerity when he gets into a four-wheel-drive vehicle and ferries stranded motorists across impassable stretches of highway. Apparently that was omitted from his programme.

Our heroes in Canberra talk of emergency squads—emergency this, and emergency that. The latest example was the “Stretton Squad” that they initiated after the Darwin disaster. But they know, as well as we all know, that the time taken for evacuation and rehabilitation would have been at least halved if the Flinders Highway had been an efficient road. Everyone knew where the city of the great North West was situated when the disaster was at its peak, and all in that city offered what they had to alleviate the sufferings of those affected by the cyclone. But let’s not forget in-between times.

The Australian Government has now come out with the National Highway Plan. It will be at least 10 years before there is an all-weather road between Mt. Isa and Brisbane, particularly through the inland. What a ridiculous scale of priorities! It has left us short of money, and with an inadequate road. With approximately 60 miles of the Flinders Highway to be sealed, the Australian Government does a double somersault and abandons the scheme. This is another insult to people who live in the North West. The complete burden now rests on the State Government. I cannot stress too strongly the need to have the road finished by 1976. The State Government must give this road priority above all other major road projects in Queensland.

In the meantime, the people of my electorate are surely entitled to take their Christmas holidays without the fear of being stranded by floods. Air and rail subsidies in case of family and community emergencies are not too much to demand. Equality of rights and opportunities for the people of my electorate is what we want.

Another subject that must always be considered when speaking of the West is water. We all know that water is the life-blood of all western areas, and Mt. Isa, Cloncurry and Burketown are no exceptions to that statement. Julius Dam is now under construction, and it will cost in the vicinity of \$30,000,000. Mount Isa Mines have contributed \$14,900,000 and the State Government \$4,000,000. The Federal Government has made available a \$5,000,000 loan, which is repayable. The Mt. Isa council’s share of the cost will be \$6,900,000, which includes capitalised interest. In order to repay the local commitment, water rates alone in Mt. Isa will increase to about \$120 a year, which is twice the general average of water rates in Queensland.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the situation is intolerable when the people of the North West have to pay out of their rates the cost of developing this country. The city council in its approaches to both the State Government and the Federal Government has received a sympathetic hearing. The Premier has guaranteed that the State Government will share with the Federal Government half of the remaining contribution of the Mt. Isa City Council, provided that the Federal Government first matches the contribution made by the State Government. We all know that the Premier of Queensland is a

man of integrity and will honour his commitment. The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, commenting on the Lake Julius project, said—

“The proper development of your water resources is essential to the future of Mt. Isa. We have recognised that need.”
We are still waiting, and we are waiting hopefully.

At this stage I think I should describe certain areas of my electorate for the benefit of honourable members who have never been there. It has the greatest mineral potential in the southern hemisphere, with the discovery of minerals such as copper, silver lead, zinc, gold, uranium, and phosphate. Mount Isa Mines, which employs 5,600 people, operates the largest underground lead mine in the world. It also is the second largest producer of silver, and about sixth or eighth in the world in the production of zinc and copper. During the last full year, Mount Isa Mines treated nearly 7,500,000 tonnes of ore.

Of course, Mount Isa Mines is considered to be a leader in management-union relationships, and I am sure members of the Opposition would not deny that. Its two-year agreements with the unions, which began in 1966, have resulted in only one full day's production being lost through strike action since then, and that was the result of an incident in Victoria. It is a unique record, and an accomplishment that is the result of sensible local negotiation without outside interference.

To the north of Mt. Isa is the small township of Gunpowder, with a population of about 600. This copper mine is operated by Gunpowder Copper Pty. Ltd., which intends to spend more than \$20,000,000 in the future to increase its production to 600,000 tonnes of copper ore by 1977-78. To the south of Mt. Isa is the Duchess phosphate deposit owned by Queensland Phosphate Ltd., with a production target of 1,000,000 tonnes of phosphate rock a year. As all honourable members are aware, to the east of Mount Isa there is the revival of the uranium township of Mary Kathleen.

However, Mt. Isa is the hub—the centre—of all mineral deposits in the area. If we, as Parliamentarians, gave equality of right and opportunity to the people of the west and had the Flinders Highway completed, that would be one of the greatest things we could do for Mt. Isa.

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

16

Mr. BERTONI: Before lunch I was discussing the water and road situation in various areas in the Mt. Isa electorate. I had referred also to the mines in that area.

Our second greatest industry in the area is the beef industry. This industry, which once was considered to be the backbone of this nation, is now reduced to near bankruptcy. The blame for this must partly be laid on the shoulders of the Federal Government. Its withdrawing of concessions from primary producers and its inability to restore the beef markets have led to this serious situation.

But let us not be so preoccupied with the reason that we fail to find the solution. It is the “how” and not the “why” that matters. I believe that—

(1) The beef industry should overcome its internal problems and speak with one united voice.

(2) The industry should co-operate with State and Federal Governments to reconstitute the Australian Meat Board, with a view to implementing a minimum-price scheme.

(3) The representation on the Meat Board should be selected by all producers.

(4) Its main object should be to promote a long-term stabilisation beef market scheme.

(5) Increased home markets should be promoted.

The former Minister for Works and Housing, Honourable Max Hodges, should be complimented on the speed and efficiency with which he brought many new projects to our electorate. I know he realises our need for more police for Mt. Isa and Cloncurry, and I am confident that this need will be fulfilled in the near future. Employment and accommodation incentives in western areas must be improved to retain the professional status of the Police Force.

An electorate like mine, which is experiencing constant growth in such areas as Duchess, Gunpowder, Lady Annie and Mary Kathleen, as well as in the established centres, from the new discovery of minerals, will place a tremendous burden on local and State authorities in the supply of essential services. Therefore it is not unrealistic to request that 150 additional Housing Commission homes be built in my electorate each year for the next four years. The need to replace the outmoded and, in some instances, disgraceful standard of railway accommodation in Cloncurry requires urgent attention.

Unlined and unsealed non-air-conditioned railway cottages must become a thing of the past in western areas.

I will never understand departmental thinking which is such that air-conditioned schools, homes and places of employment are not provided for people living out in the West, while in Brisbane, all major new Government buildings are refrigerated air-conditioned. Would someone kindly explain that to me? I urge the Government to adopt a policy of equality in the provision of these facilities.

I have always supported culture and cultural activities, where these are practicable. I am aware that every city needs a centre to promote such activities. I could probably support the Government's establishment of a multi-million-dollar centre for the purpose in the city of Brisbane, if I were sure that equal, pro rata, financial assistance would be made available in other centres, especially in my own. To me, it is not equitable that my electors should have to pay about 84 per cent of the cost of their cultural centre, while the citizens of Brisbane simply have theirs presented to them.

It is more than significant that the petrol price in my area went up to 77c a gallon. In Brisbane petrol is sold for 65c or less a gallon. The Prime Minister destroyed the petrol equalisation scheme in Queensland. The National Party pioneered that scheme, but the Prime Minister took it away. Similarly, my party pioneered transport concessions for people living in country areas, but the Prime Minister, with his professed great love for equality, justice, convention, fairness and all that sort of thing, took them away from us.

I do not want honourable members to complain that I am federally inclined. I am merely pointing to these policies and stating that we, as members of a State Parliament, must try to correct his errors. I shall list only some of the Prime Minister's misdemeanours.

Firstly, he removed the petrol subsidy. Next, he removed the Federal subsidy on the Flinders Highway. Then he stopped exploration incentives for the development of minerals in my area. He cut the subsidy on rural air fares. He reduced the income tax deduction for education expenses from a pitiful \$400 to a mere \$150, which is almost worthless. He increased interest rates. And perhaps worst of all, he increased inflation

to a level of 22 per cent. All this was done by the same Gough Whitlam who said, "You've never had it so good."

Health and education are most important to the new generation of Westerners, and as one of the older Westerners I am delighted that Dr. Lew Edwards and Mr. Val Bird are now the Ministers occupying these portfolios. They are men who have already listened to our needs and taken action to meet some of them. Dr. Edwards has already acted to improve the standard of medical care in hospitals in my electorate. That is what government is all about; it is action as well as good government from good Ministers. Good government is ministerial and not departmental government.

Today as I walked into this building I was handed some disgusting and degrading pornographic literature. I had intended reading certain extracts from it to the House. However, as there are a large number of young children in the public gallery, I do not think I should do so. It might be better for me to table it. It is certainly not fit for the ears of children.

Mr. Jensen: Where did you get it—from the Liberal Party?

Mr. BERTONI: I got it from staunch Labor supporters.

The mistaken objective of our society is that the freedom of the individual comes before the freedom and well-being of the majority. This is a lot of rubbish. It is about time, for example, that schools had both the right and courage to start using the cane again. At present our classrooms are tending to become training grounds for social misfits. I ask: when was the last occasion that a child was expelled from a school for repeatedly wilfully destroying school property or repeatedly disobeying school discipline?

We have heard many comments about vandalism and discipline in schools. The trouble is that everyone is passing the buck. Here I am referring both to parents and to teachers. No-one is getting to the root of the problem. Parents should be made to pay for the vandalism of their children.

I ask also: why has respect for teachers changed to disrespect? Why has regard for school property changed to lack of regard? I hope that someone can answer those questions. I believe that the answer lies in the bad effects of our present-day permissive

society. It is time that we laid the blame where it belongs and that every parent should accept responsibility for the product of his or her parenthood. I am referring here to the group of hard-core children who lack parental control; not to the normal mischievous or adventurous child who gets into trouble during this natural stage of growing up. I repeat: all responsibility rests on the parents.

We need to bring back to our State schools a realistic sense of dress and behaviour for the well-being of the majority. The time has come for stronger measures to be taken to enforce these virtues. Participation of parents in the teaching activities and functioning of their schools is an important and practical part of school life. Particularly should the parents of those children who misbehave be forced by law to participate for brief periods in the functioning of their school. True education lies in respect for the pupil and in the pupil's respect for the teacher.

I am pleased to be associated with the motion moved and seconded by the honourable members for Mourilyan and Salisbury. I wholeheartedly endorse their remarks in support of the role of women in the community. There is no role more important than that of mother. No person has more influence over a child than its mother. No one but a gifted and loving mother can create the much-needed home environment.

Our community must always be ready to employ in constructive activity mothers with spare time and mothers whose families have grown up. Women have a growing contribution to make to our society by accepting roles they have previously avoided.

I believe very strongly in social care and concern but not the socialisation and nationalisation of industry or the incentives of people. I have become convinced in recent years that the need of national socialism has replaced the need of the ordinary man, hence the socialistic parties throughout the world have ceased to be the servant of the worker. Rather they have made the worker serve their cause. On the other hand, I am intolerant of monopolies and multinational corporations, which destroy free enterprise and competition. I believe in caring for those who are unable to fend for themselves or need help because of special circumstances. I believe in the free-enterprise principle of fostering competition and developing resourcefulness in business and

the community. A proper blending of the best principles in socialism and in free enterprise will be the only workable politics in the years to come.

To those who say that I am sitting on the fence, I say that they either do not have the ability to think for themselves or have not the guts to try to make any changes in the feeble thinking of man-made politics. There is only one who is perfect, and that is God. Politics must ever be the search for better ways and better principles of running a country. Those who claim to be the advocates of the perfect system are fooling themselves as well as misleading many in the community.

Medibank, to me, is the special care aspect of socialism. But let us not be lulled into laziness, indifference and lack of care for our future by expecting the Government to do everything for us. Freedom is our greatest blessing and must be preserved at any cost. The more dependent we become on Government hand-outs, the more we lose our initiatives, incentives and independence.

I consider I would have failed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I did not pay tribute to some of the pioneers in the development of the North-west. I cannot name them at this stage because time will not permit me to do so, but it was these men and organisations, living and working in intolerable heat and adversity, who helped to make the towns and cities in my electorate today.

To summarise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I again draw the attention of honourable members to the four salient points I have made—

- (1) the provision of extra finance to ensure the immediate completion of the sealing of the Flinders Highway;

- (2) immediate Government assistance in financing my electorate's water resources, particularly Julius Dam, Burketown's water supply and Slaty Creek Dam at Cloncurry;

- (3) adequate provision of air-conditioned homes in our electorate; and

- (4) equality of rights and opportunity for the people in remote areas.

I believe that "democracy should persist in asking the powers that be whether they are the powers that ought to be".

I thank the people of the Mt. Isa electorate for the confidence and trust they have placed in me, and assure them that I will leave no stone unturned in this capital city

until I am satisfied that my people receive fair and equal recognition and action from this Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence and I pledge my support in your difficult task of keeping this Parliament in order.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (2.29 p.m.): In rising to speak in the Address-in-Reply debate I express my thanks to the electors of Archerfield for returning me as their representative in this House. That proves that they should get full marks for common sense.

Mr. Frawley: You only won because you didn't go there.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is true that I won.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable "manic depressive" from Murrumba said that I won only because I was not there. For the record, I received 53.9 per cent of the vote, and an absolute majority of 1,400. I am sure that in the next election, whenever it may be held, the electors of Queensland will return to the true path of righteousness and virtue.

Traditionally the Address-in-Reply debate affords members an opportunity to speak on matters affecting their electorates. However, because of the unusually large number of maiden speeches this year, the debate has become an ordeal. Members of the National Party have delivered the same stereotyped speeches (obviously written by the same script writer) and the same old hymn of hate towards the Australian Government, giving us also the usual Cook's tour of their electorates. The honourable member for Belyando, who henceforth will be known as "Lester of the Overflow", took us on a Cook's tour of his whole electorate.

There was certainly nothing constructive in any of the National Party speeches. However, I must say that I found the speeches by most Liberal members most interesting, as they highlighted the deep divisions existing in their party in Queensland. We listened to speeches by small "I" Liberals, by the Chalk Liberals and also by the small number on the lunatic-fringe of the Liberal Party, those led by the honourable member for Toowong,

who in all probability will lead this group into the National Party before the end of the year.

Mr. Lee: Pause for effect.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: And applause!

I take the opportunity of referring to the speech of a member of the lunatic fringe of the Liberal Party, the honourable member for Pine Rivers, which was delivered in this House last Tuesday, wherein he made a vicious and unwarranted attack on Mr. George Campbell, the permanent head of the Queensland Housing Commission. I quote his remarks—

"I am ashamed to say that the permanent head of the commission is an architect, ashamed because of the complete lack of initiative in housing in Queensland under this man's control."

It does him no credit to cast aspersions on the permanent head of the Queensland Housing Commission, who is a very dedicated and hard-working public servant. Mr. Campbell has had a distinguished career and has also had an onerous and unrewarding task to perform. He has carried out his duties in the true spirit of the Public Service and in a very admirable fashion. Mr. Akers, as a member of this Government, should realise that Mr. Campbell has to carry out Government policy and employ allocated funds in the way that the Government considers to be to the best advantage.

The responsibility over the last 18 years rests squarely at the feet of this Tory coalition Government and also at the feet of the ministerial head. The previous Minister, full of ineptitude, certainly had shortcomings in his administration of the Housing portfolio. I feel that a practical man such as the present incumbent will bring a refreshing change to this all-important portfolio.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention to the fact that the member is reading his speech word for word.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The large area of land at Lawnton to which the honourable member for Pine Rivers referred was to be serviced with earth closets instead of by sewerage. The honourable member should realise that that decision was made by the then ministerial head, Mr. Hodges. The Opposition has complained repeatedly at his maladministration

of the Housing portfolio. We are not surprised that he would make a decision such as the Lawnton one. I suggest to the honourable member for Pine Rivers that he look at his political bedfellows before castigating hard-working, energetic and diligent members of the Public Service.

A Government Member: He is a good man and he has impressed himself on this House.

Mr. Frawley: That's dead right. You couldn't do that.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I have tried very hard.

Mr. Frawley: You can't even pronounce the words.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Leave me alone. I am doing my best.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am a little lonely up here. I would like to participate in these proceedings.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will once again commence my remarks on a subject that is of prime concern to both the electors of Archerfield and me, namely, the lack of public transport. Most honourable members will recall that I have raised this matter on numerous occasions. However, I am disgusted to report that, in spite of the pious bleatings of this Tory Government, the position is getting worse instead of better. Year in and year out we have been told that a metropolitan transit authority will be set up to operate and co-ordinate Brisbane's public transport system, but still nothing has been done.

Only last week the secretary of the bus union (Mr. Tom McHenry) stated that bus services at night on Sundays were almost non-existent and, as a result, more people were having to use a car or else stay at home. He went on to make the very valid point that the curtailment of services and the consequent frustration among passengers resulted in bad feelings between passengers and drivers, and that sometimes this had led to assaults on drivers—a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. I notice the Tourist Bureau is very careful not to tell intending tourists about Brisbane's poor transport system. The poor tourist gets a very rude shock when he attempts to get out and really see Brisbane. It is a matter of either taking a taxi or walking.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Clem Jones will go down in history as the greatest Lord Mayor this city has had.

In the Acacia Ridge section of the electorate of Archerfield the public transport situation has reached an all-time low. From 1 January last the private bus company, the Sunnybank Bus Service, reduced services drastically.

Mr. Lamont interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am not listening to Mr. "Bird" Lamont.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! The honourable member for Archerfield will refer to other honourable members in proper terms. He is the honourable member for South Brisbane and will be so referred to.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is true, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As a matter of fact, I am a personal friend of the "Bird" family and I should like to say that Mr. "Bird" Lamont is not very popular.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! When I rise to my feet the honourable gentleman will resume his seat. I have instructed the honourable member to refer to other honourable members in proper terms. He will do so.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will.

I want honourable members to realise that most parts of Acacia Ridge are only 8 miles from the G.P.O. The population is in the vicinity of 10,000. We are not talking of some sleepy little hamlet out in the sticks. The method of getting into the city is by private bus to Moorvale and then by Brisbane City Council bus to the city. The time taken is usually one hour.

Under the new time-table the last bus from Moorvale to Acacia Ridge leaves Moorvale at 6 p.m. I will repeat that just in case some honourable members may not have heard. The last bus, Monday to Friday, leaves at 6 p.m. To cater for the party or theatre-goers the last bus on Saturday night leaves at 6.5 p.m. This is really 20th century living in the deep North!

Returning to the Monday to Friday service—in order to catch this last bus it is necessary to leave the city at about 5.20 p.m. This presupposes that every person at Acacia Ridge who uses public transport has a job that finishes at 5 p.m. Just leave this

ludicrous situation for a moment and stop and look at some of the social consequences that arise from this lack of public transport.

Mr. Lamont: Why don't you read out the bus time-table? It might be more interesting.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will try to do that too, Mr. "Bird".

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! For the last time I instruct the honourable gentleman to observe my requirements in this matter. The member is the member for South Brisbane and he will be so referred to.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am under provocation.

An Acacia Ridge resident who is required to work back or work overtime misses the bus and a fellow who wants to stay in town and have a beer with his mates must be prepared to fork out for a cab from Moorvale to Acacia Ridge, which would cost somewhere in the vicinity of \$3. Young people going straight from work to a show are in the same situation. This practice is very popular with young girls, as they are then not out too late at night. But surely it is discrimination that they have to pay so much from their weekly wage for just one evening out. The cost of coming home from the city would be twice that amount meaning at least \$6 just in fares to attend a picture show. How many members of this House can afford this type of extravagance? The alternative is to ride part of the way home on the train.

A Government Member: What about Marty?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member for Port Curtis—

An Opposition Member: What about the honourable member for South Brisbane?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: He would not be able to afford it either. The alternative is to ride part of the way home on the train for a total outlay of \$4 and risk at least the verbal assaults of the young louts who take over the late-night services from the city to the suburbs and about which railway workers have complained consistently. What member of this House would willingly expose his teenage daughter to this threat? Since these louts forced late-night buses off the road, worried parents have phoned me and sought advice about their children's protection. Girls have even phoned me in tears because, owing to lack of transport, they were risking

their personal safety and had to give up their jobs or part-time work on which they were relying.

Mr. Frawley: Rubbish! It would make your heart bleed.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: As I have told the honourable member for Murrumba before, if he had any more brains he would be half-witted.

Young people, and in particular apprentices who attend night classes, are severely disadvantaged. One does not need to be a social worker to realise the frustration these situations create. Once at home, the Acacia Ridge resident who desires to go out at night must walk, hitch a ride or take a cab. The young people have nothing to do and have to stay at home and watch television or drift to the local hamburger shop. I defy any honourable member to tell me that this is a healthy situation.

Mr. Jensen: We only had a gramophone to listen to.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: You were very fortunate. I did not even have that.

Acacia Ridge is almost totally devoid of leisure facilities for the young or the old. The football clubs and the marching girls do what they can to help. We have to be realistic and admit that not everyone is interested in those two sports. The Y.M.C.A. has plans for a centre at Acacia Ridge, but there has not been a great deal of local support—for a variety of reasons which I will not canvass here. When one looks at what has been given priority in this first stage, I can readily understand why local support has not been forthcoming. The Brisbane City Council under the progressive Clem Jones administration will erect a library in the near future, which will be of major help to the residents of this area.

At week-ends, the situation is even worse. As I said previously, the last bus on Saturday nights leaves at 6.5 p.m., and there is no service whatever on Sundays and public holidays. I suppose this is one way to make people stay at home and observe the sabbath! The cost of this lavish Monday-to-Friday, Acacia Ridge to the City, transport service is \$6.65 a week. I was going to say "19th century" transport service, but I am sure that 70 years ago, in the horse and buggy days, Brisbane had a better transport service.

Is it any wonder that young people want to leave home and move into flats closer to the city? I have had parents, particularly

mothers, come to me on numerous occasions with this problem. In many cases, parents are apprehensive of the outcome of flitting. This is a particular worry if the boys or girls concerned are not very mature. But what can parents do? They realise that children must have some social life. Many teenagers are leaving home at a time when parental guidance is of great importance. In most cases, the teenagers are also making a much-needed financial contribution to the home.

Mr. Dean: It's scandalous.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It certainly is. It is another indictment of this Tory coalition Government.

In the last week of the recent State election campaign, I publicly deplored the lack of transport services at Acacia Ridge. At that time, it was widely rumoured that the Sunnybank Bus Service was to discontinue services. My Liberal opponent immediately burst into print. He was quoted on the front page of the "Southside Observer" of 4 December 1974 as saying, "The State Government has no intention, whatever the Brisbane City Council may do, of allowing the residents of Acacia Ridge to be without public transport." This gentleman (I understand he is a protege of the honourable member for Sherwood, God help him!) would not have made such a public statement without the backing of the Liberal Party. He was not contradicted at any stage.

I now challenge the Minister for Transport and the Liberal Party to put their money where their candidate put his mouth, and to provide the residents of Acacia Ridge with a public transport service at nights and on Sundays and public holidays. This could be very quickly achieved by paying the local operator a subsidy to operate at those times.

Mr. Moore: What subsidy? Five dollars for \$1?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member seems to be an expert in this field. I might seek his advice at the conclusion of my speech. On past performances, I say to the people of Acacia Ridge, "Don't head for the bus stop yet, as you will have a very long wait."

This, of course, would only be a temporary solution. The transport problems of the outer south-western suburbs will never be solved until the rail link from Wacol, via Inala and Acacia Ridge, to either Coopers Plains or Salisbury is built. I have been advocating this link for many years.

Mr. Jensen: It's the missing link.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is the missing link—together with the honourable member for Windsor!

At one time this link was considered impossible because of the need to cross Ipswich Road, but this objection was removed when the line was built under Ipswich Road to the Wacol Industrial Estate. I ask the House to note that fact. Because of Ipswich Road, a passenger line was not possible, but when a line was needed for the Wacol Industrial Estate, Ipswich Road proved no problem at all.

As I pointed out in my speech in the Address-in-Reply debate last September, there is plenty of land available at the present time for the construction of this line. But if we wait another 10 years, land resumptions will cost a fortune. One has only to think of the tremendous difference that the Circular Quay loop made to the Sydney suburban rail system. The same thing could happen here. Trains would travel on the main Ipswich line to Wacol, thence by this line and the new Merivale Street bridge to the city. Trains would also operate in the reverse direction. This would maximise the use of rolling-stock, and provide a first-class service to the outer suburbs. In answer to a question asked last week, the Minister for Transport told me that the line is used for only one hour a day for shunting operations in the industrial estate. There is therefore plenty of capacity for passenger services.

I know that the old cry will go up, "But where is the money to come from?" This cuts absolutely no ice with me. If the money was needed to build or upgrade a line to be used for the haulage of coal, it would be found in double-quick time.

Mr. Dean: Or for the appointment of four new Ministers.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is so. The Government is now like the Portuguese Army—all generals and no privates.

As I have said in this House on numerous occasions, with this Government people run a very bad second to minerals.

Another source of funds is the Australian Government. Both the Australian Minister for Transport and the Minister for Urban and Regional Development have made this plain on a number of occasions. I know that this will provoke the usual anti-Canberra howl from this hillbilly Government. Fortunately the Ministers of the Queensland

Government are repeatedly being caught out with their statements that the Australian Government will not co-operate in projects such as the ones that I am proposing. That is just so much clap-trap.

Mr. Porter: Have we hillbilly voters here, too?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: As I said in my opening remarks, people will return to the fold of true righteousness and virtue at the next election.

Mr. Frawley: Do you think Australia would be better off as a republic?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member knows my views on that subject. They have been canvassed before. The answer is "Yes".

Mr. Frawley: You are a republican?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: All honourable members know where I stand on that subject.

Mr. Lamont: Does your script allow you to ad-lib at this juncture?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Yes; I am endeavouring to ad-lib. I am even allowed to pause for applause. The honourable member has not been giving me any, either.

All honourable members are in receipt of a publication called "Network". This is issued by authority of the commissioners of the Commonwealth and the State railway systems. I would therefore assume that the information it contains is factual. I have noted in issue after issue projects for rail improvement which have a very heavy—and in many cases a majority—Australian Government funding. It is interesting to note that most of the rail works are taking place in N.S.W. and Victoria. Why? For the very simple reason that the Tory Governments of those States put up fully documented submissions. When the money is granted, they accept it and get on with the job. Contrast that attitude with the negative role of Queensland. Even after such a short time as the Labor Government has been in power, it is possible to see the improvements in the Sydney and Melbourne rail systems.

Mr. Frawley: Oh, rot!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: If the honourable member will be a little patient, I will enlighten him. In Sydney the new double-deck rail cars are being delivered at something like a car a week. In Melbourne the new silver trains have proved very popular. Melbourne even has a couple of prototype new trams in service to test public reaction. Compare this situation with the antiquated rolling-stock used on the Brisbane suburban network. Some of the carriages are so old that they are worthy of a National Trust classification. I suggest that the Premier pick up his telephone—the one that he alleges

is tapped—and ring the Minister for Transport in the Australian Government and put a proposal to him.

Mr. Dean: What about a railway line to Redcliffe?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: A railway line to Redcliffe is needed, too, but the people of that area do not get very good representation from the present incumbent.

Mr. Frawley: Be careful! You are reflecting on the Speaker now.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: No, not on the Speaker. I am reflecting on the honourable member for Murrumba.

The Inala portion of the Archerfield electorate has a reasonably good co-ordinated road-rail service. At least the people there are not isolated like their counterparts at Acacia Ridge. Rocklea has a train service of sorts; but, here again, the cuts in the Acacia Ridge services have hit the people of Rocklea hard.

I noticed in recent newspaper reports that money is to be spent on upgrading the Oxley and Darra railway stations to interchange stations. I welcome this move, belated though it is. The bus passengers using these two stations have had problems during periods of wet weather. It is good to see that this situation will be remedied.

I notice that the member for Sherwood, Honourable J. D. Herbert, was very careful in announcing this project to make no mention of the fact that the Australian Government was making a contribution. I know this has become par for the course with this Tory Government. I can understand why no acknowledgment is made of Australian Government grants. Silence serves to hide the Queensland Government's double dealing. I think it was the teachers who were the first to wake up. The system is quite clear. As the Australian Government puts money into a project or field of activity, the State Government's contribution drops proportionately. But as I have said before, people are starting to wake up to this sleight-of-hand trick. The Premier and his Ministers will find it increasingly harder to justify their continued belly-aching for funds.

I call on the Government to act now and set up a metropolitan transport authority. Give the capital city a really first-class public transport system, something more in keeping with the 20th century and with Brisbane's role as tourist capital of Australia. I call on members of the Liberal Party to stand and be counted on this issue. I say to them, "Just for once, have a little old-fashioned backbone. Show a little bit of intestinal fortitude, and stand up to the boggy farmers of the National Party."

This question of the lack of suitable public transport raises the question of the need for a public hospital in the Inala area. I say Inala area because such a hospital would serve the needs of about 75,000 people in the immediate area—suburbs such as Acacia Ridge, Carole Park, Richlands, Gales, Wacol, Darra and Oxley. The first five I mentioned are still undergoing very rapid growth.

As I have pointed out before, suburbs such as these have been allowed to develop without any planning or provision of hospital facilities. Persons seeking hospital treatment have to travel virtually from one end of Brisbane to the other. For example, from Inala it is necessary to use three different forms of public transport to reach the Royal Brisbane Hospital. Not only is this a very costly undertaking but it is also very time-consuming.

People seeking to avail themselves of their right to free hospital treatment are, by and large, in the lower socio-economic groups, such as widows and deserted wives. I hope that that will be obviated when Medibank is introduced into Queensland.

It is also a fact of life that the proportion of children in the outer suburbs is very much higher than in the inner-city locations of the present major hospitals. People should not have to travel these great distances when they are sick or injured. A hospital at Inala would relieve the tremendous pressure on the Princess Alexandra Hospital. The proposal to build a teaching hospital at Mt. Gravatt will not help the residents of the south-western suburbs one iota. It will not be possible to reach it by direct public transport. I urge the Government to reconsider its attitude to the building of peripheral hospitals in the metropolitan area. In these days of poor transport, high fares and the need to travel long distances to seek treatment, hospitals in the outer suburbs are most definitely the answer.

The final matter I wish to raise today concerns the unfair treatment being meted out to the Metropolitan Trotting Club at Rocklea. The reason I raise this matter at this time is that the trotting club, like all other organisations, is faced with rising costs and expenses. The avenues open to the club to relieve the financial burden are extremely limited.

As most members will be aware, prior to 1970 it was possible to place a bet on the Brisbane gallops at the Rocklea trots. However, in its wisdom, or out of pure spite, depending on which corner one is in, the Q.T.C. intervened and recommended to the Minister for racing that the betting on the Brisbane gallops be stopped. He accepted its advice. We all know that the Q.T.C. is well known as a Star Chamber and a preserver of the so-called establishment. It

controls racing in this State in a very high-handed and arbitrary manner. It is a fact that to become eligible for election to that Star Chamber committee it is necessary to have one's name entered in the stud book at birth.

The action in stopping the betting was supposed to achieve a twofold purpose.

Mr. Gunn: You are starting to get a little hoarse.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Perhaps to the pony stage. In fact, while we are talking about a little horse—the honourable member's knowledge of animal husbandry is nil. He could not get a cow out of a bog.

It was suggested that by stopping the betting at Rocklea, attendances from south-side residents at the Doomben and Ascot courses would rise dramatically and T.A.B. revenue at offices in the vicinity would rise also. But neither has happened. Attendances at race meetings have steadily declined as patrons are not prepared to pay high transport costs and admission fees to go to the races. T.A.B. revenue has shown no more than normal growth patterns.

The Rocklea trots provide a very pleasant outing for large numbers of people from the surrounding southern suburbs. I did a check at the course recently just to see where the patrons were coming from. As a matter of fact I was informed that the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads would be barred if he ever went out there.

As was to be expected, the suburbs of Oxley, Darra, Inala, Acacia Ridge, Coopers Plains and Salisbury were well represented. But to my surprise I found people from as far afield as Wynnum, Slacks Creek and Ipswich. All were quite adamant that they had no intention whatsoever of travelling miles through the city and the Valley to go to Ascot or Doomben. Most people could not understand why Rocklea had been singled out for this discriminatory treatment. Naturally, to a man they wanted the Brisbane betting restored. I feel that the return of the Brisbane betting would increase attendances and so help the club financially. This would enable the club to maintain its present high standard. It is no use the Treasurer telling me that the club can cut its costs by increasing admission charges or by cutting back on prize money or the number of races. That argument just will not wash. Increasing admission charges would only penalise the small man the club is trying to cater for. These people are trying to have a good afternoon's entertainment at a moderate cost. After all, most people are not in possession of complimentary tickets to the members' stand at Doomben or Ascot, as is the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads. The owners, trainers and drivers have already accepted prize money cuts.

Mr. Hinze: Why don't you lend them your gold pass?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I've lost it.

It would be grossly unfair to suggest further cuts, because these people, too, have to meet certain expenses. The suggestion that the programme be cut back by even one race does a grave disservice to the trotting industry. What seems to escape the notice of most people is that Rocklea is a qualifying ground for Albion Park.

To cut out even one race means debarring at least 10 horses from a chance of qualifying. If dropping a race off the programme whenever the club's expenses rise is to become the practice, we do not need to be geniuses to see the harm that will befall the trotting industry as a whole in the long term.

For a man who, on every possible occasion, thumps his chest and proclaims what a great fellow he is in racing, the Treasurer adopts an attitude that, to say the least, is very strange. He says that all racing is under his benevolent wing, and then turns round and gives one section a good belt. Who needs an enemy when he can have the Treasurer as a friend? Ask the Premier; he will supply the answer. The only thing that some of his advisers have a vested interest in is maintaining the status quo.

As I have already said, the Rocklea course is a very pleasant place at which to spend an afternoon. At it spectators will find spacious grounds, ample car-parking facilities, a very large covered betting ring and excellent catering facilities.

Mr. Hinze: When were you there last?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I was there last Saturday. I would urge all honourable members to attend the Rocklea trots. They would be pleasantly surprised at the way the events are conducted and also the excellent amenities that are provided.

Mr. Hinze: Do we get complimentary passes?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Possibly arrangements could be made to give the Minister a complimentary pass if he were prepared to do a "streak" around the course. I am informed that if he did attend the course, Red Creed would not be allowed to start because occasionally the Minister hits him with a "hornet".

Last year the Rocklea course was submerged by the January floods for almost five days. In some places the water was 20 ft. deep, and the committee and club members did a fantastic job in restoring the grounds. I pay them the highest tribute. Besides having to meet the cost of restoration

of the grounds, the club missed out on five race days. Naturally its financial position was seriously affected as a result.

In conclusion, I appeal to the Minister to reconsider this grossly unfair ruling and to permit betting on Brisbane galloping meetings. The Rocklea club is well run and caters for south-side residents. Its committee comprises an excellent body of men, most of whom have made their way most successfully in their respective fields and have the trotting industry at heart. I ask the Minister for Works and Housing to lend me his support in this matter, because I know that when Rocklea was in his electorate of Yeronga he was very much opposed to the withdrawal of betting on metropolitan galloping events.

As the 500th meeting of the Rocklea Club is to be held on Easter Monday, 31 March, the Treasurer could show that his concern for trotting is genuine by using the occasion to lift this iniquitous ban and give the club a visit from the Easter bunny.

Mr. Gumm: Are you chairman of the committee?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I hope to be.

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (2.59 p.m.): It is my privilege to come to this Parliament as the duly elected member for Brisbane. On behalf of the electors of Brisbane, and indeed all the citizens of Brisbane, I endorse the motion moved by the honourable member for Mourilyan and pledge the electorate's continued loyalty to Her Majesty and affection for her. I also extend our thanks to His Excellency Sir Colin Hannah.

In pledging the loyalty and affection of the people of Brisbane, I feel sure that this pledge is no less significant now in 1975 than it was when Queensland first became a sovereign State. There may, however, be a variation in the sincerity that accompanies this pledge. I am sure all honourable members are aware that I am the first member for Brisbane in many years who is not committed to a socialist philosophy.

It was a former member for Brisbane who, when Speaker of this Parliament, frequently stated that saying the morning prayers in this Chamber almost choked him. If that gentleman was so insincere in his Christian beliefs, his sincerity in tendering the pledge of loyalty to the Crown on behalf of the people of Brisbane must have been questionable.

As recently as last week, a member of the Opposition interjected by referring to the monarchy as an anachronism. We in Brisbane do not think that it is an anachronism, and we are glad of the opportunity to pledge our loyalty.

The people of Brisbane have suffered for a long time from misrepresentation and non-representation in this House. It is my intention—in fact, it is my duty—to give active and effective representation.

The electorate of Brisbane is unique in that it incorporates the whole of the central city area of this grand State Capital. In this area substantial development is taking place. Progress has become so much a matter of fact in Queensland since 1957 that it is taken for granted—so much so that projects such as the \$12,500,000 rail link between South Brisbane and Roma Street Stations, the \$20,000,000 project at the Royal Brisbane Hospital and the \$45,000,000 prestigious cultural centre on the south side, just upstream from graceful Victoria Bridge, go virtually unnoticed. In any other electorate than Brisbane, any one of these projects would be sufficient to ensure a member's return for life.

Recently we have heard much in this House—and again this morning—about gerrymanders. In fact, my immediate predecessor referred to the electorate of Brisbane as one of the most gerrymandered electorates in Queensland. If there were any truth in that allegation, such a gerrymander was surely in favour of the Labor Party. At the time of the 1972 redistribution, Brisbane was regarded as a certain Labor seat. In less than three years, owing to the disenchantment of the electorate with the socialist philosophies propounded by the Opposition, what was in 1972 a safe Labor seat firstly became marginal and then on 7 December 1974 became a Liberal seat.

December 7 was the date of the State election. It was also the anniversary of the tremendous disaster at Pearl Harbour. The Labor Opposition has good cause to remember that date; it is the date of the commencement of the last stage of its disintegration.

At a time when public health is so topical, it is appropriate to refer to the predominance of hospital services (both State and private) in my electorate. The Brisbane electorate encompasses not only the Royal Brisbane Hospital complex but also St. Helen's, St. Andrew's, Holy Spirit, and across the river at Kangaroo Point, Mt. Olivet. Other than Royal Brisbane, all those hospitals are conducted by religious orders and institutions.

Last week a member of the Opposition reminded the House that the system of public hospitals in Queensland had been introduced by a Labor Government. That is true, but surely it is not unreasonable to expect to find at least one rose among so many thorns. We, as a Government, inherited the public hospital system, but it is also true that that system has, in our term of Government, been greatly improved and updated—so much so that I join issue with those antagonistic to the public hospitals and point, with just

pride, at the Queensland Radium Institute at Royal Brisbane, the Renal Clinic at Princess Alexandra, the Thoracic Clinic at Chermshire and to each of the intensive-care wards in hospitals, not only in Brisbane but also throughout this State in the major provincial cities.

If it is true that medical services are only as good as the nursing staff, it is a fine tribute to those nurses that such a high standard has been achieved and maintained. The Queensland medical service is such that any other Government intending to introduce any system of public health could do no better than to emulate what already exists here.

Whatever may be said to the credit of public hospitals, the same may also be said of the private hospitals. We have the best of both worlds and the patient also has the privilege of freedom of choice. It is the Federal Government's intention to take this choice away from us. It is with regret that I inform the House that the administrators of the private hospitals I have already mentioned, and those of several nursing homes in the electorate of Brisbane, are afraid for their very existence, in that they are threatened by the monster euphemistically named Medibank. Let us give it its right name, which is nationalised health services, not Medibank.

The word "bank" suggests security, but there is no security in Medibank, only conscription and compulsion. The word "bank" suggests money. The only money Medibank stands for is the vast sum of taxpayers' money which it will gobble up. There is no security for the patient. Any patient requiring psychiatric care or physiotherapy is excluded. Even chiropody, a very real and important health service for the aged, is excluded. There is no security in the so-called Medibank for the private hospital, especially when Mr. Hayden has made such a thinly veiled threat as he did on the television programme "Monday Conference" on 17 April 1972, when he said—

"If there is an increase in demand for standard ward beds, there is going to be a diminution in demand for private ward beds, and if the community hospitals are going to freeze themselves out and refuse to mesh in or dovetail in with this sort of change which is going to take place, they are going to find that their custom, if I can use this word, or the consumer demand is going to diminish and they are going to have financial problems."

If Mr. Hayden is uncertain of the cost of his dream of socialised medicine, he need only look at the actual experience of other countries.

Britain had estimated that its first year of socialised health would cost \$170,000,000. In fact, it cost them \$433,000,000. Their estimate was wrong by two and a half times. Now it is costing Britain \$4,000 million a year.

Sweden's cost for national health has increased almost ninefold from \$305,000,000 in 1960 to \$2,770 million in 1972.

The province of Ontario in Canada spends 25 per cent of its total budget on health. The people there realise that they have backed the wrong horse, but they just don't know how to get off.

Yet we in Australia are being compelled to accept Medibank. What concerns our private hospital administrators is how sure they can be of ever receiving the moneys which will be due to them from a Government which is already spending grossly in excess of its budgeted deficit—a staggering sum of \$2,700 million at the last count.

What concerns me as a member of this House is the bludgeoning tactics of the Federal Minister for Social Security. If such tactics are tolerated on this issue of national health, there is no end to their potential use. It is a sad state of affairs when the Government in Canberra can threaten to withhold from this State or any other State money which the Minister must believe to be our entitlement, for, if it is not our entitlement, what right has the Minister to make the offer in the first place? Clearly he is caught in a cleft stick of his own doing.

If Government funds are to become the sole source of capital to run national health, the degree of Government control will eventually be 100 per cent. This is what troubles the minds of those who are responsible for our outstanding private hospitals operated in my electorate by the religious orders. Their independence and survival are in jeopardy. When they look at the experience of their counterparts in places such as Canada they find that the effect has been a loss of morale and sense of vocation among the nursing religious. Their orders have suffered serious losses of personnel, principally because the Government find that, when they become salaried Government employees, they no longer find a sense of religious purpose in their work in the hospitals. In Canada in this way there has been a gradual exclusion of the religious from the central area of the Christian mission.

A cynic has said that the only two certainties are death and taxation. I have spoken of death—or its corollary, health—so I now refer to taxation.

Under the Constitution, the States had equal rights with the Commonwealth; but, since the introduction of uniform taxation in 1942, that field has been restricted. There have been conferences as to the possible return of taxing powers to the States, but the prospects of this happening become more and more remote.

It is of passing interest to note that at such a conference in 1952 the then Premier of this State—the Labor Premier (the Honourable V. C. Gair)—said to the then Prime Minister (the Right Honourable R. G. Menzies)—

“I agree with your statement that the levying of taxation by the States is an indispensable element of sovereign Government.”

It is clear that in 1952 the Labor Party in this State believed in the sovereignty of the States. There was nothing original about the expression of Mr. Gair at that time. That opinion was also shared by the Privy Council, which, in the James case, in the mid-1930's, enunciated the situation by saying as far as our federation was concerned—

“The States, while agreeing on a measure of delegation, yet in the main continue to preserve their original Constitutions . . . thus the powers of the States were left unaffected by the Constitution except insofar as the contrary was expressly provided; subject to that, each State remained sovereign within its own sphere. The powers of the State within those limits are as plenary as are the powers of the Commonwealth.”

That is the situation which we believe exists to this day and has not been taken from us.

It is true that there are very few fields left, since uniform taxation was introduced, for the States to raise revenue. Consequently it is a tribute to the ingenuity of our Treasurer that Queensland has as stable an economy as it has in spite of inflation, unemployment, and stop-start revaluations of currency and of tariffs, all of which have been imposed upon us by a Canberra centralised Government.

One of the few fields left to the State, but not exclusively because the Commonwealth still has a hand in it, is estate duty. In 1957, when this Government took the Treasury benches, two forms of estate duty were operating in Queensland—probate duty, which was fixed at the rate of 1 per cent of personal estate as distinct from real estate, and succession duty, which was at a variable rate on the whole of the value of the estate. There was an exemption in estates of under £200 or \$400. There was a further exemption in the case of widows and children who were successors. In their case the exemption was a mere £500 or \$1,000. This was the exemption that existed in the days of a Labor Government in this State. How magnanimous! How kind! Obviously it was an expression of sympathy for the interests of small people. After coming to office, our Government increased the exemption to \$3,000 and extended the exemption not only to widows and children but also to widowers, and has since increased the exemption to the realistic figure of \$50,000.

As I said, we had two forms of duty—probate and succession. As from 19 December 1973, this Government abolished probate duty. This was in accordance with the platform of the Liberal Party to moderate the imposition of estate duty. In the case of probate duty, we not only moderated it; we abolished it. And in estate duty we introduced a very realistic and proper exemption of \$50,000 to widows, widowers and children.

Like me, most honourable members have been provided by the Women's Electoral Lobby with a submission on death duties. And a very well prepared submission it is. In the electorate of Brisbane, where many superannuitants and senior citizens reside, such a recommendation is of great interest to my constituents. The recommendation of the Women's Electoral Lobby is the abolition of estate duty, and particularly the abolition of estate duties as between spouses.

It is not possible to consider estate duty without having regard to gift duty, which, because it is without any form of moral justification, would be perhaps the most oppressive of all forms of taxation. Gift duty was first introduced into Australia in Queensland. It is of interest to note that the author of the leading textbook on gift duty in Australia, Bernard Silitto, a Victorian barrister, said in the preface to that book—

“Queensland, which has always been astute to devise new means of taxation imposed gift duty on gifts by its Gift Duty Act of 1926”.

That was done in 1926, during the term of a Labor Government.

The revenue raised by gift duty is not considerable. In 1971-72 it was \$357,582; in 1972-73 it was \$473,932; and in 1973-74 it was \$673,152. Although I do not wish to make the Treasurer's task more difficult, I believe that the cost of collecting gift duty, and the resentment that it causes, outweigh the amount received from it. I believe that gift duty could well be abolished, especially when it is remembered that revenue of almost \$1,000,000 was abandoned by the Government when it abolished probate duty in December 1973.

It is not to be inferred from my recommendation of the abolition of gift duty that the conveyancing of property of any kind by gift should be exempt from duty. Such transactions would still attract conveyancing duty, which at present is at the rate of 1½ per cent. By the abolition of gift duty, I believe that we would be taking one further step in pursuance of the policy of the Liberal Party, and the Government, to abolish estate duties.

In the same period of three years to which I have already referred, succession duty, on the other hand, returned these figures—

1971-72	..	..	\$17,264,000
1972-73	..	..	\$18,586,000
1973-74	..	..	\$20,214,000

Those figures show that succession duty increased in that period by not more than 15 per cent, which is not a substantial increase.

On the other hand, stamp duty on conveyancing in those same years changed markedly. These are the figures—

1971-72	..	..	\$15,597,000
1972-73	..	..	\$30,477,000
1973-74	..	..	\$37,564,000

They show a most substantial increase of approximately 150 per cent from 1971-72 to 1973-74. It is therefore fairly obvious that the larger amount of revenue will come from conveyancing duty, which is readily assessable and promptly received, as compared with succession duty, which is irksome and costly to assess and, as the Women's Electoral Lobby submission points out, may well cause hardship and resentment.

By way of aside, I point out that some of the hardships in the case histories set out in the submission from the Women's Electoral Lobby, which were caused by the need for the survivor to prove his or her personal contribution to joint accounts in banks and other financial institutions, will now be avoided because, when the Succession and Probate Duties Act was amended in 1973, section 10B was abolished. All in all, and as a result of some years of experience in the administration of estates, supported by the figures that I have given, I commend the policy that leads to the abolition of estate duties.

The character of the whole of the electorate of Queensland is reflected in the constitution of this House, not only in the number of Government members but also in the number of Government members who have a Labor-affiliated background. We have already heard from the honourable members for Everton and Flinders, and I know of others with similar backgrounds. In my own case, it would be sheer disrespect not to refer to my Labor-influenced background, for I feel that it makes me a better Liberal.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Your grandfather would turn in his grave.

Mr. LOWES: It is with pride that I inform the House, as has the honourable member for Archerfield, that my grandfather was the member for Maree. The part of the Brisbane electorate that is in Kangaroo Point was part of the old electorate of Maree. He was a member from 1912 to 1929, and from 1920 till 1929 he occupied the honourable position in this House that is now so ably filled by yourself, Mr. Speaker.

All honourable members will be aware that the 1912 election followed a long and bitter general strike, and on my grandfather's entry into this Chamber in 1912 he made a forthright statement on the virtues of the Labour Party of the day. Fortunately, I have been provided with a copy of the "Hansard" report of his speech, and I quote from it with pride—

"Today there is a strong Labour party in every State of the Commonwealth. The Labour party hold the reins of government in two of the States, and in the Commonwealth Parliament. There must be some reason for the growth of the party under such adverse circumstances as it has had to face. I will tell you what the reason is—it is because the Labour party is advocating measures for the improvement of the conditions of the people, and while it continues to advocate such measures the Labour party will continue to grow."

Later in the same speech he said—

"It is because the Labour party believes in making the conditions better for the mass of the workers that I am a member of that party at the present time."

Fine words, Mr. Speaker—words used with their true meaning and with high ideals.

Unfortunately for the Labor Party, it has lost those high ideals and, with them, the support of the majority of the electorate. Strikes are no longer for the improvement of industrial conditions; rather they are attempts to embarrass Governments, or even other trade unions, and high-minded principles have given way to high-handed authoritarianism. If that were not so, the honourable member for Bulimba, who is absent from the Chamber at present, might still be the Leader of the Opposition. If the skulduggery of the Q.C.E. had not perverted the proper selection of the candidate to succeed the late George Keyatta in the seat of Townsville, my father would most likely have been selected, and I assure the honourable member for Bulimba that from my father he would have received loyalty rather than what he received from the former member for Townsville West.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, as a newly elected member I look forward to the introduction into this Parliament, under your guidance, of laws for the betterment and advancement of the people of this State, and I therefore heartily support the motion.

Mr. GIBBS (Albert) (3.24 p.m.): I am both pleased and grateful to be able to support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply in this, the Forty-first Parliament of Queensland, and I know that I speak for the people of my electorate of Albert when I pledge allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen through His Excellency the Governor, Sir Colin Hannah.

In his Opening Speech, His Excellency clearly expressed the intention of the Parliament to get on with the job of making Queensland a strong, productive, free-enterprise State. My colleagues and I intend to fulfil this undertaking through the full spectrum of parliamentary duties.

I applaud the honourable member for Mourilyan (Mrs. Kippin) for her speech when moving the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech, and I congratulate her on the quality of the response to it. This is International Women's Year, and we are proud of the women of Queensland and of Australia, especially our lady parliamentarians.

It is with great pride that I have taken my place in this Parliament as the member for the electorate of Albert. The people whom I now represent showed very clearly by their decision that they wanted to retain the able government provided by the coalition parties. In earlier Country-Liberal Governments, Albert was ably represented for 12 years by the late Cec. Carey on behalf of the Country Party. Through hard work and a deep regard for the people in the electorate, he gained a very special respect at all levels, including Opposition members and Government departments.

His good lady, Mrs. Melba Carey, worked untiringly by his side, and she is still very active in community affairs. It is with considerable humility that I acknowledge the standard set before me by the late Cec. Carey, and it will be my challenge to revive for this great electorate the quality of representation it formerly enjoyed.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. GIBBS: Yes, the late Cec. Carey was an excellent member.

The Albert electorate is bounded by Slacks Creek in the north and Kingston in the west, and continues through Beenleigh and surrounding districts to Southport and Nerang in the south. It is an area of great diversification. The northern and southern ends are urbanised communities. In between there is a rich sugar-growing and processing district, a substantial dairying industry, rum-distilling, meat processing and manufacturing.

The electorate intrudes into the Gold Coast, where there is a sophisticated tourist industry on which many of the people living in that area depend for their livelihood. I am very conscious of my responsibility to the tourist industry in so far as it affects the permanent population of the Gold Coast and Albert Shire areas.

Beenleigh is the other major centre in Albert. It has a common interest with all surrounding areas, and has a growing community with a rural background. It is a very friendly town in one of the fastest-growing areas in Australia.

I have already had several meetings with representatives of the Albert Shire, including the Shire Chairman, Mr. Hughie Muntz, and I am being supplied with up-to-date information about the plans for the area's future development.

Because of its geographical situation, having Brisbane roughly bordering its northern end, and the tourist capital at its southern end, I regard Albert as the electorate with the greatest potential for development, and I hope to play a full part in bringing that potential to fruition. To achieve this I shall obviously need the co-operation of the State Government, the Albert Shire Council and the Gold Coast City Council, as well as the co-operation of the entire population of the electorate. In particular I still need the continuing help of the many supporters who came forward and were willing to stand and be counted at my side during the election.

I would like to thank my wife and family, my campaign manager, Alderman Norm Rix, and my campaign committee. Thanks also go to Mrs. Moira Barker and Mrs. Mavis Barter, who manned the office for the duration of the campaign on a volunteer basis, and to two young men, Bruce Finlayson and David Molhoek. My special thanks go to the Premier for his part in my campaign and, in fact, for his dedication to the election throughout Queensland, and to his wife, Mrs. Bjelke-Petersen, for her wonderful effort and the long day she spent in the electorate talking to people. My thanks also go to the Honourable Vic Sullivan and Sir Alan Fletcher for the time they spent with me. My special thanks also go to the people who ran functions in association with these visits.

There are two other gentlemen I should like to thank, namely, the Prime Minister, Mr. Gough Whitlam, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Cairns, for their part in the Opposition's campaign, which was of such great help to me. I was sorry Mr. Tucker was not able to come and assist me with his "Let's go!"

There is one thing the Whitlam Government has done for Queenslanders, and the people of Albert in particular, and that is make them aware of what happens when a socialistic Government is in power. It has made a lot of people suddenly become politically aware, with the result that many of the old-time, genuine Labor voters changed their support away from modern Labor.

We fought our election campaign mainly on federal matters, and we make no apology for this. The threat of the Federal Labor Government to Queensland was, and still is, very real. We fought the campaign on an anti-socialistic policy and one of direct opposition to any socialistic or Communistic influences coming into Australia, indications of which are very evident at this time. The result of the election was a clear indication right across Queensland, and to me personally in Albert, that the people of this

State support State rights, the free-enterprise system, and the freedom to think and work and to choose their way of life within the framework of the law.

The basis of the Labor Government's platform is the destruction of the States as we know them and the establishment of regional government with a two-tier system instead of a three-tier system. I will oppose any such moves with the utmost vigour. I believe in a three-tier system of government as we know it now, based on a free-enterprise, free-thinking democracy. It has been said by the Federal Government, and Dr. Cairns in particular, that they have decided to assist the private sector of the community on a short-term basis in order to get our economy back on a profitable footing; but it is only a short-term programme. As soon as things have been made to look a little brighter again, they will bring back their socialistic policies to which they are dedicated. I would like to say more about the three tiers of government, which I fully support. These are Commonwealth, State and local authority. I shall at all times support State rights.

Local authority has changed vastly over the years and is getting more responsible and stable day by day as people demand higher standards in the environment in which they live. This is forcing balanced development of parks and sporting facilities and the upgrading of the old areas that were developed in a period in which councils had few or no by-laws. In fact in many of the areas for which they were responsible the councils could not afford in those times to develop land and to provide facilities such as kerbing and channelling, water, sewerage, and the entire development concept that we have today. These high standards of development are largely responsible for the current high cost of building lots and industrial land, and the people must be prepared to pay for them.

The unfortunate aspect of this is the spate of substandard development which took place perhaps from the post-war years onwards, when there was no kerbing and channelling and insufficient underground drainage—factors that are hampering local government today. The installation of sewerage is fraught with problems and high cost, but it is a service that is paid for by the recipients. So, too, is water supply. The situation will improve progressively all the time. The services that are a direct cost to the ratepayer are kerbing and channelling, drainage, and upgrading, sealing and widening of roads. People today demand these improvements to make the areas they live in more attractive, and the result is that the costs to the council multiply.

The Gold Coast ward that I represent as an alderman is looking at a cost of between \$3,000,000 and \$5,000,000 for this type of improvement. There are 10 wards on the Gold Coast. This expenditure will bring

the standard up to somewhere near that of modern developments that adjoin these areas. Some are extremely low lying and their drainage problems are immense, but I know the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads recognises this issue and will face up to it realistically. We are confident that he will put a very solid case to the Federal Government for a greater share of the revenue from the high taxes we pay today. I believe that once local government overcomes the backlog in carrying out improvements to these areas, at a cost of many millions of dollars, it will be in a position to support itself to a larger degree. If interim assistance is not given, I feel that the high labour costs related to materials will force rates up to such a height that people will not be able to pay them.

I believe, too, that the majority of local authorities are supplying the essential services, such as water, garbage removal and sewerage, at a price well within the reach of the public. But it is the general rate that has to pay for the loans which are undertaken by councils to supply permanent works in the older areas, and this has grown out of all proportion and has no returnable value to the councils. The Minister for Local Government has indicated his willingness to act on this matter, and, with his extensive background of experience in local government, he is well equipped to carry out the necessary investigation and to make the recommendations that will put the local authorities on a better footing. Local authorities have the feeling of the people at their finger-tips and know the needs at real grass-roots level.

Solid-waste disposal is another facet of local administration and most authorities find it a problem that is expanding at an alarming rate. The time is not far distant when it will become a high priority in future planning.

If one can describe driving as a pleasure, it is a comparative pleasure to drive up the four-lane highway from Southport to Brisbane. And if one can think back to 1957 it is possible to visualise the remarkable progress that has been made by the coalition Government of this State in Albert's roads.

Because of the continued growth of the area and the volume of traffic which is, and will be, using this highway, we must press on with future planning and construction of all roads. As well as being the elected member for Albert, I am a member of the Gold Coast City Council, chairman of the health committee and deputy mayor. I shall continue as an alderman and a member of this Assembly for the rest of my council term, during which time I propose to consider the wisdom or otherwise of trying to cope with the duties of these two positions.

If it proves possible to carry out both tasks to the full, I feel it would be desirable to continue in both positions from the point of view of remaining close to the people through my contact with local government. There is nothing like a local government background and training to give one a clear understanding of the people's needs.

I express my appreciation to my colleagues in this House for the opportunity given to me to serve on the parliamentary committee on Local Government. I regard it as a great privilege to be able to endeavour to further the great cause of local government at State level. It is good to have a fellow alderman of the Gold Coast City Council, Sir Bruce Small, as a colleague, and it is a matter of great pride on the Gold Coast that the Honourable Russ Hinze, a former councillor and chairman of Albert Shire, is now the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads.

Many honourable members are former or current members of shire or city councils in Queensland. They know the true value of the form of government which operates so close to the people. Today, more and more, State and Australian Government members are showing an interest in local government, and there is competition between State and Federal Governments in the financial deals being offered to local government. The people of Australia have spoken clearly on the question of direct relationship with Canberra. Let the States look after local authorities. That was what the "No" vote meant last May. I supported that vote, and I make a strong plea that we demonstrate our determination to honour that obligation with all the strength at our command.

For the first time in the history of this State the Government of which I now have the honour to be part has come forward with a State Grants Commission plan worth, in the first year, some \$5,000,000 to local government in Queensland. I am proud and appreciative that my own council of the Gold Coast has just received advice of a grant of \$60,000. Albert Shire, most of which is in my electorate, will receive \$50,000. I remind honourable members opposite that the \$60,000 that the Gold Coast will get from the State Grants Commission is just \$60,000 more than we got from the Australian Grants Commission last year, but we are hoping for better things this year.

Honourable members will know that there are no strings attached to State grants of the type I have mentioned. This is the sort of financial assistance the councils need, and I hope this Government will be able to continue the good work on an expanded basis in the coming years.

I turn now to education. The Albert electorate has a total of 15 State primary schools, two high schools, three pre-schools and a reasonably vigorous programme of expansion. As one of the fastest-growing areas in Australia, it requires constant action on the forward planning of schools. The overcrowding of the Southport High School is one problem facing us and should be tackled without delay.

We should acknowledge the profound value of the report, which was accepted by Cabinet just before the recent elections, on the wet lands from Jumpinpin to the Nerang River bridge. Much of this report deals with areas which are in the Albert electorate and sets out quite clearly how the area should be utilised. I believe it is a very forward-thinking document and its proposals are somewhat overdue. The report took some six years to complete and is a most worthwhile concept, well thought out and an excellent thesis on long-term planning. I believe it will please all those who believe in sensible conservation. It is interesting to note the list of people and departments who served in putting this important document together. I took part in it, and I felt privileged to be involved.

I now touch on a matter that has already been raised in this House and has special reference to my electorate. I refer to the problem of dust nuisance at Runaway Bay, which was raised by the honourable member for Sandgate. I preface my remarks on this subject by congratulating the honourable member on having solved the problems of his own electorate so successfully as to have time to interest himself in the problems of mine. However, I have great respect for the honourable member and, had it not been for the fact that I am aware that he has a house close to Runaway Bay and is therefore personally affected, I might have been tempted to assume that he was being prompted by some former, disgruntled member of this House to raise the issue.

Let me say at the outset that there is a very real and a very serious dust problem at Runaway Bay. It is a problem to which I have devoted a great deal of attention, both as a member of this House and in my capacity as chairman of the Gold Coast City Council's health committee. The simple physical explanation is that a major development is in progress in the area and when a south-east wind prevails it picks up fine, black sand, which develops into a dust cloud and invades every building in its path.

I would take up far too much of the time of this House if I were to attempt to acquaint members with the detailed history and timetable of events that have led to and been partly responsible for the seriousness of the problem. However, I think the House should know that there have been some extraordinary delays on the part of the various bodies responsible for authorising

the several stages of this development. A major problem, too, was created by a change in the membership of the Gold Coast City Council in 1973, when the developers, who were in the midst of critical negotiations, found themselves confronted by an entirely new works committee that was quite unfamiliar with the project. Finally we had a classic example of fools rushing in where angels fear to tread. I am referring to the actions of the former member for Albert, who chose to join issue with both the Harbours and Marine Department and the Land Administration Commission over the administration of the Canals Act. His hit-and-run tactics served only to hold up all work on the development for a full five months, and if there had not been this delay, most of the dust-provoking groundwork would have been completed as planned long before the south-east winds prevailed. On top of all this, it must be borne in mind that the Gold Coast has just experienced one of its driest summers on record.

The only purpose in pinpointing blame for the situation would be to alert the Gold Coast City Council, as well as those Government departments involved, to examine their administrative machinery so that there is no repetition of this unfortunate occurrence. Let blame lay where it may; I am more concerned now with the problem as it is and with its effect on the people whose homes lie in the path of the dust clouds that are blown off this development. We cannot minimise the problem. It is serious indeed, and Press reports describing it have not been exaggerated. I have concerned myself with it and have been in constant touch with the developers, who, I must emphasise in all fairness, have done everything possible to alleviate the distress occasioned.

I shall give the House some indication of the measures that have been taken by the developers, but first let me give the honourable member for Sandgate the good news.

I have an assurance from the developers that the problem will be eliminated within a matter of five or six weeks, by which time water will be in the canals and most of the area from which the dust has been blowing will be grassed over.

The area under discussion is known as Shearwater, and as far back as September 1972 provisional approval to construct a canal estate there under the provisions of the Canals Act was issued by the Department of Harbours and Marine. From then until February 1974, there were protracted negotiations with the Gold Coast City Council on a number of aspects of the development. These were still under discussion and negotiation with the city council in March 1974, when the Harbours and Marine Board advised the developers that under s. 7 (2) of the Canals Act the approval granted for

canal construction had lapsed. This notice was accompanied by a threat of prosecution under section 3 of the Act for the unlawful construction of the canals.

It was inevitable that with the delays experienced in getting the Gold Coast City Council to reply to correspondence and in having to supply with each engineering submission fresh drawings and additional information not originally requested, the developers would run out of approval time from the Gold Coast City Council as well.

Finally in March 1974 the developers were ordered by the Department of Harbours and Marine to suspend all work and to vacate the site. A request to de-water the canals as a safety measure was approved, but requests to grass over the area as a dust-preventive measure was denied by the department.

From that point on it took five months to achieve full approval for the project. During this time, the developers spent \$25,000 maintaining the de-watering process and to that can be added something like \$125,000 by way of inflation and holding charges. An unfortunate flow-on from this unhappy situation was the loss of employment by many workers engaged by contractors to complete the project.

As I said earlier, the worst of the problem is over and the final solution to it is for the developers to be allowed to get on with the job unhindered until the canals are filled and the dust is laid under a carpet of grass. This is in progress at this moment. The developers are even grassing, at considerable expense to themselves, areas of the development which will eventually have to be disturbed as the development proceeds. This, I might mention, is in itself a contravention of the Canals Act; but, because of the seriousness of the situation and the understanding of the problem, the head of the Department of Harbours and Marine, Mr. Allan Britton, has seen fit to authorise it.

In the meantime, I have satisfied myself by personal investigation that the developers have explored every possible measure that could be used to minimise the dust nuisance. The developers have tried the use of oil spray to keep the dust down and have invested \$2,500 in spray nozzles using salt water. These measures were found to be quite effective. Engineers and scientists—in fact anybody who could offer a solution—were recruited to examine the problem and make suggestions.

Because the owners indicated they could not live under the prevailing dust conditions, the developers even went to the extent of buying outright two homes closest to the development for a combined price of \$73,000.

In Howard Street the developers built a fence 1.8 m high at a cost of \$650 along the southern alignment to stop the worst of the wind-blown dust entering the homes. Relief in various forms has been given to affected families and in one instance, where young children were affected, the company rented a house for them so that they could have an alternative home in times of severe dust problems.

Throughout this trying period I have kept in close touch with the residents through their organisation, the Hollywell Progress Association, formed as a follow-up to the original meeting between the company's executives and the Hollywell residents, which I also attended. I have also had several discussions with Mr. Ted Reilley who ably represents the affected residents and is contributing many hours to solving this problem.

Residents were told what steps were being taken to alleviate the dust menace and were assured that any suggestion of merit from any source whatsoever would be implemented if it could be shown to produce results. In the meantime, the company has amended its development procedures to that land under development so that it could be brought to the grassing stage more quickly.

Admittedly, the residents of Hollywell have been through a trying time which, generally speaking, they have borne with admirable patience. I feel sure that their patience will be rewarded, for when this development is completed it will prove to be the best-planned and best-constructed canal estate of its kind to be found anywhere in Australia.

I now turn to another matter. I believe that there is an urgent need for planning to be carried out in Beenleigh with a view to moving the goods rail facilities out of town. This would mean the resiting of the shunting track to allow the Albert Shire to replan the centre of the town. It now has six roads and one shunting lane converging at one point.

There is also the need to plan, as a matter of urgency, a new layout for a rail exit from Beenleigh south to link up with the standard-gauge railway from Murwillumbah to Lismore. Beenleigh is developing at a rapid rate and the opportunity to provide this link without expensive resumptions will soon be lost. The Albert Shire is more than willing to co-operate in this planning, which would also alleviate some of the parking problems in Beenleigh.

There is a need for the Housing Commission to have a good look at some of its activities, especially the design and type of houses built in various areas, and I would like to see many more commission houses built in Albert.

I was pleased to hear in the Premier's speech that Government policy is to eliminate road tax over three years, and I look forward to seeing in the next Budget the first move in this direction. Over the years road tax has been one of the most unfair taxes aimed at private enterprise, and affecting the average private individual.

I would like to see the Government subsidise bus fares from the Gold Coast to Brisbane for pensioners as their fares would be subsidised for train travel. Because of the high percentage of retired people in my electorate, a large number of whom are pensioners, I would like also to see many more pensioner units built in Albert.

I turn now to the Southport General Hospital. In 1956, when I first moved to Southport, the town had only a maternity hospital. All general-hospital treatment had to be sought in Brisbane. In 1961, Southport was granted its own hospital board, and in that year a 75-general-bed hospital was completed. In the mid 1960's, the then Premier (Sir Francis Nicklin) opened a new maternity section with 32 beds. Since then, two more wards, with a total of 68 beds, have been added to the hospital, and tenders are now being considered by the Health Department and the board's architects for construction of a twelve-storey building at a cost of \$10,500,000. It is anticipated that construction will start within the next few weeks. That certainly is a feather in the cap of the coalition Government. All of this activity has taken place since 1956 in the interests of the health of the people of Queensland—and without Medibank.

Over the years the Albert electorate has acquired what up till now was a successful and thriving clothing industry, and I am deeply disturbed at the way in which the Commonwealth Government appears to be hell-bent on destroying it, as it is on eliminating the motor, shoemaking and other local industries by facilitating the entry of goods from countries enjoying cheap labour. One firm has reduced its work-force to 33 per cent of what it was previously; another has been forced to retrench 60 of its workers; and another has had to suspend its operation. Those displaced workers now have to join the end of the unemployment queue.

I am privileged to have been selected to serve on four important committees of this House. These are Health, Local Government and Main Roads, Industrial Development, and Works and Housing. They are committees on which I particularly wanted to serve, and I look forward to giving as much assistance as I can to the respective Ministers.

It is in man's nature to be part of a unit; it is an instinct that goes back to primeval days. It developed in tribal units, and today we have our family units. The family has, for 2000 years and more, stimulated the instinct for survival. It must be

the great task of this and following generations in this nation to preserve the family unit. I believe that the best way we can do this is by raising the level of opportunity for our young people so that they can devote themselves to fruitful endeavour, instead of being forced by lack of opportunity and despair to abandon the standards of good family life. I know that the Government of which I am a member shares this objective, and it is a source of great comfort to me to have watched the concern shown for maintaining good family life. I share this concern very deeply.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, permit me to offer you my congratulations on your appointment to the important office of Speaker of this Assembly. I also offer my congratulations to the Premier and the Deputy Premier on the overwhelming support they received from the electorate when they were returned to office. I congratulate the new, expanded Ministry, and assure members of it that they have my unqualified support and ever-ready willingness to serve.

Mr. GLASSON (Gregory) (3.56 p.m.): In making my contribution to the debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply so ably moved by the honourable member for Mourilyan (Mrs. Kippin) and seconded by the honourable member for Salisbury (Mrs. Kyburz), I wish first to express not only my own loyalty but also the loyalty of the electors of Gregory to Her Majesty the Queen. We hold her in very high esteem.

I congratulate the Governor, Sir Colin Hannah, on the way in which he, on behalf of Her Majesty, played his part in the opening ceremony of the Forty-first Parliament of Queensland.

I now express my thanks to people in the electorate that I represent. Standing as the National Party candidate for the electorate of Gregory was for me a dream come true. I could see that the future of industries in the area was in deadly peril, and I believed that the economy of the three electorates of Flinders, Gregory and Warrego was inevitably sinking. That was what influenced me to stand for Parliament.

I thank my wife and family for making it possible for me to successfully contest the election. Without the support of my wife—she will now become a grass widow—and the co-operation of my family in taking over the part I played in the business, it would not have been possible for me to undertake this task.

My thanks go also to the very many people who helped me during the election campaign. A number of people went out of their way to visit the vast Gregory electorate, and I mention first the Premier, who made a complete tour of the electorate. The

Honourable Vic. Sullivan, Queensland Minister for Primary Industries, Mr. Bob Katter (the Federal member for Kennedy), Mr. Ken Tomkins, who is now Minister for Lands in this Assembly, Mr. Jim Corbett (the Federal member for Maranoa), Mr. Don Neal, the member for Balonne, and Mr. Tom Lewis, now Premier of New South Wales, all assisted me in my campaign.

Of course, I must not forget the former member for Gregory, Mr. Wally Rae. I pay a special tribute to him because I believe that he served the Gregory electorate with great distinction. That is exemplified by the fact that he is now Agent-General for Queensland in London. If my service in this Assembly is as long as Wally Rae's, I hope that I will be able to contribute as much as he did in the 17 years that he was here. He certainly served both the Government and the people of his electorate well.

I also record my thanks to my campaign director, Mrs. Betty Carey, to my deputy campaign director and right-hand man, Tony Richards, and to the National Party committees throughout the Gregory electorate. There are not very many of them, but I received tremendous assistance from those that are functioning.

As for those centres without a National Party committee, I thank the individuals who came forward and said "I am it, boy". I deeply appreciate their efforts.

I thank the Press in Longreach, Blackall and Charleville. It gave equal opportunity to both sides of the campaign. Although it might be suggested that the newspapers would have been biased, we have figures to prove that on the front pages of "The Longreach Leader", the "Western Times" and "The Barcoo Independent" equal space was given to each party. The job of the editors is to sell papers, and I believe that they were quite impartial throughout the whole campaign.

I thank the management and staff of 4LG, the commercial radio station in Longreach, and the A.B.C.'s 4QL, and 4BL. I also thank the various people who acted as our hosts at the various hotels.

Most important of all, of course, are the electors of Gregory, who, by a near-record majority, elected me to this House to represent them and their problems for the next three years. This I intend to do without fear or favour to any section of the community.

Basically I believe that I am Labor orientated; I am talking about the old Australian Labor Party. I do not believe that the present Federal Government is a Labor Party at all, but is merely trading on the name of the good old Labor Party. After all, the Labor Party was born in my part of

the world, just out of the Gregory electorate. I am very pleased that that gidgee tree was not tainted when Mr. Whitlam made his tour throughout Queensland.

The Gregory electorate covers no less an area than 190,100 square miles. At the last election 6,280 electors voted, although there were 7,000-odd on the roll. Inconvenience and distance were the reasons the others did not vote. On a redistribution I would envisage that Flinders, Gregory and possibly part of Warrego would call for another Flynn of the Inland. No man who was sincerely trying to serve his people would have Buckley's chance of succeeding there. It shows a complete disregard for the problems of isolation. The honourable member for Mt. Isa said that it was about time isolation was taken into account. If it were left to Opposition members, isolation would not count.

That vast pastoral area breeds sheep for meat and wool production and breeds and sells fat cattle. That is the only industry we have. It is dependent entirely on the grace of God and the seasons. It was pointed out by the honourable member for Flinders that on an average we have a drought or semi-drought in three out of every 10 years. In an area in which the rainfall varies from six inches at Birdsville to 20 inches at Blackall, there is little room for diversification. Farming has been tried, but it has not proved a successful venture in any circumstances.

This vast area is fed by four water systems, namely: the Georgina River, which runs from the Northern Territory border to the south-western corner of Queensland; the Diamantina River, which drains the central area and spills into the Channel Country; the Cooper Creek, Thomson River and Barcoo River system, which flows into South Australia; and, on the eastern boundary of the electorate, the Bulloo River.

These great inland water systems flow through what, in good wet seasons, is probably the greatest cattle-fattening area in Australia. Proof of this contention can be found in the fact that cattle trucked from the Quilpie saleyards average 50,000 a year. And I remind honourable members that large numbers of cattle are trekked across 400 miles of country in order to reach the Quilpie saleyards.

The beef-cattle areas in the west of the electorate are among the most isolated in the State and they derive no assistance whatever from concessions, such as the lifting of the road tax. As the people in those areas are not served by rail, they are not required to pay the road transport permit fee. They are, however, required to pay one-third of a cent per ton-mile, which is an imposition on them. As we know, this rate is fixed under an agreement between the State and the Commonwealth, and we have no power to have it altered or removed.

The Federal Minister for Northern Development (Dr. Rex Patterson) has claimed that the Commonwealth Government has done everything asked of it by the National Cattlemen's Council to alleviate the problem brought about by low cattle prices. I urge the Federal Minister to press his Government for a 50 per cent subsidy on transport to and from these Outback areas and also for a removal of the one-third of a cent per ton-mile during the cattle recession. If he is genuine in his desire to assist the cattle industry, he will do as I have suggested. At present, the most isolated area is the one that receives the least consideration.

It has been said that the Queensland State election was fought on Federal issues. I would be the first to admit it. Why shouldn't it have been fought on Federal issues? After all, my electorate has been adversely affected by certain actions of the Federal Government. For example, the Federal Government acted harshly and cruelly when it removed the petrol subsidy. The isolated areas of the Outback depend on fuel for almost all their day-to-day activities. Every mode of transport in the West is motorised. Graziers are required to pay high prices for the petrol they use in inspecting their properties, some of which are bigger than city electorates. The removal of the subsidy has greatly increased the cost of lighting, cooking and power generation.

The Federal Government also removed the tax concession that allowed landholders to improve their properties and thereby lift their carrying capacities. It also withdrew the subsidies on air services, which are lifelines of the West. In the wet season air services are the only physical means of communication. No fewer than seven towns in the Gregory electorate alone have had their air services withdrawn. There are two towns with only one service a week. Longreach, the hub of the electorate, gets only four planes a week, although it used to get a plane a day, and sometimes two a day. I have shown clearly how drastically our air services have been cut.

The free milk issue for school-children in the West was stopped by the Commonwealth Government. The upkeep of the aerodromes, formerly a matter for the Federal Transport Department, has been handed over to local authorities. This is another burden that they can ill afford. Once again the burden falls on primary producers and other residents in the area, who can ill afford to maintain aerodromes, especially when there are few, if any, services.

Telephone services throughout the area have been downgraded. Some areas that once had a continuous exchange are now on an 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. basis, while others run the risk of having their post offices closed. Telephone charges have been increased. Anybody who is lucky enough to

have a telephone in these outback areas knows that his telephone charges and rent, and charges for other postal services, which he is totally dependent upon, have become an affliction under the present Commonwealth Government. Windorah and Jundah formerly enjoyed a twice-weekly mail service. That has been reduced to one a week, but it is not a connecting service between the two towns. There is a break of 19 miles. There is a short service from Jundah and another from Windorah, but there is no communication between Jundah and Windorah. The people have to send their mail through Quilpie. That is the only connection that I can see unless some kind-hearted person takes the mail to Longreach. These are impositions in an isolated area that we can ill afford to have cast on us.

In the education field, the allowable deduction for taxation purposes, a deduction that is essential to persons in isolated areas, has been reduced from \$400 to \$150.

As I said, my electorate is basically a sheep and cattle area. Everything depends on those two industries. The towns—and every person in them—either sink or swim with those industries. Shearing is the main source of money injected into the weekly economy of the towns. In Longreach there are about eight or nine teams of shearers, consisting of 100 to 150 men at the height of the shearing season, who return with average earnings of \$130 to \$140 a week. It is obvious that shearing is by far the most important calling in the area.

Transport operators depend on the two basic industries. They have invested large sums of money in transports and, basically, are geared to cart cattle. Sales of stores and fat cattle have virtually ceased, and, because turnover is too low, transport operators are finding it very difficult to meet their promissory notes.

Before the rural depression and the loss of the tax concessions, there were no fewer than nine tank-sinkers in Longreach, four in Winton and four in Quilpie. We now have one tank-sinking plant in Winton and two small plants operating around Longreach. All the stores, hotels and garages depend wholly and solely on the pastoral industry.

Men who have made a career of the agency game now face retrenchment. The economy of the West has slipped so badly that there must be retrenchments. The recent big merger of Primaries and Mactaggarts will naturally bring retrenchments. I fear for the future of many men who have given a lifetime to training in that sphere, and for the future of their families. Banks have been closed in some of our western towns. That is indeed a bad sign of the economy in any area.

I now turn to local authorities. The Gregory electorate has no fewer than 10. It has been said that I am representing only 6,000 people; but, with 10 local authorities, honourable members may be sure that I have 10 really big headaches. At this stage may I say how pleased I am to see that the Departments of Local Government and Main Roads have been merged, because they go hand in hand, especially in our area. I am very pleased to see that Russ Hinze has the responsibility for that portfolio. Already he has toured the electorate of Gregory to familiarise himself with the problems of the people in that area.

At this stage I state that I support the appointment of additional Ministers, provided they give additional service to the State as a whole, which I believe they will.

After the shearing industry, local authorities would be the biggest employers of labour in my electorate. The prosperity of the towns depends to a great extent on local authority and Main Roads work. Funds are injected into the economy through rate collections, loans and/or grants. I cannot help congratulating the local authorities for the job they have done with the assistance derived from this Government since it took office in 1957. The transformation of public facilities within the area is unbelievable. We have been provided with swimming pools, civic centres, parks and gardens, kerbing and channelling, sewerage systems and many other amenities. Nearly every town in Central Western Queensland is completely sewered. We are very proud of that. I repeat that I give full marks to the men who serve on local government. It is our third arm of government, and a very important one. I should hate to see the day it is disbanded.

I take this opportunity also to thank the men who serve on local authorities for the time they devote to their task. Next to politics, it is the most thankless game in the world because the general public do not fully appreciate just how much these men give of their lives for the benefit of the communities they live in.

There is very little I can say about the roads in my electorate. I really did not realise just how many holes and bumps and bends there were in Queensland's bitumen highways until I came to this House and heard everyone complaining about them. However, we have very little bitumen in Gregory. The Landsborough Highway passes through the electorate; but, of the 240 miles in that area, less than half is sealed. I heard 10 years mentioned as the time in which sealing will be completed. If the Landsborough Highway is completely sealed in 15 years, I'll walk to Bourke with a water-bag.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You'll want two. It's a long walk.

Mr. GLASSON: That shows how sure I am.

There would be no way of calculating the extent of rural arterial roads in my electorate. I have asked for the figures from the shires, but as yet they have not been compiled. However, there would be well in excess of 3,000 miles of rural arterial and rural urban roads.

There are three developmental roads in my electorate. The one that goes to Julia Creek is a road to nowhere. I am pleased to see that approval has been given for an extension of that road, which eventually will go from Quilpie via Windorah to Boulia. The beef road from Boulia to Winton is the most crucial link in the West, including the Flinders Highway. The beef road from Winton to Boulia now carries 90 per cent of the road traffic to Mt. Isa. I have just said that we can forget about the Landsborough Highway being sealed for the next 15 years; but the Winton to Boulia link is crucial and something has to be done about it.

The Minister for Northern Development indicated to the previous Minister for Main Roads (Mr. Camm) that there would be no release of money in the next three years for that section of road. I sincerely hope that it will be reconsidered. It is only 60 miles long and goes through some of the drier area. It would be more easily maintained than the Flinders Highway, which would have double its rainfall. Apart from its use in the transportation of beef, it is imperative that this road be constructed to provide a north-south link which we have not had as yet. The quickest way to provide it would be to connect Boulia and Winton by bitumen road. I hope that funds will be made available for it.

The electorate of Gregory contains no fewer than 19 schools and although some are no credit to the Government, most of them are. People in areas with a growing population are fighting for more schools and deserve them as soon as possible. I know that the Minister for Education will give favourable consideration to all requests.

School accommodation is most inadequate and unsatisfactory. I hope that pressure will be brought to bear on the Minister to improve accommodation, especially in Longreach and Winton where it is urgently required. It is a very important factor. Some of the conditions under which teachers are asked to live are so bad and inadequate that they are jammed in like sardines in a tin.

Longreach has the only senior top in the Gregory electorate, which represents one-third of the area of Queensland. Barcardine has a high school but that is not in my electorate. The school at Longreach is a beautiful building and is well staffed. It is a credit to the Department of Education.

The Longreach Pastoral College is probably the greatest industry—if it could be called that—or example of decentralisation that could be found. It is a beautiful college and is very well staffed by excellent teachers. It is immaculately kept. The boys who pass through it have great pride in having attended it. A pastoral college has been opened in Emerald and I am pleased that it will deal basically with cattle. The Longreach Pastoral College was designed primarily to deal with sheep, but it has both sheep and cattle studs. That college is a monument to a former Minister for Education who later became Premier, the late Jack Pizzey. With many local men he worked on this dream and had it not been for his pressing determination the college would not have been built.

The Gregory electorate contains eight hospitals. In general, they are quite good buildings and are very well staffed, thanks to the married women in the different towns who have made their services available. With the drift to the cities, it would have been difficult to keep staff up to full strength without their assistance.

The availability of doctors in the electorate of Gregory leaves much to be desired. Only two out of the eight hospitals have the services of a medical officer. I am very proud to say that the new Minister for Health is very sympathetic. He is not a centralist in his outlook on health matters. Health conditions in the West will be changed drastically within the near future. I look forward to that improvement. Longreach has the services of two hospital doctors, one of whom was appointed early this year. The other doctor is to relieve at the Winton, Blackall and Barcaldine hospitals. This is a very good move and it will make doctors at country centres more contented. They now have two days a fortnight in which they are completely free, whereas previously they were on call at all times.

But this has done nothing to alleviate the problem in those areas without a doctor. The people of Muttaborra and Aramac quite rightly think that their health and the health of their families is just as important as that of people at Longreach, Brisbane or any other centre where medical attention is available. The people of Muttaborra are fighting tooth and nail even to retain their hospital. I believe that in the not-too-distant future they will be serviced by a doctor if agreement can be reached between the responsible bodies in Aramac and Muttaborra.

One of the greatest services in the medical field is that provided by the flying surgeon based at Longreach. I hate to think how many lives would have been lost over the years if his services had not been available. He covers a vast area, and he is on call 24 hours a day. He is a top surgeon. In fact, all those who have served us in this position have been top men.

Another great service is provided by the flying doctor, who is based at Charleville and services the south-west areas to Birds-ville, Thargomindah and Quilpie. I am pleased to report that an application has finally been received from a doctor for a position at Quilpie. It has yet to be approved by the board, but we hope that the people of Quilpie will at last have their own doctor.

There are no fewer than 360 miles of railway line in my electorate, and services generally are satisfactory. But that is rather more than I can say for some of the conditions under which railwaymen are living in some centres. It will be one of my ambitions to see that all new railway buildings are provided with sewerage, or septic systems where sewerage is not available, and electric light where it is available. I think it is quite thoughtless to deprive railwaymen of the amenity of electric light when they are within two poles of a transmission line. They live very lonely lives, and I think that every effort should be made to improve the living conditions of those in isolated places.

I cannot say that my area is not well covered by the police. There is an inspector stationed at Longreach. However, I believe that the department promotes ill feeling in some instances between the police and the people in small communities by sending out notices such as, "You have not had enough bookings this month." Such a notice was sent to one area in which no traffic was moving because it was completely isolated by floods and rain. Instructions that might apply in Queen Street do not apply to small centres in the West. The inspector at Longreach has a good staff. It was once a training centre, and there was no shortage of police in the area. That status has since been withdrawn.

I should like to pay a special compliment to the committee of the aged people's homes project in Longreach. It is one of the best steps taken in the West since the establishment of the pastoral college. If finance can be arranged through the Commonwealth Government, it is intended to provide in Longreach a home with accommodation for 43 people, and it will be a community effort by the shires of Barcoo, Isisford, Barcaldine, Aramac and Winton. People will not have to be sent away to a home on the coast but will be able to be cared for in their own environment, where their friends and relatives will be able to visit them. In the last 12 months too many Western people have gone to homes on the coast, where they are strangers in a strange land at a time of life when they need the comfort of the few friends they have left.

I think this is one of the most worthy projects that have been undertaken in Western Queensland, and I know that the people of my

electorate think as I do. No less than \$200,000 has been collected already from local people, which is a great tribute to their generosity, and I sincerely hope that the project will bear fruit.

Beginning tomorrow, the Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service (the Honourable Ken Tomkins) will undertake a tour of my electorate with the objective of giving people an opportunity to put their problems to him and see what the Department of Lands can do to assist primary industries.

My colleague from Albert mentioned Government party committees on which he now serves. I have the privilege of serving on four such committees that directly affect the people of Gregory—Lands, Primary Industries, Works and Housing, and Health—and I certainly hope that I can contribute something to the work of these committees that will benefit my electorate.

Finally, I thank members who have served in this Assembly previously for the courtesy and assistance they have endeavoured to bestow on all new members. I also thank the parliamentary attendants and the staff of the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms for their courtesy and assistance to new members. In particular, I thank our landlady, Cathy, at the old "Bellevue", who has tried to mother all the boys from the West.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT (Chatsworth) (4.33 p.m.): It is my privilege to deliver the final speech in this Address-in-Reply debate. I do not pretend that its content will be of earth-shattering significance, but I hope that some of the observations I make will be of interest to honourable members.

I want to associate myself with the debate because I certainly endorse the statements made by the Governor in his Opening Speech and wish to make the traditional response to him.

I compliment all honourable members who have made their maiden speeches in the Address-in-Reply debate. I believe that the Parliament is now well endowed with outstanding talent. We have in the Chamber men and women who represent a broad canvas of great capacity and ability, and I believe that this Parliament is going to stand the people of Queensland in very good stead over the next three years.

Of course, I wish to make particular reference to those two gracious ladies who initiated this debate. They discharged their obligation with great sincerity and great purpose, and they are to be complimented by each and every member of this Assembly. Because of the significance of the year 1975 in the affairs of women, it was particularly timely that these two members should have been invited to initiate the debate.

When one looks at the history of this State, one sees that very few women indeed have been able to walk through these portals as members of the Parliament of Queensland. Indeed, only four have entered the House since Queensland became a separate State in 1859. The first was Mrs. Irene Longman, who made her way to this Assembly in 1929, and Bernays tells us something about how well she was regarded as a political opponent. The member she dismissed from this House was one A. H. Wright, the member for Bulimba. When Wright was asked how the election was going he replied with an inimitable and self-satisfied grin, "Well, you know, I am only being opposed by a woman." Bernays goes on to tell us—

"And so it came about that one little feeble woman, full to the brim of energy, overflowing with sympathy for her sex; simple, non-aggressive, ladylike to her finger-tips, just metaphorically took A. H. Wright by the scruff of the neck and scrubbed the whole surface of the large Bulimba electorate with him, wiping out a previous majority of thousands, and converting it into a minority of 401."

I should imagine that, in the light of that historical event, any man who took a woman opponent cheaply would be indeed a man of great folly.

Mr. Bird: The previous member for Mourilyan made the same mistake.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: Of course, he was never a student of history. If he had read Bernays he would have seen the error of his ways.

Thirty-four years passed before another lady found her way to this Parliament. That was Mrs. Jordan, who came here in 1966 with myself and my colleagues from Mansfield, Ithaca and Toowong. I certainly could not say one word to her detriment, and I am sure none of my colleagues would. She was a lady of grace and charm. I take some small degree of pleasure in reminding the House that I helped her to find a small niche in the pages of history. Mrs. Jordan joined me in the panel of temporary chairmen in the 1972 Parliament. While I was Acting Chairman during the absence of the honourable member for Mt. Coot-tha overseas, I invited Mrs. Jordan one evening to take the chair in Committee. As far as records can show, she was the first woman to preside over an Australian Parliament, notwithstanding that a few months later the Victorians, who are always trying to take our historical claims away from us, said that Mrs. Edna Roper had presided over a Committee, and that she was entitled to claim that distinction.

An Honourable Member: New South Wales.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: New South Wales; I thank the honourable member for the correction. Mrs. Jordan certainly has that small claim to history.

It is a matter of satisfaction to see women enter this House. I hope that in the fullness of time more will win seats and represent the varied political points of view.

I associate myself with the expression of loyalty to the Governor, and express my thanks to him for again presiding at the opening of this Parliament. The Governor, as is his traditional responsibility, outlined the Government's programme for the session that is now in progress.

I select two matters of significance to comment upon. The Government has promised that company laws will be further strengthened, and that there will be an even greater exchange between the three States of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. I have always believed that there should be transportability of right with regard to registration of companies and to a great variety of other matters. Anything that can facilitate company procedures is to be applauded, but more importantly I hope that this will close the gate even more firmly against the crooks, shysters and confidence tricksters who believe that they can exploit company law, take people down for thousands of dollars and get away with it.

In recent days I informed the Minister for Justice of one of these people who have had a sad and sorry history in this State. This person is now trying to establish himself in New South Wales. I hope that laws of the type envisaged by the Minister will make sure that if there is a crook operating in Queensland his case history will be made well known in Victoria and New South Wales. We can do without them wherever they might try to operate.

I would also select for comment the reference in the Governor's Opening Speech to the Commission of Inquiry into Youth. It has presided over it a most distinguished jurist, Judge Demack. I am quite sure that that inquiry will lay down very useful guidelines for the State.

There are probably no problems that harass a State more than juvenile delinquency and juvenile vandalism, so it is appropriate that there should be a commission looking specifically at the problems of youth and trying to give to the Government answers to those problems. I am quite sure that the report of the commission will be welcomed warmly in this Chamber, and I would hope that the Government will act upon its recommendations with the same alacrity as that shown by it in acting upon those of the Select Committee on Punishment of Crimes of Violence.

This Parliament is unbalanced and unusual; it is probably the first of its type in the long history of the State. The Opposition is reduced to 11 in number, and the Leader of the Opposition refers to it as his cricket team.

One wonders how such a tidal wave overwhelmed the Labor Party on 7 December. Certainly the great victory of the parties I support vindicated the judgment of my political leader, who on prior occasions urged that there should be an early election. But there is no doubt that the great loss sustained by the Labor Party was attributable to the policies of the Labor Government in Canberra.

I suppose we should ask ourselves: What went wrong with the Labor Government? We are entitled to ask that question in an objective fashion.

I shall never forget the euphoria that prevailed in the corridors of this building during the last few days before 2 December 1972. The members of the Labor Party knew that they were on the threshold of victory, and those in the Government, sad as they may have been to admit it, also knew that our side of politics faced defeat. As I say, an air of absolute euphoria prevailed. Here was the day that the Australian people had waited for; here was the great change. How ironical it is that the day that the Labor Party looked forward to should, in the fullness of time, be the death-warrant for so many of the members who looked forward to victory.

Again I ask: What went wrong with the Labor Government? It is fair comment that it went into office with a ground swell of popular support and public feeling towards it. There were, however, many thousands of people who did not vote for the Labor Government in December 1972 but nevertheless said, "Well, after 23 years it's time for a change, and we will give them a fair go." That attitude prevailed for many months after the election. The community showed great charity. Even the Labor Government's initial mistakes were forgiven. They were attributed to ministerial inexperience; the people thought the Labor Government would get over that hump, sort itself out, and do all right. However, when the early mistakes were compounded and inflation raged, we saw unprecedented industrial disputes, the highest level of unemployment in our history, assaults upon established institutions and massive disillusionment. This was so not only in Queensland but also in the Northern Territory, where in an election that preceded the Queensland State election, the Labor Party did not win one seat.

Again I ask: What went wrong? There was gross mismanagement in the areas that I have already referred to; but if I were asked to touch on one or two aspects, I would say that the Labor Government's cardinal error was that it pitifully misread the Australian community.

Australians like to project an image of rugged individualism, of great bronze Anzacs. Beneath that surface, however, we are probably as conservative as any other people in the world. Australians could not understand this great race towards change, reform and alteration. They were confused, and they were dismayed. They could not understand it, nor did they want any part of it. Again I say that the Labor Party committed this cardinal error of not understanding the Australian sentiment and the Australian ethic. So it came to be that there was this massive disillusionment.

I have said that Australians are individualists; they are, and they are proud of it. They reject totally this cradle-to-the-grave concept—this idea that, "From womb to tomb you will be looked after. Don't worry about it yourself; ask and thou shalt receive". That is not an Australian attitude or sentiment.

If I were disposed to give the Labor Party good advice, I would say that it should return to its traditional attitude of championing the underdog and get away from the idea that it can have massive intrusion into every pursuit and aspect of Australian life. We repudiate that totally. As long as the Labor Party is hell-bent on massive socialisation, it will be hell-bent on its own destruction.

For the moment, it is not the Labor Party but my own party that faces some turmoil. The Labor Party enjoys a temporary reprieve. For the past 10 days or so, no-one has been reported in the Press columns as saying anything about the state of the economy, raging unemployment or uncontrolled inflation. Labor enjoys a temporary reprieve while my party inflicts great wounds upon itself fighting over leadership. Not for a moment would I comment on who should or should not be the leader. However, there are two factors I wish to comment on, and I should be surprised if many honourable members disagree with my comments.

I lament very much indeed the personality cult that has developed in Australian politics. But I lament even more the blight of public-opinion polls that are inflicted on us almost weekly.

For some strange reason we look upon our political campaigns as virtually presidential campaigns—which they are not. The leaders of our parties project the policies of their respective parties. When elected they are not clothed with any of the massive powers that presidents enjoy. We should not see election campaigns as clashes of personalities. They are clashes of parties and

clashes of ideologies. So long as we try to build up individual personalities to the exclusion of parties, we will have an inbuilt instability in our system. I decry this personality cult, and believe that every political party should try to get away from it.

Just as I decry that, so too do I decry public-opinion polls, which tell us about everything under the sun. Mr. Snedden's current unpopularity is related to polls that tell us his popularity is down to a certain rating. If we are to select leaders on that basis, we will be changing them as often as we change shirts, because there is not a member of parliament who does not, on occasions, make an indiscreet comment; there is not a Minister who, on occasions, does not make a wrong decision; and there is not a political party which, on occasions, is not in disfavour. But if anybody chooses to take a poll at such a time it will show that the reading is down. At such a time there is a challenge to people to close their ranks and say, "Is this a continuing situation, or does it merely reflect a temporary setback of one or two weeks?" Certainly such a poll can do nothing to stabilise the political system; rather does it have a totally eroding influence on political personalities. Honourable members must make their judgment on loyalty and solidarity—on a basis different from that of the public-opinion polls, which come to us on an all-too-regular basis.

I decry the polls that relate to individuals; I decry even more the polls that state, "If there had been a Federal election last week-end, someone would have won and somebody else would have lost." These polls are absolute nonsense.

Mr. BURAS: The samples are so small.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: Yes, and they are predicated on totally wrong premises. If an election had been held last week-end, the two, three or four weeks leading up to it could have totally changed the situation. Counter arguments would have been advanced, some things would have happened, other things would not have happened. To state at any time, "If an election had been held last week-end, such and such would have happened," does not prove a damn thing. I believe that political parties are allowing these public-opinion polls to have too much influence upon their judgment. The only judgment that counts is the judgment that is made on election day, and all political parties work towards that. Quite often, mid-term, Governments deliberately take action which they know is not popular. Goodness me, we are all political people. We understand these things. We know when to bring popular legislation down; we know when to bring unpopular legislation down.

This Government would suffer the same type of judgment on occasions. As an example—in the last Parliament we made radical changes to the structure of the city of Brisbane. Polls taken at the time would

have shown clearly that the Government's rating was very low. But those who believed it was right said, "We will ride this out, and time will vindicate our judgment." However, if we reconsider these matters we will be driven into the ground by those whom another person has described as "nervous Nellies".

I have spoken at length about the unpopularity of the Federal Labor Government.

Mr. Houston: Did you get that from the opinion polls?

Mr. Moore: Blind Freddie would know that.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: Blind Freddie would know it indeed.

This unpopularity is related not only to the many things that I have already catalogued but also to the massive intrusion into the traditional areas of State responsibility. Because of that massive intrusion it is right and proper that State Parliaments should express their dissent. They should take a contrary point of view and insist that constitutional processes will prevail. I have no argument with that whatsoever. We have a responsible role to criticise and to object; but I want to make the point that while we are adopting that stand, we should still be seen as a Government that is constructive, that is applying itself to defined policies, that has a programme it is prepared to work to, and that it is keeping its own priorities very strictly in order. Certainly the people of Queensland look to us not only to fight against a Federal Labor Government but also to do things in our own right.

I well recall a comment I made in my maiden speech nine years ago, when I said that Ministers must be initiators and not merely administrators. If I were given the opportunity to correct that speech in any way at all today, I would not want to depart from that one iota. I still believe it very strongly indeed. Each and every Minister must be not only the person who signs the letters at the end of the day but also the person looking quite deliberately for ways to break into new policies and to break new ground. If any Minister finds himself desk-bound with a massive quantity of paper work he should say, "I am not fulfilling my function. Somehow or other I have to delegate and give responsibility to somebody else. There must be a time when I can look critically at my portfolio and decide what areas need further developments." If we do not investigate areas where there are challenges, we take great risks.

I devote my concluding comments to observations to the new members. I have already been lavish in my praise of them, and I have said those words with great sincerity. I believe we have brought into this Parliament a new reservoir of talent, and I am looking forward to seeing how the Government can use that talent.

In all honesty, I say to them that they will not see here the most sophisticated Parliament in Australia. Certainly the old one was probably the worst "knock 'em down, drag 'em out" Parliament in the whole of Australia. We used to get in boots and all.

Because this earthy atmosphere prevails, new members could be excused if they overlooked the significance of this place that they now serve. That would be a great shame because, with all of its manifest shortcomings, the institution of Parliament is still the greatest thing—the greatest creation—of the Anglo-Saxon mind.

While we must be critical of it and constantly looking for ways to improve it and make it more participatory, we must nevertheless respect it for what it is—the great institution of Parliament. Therefore I hope that new members will always be seized with this real responsibility and will never deliberately do anything to degrade this place.

Because I say that, it is with some sadness that I refer to a submission that Professor G. S. Reid of the University of Western Australia was recently reported as having made to a Federal parliamentary committee. Although he was talking about the Federal Parliament, his comments are pretty germane to State Parliaments as well. He said—

"Federal Parliament's failure to play a healthy role in the framing of Australia's laws was a national scandal . . . Parliamentary committees, made up of government and opposition members, were pitifully weak and were only giving lip service in their role as watchdogs of the executive."

I believe firmly in a participatory Parliament. I have never believed that the role of back-benchers, be they Opposition or Government, is merely to endorse decisions that have been made by the Cabinet. They should be looking constantly to initiate new ideas in this Chamber and they should initiate those ideas in the expectation that they will be respected and acted upon.

A participatory Parliament calls for more than is happening in this Parliament alone. We opened the door a little last year when we set up a select committee to investigate violent crime. There are those who now say that the door is shut more firmly than ever. It would be a great shame if that were true. Select committees give to the Government an opportunity to utilise the talent I have referred to.

Mr. Moore: There will be more of them.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: I am tremendously encouraged by the words of my colleague the honourable member for Windsor.

There are those in this Parliament who have called constantly for reform; for a critical look at our Standing Orders, Estimates debates and many other things. I suppose those who have heard it so many times are

saying, "Hewitt has got his cracked record out again." If that is so, I plead guilty. When I say this, I know that I am sustained by my colleagues from Toowong, Clayfield, Mt. Gravatt, Landsborough and others who have constantly endorsed these sentiments and believe firmly that it should be a participatory Parliament and that we should look for ways to make it such a Parliament.

Mr. Chinchin: It's hard to break through.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: Constant dripping and all that!

When we are dismissed as being starry-eyed idealists, I hope that the new members return to the basic sentiment that this is Parliament, that they have a significant role to play in the Parliament and that that role is not merely to endorse decisions that have been made by others; rather is it to participate in those decisions and to put forward viewpoints that will be respected.

It has been a pleasure to be associated with the Address-in-Reply debate.

Motion—That the Address in Reply be adopted (Mrs. Kippin)—agreed to.

SUPPLY

CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEE

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

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty."

Motion agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS

CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEE

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

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty."

Motion agreed to.

AGENT-GENERAL FOR QUEENSLAND BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (5 p.m.): I move—

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

When I introduced the Bill, I indicated that its purpose was to give statutory recognition to the position of Agent-General for Queensland in London. I outlined in some detail the reasons that prompted this action. Now that honourable members have had an opportunity to examine the provisions of the Bill,

they will no doubt realise that it is a simple but important item of legislation and is designed for the purpose that I indicated.

It is not my intention to repeat the points that I made at the introductory stage. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (5.2 p.m.): We will not oppose the Bill; nor is it my intention to delay the House. We do, however, express our disappointment at the Government's lack of initiative in framing duties and functions, as spelt out in the Bill, which are not political or tied to any sovereign relationship shared by this State with England. We believe the opportunity should have been taken to extend trade offices, as was promised in the Premier's policy speech six years ago. However, the Bill deals with an office that has functioned successfully for 111 years, and we have no intention of delaying the House any further.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (5.3 p.m.): There are a couple of points that I should like to bring to the notice of the House, particularly in relation to the new style that is being set up for the Agent-General for Queensland. I notice that one of his duties and functions is—

"Promotion of tourism in Queensland with a view to attracting tourists to Queensland."

I feel that perhaps the time has now been reached to give serious consideration to the setting up of a complete office of the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau in the precincts of Queensland House in London. International travel has increased tremendously in the last few years, and I think that such an office could not only promote tourism in England and Europe but also be of great help to Queenslanders who go overseas. I think that the establishment of such an office would prove quite lucrative, and I should like to see it set up in conjunction with the Agent-General.

I feel that an historical section could also be set up in the office of the Agent-General in London. I received great co-operation from the late Sir Peter Delamothe when he was Agent-General in London when I was endeavouring to trace some of the early history of North Queensland. Those who knew Sir Peter well know that he was a keen student of North Queensland history, and he was able to guide me and help me to obtain the information that I was seeking. Consideration could perhaps be given to appointing an officer from the State archives to serve with the Agent-General in London. Nowadays, people are becoming more conscious of history, and most of the early history and traditions of Queensland stem from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and some parts of Europe.

There is one matter on which I should like the Premier's advice. It is clearly set out in the Bill that at least once in every three months the Agent-General shall furnish a report to the Governor in Council on the discharge of his functions; but there is nothing in the Bill to indicate that each year the Agent-General will still report to Parliament, as he has done in the past. I see that the Premier is nodding his assent. I think it most important that we be kept aware of the activities of the Agent-General in London. I find his annual reports most interesting, and I know most other members do, too.

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (5.4 p.m.), in reply: It is indeed most important that honourable members know exactly what is happening in London, and what the Agent-General is doing for us all.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 7, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

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

SUPREME COURT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice) (5.7 p.m.): I move—

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

This is a very short and simple Bill. Its object is to increase the statutory maximum number of judges from 14 to 16. I have already indicated that it is proposed to appoint one additional judge to the Supreme Court during the course of this year. The Bill will provide the legislative authority for this appointment and will also allow for a further additional judge to be appointed at some time in the future should the need arise.

Clause 2 of the Bill provides that the Governor in Council, by commission in Her Majesty's name, may appoint a duly qualified person to be a judge if the total number of judges in office is less than 16. Honourable members will be aware that a barrister or solicitor of not less than 5 year's standing is qualified to be appointed a judge of the Supreme Court. The Bill provides also that the Governor in Council is not bound to make any additional appointments

and is not empowered to make an appointment which would have the effect of increasing the number of judges to more than 16.

Subsection (6) of section 4 of the Supreme Court Act of 1921 allows appointments to be made to fill any vacancy which occurs in the number of judges who have been appointed and provides that if a vacancy occurs, the Governor in Council may appoint a replacement judge provided that such an appointment would not bring the total number of judges to more than 14. Following the increase in the statutory maximum number of judges as provided for in clause 2, it is necessary for a consequential amendment to be made to this Act by increasing the number of judges mentioned to 16. The Bill contains the necessary amendment and follows the form of previous legislation increasing the statutory maximum number of judges.

It is most important that, as far as possible, delays in both criminal and civil trials be avoided or reduced. The provisions of the Bill will ensure that, when the need arises, additional judges may be appointed to the Supreme Court to overcome any unwarranted or excessive delays in court litigation and to fulfil the needs of the people of this State.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (5.9 p.m.): All members of this Assembly have a responsibility not to simply accept anything that the Minister brings forward. I think we all agree, too, that he has an obligation to persuade us—firstly, Government members in the party room and, secondly, honourable members generally at the introductory stage—that particular legislation is necessary.

At the introductory stage of the Bill, the Minister endeavoured to back up his claim that there was a need for this legislation. He has just explained to honourable members that it will not necessarily follow that two new Supreme Court judges will be appointed immediately. In fact, one will be appointed now and another may be appointed later, to a maximum of 16. He has stated that an additional appointment is necessary because there is a significant backlog in the number of civil actions awaiting trial.

He said that the number of civil actions increased from 186 in 1972 to 375 in September 1974. As I said at the introductory stage, if the Minister can prove that, the Opposition certainly will not be against the increase in the judiciary, because we believe in swiftness so that matters are dealt with and people are not kept waiting months or years for litigation to be heard.

It is said that an increase in the judiciary should overcome the backlog, but that might not necessarily be so. I hark back to the Beeching Commission in England, which desired to look at the over-all problems of the judiciary. That commission believed that the answer was not to be found in simply increasing the number of judges. I ask the Minister now to consider this. It is not a subject for a select committee of this Parliament. It is a task for a special expert committee. This State should surely set up an expert commission to investigate the over-all task of the judiciary and the over-all needs of the legal system in Queensland.

I have a personal view, and that is that we should consider the introduction of divisions. I believe that we should first of all set up a permanent court of appeal. Then we should have a criminal division, a civil division, a family division, a commercial division and so on. I was pleased when the Minister said in his reply at the introductory stage that he saw the value of this. He said that it was not necessary to have them all at this point, but he would consider the suggestion. With the increase in the number of judges it could become feasible.

We have no intention of opposing the Bill. We believe there is a backlog in the number of cases, and we believe that something has to be done about it. We believe that the increase in the number of judges may help. But we are firmly committed to the idea that we need to inquire into the total aspects of the judiciary, because there is so much criticism of the judges and so much delay. While we support the legislation at this point, we simply ask the Minister for Justice to take it upon himself to have this in-depth inquiry carried out.

Mr. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove) (5.12 p.m.): The Government shares the honourable member's concern whenever any delays occur in the civil sittings in the Supreme Court.

Sometimes the true picture is not simply gleaned from looking at figures of previous years. It is not merely a matter of the number of judges but a matter of the method used to organise the work that comes before the Supreme Court. The civil sittings is the area where most delays occur. Sometimes people have to wait years to receive payment of their damages for injuries that they have sustained and which have incapacitated them and prevented them from earning a living for themselves and their families.

Until 1961 this presented us with a very real problem. Until that time, the principle used in the organisation of the Supreme Court work was one which probably would appeal to the honourable member opposite—the principle of one man, one job. If four judges were available to sit in the civil sittings, four cases would be listed before them for that particular day.

In 1961 Mr. Justice Gibbs introduced a completely new system which increased throughput by 50 per cent. He did that by the simple expedient of listing six cases for four judges for a particular day. That system worked very well indeed. It worked well because on an average one-third of all cases are settled at the door of the court, for one reason or another. Since 1961 that system has cleared the backlog of cases and kept things up to date whenever it has been possible to implement it. But it has not always been possible, because four judges are not always available for the civil sittings.

It does not work with smaller numbers. I do not know what it is, but it might have something to do with the law of averages. Although we can confidently expect two cases out of six to settle, we cannot confidently expect one case out of three to settle. If an attempt is made to work the system by setting down three cases with only two judges everything bogs down. Four judges are needed for the system to work. As long as four judges can be kept in civil sittings, many more cases can be dealt with than are coming before the courts now.

It is not just a matter of looking at the population of Victoria and the population of Queensland and the number of judges in those States. We could cater for a much greater population than we have now in Queensland if we could keep four judges in civil sittings all the time.

The reason why that cannot be done at present is the increase in other work. Criminal work must come first; there must always be judges working to clear the remand sections of gaols. In 1961, when this system was introduced, and for many years afterwards, only one judge was engaged in criminal work. Over the past two years, however, it has been usual to have two and sometimes three judges engaged on criminal work in Brisbane. Certainly over the past 12 months it has been usual to allocate a second judge to that work.

Moreover, during the past six or eight months it has been usual to allocate not one judge but two judges to Chambers. The result is that the system is losing two judges—one to the Criminal Court, the other to Chambers.

How are these two "vacancies" to be filled? And they must be filled, or there will not be enough judges left to constitute the bench of four judges for the civil sittings and the whole system will again fall behind. It is to prevent this that the Government is seeking an increase in the number of judges. The Governor-in-Council will have power to appoint sufficient judges to enable the Chief Justice to have four judges sitting in civil jurisdiction.

Mr. Wright: This problem would be overcome if there were judges dealing specifically with certain work.

Mr. GREENWOOD: This brings up the point that heavy demands are made on judges. Frequently they are required to conduct certain investigations. For example, Mr. Justice Campbell sits as the pay tribunal on matters involving Federal public servants as well as university academics. And, in addition, judges do go on leave.

Mr. Wright interjected.

Mr. GREENWOOD: In reply to the honourable member I should say that in introducing a system of divisions, we must be confident that we have a large enough bench. The divisional system is an efficient one, but it involves a certain waste of judicial time and it is not as flexible as the system under which judges are switched about from one jurisdiction to another.

Mr. Wright: If other divisions cannot be introduced there should at least be a special division for the civil work.

Mr. GREENWOOD: Again the problem is that criminal work must come first. Accused persons must be tried as early as possible. Chambers must come second, as the work involves the custody of children, injunctions and other proceedings that cannot wait. The fact is that the civil sittings is the poor orphan. It is always neglected, and necessarily so.

The idea of divisions has a lot to commend it. In fact it has been under consideration for some years by the Bar Association. Some time in the future—hopefully, the not-too-distant future—we may see its introduction in Queensland.

In the meantime I commend the Bill to the House, because the appointment of two additional judges will have the effect of enabling four to be engaged in civil sittings all the time, thereby disposing of six cases each day and so clearing the civil list.

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (5.19 p.m.): On an earlier occasion I borrowed a phrase from W. S. Gilbert and said that a judge's lot is not a happy one. The honourable member for Townsville South has told us that the Supreme Court judges have rejected his offer to debate with them in public certain matters that he regards as being of public importance. In saying that, the honourable member has highlighted the type of restrictions that are placed upon Supreme Court judges.

Unlike members of the public, they are not able to lead a full life. For example, they certainly cannot engage in politics. The reason for this is obvious; if they were to do so, they might at some future time be called upon to act as arbitrators in matters in which they have been involved. For this

reason it is highly desirable that judges should live somewhat in isolation after their appointment to the bench. I emphasise the words "after their appointment to the bench".

It is most important that judges be selected from a group of men who have gained the utmost experience in all walks of life. In his speech the Minister referred to the appointment of judges from the ranks of both barristers and solicitors. Pursuant to an Act introduced by a Labor Government in about 1925 or 1926, all practising members of the profession who have practised for five years as solicitors or barristers are eligible for appointment to the bench. Quite a number of judges, both today and in the past, formerly practised as solicitors. I, as a practising solicitor, might say that it is somewhat unfortunate that no solicitor in my recollection has been appointed to the bench. Probably there have been one or two rare exceptions, but I can recall no appointments other than from the bar.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. LOWES: I thank the honourable member for Bulimba. I am sure that if ever that should happen he would be—

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

Mr. LOWES: The suggestion that the bench be divided into divisions is not new. It was not invented by the honourable member for Rockhampton. The bench may well be divided into a Court of Criminal Appeal, a Court of Appeal, a Court of Commercial Causes, and a court to deal with probate and family law. Whether they will all be introduced at the same time, or progressively, is a matter for the Minister to decide. And how effective they will be remains to be seen.

A vast quantity of work is coming before chamber judges. More than one chamber judge is now appointed each week to deal with chamber and interlocutory matters. There has been a continuing increase in the work coming before chamber judges; in the last 12 months there has been a big increase.

All apparent delays are not bad for litigants. Many litigants suffer injuries, the full extent of which is unknown at the time of commencing proceedings and for two to three years thereafter. What may seem to honourable members to be to the detriment of a litigant may not necessarily be so. I have personal experience in matters where the extent of injuries has been unknown for three to four years. I therefore submit that what are referred to as delays in this House are not necessarily such.

There is a need to enlarge the size of the Supreme Court bench. There is talk of family law being taken from the Supreme Court and of national insurance doing away with motor vehicle insurance work. That has not happened. If it does we will review the situation. It is proposed to increase the size of the bench by one, with provision for another appointment if necessary.

The Bill is well founded and I commend it to the House.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice) (5.24 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable members for Rockhampton, Ashgrove and Brisbane for their contributions. They have generally canvassed the matters raised in the previous debate. I agree with the honourable member for Ashgrove that a great deal depends on the method of working of the courts, apart from the numbers on the bench. It can be misleading to think that simply by increasing the number of members on the bench the work will move faster. Because of the procedures that have to be followed and court arrangements generally, that does not necessarily happen.

On the matter of inquiring into judicial functions, the honourable member for Rockhampton has obviously overlooked statements I have made, and which have been tabled in this House, relative to the programme of work of the Law Reform Commission, which is currently engaged on this task and has progressed considerably with it. I have no doubt that before the end of this year there will be a document available for members to study containing recommendations on how these procedures might be improved. Some of these procedures relate to the rules of the court and some relate to the need for legislative change. That will be available in due course and I do not believe there is need at this stage for any other commission of inquiry to examine judicial procedures.

The honourable member for Brisbane gave a point of view that is current in the legal profession. He is quite right in his observation that care must be taken in administering the structure of the courts. I believe there will be a need in the not too distant future for the size of the bench to be increased. We are required from time to time to provide judges for special inquiries. The honourable member for Ashgrove referred to the work of Mr. Justice W. B. Campbell. I expect that work to increase, not necessarily in relation to the remuneration of members of the Commonwealth Parliament or of statutory authorities, but in other special tasks which may be required by the State or the nation. Our Supreme Court judges are just as well equipped as any others in the nation to perform those tasks.

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

MEDIBANK HEALTH SCHEME

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (5.29 p.m.): I refer to a Press statement in today's "Courier-Mail" regarding Medibank and the statement attributed to the Victorian Health Minister, in which he is reported to have said that the States would act as a body in negotiations with the Minister for Social Security (Mr. Hayden) and would either all enter the Commonwealth-State hospital financial agreement or all reject the funds.

It is true that I attended a meeting of Health Ministers from some States of the Commonwealth in Melbourne yesterday and discussions were held on some aspects of the Commonwealth-State hospital financial agreement of the Medibank scheme. It is also true that an agreement was reached to have a joint approach to the Minister for Social Security (Mr. Hayden) regarding some details of the proposed agreement which need clarification and which affect all States.

At no time was a statement made that either all the States would enter the Commonwealth hospital agreement or all the States would reject the scheme.

I wish to place on record in this House, and to tell the people of Queensland, that this Government will make the final decision on this matter and will not be influenced by decisions of other States or anyone else, but will decide on this important matter of the Commonwealth-State hospital financial agreement after all the facts have been clarified, so that the very best patient care will continue and Queensland's unique hospital programme will not only continue but expand.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

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

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 8 April 1975."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.31 p.m.