Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 1975

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

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1)

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that on 1 September 1975 I presented to His Excellency the Governor Appropriation Bill 1975-1976 (No. 1) for the Royal Assent and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his Assent thereto in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr. Speaker:—

Greenvale Agreement Act Amendment Bill;

Appropriation Bill (No. 1).

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY; MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah —Premier) (11.4 a.m.): I desire to inform the House that in connection with the overseas visit of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, His Excellency the Governor has, by virtue of the provisions of the Officials in Parliament Act 1896-1971, authorised and empowered the Honourable Sir Gordon William Wesley Chalk, K.B.E., LL.D., M.L.A., Deputy Premier and Treasurer, to perform and exercise all or any of the duties, powers and authorities imposed or conferred upon the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General by any Act, rule, practice or ordinance on and from 31 August 1975, and until the return to Queensland of the Honourable William Edward Knox, M.L.A.

I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the Queensland Government Gazette of 30 August 1975, notifying this arrangement.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the Queensland Government Gazette upon the table.

PAPERS

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

Report of the Chief Safety Engineer and Chief Inspector of Machinery, Construction Work, and Weights and Measures, for the year 1974-75.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

The State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1965.

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

The Regional Electric Authorities Acts, 1945 to 1964.

Industrial Development Act 1963-1973.

Forestry Act 1959-1975.

Forestry Act 1959-1975 and the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. WHARF AT LUCINDA

Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) What were the circumstances surrounding the Government's decision to construct a wharf at Lucinda?

(2) What is the estimated cost of this wharf and when will construction be completed?

Answers:—

(1) The Sugar Board, in consultation with the Industry Bulk Consultative Committee, keeps the future needs of the sugar industry, in relation to port and bulk storage facilities, under constant review. Model studies of Lucinda Port have been in progress for over 10 years. Increasing production has now reached a stage where further development of such facilities is needed. Current plans include further development to cater for sugar production in the Bundaberg and Herbert River districts.

(2) A final decision has not yet been taken as respects facilities at Lucinda, this being subject to submarine investigations presently in progress. The final estimate of cost will depend on the results of these investigations and, upon completion of which, the Sugar Board, in consultation with the Bulk Consultative Committee, will make a determination as to the nature and location of facilities needed to handle future production of sugar from the Herbert River district.

2. ALBION PARK TROTTING CLUB

Mr. Dean, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

(1) Is he aware that the Albion Park Trotting Club showed a loss of $124,008 for the year ended 30 June 1975?

(2) As the income for the year for this gambling-moguls' paradise was $1,308,002, is he alarmed as to whether his contribution from T.A.B. distribution

and off-course turnover tax of some $408,999 and $68,018 respectively is wisely managed?

(3) Could not the prize-money of some $786,405 be used more profitably on more wholesome and healthy activities?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) I am aware of the financial result of the Albion Park Trotting Club for the year ended 30 June 1975 and have had discussions with the club concerning the reasons for the poor financial results and remedial action to improve the position during the current year. The club, in 1974-75, faced the abnormal cost of conducting the World Driving Championship. It also had to meet the cost of conducting a second winter carnival in the one year. Such carnival was plagued with poor weather conditions. Nevertheless the club administrators are very much aware of the need to economise in their expenditure and to look for ways of increasing club revenues. I note the honourable member's feeling about the use of the funds paid as prize-money. This is one of the costs of maintaining the industry, which provides not only employment but a very great source of enjoyment to tens of thousands of people. While the honourable member may not find anything in this type of activity to interest him, I believe that he should be prepared to respect the preferences of those who do find such interest and enjoyment.

3. REPORTED ATTACK ON POLICE BY MEMBER FOR BELMONT

Mr. Dean, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) Has he seen the article in *The Sunday Mail* of 10 August wherein an M.L.A. stated that police intimidated him?

(2) Did the member referred to in the article later identify himself as the member for Belmont?

(3) Has he received any formal complaint from the member for Belmont in relation to the serious charges made in the article referred to, or was the member merely gaining publicity at the expense of members of the Police Force?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) An article in *The Courier-Mail* of 10 August reads: "Mr. Byrne identified himself as the Liberal backbencher who had said on Saturday that he had been intimidated by a top-level Police Force official". As far as I know that statement was never denied by the honourable member for Belmont.

(3) Inquiries have failed to reveal that any formal complaint has been made by the honourable member for Belmont.

4. POLICE REPORT ON DR. M. COLSTON

Mr. Dean, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) Why was the report on Dr. Colston written in 1971 about events which occurred in 1962?

(2) Who was the member of the Police Force who wrote the report?

(3) Was the policeman a member of the Special Branch of the force?

(4) Was the present member for Merthyr in the Special Branch of the force at the time the report was written in 1971?

Answers:—

(1) The honourable member for Belmont quoted from a letter, which he stated was written by a member of the force to another member of the force. I have no information at this stage that it was in the form of an official report or that it was officially recorded. The matter is being investigated.

(2) I am not aware of the identity of the person who wrote the letter.

(3) See answer to (2).

(4) The member for Merthyr was a member of the Queensland Police Force attached to the Special Branch in May 1971 when the letter was written.

5. ROAD DEATH OF STEVEN CHARLES DAY

Mr. Frawley, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) Who was charged on summons under the provisions of the Criminal Code for an offence of dangerous driving causing the death of Steven Charles Day on 18 December 1973?

(2) Did this person, after running down his victim, leave the scene of the accident and was he discovered some days later by police?

(3) Why was the matter dismissed?

Answers:—

(1) Kevin John Murphy.

(2) (a) Inquiries made by police indicated that this may have been the case. (b) Mr. Murphy was interviewed by police on 20 December 1973 after his solicitors had made contact with the Petrie Police Station.

(3) The acting magistrate who heard the evidence in this matter found that there was insufficient evidence.

6. REPORTING OF RAPE

Mr. Ahern for **Mrs. Kyburz,** pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) How many women have approached the Rape Squad to directly report a rape?

(2) As it is conservatively estimated that less than one-fifth of personal physical violation offences, commonly called rape, are reported, what action has the Police Commissioner taken to ensure the easy accessibility of the officers in the Rape Squad?

(3) By what criteria were the officers chosen?

(4) Are the victims readily able to seek consultation with a female Government Medical Officer and, if not, what is the reason?

Answers:—

(1) 19. In addition 20 complaints were made by relatives and friends.

(2) Rape Squad personnel are rostered for duty 24 hours per day, seven days per week. At all times sufficient trained female personnel are available to speak to complainants. Publicity was given to the telephone number of the squad, and this will be included in the new directory in the Help Reference Page under the heading of "Advice and Referrals".

(3) Female officers were selected on the basis of a high degree of intelligence and understanding of the duties involved, after receiving special training in law pertaining to rape and other sexual offences, police procedure, and medical matters (body structure and functions, pregnancy, venereal disease and psychological reactions to rape).

(4) No. There is no female Government Medical Officer available. The appointment of Government Medical Officers is a matter for the Honourable the Minister for Health.

7. FIELD OFFICERS TO IDENTIFY DRUG CROPS

Mr. Doumany, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

As the large force of technically qualified field officers employed throughout the State's rural areas are well equipped to identify illegal drug-bearing crops in field situations, will he consider utilising the skills of these officers as a means of strengthening the blitz on the illicit drug trade in Queensland?

Answer:—

Yes. This is being done at the present time, although not on a centrally-organised basis. In certain areas throughout the State liaison as between the local police and officers of other departments has developed and has proved effective.

8. STOCKPILE OF WEST MORETON COAL

Mr. Doumany, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

As Mr. Haydn Sargent quoted information on a 4BC radio programme on 28 August, allegedly provided to him by a coal-miner, that 30 000 tonnes of unwashed coal was at grass at a site in the West Moreton area and as Mr. Sargent imputed that the stockpile would overcome the present shortfall in power-generation requirements for six weeks, does such a stockpile exist and, if so, will it overcome the shortfall for the period claimed?

Answer:—

The information quoted by Mr. Sargent on a 4BC radio programme on 28 August is entirely incorrect. The actual quantity at present is 19 000 tonnes of unwashed coal which, when treated, should yield some 8 000 tonnes of usable coal. However, in June this year, the Queensland Coal Board directed the colliery company concerned to process its stockpiled coal and deliver it to the Swanbank Power Station. The company commenced to carry out these instructions and has reduced the original quantity to that already stated, but has been hampered throughout by industrial action. The imputation by Mr. Sargent that the stockpile would overcome the present shortfall in power-generation requirements for six weeks is ludicrous, and indicates the extent to which some people will use public figures to inadvertently misinform the people of Brisbane. Mr. Sargent would be doing a greater service to his listening audience if he took time to ascertain the authenticity and accuracy of information which he receives, before deciding to use it publicly. This is not the first time that Mr. Sargent has given opinions on subjects of which he has limited knowledge and consequently is not in a position to give a qualified opinion. The danger with this type of programme is that people can take advantage of the fact that they can ring up and make accusations and claims without any check as to their veracity or qualifications.

9. PARLIAMENTARIAN'S ACCESS TO POLICE FILES

Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) How did the photostat copy of Police Department correspondence tabled in this House by the member for Belmont on 27 August get into his hands?

(2) If he does not know, will he have an immediate investigation made and report his findings to Parliament so that this practice of files concerning private citizens being given to members of the State Government, for use in this House under parliamentary privilege, can be stopped?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am not aware of how the copy of an official report came into the possession of the honourable member for Belmont. The matter is being investigated and, when completed, I will decide upon what action should be taken.

10. BRIGALOW SCHEME

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. Lester,** pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service—

(1) What are the implications for the administration of the brigalow scheme as a result of the Commonwealth Treasurer's Budget speech?

(2) As the control of brigalow suckers poses serious financial problems to settlers under the scheme, are any funds available and, if so, will funds continue to be available to assist the settlers to combat the problem?

(3) In the light of the depressed state of the beef industry, has any specific approach been made to the Commonwealth Government for assistance to brigalow settlers?

Answers:—

(1) As the honourable member is no doubt aware, the Commonwealth provided loan funds to the Government for development of the brigalow area. These funds were required to be drawn by 30 June 1975, but owing to many factors (such as the disastrous January 1974 floods) some development was delayed with the result that works estimated to cost approximately $1,500,000 remain to be completed. On 10 April 1975 the Premier wrote to the Prime Minister requesting that, in view of the fact that we were already committed to this expenditure, we be permitted to progressively draw advances from the Commonwealth as we needed it. A reply, dated 15 August 1975, was received from the Prime Minister. This letter reads as follows:—

"My dear Premier,

"I refer to your letter of 10 April, 1975 requesting a five year extension in which to draw funds under the Brigalow Land Development Agreement. In view of the need to restrict expenditure during the current financial year, I regret that the Australian Government is unable to accede to your request.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) E. G. Whitlam".

With cattle markets as they are, the brigalow settlers are going through a very difficult time and the refusal by the Commonwealth Government to provide loan funds for further development was most disappointing. Notwithstanding the attitude of the Commonwealth Government, the Queensland Government will do all in its power, within its financial capacity, to press on with completion of development within the scheme. In his Budget speech, the Commonwealth Treasurer mentioned a sum of $1,800,000 as being made available for the brigalow scheme. However, this referred only to expenditure incurred prior to 30 June 1975 and for which the Government had not been reimbursed.

(2) The Government realises the serious problems presently being encountered by brigalow settlers. Notwithstanding the refusal of the Commonwealth Government to make further funds available, the Government will honour its obligations and continue to advance funds to settlers for the control of brigalow suckers and, in fact, for all types of scrub development, provision of watering facilities, purchase of breeding stock, etc., to the extent of our original agreement with them, which in the case of Area 3 is $72,000. In addition, the Government will finance the completion of the road system within the area. It is expected that these funds will be made available from Brigalow Fund resources.

(3) Yes. We have made and will continue to make approaches to the Commonwealth Government for assistance to brigalow settlers. My officers will once again examine closely the position to see ways and means of assisting these settlers. The Government must, of course, repay with interest, all moneys borrowed from the Commonwealth. We will examine the possibility of asking the Commonwealth Government to waive repayments by the State for a time so that we can, in turn, grant concessions to the brigalow settlers in order to allow them a little breathing space in which to get on their feet. The honourable member must realise, of course, that it is very difficult for this Government to grant concessions to settlers when we are committed to heavy repayments to the Commonwealth. The previous approach to the Commonwealth Government for an extension of time in which to draw loan funds met with a disappointing response. I can only hope that future requests will meet with more realistic consideration.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PARLIAMENTARIAN'S ACCESS TO POLICE DOCUMENTS

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: I ask the Premier: Has his attention been drawn to a statement by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Burns) demanding an investigation into how a police document came into the possession of the honourable member for Belmont and charging that that revelation of the past of the A.L.P. Senate nominee (Dr. Mal Colston) was a misuse of parliamentary privilege? Will the Premier agree to such an investigation?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, I am aware of the Press statement by the Leader of the Opposition. I do not think many people would regard it as other than utter hypocrisy for the Leader of the Opposition to speak as he did on this, having in mind his own activities as a dealer in stolen goods. If an inquiry should be made in any direction, it should be a full inquiry into the question of the very many Cabinet and confidential documents that the Leader of the Opposition, out of his own mouth, has declared that he has in his possession. They are documents concerning parole, custody, adoption and many other matters. The Leader of the Opposition has indicated clearly that he is able to obtain such documents and that he has them.

I have noted attempts by the A.L.P. to pillory the honourable member for Belmont for bringing Dr. Colston's past to the attention of the Parliament. It is interesting to note that A.L.P. members are the first to complain when something happens that affects them. I remind the Leader of the Opposition that Labor members had no such scruples when dealing with issues like oil shares that I bought at one time. For weeks and months they did not hesitate to raise that one; that was an entirely different matter; they said then that it was all fair and above board in the interests of Parliament.

How hypocritical can anyone get? The allegations of arson are common knowledge and Dr. Colston would certainly have had to face up to them at some time or other if he had gone to Canberra. There are those in his own party who have voiced such accusations. Let us therefore hear no more about the honourable member for Belmont and the way in which he brought these matters forward. I have nothing but admiration for a man who is prepared to speak with conviction in this Chamber on matters that concern him, and, irrespective of what may be said by newspaper writers who sit in ivory towers far removed from the political scene, I would support the honourable member for Belmont if he acted in the same way again. What the State needs in this House are men who are prepared to speak and act in accordance with their conscience.

Senator Bonner, of course, jumped on the band wagon. Apparently he has forgotten that he very nearly failed to get on the band wagon originally because the A.L.P. tried hard to have someone else elected instead of him. They wanted a choice. Opposition members also did not hesitate, Mr. Speaker, to demand a choice when the Government sought originally to have you elected as Speaker. That was an entirely different matter to Opposition members; they said then that Parliament had to have a choice.

In conclusion—last Wednesday Cabinet decided that it would require a choice, and that decision was backed by the joint Government parties. So far as I am concerned, it still stands, and Parliament will not be dictated to by the A.L.P. So far as the Government is concerned, it is only a matter of choice.

Mr. Houston: Why don't you give Parliament the choice as to who should be Premier of this State?

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The people of Queensland decided that. Count the A.L.P. members now here—a miserable, lousy 11.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Callide, and other members on my left and right, to cease interjecting. There will be no cross-firing in the Chamber during question time.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It is sheer hypocrisy for A.L.P. members to suggest an inquiry into statements made last week by the honourable member for Belmont, whom I respect greatly for his courage and determination in speaking out on issues that are vital to this House.

POWER CRISIS; CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS ALLEGEDLY HELD BY LORD MAYOR OF BRISBANE

Mr. DOUMANY: I direct a question to the Minister for Mines and Energy. In "Sunday Sun" of 31 August 1975, further credence was accorded to the so-called confidential papers allegedly held by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane and to their implications. Will the Minister inform the House whether the Lord Mayor has made these mystery documents available so that they may be tabled in the House? Will he publicly commend the Chairman of the Southern Electric Authority for his lucid and complete rebuttal, in today's Press, of the Lord Mayor's persistent and mischievous claims regarding the power crisis?

Mr. CAMM: The Lord Mayor has indicated that he has some confidential documents. I have challenged him to produce them so that they can be tabled in the House for the information of all honourable members. I am appalled at the ethics displayed by that man since he assumed the

very important office of Lord Mayor of Brisbane. He sits with those papers in his hands when he is making broadcasts and giving interviews to the Press, but he refuses to make them available to me or anyone else. That means that he can quote out of context and tell lies about their contents. Never yet has he indicated a willingness to let me have a look at them or to make them available for tabling in Parliament where their authenticity could be tested.

In his broadcasts he has said that we should be burning more oil in our power stations. At present we are burning 600,000 gallons of oil a week. The cost of oil fuel is more than twice the cost of coal. On the one hand he urges that we should burn more oil and, on the other, he accuses the State Electricity Commission of mismanagement because the price of electricity is going up. I do not know how to deal with that man other than to once again plead with him to make the documents available for tabling so that we can test their authenticity. I do not know where he obtained the documents, but if he continues to quote from them and refuses to make them available for tabling, I will have to come out in the Press and make a very serious accusation against him.

ACCOMMODATION FOR SCOTLAND YARD DETECTIVES

Mr. MELLOY: I ask the Minister for Police: Have two rooms at Police Headquarters been recarpeted and refurnished for the use of the two Scotland Yard investigators at present in Brisbane? How much has been spent on those renovations for an inquiry which will be of only short duration?

Mr. HODGES: I am not aware of any renovations being made at Police Headquarters.

PARLIAMENTARIAN'S ACCESS TO POLICE FILES

Mr. HOUSTON: I ask the Minister for Police: As the honourable member for Belmont is a friend and colleague of his, why has he not asked the honourable member where he obtained the police document that he used in this House and tabled?

Mr. HODGES: No doubt the information will be made available during the course of the investigation.

OPERATION OF LIFT BY STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION

Mr. YEWDALE: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: Is it a fact that the State Electricity Commission is running a lift even though its building has only two floors above ground level and two below ground level? What is the meaning of the term "four floors" mentioned in the regulation? Does it cover four floors, in total, above ground level, or four floors over all?

Mr. CAMM: I could not be expected to know whether the lift in the commission's building is being used. I shall be going there myself in about an hour and I will see if it is still operating.

GRAMMAR SCHOOLS BILL

INITIATION

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education and Cultural Activities): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to public grammar schools and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Brands Act 1915–1974 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

AMBULANCE SERVICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (12.3 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Ambulance Services Act 1967–1974 in certain particulars."

With the exception of a small number provided by hospitals boards, ambulance transport services in Queensland are provided by committees of the Ambulance Transport Brigade, constituted under the provisions of the Ambulance Services Act 1967–1974.

At the present time, 100 such committees are in existence and these committees provide land ambulance services throughout the greater portion of the State. To serve some of the islands adjacent to the coast and areas of the Gulf country largely inaccessible by road, aerial ambulance services have been provided by the Cairns and Rockhampton committees.

Constituted also under the provisions of the Act is a State Council of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, which consists of members appointed by the Governor in Council upon the recommendation of the Minister, representatives of the St. John Ambulance Association, the St. John Ambulance Brigade and the trade unions representing ambulance employees, together with

the superintendent of the Brisbane committee and representatives of committees situated within zoned areas of the State.

The State council is charged with the duty of advising the Minister in relation to the administration of the Act and in respect of ambulance services generally. The State council is charged also with the responsibility of co-ordinating the services provided by the various committees.

In terms of the Ambulance Services Act and of awards made pursuant to the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, each committee is the employer of its employees. Again in terms of the Act, the seniority of any employee is determined only in relation to other employees of the same committee by which he is employed and no provision exists to relate the seniority of any employee to any other employee within the ambulance service as a whole.

This Bill seeks to make better provision for the employees within the whole of the ambulance services and to make available career opportunities by establishing the means of determining the seniority of any employee in relation to any other employee within the whole of the ambulance services, rather than simply within the committee by which he is employed.

The relevant award made pursuant to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act presently provides that applications for appointment to a position of superintendent be considered by a promotions board, which has power only to recommend to a committee that prior consideration be given to an applicant selected by the promotions board, when making an appointment to a position of superintendent.

The Bill seeks to establish an appointment board, which will consider applications for not only the position of superintendent, but also the position of deputy superintendent and any other prescribed position. The board will consist of specified members of the State council, together with a representative of the committee in whose employ the vacancy exists.

The appointment board, which will supplant the promotions board, will have power to recommend to a committee one or more applicants selected as suitable for appointment, and it will be mandatory upon such committee to appoint the selected applicant, or one of the selected applicants, as the case may be.

Additionally, the appointment board will be empowered to interview applicants, to be represented at an appeal board hearing, to sit at any place, and to make any investigation it deems necessary in respect of the matter under consideration.

The present rights of appeal will be retained. Unsuccessful applicants employed by the committee in whose employ the vacancy existed will be entitled to appeal to an appeal board consisting of a stipendiary magistrate, a representative of the committee involved and a representative of the appellant.

A further provision in the Bill is the removal of the disqualification from membership of the State council, or of a committee, of a person who is concerned in, or participates in, the profits of a contract with the State council or with a committee. Modern practice is not to disqualify a person from holding the office of member on these grounds alone, provided that suitable safeguards against unethical practices exist. Such safeguards do exist in the Act, and the retention of this disqualification clause is not considered desirable. Similar disqualification clauses have been removed from other legislation, including legislation administered by other Ministers.

The Bill seeks also to give power to the State council to negotiate any industrial matter which affects, or is likely to affect, more than one committee, and to make any judgment so obtained binding upon all the committees affected. There arise from time to time industrial matters within one committee which affect, or are likely to affect, more than that committee. In terms of the present provisions of the Act, negotiations through the Industrial Court or Industrial Commission would have to be pursued by each and every committee affected. This is most undesirable, for there exists the possibility of different judgments being made in respect of different committees upon similar matters, to the detriment of uniformity within the ambulance service. The proposal that State council negotiate upon such matters would not prevent any committee negotiating upon, and seeking resolution of, any dispute or other matter which affects that committee alone.

Provision is also made in the Bill to give effect to the Cabinet decision that a member of the State council, or of a committee, who is an officer of the Public Service of Queensland may not receive fees or allowances in respect of attendance at a meeting held during the normal working hours of that officer.

The Bill further provides that it will be mandatory upon a committee to report immediately to the police and to the Auditor-General any circumstances in which it appears that money or property belonging to, or received by, a committee has been stolen or has not been brought to account.

Mr. Aikens: Are there any punitive powers in the Bill?

Dr. EDWARDS: I am sure that this will satisfy the honourable member for Townsville South.

In addition, the Bill prescribes that in such matters a committee shall not abstain from, discontinue or delay a prosecution for an

offence against the laws of the State, or promise to do so, or withhold any evidence material to the prosecution.

While a number of the provisions of the Bill could be regarded as administrative matters, the Bill nevertheless seeks to establish new principles in respect of seniority of employees and appointments to certain positions.

I commend the motion to the Committee.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (12.9 p.m.): The Opposition welcomes any amendments that will improve the operations of the ambulance service, particularly those that are in the interests of its employees. However, I think that the Minister could have given consideration to a consolidation of the Act. That has not been done since 1967—eight years ago. I have attached to my copy of the Act a sheaf of amendments and this makes it rather difficult to keep up to date with what is actually happening to the Act. As the Minister has foreshadowed so many amendments this time, I think some consideration should have been given to the consolidation of the Act.

However, the terms of the amendment set out by the Minister on seniority between and within branches of the ambulance service controlled by separate committees are very desirable. Seniority has long been a bone of contention with employees of the various ambulance committees because service with one committee or branch has not carried over into appointments with other branches in the State. I am sure that the employees of the ambulance service will appreciate the new provisions. I think the constitution of a properly supervised appointments board taking into consideration the recommendations made by committees will go a long way towards ironing out many of the difficulties about appointments.

As I said, over the years ambulancemen have been very disturbed at the operation of the Act. Its provisions have deterred many employees from considering transferring to another centre as their seniority is not recognised by the other committee. Although they may be exemplary employees, they just will not risk being appointed on a lower grade or not having their present qualifications recognised by the other committee.

The appointments board must take care to give very great consideration to recommendations made by the committee employing the applicant. I know it might be difficult at times to assess the qualifications of an applicant and I suppose the Minister will make sure that the advice given by the committee employing the applicant will be taken into consideration by the appointments board. Otherwise, as the board would not have personal knowledge of the applicant, it could not operate.

I have a few general comments on the ambulance service over all. It has long been the policy of the A.L.P. that the ambulance service should be controlled by the Health Department. In various parts of the State ambulancemen are still called upon to collect money to maintain the service. It is a degrading experience for ambulance bearers to have to go out on the streets on Saturday mornings to solicit funds from the public just to keep this essential service operating. The full responsibility for the operation of the ambulance should be taken over by the Government. The necessary funds could easily be provided under the Estimates of the Health Department.

I suppose the proposed appeal board will be constituted along the same lines as the appointments board. Appeal boards exist in very many other departments and I think the setting up of an appeal board in this instance is a good thing because difficulties will arise with appointments throughout the State and injustices may be done purely because the qualifications of an applicant have not been fully investigated or because full weight has not been given to the recommendations made by the committee employing the applicant.

The Minister mentioned also the situation of temporary bearers in ambulance centres and people who are employed as ambulance bearers perhaps on a part-time or emergency basis. They should not be discriminated against because of their association with a firm that supplies goods to the ambulance centre, and I think that the amendment proposed is designed to cover such a situation. In country towns where everyday activities are not very varied, in many instances temporary bearers are employed by people who supply services to the ambulance centre. For example, a motor mechanic may be one of the relief drivers and the garage at which he works may supply the petrol used by the ambulance centre. He certainly should not be discriminated against under the Act.

I did not hear the Minister's remarks very clearly. I indicate that the Opposition will study the Bill, deliberate on its provisions and make a further contribution at the second-reading stage.

Mr. AHERN (Landsborough) (12.17 p.m.): As the Minister indicated in his introductory remarks, the proposed Bill is designed to improve industrial procedures within the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade and to better provide machinery for the resolution of disputes in the service in Queensland. After listening to the Minister's comments, I am certain that the new provisions he is proposing will improve the present position quite substantially.

However, I take this opportunity to speak briefly in general terms about a problem that has arisen in the ambulance service in

my electorate, and I shall argue in principle about this matter. For some considerable time variation in Q.A.T.B. district boundaries in the area has been discussed. I expect that all honourable members know that quite a lot of discussion takes place, and in some instances heart-burning is caused, when changes are proposed in district boundaries. My own feeling, after studying the situation, is that an attempt should be made to designate all areas so that there will not be any shirt-tail agreements, grey areas or areas that are not clearly the responsibility of one district. A move should be made to clarify the situation by saying, "This particular area belongs to this district and is its responsibility." That is the first point I wish to make.

On the second point, I wish to deliver what I hope is helpful criticism of the State Council of the Q.A.T.B. My experience with that council arises from the dispute that now exists in my electorate. When a dispute of this type exists, I should hope that the State council would deliberately discuss all aspects of the situation freely and openly with all the interested parties in an endeavour to resolve the dispute in the correct way.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Rule of Practice No. 6 of the Standing Rules and Orders provides that ministerial benches are reserved for Ministers of the Crown only. I ask back-bench members to observe that rule.

Mr. AHERN: It seems to me that the State Council of the Q.A.T.B. is too ready to appoint an executive committee to investigate matters coming before it and to implement the report of that committee without a full and open discussion of the matters. In my opinion, the discussion is certainly not full enough. It may be that the right course of action is eventually taken, but that practice does not help to build a good relationship between the various centres.

If from a position on the State council I had been handling the dispute that arose in my electorate, I would have tried to bring all the parties together for an open and frank discussion on the mater. In a helpful sort of way I would have given ample opportunity for discussion and counter-discussion before the State council itself had a full and open debate on the matter and made a recommendation to the Minister.

In respect of the matter I am referring to, it appears that an executive committee was formed. That committee made a recommendation which was adopted by the State council almost without debate, or at least without enough debate, so the problem still exists. Very few people are happy with the recommendation that the State council has made. All the trouble has been totally unnecessary. I hope that officers of the State council will listen to my helpful public criticism of them, and I ask that in future they try to give a better opportunity for all parties to discuss an issue with them before they make a recommendation.

I support the Bill. I am sure that the proposed amendments will lead to better industrial relations within the Q.A.T.B. in Queensland.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (12.22 p.m.): Had I been permitted to do what members have been doing for many years, and had I been able to ask the Minister piloting the Bill through the Chamber a question while he was in the act of sitting down, it might not have been necessary for me to make this speech.

While on that subject, I should like you, Mr. Hewitt, to quote the Standing Order that forbids me, as a private member, from sitting on the ministerial bench while I am having a conversation with a Minister. Or is that something that you just thought up as you went along?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! For the benefit of the honourable member I point out that I cited Rule of Practice No. 6 of the Standing Orders. For the further benefit of the honourable member, I point out that Mr. Speaker ruled along those lines the other day. I am merely being consistent. I now ask the honourable member to direct his comments to the Ambulance Services Act.

Mr. AIKENS: Very well, Mr. Hewitt. I would have expected that from an A.L.P. Chairman of Committees, but not from you.

I am very interested in the Bill for one reason and one reason only. It is a very sound reason. Unfortunately, over the years this Parliament has developed the craven habit of passing its responsibilities over to various boards and commissions. From the Government's point of view, there is a very good reason for that. In the first place, it wants to avoid making controversial decisions; it wants to avoid falling out with anybody; it wants to avoid losing a few votes. So instead of carrying out the obligations that it is supposed to carry out, and instead of doing the job that the people elected it to do, it appoints a board or a commission. When anybody comes to the Government and says that he is aggrieved with the decision of the board or commission, the Government says, "We can do nothing about it. It is a statutory body. Consequently you will just have to go and weep on somebody else's shoulder."

I am not going to digress very far, but I have raised this matter more than once. I have pointed out that in some instances legislation has been passed in this Chamber simply because members were not interested in it or probably because they could not understand the English language as well as

you can, Mr. Hewitt. After certain legislation became law it was found that the Minister had no power at all to administer the legislation that he had piloted through Parliament.

The most outstanding and most outrageous case was the Bill that set up the commission dealing with the film industry—the registration of picture theatres and so on. The liquor legislation is another example. When I challenged the Minister responsible as to why he gave away the power of veto vested in him by the people on polling day, he said, "Oh, I haven't got time to go through every little detail and deal with those things."

I ask the new members of this Parliament, some of whom appear to be very eager beavers—some, to my surprise, appear even to be intelligent—that they devote themselves to keeping a watchful eye on the possibility of this Parliament's power being eroded away by lazy Ministers or by Ministers who are under pressure from particular groups in the community.

In the Act that the Bill is designed to amend the power of the Minister to control his own department was taken away from him, not by the present incumbent of the office but by one of his predecessors. In spite of my prodigious memory, I am unable to recollect which Minister it was. So I am happy to learn that under the Bill the Minister sets out to assert what we should all try to assert, namely, the retention of the Minister's supreme power. We should all fight to the death any attempt to take it away from him.

The Minister should have the power of veto and the power of review. He must have absolute power over his own department. If he abuses that power he must be held responsible to the Parliament and Parliament, in turn, must be held responsible to the people. It is, after all, the Parliament of Queensland, not any board or commission set up by it, that is the supreme governing body in the State. This Parliament must not hand over to some little group of people a certain power that it has arrogated to itself. As I say, Parliament is responsible to the people, and it receives all the kicks and vilification if a commission or a board does something wrong. Yet it would appear that Parliament has no power to do anything about it. The Minister should be supreme under this Act in all things.

Mr. Moore: Under every Act.

Mr. AIKENS: All Ministers should be supreme under their Acts. I do not know who interjected, but he is a man of sound common sense—even though he may not be the epitome of good looks.

The Bill will provide that the committee shall not do this and that, and that some instrumentality set up under the Act shall not do this and that. During the Minister's introductory speech I interjected, and I ask again, "What punitive power is put into the Bill to make the committee do this or that, or to stop it from doing this or that?" Unless such power is written into the Bill, we will create a situation similar to that existing in several Government departments where the bureaucrats reign supreme because no-one is either willing or game to take them on. They simply thumb their nose at the Minister and at Parliament as well as at the law. They are able to do this simply because the Acts under which they operate make no provision for punitive action against them if they do not do as they are told. So I ask the Minister to tell us either in his reply or at the second-reading stage what punitive power is written into the Bill.

What happens if the committee thumbs its nose at the Bill and at the Minister? What provision is there in the Bill to allow the committee to be dealt with? Are its members going to be slapped on the wrist; are they going to be taken before a Supreme Court judge, who will pat them on the head and release them on a bond; or are they going to be sent over to Boggo Road prison so that they can enjoy living like fighting cocks and reap the benefits of the release-to-work racket and that type of thing? What does the Bill provide to enable the Government to deal with the committee if it thumbs its nose at the Minister? I ask all members, particularly the younger ones, to have a close look at the provisions in the Bill.

I did not know what was going on in the ambulance committee in Townsville until a deputation of reputable local citizens told me that they had laid certain written complaints against the Townsville branch of the Q.A.T.B. on certain aspects of its operations. I do not know whether the complaints are true or false; nor do I think it concerns me whether or not they are. The fact is, however, that these reputable people sent down these complaints to the board controlling the ambulance committees, and received no answer. They may as well have dropped their complaints into a well.

They then came to me and asked if I would put them to the former Minister for Health who is now, I think, the Honourable Sir Douglas Tooth. I did and he was astonished. He asked me, "How do you come into this?" I said, "I don't come into it at all. The committee approached me to ask you why something has not been done about serious complaints made by responsible people." He said, "I shall have inquiries made."

Honourable members may recall that I raised the matter by way of several questions in the House. I do not wish to prove whether the charges are true or false. I merely want to know why some action has not been taken about the serious charges made by reputable men. I knew, of course,

that Sir Douglas Tooth was contemplating resigning from Parliament after a rather colourless period in this Chamber. I also knew that, like most people, he wanted to resign in an atmosphere of tranquillity and amiability. He did not want, metaphorically speaking, to go out with a dirty nose. He therefore passed the matter on, I think, to the Auditor-General and the police. It has gone from one to the other. I understand that the charges were investigated by the Auditor-General himself in Townsville. I do not know whether they have been proved or not, but the fact remains that nothing has been done. They are in a quagmire.

I understand that there is someone on the board or the committee who is reluctant to act for some reason known only to himself and his God. I shall not further elaborate on the subject, other than to say that we have a responsible Minister of the Crown, who is responsible to Parliament (with Parliament being responsible to the people), at whom someone on this board or committee controlling the ambulance brigades in Queensland is deliberately thumbing his nose and telling the Minister to go and jump in the lake, mind his own business and get out of his office, so to speak. That is a monstrous state of affairs.

If the last part of the Bill dealt with by the Minister gives him power (which should never have been taken away from him) to go to this board or authority and say, "You do what I want you to do or I will abolish, wipe out or replace you with a board that will act in accordance with the law of this land," I shall be better satisfied with it. In these days it is a quite common pastime for people to make their own laws as they go along. I am not referring to a little incident that occurred recently. However, it is unfortunately true that many people, even the traffic people, make their own laws as they go along. It is apparent that certain boards commissions and other bodies which are supposed to be instrumentalities of Parliament are defying Ministers who are instruments of this Parliament.

I do not know whether this Bill contains any retrospective clause. I should like the Minister to tell me whether it will be retrospective relative to the complaints that have been made about the Townsville branch of the Q.A.T.B. Will the Minister be able to go to this board—this brick wall in Brisbane—and say, "You are going to tell me all about what happened in Townsville relative to those complaints and the investigations that have been made by the Auditor-General and the police. You will also tell me what you intend to do about it. If I am not happy with what you propose to do about it, I will do it myself." Does the Bill provide retrospectivity?

Dr. Edwards: I will answer the honourable member's question in a moment—in my reply.

Mr. AIKENS: I know nothing about the matters raised by the honourable member for Nudgee, who generally speaking is very knowledgeable so long as he is not led astray by the Left-wingers. I must say that he is very rarely a toady for the Left-wingers in his party although they are very powerful, arrogant and insolent. If this Bill restores to the Minister for Health the power that he should never have lost to control the ambulance brigades in Queensland, I shall be very happy to support it. If the Minister can find any other instrumentality or section of the Health Department in which his power has been taken from him by either the weakness or laziness of this Parliament when particular Bills were going through, I will be very happy to support any action he takes.

The affair in Townsville has to be cleared up one way or the other. I say again that I do not know whether the charges laid by this reputable committee are true or false. To me, that is not the real issue. The real issue is that, unless this Bill goes through, the Minister in charge of the ambulance committees of this State can do nothing about it. In that case, the sooner the Bill goes through the better. If I could, I would move, "That the motion be now put."

Mr. ROW (Hinchinbrook) (12.36 p.m.): I enter this debate with a great deal of respect for the ambulance service. The remarks of the honourable members for Nudgee and Townsville South have only served to heighten my respect for the traditional concept of this service. Whilst I do not disagree entirely with the remarks of those two honourable members that some semblance of legislative management and control should be applied to such an important service as the Q.A.T.B., nevertheless, I feel that there are very valid reasons for the present situation. The Bill will go a long way towards meeting what might be considered to be a new concept in the provision and administration of the ambulance service.

If we go through history, particularly the history of the ambulance service in Queensland, we find that this organisation was originally based on a great act of humanity. In the early days of this State pioneers went into various regions where very few medical facilities existed. I suppose it was the original voluntary action of those few men who constituted what is now the Q.A.T.B. that was largely responsible for the alleviation of much suffering, the provision of a great deal of confidence and the relief of trepidation, particularly among women in the Outback.

The display that some of us were fortunate enough to witness at the Brisbane Exhibition last month was very enlightening. It was to me, anyway. The cavalcade depicting the history of the ambulance service brought home to me the real value and essence of this service.

It is all very well to say that we should have complete legislative and administrative control over this facet of our health organisation. However, if we took away entirely the present concept of ambulance work we

should lose some of its value. Perhaps the fact that it grew from a voluntary service and is of great value to the people accounts for its being taken for granted at times. But its availability is never questioned. Its service is always on hand and is something that people have come to expect as part of the charitable activities of our way of life.

I fully realise that over the years of development in this State, discrepancies have crept into the ambulance services. Those discrepancies are most marked in the viability of the various centres. Some of them are quite well provided for financially by voluntary subscription. In fact, I believe that most country ambulance centres are. However, through circumstances beyond their control, many are finding it very difficult to make ends meet. While there is some legislative provision for the funding of this service, I think that the discrepancies that have mentioned still exist, and it has always been a matter of concern to me that they have not been removed.

Because most ambulance centres have their origins in voluntary service, many of them today do not have secure tenure over the land on which their premises are situated. To the best of my knowledge, most ambulance centres are established on land held under the trusteeship of a shire, or on Crown land under some other tenure which is not entirely secure. The viability of any large organisation today depends on its ability to provide security for the obtaining of finance, and this security has been denied the ambulance service because in most cases the centres do not have security of tenure of their establishments. I put it to the Minister that it would be wise to provide ambulance centres, through the Lands Department, with a type of tenure over their land and premises that would be acceptable security to the traditional money-lending authorities, thus enabling the ambulance centres to work on reasonable overdrafts.

As was mentioned by the honourable member for Nudgee, I think that the dual role of bearer and collector puts an unreasonable strain on ambulancemen. I feel that many of the industrial problems that have arisen in the ambulance service in recent times can be traced directly to the strain placed on ambulance officers in maintaining the viability of their centres and carrying out their services to the public. I ask the Minister to look seriously into giving to ambulance centres some kind of secure tenure, such as a long-term leasehold, over their premises so that they may borrow to the extent necessary to maintain their viability throughout the whole financial year. Admittedly, some limit must be placed on their borrowing, but at the moment, apart from asking for charity, they have very little capacity to borrow at all. This is not good enough.

I agree with the honourable member for Landsborough that the present definition of ambulance boundaries is not as good as it should be. In my electorate I have had a similar experience to his. It concerns a dispute over a boundary that has, to my knowledge, existed for at least two years. Whilst I have had an assurance from the Minister's department that the board will be investigating this problem, it has still not been resolved. I repeat that in this matter I agree with the honourable member for Landsborough.

I think that much more attention should be given to the position of ambulance boundaries. There is overlapping of both services and charitable activities of centres and, while they are very tolerant of one another and there is no open hostility, there are undercurrents of feeling about someone who is trespassing in another's arena. This is most undesirable, and it should be avoided.

I applaud the proposed amendments to the Act and I make my comments about district boundaries and the financial viability of the service in the hope that the Minister will shortly give consideration to these matters. I commend him on introducing the Bill.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (12.46 p.m.): I rise to support the proposed amendments to the Ambulance Services Act relating to appointments and appeals. These amendments are, of course, long overdue and I would like to pay a tribute to the Minister for introducing them. At least he is trying to bring the Ambulance Services Act up to date, unlike his predecessor, who kept the ambulance service in the dark for so many years.

The proposed amendments were first discussed at the Q.A.T.B. conference in Cairns in 1973 and in July 1974 correspondence was received by the brigade from the Health Department suggesting them. They were then discussed by the State Council of the Q.A.T.B. in November 1974.

The proposed amendments became necessary because the existing promotions board created under the old Superintendents Award has no teeth. It is a toothless tiger, as I think the Minister will agree. The board can only make recommendations, which are not binding on the various committees. The committees are free to make their own decision and may choose to ignore the board's recommendations and appoint other applicants not recommended by the board. I feel it is time the Q.A.T.B. was brought into the 20th century. It is not so long ago that the men of the Q.A.T.B. were required to line up for inspection at the old Q.A.T.B. Centre in Ann Street.

Mr. Jensen: It wasn't a short-arm inspection, was it?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: No, not a short-arm inspection at all. They were inspected by the superintendent or his deputy to see that their hair was parted in the middle, their tie was on straight and their fingernails clean. I am glad this practice has been discontinued; but, there again, it has been discontinued only because the deputy superintendent does not have the time to conduct the inspection. I feel that it was not only degrading but also a waste of valuable time.

I would like to outline briefly the conditions under which bearers have been required to work since the introduction of one-man cars. I am rather disappointed that the Minister has not done something to alleviate the problem.

Mr. Moore: They could put girls on.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That's true; they could put a girl on. They could even put the honourable member for Windsor on as a runner. At present there is a severe shortage of staff in the Brisbane area, which has necessitated the introduction of one-man cars. The brigade is unable to provide an efficient service in emergencies and in the transporting of seriously ill patients. It is impossible for a driver to attend to a patient effectively and drive an ambulance vehicle safely at the same time. The difficulties caused by this shortage apply particularly to the service given between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. During that period only one man is on duty at each of the 11 branches in Brisbane and, I am told, only one driver and one bearer on duty at the Brisbane centre. When staff are off ill, their place is not filled, and I believe that a supplementary pool should be established from which additional drivers or bearers could be drawn in time of emergency. If this pool were established, the sick and injured of Brisbane would certainly get a much better deal than they receive at the present time.

The Minister, as a medical practitioner, would know that most serious cases seem to occur during the night; most of these are of an urgent nature such as heart attacks and strokes and, in the main, stretcher cases. A lot of injuries today are caused by car accidents. Of course, when a serious car accident occurs the bearer usually requires the assistance of another driver to take the injured patient or patients to hospital. On most occasions the assistance is rendered by a driver from another area, who usually takes 15 to 20 minutes to get to the scene of the accident. If his services are needed en route to hospital as well, this means leaving two centres without a car for that time, which certainly creates serious problems. Often when it is known by the dispatcher that no assistance is available, a driver is sent alone to a case in the hope that he will manage. I think the dispatcher who does this is flirting with the patient's life.

I have received many complaints that, when an accident occurs in the Inala-Oxley area and a call is made to the Oxley Ambulance Centre, it has to go through the Brisbane centre. In this day and age, that is ludicrous. A person should be able to ring the ambulance station in the area—for example, Oxley or Moorooka—without having to go through the head centre.

In many country centres the situation is even worse. The superintendent does the night work and usually he is backed up by "on-call" drivers; that is, they are called if they are needed. Where there is one man on night shift at other centres, "on-call" drivers are available either to take over or to assist the man on night duty if the need arises. The branch complement was recently reduced by one man at each of the 11 branches in the Brisbane area. I think this is a disgrace and needs looking into. There are now seven men at the Brisbane branches instead of eight.

It has been conceded on numerous occasions that ambulance officers are dedicated to the safety and welfare of the public and are obliged to transport sick and injured people for medical treatment with a minimum of delay. So it is of some concern to me that on 30 December 1974 a staff notice was issued instructing the officers to obey traffic signals and rules at all times. The Federated Miscellaneous Workers' Union, which represents the ambulance bearers, requested that that instruction be withdrawn. As the union quite rightly pointed out, the ambulance officers had a proven record of safety. In confirmation of that, I should like to read to honourable members an article that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" on 20 June this year, under the heading "130 drivers get awards"—

> "One hundred and thirty ambulance officers received Road Safety Council Safe Driving Awards from the Transport Minister (Mr. Hooper) yesterday.
>
> "The awards are given to employer-nominated drivers who have not been involved in an accident that was their fault or breached traffic regulations in the last year."

So it would appear that the instruction by the State council was superfluous.

In January of this year, the National Heart Foundation pointed out that the sooner a heart attack victim got to hospital the greater were his chances of survival. I think that, in these circumstances, the speed and safety of the ambulance can be left to the good sense of its driver. It is also interesting to note an article that appeared in the "Telegraph" on 25 January 1973, which said—

> "The director of the National Heart Foundation, Dr. Ralph Reader, today said the sooner a heart attack victim got to hospital, the greater were chances of survival.

He estimated that 3,000 lives would be saved every year if every heart attack victim reached hospital within an hour of the start of an attack.

'Each year 23,000 Australians between the ages of 30 and 69 suffer heart attacks,' Dr. Reader said.

'Of these, about 11,000 die, 5,000 of them outside hospital.

'If all victims were in hospital within an hour, that 5,000 could be cut to 2,000 or fewer'."

Mr. Moore: Can't you read your mate's writing?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: No; I am trying very hard.

It appears at the moment—and this is tragic—that a burning building receives more urgent attention than a life that is possibly in danger. Every effort is made by the fire brigade to have efficient and up-to-date warning devices installed on fire brigade vehicles and to educate the public and motorists to assist in getting vehicles to an emergency as soon as possible. Not so the ambulance. As I have said, drivers are forbidden to travel at over the speed limits or to break traffic rules, however serious the emergency. Which is more important: a burning building or a human life? I ask the Minister that question through you, Mr. Hewitt.

The claim in the media that too many ambulance vehicles have been badly damaged conflicts with the safe-driving awards to the 130 drivers at the Brisbane centre. As I said, a number of medical experts and newspaper articles dealing with heart attacks stress the need for admission to hospital as soon as possible.

In conclusion, I tell the Committee that I am of the opinion that the ambulance service should be the direct responsibility of the Health Department. I think it is degrading that ambulance officers should have to go out and collect money and sell raffle tickets to purchase equipment and to meet their wages. The Government can always find money for less worthy purposes—such as the Premier's new aeroplane—but it cannot make the money available to give Queensland a first-class ambulance services.

I shall peruse the Bill and have more to say at the second-reading stage.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (12.54 p.m.): Having read the original Act, I am satisfied that it was a very good and sound piece of legislation. Therefore, any alteration proposed to it should also be sound and designed to effect an improvement in it. It would appear that the Bill is aimed mainly at giving security to employees by way of seniority and appointment. The appointment of senior persons in any service must be given due consideration and deliberation, not by an individual but by a group of persons, preferably a committee of appointment. In certain Government fields senior persons have been appointed to positions without very much forethought. If we can have a committee of appointment set up in the ambulance service, we will have accomplished something.

The committee of appointment should always have some form of inbuilt appeal system such as exists in the Public Service. No person or committee is infallible.

A person might be very well qualified academically, but if he is appointed as the superintendent of an ambulance brigade or the superintendent of a hospital, the added responsibilities he must accept in that sphere might just throw that little extra weight onto the scales with the result that he cannot carry the total work-load in his new appointment. That is where the honourable member for Townsville South was correct. He said that in none of these changes should the Minister relinquish his overriding power of authority. He should not completely delegate his authority to the committee. The Minister should always have the final say.

A hospital superintendent or an ambulance superintendent could prove to be inefficient by reason of inability to cope with the extra burden of work thrown on him. We saw that occur recently in one major hospital. A considerable amount of chaos and administrative difficulty, with resultant backlash on patients, arose because the person concerned did not have that little bit of extra ability that was required. In that instance the Department of Health had considerable difficulty in sorting things out and, as a result, it received a lot of unwarranted criticism and blame. If the Minister can be given this power of direction or authority, the provision will be well worth while.

Not a great deal of credit has been given to ambulance services in Queensland. Ambulance bearers are a breed of their own. Usually they are people who want to do that sort of work. To them it is not just another job. They like that type of work and adapt to it well. Usually they are liked by the community. In Townsville I have not heard one complaint about ambulance bearers, and I had a lot to do with them when I was working at the hospital. Their handling of emergencies, such as cardiac cases, is efficient.

At one time the suggestion was made that ambulance brigades should go to the expense of fitting up a cardiac ambulance in each of the provincial cities. In my opinion, in view of the efficiency of ambulance services, those units are not necessary. One has only to ring up the ambulance brigade and say, "Mrs. so-and-so has had a cardiac attack. Could you take her to the hospital?" There is no delay. In my city most of the patients are in the hospital well within half an hour, and they are looked after at the hospital immediately on arrival. Ambulance bearers have done a magnificent job in Queensland, particularly in Townsville.

Ambulance bearers are dedicated men, but it always strikes me as being rather infra dig for them to have to raise funds. With the fast-moving life we live (with consequent road accidents) and national disasters, ambulance services have got to the stage of importance where they should be funded more adequately by the State Government, or preferably by the Federal Government.

Unfortunately, the Federal Government squanders large sums of money on fancy gatherings such as the recent women's meeting to celebrate International Women's Year. Money was wasted on sending discontented females to that conference.

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

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: Before lunch I was discussing the funding of the ambulance services and I remarked that it is a shame that the ambulance brigade is called upon to collect money. Obviously our Federal counterparts are not aware of the services provided by the brigade to the community. Whereas we, on the one hand, are skimping and scraping to finance the brigade, the Federal Government, on the other hand, is wilfully and wantonly wasting the taxpayers' money on various hare-brained schemes, such as the International Women's Year conference. It has spent money on sending to Canberra to participate in a conference a group of frustrated women who consider themselves to be oppressed. This conference seems to be nothing more than a Leftist, radical, socialistic group airing its views. As I listened last night to the announcement made concerning the conference, I wondered how oppressed these women would feel if they were left without ambulance services such as those provided by the State Government.

The Minister has told us that the Bill provides for the removal of disqualification of members of the council and committees on the ground of financial interest in contracts. This aspect greatly disturbs me. Such a disqualification acts as a safeguard, and, no matter how pure people may be, human nature being as it is, some persons are led into profit-making schemes involving contracts. I think we should retain the time-honoured system of not allowing on a committee those persons who have an interest in contracts entered into by it. It is unwise to waive such a provision; it should be retained as a safeguard both for the public and for the good name of the committees concerned.

I should like the Minister to tell us whether the local committee has any right of appeal against a decision of the appointment board. A local committee would probably be fully aware of local attitudes and atmosphere, whereas the appointment board, although cognisant of local problems, certainly would not be able to appreciate their significance to the same degree as the local committee. I believe that local committees should be vested with considerable power and be given a little more say than they have at present.

Generally speaking, I consider that the Minister has introduced an amendment that will be of benefit to the ambulance services. The honourable member for Townsville South referred to financial problems that might arise from time to time. I ask the Minister to take heed of the correspondence that passed between the member for Townsville South and his department while it was under the control of his predecessor. I urge the Minister also to ask either the police or the Auditor-General to investigate any unsatisfactory aspects of monetary management and to refer to him any findings that may be made thereon. This would enable the Minister himself to be aware of such matters. This is relevant to the point I made earlier, namely, that a Minister's power of discretion and decision should not be removed under any Bill, and that applies equally to the Ambulance Services Act.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (2.21 p.m.): For many years I have been privileged to serve as a member of the Brisbane Centre Committee. During my term many decisions have been made by that committee.

Mr. Lindsay: Please speak into the microphone.

Mr. DEAN: If the honourable member cannot hear me, there is something wrong with his hearing.

During my term of office no Minister has been rebuked or ignored by the committee in any way. As we have not yet seen the Bill, we can only make assumptions, but with my experience, I think I am entitled to refer to what I believe the Bill might contain. If my assumption is correct it will take away the complete autonomy of committees and pass it to the State council. I always understood that the State council was more of an advisory body serving the 100 ambulance committees throughout Queensland than an administrative body. We have always been guided by the advice given by the council. On most occasions we have either adopted its advice or heeded it in some other way. If a provision in the Bill takes away the complete autonomy of ambulance committees, I see no reason for members remaining on them because they will only be rubber stamps. They will only be agreeing to any decision made by the council.

If after the Bill becomes law, a committee wishes to appoint a new superintendent, the names of applicants, as at present, naturally, will be submitted to the State council. However, someone on the State council may have a dislike for the person whom the committee wishes to appoint. In the circumstances that I envisage the local committee would have no say. The members of the committee will have no autonomy, and therefore no right to

say, "This is the man we want. This is the man who will run our ambulance service to the best advantage." We would be concerned about giving service to the public, the patients and the accident victims who need ambulance attention. A desire to give the best service possible, irrespective of other considerations is of prime importance. If I were an ambulance man I would act in the same way as ambulance bearers who are concerned only about their patients. A man would not be an ambulance bearer very long if he did not have such feelings.

Like all organisations, the ambulance service, from time to time, finds persons who do not fit properly into the organisation. Fortunately for the service, the honest persons realise their shortcomings and leave the service. Others may hang on a little longer, but sooner or later they find that they do not have the right approach or are completely unsuited for the work, and they then leave. The most important point in my view is autonomy of the local committees.

The Minister referred to the appointment board and said that its decision will be final. A person may lodge an appeal against its decision but it would be like an appeal from Caesar to Caesar. Some very good grounds would have to be established before the appointment board would alter its decision concerning an appointment to any committee. It will mean straight-out dictation to all committees throughout Queensland.

The Brisbane Centre Committee is very different from the ordinary country committee.

Dr. Edwards: But you believe in one man, one value.

Mr. DEAN: Absolutely. However, I also believe in the autonomy of the committee on which I serve. If there is lack of faith in its judgment, the committee should be dispanded immediately. I do not think that the State council should have the complete and final say. I thoroughly agree that the Minister should have the final say at all times and I would always support his being the arbiter if no progress could be made in that regard. I repeat that the State council should not have this complete and overriding power.

The Minister said that if a decision is made in respect of one centre in one area, the decision is binding on all committees—the 100 committees in Queensland.

Dr. Edwards: That is so at the present time.

Mr. DEAN: No; only if this Bill becomes law.

It means that if the Cairns committee is deeply involved in industrial trouble, all the other committees in Queensland would have to support it and become embroiled in some way in its domestic problems.

Mr. Moore: Why?

Mr. DEAN: That's what I want to know.

Mr. Moore: I am asking you.

Mr. DEAN: I should like the honourable member to tell me. That is what I feel.

Mr. Moore: Answer the question.

Mr. DEAN: I am posing the questions at the moment. I might be wrong in my understanding of the Bill and I hope I am.

Mr. Aikens: Ignore him.

Mr. Moore: He is floundering.

Mr. DEAN: If I am floundering, it is because of the ignorance of some honourable members. It is a pity that many of them have not had the opportunity to serve on one of these committees. They speak from complete ignorance of the workings of the committees and the machinery that is necessary to keep the ambulance in service in Queensland. They see an ambulance vehicle flash by with its siren screaming and that is their complete knowledge of ambulance work.

Mr. Aikens: They would not know a ligature from a band-aid.

Mr. DEAN: I agree.

Lets us face up to the matter squarely. I feel that other people share my view that, for a long time, the State council has not vindicated its existence. I say that without any hesitation. Years ago we had the Queensland Ambulance Committee. It was a cubersome organisation and in many ways hindered rather than aided the workings of the ambulance service. When the Act was amended to create the State council, we thought that some of the difficulties would be ironed out. I would like someone to indicate to me how the State council has served the purpose we thought it would when the amending legislation was passed. I feel that in many ways its interference is due in some degree to our own shortcomings. I say that without any hesitation.

Reference has been made to the ambulance bearers. The ambulance bearer in the country still works under great hardship and in many cases his wife plays a very important part in his work. Within the Brisbane area, of which I can speak from close personal knowledge, ambulance bearers do not have to do any of those things. It is now many years since Brisbane ambulance bearers had to go into the streets to collect their salaries. Years ago this had to be done, and it was shocking to see ambulancemen standing on street corners collecting money. No ambulance bearers in the area controlled by the Brisbane centre now have to make any collections or conduct raffles.

Mr. Hartwig: They do it in the country.

Mr. DEAN: I know, and I am sorry that they have to. They should not have to do that. The Brisbane centre is big business in

the administration of ambulance work, and, because of its magnitude, it has been able to overcome problems of this type. Compared with their brothers in the country, Brisbane ambulancemen are in many ways very privileged. Many of them came from the country on accepting positions with the ambulance service in the Brisbane area and they know only too well that what I am saying about the hardships endured by country ambulance bearers is correct.

On what I have so far heard of the Bill, I am not very happy with it. If we could see Bills before they are brought down in the Chamber, and before they become the subject of in-depth debate, I feel sure that many of the things said here would be left unsaid. Unfortunately, however, a lot of suppositions are made, and often our imagination goes a little too far. I may change my mind when I have an opportunity to study the Bill, but at this stage, from listening to the Minister's introductory speech, I am not very happy with it. In saying that, I cast no reflection on the Minister. Virtually no Bill is fully explained on its initiation. When we study the principles of the Bill, we might find that it does not go as far as we were told, or we may find that it goes further than we had thought.

Reference was made to understaffing of the ambulance service. Today the person in the street has the opportunity to choose his calling, and not all who apply for positions in the ambulance service are suitable for appointment. A fully trained ambulanceman is a highly qualified officer, and any medical man will confirm that the first contact that a patient has with medical assistance, whether it be at the side of the road or in the home, has a very great bearing on his welfare when he reaches hospital and on his eventual recovery. That is why it is very important to exercise care in the selection of ambulance staff. That has always been done in the Brisbane centre; in fact, perhaps we have been over-careful. The staff in the Brisbane area are highly qualified, very competent and humane officers. Those qualities form part of their job, and they use them seven days a week.

Reference was made to speed in reaching accident scenes. Over the years progress has been made in communications, and I think that in the use of radio we have the speediest communication possible today. It is far better to have a service controlled by radio than to have officers sitting in ambulance stations waiting for telephone calls. The modern system has only one central control, and the duty officers maintain control of the whole area for 24 hours a day. It works very effectively. I know it would be very nice to have two men in a vehicle every time it goes out, but we cannot get the staff. If we could, no doubt there would be two men in every vehicle.

Mr. Moore: It has to be paid for.

Mr. DEAN: It would be paid for. One thing I do know is that the public of Queensland will not quibble about contributing to the ambulance service if they are asked because it is such an important part of our daily lives.

Dr. Edwards: Tell Mr. Hooper all this.

Mr. DEAN: I am putting the record straight. I hope I am not missing any points and that I am getting my message across. If anything said in a debate on an important matter like this happens to be slightly incorrect, it is said not deliberately but from ignorance of the workings of the organisation. That is why I mentioned it.

Reference was made to road safety and the difficulties faced by some of our drivers in traffic. I and my fellow committee men have insisted that the drivers obey the traffic laws. It is important not only for their safety but also for the safety of the patient in the vehicle. Many years ago nothing was thought of an ambulance vehicle flashing through a red light. That is just not right. For the sake of saving a few seconds, the driver might not only lose his own life but be instrumental in killing several other people or even the patient he is trying to save. I must say that the Police Department allows ambulance drivers a great degree of latitude. I am not aware of any occasion when an ambulanceman has been breached by a member of the Police Department, yet this could have been justified quite often. In some cases this lenient treatment can be understood. An ambulance driver, with the knowledge that he has must be allowed some discretion but, at the same time, whilst engaged in committee work I have never encouraged drivers to break the State's traffic laws in any way. I feel that the saving of a few seconds trying to get someone to hospital as quickly as possible could bring about a dreadful tragedy. In my view, drivers get there quickly enough. In fact, sometimes when I see an ambulance flash by on the road I wonder about the comfort of the patient because if he is conscious he must realise the speed the vehicle is travelling at. Travel at high speed is not very comfortable and it cannot be conducive to a patient's peace of mind to know that he could be involved in a crash at any moment. A very serious accident could occur if another vehicle cuts across the path of an ambulance from a side street or comes through an intersection. I realise that the ambulance driver exercises a great deal of discretion and uses a lot of common sense, and he would not drive at high speed unnecessarily; he would not be an ambulanceman if he were not aware of his responsibilities. Ambulancemen do marvellous work.

Over the past few months road safety awards have been made to ambulance drivers; the Minister for Transport was the first person to present them. Nevertheless,

many drivers have been in accidents and ambulance vehicles have been damaged. This is only natural. The private motorist is fortunate these days if his car does not receive a few dents or a crushed mudguard.

I will have some further comments to make during the second-reading of the Bill. I hope that my present feeling that the Bill will take away the autonomy of the local committees will prove to be wrong. If not, I will object very violently.

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (2.39 p.m.): In rising to contribute to the debate on the introduction of the Ambulance Services Bill, I must say it is certainly not the intention of the Bill to detract from the autonomy of the local ambulance committee. Throughout this State the local ambulance committees are held in very high regard not only by the community but also by the Health Department. The work done by these committees should not be belittled, because it contributes in a large measure to the feeling of safety and well-being of the people. Particularly in rural areas, the ambulance service provides a link not only with the small country hospital but also with the major services of the city if these are required.

Rural committees have raised large amounts of money over the years to provide ambulance services, and the sums so raised have been subsidised by the Government. The Government is acutely aware of the need for such services and has been very appreciative of the work of local committees in raising funds for ambulance services. It believes that, when money is raised by a local committee, a greater public spirit is aroused and people will ensure that the ambulance service is maintained at all times.

It is regrettable that too often the superintendent has to be the senior ambulanceman, the chief instructor, the secretary of the committee and also the chief fund-raiser. All too often superintendents have to devote a great deal of their time to running raffles and taking part in all sorts of drives for funds. In some instances they attend cattle sales—if these still raise money for people in the rural sector—and man stalls providing morning or afternoon tea, and things of that type, to swell the funds of the local committee.

The provision of vehicles has always been a major drain on the funds of local committees. There has been a steady improvement in ambulance vehicles in this State, but there has not yet been a general acceptance of what might be termed a full ambulance vehicle.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Honourable members should not be loitering in the lobbies.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: In rural centres, even today, many of the ambulance vehicles have been adapted from current model station wagons. They have not been designed as ambulance vehicles and do not cope at all well with carrying two patients, let alone four from a major disaster. In the future, perhaps the Government will be able to provide subsidies that will enable the ambulance service to cope better with the victims of the disasters that occur, particularly on the roads.

There is also a need to have more than one ambulance bearer in attendance at motor vehicle accidents. When a bearer answers a call, he does not know the extent of the accident, how many people are injured, or what may ultimately be required of him. Nowadays he has the advantage of radio and he can summon further aid. However, I think when a bearer has to go more than a couple of miles away from his centre, it would be wise to have another bearer accompany him. Even in Toowoomba I have seen persons from amongst the passing motorists having, as a matter of conscience, to render assistance to the bearer. Where the passers-by are skilled in first aid, they make the best of a bad job; but if there is no-one skilled in first aid, the situation slips far below what is desirable. The sister in my employ has once rendered first aid to a person involved in a road accident in Toowoomba and accompanied him in the ambulance to the general hospital. She believed that the victim could well have died on the road if she had not gone to the hospital with him.

I raise the matter because I believe it is important. It certainly is of great importance to a person who has, for example, chest injuries, facial injuries, sometimes head injuries, or where breathing mechanism or respiratory centres may be affected. It is not good enough for the bearer to have to cope with all of that on his own and also drive the vehicle. In my opinion, it would be better to have the passer-by drive the ambulance vehicle to the hospital, with the consent of the ambulance bearer.

The need for a second ambulanceman does afford an excellent opportunity for an honorary bearer. A person who has satisfied the local committee on first-aid qualifications could serve as an honorary bearer. It would give him an opportunity to decide whether he had any great yen to be a full-time ambulance bearer and to improve his knowledge of first aid. Under the direction of the full-time bearer, he could render first aid to the less seriously injured persons at the scene of an accident and assist the bearer in the often very difficult task of removing persons from vehicles. He could drive the vehicle to the hospital, leaving the more senior and expert man to render the aid that was necessary, say, to keep air passages clear so that the patient could keep breathing.

Honorary bearers could also be used when full-time bearers were attending severe medical emergencies, such as patients who had a coronary occlusion, or heart attack. I have found it necessary to send a sister from my surgery to the hospital with a person who has suffered a severe heart attack. Such patients need the utmost help on the way to the hospital. If such an emergency occurred at a time when an honorary bearer was available—say, after ordinary working hours—he could take the wheel, which would leave the more experienced man to render first aid with oxygen resuscitation until they reached the hospital.

With the police, the fire brigade and the ambulance services, it is essential to have a vehicle available at all times for immediate dispatch in the case of an emergency. In this regard the police have come in for a great deal of criticism and unfortunately we are all aware of times when ambulance vehicles have not been quickly available. Often the peak period for accidents is after 10 p.m. A patient who suffers a coronary attack at that time of night might have to wait more than half an hour for an ambulance to arrive—perhaps more so in rural centres than in the metropolitan area. Therefore there is need for a back-up system, and again the honorary could be used in this area. As soon as so many ambulance vehicles are out, an on-call honorary could be alerted or brought into the ambulance centre.

In large cities it might be possible to form an ambulance committee with people who never have any direct dealing with any type of board or committee, but in the rural areas the lot seems to fall to the same few people all the time. They assemble and say, "Who are we tonight—the cricket committee, the golf committee, the ambulance committee or the school committee?" Sometimes they can work it out by who is the chairman and who is the secretary. In the towns the same few people seem to have to run a great many activities. The ambulance committee cannot do without the expertise of persons who may also be on local government councils or have contracts with committees. For that reason I believe it is sufficient for such members to declare any interest they have in any dealings before the committee and retire from the committee while such matters are being debated and decided.

There is a need in appointing superintendents to ensure that each area is given the best man available, one who can fully cope with the duties involved. He must be highly skilled in the application of first-aid, and, as well, a wizard at organisation and fund-raising. While raising money is part of the ambulance service's functions the difference between failure and success lies in a man's ability to get full public support for his fund-raising activities. It may be necessary also to ensure that a man is quite capable of dealing with every type of problem that besets his area. The local committee should have the power to decide who finally will be given the position and to ensure that no ineligible person is even considered for appointment. In this regard the State Government could, perhaps, peruse all applications and select from them for submission to the local committee the names of persons possessing all the necessary qualifications. It should then be up to the local committee to select the man who they feel is best fitted to help their area.

There is a great need to provide ambulance vehicles with some public-address system so that, on arriving at the scene of an accident, the bearers or some delegated persons are able to assume control of traffic. At the scene of accidents the biggest single problem is the prevention of the second accident. There is a need also to install in ambulance vehicles some small portable hydraulic jacks, of from 5 to 10-ton capacity, so that persons trapped in crushed vehicles can be freed. I have attended road accidents necessitating the use of such equipment to free trapped drivers and passengers. A bearer should not be expected, of course, to arrange for the recovery of vehicles down steep banks or inclines, but he should have at his disposal within his own vehicle the means of either jacking up or cutting apart vehicles that are crushed in traffic accidents.

Finally, I consider that the Bill is a step in the right direction, and I commend it to the Committee.

Mr. YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (2.53 p.m.): It is obvious that this debate is creating a good deal of interest. This is not surprising, as all of us are very conscious of the ambulance services that are provided. Perhaps those members representing country areas are more aware of these services than are members in the provincial cities and towns.

My comments on the reorganisation of the State council are along the same lines as those followed by the honourable member for Landsborough, who said he wholeheartedly supported the creation of greater liaison between boards, committees and the work-force in the ambulance service. I go along with his remarks, because greater liaison is needed.

I would liken ambulance bearers to employees of the fire brigades and hospitals, all of whom provide an essential service to the public. The community has come to expect them to continue to serve it, come hell or high water. In times of a crisis they willingly make their services available. We sometimes tend to treat them as second-class citizens. When ambulance bearers deem it necessary to try to improve their income or their general working conditions, they find themselves behind the eight-ball, without any real bargaining power in the sense of withdrawal of labour, as is done by the general industrial worker, because they are dedicated to meeting the needs of the community. In

those circumstances their standards are lower than those of the average worker, while their service is accepted and expected by all people in the community.

Honourable members have said that ambulance bearers have no longer to collect money in the community in order to finance the service. In Rockhampton ambulance service is free to every person in the community whether he is a contributor or not. Ambulance fund-raising schemes have been under way in Rockhampton for many years and, unless there is a drastic alteration in the funding of the centre, they will continue. Although people in the community are still prepared to support the service, I do not know how long they will continue to do so. I am sure that the service rendered by the Rockhampton centre is equal to that provided elsewhere in the State.

The city of Rockhampton is divided by the river and the electorates of Rockhampton and Rockhampton North are virtually split in half by it. While the ambulance service is based on the older southern side of the city, the population of the North Rockhampton area is racing ahead of that of the south side. Because of financial considerations, the construction of a new traffic bridge, it seems, will be delayed for a long time. That matter has been referred to quite often in this Chamber. Thanks to the initiative of the trade union movement in Rockhampton, the local ambulance board saw fit to station early in the afternoon of each working date, an ambulance across the river in North Rockhampton to cope with any serious traffic accident in the North Rockhampton area. This was done mainly to counter the bottlenecks on the bridge that restrict the movement of an ambulance vehicle.

The local authority has a suitable site available in North Rockhampton with access to the northern highway and the coastal highway which, naturally, will feed back into the area on the north side of the river. I have raised this matter publicly in Rockhampton and in this Chamber. The debate at this stage of the Bill affords me an opportunity to refer to it again.

This legislation could be helpful, particularly in the matter of liaison between the work-force and the administration of the ambulance services in Queensland.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (2.59 p.m.): I know that the Minister has received submissions from the Bundaberg Ambulance Board about the lack of an aerial ambulance service in our district. Only a few months ago it took eight hours to transport a person from Bundaberg to Brisbane after one of our ambulances was run off the road. Another ambulance had to be called from Brisbane to take over. The traffic on the road was dense and would not move over to allow the ambulance to make quick time to the hospital. This is a very serious disability confronting the 50,000 people of the Bundaberg area. If a serious accident occurs and the victim has to be transported to Brisbane, it is a matter for concern that the ambulance has to give way to other traffic. The normal trip takes about six hours but it takes a lot longer if the ambulance is delayed on the roadway or, as happened on the occasion I am speaking about, is pushed off the roadway. That vehicle could have been smashed and the patient and driver killed.

The whole ambulance situation should be reconstructed. The honourable member for Sandgate said that in Brisbane there are no subscribers and the people get free service. I am sorry; there are subscribers, but the ambulance service is completely free.

Mr. Sullivan: You are confused.

Mr. JENSEN: There are subscribers, but everybody gets free ambulance transport. The honourable member for Rockhampton North said the same thing.

Mr. Moore: That's not true.

Mr. JENSEN: Whether a person is a subscriber or not, he gets free service.

Mr. Moore: He does not.

Mr. JENSEN: The honourable member for Rockhampton North made that statement and so did the honourable member for Sandgate.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. JENSEN: Well, there are no collectors in the streets. A person who is not a subscriber still gets free service. That was the point made by those honourable members.

Mr. Aikens: No.

Mr. JENSEN: That is the point that was made.

A Government Member: You don't know what you're talking about.

Mr. JENSEN: The honourable member should read the remarks made by the honourable member for Rockhampton North.

In Bundaberg there are subscribers and, in addition, ambulance bearers have to go into the streets collecting money. On Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings they sell lucky-number tickets and on Mondays they hold the biggest bingo night in Queensland. The ambulance runs two $1,000 jackpots in addition to $10 jackpots and others worth up to a couple of hundred dollars each. Every Monday night over 1,000 people go to the Civic Centre where the ambulance bingo is held. It has raised many thousands of dollars for the aerial ambulance. Regardless of whether the State council will veto this or not, I would like the Minister to read the submission and form his own opinion and not have the State council overruling the ambulance brigade in Bundaberg.

A Government Member: You are one-eyed about this.

Mr. JENSEN: I do not want to be one-eyed.

In Maryborough the ambulance is controlled by the hospitals board and provides a free service. It is also free in Rockhampton and in Brisbane, but it is very expensive in Bundaberg. Ambulance subscription fees are to rise this year and pensioners, too, have to pay. However, Aborigines and Islanders do not pay. They do not pay their bills. A white person would be taken to court if he did not pay the required fee.

Only a few months ago I wrote to the Federal Minister to get some $300 which was owing to the Bundaberg ambulance for transporting Aborigines and Islanders. In any case, most of them are neither Aborigines nor Islanders. They are part Sri Lankan or something else and call themselves Aborigines or Islanders because that is the in thing now. A person who has a bit of colour in him—and I am not looking at the Minister for Police—is given the same treatment as an Aborigine or Islander. It appears that they can get anything—homes, free ambulance, and practically anything else. The Bundaberg brigade was down hundreds of dollars because of this transportation and the Federal Minister has agreed to pay for it.

Mr. Moore: You look a little like a "boori" yourself.

Mr. JENSEN: I do not think so. I am not as brown as that, although sometimes after a bit of sun I could have a good tan. I was born in Port Darwin among the Aborigines but it did not make any difference to the colour of my skin.

I agree with some earlier speakers today that the position of superintendent or his deputy should be advertised throughout Queensland and that the best available man should be appointed. If the fire brigade board wants a chief fire officer or a deputy, the position is advertised and the best man is selected. I quite agree with the honourable member for Toowoomba North, who said that the applications should be vetted by the council and that the final decision should be one for the local board. The local board members could have some say, but they would not know the full history of officers from other centres. The council might know something about them, and it could submit some names saying, "All these people are satisfactory. You now select your man." I do not think that the local board members should have the absolute right of selection, because they may not know some of the superintendents or deputies from other districts. They may not know the full history of the ambulance service in that area. But the council might know something about the officers or it could inquire about them.

A short while ago I mentioned the reconstruction of ambulance centres. I drew an analogy with the fire brigade. Fire brigades in Queensland are financed through the Government and through insurance companies. As I have said in this Chamber before, why should not life assurance companies and superannuation funds contribute to the maintenance of the ambulance service? The ambulance saves many thousands of dollars a year by transporting to hospital people who would otherwise die, thus involving assurance companies in pay-outs. If a person takes out a fire insurance policy, some of his premium goes to the fire brigade. Why should not some of the money paid in life assurance premiums and superannuation contributions go to the ambulance service?

Why should people in Bundaberg have to subscribe, by way of raffles or bingo, to keep the ambulance in the position in which it is today when other centres have a free ambulance service? I am sorry that I do not have the latest ambulance report with me. I shall have it with me for the second reading of the Bill, and I shall use it to detail the subscriptions and the amount that pensioners have to pay, even though the Bundaberg ambulance is now making thousands of dollars a week through bingo.

Mr. Frawley: That will make a very valuable contribution on the second reading.

Mr. JENSEN: The honourable member has never made a valuable contribution in this Chamber. All he ever does here is tip the tin on people. If he ever comes in here and tries to make a valuable contribution, I shall be here to listen to it, because I am always here listening to what people say. I know right from wrong.

Mr. Moore: He won't tell the truth about you if you don't tell lies about him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member for Bundaberg just to tell me about the Ambulance Services Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. JENSEN: It is only these small points that I want to bring up. I quite agree with what the honourable member for Sandgate said about the need for ambulance bearers to heed the traffic regulations. Some time ago—perhaps 12 months—there was a serious accident in Bundaberg involving an ambulance bearer. It could have been extremely serious. In Bundaberg the railway line crosses the main street, as the Minister for Transport knows, and if an ambulance driver tries to fly across when a train is coming, he can get into serious difficulties. That in fact did happen. Ambulance drivers must take notice of traffic lights. It is more serious to kill two or three people in another car than to get a patient to hospital just a few seconds later. If a patient died because of those extra few seconds, he would probably

have died in the hospital, anyhow. I do not see why somebody else should be killed whilst the ambulance is on the way to hospital. I quite agree with the honourable member for Sandgate that ambulance bearers should heed the traffic regulations.

Mr. MARGINSON (Wolston) (3.9 p.m.): I have listened very intently and with great interest to those who have spoken on this most important Bill. I cannot speak too highly of the work done by ambulance bearers and staff. In my 33 years' association with a very large hospital in this State, I came into contact with ambulance officers almost daily. We in Ipswich have been very fortunate in that we have had an ambulance committee that has worked very diligently, and a staff of superintendents, deputy superintendents and bearers who have been most conscientious in their work of providing first aid for the people of Ipswich.

In my electorate of Wolston, there is a body of people who have voluntarily and continuously raised money for the Ipswich centre. I must admit their main objective is to raise money to assist in the administration of the subcentre at Redbank.

Some years ago—before I entered this Parliament—the people of Redbank felt that they should have a subcentre because there was not one between Oxley and Ipswich. Redbank is situated on the very busy highway connecting those two centres. It is highly industrialised and there have been numerous accidents in its industries and on the highway. Accidents still occur and this subcentre at Redbank has proved very beneficial to the unfortunate people who suffer from them. The people of Redbank approached the Ipswich centre about this subcentre and were told, "We cannot help you. We know one is necessary there but we haven't the finance to do it. If you raise $5,000 voluntarily within the district we will give consideration to a subcentre at Redbank." This they did; the money was raised in a very short time. I played a part —a very modest one, I must say—in approaching the industrial and business houses of the area and we suceeded in raising the money. The subcentre has been established and is in operation. The people are now raising money for amenities that cannot be provided by the Ipswich centre. I was told recently that they were a little disappointed—I think the Minister will remember this incident—that the money they are raising could not be guaranteed to be spent at the subcentre at Redbank. An approach is being made to the Minister and I hope that this money which is being raised voluntarily by these people through dances and other means will be held in trust by the Ipswich centre and eventually expended for the benefit of the subcentre at Redbank.

The next point I wish to raise relates to appeal board hearings of appeals against appointment. No doubt this comes under section 30 of the Act. I do not want to be nasty here, but I wonder whether this Bill will allow for appeals by people from outside the service. We have recently seen a nasty situation develop relating to an appointment made under another Act administered by the Minister. We saw a man appointed from outside the service over the heads of 28 people within the service. No one will ever convince me that not one of those 28, some with over 30 years' experience in this particular service, was more suitable than the person who was appointed from outside. But because he was appointed from outside those within the service have no right of appeal. If this Act is being amended to make it impossible for that to occur within the ambulance service, then I will be very delighted. I make no bones about it; I think that in the instance I have referred to, the appointee was picked before the applications were called; those concerned had the man selected before the applications were called.

Dr. EDWARDS: I rise to a point of order. I take exception to that statement. It is a reflection on my department and on members of my staff. The appointment was recommended by a panel. I ask the honourable member to withdraw it immediately.

The CHAIRMAN: With respect to the Minister, the honourable member is nevertheless entitled to make that allegation.

Mr. MARGINSON: I believe actions like that can be overcome, not only in the ambulance service but also in the Public Service. When I was a member of the Public Service I was advised not to apply for certain positions because they were reserved for others —I make that quite clear—and this is what happened in this case.

Mr. Frawley: That must have been when the A.L.P. were the Government.

Mr. MARGINSON: I am sorry if I have stirred anybody up.

There is one other point I wish to raise.

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

Mr. MARGINSON: There is at present a vacancy in Ipswich, and my committee—our committee; I will include the Minister and the honourable member for Ipswich West—has recommended that the Minister appoint a certain person. I must admit that the name of that person was not on the ballot paper at the last election.

Dr. Edwards: Thank you.

Mr. MARGINSON: I must admit that. It may be that the Minister will decide to appoint the man whose name appeared next on the list at the last election; I do not know. The only comment I wish to make before I sit down is: if it is the Minister's

policy to appoint the next man on the ballot paper, the first of the defeated candidates, may I look forward to his supporting Dr. Colston tomorrow afternoon?

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (3.16 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the proposed amendments to the Ambulance Services Act. Their interest shows the high regard in which ambulance services within this State are held. The speeches made by honourable members indicate to me that the amendments that I outlined in my introductory speech will be well accepted by the Committee and, I think, by the community generally; but I have a few comments to make on them.

The honourable member for Nudgee made a brief speech generally welcoming the proposals I put forward. However, there are a couple of matters that I think I should clear up. The honourable member said that A.L.P. policy in Queensland is to have the ambulance controlled by the hospital boards. That amazes me, because this is one service in which the community is totally involved and the Commonwealth Government and the State A.L.P. have made it clearly evident everywhere that they want the community involved in all matters. To me it is an amazing suggestion to change completely a service in which the community is involved and to have no Government appointees elected. I cannot understand the attitude of the honourable member for Nudgee on that.

However, the honourable member did say that he welcomed the fact that temporary bearers will be covered by the proposed amendments and allowed to take part in contracts. I think he misunderstood my statement completely. That provision will not apply to temporary bearers; it will apply only to members of committees and members of the State council.

The honourable member for Landsborough mentioned industrial matters and welcomed the proposed amendments dealing with them. He also mentioned boundaries. These are a matter of concern in his area and also in the area of the honourable member for Hinchinbrook and I shall be discussing the problem with both honourable members.

The honourable member for Townsville South made himself quite clear on the Minister's power and authority. Section 46 of the Act states quite clearly that the Minister does have power, where necessary in his opinion as a result of information passed to him, even to dismiss a committee. The particular matter to which he referred, which I will discuss with him at an appropriate time, is being fully investigated. I believe that the Act will cover such a problem if it arises in future.

Mr. Aikens: Have you put any teeth into this amendment?

Dr. EDWARDS: When the honourable member reads the Bill, I think he will be very happy with the outcome.

The honourable member for Hinchinbrook stated his support for the ambulance service. He mentioned finance, and I shall have more to say about that in my second-reading speech. For the benefit of honourable members, I recall to their minds that the Treasurer indicated in his Budget speech last year that he would increase the contribution of the State Government to dollar for dollar on funds raised by ambulance services throughout the State from 1975. In the 1973-74 financial year the Government contributed $2,500,000 and in the 1974-75 financial year almost $3,000,000. It is estimated that, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, the State subsidy next year will be over $5,000,000.

Mr. Wright: Do you agree with committees raising money by raffles?

Dr. EDWARDS: I think the honourable member for Sandgate answered that. It is not occurring in the Brisbane area. In some other centres people have been appointed full time to go round collecting subscriptions. It is not my responsibility how particular communities raise money. My responsibility is to see that the Act is administered, and I will have more to say about that. Obviously the honourable member for Bundaberg knows a lot more about raising money than I do and I will value his submission to me on this matter in due course.

The honourable member for Archerfield spoke about the operations of ambulances generally. The honourable member for Sandgate corrected most of his mistakes. I suggest that the honourable member for Archerfield ask the honourable member for Sandgate to take him on a visit to the Brisbane centre, where he can see how operations are conducted. I visited the Brisbane centre recently and I saw why the honourable member's suggestions are not practicable. If he makes a similar visit, he will see a very fine set-up for the receiving of messages. Specially trained staff are employed and they ask specific questions of anybody who rings up. If there is any doubt at all, two bearers are sent out on a call.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You know that the bearers are very critical of them, though, don't you?

Dr. EDWARDS: That is a matter for them to take up with the committee. They have a very fine member in the honourable member for Sandgate, who answered the honourable member's questions very well. If the honourable member for Archerfield would ask some questions of the honourable member for Sandgate, he would not make such a fool of himself as he did in some of his statements today.

The honourable member mentioned having separate telephone numbers. I was informed the other night that that has been tried. The system that operates at the Brisbane centre of dialling either 000 or a single number has worked very satisfactorily.

The honourable member for Townsville supported the Bill in general and spoke of the need for an appeal system. Of course, the legislation covers an appeal system with a magistrate, a union representative and a committee representative constituting an appeal board. He did say that no great credit was given to ambulance services. I should like to place on record the tremendous amount of credit we must pay to ambulancemen throughout the State. I believe the Bill will make this an even more professional and career service. It will give men who have rendered dedicated service in country and smaller centres an opportunity to gain promotion and career status in the ambulance service. I agree with him when he says that cardiac ambulances are not needed. The National Heart Foundation has stated that it does not support that principle at this time.

The honourable member for Sandgate was concerned about the loss of autonomy. I think he should wait till he sees the Bill. I believe he will be quite satisfied with it. I will be interested to hear his comments at the second-reading stage after has has seen it. He said that he wanted the committee to have more say in the appointment of superintendents and deputy superintendents. The appointment board will have on it a representative of the committee concerned, as well as zonal representatives. I believe this will cover what the honourable member has in mind.

I believe that the State council has vindicated its position. Of course, that body is made up not of Government-appointed members but Government-approved members. The representatives on the State council are all zonal representatives. The Brisbane centre is represented on it and the union is represented on it. It is a fairly widespread body, which carries out the duties set out for it.

I was pleased to hear the honourable member for Sandgate answering most of the criticisms of the honourable member for Archerfield. He answered them very well, and I need not comment any more on them.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North talked about the desirable type of vehicle. That is something that has been taken up with the Brisbane centre. I was informed the other night that single-stretcher vehicles are no longer being purchased; mostly two and four-stretcher vehicles are being acquired.

As to the problem mentioned by the honourable member for Rockhampton North—I am sure he will get in touch with me, when we can have a look at the matter.

I would suggest that the honourable member for Bundaberg is totally confused as to who is giving whom contributions and who is giving free service. I suggest that he talk to the honourable member for Sandgate on the matter. Obviously he does not know who is free.

The honourable member for Wolston, in paying tribute to the Ipswich centre, has my support, but I am sure that his reference to another Act was totally unnecessary. He cast a reflection on the staff of my department, and I take strong exception to it.

The matter concerning the local board at Redbank has been discussed with the chairman of the ambulance committee and I am informed that it has been sorted out.

The honourable member also mentioned a vacancy on the Ipswich committee. It is true that I wrote to the committee asking if, in the light of the fact that the man selected has a specific political affiliation, it would reconsider the position. The committee replied that it was quite happy with the appointment of this man. As the committee is prepared to accept the consequences of a political appointment, I am quite happy to approve it. Finally, I have no intention of commenting on the selection of the Senate nominee.

Motion (Dr. Edwards) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Dr. Edwards, read a first time.

MOTOR VEHICLES CONTROL BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (3.27 p.m.): I move—

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

I wish to thank honourable members from both sides of the House, including the honourable members for Cairns, Toowoomba North, Rockhampton, Everton, Mackay, Isis, Sandgate, Cooroora, Belmont and Mansfield, for their contributions during the introductory debate.

I regret that the honourable member for Sandgate expressed disappointment at what he called the brevity of my remarks when introducing the Bill. I hope that he will now have observed that the Bill itself has covered the main areas of his concern.

I must stress again that the objectives of the Bill are to ensure, as far as practicable, the safety of the public, and I again refute any suggestion that this is merely a revenue-raising exercise.

The Bill provides for the Act or any provisions thereof to come into operation on a date appointed by proclamation. Appropriate definitions of terms used in the Bill

have been provided and are self-explanatory. It is provided that recreation vehicles used in public places must be registered and insured. In addition, areas can be declared where vehicles may be prohibited or their use regulated.

Where motor vehicles are used for the carriage of passengers for reward or in connection with a business—such as tourism—they must be registered and insured and only driven by licensed persons. These provisions apply even though a vehicle such as a bus or a converted truck is driven not on a public road but on tracks or beaches on a tourist island, for example.

Obviously the standards of equipment and comfort required for these vehicles would not be those which the public would demand of a long-distance luxury coach. However, their safety standards are to be maintained and this should overcome the situation raised by the honourable member for Cairns. Consideration will be given to prescribing a reduced registration fee where the vehicle is not to be used on a road as defined in the Bill.

I shall now pass to the main provisions of the Bill and where it is pertinent I will answer any particular questions that were raised by honourable members at the introductory stage. As I have indicated the Bill provides for all motor vehicles such as beach buggies, trail bikes, mini-bikes and the like to be registered as recreation vehicles with the Main Roads Department if they are used in public places. Honourable members will be well aware that many of these vehicles are currently being used in such places, unregistered and uninsured. As recreation vehicles they cannot be driven on a road. However, I want to make it quite clear that a vehicle which is fully registered under the Main Roads Act may be used as a recreation vehicle in a public place or a declared area under the conditions applying to the particular area.

The Bill provides that no recreation vehicle will be registered in the name of any person who has not attained the age of 18 years.

The vehicle will also be required to be covered by third-party insurance and to comply with prescribed structural and equipment requirements basically aimed at ensuring the safety of the driver, its passengers or members of the public generally.

The honourable member for Mackay referred to tractors. If a tractor is used as a recreation vehicle, then it will be required to be registered.

The honourable member for Isis referred to what he called a land yacht. This type of vehicle is not covered by the Bill, which is directed towards motor vehicles. If, however, there is a real problem in this area, then I assure the honourable member that consideration will be given to his suggestion that these vehicles also should be subject to some form of control over their operation in public places.

The Bill itself covers the other matters mentioned by the honourable member such as the power of local authorities to remove derelict or abandoned vehicles from public places or declared areas. This may be achieved by authorised officers, who will be police officers or any person appointed as such by the Commissioner for Transport generally for the State or by a local authority in respect of the area of that authority. I will deal with this more fully in my later remarks.

A vehicle used for the conveyance of an incapacitated person as a recreation vehicle is excluded from the provisions of the Bill.

A vehicle which is used within the limits of a defined fabricated area within a public place, for example, dodgem cars, and any class of vehicle exempted by Order in Council at any particular time are also vehicles excluded from the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. Wright: That includes a showground vehicle?

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: Yes, provided they are under control, and so on.

The power is provided for the registering authority to refuse registration of a recreation vehicle if it is not safe. The authority can also suspend the registration of a vehicle if it is in such a condition that it would be dangerous or unsafe to use in a public place. The registration will remain suspended and the vehicle cannot lawfully be used until the defects are rectified.

Registered recreation vehicles will be covered by the Motor Vehicles Insurance Act 1936-1974 by virtue of an appropriate amendment to that Act, which is included in the provisions of this Bill.

The main point I wish to make is that recreation vehicles used in public places will have to be registered and have number plates attached to the front and rear thereof to clearly identify them as vehicles subject to the provisions of this Bill. It will be an offence to drive unregistered recreation vehicles, and one important aspect of the Bill is directed towards establishing responsibility for control over the use of these vehicles. For instance, it is provided that the owner of the vehicle can be held to have committed an offence if a motor vehicle is used in contravention of the provisions of the Act.

The Bill provides that recreation vehicles may be driven in public places by any person of eight years or over without the necessity to hold a driver's licence.

However, I stress that persons aged 8 to 16 years, inclusive, can drive these vehicles only in public places and declared areas and

they will be subject to certain conditions. For example, they will be prohibited from driving a recreation vehicle in a public place at a speed exceeding 35 kilometres per hour.

Any person who unlawfully uses a recreation vehicle on a road is liable to a maximum penalty of $200. A child under the age of eight years cannot be held to have committed an offence and be liable to this penalty. However, the liability where a child under the age of eight years is concerned in the driving of a recreation vehicle on a road or in a public place will attach to the owner of the vehicle, who will be liable to a maximum penalty of $500.

It will be a defence if the owner can show to the court's satisfaction that the vehicle was driven without his knowledge or consent.

However—and I wish to stress this quite firmly—this defence will not be available to an owner who is the parent of or who stands in the place of a parent of the child who has driven the vehicle in contravention of this law. In other words a parent who is the owner of a recreation vehicle must take the full responsibility for the use of the vehicle if his child is under eight years of age and drives it on a road or in a public place. I think this provision will, to a large extent, meet the concern expressed by the honourable member for Sandgate and I fully support the sentiments expressed by him in this regard.

I have mentioned that the Bill's provisions extend to the use of motor vehicles for the carriage of passengers for reward or for the carriage of passengers in connection with the conduct of a business, such as tourism. These vehicles will be required to be registered, have a current certificate of inspection under the Inspection of Machinery Act and can be lawfully driven only by a person who is the holder of a current driver's licence issued under the Traffic Act for that class of vehicle.

This was a matter raised by the honourable member for Toowoomba North and here again the Bill is directed to the safety of the public who are carried as passengers in what are now, in many cases, unregistered and uninsured motor vehicles. In many cases they operate on private properties such as tourist islands and associated tourist resorts on tracks which are not roads within the meaning of the Traffic Act or the Main Roads Act. The use of a motor vehicle in contravention of these provisions will render the owner of the vehicle liable to a maximum penalty of $500. In addition, any person who drives such a motor vehicle whilst he is not the holder of a current driver's licence within the meaning of the Traffic Act will also be liable to a maximum penalty of $500.

The Bill also provides that the Governor in Council may, by Order in Council, declare any part of the State to be a declared area for the purposes of the Act. In doing so due regard will be had to the number of persons who use the area and to the flora and fauna therein or any natural feature thereof, as well as to any other reasons which satisfy the Governor in Council that the use of motor vehicles within the area should be prohibited or regulated.

The honourable member for Sandgate expressed concern at the use of beach buggies on the foreshores of Sandgate. If the Brisbane City Council shares his concern, then the question of considering the total prohibition of vehicles in this area might well merit its consideration.

The honourable member for Mackay referred to areas for which local authorities are not responsible, such as areas coming within the jurisdiction of the Beach Protection Authority. He will now be aware that under the provisions of the Bill the Governor in Council may declare any part of the State to be an area for the purposes of the Act and that the use of motor vehicles within such an area can be prohibited or regulated.

It is proposed that the interdepartmental committee representing the various interested authorities will consider and frame the regulations under the Act.

Provision is also made in the Bill for the extension of a local authority's jurisdiction to land lying between high-water mark and low-water mark.

The honourable member will also now appreciate that, as police officers are authorised officers under the Act, there will be no artificial boundaries to be observed in the performance of their duties and they will have power to deal with matters which occur in public places and declared areas as well as on roads.

Regulations can be made in relation to a declared area with respect to the prohibition or regulation of the use of motor vehicles within the area. The regulations may also prescribe the obligation of persons who use motor vehicles in the area and provide for the functions and powers of all authorised officers for the area. The offence with respect to a person using motor vehicles within a declared area where the use of motor vehicles is prohibited incurs a maximum penalty of $500 or imprisonment for six months or both such fine and imprisonment.

Any person convicted of an offence of dangerous driving in a public place or a declared area, or where passengers are being carried for hire or reward, is also liable to a penalty of $500 or imprisonment with hard labour for six months, or to both such penalty and imprisonment. This particular provision of the Bill is in addition to the dangerous driving provisions as contained in the Criminal Code or any other Act that touches upon the dangerous driving of a motor vehicle.

Whilst general provisions are set out concerning the powers of authorised officers, honourable members will note that only a

police officer is empowered to arrest any person for offences against this Act. On the other hand, authorised officers generally may lay a charge and prosecute under the Act with respect to any offence as defined in the Traffic Act, although that offence may have been committed in a public place. This will strengthen the hand of local authorities in dealing with matters which concern them in respective areas subject to their jurisdiction.

Authorised officers are empowered to take charge, remove and detain motor vehicles under certain circumstances. These are when the driver has been arrested; where the vehicle has been abandoned; where it has been involved in an incident causing death or injury; or where it has been left unattended for such a period of time that it causes a danger or obstruction and the driver cannot be located or fails to remove it when lawfully required by an authorised officer.

In such circumstances, the vehicle may only be detained for a period of three months, during which legal proceedings relating to its detention must be commenced. It will be up to the court to determine any longer period for which the vehicle should be detained, and this could be necessary to finally determine any legal proceedings or allow for any appeal in relation thereto. At the same time, the owner of the vehicle can apply to a court at any time after its detention for an order for its return to him.

The Bill sets out the procedure for the disposal of a vehicle, and for the disbursement of any proceeds which may accrue from its disposal in cases where the court orders that it so be disposed of or makes an order for its forfeiture. I stress that a court will have the power, where a person is convicted of an offence against the provisions of the Act and where it thinks fit, to order that the motor vehicle concerned in the commission of the offence be forfeited. Perhaps I might also add that the Bill provides for the disbursement of proceeds from the disposal of vehicles either to the local authority concerned or to the Crown.

Any person convicted of an offence against the Act may be disqualified by a court from holding or obtaining a driver's licence, or from driving a recreation vehicle in a public place, for a period not exceeding 12 months. Where a person drives a recreation vehicle in a public place during any period of disqualification, he will be guilty of an offence and liable to a maximum penalty of $500. Where no specific penalty has been prescribed in the Bill, a penalty of $200 is provided.

Provision is made for offences to be prosecuted by way of summary proceedings under the Justices Act. These proceedings will be on the complaint of a member of the Police Force, or a person authorised by the Commissioner for Transport or by a local authority.

One of the most important aspects of the Bill is that the control and regulation, including the prohibition, of motor vehicles in declared areas and public places, as well as the execution of the powers and functions under the Act, shall be a function of local government. The local authority is empowered to make by-laws or ordinances generally to give effect to its provisions, or to achieve its objectives and purposes. These powers have generally been sought by local authorities to enable them to control the indiscriminate use of unregistered and uninsured motor vehicles in public places such as beaches, parks and areas where the public expect, and are entitled to receive, protection from them.

The honourable member for Belmont also mentioned other problems in this area relating to safety, noise and recreational opportunity. No doubt problems will arise in the administration of this law, but this will have to be looked at in the light of experience gained over a period of time.

The honourable member for Mackay expressed the hope that the provisions of the Bill covered the foreshore to the low-water mark. No doubt he has now noted that the Bill provides for the area of a local authority, where applicable, to include the land down to the low-water mark at spring tides. This will cover the problem mentioned by the honourable member of the use of recreation vehicles on beaches below the high-water mark where they become bogged and are subsequently abandoned and left exposed by low tides.

There is no provision for registration fees in relation to recreation vehicles to be paid to local authorities as suggested by the honourable member for Mackay. However, special provision has been made in the Bill for all penalties and other moneys recovered by and on behalf of the local authority in respect of offences against the Act to be paid into the general fund of that local authority. As the use of recreation vehicles will not be permitted on roads, it is proposed that the registration fee should be a nominal one only.

The honourable member for Sandgate expressed concern at the fact that police officers would be required to police the provisions of the Act. The only actual duty placed on police officers by the Bill is that they shall assist an authorised officer—whether or not he is a member of the Police Force—in the exercise of his powers and the performance of his duties under the Act. Naturally, as authorised officers, police officers will be at liberty to enforce any provision of the Act.

To meet the objectives of the Bill a head of power is provided whereby the Governor in Council may make regulations with respect to the regulation of, and access to and within, declared areas and public places as well as with respect to the use of motor vehicles in declared areas and public places.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North referred to the need for the wearing of safety helmets by riders of trail bikes and mini-bikes. In this respect there is power to make regulations prescribing the standards of motor vehicles and the fittings and accessories used in connection with them as well as the dress and equipment of persons using these vehicles. I certainly agree with the honourable member that persons riding trail bikes should wear safety helmets and that children riding mini-bikes should be encouraged to wear both safety helmets and suitable clothing. This would certainly lessen the risk of injury from spills or collisions with other vehicles or trees or rocks. I also assure honourable members that special attention will be given to the noise factor of these vehicles and every endeavour will be made to limit this factor which creates a public nuisance.

The honourable member for Rockhampton also mentioned the matter of roadworthiness of recreation vehicles and I assure him that this will be given particular attention in the standards to be prescribed. As the honourable member for Cooroora pointed out, this is a very difficult area in which to legislate. Only through experience gained from the administration of the legislation will we be in a position to assess the results which we hope to achieve.

Honourable members have indicated by their contributions at the introductory stage that they regard this as an important piece of legislation. I heartily agree with these sentiments and look forward with interest to hearing their further contributions during this second reading of the Bill.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (3.49 p.m.): As the Minister has indicated, the purpose of this measure is to control what we term recreation vehicles, and these will include mini-bikes, trail bikes, beach buggies, motorised tricycles and bicycles——

Mr. Moore: And camels.

Mr. JONES: I do not think we could motorise a camel, but our desert-headed friend over there always brings a little humour into the debate and we like to hear him. These vehicles must be used only in a public place and under the terms of the Bill it appears that a public place does not include a road. These vehicles are now to be registered and must have third-party insurance. I believe that the Bill is a timely piece of legislation. The third-party insurance should be in line with that applying generally to other motor vehicles, and it must cover not only the drivers and riders but also passengers or members of the public who suffer injury.

In general, the Opposition welcomes the introduction of the legislation, which breaks completely new ground. Its initiation was probably motivated by the need to control vehicles used for recreation, particularly business vehicles used for passenger recreation, rather than drivers or spectators. With all the legislation on the Statute Book, and in spite of the fact that legislative enactments are considered deeply and scrutinised carefully by law enforcement agencies and by the Public Service, because of changing circumstances and human development and progress, with the effluxion of time, defects will be found in the laws and there will be a need to repair fences and close gaps.

I was pleased to hear the Minister say that, under this legislation, the safety of the public will be paramount and that safety standards will be maintained. He emphasised that, even if registration fees are reduced for vehicles used for tourist purposes on islands having no dedicated roads but only tracks and beaches, safety will be maintained. The Bill seeks to control and limit the operation of vehicles used for recreational purposes in that particular sphere and place certain conditions on their use. They will now have to be registered and show number-plates and, of course, the Bill provides penalties for new offences that are to be created under the Act.

There are exceptions to the Act, and these will probably include agricultural vehicles and motorised wheelchairs or other similar vehicles used indoors. I think the Minister mentioned that one vehicle not provided for was the wind-operated land yacht. Perhaps motorised golf buggies, and so on, that may be used for purposes other than those for which they were originally intended will be included.

The renewal and transfer of registration of recreation vehicles will, I believe, come within the ambit of the Motor Vehicles Insurance Act 1936-1971, and, as mentioned by the Minister in his introductory speech, the basic procedures will be carried out by the Main Roads Department. As I understand it, the registration fees have not yet been determined, but it appears that they will be nominal or minimal. However, the driving of an unregistered vehicle will attract a penalty of $200, which is quite substantial.

There is some doubt about a person's having to be 18 years of age to be the registered owner of a vehicle. Certain clauses of the Bill say that the owner of a vehicle may be eight years of age, and I think that provision will have to be debated during the Committee stage. Certainly he may drive a vehicle if he is eight years of age, and it appears from the wording of the Bill that a person who is eight years of age may own a vehicle although not being the registered owner. If anyone less than eight years of age drives one of these vehicles, the owner is culpable and liable to a penalty of $500 if he has knowledge that a child under eight years of age is driving it.

One might well cogitate on the idea of a child of the tender age of eight being in charge of one of these vehicles in a public

place, even if it is off the roadway. I venture to say that the opinion will be expressed that a child of eight years is too young. It seems to me that if the wheel diameter is 305 mm or less, a child of eight years of age may drive one of these vehicles as long as it is not driven at over 35 km/h and not taken onto a highway or roadway. A child or youth between 8 and 17 years who drives a vehicle with a wheel diameter in excess of 305 mm in a public place will be liable to a fine of $200. If he drives dangerously on a roadway, or even in a public place, he will be subject to the penalties prescribed by the Traffic Act for dangerous driving.

I wonder whether we can make that stick in the case of a child of eight years. Of course, the owner is liable in some circumstances, and the parent, too, is liable in other circumstances. What will the position be if a child without parents drives dangerously? Whether or not a child has parents, it is still improbable that we will be able to enforce the penalties.

No designated period is set for the currency of the certificate of registration. I think the Minister indicated that it would be similar to the existing certificate and that it will be for 12 months. No renewal requirements for the business operation of vehicles are set out in the legislation. As that is the motivating reason for legislation, that should have been specified in the Bill, although I suppose it will be declared in the regulations.

Consideration of the areas declared for the use of these vehicles is a very interesting exercise. Possible noise nuisance would have to be considered in their declaration. Other factors to be considered would be the possible damage to property, the environment and, as the Minister pointed out in his second-reading speech, the foreshores. The likely incidence of injury caused by lack of control of these vehicles in rough terrain would have to be taken into consideration in the declaration of areas. The proclaiming of areas where the vehicles can be used is a responsibility that must devolve on local authorities or the Crown.

The Bill makes no mention of the hours of operation. In fact, a person could operate one of these vehicles of high-noise nuisance in a public place at any hour of the day or night, much to the annoyance of neighbours. That would be particularly annoying to residents living near parkland.

Councils should have a fair amount of say in what are to be designated areas and should be given a measure of control of those areas. Councils may take the view that the definition of "public place" is already too wide. I could nominate a number of public places coming within the definition that would not be acceptable to local authorities as public places. I could nominate several places in which, I suggest, recreation vehicles should not be permitted.

I welcome this approach to the designation of areas and to the right of the local authority to decide where such areas shall be; but we should not be too restrictive in our approach, because I believe that many local authorities will impose severe restrictions in their determination of what constitutes a public place. I should imagine that in city areas particularly local authorities would take a very dim view of the use of recreation vehicles in parks and on sporting fields. I should think that they will also set out in their by-laws the times at which such vehicles may be used.

The use of such vehicles in densely populated areas could constitute a nuisance and disturbance to local residents, so I feel sure that in the future the local authorities will ask the Minister to include within this legislation a restrictive definition of "public place". They might even go to the extent of asking the Minister to make provision for "public places subject to the authorisation and approval of the local authorities". I do not intend seeking such an amendment without prior consultation with local authorities or without allowing this new legislation a trial period to see how it works.

The legislation vests in local authorities most of the powers and responsibilities associated with definitions and control. I suggest that local authorities already possess within their existing framework ample power to control the operation of these vehicles, and that the imposition of added responsibilities will be a burden that will prove to be too heavy for some local authorities, particularly those in whose areas there is widespread use of the vehicles referred to in the Bill.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: If this is so, there is the overriding power of the Governor in Council.

Mr. JONES: I realise that, but a long, drawn-out process is involved in obtaining the approval of the Governor in Council.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: It is a difficult one.

Mr. JONES: I realise that, and that is why I draw it to the attention of the House. If we do not discuss it, the local authorities will be asking their local members why the matter was not raised in the House. At least now we will be able to point to it and tell them that we took the trouble of finding out how the legislation would work.

I note that if the local authorities do not now possess sufficient power it is delegated to them by this measure. It will devolve upon the councils to either declare or not declare areas, provided the State Government has not already done so. Even though there is an overriding power, conflict could arise between the local authority and the Governor in Council over the enactment of this legislation.

I think the honourable member for Mackay suggested at the introductory stage that, in addition to what was referred to by the

Minister, money collected by way of registration fees, fines etc, should be channelled to local authorities. It seems that local authorities will be policing this legislation and improving areas where recreation vehicles operate. They will be called upon to provide certain areas, fence them for the protection of the community and look after them. In the light of all the responsibilities that will fall on them, I doubt that they will have sufficient funds to carry out the work that they might like to do.

It is important to realise that this legislation will probably cause people to become more organised and that clubs catering for mini-bikes and other recreation vehicles will spring up, with people tending to pool resources and operate their machines under supervision. This could well be a sort of in-between-the-lines commendable aspect of the legislation. It will mean that the sport will be confined to regular hours and conducted in a regulated, orderly manner. At both local government and State level, we should encourage sporting organisations catering for this type of sport, especially by diverting to their use money collected in registration fees. I am sure that following the control of the sport a number of organisations will spring up to cater for the youth in our community, which will be all to the good.

Councils will be quick to restrict the use of recreation vehicles. That being so people will have to resort to organising clubs. Naturally a council will not welcome any encroachment on its sporting fields, which are costly to maintain; at the same time sporting areas and local parks in metropolitan and provincial areas are minimal. Defined areas will have to be set aside with clubs formed around them so that this sport can progress as it should.

In my opinion authorised officers will create concern for the councils at an early stage. Firstly, councils will have to contend with encroachment on sporting fields, footpaths and public thoroughfares before defined areas are organised. This will create problems for both the councils and the local police force. Local councils will have limited enforcement powers. Although they can prosecute, they have no power of arrest. Invariably complaints will have to be handled by the police and, no doubt on occasions councils will call in the police to exercise control. The mere fact that councils will not have sufficient officers to cover the situation indicates that the police will be involved quite often. The very nature of the term "recreation vehicle" tends to indicate that an operator will use it outside normal working hours—over week-ends—when local council officers have completed their duties and are not at work. These areas of control will eventually be under the supervision of police officers.

In the embryo stages of this legislation and until the sport is administered correctly, there will be innumerable problems for the police and the authorised officers of local authorities, and the functions of local government in this area will be severely taxed in keeping order and controlling the people who want to ride these vehicles in public places.

If the sport is properly administered, eventually it will be better controlled than it is today and if registration results in supervision of the clubs—I have already touched on this—bodies such as the Far North Queensland Motor Cycle Club, the Cairns District Motor Cycle Club, and the Cairns Competition Car Club will, with their affiliations and standards, cater for the venturesome spirit of youth and provide the challenge that youth today is short-changed on. The smaller clubs will become adjuncts of the larger clubs. Motor-racing and other motor sports are not well catered for in provincial areas. If this legislation provides for them, we will be doing a service to the youth of our State.

It is strange that horse-racing, trotting and dog-racing are well catered for and have good facilities whereas the motoring sports, which would cater for our children and young people, are not. This legislation could lead to creating or building up an organisation to cater for the motoring sports, where children would start in mini-bike clubs and work their way up through the various other clubs. These clubs will provide for supervision by people who realise the need for control, who have been involved in another form of motoring and who know the specifications and the need for maintaining proper safety precautions.

Under the regulated methods and controls applied on a national and State basis, the dare will be taken away from the young person, but the excitement will remain and the experience will still be enjoyed. This will encourage a sense of responsibility and, through training in the sport, the discovery of its dangers and ways of overcoming them. Motor-racing is a very commendable way of developing the correct attitudes in the young. The result of this measure will be a generation of better road users on our highways. I certainly commend it.

I have been associated with motor sports, from motor-cycling right through the full range of motoring activities. If anybody wants to try himself out, the motor circuit is the place to do it, not the highway. If we encourage this type of organisation by passing legislation such as this we will in due course note many improvements in the community.

The inclusion of the provision to have vehicles examined on presentation for registration is too loosely defined. Who will undertake these examinations and who will declare a vehicle to be roadworthy, public-place worthy or whatever worthy it might have to be? Certainly the noise element is important. Who is to determine the type of silencer to be used on this vehicle and its engine capacity? Who will say that it is too

large, too small or too noisy, or that it does not measure up to specifications? If we are not careful, and if standards are not set, such determinations will merely reflect the opinions of the inspecting officers. The power to make regulations is set out in the Act, and I know that these matters will be determined and embodied in regulations. But my point is that one person's opinion of a vehicle might not be the standard acceptable to another person in another place at another time. Uniformity will not be achieved if it is merely left to someone to say, "This is too noisy, so it cannot be registered." Definite measurable standards that go beyond opinion will have to be prescribed.

It is said that this will be done by the registering authority. But who will be the registering authority? And what will be the regulations applying? I think that those concerned with the registering authority will need some expertise in this aspect of machinery inspection. Police officers, municipal traffic officers or any other officials may not be sufficiently well equipped to have this responsibility thrust upon them, particularly the inspection of made-up vehicles.

When I speak of "made-up" vehicles, I refer not to factory-made vehicles or vehicles that have come off an assembly line but to vehicles made by motor sport enthusiasts in their back yards. Such a person may take a "donk" from one vehicle and parts from others and make up a vehicle to his own design. A person who is not an expert would not know the stresses and strains involved in such construction, the cubic capacity of the engine, its brake horsepower, or the r.p.m.'s that it may produce. The amateur is not capable of saying whether such a vehicle should be allowed on the roads.

Mr. Lee: Some of them are quite dangerous.

Mr. JONES: They are. Some of the fellows who build these vehicles fit injectors and extra carburettors and so on after they are registered, and they very soon become overpowered. I know that the Act contains certain protections and limitations dealing with, for instance, wheel size, cylinder diameter, and so on, but I think that such vehicles should be subjected to a speed and performance test by a competent officer before being registered, even for use in a public place.

The Bill introduces a new era of legislation. Recreation vehicles are gaining in popularity in our affluent society, and now that they are to be registered there will be an increase in the number of people wanting to sell them. Too much power, whether it be in a mini-bike, road bike, road vehicle, or even a Government, is potentially dangerous if it cannot be controlled. The controls to be introduced must be enforceable, and the ability or inability of local authorities to enforce them will become a problem to be faced when the legislation becomes operative.

The conditions of the track, road or declared area in which such a vehicle operates can be a danger to its rider as well as bystanders. On a wet track or in the mud, a two-wheeled vehicle is very dangerous, and, if not properly controlled, it can become a lethal projectile. I suggest that an 8-year-old would not be able to control a bike travelling at even 20 miles an hour under certain conditions of weather and terrain. The Government's recognition of the need to provide third-party insurance is therefore timely.

I believe there are other aspects of the legislation which should be debated. For example, the Bill refers to a recreation vehicle having two or three wheels with an engine capacity of not more than 70 ml. I believe it was found necessary interstate to alter that description to 80 ml because the factory-produced vehicles had a capacity of 73, 74 and sometimes 75 ml.

Mr. Moore: With a rebore they're in trouble.

Mr. JONES: That's right. It has been found necessary in the South to amend the legislation already to provide for a capacity of up to 80 ml so I think we should do so at this stage. I again refer to the imposition of a fine on a child under the age of 17 and over the age of eight. I am pleased that a business vehicle carrying passengers must be duly registered with a certificate of inspection and the driver must be the holder of a current licence.

I am concerned about the regulated powers relating to declared areas. Who will administer these provisions? The use of a vehicle in a prohibited or declared area could cost somebody $500. This could be rather difficult to administer. How will an operator know the boundaries of a declared area? What form of warning will be exhibited? I think we should be looking at the enforceability of those provisions of the Bill.

Mr. Moore: The penalty is a mile high.

Mr. JONES: I agree the penalty is too high under that particular circumstance. I know ignorance of the law is no defence but certainly a person can enter an area from all sorts of angles on a trail bike, for example, and may not even be aware he is in a declared area. If someone rides a trail bike from Mareeba to Cairns over the ranges——

Mr. Gibbs: Through the rain forests?

Mr. JONES: Yes, through the rain forests, and if at the bottom of the Whitfield Range there is a sign which says that a trail bike cannot be ridden over the range, this will make it rather difficult to enforce.

Mr. Elliott: The police officers aren't that conscientious.

Mr. JONES: In that country trains have been robbed by people riding trail bikes and nobody ever found out where they came from or where they went. I doubt that we will be able to enforce the provision of a fine of $500 and a gaol sentence of six months if it applies to a child between the ages of eight and 17. I know that that provision is in addition to the provisions of the Criminal Code and the Traffic Act but I think it is unenforceable when related to children. No court will sentence an 8-year-old child to six months' hard labour.

As to the powers of arrest of authorised officers—the police do not always need the power of arrest. Too many Acts give them the power of arrest and now we find that this Bill gives them power to arrest without warrant in certain circumstances. The Bill also provides for the seizure of an abandoned motor vehicle. If it is unattended or is causing a danger or obstruction, that should be sufficient to meet the situation. The police have wide powers and I do not think they need to be expanded under this Bill. A vehicle can be seized if the owner has disobeyed a police instruction. The provision enabling forfeiture of the vehicle is probably a good one because an appeal can be instituted and a court will determine later whether or not the vehicle should have been forfeited.

Would the suspension or disqualification of a minor from holding a licence to drive a recreation vehicle automatically affect his eligibility to hold a driver's licence when he turns 17? As honourable members know, a person who has been so suspended or disqualified from holding a driving licence would automatically be disqualified from holding a licence to drive a recreation vehicle. But what about a person who is betwixt and between—who is, say, 16—and is disqualified from driving a recreation vehicle and then applies for an ordinary driving licence? That is a point which might need clarification.

I again emphasise that I believe that local government has sufficient power to enable it to enforce the provisions of the Bill. However, the additional burden imposed on local government will, I am sure, cause quite a lot of heartburning.

As far as I am aware, the Bill does not contain any provision giving this assembly the usual statutory power to review regulations, and there does not appear to be provision for objection to the regulations. I will study the Bill a little more closely before we reach the Committee stage.

I believe that the legislation will probably require amendment at a later stage. There will almost certainly be a need to tighten the provisions of the Act and eliminate knocks, bumps and rattles as they appear. The Opposition has studied the Bill and has no argument with its contents generally. It wishes only to raise the points I have mentioned and hopes that they will be noted and acted upon when the regulations are drafted.

Mr. LINDSAY (Everton) (4.27 p.m.): As I am a member of the Minister's parliamentary committee, I have followed the debate on the Bill with some interest. After my speech at the introductory stage, I attempted to get as much publicity as possible for the proposed provisions, and I understand that they have received some publicity today in the local newspaper in my area. In addition, I have endeavoured to get in touch with a number of riders of trail bikes in order to discuss the Bill with them and see what they think about it.

From what I have been able to ascertain, the community generally supports the Bill and is looking forward to its implementation. However, there is one group that I think have a legitimate query, and I refer to youngsters between the ages of 8 and 17 years, in particular the 14, 15 and 16-year-olds.

As honourable members may already have gathered, there is a possibility that the Minister will be considering an amendment to clause 14 of the Bill. I refer honourable members to that clause so that they may follow my argument a little more readily. The basic premise is that the Bill, under clause 14 (1) (a), says that a recreation vehicle——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! An honourable member is not permitted to refer specifically to clauses at the second-reading stage of a Bill. He may refer to them in broad outline.

Mr. LINDSAY: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I withdraw my remarks and say that the Bill, as it stands, refers in clause 14 to vehicles that do not in fact exist—that is, there are no vehicles with an engine capacity of under 70 ml that are capable of driving at a speed of 35 km/h on a substantially flat surface.

Mr. Houston: Haven't you seen the amendment?

Mr. LINDSAY: I believe that the Minister is considering an amendment; but the point is that a large number of 14, 15 and 16-year-olds have already purchased bikes of this type.

Anybody who knows me well would realise that, in talking about makes of bikes and capacities, I am able to do so only as a result of talking to those who ride them. My only experience with bikes was gained 20-odd years ago during Army training, when I was forced to get on a Harley Davidson. There were about 80 of us on the course and for some reason I was never actually taken off it. Those who had breakdowns and crashes seemed to be observed by the instructors and they were taken off it. The stage was reached eventually when there were only five of us under instruction.

I was so terrified of the Harley Davidson and its capacity that I surrendered the bike and surrendered the whole thing. I decided

it was too dangerous for me. Personally I do not like bikes, but there are those that do, and we should give that section of the community a hearing. That is what I am attempting to do now.

The makes commonly available in the under-70 ml range are the Honda MR 50, the Cox Gemini 50, the Cox Gemini 65 and the Honda XL 70. They are all capable of doing more than 35 km/h. Perhaps that is where the parliamentary committee was confused. We were thinking in metric terms and relating them to British Standard units. A speed of 35 km/h is not 35 m.p.h. but 22 m.p.h. Just about anything with wheels can travel at 22 m.p.h. on a substantially flat surface. Presently there is no commonly available bike under 70 ml which does less than 35 km/h, unless it is modified. The teenage group that we are talking about is the 14 to 16-years range.

As I indicated in my speech at the introductory stage, what we are seeing at the moment is the tip of the iceberg in the whole concept of trail bikes and mini-bikes and their popularity. Honourable members may have noticed the article in today's "Telegraph" headed "Plan for army of bikies". In essence it says that because of the popularity of bikes there is an obvious advantage in having soldiers trained to operate them. It speaks in terms of parachuting behind enemy lines and dropping trail bikes in. Because of the popularity of these machines among the younger generation, I should think that it would be a good recruiting gimmick.

As I understand it from recent talks with boys and girls in the age group mentioned, they already have bikes that are substantially more powerful than the ones that have been mentioned to date. They have already purchased them. It must be realised that these bikes, with the helmet, gloves and all the other paraphernalia that go with them, cost these youngsters or their parents between $400 and $500. The way the Bill stands at the moment—and I am partly responsible for it—it will ensure that the youngsters I have referred to will be able to ride only around their own back yards on their expensive bikes and with all their equipment. Because many will not be content to do that, a considerable number of arrests will be necessary. A fine of $200 is a very heavy one, and obviously will have a prohibitive effect. The 14 to 16-year-olds already have these bikes, so what are they going to do with them?

Mr. K. W. Hooper: You wouldn't want them to travel at more than 22 m.p.h.?

Mr. LINDSAY: We are talking about 22 m.p.h. on a substantially flat surface. A pushbike will travel at 22 m.p.h. on a substantially flat surface. When are the bikes we are talking about operated on a substantially flat surface? Trial bikes and mini-bikes are not speed machines. Their riders are not out to attain high speeds; they get their enjoyment and excitement from the curves and the ups and downs.

The information that I am putting before the House was handed to me very recently, so I apologise to the Minister and to his committee for not having tendered it earlier. The point is that boys and girls in the 8 to 16-years group are brought together under the one heading. This means that children in this group would ride this little bike (which in fact is not available except as a modified standard model) up till the age of 16 years, and then—bingo!—they turn 17 and are permitted to ride the big, powerful machines. That is when the problems will arise. It must not be forgotten that we are talking about the responsible element in our society, not the lunatic fringe.

We must pay due regard to the fact that between the ages of 8 and 16 years a boy undergoes many changes, particularly in his size. Under the Bill as it stands a 16-year-old boy is permitted to ride only a bike whose engine is not powerful enough to carry him up a hill. Therein lies a problem. I would ask the Minister to reconsider clause 14, because no such bike exists; nor is there a common factor for boys between 8 and 16 years of age. Perhaps we should legislate to provide for the use by boys of from 8 to 14 years of one type of bike and for the use by boys of from 14 to 16 years of age of another type of bike, one of greater capacity and size.

The bikes that are readily available and are most commonly used by 14 to 16-year-old boys are those in the under-90 ml range. They are the Honda XR 75, the Yamaha YZ 80, GT 80B and TY 80, the Suzuki 75 and TS 90, and the Kawasaki 75 MT1 and 90 MC1. A lot of 14 to 16-year-old boys already possess bikes within that range, all of which are capable of speeds in excess of 35 km/h. But it is not a matter of the speed the bike is capable of attaining; rather it is a question of having a speed limitation on the bike, and that is fair and reasonable. I do not see the need, however, for a capacity limitation. It is reasonable to allow 14 to 16-year-old boys to ride 90 ml bikes, because these large capacity machines would enable such boys to ride up hills and do their thing in the bike game. If a large 14 to 16-year-old boy is restricted to the use of a 70 ml bike, we will have problems.

I have raised these points for the Minister's consideration, and I apologise for not having supplied this information earlier. I believe that Parliament functions correctly if, as at present, we discuss provisions such as this at the second-reading stage. By doing so we are turning our attention to the way in which our legislative measures affect the public. I thank the House for having given me the opportunity of making these comments.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (4.40 p.m.): I thank the Minister for acknowledging the points I made at the introductory stage. They have concerned me for some time. After studying the legislation and listening to the Minister's second-reading speech I have some further matters to bring to his attention.

Firstly, I refer once more to the recovery of abandoned vehicles. To my personal knowledge this can be extremely expensive in some instances. I am not thinking of vehicles abandoned in paddocks or parks, but of those abandoned on beaches. Having formerly owned an earthmoving and contracting business, and living beside a beach where the tide goes out for almost a mile, I have had a lot of experience in this field. The local hoons or other young fellows go out in an old vehicle on the flats and get themselves bogged, and then run up to a man who owns a couple of big end-loaders or trucks to get him to pull them out. As soon as he finds out where they are bogged, he tells them that the best thing to do is to get a few 44-gallon drums and float the vehicle out on the tide. When a vehicle is completely immersed in salt water for some hours nobody wants it and, in the main, we are considering low-cost vehicles. The work and effort entailed in recovering a vehicle, or removing it from where it can be an obstruction to bathers, can cause very real problems. I do not think the legislation goes far enough in allowing for cost of recovery. It contains a provision whereby a vehicle can be disposed of and the sum received can then be paid to the Crown or the local authority, but it should include a special provision to cover cases where recovery costs are far greater than the sum realised on disposal of an abandoned vehicle.

I agree that this is new legislation and I compliment the Minister on introducing it. It is fairly modern in context, dealing as it does with a modern problem created by motor vehicles. Over a period experience will show where the flaws in the legislation lie, but as the honourable member for Everton said, it is well to point out where we believe there are problems.

I do not like the wording of the provision concerning the prosecution of parents. It is completely wrong in principle. You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and most other honourable members are parents. Not one of us could honestly say that he knows at all times what his children are doing.

Mr. Dean: You should know.

Mr. CASEY: When the honourable member for Sandgate says that he makes it obvious that he is one of the few bachelors in this House.

Mr. Hanson: And a very eligible one.

Mr. CASEY: He certainly is. Although he is a very charming and well-behaved person, I suggest that even he must have strayed on more than one or two occasions in his boyhood.

Mr. Jones: And his father didn't know about it.

Mr. CASEY: That is precisely my point.

There are those of us who appreciate that we do not know at all times exactly what our boys and girls are getting up to. We could endeavour as much as we liked to make secure a trail bike, beach buggy, registered vehicle, or whatever other form of transport might be used in this area, then go away for a short period, and because boys will be boys and kids will be kids, it is a temptation to them to get at it and do something to it.

It appears to me that, under this legislation, it is mandatory that, under no circumstances, can a parent use that defence. I agree that we should make an effort to ensure that parents do control their children but the way the principle is incorporated in the Bill makes it apparent to me that, despite the fact the parent did not know an offence was being committed and did not even know that the child had the vehicle under his control at the time the offence was deemed to be committed, the parent has absolutely no defence. He may have taken the best precautions in the world to ensure that the child did not get at the vehicle or have possession of it, yet he has no defence. This matter should be looked at much more closely because traffic legislation that has been introduced into the House in the past has created complications and similarly the wording of that section will lead to complications in the future.

The Bill contains an anomaly within itself. In the early part of it, the parent is denied the defence that he had no knowledge or did not consent whereas in a later part a different principle is applied to corporate bodies. Whilst members of a corporate body can be held liable, they are allowed the defence that they had no knowledge or had not given consent. The stringent way in which that clause relating to parents is worded calls for an amendment in case the courts give an interpretation that will force this problem onto parents. I would be the first to admit that perhaps I did something in my youth of which my parents had no knowledge despite their taking precautions to ensure that I did not do it.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: You have raised certain matters. This is why I let the Bill lie on the table. In fact, I would have liked it to lie on the table much longer. Both you and the honourable member for Everton have raised certain matters and I would be quite happy to move at the conclusion of the second-reading debate that progress be

reported and let the clauses be discussed at a later date after we have had time for a careful look at those suggestions.

Mr. CASEY: I thank the Minister. I am pleased to hear that because that is the real way in which members can make a contribution to this Parliament. I could express the sentiments that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have expressed on so many occasions in this Chamber.

I shall now deal with further points in the legislation that could cause problems in the future and might be looked at by the Minister. Again we are looking at low-value vehicles. After a person has flogged a vehicle all over the countryside as a beach buggy, a trail bike, or a mini-bike, he might prefer abandoning it to going to the trouble of repairing it mechanically for transfer of registration. Then the temptation is always present for someone else to pick up a vehicle such as that, repair it himself and start to use it. Possession will have changed hands in an unlawful manner and the person who previously owned the vehicle would not be at all concerned that he had lost possession of it. I foresee that problems will arise with that.

The Minister may be able to enlighten me a little further on another matter. The Bill contains the principle that the local authority can implement certain things. Are the local authorities to be made the agencies for applications for registration of these vehicles? Under the Act the power is vested in the Commissioner for Transport. Naturally, he has subagents right throughout the State. Will he use police stations or the office of the clerk of the court, or what particular agency will he normally use for this?

One small point that I note is that a slight alteration may be required in the definition section of the Bill. I have in mind a new field that is developing in recreational beach activities and that is the towing of vehicles of a certain type by other vehicles. In some cases the towed vehicles have skids, and in other cases they have wheels. We all know that a water-skier increases his speed by zig-zagging across the water rather than following a straight line behind the towing vehicle. Similarly, some of these fellows (who incidentally are over 17 years of age and have licensed vehicles that can be used on the roads) tow smaller, wheeled vehicles, and the towed vehicles broadside from side to side on the beach just as a water-skier zig-zags on the water. It may be necessary to alter the definitions contained in the Act to include not only trailers but also other vehicles under tow.

Earlier a reference was made to land yachts. I do not know whether it is proposed to cover them in the legislation. I have in mind also the growing sport of sail-planing, or gliding with kites, in which tow starts are made. I am wondering if there is any provision covering third-party risks arising from the use of tow-lines and other equipment associated with this activity.

I am a little confused about the powers of the commissioner and the powers of the local authority. One principle of the legislation is that the local authority may execute the Act and, by means of by-laws, declare areas in which these activities can be carried on. Another section provides that such areas shall be declared by the Governor in Council. I presume that local authorities will make recommendations to the Minister for submission to the Governor in Council on areas to be so declared.

If a local authority declares an area under its by-laws and there are complaints about it, the Minister is empowered by the Act to revoke the declaration. I do not see any provision in the legislation covering the reverse situation. If a motor-cycle club or beach buggy club applied for the declaration of an area and its application were rejected by the local authority, I cannot see any provision under which the Minister could override the local authority and grant the application. I think that this is another area that could receive close consideration. Requests are made constantly to the Minister for Local Government as a result of the actions of local authorities. We all know that local authorities can make some zany decisions at times, and there is need for a person to be vested with wider powers to deal with those matters. I would like to see some such provision incorporated in this legislation. I should like to see power conferred on the Minister not only to revoke a declaration made by a local authority but to make a declaration where an application for it has been rejected by a local authority. I think that such a provision would strengthen the Bill considerably, particularly when one considers that clubs will be formed as a result of this legislation. I firmly believe that much of the control of this type of activity will be done through the clubs and by getting people to associate themselves with clubs. I believe that the recreational activities provided by the Bill will be excellent for the young people of this State.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (4.54 p.m.): I merely want to add to what has been said by the honourable member for Cairns, who spoke on behalf of the Opposition in this matter. There are some points on which I should like to express an opinion. I think we all understand, as the Minister has already said, that this legislation is a matter of trial and error.

Mr. Moore: Any amount of error.

Mr. HOUSTON: There may be plenty of errors in it. If that is the case, why did the Government parties agree to make the penalties so severe? After all, the Government

does not know at this point of time whether its legislation is practical, or whether it will produce the desired effect.

It seems rather strange to me that if a person drives a trail bike, mini-bike, buggy or something of the kind on a beach or somewhere else that it is decreed he should not go, the courts can sentence him to six months' gaol and fine him $500. For the most minimal offence, the penalty laid down is $200. Having some experience with courts and their decisions over the years——

Mr. Elliott: You've been in them, have you?

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, I have looked and listened and I have read about that type of thing because as a parliamentarian I am interested in these matters. But the point is that the courts very rarely impose the maximum penalties laid down in legislation such as this. I fear that they will impose such minimal penalties that what we are trying to do will be nullified. I believe that, as this legislation is being introduced on a trial-and-error basis, the penalties provided are far too severe. If we say, "We have legislation. We are going to register them" and then do nothing about it, then people will regard the legislation as having no value at all. At this stage I would like to see much lower penalties provided and hope that they would never have to be enforced, but if we find it is necessary and that penalty is insufficient to deter people from doing what we object to, then we can certainly increase the penalties. I would rather have that than introduce heavy penalties which are not put into effect.

Mr. Moore: Magistrates tend to take a percentage of it, anyway. The higher we make the maximum, the higher the penalty they impose.

Mr. HOUSTON: That's right. It becomes ridiculous when we know that a person can go down the street, bash somebody up and steal his money and be let off with a warning, particularly if the offender is young, when the courts almost invariably adopt the attitude that some latitude must be allowed. All they do is say, "You're a naughty boy" (or "a naughty girl"). "You go home to your parents and behave yourself." Yet under this legislation young people not committing any real, criminal offence are subject to these heavy penalties just for riding a bike in a particular area or riding in a manner which in the eyes of an adult is dangerous, but certainly not dangerous in their own eyes. I suggest to the Minister that the penalties are far too severe and will not be enforced by the courts and that therefore the legislation will not have the effect this Parliament wishes.

I suggest that the Minister look first at the clause which lays down that a person shall not be registered as owner of a recreation vehicle unless he attains the age of 18 years. I have no quarrel with that clause because that is standard practice. Many of these vehicles are bought by parents, who would be registered as owners, so I see no reason why that should be changed. But a later clause states—

> "If a person who has not attained the age of 8 years drives a recreation vehicle on a road or in a public place the owner of the vehicle (being a person who has attained the age of 8 years) . . . "

It is already provided that no-one may be a registered owner unless he has attained the age of 18 years yet this later provision reads, "(being a person who has attained the age of eight years)". There is an obvious contradiction in those two clauses. Perhaps the figure "1" was left out before the figure "8". Adding the figure "1" to make the age 18 would bring it into conformity with the other clause. I know that some amendments to that clause are proposed and I do not wish to contravene Standing Orders but I hope the Minister will have a look at the point I am making. It is fair enough to say that if a child does something, then the owner of the vehicle should be held responsible. After all, it is the owner of the vehicle who should determine whether or not the child is competent to drive the vehicle. I believe there are some children who, owing to their physical and mental make-up, are capable of driving a low-powered two-wheel vehicle at eight years of age; but, in my view, others are certainly far too weak physically to handle such a vehicle at that age. Not only the age and mental capacity must be taken into accout; the physical capacity of a child to operate a vehicle must be taken into account. I agree that the owner of the vehicle should accept some responsibility for determining whether or not a child should be allowed to drive it.

As I said earlier, I have no quarrel with the provision as it relates to the owner; but I have a very big quarrel with it as it relates to a person who is eight years of age, particularly when clause 13 (3) goes on to say "commits an offence against this Act, by reason of his being such owner, and is liable to a penalty of $500." I do not think the Minister can have it both ways.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: We are talking about the registered owner and the legal owner.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is the whole point. There is one vehicle with two different standards. There is a registered owner and a legal owner.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: That is no different from what obtains in the Main Roads Department at present.

Mr. HOUSTON: I think that is where the Minister is going wrong. I suggest that the provisions are too parallel with those relating to the Main Roads Department.

As the honourable member for Cairns said earlier, the Opposition completely agrees with the motives behind the introduction of this trial-and-error legislation. However, the issues should not be confused, and parents who buy vehicles of this type for their children, or who authorise their children to buy them, should be given every encouragement to do the right thing. I suggest that imposing a fine of $500 on a child of nine years of age who happens to be the owner of a vehicle is simply ridiculous. How can such a provision be enforced?

Mr. K. W. Hooper: The honourable member must realise that it is not a minimum penalty.

Mr. HOUSTON: If it is not a minimum penalty, judges or magistrates, as the case may be, will be asked to take into consideration the age of the child when they are determining the degree of culpability.

The Minister has introduced a new point with which I cannot agree. There will be an owner and a registered owner. How is any court to determine the difference between the registered owner and the owner of a vehicle? Does the law recognise ownership of property or anything such as that by a child of eight, nine or 10 years? I thought there would be guardianships associated with a child of those tender years. When the Minister mentioned 18 years of age, I said that I agree with that because an 18-year-old is an adult in the eyes of the law today. If the person concerned is a licensed driver of 17 years of age, the licensing laws can be taken into account. In this legislation, although a registered owner is certainly defined, there is no clear definition of the difference between a registered owner and a physical owner.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: It could be difficult to find out who is the owner.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course it would be difficult. Why, then, in a later part of the legislation, is it proposed to hold a physical owner liable, as distinct from a registered owner? I use "physical" in the sense of the person who actually owns the vehicle. There is still a doubt in my mind—perhaps some of our legal friends in the Chamber could tell us—whether an eight, nine or 10-year-old can carry the responsibility of ownership, or whether it would be carried by a guardian. I do not profess to know that.

Mr. Greenwood: They can.

Mr. HOUSTON: They can own it?

Mr. Greenwood: Yes.

Mr. HOUSTON: If an 8 or 9-year-old rides a bike——

Mr. K. W. Hooper: They do in fact now.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes. If it is considered that he does something wrong, he is liable to a fine of $500. I cannot see why there should be a difference—why in one case it is the registered owner and in the other the physical owner of the vehicle. I can foresee a lot of argument about who in actual fact is the physical owner. However, that is a matter we can argue at a later stage now that the position is quite clear.

I do not think there has been any mention so far of go-karts. In many cases go-karts race on recognised racing circuits. The go-kart associations that I have had any association with over the years have done a very fine job in teaching young fellows and girls the rudiments of the mechanics of motor vehicles.

Mr. Moore: It has been a pretty safe sport, too.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes. Many of them are very good organisations and they do a tremendous amount of work on behalf of young people. Many of these vehicles are built up by 14 and 15-year-olds. They save their money for that purpose and physically own their vehicles. I doubt whether we should hold them responsible when in fact the registration is in the name of a more senior person.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: We are assuming that the registration could be in somebody else's name.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes. In the early stages of the legislation the Minister——

Mr. K. W. Hooper: I am not opposing what you are saying.

Mr. HOUSTON: No, but I think the Minister should make it very clear that it is the registered owner—at this stage, anyway. I would rather have it that way for trial and error than the other way for trial and error. We have to place responsibility on parents for the actions of their children. I know that the honourable member for Mackay would well-meaningly suggest that parents do not always know where their children are. Unfortunately that has been true for generations, and I agree with him. In our childhood when any of us did the wrong thing we found that our fathers were not behind the door in giving us a clip over the ear. The local policeman who rode a horse or a push-bike very quickly learnt if we were doing the wrong thing and he was not slow in seeing to it that our parents knew about it. Very seldom did parents fail to find out eventually about any of our wrongdoings. But the situation is a little different today. Here we are talking about the use of certain vehicles, which is a little different from the things we did. I feel that parents have to accept responsibility for what their children are doing with vehicles which in many cases they have helped to purchase.

When considering the power of vehicles, the Minister could run into trouble with go-karts. I think the honourable member for Everton would agree that many of the go-karts are up to the capacity mentioned. I hope the Bill will not affect the activities of the go-kart associations; they have been doing a very worth-while job. Even in the amendments proposed by the Minister speed is still referred to. In the operation of a trail bike it is not so much speed on the flat that the driver is concerned about. The thrill or the competitive element of riding a trail bike is in travelling up hill and down dale, the rougher the country the better. That is why many public parks that we know will not be suitable for that purpose. Apart from the fact that riders will not be permitted to use those parks for that purpose, they would not appeal to them, anyway, as they lack the desired terrain. Many areas that are most suitable for the operation of trail bikes are allotments owned by private citizens. Very often privately owned land is used by the riders of trail bikes because of its rugged nature. Therefore I suggest that the Minister should look not so much at the speed of vehicles as at their power. After all, a rider can get as much fun out of a high-powered vehicle by getting over the ruts and up the hills even though the bike is geared to a maximum speed well within the requirements of the Bill. A speed of 35 km/h, or 22 m.p.h. is not as significant as engine capacity.

Mr. Moore: It's the ratio of engine revs to wheel speed. That's what it amounts to.

Mr. HOUSTON: As far as speed is concerned, yes. Such a vehicle can attain a high speed going either downhill or along a flat, but it may have no guts at all when climbing a hill—an activity that young fellows like to engage in. I suggest that the Minister look at the realities of the situation, that is, at the power of the vehicles as distinct from their speed. We should allow the bikes to have sufficient power to enable the riders to enjoy their recreation without having to attain high speeds.

Like the member for Cairns, I, too, am concerned at the effect of this legislation on local authorities. From time to time the State Government, in an endeavour to overcome a certain problem, passes over to local authorities the control of certain legislation. In many instances, having introduced legislation, the Government wipes its hands of the problem. This has occurred in relation to traffic control and the implementation of safety measures. Such a practice throws upon local authorities an additional financial burden, with the result that in some instances very little supervision is carried out.

It is desirable to pass on to local authorities certain powers that they need, but I do not think that we are entitled to rely on them to carry out necessary inspections. For example, under this legislation the local authority inspectors would be required to be on duty mainly at week-ends or during holiday periods. Whether the vehicle involved is a trail bike, a mini-bike or a go-kart, it is used mainly on Saturdays and Sundays or during holidays. The wages of local authority employees who are called upon to work during those periods are very high. Therefore, as I say, the already strained finances of the local authorities will be further strained, so I hope that, from the registration fees and the monetary penalties that are to be imposed for certain breaches of the legislation, sufficient money will go back to the local authorities to enable them to carry out their inspectorial duties.

I should imagine that in a declared recreational area there will be a need to provide toilets and, probably, drinking facilities. Again it is the local authority that will have to provide them. When the riders of these machines make such noise as will annoy local residents, they will move to another area, and I venture to suggest that it will not be very long before riders will form clubs. When clubs are formed they will want their own areas. I have no quarrel with this, provided the riders do not interfere with the welfare of nearby residents. But having obtained their own areas, the clubs will no doubt ask local authorities to provide certain amenities, and this, too, will impose an additional financial burden on them. Whilst I go along with the idea of giving local authorities a place in the implementation of this legislation, I am not happy with imposing upon them the financial responsibilities associated with it.

It is obvious that all honourable members want this legislation to work and that we do not want to impose on local authorities and other people a heavier burden than that already borne by them. I think the Minister told the honourable member for Mackay that the Committee stage of this Bill will be delayed to allow further consideration to be given to it. I whole-heartedly endorse such a step; in fact, I should like to see it taken more often.

Quite often when we are debating legislation, worth-while suggestions are made to Ministers, who say, "We have no time to look at them." The legislation then goes through and an honourable member's speech is virtually forgotten until the Act is dealt with again. If the Minister is prepared to take this action, I compliment him. I believe it should be followed in other legislation. That would give honourable members generally a chance to put forward ideas and have them looked at rather than simply wiped off because of insufficiency of time between the second reading and the Committee stage.

Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumba) (5.16 p.m.): The Minister deserves to be congratulated on introducing this Bill. I am a member of

his committee but, unfortunately, I was away when it was discussing this legislation. That was my own fault and I certainly do not hold the Minister or anyone else responsible.

Mr. Hanson: That's the reason why he brought it in—you were away.

Mr. FRAWLEY: That is not correct. The Minister had this Bill in the pipeline, as it were, for many months. I know that he has been thinking about it since as far back as 1972. It has been his brain-child. He always intended to introduce it.

Mr. Houston: He had to wait till you were away to get it through.

Mr. FRAWLEY: That is not so. He is getting it through now. It was good of him to wait until I got back so that I would have an opportunity to speak on it. I shall make my usual sensible contribution to the debate if I do not get too many stupid interjections from Opposition members.

Mr. Casey: How do they get on down your way? You haven't got any decent beaches.

Mr. FRAWLEY: If the honourable member listens, I may be able to give him some good information about Redcliffe.

I hope that the main purpose of this Bill is to afford protection to the public. I am very concerned about that. In Redcliffe I have noticed trail-bike riders—they are not to be confused with trial-bike riders, and I shall explain the difference shortly—using footpaths and roadways for riding unregistered vehicles. On more than one occasion I have seen them knocking subdivisions about. In fact, I was on a vacant block of land one day when a group of trail-bike riders came along and terrorised me by riding backwards and forwards past me.

Mr. Casey: Why didn't you hit them with your javelin?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I had only a discus. I let fly with it and missed them. I was subjected to this experience by trail-bike riders.

The noise factor is another matter that must be considered. I have received many complaints from people, especially in the Caboolture area, about the noise made by mini-bikes operated on private property. The people of one street in Caboolture complained bitterly. On going to the Caboolture Shire Council they were told, "Go to your local member of Parliament. It is his Government that has not brought in a law to control noise." The passage of this Bill will not lead to additional noise. It might even control it. However, at some time in the future, we should legislate to do that.

The registration fees for these recreation vehicles, especially mini-bikes belonging to young people, should not be excessive. I am not so concerned about beach buggies, because they are mainly certain types of vehicles designed to run on roads and beaches. I note that no fee is mentioned in the Bill. Perhaps it could be about $10, but it should not be higher than that. As many parents buy mini-bikes for their young children, the charge for third-party insurance should be kept as low as possible.

The Redcliffe City Council has recognised the problem and built a mini-bike track in my electorate on the corner of Duffield Road and Robinson Street, Redcliffe. I mention that in case any honourable member cares to go down there some day to ride a bike. It is on 5 acres and is specially set aside for people in the area.

Mr. Aikens: Are you suggesting that if you are killed by a mini-bike you are not as dead as if you are killed by a car.

Mr. FRAWLEY: Not at all. There are no degrees of death. I know a man who was killed by a tomcat, but I will not go into that story now.

Mini-bikes have caused problems in many local authority areas. Unlike the honourable member for Bulimba, I believe that local authorities should be prepared to administer this legislation. For years some of them have been screaming about mini-bikes in their areas, and I take it that this Bill is designed to control mini-bikes rather than beach buggies. Local authorities should be prepared to administer this legislation.

Some years ago I noticed someone running classes on the riding of mini-bikes on the No. 2 oval at the Brisbane Exhibition grounds and he did a pretty fine job. We bring in these restrictions and I agree that all bikes should be registered. I sincerely hope that all mini-bikes and recreation vehicles already in use are registered. I agree that they should be registered in the name of a person over 18 years of age. To a certain extent, the onus should be on the parents to control their children. They should not be allowed to ride these bikes willy-nilly along the roads. By requiring owners of mini-bikes to register them and take out third-party insurance, we are ensuring that the people who might be knocked over will have a great deal of protection. I do not know of anybody in my electorate who has been knocked over by a mini-bike. I have not had any reports of such an accident, but I do know that people have been knocked over by mini-bikes and because those vehicles are not covered by third-party insurance, the injured people have had to battle to get any compensation.

Some confusion exists between trial bikes and trail bikes. A trial bike is used on a set trial course. The Redcliffe Peninsula Trial Bike Club cannot obtain land in Redcliffe, because its members use machines of a higher capacity than those envisaged by the Bill. The machines are not registered for the road and are used only on private property, mostly at Upper Caboolture. The club has been desperately trying to find land on which to tutor these young people. I think it is a good idea to have trial-bike clubs. I am not against them in any way; nor am I against trail bikes provided they are used in the right area.

Many farmers in my electorate have complained that trail-bike riders use their properties and knock hell out of the place. Many trail bikes are already registered, so I do not see how the Bill will be of assistance in that regard. The only redress that these property owners can get is to go to the police and try to catch these riders on their property.

It is very important that there should be declared areas and it is right that the Governor in Council should have the right to declare those areas. Mt. Nebo is a State forest and I have received complaints from people living there. They are dyed-in-the-wool conservationists. I must admit that at one time I thought they were rat-bags but I have changed my mind. They are decent people who are greatly concerned about some of the destruction being caused in State forests by trail bikes. By declaring these areas we will in effect be able to prevent trail-bike riders riding willy-nilly through State forests and destroying the flora and fauna.

I do not have much to say about the Bill, except that it might assist local authorities with beaches in their areas. There is no problem in Redcliffe from beach buggies being driven on the beaches. I have been living there for 19 years and have never seen one. I was surprised at what the honourable member for Sandgate said about the beach at Sandgate. I have never noticed any beach buggies or bikes there, but I agree that it is possible to run them along the beach at Sandgate.

Mr. Aikens interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: The honourable member for Redcliffe has never had any trouble with beach buggies. It is wonderful to think that Mr. Speaker had the honour of being the first mayor of Redcliffe when it was declared a city. At no time when he was mayor of Redcliffe did he have any problems with beach buggies. In fact, he was always a tolerant mayor. He gave everybody a reasonable opportunity and even allowed horses on the beach in a certain area so that they could be taken for a swim.

I congratulate the Minister and his committee. When we are debating the clauses, I hope to make another contribution.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (5.24 p.m.): After studying the Bill rather closely, I am afraid that the fears I entertained when the Minister introduced the measure last week have not been allayed. I still fail to see how this Bill will be enforced. Many pieces of legislation that we pass fall into that category. We pass the legislation, but the enforcement of it is another matter.

I wish to refer to the contribution of the previous speaker. I was rather surprised to hear a former member of a local authority, with experience in local government, express the opinion that it should be the responsibility of local government to administer this legislation. As I mentioned last week, almost every piece of legislation that passes through this House places extra burdens on the police or local authorities. It really surprises me that the honourable member for Murrumba, with his experience in local government, should be in favour of encumbering local authorities with further responsibilities.

I know the Greater Brisbane area rather well, and I cannot see how this legislation will work properly without causing great disturbance to the peace of the community. Even single motor-bikes make a great deal of noise. What will it be like when there are groups of 20 or 30 racing round? When the bikes are registered no doubt they will be in proper order, and fitted correctly with silencers. But as soon as they have left the registering authority the silencers will be removed, or the baffle plates taken out, so that the bikes make more noise and thus give those who ride them a greater feeling of exhilaration.

I cannot see in the Bill any real penalty for interfering with machines. There is such a provision in other legislation, but how often are people apprehended on the road because they are creating excessive noise as a result of interference with the mechanism of their vehicles? Some time ago I reported an incident concerning bikies outside Her Majesty's Theatre one night. On that occasion it was impossible to hear anyone speak. If they had moved off, it would not have been too bad. Instead, they kept the engines of their bikes running, revving them up and disturbing the peace at 11.30 p.m. in Queen Street. No action against them was taken, and the reply that I received from the department was, to my mind, rather foolish. Those bikies unnerved many people, especially elderly people leaving the theatre, and the excessive noise that they made was shocking.

I cannot see anything in the Bill that will ensure that its provisions are enforced. It is said that local authorities will be responsible for defining the areas, and for enforcement

there will be the local authorities and the police, who are again number one on the list. But it is at week-ends and on holidays that I find that most disturbances of this type take place. I have been called out on many occasions in all parts, not only one, of my electorate as a result of similar disturbances.

We have to recognise that we live in a mechanical age, and provision should be made for people to engage in this type of sport and recreation. Only last week-end I looked at the area set aside in Murrumba, and it is a rather good one. The council has provided obstacles to test the skill of riders, and the area generally is one in which they can follow their recreation. I saw some people doing the right thing by wheeling their bikes to the area rather than riding them on the public highway. They are, of course, unregistered, and they carry no number-plates. But there are very few places that I know of in the Greater Brisbane area where a similar facility could be established without causing considerable disturbance to the daily life of the people.

Mr. Frawley: What about rubbish dumps? That's where it is in Redcliffe.

Mr. DEAN: Rubbish dumps are not very good areas. Even the garbage dump in my electorate is very close to residential development at Shorncliffe. I would not like to see such an area set aside there. It would greatly disturb the peace of Shorncliffe. Perhaps something could be done by some of the J.P's in the area. We have thousands of them; we lost count of them long ago. Without being unkind to all of them, I think I can say that most seek this honour only to allow them to put "J.P." after their names, and to increase their social standing in the district. Perhaps they could be used for the policing of such areas at week-ends. I cannot see any council employing special rangers for this purpose. Local authority revenue and expenditure have been cut to the minimum, and the employment of rangers at week-ends and on holidays would be a very heavy financial burden on local authorities.

I am disappointed with the Bill. I suppose it will not be long before it is back again for amendment, which happens with a lot of legislation. This is as it should be if we find there is some weakness in some particular legislation. But I think the weakest part of this Bill is that covering enforcement. I just cannot see how we will enforce the principles laid down in this Bill.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (5.30 p.m.): I will not delay the House very long, but we must not forget that, once any vehicle is licensed at all, it is covered by all the laws that cover other licenced vehicles. For instance, anyone driving any of the vehicles covered by this Bill will be subject to the laws relating to drunken driving. The drivers can be arrested and charged with drunken driving. I am rather concerned at times to know that magistrates differentiate between a person who is drunk in charge of one particular type of vehicle and a person who is drunk in charge of another type. I do want to put this point to the Minister for Transport because it is something that agitates my mind and I think it agitates the minds of quite a number of people who use the roads to walk on.

I know that most politicians live a life of indolence, affluence and luxury; that they never walk except perhaps from their bedroom to the kitchen or to the toilet. The moment they have to leave their homes or leave Parliament House or wherever else they are, they flop down behind the wheel of a car and drive. If only they would consider the problems of the pedestrian, particularly women and children, they would get a far better idea of what laws should be placed on the Statute Book of this State.

I am not going to develop a long argument as to all the laws that should be updated and strengthened in order to protect the pedestrian, but there is one law that should be updated and strengthened and that is the law dealing with probably the most dangerous motorist on the road. I refer to the motorist who sees a car stopped at a pedestrian crossing, sometimes a zebra crossing, yet comes up at a terrific speed, sometimes on the blind side of the stationary car, and runs down a pedestrian on the crossing. The pedestrian, sometimes a woman pushing a pram, sometimes a woman with children, sometimes a child, sometimes an old man, will start to walk across the zebra crossing because the courteous driver has stopped to allow the pedestrian to walk across, and naturally the pedestrian thinks he can get safely to the other side of the street or to the median strip.

Apparently there is no specific law relating to this type of offence. The offender must be charged with dangerous driving and honourable members know what little chance there is of "fitting" such a person with a charge of dangerous driving or dangerous driving causing death or dangerous driving causing grievous bodily harm once he goes before a jury. I really think that the Minister for Transport, who is quite sympathetic about these things, should get in touch with some of his non-legal officers—his legal ones are as bad as the legal officers outside—and see if he can think of some way of dealing adequately with those motorists who will pass a car that has stopped in order to allow people to use a pedestrian crossing or even a zebra crossing.

I am going to suggest, too, that in all cases where a person has been convicted of drink-driving or dangerous driving and has has his licence suspended for a period of, say, six months, 18 months or two years, his car should be impounded

for the period of the licence suspension. As it is, the whole matter becomes farcical because any member of the family can drive the car around the corner from the home and the person under suspension can then get behind the wheel and drive to his heart's content. The police are doing nothing else but chasing people who are driving while their licence is under suspension. We should impound the car for the period of suspension when suspension arises from a conviction for drink-driving, dangerous driving or any other serious driving offence.

There is another matter that I should like the Minister to look at because the vehicles covered by the Bill will be protected by the provisions of the existing law. It is something that many members of this Assembly may not know. Today, in this period of big business expansion, there are many huge parking areas associated with business premises. For example, I have been to the parking area at the shopping centre at Toombul, and there are many big parking areas in Townsville. In fact, there is a parking area at the end of the street in which I live. It is about an acre in area, but it is only a pocket handkerchief in comparison with some of the other parking areas provided by businesses.

The point is that no traffic laws are applicable in such parking areas. In those places a person can commit any traffic breach he likes and cannot even be chatted by a policeman, be given a ticket, or be brought before a court. Nothing can happen to him as long as he is in the parking area. Naturally, the law relating to civil actions still applies. If a person sends his vehicle careering across a parking area, crashes into another vehicle and crumples it into an unrecognisable mass, the police cannot take any action against him. The owner of the vehicle that he crashes into can take a civil action. But honourable members know what happens when a person takes a civil action; the only winner is the lawyer.

I think some action should be taken to declare at least big parking areas as areas that come under the control of the police for driving purposes. The present state of affairs is shocking. Fortunately, very few people who drive motor vehicles know that in such areas they are completely immune from any traffic law. The moment they enter a parking area, no matter how big it is, they can do what they damn well like, and the police cannot even lift a finger or speak a word to stop them.

Mr. Dean interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: The honourable member could be right. I suggest that he get someone to look up the law for him. He should not ask any of the barristers or solicitors in the Chamber to do it; he would be better off doing it himself. He will find that no traffic laws are applicable to privately owned parking areas. It may be a different matter in a parking area set aside by the Government. I should not like to say that traffic offenders are given immunity in the parking areas set aside by the Railway Department. However, I do know that anyone driving on the big privately owned parking areas in and around the cities in Queensland is completely immune under the traffic laws.

I should like the Minister to look at that matter when he has time, because the vehicles covered by the provisions of this Bill could also be affected. I am aware that the Minister has quite a number of problems that he would like to solve, and some of them are big problems that are difficult of solution because he is up against, first, the lawyers in the Crown Law Office, then the weaklings in his own party and in the National Party and the super-weaklings in the A.L.P., who believe that anything goes for the motorist and to hell with the pedestrian, and to hell with women and children in particular.

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (5.38 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the second reading of the Bill and assure them that their criticisms have been taken by me in the spirit in which they were made. I certainly intend, as I said earlier, to consider them before the Bill goes into the Committee stage.

It was very pleasing to me to hear the honourable member for Cairns welcome the legislation and give it his support. He indicated that he is concerned about the age of the registered owner and the legal owner.

He was concerned also about the definition of a recreation vehicle. I point out to him that a recreation vehicle may be used in different local authority areas and need not necessarily stay in only one area in this State. The honourable member's contribution, I think, indicated that he understood that. Therefore, it would not be possible to apportion registration fees to all local authority areas in which a recreation vehicle was used at any time. Although a recreation vehicle can be used anywhere and is not restricted to a particular local authority area, it is up to the local authority in the area in which it is being used to bring it under its own by-laws.

Both the honourable member for Cairns and the honourable member for Bulimba were interested in the difference between the legal owner and the registered owner. That is a problem faced by the Main Roads Department at present, and I shall endeavour to come up with an answer and give it to them in Committee.

The honourable member for Everton expressed his concern about the power of mini-bikes or two-wheeled vehicles, having regard to the age of their operators. He

would realise that I am considering an amendment in this regard. Certainly it takes into account the restriction of speed, but not necessarily the power capacity of the vehicle. We are looking at that aspect of it, and I am all in favour of trying to do something there.

The honourable member for Mackay holds very strong views, which I share, about the responsibilities of the parents of young people who use these vehicles. We have gone a long way towards doing something about that in the Bill. I will have a look at his remarks to see if we can strengthen it in any way. If so, I will be prepared to amend it.

The intention is to establish as many agencies as possible wherever we can under various Government departments. As the honourable member says, it may have to be a police station here or a court house somewhere else. That will be to the advantage of people who are going to use these vehicles. He would realise that in some areas the vehicles do not show up at all, but in other places they are to be seen in very large numbers. We will have to work out how to have the facilities available according to the numbers of the various types of recreation vehicles. The honourable member is interested in the powers of the commissioner as compared with the powers of the local authority. I thought that was spelt out fairly clearly. On that point perhaps I can enlighten him a little more at a later stage.

The honourable member for Bulimba considered that the penalties were too severe. I remind him that they are maximum penalties. It would be up to the court to decide what it would impose.

Mr. Moore: The magistrates take a certain percentage, though.

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: Perhaps they do. It is a very difficult area. Criticism is levelled at a Minister and the Government for making penalties too light; it is also levelled at them for making them too severe. The honourable member for Townsville South indicated that we cannot be too severe on some of these people.

Mr. Aikens: It is a great pity that the maximum penalties are not imposed more often than they are.

Mr. Murray: Is it a maximum penalty?

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: It is a maximum penalty, not a minimum penalty. The penalty is up to $500.

The honourable member for Murrumba was absent on other commitments during the introductory stage. He was concerned whether the Bill was brought in for the protection of the public. That is what the Bill is all about. It is for the protection of the public. The whole purpose of the Bill is to make sure that there is protection for the public by way of insurance. The only way we can achieve that is to have some control over the vehicles by way of registration. Like other honourable members he was concerned about the noise problem. At the point of registration we will endeavour to control noise by way of the regulations, but after that there is certainly a problem. However, another Minister will be bringing down legislation that will adequately deal with that aspect of it.

The honourable member for Sandgate is still concerned about the enforcement of the Bill. Naturally, I share his concern, as I am sure all honourable members do. All we can do is give authority to enforce it to the police and the officers authorised by the Commissioner for Transport. If we find that this is not working out, I give an undertaking that we will have another look at it.

He expressed concern also at the disturbance to the peace caused by groups of these vehicles. This is what the Bill is all about; it is designed to encourage groups of bike riders—mini-bike riders—to control themselves as well as to provide control of them by local authorities, under the Commissioner for Transport. I feel that this will have a great effect.

The honourable member suggested that local authorities would not be able to appoint officers authorised to do the job. We will be watching the situation very closely and if we find that they cannot do it we will take other action.

The local authorities are very interested in this legislation—in fact they were party to the framing of it. For a long time they have asked for it, as have tourist authorities and chambers of commerce in tourist areas.

The honourable member for Townsville South referred to the drink-driving laws. He is quite right; they will apply under this legislation as they do under other legislation. He was a little bit off the beam, however, in his references to zebra crossings, excessive speeds and parking areas. They come under the Traffic Act; nevertheless those matters to which he referred will be given close examination.

Mr. Aikens: They mightn't be under the Bill, but I suggested them for your future consideration.

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: I know that, and I take the honourable member's point.

Earlier I said that, in view of the useful suggestions put forward, I was prepared to postpone the passage of the Bill through the Committee stage. I gave an undertaking, and I intend to honour it. I shall not proceed to the Committee stage now. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion (Mr. K. W. Hooper) agreed to.

GLADSTONE POWER STATION OPERATION AGREEMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (5.47 p.m.): I move—

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

As I said when introducing the Bill, it is a simple one. I feel that it has been accepted as such by honourable members. The legislation is necessary to remove any legal doubts about the proposed agreement.

Most of the comment made during the introductory debate is more pertinent to major legislation that I shall introduce later in the year. In fact, nothing was raised in the debate which requires explanation or elucidation for the benefit of honourable members in further considering the Bill.

The honourable member for Port Curtis has indicated that the Opposition has no objection to the legislation.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (5.48 p.m.): The Opposition certainly does not have much objection to the measure. Nevertheless we wish to raise certain matters both now and at the Committee stage and to obtain clarification on them.

The decision to construct a power station at Gladstone, to provide not only for the growth of South and Central Queensland but also for the power needs of large industrial complexes in Central Queensland, was welcomed by the people of Gladstone and of Central Queensland as a whole. Such a power station is of paramount importance to that portion of our State.

The Minister said that the measure dealt specifically with giving power to the Southern Electric Authority to operate the Gladstone Power Station pending the formation of a board which will be established to control the generation of electricity throughout the State. He said that he hoped the enabling legislation would be introduced later this year.

The Central Region of Queensland contains a large number of varied natural resources of considerable magnitude. In years to come this power station will facilitate the use of those resources through the establishment of large industries in the area. Feasibility studies have disclosed that in Central Queensland power can be generated at low unit cost for use by major power-intensive industries. Some disquiet has been expressed about the price of .358c a unit that has been bandied around as the charge to be made to Comalco. Many industries in the State that operate on a high-load basis believe they have been somewhat disadvantaged by the very favourable treatment given to the smelter enterprise to be started on South Trees Island in the very near future by Comalco.

As a Gladstonian I shall be very pleased to see this enterprise in operation and to know that the State, after long negotiations —during which I and other Opposition members maintained that the Government could have been more aggressive—is assured that the smelter is to become operative.

In recent years electricity authorities in Queensland have been subjected to considerable pressure, which is likely to continue in the years ahead. They have a responsibility to meet demands of domestic and industrial consumers. The Opposition believes that, as well as providing for normal growth, the proposed new power station should have sufficient surplus capacity to supply the needs of future large industries. We have been told that it will be able to generate power at a low cost which will attract such industries.

The requirements of the station had to be taken into account by the people responsible for its design. Finally, they formulated their plan on the basis that there would be power-intensive export-based industries. The Commonwealth's share of the cost of this power station, which is based purely on export-orientated industries, is $80,000,000, and that is expressed in a formula as 80/155ths of the total cost.

Mr. Camm: By way of loan.

Mr. HANSON: Yes, a repayable loan. There is no grant, I quite agree. Had the present administration been in office in Canberra instead of the Minister's political colleagues, I am certain he would have got a better deal; probably he would have got a grant of $80,000,000. I realise that with all the generosity that the Minister fleetingly possesses he would not agree with me on that premise or submission.

We as an Opposition say that for many years we have favoured this policy of having a single generating network throughout the length and breadth of the State, and it is imperative that this be so. We also believe that there should be equalisation of costs. This is very necessary if we are to have sufficient population in various areas for the satisfactory functioning of our State.

As I said, however, there are within the whole power industry some disquieting moves related to this legislation. We have taken note of many of the statements made by electric authority leaders throughout Queensland over a considerable period. They have expressed concern about some of the old power plants and stations that exist in the State. They have also spoken of the tremendous difficulties that will need to be overcome unless the Government galvanises itself into action and does something to meet the demands of the 1980's.

It is imperative that early approval be given to the creation of the super power station in this State. I do not know the intentions of the Government or where it will be located or sited, but it is imperative that the construction get under way. If the Gladstone Power Station had been in operation as was intended, we would not have had the farce of black-outs and many other recent occurrences, some of which, in fact, still exist.

Mr. Camm: Where did you have any black-outs?

Mr. HANSON: Not black-outs, but restrictions. The Minister would not claim that, over the past three weeks, Queen Street has been a beautifully lighted area. To me it seemed to be very dark compared to what it was before. I agree there has not been a complete black-out but this state of affairs has been much to the discredit of the Government. It has been very dilatory in getting this power station complex off the ground.

As I said in my introductory speech, the Government has been dilatory not only during the term of the present Minister but as far back as 1967 and 1968, when it showed that it did not have sufficient activity within its own ranks to get the help of the Federal Government of the day to get this power station well and truly under way. We read every day in the financial pages of the Press and hear from other news media stories of how the State Government had not made a sufficient and correct submission to the Commonwealth to obtain the loan of the ultimate $80,000,000. The funding of the project was the cause of serious concern. We believe that the Government should have started much sooner than it did.

We believe also—and I raise the matter of the .358c—that there is provision in certain of the clauses about certain contracts or agreements that may be made with the authority. We do not believe that those agreements should be kept entirely secret. We have said repeatedly, week after week during sittings of the Parliament, that there should be more openness in these matters.

[*Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.*]

Mr. HANSON: It was rather regrettable that, just as I had begun to generate a little political steam, the sitting was suspended for dinner.

I think it is pertinent to the Bill under discussion, before I proceed with my arguments on several other matters that are of serious concern to the House and the people, to remind honourable members that this powerhouse enterprise has been built at the end of Hanson Road, a road that has been named after the Hanson family—people who have contributed to the development of Gladstone. I do not think that the Minister was in any way involved in the naming of that road; I would not give him credit for such exuberance or generosity.

I have been dealing with the secrecy about agreements. Naturally this is of concern to Opposition members. We believe that the Government should be more open, that it should take people into its confidence and not do anything to destroy the confidence that some industrial enterprises have in the administration today. We are repeatedly being asked by industrial concerns to impress upon the Government that it is very necessary, before entering into agreements, that guidelines, plans and rules be laid down firmly before a start is made. There are in the Bill some clauses that have overtones comparable with what transpired in the debate on royalties in this House last year.

The export price demanded in recent times by the coal-owners of Central Queensland has naturally exercised the minds of the consumers in this State. We see in the schedule to the Bill that there is to be a price for coal actually delivered in railway wagons at the Utah mine. I do not know whether a price was taken for the coal delivered on site to the powerhouse at Gladstone. This seems to me to be something that requires considerable explanation. After all, these are matters that must be ventilated.

If we look back to Cabinet decisions made in April last year, we will find that the basis of payment for Central Queensland coal coming to power stations in the South was related to cost of production rather than to the current export price. As a result of subsequent negotiations, deputations and conferences that were held with the Queensland coal-owners, the Government found that the owners were unwilling to accept other than the export price. Naturally, this was a severe impost on the consuming public.

But the position did not stop there. The owners maintained in their submissions that the transport of export coal to Brisbane and other southern areas would deprive them of railway rolling-stock, and a certain amount of this activity would reduce their profits accordingly. The export coal market escalated and, despite what the Minister may say, the increase has been of considerable magnitude because of the efforts of the Federal Minister for Minerals and Energy. There has been a considerable increase since he started negotiations. Of course, the coal-owners demanded a retrospective price, with the consuming public of this State having to foot the bill.

The price will be very, very important to the Southern Electric Authority when it takes over control of the Gladstone Power Station. We would like some explanation from the Minister about the escalation in the price of coal supplied to that particular installation.

Recently the Southern Electric Authority protested about the increase because it saw no reason why it should be subjected to the huge escalation in the world market price. The authority quite rightly maintained that it had a responsibility to maintain electricity tariffs at the lowest possible rate. Naturally a major factor influencing tariffs is the price of coal. It is considered inequitable that electricity consumers in this State should be required to pay increased electricity charges merely to maintain the profits of coal-exporting companies, which have risen owing to the upsurge in world energy demands. It is considered that the State should be able to direct its resources advantageously and pay equitable prices for coal for its own consumption.

I quite agree with the opinions expressed by the authority and I hope that, when this power station is completed, we will not see a repetition of the farcical situation which I mentioned earlier, and that the authority charged with the responsibility of electricity generation—it is clearly defined in the measure now before the House—will not find itself in the unenviable position of having to pay considerably more for coal than was originally planned.

As well as looking for restrospective payments, the coal-exporting companies were demanding payment based on royalty charges, pay-roll tax, currency adjustments, increased labour and maintainence costs and any other item they could throw into the ring. This was, of course, in direct contrast to the spirit of the Cabinet decision of April 1974.

I believe that, in the interests of Queensland generally, before major legislation on this subject is brought before the House, there should be a sound inquiry into all electric authorities in this State so that we can plan successfully and see that the people of Queensland will not be in any way disadvantaged by any decisions that are made in the future like those made recently for the advantage of the coal-exporting companies.

These matters require ventilation and that is why I say the Government should be open about them. I fully realise, as the Minister has said, that this is an interim measure before the introduction of legislation relating to a future single authority for electricity distribution.

In company with other members of the Opposition I believe that when the Gladstone Power Station is completed we will have in this State something of which we can feel proud. The close proximity of the station to very deep water and large tracts of land should encourage the entry into the region of a multiplicity of enterprises which could serve the needs of the State and provide employment opportunities for a considerable period. It will provide us with breathing space. That is why we wish this project considerable success.

But I want to sound a note of warning. There are several matters about which there is disquiet in the community, including the old powerhouse and the dilatoriness of the Government. The recent situation which forced power rationing upon us calls for close examination, as does the secrecy of arrangements made by the Government—arrangements which I maintain should be broad and open. We should also look at the price of coal. Naturally, the Opposition has a few queries that it will raise when the clauses of the Bill are before us.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (7.25 p.m.), in reply: I do not think that the honourable member for Port Curtis really understands what is in the Bill. This is an agreement between the Southern Electric Authority and the State Electricity Commission to cover the generation of power in the Gladstone Power Station until the board has been selected by the Government to control the generation of all power within this State. The honourable member departed from the Bill in many ways, and I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to permit me to reply to him because he seems to be confused on several issues.

The honourable member for Port Curtis spoke first about the supply of coal to the Gladstone Power Station and said that the coal export companies were swelling their profits at the expense of the electricity consumers of this State. The coal going to Gladstone Power Station is the cheapest coal in Australia. It is available to the Government as a result of the negotiations between the Government and the Utah company, under which the steaming coal overlying the coking coal seams at Blackwater is mined and stockpiled for use by the Queensland Government in electricity generation. There is no way in which the profits of the company will be swollen by the Government's acquiring that coal at cost. I reiterate that it is being acquired at cost.

The Government does not even allow the company to charge for mining it; it acquires the coal for the cost of stockpiling it. The State Electricity Commission owns the gathering and loading facilities that have recently been brought into commission in the Blackwater area. So the coal to which the honourable member referred is not affected by the export price of coal. The only variation that can occur in the price of that coal is in the cost of handling it—increased wages and the increased price of fuel used at the loading facilities. The export price of coal has nothing whatever to do with it.

Mr. Hanson: What would happen to that coal if you did not want it. Would it be left at grass?

Mr. CAMM: When I became Minister and began negotiating with the Utah company, I could see what would happen to that coal. I could see that, because it was useless for export purposes, it would simply be put back into the heap of overburden. I could foresee a time in the future when the Government would need the coal for the generation of electricity. So one of the first provisions I introduced into the franchise agreement for the special coal-mining lease that Utah took up in the Blackwater area was that all the steaming coal that was mined, instead of being placed on a heap of overburden and covered with spoil, was to be stockpiled and reserved for the use of the Queensland Government in a power station that was expected to be built. That is why the coal is there.

The honourable member for Port Curtis spoke about the potential for industry and what might happen in this particular area. He praised the Federal Government. The coal industry that is now feeding into Gladstone would never have been available and the cheap coal that the Government now has available would not have been available for electricity generation, nor would industrial development in the Gladstone area have been considered feasible, if the Federal Labor Government had been in office. It imposed a condition on industries desirous of coming to this State, one of which was that they should deposit 33⅓ per cent of funds from overseas in the Reserve Bank, free of interest. No large industrial complex has been established and no major mining enterprise has been begun in Queensland since the present Federal Labor Government has been in power. It has chased mining companies and exploration companies out of this State; it has stifled the development of heavy industries that the Government expected would take place in the electorate of the honourable member.

He spoke also about the equalising or levelling out of the price of electricity so that we would all be paying the same rate for it. He is adopting a very altruistic attitude because, as I said earlier, this is the cheapest coal going into any power station in Queensland and it is the cheapest electricity available to any industry in Queensland. If the honourable member wants prices levelled out so that consumers pay the same price for electricity from the Gladstone Power Station as they pay from the Swanbank Power Station, I will be only too happy to accede to his request. It is expected that the cheap coal and cheap electricity will encourage industry to go to the Gladstone area. If the honourable member advocates that the Government charges the same price for that electricity as is charged by electricity undertakings in Brisbane, I suggest to him that industry might come here instead of going to Gladstone.

Mr. Casey: What about the Moura agreement?

Mr. CAMM: I did not negotiate the Moura agreement. It was negotiated before I became Minister for Mines. I give due credit to those who negotiated that agreement because it was the first one ever negotiated in this State. I went through it to see if we could make a better agreement following on what had been accomplished by the previous Minister and those involved in negotiating that agreement.

Mr. Casey: What is happening to the steaming coal at Moura?

Mr. CAMM: They are stockpiling it now. As a matter of fact they are selling it to Q.A.L. for the alumina plant at Gladstone. That is the coal that someone said we should be bringing down to the Swanbank Power Station. It is 9,000 B.T.U. coal compared to the 12,000 B.T.U. Blackwater coal. We would need one-third more in train capacity to haul coal to get the same generating capacity in the power stations as we are getting from Blackwater coal. It is quite acceptable to the Comalco aluminium plant at Gladstone. In case the honourable member for Mackay thinks it is being wasted, I point out that it is being utilised.

The other coal that is being used for electricity generation in Central Queensland comes from an open-cut field operated by Thiess Bros. That has nothing whatever to do with that company's export enterprises. That Callide coal is supplied under contract, and the price is about one-third of what the company could get if it were exporting it. The Collinsville Power Station is supplied under contract at a price less than one-half of what the company could obtain if it sent the coal overseas.

The honourable member for Port Curtis was quite vociferous in his criticism of what the Government has done in the establishment of power-generating stations. I know he has not been in here long but if he just goes over the time since this Government came into office he will realise there is the new power station at Calcap, a new one at Collinsville, a big one being built at Gladstone, and the finishing off of the Swanbank Power Station at Ipswich. That has all been done by this Government and we are planning for increased generation as the demand warrants it. It has been wonderful to have the forward planning of the State Electricity Commission and its advice to the Queensland Government as to the future power needs of the State. I do not think anyone can point a finger at the State Electricity Commission and say that it has been dilatory in its assessment of what power stations should be built in the State.

The honourable member spoke about the price of electricity to people in South-east Queensland. He was rather vague about that so I will explain it to him. Following the January floods, we had to bring coking coal from Central Queensland. It was an emergency situation. No loading facilities were available to load the steaming coal as we did not expect that we would need it until the Gladstone Power Station came on. The timing of the building of that loading facility did not enable it to be used following the January floods. In bringing down the coking coal, we took advantage of the provisions in the agreement under which the Queensland Government could acquire any export coal for use in any industry in Australia. However, we were obliged to pay the same price as the company was receiving from overseas. There were some negotiations by the Coal Board in respect of the price we paid for the steaming coal that came down from the Moura area.

Up until 1973 the coal owners in South-east Queensland enjoyed long-term contracts. Following the Box Flat disaster the mine owners requested that they be relieved of their obligations under the contracts which would have expired in 1975. Because they were having difficulty in fulfilling their contracts, the mine owners were put on a quota by the Queensland Coal Board, which not only allocates quotas to the coal mines but also fixes the price that can be charged for the coal.

There will be no variation in the price of the steaming coal going into the Gladstone Power Station because of the high export price. The only variation will be on the basis of actual increases in costs in handling that coal. Therefore it is wrong to say that by our actions we are swelling the profits of export coal companies. I think I have effectively answered the honourable member for Port Curtis.

Motion (Mr. Camm) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Variation of Agreement—

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (7.35 p.m.): Subclause (1) provides as follows—

> "An attempted variation of the Agreement, either as set out in the Schedule or as varied from time to time, that is not made in the manner prescribed by this section shall be void and of no effect."

I therefore submit that, in view of the recent Full Court decision in the Comalco case on royalties, this clause will not be binding in any way. Parliament can, of course, amend the clause at a later date, but I am firmly of the belief that there is no real reason for its inclusion in the first place. As happens in lots of legislation introduced by this Government, the Minister is only window-dressing. His Government is most adept at window-dressing in legislation.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (7.36 p.m.): Again the honourable member is confused. This agreement is not between a Government instrumentality and a mining company, such as Comalco, but between two Government instrumentalities, the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland and the State Electricity Commission. It is not an agreement between the power station and the users of electricity. In the agreement conditions are laid down to enable the Southern Electric Authority to act as the constructing and operating authority of the power station until we are able to have complete board control of the whole of the generating system throughout the State. That will be provided for in a Bill that I shall introduce later in the session.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (7.37 p.m.): I turn now to subclause (2), which provides—

> "The Agreement, either as set out in the Schedule or as varied from time to time, may be varied by agreement between the Commission and the Authority approved by the Governor in Council by way of Order in Council."

It is the prerogative of Cabinet to amend an Act of Parliament, and we in the Opposition have frequently expressed concern at the growth of Executive power. We voice our strong protest against it, as we believe it takes away the rights of the supreme authority in the State, that is, Parliament.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (7.38 p.m.): As subclause (2) provides, the agreement may be varied "by agreement between the Commission and the Authority" and then approved by the Governor in Council by way of Order in Council. In other words, there will be no approval of the Governor in Council unless there is first an agreement between the commission and the authority. Such Order in Council must be allowed, as is provided later in this clause, by the Legislative Assembly. So Parliament approves of the agreement. This allows the Governor in Council to approve an agreement entered into between the S.E.A. and the State Electricity Commission; the Order in Council is tabled; and the Legislative Assembly can either allow it or disallow it.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (7.40 p.m.): I hope that we see the day in Queensland when necessary parliamentary committees are formed. It is vital to the future of all State legislation that a committee should exercise vigilance. I fully understand what the Minister is submitting and, probably, what he has said is valid. But it does not

satisfy some of us. There has been strong opposition to this in the Government ranks, and I know that it has been raised many times at Government party meetings. Judging by what we have read in the Press in recent times about the establishment of these committees to act as watch-dogs, their establishment is necessary. Other Parliaments have this machinery. In the interests of the State it is vital that they should be part and parcel of our administration.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (7.41 p.m.): The honourable member got right away from the clause when he referred to committees being appointed to examine subordinate legislation. That has been under discussion for quite some time. When this Order in Council is laid on the table, 84 members of Parliament can form themselves into a committee to examine it, whereupon they can allow or disallow it.

Mr. Burns: There are only 82 members.

Mr. CAMM: The 82 members.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—Commission and Authority controlled by Agreement—

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (7.42 p.m.): This clause reads—

> "The rights, powers and obligations of the Commission and the Authority in connexion with the Gladstone Power Station and matters incidental thereto dealt with by the Agreement, as varied at the material time, shall be as provided for by the Agreement, as varied at the material time, and shall not be altered save by way of variation made as prescribed by section 5."

It seems to me that this seeks to say that Parliament cannot change the law except in the manner and form provided in Clause 5 (1).

Mr. Camm: That's right.

Mr. HANSON: It is a waste of Parliament's time to debate it. In a subsequent provision, that is, paragraph 19 of the Schedule, we will see a provision that is the direct opposite of this clause.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (7.43 p.m.): We will await verification of what the honourable member says. Clause 6 sets out precisely what the position is. This agreement between the S.E.A. and the S.E.C. cannot be varied unless by agreement between the two bodies. That agreement has then to be ratified by the Governor in Council and tabled for Parliament to examine.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7 and 8, as read, agreed to.

Schedule—

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (7.44 p.m.): The Schedule is rather lengthy. It relates to virtually everything in the agreement and everything in the future concerning electricity generation in Queensland. The important principle to remember is that the Schedule covers the agreement between the Commissioner for Electricity Supply, the Queensland Railways and Utah, for the supply of coal to the Gladstone Power Station, and the agreement to be entered into between the S.E.C. and the S.E.A. concerning the operation of the power station. In particular, sub-clause 6 of the Schedule on page 6 refers specifically (in details worked out therein) to the pricing arrangements for domestic and various other supplies from the output of the stations throughout the system which the S.E.A. will be operating and costing.

This covers the whole range of pricing of electricity in Queensland. At this stage it is very important for us to take a quick and very hard look at the advantages contained therein for the people in the area. I may sound a little parochial in this regard, but I am pretty down to earth when it comes to this matter.

Certain advantages accrue to people living in the south-east corner of Queensland because in that area they have the capital city, the major manufacturing enterprises and many other things, and these factors are to the disadvantage of people in other areas of the State. As the people in the other areas of the State are fortunate enough to have the natural resources in their areas, surely they should be the people who obtain the primary benefit of those resources.

In considering this point we have to look at the current electricity rates in Queensland. This part of the Schedule allows for the sale of the electricity by the Southern Electric Authority and covers its entering into an agreement with the various other electric authorities in Queensland concerning power from the Gladstone Power Station. That power will now be transmitted into the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board system and a new transmission line is being built to take the interconnecting system to the three northern electric authority boards at Mackay, Townsville and Cairns. So that we will have an integrated electrical system in Queensland. I go along with this; I think it is a good idea and a wonderful thing. It is something that the people in Queensland have been trying to achieve for a considerable period.

Let me outline the pricing arrangements in the various areas. I shall deal with the rate that concerns most people—the domestic tariff. Without confusing the Committee by quoting the full figures for all of the various ratings, let me deal with the initial primary domestic supply rate for the first 30 kilowatt hours per month.

In Brisbane, the rate is 7.68c. In the area in which the power station is now situated, the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board charges 10.75c; in other words, something like 40 per cent higher. With the power coming from the same power station and being transmitted to Brisbane—assuming that the rate is as it was established by Order in Council in, I think, May of this year —surely the people in the Capricornia board area are entitled to be supplied at the same rate as the people in Brisbane. After all, virtually all of the supply to both areas will be coming from the same power source.

I admit that most of the supply to the northern boards comes from Collinsville Power Station. However, as the Minister confirmed a moment ago in reply to my interjection, we have steaming-coal sources at Goonyella, Peak Downs and Saraji. I know that an investigation is under way and that this is a possible future source for one of the future power stations to be constructed in Queensland. I do not feel that it will be the next, because one will be built at Tarong first and other stations will be constructed after that. The rate charged by the three northern boards at Mackay, Townsville and Cairns is 11.3c, which is more than 50 per cent higher than the domestic supply tariff in Brisbane.

Let me compare that situation with what happens in New South Wales. The Shortland County Council, which supplies electricity to Newcastle, charges domestic consumers 4.775c per kWh as its base rate. As we know, most of the power stations supplying Sydney are just south of Newcastle. The price in Sydney for the first rate of electricity consumption by domestic consumers is 7.8c per kWh; in other words, just the opposite to what happens in Queensland. The people living in the area get the advantage of the coal supplies in the area and the people in Sydney pay the higher rate. I think the present pricing arrangements in Queensland are scandalous, and there is a great need for a change.

Let us take a quick look at some more figures, this time for farm supplies throughout the various areas in Queensland. Under the rural subsidy scheme, some farms are supplied by the Brisbane City Council, and their rate is 2.59c per kWh. In the areas of the Capricornia and Northern boards, the rate is 3.65c per kWh. In other words, a person who has a farm in the Brisbane area is able to obtain power 50 per cent cheaper than it can be obtained by farmers anywhere else in Queensland. I am sure many National Party members will be interested to hear those figures.

In the light of those tariffs, the Minister should give an indication that he is prepared to consider a better pricing arrangement for both domestic and industrial supplies of electricity. I think it is a disgrace to Queensland that the rates are fixed as they now are. The Bill confirms Gladstone as the major source of power for the whole of Queensland, and now is the time to look at the pricing arrangements in all other areas.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (7.52 p.m.): I should like to comment on the Bill and say first that I support it. I believe that such legislation is long overdue in Queensland. The Gladstone Power Station has been planned for many years, with a view to establishing a grid system throughout Queensland.

The very argument put forward by the honourable member for Mackay is the reason for the Bill, in that there is presently a variation of tariffs throughout the State. No power station of the magnitude of the one at Gladstone has previously been thought of in this State. When one considers that the power station at Callide has about half the output of one generator at the new power station, one realises the magnitude of this enterprise that has been undertaken by the State Government. Contrary to what we now see at some power stations, I expect, because of the availability of good quality steaming coal, that there will be a reserve capacity at the Gladstone Power Station far in excess of that of other power stations throughout Queensland at the present time.

This is the first step towards the introduction of standard electricity tariffs throughout Queensland. In the more remote areas, particularly in the West, power is very expensive and it has been so ever since power has been generated in that region. Of course, power generation is like everything else; if the price is 10 cents in Rockhampton and 7 cents in Brisbane, it must be remembered that Brisbane has nearly 1,000,000 people.

Mr. Jensen: What about Sydney compared with Newcastle?

Mr. HARTWIG: When it became necessary to transport coal from Blackwater to Swanbank, why didn't the honourable member for Bundaberg stand up and say that the West Moreton field should be closed? He is complaining about the price of electricity. Those who condone the present situation say nothing about the steep increase in the price of electricity. Because of what has happened in the last few weeks, every consumer in this State is being penalised, not only the miners. All users of electricity will pay more for it.

There has been some talk about burning oil in power stations. The Minister said how much more it costs to generate electricity by this means. The generation of electricity is simply another business, and the product has to be produced at the lowest possible cost. Queensland will obtain the cheapest possible electricity from the huge power station that is being constructed at Gladstone.

The whole idea behind the installation of the four 275 mw generators, the type installed in power stations throughout the world today, is that the larger the generating station the more cheaply power can be generated with lower administration and general maintenance costs. What the Bill is doing——

Mr. Marginson: Which clause are you talking about?

Mr. Jensen: He's talking on the Schedule.

Mr. HARTWIG: I am talking on the Schedule, which refers to the agreement. Actually it sets out the agreement drawn up between the State Electricity Commission and the Southern Electric Authority. The member for Wolston appears to have some doubts about my qualifications to speak on that agreement, but let me inform him that I have had quite a bit of experience with regional electricity boards.

The high cost of electricity in Queensland is due in part to the State's having been burdened with small, high-cost power stations over the years. The completion of the Gladstone Power Station will at least be a step in the right direction. It is high time we built a power station where we have cheap coal and can produce cheap electricity. This will induce industry to come to Queensland and will give us a chance to establish major secondary industries, something we will never do while we prop up the high costs which lead to the increased cost of electricity in this State.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (7.57 p.m.): I respectfully and humbly submit that, while the last speaker showed a genuine sense of enthusiasm and while his remarks would no doubt read well for a member in his local newspaper, he is a long way off the subject under discussion, which is the Schedule to this Bill.

The Minister stated that the reason for the introduction of the Bill is that there were legal doubts about the power of the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland to make an agreement with the State Electricity Commission. He said further that, as the commission is principal and the funds for the operation of the station will be subjected to parliamentary appropriation, it is desirable that Parliament should know exactly what arrangements have been made. Naturally we subscribe fully to that view.

The remarks of the honourable member for Mackay were well taken and, of course, we in the C.R.E.B. region are concerned.

The Schedule states in part at page 3, about line 28.

> ". . . adequate supplies of energy in bulk at minimum cost to any electricity authority . . ."

As I said in my remarks on the second reading, we want the formula on which the cost is based to be made available to the public. We believe it should not be hidden. Parliament and the public have a right to know. The honourable member for Kurilpa would know about Senate inquiries in the United States of America—I have often seen him in the Parliamentary Library reading about these inquiries, particularly on matters of racial discrimination—where everything is laid bare so that the public can be made fully aware of any negotiations that have been entered into on behalf of Government. There are very strong and vehement reasons why this formula should be made public. Looking at rural rates in the C.R.E.B. area—I know they are interesting to the honourable member for Callide—we find that, if a farmer in the region wants electricity connected to his property, he has to go through a very onerous financial procedure.

Mr. Hartwig: What has that got to do with the Bill?

Mr. HANSON: You raised the matter. You wanted to kick the can.

Mr. Hartwig: Stick to the Bill.

Mr. HANSON: I am going to kick the can on the honourable member. He is always kicking the cream can. After all, the Schedule has a lot to do with prices. The remarks of the honourable member for Mackay were very pertinent about equity in tariffs for people in the region.

The Minister attributed to me the statement that people should be getting electricity at .358c a unit, but that is completely wrong. I said that the treatment of employees of certain large undertakings throughout the State has caused a certain amount of disquiet among others who want to know why they cannot receive similar treatment. I did not say that I necessarily agreed with the submissions, but I did raise the matter. I suggest that the Minister adopts an ungenerous attitude at times and attempts to score off his opponents by attributing to them remarks they did not actually make.

During the debate at the second-reading stage, I raised a question about the supply of coal mentioned in the Schedule. I believe that the point I made was quite valid. If you buy a product from Myers or some other firm, Mr. Miller, you do not pay for that product until it is delivered. In the case of the coal that is exported through Gladstone, the price is f.o.b. the ship. It is first stockpiled in the harbour board area, for which the coal company has to pay a charge and make a contribution to the Gladstone Harbour Board. As I said, the price paid by the overseas company is f.o.b. the ship. I maintain, therefore, that it was quite reasonable for me to ask whether, when the agreement was being negotiated, the question of a price free into the Gladstone Power Station was

discussed—in other words, the company to undertake the obligation of transporting the coal there.

I realise that the coal of which the Minister speaks could be mixed up with the overburden and lost to the power-generation system of this State. It would be an impost on the company to have to stockpile it. A considerable number of tenders were called, and I do not in any way depart from the idea that the Government is getting a very sound and a very good deal. I again ask: was a price sought f.o.r. at the Gladstone Power Station site?

Other matters are mentioned in the Schedule, and I think that the Minister could deal with them collectively. First, there was the question of a guaranteed payment for rental homes to be provided by the Queensland Housing Commission. As honourable members are aware, since the original agreement was entered into with Queensland Alumina Limited in Gladstone, other rental agreements have been entered into with the Queensland Housing Commission by different companies that have established industries throughout the State, and these have caused considerable concern. I said initially that I did not dispute that every person, whether he is an employee of Queensland Alumina Limited or the Southern Electric Authority, whether he works at the abattoirs or at the Grand Hotel in Gladstone, is entitled to be adequately housed. All honourable members have a clear responsibility to their constituents to use every means possible to ensure that they are all adequately housed, whether they are paid a high salary or only a minimal salary.

However, the establishment of enterprises throughout the State has resulted in growing concern among people engaged in industry. They simply say, "I have lived in this community for years. I have lived and worked in this town all my life. I am not able to get a house through the Housing Commission. I am told that my priority is G or E, or something like that, and I am about 125th in line for a house." Every day I am in Gladstone, I have people in my office pleading with me to try to get them a home. It is a most unsatisfactory position. The Minister for Industrial Development, representing the ultra-exclusive suburb of Aspley and its environs——

Mr. FRAWLEY: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is making an Address-in-Reply speech. What he is saying has nothing to do with the Bill under discussion.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! There is no point of order. There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber and I will not tolerate it any longer. If it continues I will name somebody tonight.

Mr. HANSON: The matter is very pertinent. If the honourable member looks at page 4 and starts to read from line 30 he will see that I am well and truly on the right track, not on the bus to a certain service station in Redcliffe.

Mr. Campbell interjected.

Mr. HANSON: Of course, the Minister who has been interjecting could not care less about some of these people.

I am not opposed to the new enterprise but employees have to be housed. Side by side with the need to house employees adequately, the Government should take cognizance of those who have had applications in for houses for a considerable period of time. They are worthy of support from any responsible Government but unfortunately they are just not getting that support. In Mt. Isa and other places the companies concerned have used much of their own funds to provide adequate housing.

Only a couple of years ago we had a serious situation in Gladstone. Tenants of some of the houses sought ownership of them. The Queensland Housing Commission entered into arrangements with them but within 12 months many of them sold their homes to someone not engaged in the industry at a profit of $5,000. Of course that sort of thing is not good for the company; it is not good for the Housing Commission; it is not good for the Government, and certainly it is not good for the enterprise established in the town. Naturally that is a cause for worry, and I think the Minister would agree with me.

At page 5 of the Schedule reference is made to the sale of electricity from the power station. We would like some information on the formula for the determination of the price. In the last paragraph on page 6 the Schedule states—

> "If in any year there is insufficient revenue from the operation of the Power Station to meet the costs and charges herein outlined . . ."

The repayable money that was advanced by the Commonwealth Government was for future export-orientated industries. What if export-orientated industries do not come about? Will that wreck the formula? What would the Government's position under the agreement be then? Naturally that would be of considerable concern to us.

At line 13 on the same page, the Schedule states—

> ". . . shall be purchased by the Authority at a rate which shall be determined by the Commission."

Will the Minister give the Committee an assurance that other supply authorities may buy in bulk at a cost no greater than that entered into under future special agreements? That is very important, too. It needs clarification.

At the end of page 7 the Schedule states—

> "The Authority shall arrange for its auditor to audit all accounts which . . . are kept by the Authority, and as required from time to time by the Auditor-General, to audit the financial statements prepared by the Authority in respect of the operation of the Power Station."

Will we receive an annual Auditor-General's report disclosing the financial and physical activities of the Gladstone Power Station, including unit costs and unit sales? These are matters on which we would like some clarification.

I have drawn attention to clause 19 of the Schedule, and the Minister might care to reply on that clause as well.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (8.10 p.m.): No doubt the Schedule gives some scope for discussion, and members have availed themselves of the opportunity to comment on it. The main topic for discussion was the averaging of the price for electricity. The honourable member for Mackay quoted prices in New South Wales and in the metropolitan area. Even he should know that a large metropolitan area has the advantage of economy of scale and is not faced with the high distribution costs incurred by other electric authorities. Consequently, an electric authority in the metropolitan area can charge a lower rate for its supply.

I make it clear to all honourable members that the electric authorities in Queensland are not profit-making instrumentalities. The authorities are set up under the control of the Government and they comprise mainly men from local authorities in their area. The Commissioner for Electricity Supply is a member of the boards, whether they be generating boards or distributing boards, and he sits on them in an advisory capacity. He is also entitled to vote on the boards.

The cost of distribution of electricity must be related to the price that people pay for power. If we were to trace the history of the electricity industry in Queensland, we would see that some time ago the local authorities throughout the State had their own generating authorities. Surely the member for Mackay recalls when Mackay had its own power station and when Proserpine, Bowen, Home Hill, Ayr and Townsville had their own power stations. Some of the sugar mills were the generating plants for the local authorities in whose area they were located.

Subsequently a move was made to combine many of these small generating authorities into one distribution board, a regional board, centred on one large power station. This occurred in Mackay, where the Mackay Regional Electricity Board was formed. The cost of distribution of electricity had to be borne by the consumers, and their charges were fixed so that the budget of the electricity undertaking could be balanced each year. There was no interconnection between Mackay and Rockhampton or between Mackay and Townsville. Those three cities were independent of each other.

The establishment of regional boards spread to Townsville and to Cairns, and later on one generating authority was established in North Queensland. This was centred on the Collinsville Power Station and the hydro stations to the north.

Anyone who compares the size of the complex in North Queensland, serviced by one generating authority, with that of the complex in South-east Queensland, and compares the population of the two areas, will quickly realise that the price of electricity in the sparsely populated areas of the North will be higher than that in the densely populated South-eastern part of the State.

The size of power stations dictates the price charged for electricity. It would have been ludicrous to build in North Queensland a power station of the size of Swanbank; yet the generation of electricity at Swanbank would be far cheaper than that in a smaller power station, such as Calcap, which, when compared with Swanbank, is very small.

Certainly Gladstone will be the largest power station in Queensland and the electricity generated there will be far cheaper than that generated in any other power station in the State. I might add that on my recent trip to England I saw one turbine generator that generates more electricity than will be generated at the Gladstone Power Station. But such a massive generating unit could not be installed in any power station in Queensland. If anything happened to one such unit, the whole of South-east Queensland could be blacked out. The authorities must plan their power stations in accordance with the demand that they anticipate will grow in an area. They cannot install single gigantic generating plants; rather must they install several smaller units, so that if one is put out of commission the others can take its place.

The size of generating stations is a major factor in assessing the price that must be charged for electricity. It is true that electricity in the Newcastle area is cheaper. But consider the heavy industries and the demand for electricity in that area, which mean that very large power stations with very large units can be built. The price of power can therefore be far lower than could be expected from a smaller station. We are rapidly approaching the stage where we will have an interconnected system throughout the State. That is not embodied in this Bill, although certain clauses in the Schedule enable it to be discussed. We are working towards that end. Today, the Mackay, Townsville and Cairns Regional Boards are all connected, receiving their electricity from the one generating authority.

Mr. Casey: They are all on an equal distribution figure, too.

Mr. CAMM: That is so. But 10 years ago they were not, and 15 years ago a surcharge was imposed in country areas. This Government has worked towards a uniform price for electricity throughout the State and the northern area is getting close to that. In South-east Queensland, because of its size, population and lower cost of reticulation of electricity, a lower operating figure can be charged than is possible in the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board area. We now have a connection between the Wide Bay area and South-east Queensland. Some of the electricity generated at Swanbank is fed into the Wide Bay Area. We also have a connection between the Capricornia region and South-east Queensland. Electricity can now be channelled from Calcap Power Station—we are doing that at present to the northern area of the S.E.A. district, to offset some of the reduced capacity caused by the lack of coal in this area. Two more years will pass before the whole of the State is connected, that is, when the southern and Rockhampton areas are connected with the northern region. We will then have the one generating authority.

This agreement is only to allow the present Southern Electric Authority, which was reconstituted recently—it is now more or less a public authority—to take over the responsibility of operating the Gladstone Power Station until we pass the major Bill that I shall be introducing later. In June 1976 we hope to have the one generating authority in charge of all generation in Queensland, although the interconnection may not take place until 12 months thereafter.

Mr. Burns: The new Bill will probably contain the same sort of provisions?

Mr. CAMM: It will. Of course, it will be a very big Bill. The object will be to work gradually towards a uniform price for electricity. We could not expect the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board to charge the same rate for electricity as is charged in Brisbane or the south-eastern area, because it supplies electricity from Rockhampton and Callide right down to Wandoan and all places in the Callide and Dawson Valleys. It has miles and miles of reticulation lines, whereas the Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba areas have a concentration of population and industry that ensure distribution costs far lower than in the northern areas.

Because of the size of the modern power station at Swanbank—and it is far larger than the ones at Calcap and Collinsville—electricity can be generated at a lower rate. That is the simple and one answer to the variation in prices for electricity. No electricity undertaking makes a profit. Electricity undertakings are allowed to channel a certain amount each year for future capital expenditure, but they are not allowed to make a profit as such. That is why we are hoping for complete integration of our generating system. We are working towards a uniform price for electricity throughout the State. Some years will elapse before we achieve this, but I am sure that in the coastal regions from Cairns to Brisbane it will not be many years before a common tariff applies.

As the honourable member for Port Curtis indicated, power will be generated at the Gladstone Power Station at a price lower than the cost at which it can be generated at Swanbank, but the reticulation of the electricity in that board's area will cost far more than reticulation in the Brisbane area because Central Queensland has not the density and size of population. Consequently, the final price that the consumer will pay for electricity could be much the same as is paid in Brisbane. Even though there will be a lower generating price from the generating station, the final price for reticulated power could be much the same or even higher than it is in the area.

The advantage of building power stations where the coal is, particularly where steaming coal is overlying coking coal, is that there will be cheap electricity generation. The price of reticulating that electricity will dictate the final price that the consumer will have to pay.

Mr. Burns: Will we be getting copies of the Auditor-General's reports, because paragraph 7 of the schedule provides for his approval.

Mr. CAMM: Yes. I dare say that in the Auditor-General's reports to Parliament he will mention the cost factor involved in this operation. It will only go on for 12 months. Honourable members do get the reports from the various electricity authorities every year. All electricity boards submit reports and they are available for perusal by anybody.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (8.21 p.m.): Paragraph 6 (i) of the Schedule reads—

> "The Authority shall at the direction of the Commission supply electricity to consumers other than Electric Authorities, who are parties to special agreements with the Commission for supply, and the rates for such supply shall be determined by the Commission."

Subparagraph (ii), commencing in the third line, reads—

> ". . . Clause 4 hereof shall be purchased by the Authority at a rate which shall be determined by the Commission."

My concern is the need for disclosure. I thank the Minister for the detailed answers he has given to statements by other honourable members in discussing the Schedule. I am concerned as to whether we will get information in relation to the special agreements referred to in paragraph 6 (i) and

also whether local consumer authorities will get the same level of prices. The argument seems to come up all the time in relation to the costs and increased charges to be met by consumers. They will continue to arise whilst we are unaware of some of the special agreements with companies and others.

I know we have to do something of this nature to induce industry to establish in certain areas, but there is the feeling that the consumer ends up subsidising it. The consumer would be happier if he knew what sort of charges were involved and was able to see the Auditor-General's report on a particular station and the costs involved. I do not think anyone disagrees with the contention that we have to help industry to establish in particular areas. It is also necessary that we have this information, otherwise secret agreements lead us to start worrying about what is happening. They also cause people to stir up trouble.

Would it be possible for some sort of assurance to be given that supply authorities would gain similar rates to those granted in special agreements under paragraph 6 (i) and also that the Auditor-General will report in such a way that we will be able to compare the rates and charges to special groups and the local consumer?

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (8.23 p.m.): I do not think I indicated that the agreements made with special customers as compared with the price charged to the authorities will be disclosed in the Auditor-General's report. It is up to him to decide whether he discloses that or not. The Auditor-General will report on the operations of the authority, including whether it is being conducted in a business-like manner or not. He will bring to light any errors.

It is the Electricity Commission of Queensland which has negotiated the price to be charged to special customers. We must face this: if we did not have the bulk load of these special customers, some of these power stations might not have been built in their present locations. It is the anticipation of attracting big bulk loads that encouraged us to build the power station in Gladstone. The commission and the State Government have already made and announced publicly an agreement with Comalco for the supply of electricity to an aluminium smelter. Any Order in Council made under provisions contained in this Bill or statements included in the Auditor-General's report can be debated in Parliament. Honourable members could then take the opportunity to question the charges made for electricity for those special consumers. They will however be negotiated by the commission itself.

Mr. Burns: There will be no cover-up?

Mr. CAMM: No. The price charged to the authority could be more or it could be less; it all depends on the negotiations involved in the establishment of a large industrial complex.

Mr. Burns: There will be an opportunity to compare one with the other?

Mr. CAMM: I cannot give an unqualified assurance, but I am confident that if any matters are discussed here in Parliament in relation to companies that are contemplating the establishment of large industrial complexes in the Gladstone area, there will be opportunities to question the prices that we will be negotiating.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (8.25 p.m.): I was very interested to hear the Minister's reply to comments that I made earlier. Whilst I accept the points that he made in relation to distribution, costs and the other things that he mentioned connected with generating capacity, I do not think he negated the argument put forward by means of a comparison with the New South Wales figures. Whilst it is all very well to say that there is the large supply factor of South-east Queensland compared with that of the Capricornia area, Sydney has a huge population, and in that area the heaviest consumption of electricity in Australia is to be found. In addition, there is tremendous industrial development in and around Sydney.

At the outset I mentioned what I thought should be happening in the future, and I feel that that stage is fast being reached. We are negotiating this agreement now and the Minister is about to start moving on another Bill to be brought down later concerning large supplies. To my mind this is the time to reconsider pricing arrangements. To meet the requirements of bulk consumers, a 132,000-volt power line will be erected to the mine area for the major bulk consumers on the Nebo field. This will hook up with other lines and an integrated system.

Another factor to be taken into consideration is that there has been an increasing move in recent years for regional electricity boards to require developers and subdividers to meet the cost of reticulation in their areas. This trend has been increasing greatly, and, now that many more subdividers are providing underground reticulation, the regional boards are not having to meet costs of the order they had to meet before the days of underground reticulation. The rural guarantee scheme and the subsidy scheme, together with the many other things that have been introduced in recent years, have helped to produce a better deal for the consumers of electricity.

Now, when an integrated system is being introduced throughout the State, is the time to look at pricing to see that it gets off on the right footing, because it will be

so much more difficult to do so at a later stage when political considerations arise. If we get an integrated system throughout Queensland, in a couple of years political pressure will increase to bring about an alteration in prices. And pressure will be brought to bear, because it will come from the people who will be most upset at being disadvantaged by price factors. I believe that now is the time to reconsider the whole pricing structure.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (8.29 p.m.): As I indicated earlier, the Schedule gives wide scope for discussion, but what the honourable member for Mackay has just mentioned has nothing whatever to do with the Bill, which only authorises the making of an agreement between the Southern Electric Authority and the State Electricity Commission.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

PETROLEUM (SUBMERGED LANDS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (8.30 p.m.): I move—

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

In presenting this Bill to the House for the second reading I can only confirm the remarks I made when introducing it. It is purely a machinery measure dealing with an amendment to the State's Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act of 1967 to allow that Act to conform with a slight alteration to Queensland off-shore sea-bed boundary in the Arafura Sea. Agreements were made in 1971, 1972 and 1973 between Australia and Indonesia in relation to altered sea-bed boundaries between the two countries. The 1973 agreement concerned certain boundaries between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

The Second Schedule to the Commonwealth Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967-1968 describes "adjacent areas" and the limits of certain of these "adjacent areas" did not conform to the new sea-bed boundaries established by the agreements. The schedule to the Comomnwealth Act has now been amended to conform with the boundary agreements. The Queensland Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act of 1967 is a counterpart to the Comomnwealth Act and the Second Schedule to the Queensland Act defines the area adjacent to the State of Queensland in identical terms to that in the Commonwealth Act.

The agreement made in 1971 with Indonesia was ratified by the Commonwealth Government on 8 November 1973, and this agreement affects Queensland's "adjacent area" by including in it an additional area of about 155 square miles. As I mentioned when introducing the Bill, no petroleum exploration titles are affected and the State has gained this small area. The only amendment to the Queensland Act to be effected by the Bill is to alter the description of the area adjacent to the State of Queensland in the Arafura Sea which is set out in the Second Schedule to the Act. The passage of the Bill will allow the description of Queensland's "adjacent area" in this locality to conform with the area described in the complementary Commonwealth Act and as defined by the 1971 Boundary Agreement between Australia and Indonesia. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (8.32 p.m.): As the Minister stated in his initiation remarks, the 1971 agreement, which was ratified by the Commonwealth on 8 November 1973, affects Queensland's "adjacent area" by including in it an additional area of 155 square miles.

In my speech on the introduction I did mention the points of the agreement between Australia and Indonesia and the confrontation which both Governments were having with the interests of Timor. I think it could reasonably be argued that, as presented, the Bill seeks to extend the State's jurisdiction over the seabed. The only point to be made is the uncompromising attitude of this Government over a long period in its associations, discussions and negotiations with Canberra.

As we all know, Commonwealth legislation relating to the seabed is presently being challenged before the High Court and a decision will eventually be made. There are overtones which suggest that this measure is a device with which to fight Canberra and allow the State to extend its jurisdiction. As the Minister says, the Bill is really simplicity itself but it seems to run counter to Federal law. If the Federal law is judged by the High Court to be valid, then the State law will naturally become inconsistent with it and there would, of course, be no reason for the presentation of this legislation.

I did hope that matters relating to the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act could be settled amicably as time rolled on. When the Minister gave notice of his intention to bring down this legislation, he spoke of a firmly held suspicion that mining titles would be affected, but they will not. We are reasonably happy that this is so because when this measure was presented to the House it could have led to considerable argument and confrontation.

The Opposition is very interested in the position and, naturally, will keep its options open in relation to further legislation that no doubt will come before the House.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (8.36 p.m.), in reply: I think that the honourable member for Port Curtis is trying to read into the Bill something that is not there.

As to his remarks about the dealings between Queensland and the Commonwealth relative to off-shore boundaries, I inform him that there was never any confrontation between this State and the Commonwealth Government when the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act was negotiated, and these were the boundaries then set out. But following negotiations with Indonesia and that part of New Guinea controlled by Indonesia, the boundary was altered by a few degrees in one direction. It was really to straighten a line that was embodied in the description. The Queensland Petroleum (Submerged) Lands Act has to coincide with the Commonwealth Act because it is virtually mirror legislation and the agreement between the Commonwealth and Indonesia stipulates that the boundaries set out in the State Act must be identical with those in the Commonwealth Act. The only question between the Commonwealth and the State of Queensland is as to which has the rights to the minerals under the sea bed embraced by the boundaries.

Motion (Mr. Camm) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

COLONEL DANIEL EDWARD EVANS (WILLIAM PARRY MEMORIAL BURSARY) BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education and Cultural Activities) (8.39 p.m.): I move—

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

As explained in my introduction of the Bill, the Government has been requested to amend the legislation to provide flexibility in the selection of members of a committee which chooses the winners of the William Parry Memorial Bursary.

The Act was passed in this Chamber in 1960 to give effect to the wishes of the late Colonel Daniel Edward Evans, who wished to finance the further education of apprentices in the Bundaberg engineering district and, at the same time, honour his old friend from the Bundaberg Foundry, William Parry.

The Bill eases the requirement that the committee consist of a director and foreman engineer of the Bundaberg foundry, "preferably officers who have served under the late William Parry", and a representative of the Department of Education, preferably one dealing with technical education.

Two of the members will be nominated by the board of directors of the Bundaberg foundry and, in order to retain as close a link as possible with Colonel Evans's original wishes, one of these members shall be preferably a person associated with the engineering trades or profession. The third member will be an officer of the Department of Education, preferably one involved with technical training.

The Bill provides for other people to be nominated for the committee if the first-named qualifications cannot be met. The amendment thus provides a flexibility in the selection of committee members which does not exist in the Act.

The trustee of the fund, the Union-Fidelity Trustee Company of Australia Limited, appoints the committee from the nominees of the Bundaberg Foundry and the Department of Education. The Act makes no provision for terms of appointment of the committee members, and it was deemed advisable to include in the Bill such a provision —the members holding office at the pleasure of the trustee.

We have also included provisions covering the removal of a member or members of the committee by the trustee on 14 days' notice, and protection for the trustee in the event of such removal.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (8.41 p.m.): I, on behalf of the Opposition, am in accord with the Bill. The Minister corrected me at the introductory stage when I said that, under the terms of the Act, Mr. Robert Gibson would not be allowed on the committee. I did say that because the Bill was mooted in 1969. I have a copy of a letter from the trustees which states—

> "Now that Mr. Gibson has retired from his former position in Gibson & Howes Limited, he has no status insofar as concerns the local committee, although he is prepared to carry on."

Mr. Gibson was Chairman of Directors of the foundry, and he worked under Mr. William Parry. While he was associated with the foundry, he was appointed to the committee, and he served on that committee for many years. As the Minister said, as he was appointed by the trustees he probably did have the right to carry on. Under the original terms of the Act of 1960, it appears that he should not have been on the committee. That is how I read the Act. The

Minister has eased the conditions of the original terms, and this makes it easier for the Bundaberg Foundry to appoint the committee under the rules laid down by the trustees. The trustees still have authority in relation to the appointment of the committee.

Some honourable members may have thought that the bursary was for only one person. Under the terms of the original Act, the bursary could be granted to many people. It could be distributed in different sections of the Bundaberg Foundry and in the Bundaberg district within a radius of 30 miles. The original Act stated—

> "The Trustee shall have power and authority to determine the aggregate or periodical amount of any bursary to be paid from the net income of the Trust, and may determine different such amounts in respect of different persons chosen or to be chosen by the Committee, and whether at the same time or different times."

It further stated—

> "The Committee may fix terms requiring or permitting a bursary to be applied for all or any of the following purposes, namely:—
>
> (a) In payment of fees for a course of study at a specified university or technical college in Queensland or elsewhere;
>
> (b) In payment of the costs of text books and equipment required in connection with any such course;
>
> (c) In payment of fees for enrolment in a residential college of a university whilst attending any such course thereat;
>
> (d) In payment of expenses incurred for board and lodgings while attending any such course; and
>
> (e) In payment of any cost, charge or expense incurred in respect of any matter or thing which, in the opinion of the Committee, is of educational benefit to the recipient of the bursary concerned."

In 1973 the committee paid out a total of $1,176, but it went to many people. The sum of $719 was paid to six students doing the certificate course for apprentices or cadets; $277 was paid to those continuning this course after finishing their time, and seven lads were concerned; $160 was paid in recognition of the higher pass gained by 14 students in the trade course; and $20 was paid as an incentive to two young men doing an advanced trade course. Similar payments are made each year to students at the Bundaberg Technical College or in the various engineering firms and sugar mills in the Bundaberg district. The committee has the power to continue awarding the bursary to students who move away from the district.

The honourable member for Townsville South said that the will of the late Colonel Evans provided for the granting of the bursary in two parts, one to boys in the foundry, the other to boys in the district generally. Perhaps the honourable member was right—the court may have ordered that it not be divided into two parts—but the Act of 1960 provided that the estate be divided into 20 equal parts and that two of such parts be retained and invested in the name of the trustee and the net annual income therefrom applied as an annual education bursary for an engineering apprentice in the Bundaberg engineering district, including sugar mills, to be chosen by a committee. The two parts are still there.

I cannot understand the provision in the Bill relating to terms of appointment. The Bill provides that the trustee may at any time, without giving any reason therefor, upon giving 14 days' notice in writing to the member or members of the committee concerned, remove a member or the members of the committee from office as such. It goes on to provide that the removal by the trustee of a member of the committee from his office as such shall not be questioned in any proceeding whatever. I do not know why those provisions were included in the Bill, because at all times the committee has been a strong one. The director and the engineer have nearly always been engineers who had served under Mr. Parry. Even at the present time the chairman of directors is on the committee, as is the principal of the Bundaberg Technical College, Mr. Bailey. As I say, I cannot see the necessity for the inclusion of those two provisions. I do not think that the trustee would question the appointment of persons to the committee. I do not know whether the two provisions serve any useful purpose, or whether it is thought that the Education Department cannot provide a suitable man for appointment. I know that Mr. Rob Gibson, the chairman, and Mr. Lindsay George are very sound people, and I cannot imagine that there would be any need to dismiss them within 14 days. So I ask the Minister to give the reason for the inclusion of those provisions.

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education and Cultural Activities) (8.49 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for Bundaberg for his comments. I have noted his concern about a couple of aspects of the Bill. I am pleased to know that he is happy with the fact that Mr. Gibson will be allowed to continue on the committee. This is what we had in mind when we agreed to amend the Act. There were insufficient persons eligible for appointment to the committee, and it was for that reason that this legislation was introduced. It will be appreciated that the bursary can be awarded to more than one person. It was never our intention to hide anything.

Mr. Jensen: The honourable member for Toowoomba North thought that the amount of the bursary for one student was not worth wasting our time here.

Mr. BIRD: In most instances bursaries can be awarded to one person or to a number of persons as determined by members of the committee.

The honourable member for Bundaberg expressed concern about the reason for removing a member of the committee on what could be termed fairly short notice. He should appreciate that one person who could serve on the committee is a representative of the Department of Education, that is, the principal of the technical college. He is subject to transfer, and could be transferred at a time very close to the awarding of bursaries. If he were to be transferred then, it would be necessary to replace him fairly quickly. There must therefore be provision for his removal from the committee and the appointment of another member in his place. A member may also have to be replaced because of ill health or chronic illness at the time when the committee has to make a decision on awarding bursaries. It would be necessary to remove him and that could be done at fairly quick notice under the amendments.

Motion (Mr. Bird) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, and preamble, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (8.54 p.m.): I move—

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

During the introduction of this measure I gave a detailed explanation of the proposed amendments and the Bill was well received.

The honourable member for Rockhampton North suggested that section 50 of the Act should be amended to provide for the setting up of a board of reference on the request of an injured worker or his representative. Currently, the Act provides that the Minister may appoint such a board.

Provision already exists under section 17 of the Act by which a copy of the inspector's report may be made available to the injured person or his representative on the payment of a minimum fee. I therefore do not consider that any amendment to section 50 of the Act is warranted.

Mr. YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (8.55 p.m.): I do not intend to delay the House on the second reading of this Bill. However, I indicate that I will speak to several clauses at the Committee stage.

The Minister referred to the suggested amendment I put forward. It would seem to me that the specific case I raised has developed to the stage that there has been communication backwards and forwards with the department, and the worker himself has apparently been advised by the legal people that, apart from the inspector's report being available, the Minister still has a discretion. I stress the point that the Minister, in these particular cases, should exercise his right to set up the board of reference. I did suggest an alteration, purely for the purpose of debate and discussion. I genuinely intend to follow that matter up by putting something in writing. I have nothing further to say on the second reading.

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (8.56 p.m.), in reply: I would be very happy to receive any representations that the honourable member for Rockhampton North wishes to make to me. I will give them full consideration.

Motion (Mr. Campbell) 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.

Clause 4—Amendment of s. 14; General powers of inspectors—

Mr. YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (8.57 p.m.): I am mainly seeking an explanation or interpretation. The clause refers to the inspectors having power to enter—

> "(ii) any place wherein he reasonably suspects that construction equipment is being made, stored, sold, let or hired, lent or otherwise disposed of."

It would seem to me that many people engaged in this type of work are, to some extent, manufacturing or constructing scaffolding material and other types of trestle used in the building and painting industries. Even though this legislation will pass through Parliament, many of those people may find they are not conversant with or aware of the current law. I think this happens quite often in the community.

I believe that the inspectors should use a good deal of discretion in approaching this new area of entering onto property at any reasonable hour by day or night. A number of people are operating in a very small way—in some cases registered backyard people who hire out trestles, and I know of them personally. Would the Minister,

through his department, start notifying companies registered for this purpose or, alternatively, issue some form of public notice, giving advice of this new provision under which inspectors will be going onto properties, so that the people involved will know that inspectors are acting in accordance with the legislation? This is something they have not been subjected to before. They have had no experience of it.

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (8.59 p.m.): Inspectors in the department are not overbearing in the implementation of their responsibilities. This is a new requirement. The Construction Safety Act is being amended because it has been discovered that while its provisions covering inspection of equipment, construction and other aspects of building are adequate, in relation to the supervision of hired equipment brought onto a site, perhaps after inspectors had originally visited the site, the wording of the Act prevented them from making sure that it was up to the standard required by the Construction Safety Act. It is very difficult to cope with the situation when equipment can be moved to and from a site at will. This section has therefore been extended to cover off-site inspection of construction equipment and material likely to be used in construction work.

My inspectors are firm but reasonable, and they do not adopt an overbearing attitude. I am sure that trade journals and other publications, as well as the publicity that I shall be giving to these desirable amendments, will be sufficient to acquaint equipment hirers with the changes in the legislation. Furthermore, if a breach is not a deliberate evasion, a warning is issued.

Mr. YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (9.2 p.m.): I refer to clause 4(b)(iii), which reads—

> "material that is being or has been made for use in construction work and to or in which is or is to be attached or inserted gear of any kind; or"

Some suppliers, or places of construction, could be categorised as supplying or constructing solely for household purposes, or for private work not connected with the construction of major buildings or covered by this Act. What I am endeavouring to point out is that there are some people who hire equipment solely for personal use, not the construction of buildings.

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (9.3 p.m.): I think I dealt with clause 4(b)(iii) quite explicitly at the introductory stage when I pointed out that in modern building techniques more and more panels used in high-rise buildings are prefabricated off site. They are delivered to the site and placed in position by means of special attachments built in for lifting. This part of the legislation deals almost specifically with that type of prefabricated panel. It may be recalled that I said that, whilst provision was made to cover walk-ways, until this amendment becomes law my inspectors do not have power to go to a site where prefabricated panels are being made and check that they are reasonably constructed and, particularly, that the lifting attachments are suitable for their purpose and of such a nature as to prevent panels from falling and causing accidents.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (9.4 p.m.): Just to clarify this point—is the Minister saying the inspectors have the power to go into any place where the scaffolding is actually being constructed and is this the extension he is talking about?

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (9.5 p.m.): If my inspectors believed that it was necessary to check a place where scaffolding was being manufactured, this provision would empower them to do it, but I think my inspectors have sufficient faith in the manufacturers of equipment and, as well, the manufacturers must conform with the requirements of the Standards Association of Australia. But the main purpose of this provision is to deal not with new equipment but equipment which, in accordance with common modern business practice, is made available for hire.

Mr. Wright: But new equipment could be covered if so desired. That is your point. If they are willing to go into that area, they can.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Of course, because it does not specify where this inspection would take place; but I believe such inspection would be superfluous. We are aiming to make sure that the equipment hired out by organisations complies with the safety regulations. As I said earlier, when equipment is being moved on and off a site with fair rapidity, it is difficult for our inspectors to be there every time this happens. This provision is a further safeguard in the interests of safety.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—Amendment of s.25; Inspector's power to secure compliance with Act, etc.—

Mr. YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (9.7 p.m.): I would like to refer the Minister to clause 6 (b) where reference is made to the inspector issuing a direction in writing. I think this was ventilated in the introductory debate, but I have given some further thought to it. Is it the intention of the department to simply issue an instruction or direction

in writing to a contractor or whoever the responsible person might be and leave the matter at that, or is there some method by which the department could prove at a later point, if disputation should arise, that that particular direction in writing was actually received by the person to whom it was delivered? Is there a section to be torn off the written direction or does the recipient indicate by some means of identification, such as his initials on a copy of the direction, that he has received it, so that there could be no argument about the fact that it had been delivered to him?

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (9.8 p.m.): This provision is really designed to enable inspectors to cope with problems they encounter. In most cases it is possible to give instructions in writing. In other cases, of course, when an inspector discovers a glaring fault and the delay necessitated by the issuing of a written instruction could cause some delay, he is now empowered to give an oral instruction and I think the Bill requires that it has to be followed up with confirmation in writing.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7 and 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9—Repeal of and new s.28; Inspector's powers to seize scaffolding, etc.—

Mr. YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (9.9 p.m.): I refer to clause 9 (1) which permits the seizure of material by an inspector if it is considered that the material could cause serious bodily injury or damage to property. The inspector has the power under this provision to have this material, scaffolding or whatever, removed or order it to be removed.

It seems to me that it does not clarify the position. Although the owner may be subject to an order to remove material for the reasons indicated by the inspector, is there any provision in the Bill—I may have missed it—saying that the inspector may at the same time issue a direction that certain repair work be carried out on the material, thereby allowing it to be put back into use instead of being dismantled and taken away and leaving the matter at that, or alternatively, direct that some repairs be effected and then inspect it again to establish that it is in working condition?

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (9.11 p.m.): An inspector would take this action as a last resort. The section has been redrafted for clarity, and it extends the inspector's powers to the seizure of off-site defective materials that are being made or have been made for use in construction work. The step mentioned by the honourable member in the question that he posed would be preliminary to seizure of the equipment and taking it out of circulation, which would be the action taken by the inspector only in the last resort.

Mr. YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (9.12 p.m.): If I may refer to another clause without being specific, Mr. Hewitt, I take it that the answer just given by the Minister relates also to the situation referred to in clause 10 (b), new subsection (2) (c)?

Mr. Campbell: Yes.

Clause 9, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 17, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—New s.74A; Liability for offence by body corporate—

Mr. YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (9.13 p.m.): The purpose of this clause is to insert a new section 74A, which reads—

> "Where an offence against any provision of this Act is committed by a body corporate, every person who is a member of the governing body of such body corporate shall be deemed to have committed the offence . . ."

It seems to me that this clause may assist to some degree in avoiding neglect by people in this industry, but I do not think it really would be implemented in the way in which it reads. It seems rather nebulous. Would it not have been better to define a person who would be responsible for the corporate body? Basically, that happens in the case of most organisations, because the secretary is usually the person who shall be sued or do the suing. A corporate body may include any number of persons. Although I accept that those persons should be responsible in their function as an organisation or a body, it seems to me that there should be further definition as to who is to blame and who shall be charged with the offence.

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (9.14 p.m.): As I indicated at the introductory stage, the key-note of this legislation is that it puts the final responsibility on a person or a body of persons—a corporate body—by using the term "constructor". This is a completely new approach in the determination of responsibility in relation to construction safety, and since the introduction of the Act it has been very effective in giving final responsibility in a certain direction. There has been no problem in the great majority of cases; but there is a problem where there are a number of interlocking companies and it is difficult for the departmental inspectors to determine who has the final responsibility—in effect, who is the person or the corporate body on whom the final responsibility rests.

Because of this imperfection several prosecutions under the Act have been dismissed on the grounds that the constructor of a project could not be established or identified. In each case the defendant was a corporate body operating as a number of companies with the same governing body in each company. The inclusion of section 74A enables the department, where doubt exists as to the authenticity of a constructor being one company or another, to prosecute a member of the governing body. The provision covers those cases where there is ambiguity because of a number of companies being involved in the particular corporation. It simply puts the responsibility on a specific person. The honourable member asked whether it could be the secretary. We believe it should be a member of the governing body, in other words, a director of the governing body. It is designed entirely to identify the person who has the final responsibility.

Clause 18, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

COLLECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (9.16 p.m.): I move—

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

I thank honourable members for the contribution they made when the Bill was initiated in Committee.

Reference was made to a shipwreck case of over 100 years ago where money from the fund still lies idle in bank accounts. It was recently reported that the oldest fund dates back to 1915, and was set up following the wreck of the ship "Yongala" in 1911.

The Queensland Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society, formed in 1915, commenced with a grant of a sum of approximately £900, which was the residue remaining from the fund established to assist victims and persons in necessitous circumstances arising out of the "Yongala" disaster.

In 1971 the property of the Queensland Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society was vested in the Public Curator of Queensland in accordance with section 35 of the Act. A subsequent Order in Council was made varying the trusts upon which the property was originally held to those set out in the rules of the Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of Queensland and also vesting the property in Queensland Trustees Limited to be held by it for the Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of Queensland in accordance with the rules of that society.

The provisions of section 35 of the Act are operative, and several other cases have been dealt with under this section.

The honourable member for Rockhampton also referred to the circumstances where the name of some well-known charity is used when collecting rags or paper.

The Collections Regulations 1975, which came into operation on and from 1 March 1975, provide that an agreement in writing may be made between a charity and a commercial undertaking making an appeal for support whereby moneys will be paid to the charity by the commercial undertaking in consideration of the use of the name of the charity in connection with the appeal.

The regulations also provide that the moneys payable to the charity shall be not less than 30 per cent of the gross proceeds of the moneys so collected or such percentage as may be approved by the Minister from time to time and shall be paid to the credit of a separate account in the name of the charity in a bank.

Leaflets distributed relating to an appeal for support by a commercial undertaking are required to contain the names and addresses of the charity and the commercial undertaking respectively and a statement showing the percentage of the gross proceeds which is to be paid to the charity.

The Act has been considered in detail and it is considered that other amendments are not necessary at this stage.

The primary object of this Bill is to establish a Disaster Appeal Trust Fund and a committee to administer the fund. It is proposed that unexpended moneys in disaster relief funds be paid into the fund so that these moneys may be applied promptly to future disaster relief funds as they arise.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (9.22 p.m.): At the introductory stage I expressed the view that it would be better to establish some type of disaster fund rather than a disasters trust fund. I have considered the matter further, and having gone through the legislation I regard the Bill as an acceptable compromise. It will set up a special fund, and it will enable the moneys paid into charitable causes over a long period to be gathered up and administered and then re-used.

The administration of the fund is very well catered for in the Bill. In fact the first two pages of this five-page Bill refer to the establishment of the committee, the way it can be replaced, the manner in which it must meet, what constitutes a quorum, and so on. I notice also that the definition of "disaster relief fund" is very broad, and this will answer many of the criticisms that I levelled at the introductory stage. The definition should be broad, because people raise money for emotional reasons; they desire to see someone helped. If money is left over, it is rather ridiculous to have it sitting in some special trust account operated by the Public

Curator. It is thought that the money should be used for some similar appeal or some similar need—or, better still, for some charitable cause—and the Bill allows this to be done.

I accept the idea of a two-year period, because I believe that many of the disbursement aspects would not be resolved in a period of less than one year. It is wise to have this two-year period.

Provision is made for the investment of the funds. As I say, it is ridiculous to leave the money sitting idle. The interest gained from such investments can be re-used for a disaster that might subsequently occur.

Whilst I still prefer the idea of a special disaster fund to cover any disastrous occurrence, I support the legislation.

As to the use by commercial firms of charitable names—I am aware of the regulations that were ratified some months ago in this House, but I put it to the Minister that there are organisations using the names of certain charities. We had an instance in Rockhampton of a fellow employing some young lads from the Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association to collect rags. I do not claim that 30 per cent of the quantity collected did not go to that charity, but I do know that he got a rip-off when it came to paying the people who worked for him. Perhaps at a later stage we might examine that aspect. As I say, I support the legislation.

Motion (Mr. Campbell) 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.

ACTS REPEAL BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (9.26 p.m.): I move—

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

The provisions of this Bill are in identical terms to the previous Acts Repeal Act which was passed by this Legislature in October, 1973.

Clause 2 of the Bill effects the repeal of the numerous Acts contained in the Schedule.

Clause 3 of the Bill contains a savings provision to the effect that the repeal of the various Acts will not affect any rights, titles, obligations or liabilities already accrued or acquired under any of the Acts being repealed. It is necessary to include such a provision because the effect at common law of repealing an Act is that it never existed except for transactions which have been completed.

It will be seen that many of the Acts contained in the Schedule were passed for some particular purpose which now no longer exists. Others were passed to enable or authorise certain acts to be done. Legislation passed by the Commonwealth Parliament has superseded various State Acts such as those relating to customs, matrimonial causes, legitimation and marriage.

The honourable member for Rockhampton has raised the fact that some 858 Acts have now been terminated or repealed under the Law Reform Commission's programme of statute law revision. I might mention that the commission proposes to submit a further report in due course concerning the termination of application of various imperial statutes which apply to Queensland by virtue of the Australian Courts Act of 1828.

The research and work involved under a programme of this nature is very tedious and time-consuming and I wish to pay tribute to the members of the Law Reform Commission for the progress which has been made in this field.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (9.28 p.m.): It is obvious from the Minister's final remarks that the clean-up of the statutes of Queensland is an on-going process. I am very pleased to hear that the Law Reform Commission intends to bring down another report. As the Minister indicated, this is what might be called stage three of the clean-up of the Queensland statutes. To my mind, this Bill is exactly the same as the other two except that the Acts being repealed are different. The Acts being repealed, or being terminated, are more or less specialised and no longer have any function. Some are inoperative or archaic, while others are superseded by Commonwealth legislation. I am pleased to note that protection is clearly afforded. We do not want problems arising simply because some legislation has been repealed. I wonder whether the same principle applies as under the previous legislation whereby none of the Acts can be re-enacted without coming before the Assembly again. That was stated clearly in one of the repeal Bills that we dealt with, but I failed to find it on this occasion. Maybe the Minister will clarify whether in fact we have to re-enact any legislation that is found at a later stage to have a useful purpose. If that important principle is clarified—and it needs to be—I completely support the Bill.

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (9.29 p.m.), in reply: A perusal of the list of Acts contained in the Bill reveals that most of them are so hoary and outdated that, at a quick glance, I cannot——

Mr. Wright: We did have some sort of principle accepted here that no legislation terminated or repealed would simply be brought in again by Executive Council or by a Government Minute issued by the Governor in Council; that it would have to be re-enacted in this Chamber. We have adopted that. Has it been stated here?

Mr. CAMPBELL: I would say that the same procedure will be followed in this case.

Motion (Mr. Campbell) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, and schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

GRAMMAR SCHOOLS BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education and Cultural Activities) (9.33 p.m.): I move—

> "That a Bill be introduced to consolidate and amend the law relating to public grammar schools and for related purposes."

It is fitting that, in this centenary year of State education, this Parliament should be asked to amend the laws governing grammar schools, which were the first secondary schools in Queensland. Some of the grammar schools have been in existence longer than my department and can look back on a very long and distinguished period of service to education in this State.

The first grammar school—Ipswich Grammar School—was established in 1863 and the last—the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School—in 1892. Ten such schools were established in the 29-year period between 1863 and 1892, eight of them still being in existence. Two—the boys' and girls' grammar schools in Maryborough—were taken over by my department in 1936 and now constitute the Maryborough State High School.

Grammar schools thus have very deep roots in this State. In the beginning, the secondary education they provided followed the traditional English model—the curriculums were classical and fees were charged. They were schools for the children of the wealthy, and would mould the youngsters traditionally for entry into a profession; also they catered for only a minority of young Queenslanders.

Scholarships, or exhibitions, were available for those who could win them in competitive examinations; but even this avenue of higher education for the children of the less wealthy was not without its critics, many authorities considering the scholarships far too numerous and thus being awarded to scholars of insufficient ability.

Late in the last century the first moves began towards extending secondary education beyond the grammar schools. Early in this century, the task of taking secondary education throughout the State was tackled in earnest. By 1957 there were 37 State high schools and 34 State secondary departments in Queensland. Then the Liberal-Country Party (now National Party) came to office and achievement from that point in time has been such that the number of State high schools is more than trebled and secondary departments almost doubled. There are now 118 State high schools and 65 State secondary departments in Queensland and also numerous non-State secondary schools operated by church organisations.

It is clearly recognisable that grammar schools occupy a special place in the history of Queensland education, and are an integral part of the secondary scene in this State. They operate under a series of five Acts of Parliament, the first of which was passed in 1860 and the last in 1962. I think honourable members will agree that it is time to bring this legislation up to date to meet modern needs and practices.

In formulating the proposals contained in the new legislation, my predecessor, Sir Alan Fletcher, invited the trustees of the eight grammar schools to offer suggestions. A variety of suggestions was received. Some have been adopted, and some have not. It is our intention now to allow a period of time between the introductory stage and second reading of the Bill to enable the trustees, as well as honourable members, to examine the new legislation and to comment on it.

I believe honourable members will agree, when they have studied the Bill, that it is a comprehensive document providing most effective guidelines for the operation of a grammar school. I am sure the administrators of the school will welcome it as a replacement for the old and very much outdated legislation in force at present.

I commend the Bill for the consideration of the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (9.37 p.m.): It is significant that we have amendments to the Grammar Schools Act in this centenary year, because the history of the Act is almost as long as that of Parliament itself. The original legislation was introduced in this Assembly 115 years ago—back in 1860. Members will note that that was four years before a "Hansard" record was made of the proceedings of this Assembly. During this period of more than a century, the original Act has been amended on only a few occasions. It was amended in 1864, in 1891, in 1900 and, I think, in 1908. It was then not further amended until 1962, when some major amendments were made dealing with the borrowing of money.

It is interesting to trace the history of the Grammar Schools Act. In doing so, one quickly realises that the original intention seems to have been to encourage people to take a particular interest in education in their district and to try to improve the quality of education facilities for their children by setting up their own educational institutions. As members who have read the Act will note, so many donors had to be found, and the amount that they subscribed was subsidised by the Government. In this way, grammar schools were set up.

If one reads "Hansard" of 25 May, 1864, which I took time to do today, one realises that the concept of grammar schools did not have the unanimous support of all members of the Assembly at that time. It is rather interesting to read the hang-ups that members may have had—perhaps we could call them ideological biases as well. The main Opposition centred on the view that grammar schools would only bolster class differences, and it was considered that the public revenue should not be burdened with the expense of educating children whose parents could well afford to pay for their education themselves. That seems to have been the argument, and I suggest that it is one that is still advanced today. Today, 115 years later, we still argue whether the State should supply finance to educate students whose parents in many cases are extremely wealthy.

But it will be noted that in that early debate many members supported the concept of grammar schools because they saw it as not only allowing people to involve themselves in the provision of educational facilities but, more so, as a means of assisting the "sons of bushmen." I take that term directly from "Hansard". Those members also saw grammar schools as a means of helping the children of the poor in country areas to get some education.

If one takes an unbiased view of this matter, one will admit that the Grammar Schools Act has been successful. As the Minister said, there were once 10 grammar schools, of which eight remain, and thousands upon thousands of community dollars have been spent on education. No doubt very many dollars have been spent from public revenue as well. This has been a matter of great debate, and, I think, of great significance, and I suggest that members still have certain views on the approach that they would like to take to grammar schools, or their concept of their value.

If we put aside these ideological biases—it is true that the original Bill embodied an admirable principle of encouraging private effort in the cause of education to a very marked extent. Rockhampton has a significant history in the field of grammar schools just as Brisbane, Toowoomba and some other places have. We in Rockhampton have gained from the efforts of these early education-conscious citizens. While some people even today see the Rockhampton Girls Grammar School and the Rockhampton Boys Grammar School as "those little places on the hill" and say "If you send your kid there you have a better chance of having him (or her) employed by a solicitor or you have a better chance of his doing well in life", most people appreciate that over many, many years thousands of Central Queenslanders have received an excellent education and many of these students have gone on to leave their mark on the professional, academic and commercial areas of our community. So I support the concept.

I still have some personal views as to this class distinction and there are still many people in our community who prefer the grammar school system because they believe it is upper crust. I like to call them "Hottentots." They think they are a little bit better than the person down the road. But I think there are advantages in having a choice in education, and I stand on this point. It is important that people have the opportunity to contribute to their own children's education. It is important to have a system in which experimentation can take place without the bureaucratic feelers always there and the power of inspection so overpowering that the headmaster or principal is not game to experiment. So there are advantages here—

Mr. Katter: This is not the party line. You'll be in big trouble.

Mr. WRIGHT: That is where honourable members opposite get the wrong idea. They think everyone has to stick to a certain line. They forget that we have the right to individual differences and they forget that it is the Australian Labor Government that has done so much for private schools. In fact, the Labor Government has given something like 10 times more money in the last 2½ or 3 years than their Government gave in 23 years; so when it comes to the concept of education, to the right policies on education, I suggest honourable members opposite might study our record.

The Grammar Schools Act of 1860 made provision for money subscribed by the community for the purpose of establishing a

public grammar school to be subsidised from public revenue. It was almost on a tit-for-tat basis; "If you can raise a certain amount of money then you will get some." Initially it was £1,000. Provision was made also for a yearly grant to help out and the Government had some say. As honourable members know, the Government had the right to appoint four trustees as against three trustees appointed by the subscribers. This was subsequently changed so that everybody who donated $10 to grammar schools was allowed to vote for the various appointees.

Mr. Gibbs: Did the Leader of the Opposition go to the Brisbane Grammar?

Mr. WRIGHT: I don't know, but if he did, good luck to him. I went to Salisbury High School, and I am very proud of that fact, if the honourable member must know.

Still other amendments in 1900 provided for the appointment of inspectors whose duty it was to inspect and report on the grammar schools and so we see the over-all involvement both from the State in that sense—the State being Government—and the community, and this is not a bad concept.

The Minister has indicated that he now intends to really update this legislation and I will be very interested to see what he intends to do here, as will the members of the various boards of the grammar schools and also the parents of children at grammar schools. In Rockhampton they are even considering having girls attend the boys' grammar school. This has caused shudders, I might say, among old-time grammarians who always thought of the boys grammar school as a special place they could go back to and say, "I sat there." The idea of a female sitting in his old place might almost be enough to cause a past grammarian to turn in his grave. But I will be pleased to see the new guide-lines.

Mr. Lester: International Women's Year.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am pleased to hear that the honourable member supports the concept but I suggest that many of his own constituents from the Belyando electorate will not agree with him when it comes to allowing girls to attend a boys' grammar school.

Getting away from that, I would like to make an observation which I admit at the very outset cannot be remedied solely by the Minister for Education because it does not pertain to this aspect of the Grammar Schools Act, but it does pertain to grammar schools generally. I refer to the special exemptions that grammar schools have in the area of industrial awards for certain employees. This matter was raised previously, at length, by the honourable member for Archerfield, and I suggest that honourable members who wish to read about some exemptions that grammar schools have turn up in "Hansard" of the 1973-74 session the speech he made on that subject.

Apparently these exemptions are also a matter of history. They go back to 1918, when Justice MacNaughton handed down his historic judgment that gave seven institutions special rights relating to award wages and conditions for their employees. Provision was also made for other charitable institutions to apply for that special exemption.

In the early years there may have been many good reasons for giving these organisations special exemption, and there may have been very good reasons why they paid their employees lowly wages. But I do not believe that is the case today. I accept that grammar schools are still not exactly flush with money, but surely that is not the issue at the moment. People are being employed, and, in the present economic circumstances, forced to accept employment, for wages well below the accepted industrial award.

Mr. Greenwood: They can go elsewhere.

Mr. WRIGHT: No, they cannot go elsewhere.

Mr. Lamont interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: In reply to the interjection of the honourable member for South Brisbane, I point out that in 1918 Mr. Justice MacNaughton brought down the judgment under which charitable institutions were allowed to employ people outside industrial awards.

Mr. Lamont: But grammar schools are not charitable institutions.

Mr. WRIGHT: I thought that the honourable member was the most intelligent man in the Chamber; at least, I have been told so by some of his friends and colleagues. I suggest to him that he look into this matter, because grammar schools have that exemption and can employ people at the wages that they determine. The matter has been raised with the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs and, although he is sympathetic to the complaint, he cannot do anything about it because grammar schools have that exemption.

The exemption must be changed. I do not believe it is right that industrial inspectors and union officials cannot go onto the premises of grammar schools to look at safety and other conditions or to check on the wages of the people employed there. The teachers would not stand for it. In fact, a teacher in a grammar school now receives a salary similar to that received by his counterpart under the State system. So why should a laundress or employee in any other category working for a grammar school be paid $30 or $40 a week less than a person following a similar occupation in private enterprise or in a Government instrumentality?

Mr. Greenwood: Force the wages up and force them out of business. Is that what you would do?

Mr. WRIGHT: I think that is a ridiculous approach to the matter.

Mr. Greenwood: What other approach is there?

Mr. WRIGHT: Let us get back to the image that grammar schools are getting because of this. In Rockhampton, we have built two beautiful homes—one for the headmaster and one for the headmistress of the respective schools.

Mr. Greenwood: "We"?

Mr. WRIGHT: We, the community, have built them, because a lot of the money needed was raised in the community.

Mr. Greenwood: Did you contribute?

Mr. WRIGHT: I always contribute.

Mr. Greenwood: Do you believe in grammar schools?

Mr. WRIGHT: I have stated before that I believe in the dual system. I believe that grammar schools have made a significant contribution, and I do not apologise for believing that. The honourable member has made many comments and I am pleased to know that he intends to rise in his place and make his own contribution.

In my opinion, people employed at grammar schools should receive the benefit of industrial awards and should not be forced to accept lower wages. It is ridiculous, as I was saying before I was rudely interrupted by the honourable member for Ashgrove, that beautiful buildings are being constructed—new homes for the headmaster and the headmistress, massive libraries, science blocks, and flatettes for the teaching staff—while workers are being paid miserable wages. It is not fair, and I do not think that the community will condone it much longer.

Mr. Lamont: Are you suggesting that teachers at grammar schools receive less than teachers in State schools?

Mr. WRIGHT: I know that the honourable member has a hearing difficulty, and I am sorry for him. I invite him to sit a little closer so that he may hear what I am saying.

The obvious answer is either to remove this special exemption or for the Minister for Education to consult with the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs and devise a system under which grammar schools can be compensated financially to allow them to meet the increased wages. But the real answer is to remove the exemption.

Mr. Jensen: The Brisbane Grammar School is one of the richest schools in Queensland.

Mr. WRIGHT: I know that many of the private schools that enjoy this exemption are among the richest schools. They certainly were not classed as underprivileged schools when the Schools Commission looked into this matter. They were found to have the financial resources to be classed as class A schools.

Government Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order!

Mr. WRIGHT: I thank you for coming to my assistance, Mr. Kaus. Some honourable members opposite are only a rabble. They make many comments by interjection but they rarely make a speech. In fact some of them have made only one speech in the Chamber. It will be interesting at the end of the year to publish a list of the number of speeches made by some honourable members opposite.

Getting away from frivolity, I ask the Minister to consider this matter, because it is a serious one. If honourable members opposite would talk to people who work in these institutions——

Mr. Moore: You are only trying to improve the cricket 11. You don't believe a word of it.

Mr. WRIGHT: I believe every word of it.

If a person personally opts to accept a lower wage because he believes in the cause—be it a religious one or a political one—that is O.K., but no-one should be forced to accept those conditions. I hope that the Minister will take some cognizance of the point I have raised and speak with his colleague the Minister for Industrial Development in the hope that something can be done to overcome the problem.

Mr. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove) (9.51 p.m.): I do not intend to say very much about this except to sum up the argument that has been put by the A.L.P. We have heard it many times before. When it is shorn of all its trimmings, what it comes down to is that the A.L.P. wants to put the church schools out of business. It really bugs members of the A.L.P. to think that there are nuns and other church people—and even outside the churches, people in independent schools—who are prepared to stand there and work hard because they believe in the sort of education that is being provided by their schools. It really irritates them. They have tried to knock it out every way they can. They have tried to knock it out at the Federal level by doing away with the tax deduction.

Mr. Wright: Oh, come on!

Mr. GREENWOOD: Yes, members of the A.L.P. do not like to see people spending money in this way. They would like to put everybody through the same system.

Most people in Australia believe in the freedom of choice. One of the things they believe in is that if church people, including nuns and priests, are prepared to work hard for low wages because of something they believe in, they should be allowed to do it. The thesis that the honourable member for Rockhampton is developing is that they should not be allowed to do it. The thesis he is developing is that the schools must be made to pay high wages whether they can afford it or not, and whether the parents can afford it or not, and in this way these schools will be forced out of business. It is not a novel contribution to this debate. It is another variation on the old socialist theme. If the honourable member for Rockhampton thinks that he can fool us into thinking that it is anything else, then he is grossly mistaken.

Mr. POWELL (Isis) (9.54 p.m.): In addressing myself to the Bill I am conscious of the tremendous amount of money that is spent by the Queensland Government on education. Most people will acknowledge the fact that since 1957 education in this State has been revolutionised by a thinking Government.

We heard the figures given to us tonight by the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities. He told us that the number of State high schools in Queensland has risen since 1957 from 37 to 118, and the number of State secondary departments has risen from 34 to 65.

The Bill deals specifically with the grammar schools in the State, of which I believe there are eight remaining. I have always subscribed to the principle of freedom of choice for parents to send their children to whatever school they desire. However, I find in our history dating back to 1863 a stage when certain schools in Queensland were given an advantage over other non-State schools. Today many private schools are lamentably short of funds. This is brought about by many factors, the main one of which is the downturn in the rural industry for reasons beyond our control.

Mr. Doumany: And the Federal Government.

Mr. POWELL: That is what I meant.

Such a situation is a fact of life not simply for the grammar schools, but for all non-State schools. I hope that the Minister will give us some indication of the granting to non-State schools throughout the State of assistance similar to that given to grammar schools. I have no objection whatever to grammar schools or to non-State schools but, as one who was educated under the State system and who earned his living under that system, I naturally lean towards it.

A tremendous amount needs to be done in education in Queensland. In my electorate alone there is an urgent need for another secondary school and at least one other primary school. On the Minister's own figures, the construction of these schools would require the immediate expenditure of approximately $4,500,000.

In addition, the schools in my electorate suffer from very poor library facilities. Modern teachers look upon the school library as the focal point of the school. In teaching the pupils research and reporting skills, the teachers are using the libraries far more extensively than when any one of us attended school. The libraries at the three secondary schools in my electorate are nowhere near the desired standard. In fact the libraries at only two schools in my electorate could be regarded as being adequate. It is evident that a tremendous amount of money needs to be spent on school libraries as well as on the establishment of at least two more schools in my electorate. And I know that my electorate is not unique in its needs.

I hope that when the Bill is printed we will learn the exact nature of the provisions concerning grammar schools. Under the existing legislation, the grammar schools enjoy certain advantages over all other schools, both State and private. I do not believe that they should continue to enjoy this advantage. If any advantage is given in the borrowing of money and the payment of grants, it should flow on as well to other private schools, whose financial plight is as bad as that of the grammar schools.

When the grammar schools were first established, they certainly met a need, for at that time there was no other secondary education in Queensland. However, we now have a complete system of free education. I am reminded by the honourable member for Carnarvon that this is not so for country children. I agree with him, because children who live in the far-flung areas of the State have to travel long distances to attend school. It is to those children that I would like to see financial assistance given.

While the grammar schools fulfilled a need in the community when they were first established, I suggest that that need no longer exists. Therefore, I cannot see why the grammar schools should maintain the advantage they presently have over other private schools. I am concerned particularly about the other private schools in the community. If they have to close through financial difficulties, it will throw onto the State a tremendous financial burden that it cannot hope to undertake.

I look forward to reading the Bill and hearing the Minister's second-reading speech, and I sincerely hope that he will cover adequately the criticisms I have made.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (10.1 p.m.): It is now 115 years since the introduction of the first Grammar Schools Act in 1860. Since then there have been vast changes in Queensland, as indeed in the whole structure of education within the State.

In modern society it is important that we in this Government accept that our educational structures have greatly changed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. BYRNE: The Government has a bounden responsibility, as has any Government, to ensure that equity in education exists throughout the State.

In the 1860's, various conflicts existed within the community. There were conflicts between the squatters and the more radical elements in the community, between Protestants and Catholics, between city and country interests, between progressivism and conservatism and between employer and employee. Many of those conflicts still exist and cause many divisions in our society today. It is truly the responsibility of this Government to resolve many of these conflicts and ensure that past situations, which can only emphasise and exacerbate them, do not extend into the future.

It is important to establish this Bill on a basic premise of an understanding of equity in education in the 1970's, on into the 1980's and the next century. As I said, this legislation originated 115 years ago, but decisions that we make under this Bill can have a very long-term effect on the educational structures within the community.

R. G. Herbert, in the Legislative Assembly in 1860, when speaking to the introduction of the first Grammar Schools Act, stated—

> "A grammar school education should be such as would best qualify the youth of the Colony for discharging the duties that would devolve upon them in after life. There is no necessity in this country for high classical attainments."

We can appreciate that there have been certain changes since that statement was made. Education today is still there for the benefit of youth, and it is still there for the benefit of youth of today in relation to what it can achieve tomorrow.

There have been changes in society, and there have been further achievements and advances in education which have been very profitable for the community generally. In turn, they have meant a changed structure. Since the introduction of the Grammar Schools Act and the formation and construction of the grammar schools in Queensland—they were all constructed before 1900—there have been marked changes in our educational structure.

It is more than three-quarters of a century since the last grammar school was built in Queensland. In that time, naturally definite changes have come about, the main one being the broadening of what is now viewed as our State school system. Today the State school system embraces not only primary and secondary education but pre-school education, which was an innovation introduced by this Government, as well as the added advantages that exist for young people of today to obtain tertiary and other advanced education. All of these have been developed basically over the past 75 years. Society has changed markedly. Of course, those changes should be reflected in the attitude of this Parliament and in the attitude of the laws that this Parliament produces.

At the opening of the Ipswich Grammar School in 1863, Sir George Bowen said—

> "In the first place, I observe with great satisfaction that this institution will be carried out, so far as circumstances may permit, on the well-tried plan of the old public schools of England. So much, indeed, is implied in its name."

Both the statements I have quoted smack of a colonial viewpoint. The 1860 Grammar Schools Act arose out of a colonial era. It was introduced to fill an educational gap in a colonial society. If fulfilled the desires and the aims of a society that was in conflict in class and in religion. Today most of the people of this State consider that these conflicts in class and religion are no longer of any great consequence and indeed should be overcome in any legislation that is presented to this Parliament.

I spoke of equity in education. Three structures presently exist in Queensland and in other States within the Commonwealth. Those three structures, or levels, are the grammar school structure, the State school structure and what is termed the private or independent school structure. The independent schools arose for various reasons, mainly to fill gaps in education which different groups within the community felt needed to be filled. Some of them were developed on the basis of religion. I point out that the major conflict in the whole arena of Australian education, and also in Queensland education—the State which was able to solve its problem first—was the conflict between church and State and it was that conflict which came out after the formation of the Grammar Schools Act in 1860. The first group or organisation that applied after the passing of the 1860 Act was the Roman Catholic Church.

In December 1860 the following notice was published in the Queensland Government Gazette—

> "Persons desirous of providing in their District a higher class of education, such as these schools are intended to supply, are invited to co-operate without unnecessary delay in raising the necessary funds, especially as it may be desirous to provide Masters from England."

As I said, the first organisation that applied was the Roman Catholic Church. I said also that there existed at that time sectarian conflicts, and obviously a sectarian conflict which

existed in a colonial sphere would mean that such an application would meet certain hindrances, as indeed it did. That specific section of the community, which was the first group to apply for the resources of a grammar school, was denied it.

At a later date other groups—interested local community groups—had developed in Brisbane and Ipswich and the sectarian conflict continued as various religious groups tried to form grammar schools. However, they were not able to achieve that end.

It was after that time that the independent school structure developed. Later still, the State school system developed through the advances in State education and the finances that States allocated to education because of the increased importance the States attached to education.

Today we find ourselves in a slightly different position. A grammar school has not been constructed for over three-quarters of a century, and we live in a markedly different political and psychological climate from that which existed in the colonial days of Queensland 115 years ago. Yet we have three educational structures.

The question therefore arises of how to overcome the concept of discrimination that may occur in the allocation of finance for the provision of more grammar schools. I do not in any sense suggest that the existing grammar schools, which were formed in the last century, do not continue to serve a very important function in the community, but while those few grammar schools exist and perform that function, it is not possible for me to avoid the fact that there are far more State schools that provide similar education, and also other independent schools that provide similar forms of education. Yet these other independent schools, which, because of sectarian conflicts, were unable to make approaches in the colonial days under the Grammar Schools Act, find themselves today in perhaps a similar position.

Do we therefore continue the structure that was formed 115 years ago, in the days of colonial society, and endeavour to have more grammar schools constructed? Or do we endeavour to raise ourselves to a new level of education within the community to enable us, with a certain modernity, to project ourselves into the future and take into account the quality of equity that I mentioned earlier? To this end, grammar schools find themselves in somewhat more privileged economic circumstances than do other independent schools. Indeed, they have a board of trustees of whom four are Government appointed, without their necessarily having a great deal of association with the Government. They have the advantage also of what is termed an endowment. In the last financial year, that endowment amounted to some $20,000 a school. They have as well the advantage of loans from the Treasury, and in obtaining those loans they are privileged over other independent schools.

I do not in any way say that those two practices should be stopped. They are indeed the principles upon which these schools developed and upon which they can continue to exist; but the question arises whether the Government should today legislate for a potential increased number of grammar schools or for the extension of these economic benefits to various local community groups in contra-distinction to the independent school system. If that structure continues, we are maintaining a policy that has come down from colonial days which expressed the sectarian conflict of the times. It was a spirit of class and religious conflict—something that we today could not consider maintaining.

Whilst I wait to see the full contents of the Bill, I point out that it is important that we realise that three levels exist—namely, grammar schools, State schools and independent schools—and it is also important to realise where these three areas originated. The grammar schools originated in the 1860's, in the colonial days of the last century. The independent schools came into being through their inability to gain Government support because of sectarian conflicts. The State school system came into being in order to fill gaps that existed in the education structure of the community, and also because in a modern society education received more prominence and more Government expediture.

To that end, I therefore state that it is important that we maintain this equity in education, that in our legislative provisions we do nothing to continue a discriminatory situation, but rather that we endeavour to maintain an equality through a State school system and an independent school structure.

Mr. LAMONT (South Brisbane) (10.15 p.m.): The principle of the Grammar Schools Act is to support community involvement in education and it is remarkable to me that this principle could be attacked by either side of this Committee today. Committees investigating education at the moment throughout the length and breadth of Australia and throughout England and the U.S. and Canada constantly come back to the principle that there is not enough community involvement in education. Now, the churches have always provided, to some extent, a religious community involvement in education because of a commitment not only to education but also to their belief in the way education ought to be provided to pupils of their particular denomination. But there is far too little involvement by the community in education in the secular arena.

The Grammar Schools Act as it exists in this State provides community involvement, and for that reason alone it ought to be supported.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LAMONT: Secondly, the Grammar Schools Act supports the principle of diversity in education. We have the State system, the religious independent school system and the secular independent school system, and it is this third part of the education system which is supported by the Grammar Schools Act. Too often, socialists, such as we encounter daily as part of the burden of our job here, tend to believe that subsidies to grammar schools and, indeed, subsidies to any independent schools are a means by which the taxpayer, through the Government, subsidises the parents of students attending private schools or grammar schools. A very simple mathematical analysis proves that it is anything but that; that in fact it is not so at all.

It costs in the vicinity of $1000 per student per annum to educate a child at the secondary-school level today. The Government subsidy to independent schools is in the vicinity of $180 per student per annum so that the 80-odd per cent that remains is borne by the parent of the student who attends the independent school.

Mr. Wright: You're a poor mathematician.

Mr. LAMONT: I am a logician, which is probably something the honourable member has not come up against too often in the Labor Party. I know also that the honourable member is not accustomed to applying mathematics to justify his arguments. It would appear, on examination, that 80-odd per cent of the cost of educating students in independent schools and in grammar schools is borne by the parents, and if these parents chose to send their children to a State school, then that enormous burden of educating many thousands of students in Queensland would have to be borne by the taxpayer, so honourable members can see it is in fact the case that the parents of the child at the independent school are subsidising the taxpayer by sending the child to a grammar school or independent school, and not the reverse.

The major differences between grammar schools and other independent schools is the endowment received by the grammar schools. Let us look at the so-called tremendous advantage that the grammar schools receive. It is a $20,000 endowment. $20,000 these days would scarcely pay for two good mathematics teachers, which might almost get the honourable member for Rockhampton to the stage where he could analyse statistics adequately to come to a proper conclusion. That is an awful lot of money just to educate the honourable member for Rockhampton, I will admit, but it is not a great deal of money to give a grammar school by way of endowment. Let us not pretend that the $20,000 is one almighty advantage to the grammar schools, because it is not. It would be an advantage to Mr. Wright, but that is small cheese. In these days of Canberra-induced inflation, that $20,000 would not pay for the increase in staff salaries over a 12-month period. I hardly think that an endowment of $20,000 makes the difference between grammar schools and independent schools, or between grammar schools and any other schools, such an example of inequity.

The system of grammar schools was conceived originally to allow schools that had community support, other than community support based on something continuing such as religion, to be brought into being, and the wording of the Act is such that although the people supporting a particular grammar school in a certain area may change over the years, as student sons and daughters graduate and as the community changes generally, there will always be some sort of special Government consideration and support for at least independent secular schools of that type.

Let me answer briefly the question raised by my colleague from Belmont. If what he said is true and there is such a great advantage to the secular independent school, namely, the grammar school, as against the church independent school, why is it that Nudgee College, say, or Gregory Terrace, or Church of England Grammar School and so many other independent schools that are not grammar schools are not rushing to the Minister for Education and saying, "Put us under the Act. We want the extra $20,000"? They are not doing that, as honourable members know, because they do not want the degree of control that goes with it. They want to retain their autonomy. That is quite proper; it is their choice.

I have hit upon another word—not a word in the realm of mathematics this time, but a simple term which I do not expect the socialists to understand—"choice". It is the choice of people either to send their children to a grammar school and support that school, or to send their children to a religious school, or to send their children to a State school. It is entirely proper that grammar schools have been set up in this way. What is more, it has paid off not only to the taxpayer in terms of the subsidy that the parents of these children give to the State; it has also paid off scholastically. It has paid off, moreover, in terms of producing responsible citizens, with one notable exception. I refer to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Burns, who, I am afraid, went to my old school, Brisbane Grammar School (I try not to mention it too often). It has also paid off in terms of contribution to sport.

If anyone doubts that these grammar schools offer something extra in the scholastic and sporting fields and in the growth of responsible citizens, let him look at the waiting lists at the grammar schools in this State today. If the honourable member for Rockhampton did conceive of sending one of his children to a grammar school —I hope he does not want to conceive,

because one of him is enough—he would need to put the name of that child on a waiting list at birth. It is curious that something which is allegedly so unnecessary, according to the Labor Party, has such a waiting list and that so many people queue to send their children to these schools.

The grammar schools do offer something that the State system, mainly for financial reasons just cannot match at the moment. The Brisbane Grammar School, for example, offers 17 subjects other than board-required subjects—subjects such as Indonesian, aeronautics, motor mechanics, philosophy, journalism, consumer affairs, legal studies and so on. That attracts people to send their children there. It is not snob value, and it is not the merely wealthly who want to send their children to these schools. But if the Federal Government has its way, it will cut away tax rebates and it will cut away support from the independent schools to the point where they will become so exclusive that only the ultra-wealthy will be able to send their children there. In other words, by attacking the independent system, it will see to it that ultimately only children of extremely wealthy parents can afford to go to independent schools. At the moment, because of the bursary system and the number of scholarships and many other factors, a large number of children can still go to grammar schools without being members of the wealthy set. If the Labor Party has its way, it will, through its own ignorance, create just such a situation as I have outlined.

Our poor benighted socialists do not like an independent school system, whether it is a religious school system or a grammar school system. Because the honourable member for Rockhampton has electors in his electorate who hold religious views and may send their children to religious schools, and because he has parents voting for him who send their children to grammar schools, he has tried to make out for the sake of "Hansard" that he is all in favour of these things. But when he was heckled by my colleague from Windsor and one or two other enlightened people on this side, his true colours came out. What he really wanted to attack was the fact that some industrial awards make special exemptions for ground staff, clerical staff and others who work at grammar schools. Again I would ask what would be asked in any free enterprise system—"free enterprise" being another couple of words honourable members opposite do not readily comprehend. If it is so inequitable for clerical staff or ground staff to work at one of these schools, why do people ask for jobs there? Why are they so happy to stay there? Why is it that the non-academic staff at that sort of school are remembered by three and four generations?

They are people who hold their jobs much longer than the honourable member for Rockhampton will hold his job as a member in this Parliament. Such staff can often say to students, "I remember your father, grandfather and even great-grandfather." They are happy to work there, not necessarily because they are getting bigger wages. These days bigger wages do not mean much because Mr. Hayden gets the greater chop of them. The fact that they get better working conditions is a consideration that we could throw into the discussion. But again we come back to the fact that it is their choice to work there, and under a free enterprise system that is what really matters. This was a red herring that the honourable member for Rockhampton was forced into by my colleague from Windsor. Ultimately he actually came out against the system of independent schools as, in fact, we all knew he would. We knew it was for propaganda value aimed at a section of his voters that he tried to pretend otherwise.

The Australian Labor Party would love to squeeze out grammar schools. It would love to squeeze out all independent schools. Look at its new concept of "supported schools" that Mr. Beazley has brought out recently. Labor wants to get its tentacles into the syllabus and administration, to control the independent schools throughout the nation.

I come to my last point, and this is the only criticism I may have of the Bill. I refer to the proportion of representation of Government representatives and subscribers' representatives on the boards of trustees. I say that not because I do not trust the present Government to select very worth-while, hard-working and responsible Government representatives, but I shudder to think that the day might come—I suspect that it will be a long while away—when a socialist Government could get control in this State. Imagine what it would do if it were able to nominate a majority of trustees to the boards of schools. It is a mind-boggling thing and very difficult to conceive in the present circumstances, but it could happen. Imagine what would happen if it were able to nominate the majority of representatives on a grammar school board of trustees! It could do what in fact was done in this Parliament back in the 1920's when representatives were appointed to a particular Chamber only to vote themselves into oblivion. I should not like to think that a Government could reach the stage, which a Labor Government could sink to, where it could nominate the majority of people on a grammar school board only to scuttle the entire system. I should think that the devalued level of the endowment today, which as I pointed out earlier comes to about two teachers' annual salaries, and the meagre advantage of certain loan facilities referred to by the honourable member for Belmont, would not warrant the Government having a majority of nominees on the board of trustees. As at the moment, it is four to three. I would have thought that a

reversal of three to four would have been preferable, but that is in reality only hedging against the possibility of an irresponsible Labor Government in the future trying to do something ignoble with a majority of four nominees out of seven. In the hope that we will look at this again before the end of the century, by which time Labor could be regathering its strength, I will leave the matter lie for the moment.

I believe that the principle of choice, the principle of diversity in education and the principle of community involvement in education are very wonderful things. They are important things which have given education in this State a great deal. I hope they will continue to be principles which will give education in this State a great deal in the future, the remarks of Opposition members notwithstanding.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (10.30 p.m.): The Minister has not told us very much at all about the Bill, with the result that we are discussing something we know nothing whatever about.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. JENSEN: I am absolutely right. The highlight of this debate has been the way in which various members have spoken on something about which they have been given no information whatever.

Mr. Wright: What did you think of the contribution of the "actress" from South Brisbane?

Mr. JENSEN: I do not intend to comment on it. He has said that when a socialist Government comes to power it might do something drastic to our education system. I would remind him that for the 40 years prior to 1957, when the Labor Party was in office in Queensland, nothing whatever was done to harm the system. But I won't go into that; if I did I would only provoke an argument over a matter that has nothing to do with the Bill.

From some of the speeches made tonight it would appear that certain persons are of the view that only the rich can afford to send their children to grammar schools.

Mr. Lindsay: What are the term fees?

Mr. JENSEN: There were none if the pupil passed his Scholarship or Junior. I did not pay any fees to attend the Brisbane Grammar School. I want to get this straight; when the Brisbane Grammar School and the Ipswich and Toowoomba Grammar Schools were established they were attended by pupils from all walks of life. Parents other than those who were wealthy sent their children to those schools. My father was a pupil at the Brisbane Grammar School, as I was. He won a scholarship, and went there with the seat out of his pants. He won his scholarship to the Sydney University, at a time when there was not a university in Queensland and only three scholarships were awarded.

It is no good trying to argue that grammar schools are there only for the rich. I know, of course, that many pupils at the grammar schools are sons and daughters of rich parents, and that many of those children have no brains and are not capable of passing Scholarship or Junior. The State is spending a fortune on tertiary education, and I am looking forward to the day when it will receive real benefits in return.

From comments that are made from time to time, it would appear that the system under which we, and the great scientists who have succeeded in sending rockets and men to the moon, were educated was lacking in certain respects. I cannot see that anything was lacking. The present educationists, however, are setting out to change our system entirely to accommodate in the universities and other tertiary institutions people who simply should not be there. They should be out learning a trade. This country lives on the skill of the tradesman, not on the efforts of the academic who attends the university.

Mr. Frawley: What are you talking about? Your party is full of rat-bags, radicals, academics, lesbians, homosexuals, and all the rest of them.

Mr. JENSEN: The honourable member for Murrumba would be the greatest rat-bag in the National Party. He and his colleagues continually talk rubbish of the type we have heard tonight. He would not know what he is talking about.

Until we see the Bill we should not speak further on it.

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education and Cultural Activities) (10.35 p.m.), in reply: I introduced the Bill at the request of representatives of the grammar schools, who realised that, as the Act had not been amended for some years, it was about time it was tidied up. I thought I made that clear at the outset. The debate has ranged far beyond the purposes for which the Bill was introduced. In the light of the knowledge honourable members have that at the introductory stage they are allowed to depart from the Bill and raise their own little problems and arguments about various matters, I suppose I cannot blame them for referring to matters which they might know do not pertain to the Bill.

Mr. Moore: And rightly so.

Mr. BIRD: And rightly so.

Mr. Wright: The Minister did say "for related purposes".

Mr. BIRD: That is so, and they did get away from the purpose of the Bill.

I do not intend to take up the time of the Committee in dealing with matters that are not pertinent to the Bill. I was at a loss to understand the comments of the honourable member for Isis, who said, firstly, that we are very short of funds for education. Nobody knows better than I the exact position with regard to funds for education in Queensland. No doubt the position is similar in all Australian States. Then, in departing from the purpose of the Bill, he said that if grammar schools were given any financial benefit all non-State schools should get the same benefit.

The honourable member for Rockhampton spoke on much the same lines about whether funds should continue to be used in non-State schools. His comments were in line with those of many other honourable members. I agree that that suggestion has to be considered, but I would not like to say that, at the present time, we should take away this support and suddenly find ourselves burdened with additional children who would have to be placed in State schools.

The honourable member for Rockhampton referred also to the exemption from payment of award rates to certain staff members at grammar schools. He knows as well as I do that that pertains only to kitchenmaids who are paid under the Boarding House Employees, etc. Award.

Mr. Wright: And laundrymaids, too, in some cases.

Mr. BIRD: Boarding schools are exempt from the award. Honourable members who followed this matter prior to the decisions being made know that a very strong case was presented by the charitable organisations. I was not aware that grammar schools were included, but obviously they were.

Mr. Wright: You certainly could not call them charitable organisations.

Mr. BIRD: At the time the judge apparently did, and this evening I am not arguing with his decision. He saw fit to include them under the Religious Educational and Charitable Institutions Act. If a grammar school used a contractor to supply and prepare food, the contractor would have to pay his staff according to the Industrial Food Services Act, and would have to pay them the correct award rate. I do not wish to pursue that argument this evening. It is obvious that the judge, in making his decision, took all these things into account. The honourable member for Rockhampton also referred to wealthy schools. If he had available to him the figures that I have at the present time, he would realise that there are no wealthy schools in Queensland.

Mr. Wright: I said that they are not flush with money. I recognised that.

Mr. BIRD: They most certainly are not. I might say that it is of great concern to me and I am sure that it is to every clear-thinking member.

The honourable member for Ashgrove spoke about the impositions placed on non-State schools by the Federal A.L.P. Government. Without pursuing this matter to any great length, I say that, although in past years finance has been given to non-State schools by the Federal Government, I am worried that that will dry up—there is every indication it will—and that a greater burden will again be placed on the States. Let us hope I am wrong.

The honourable member for Isis spoke of the lack of funds for State schools and said that we should give additional money to the private schools as well as to grammar schools. I am a little at a loss to understand just which way he wants it.

Perhaps I could refer to one other matter briefly. Our grammar schools could be regarded as the nearest thing we have to State boarding schools. We know the problems confronting country people at the present time. I know that not all country children attend grammar schools; nevertheless quite a few of them do. As I said, these could be regarded as the nearest thing we have to State boarding schools. They are not sectarian and their doors are open to everybody.

The honourable member for Belmont adopted a similar approach to that of the honourable member for Isis on whether or not we should continue to support the grammar schools financially. This is not covered by the Bill and I do not wish to elaborate on it.

The honourable member for South Brisbane strongly supported the grammar schools, as did the honourable member for Bundaberg.

I realise that I did not give very much information on the contents of the Bill during my introductory speech. As I said, it is my intention to let the Bill lie on the table for a reasonable period so that all interested persons may study its contents. I will be open to any suggestions that may be put forward at the second-reading stage.

Motion (Mr. Bird) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.