

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 1975

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QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. and 2. NON-DEGRADABLE PESTICIDES

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

(1) With reference to his answer to my question last week in relation to the regulation of the sale and use of non-degradable pesticides, has he read and studied the articles in "The Sunday Mail" of 7 September and "The Courier-Mail" of 9 September on the subject?

(2) As both the Queensland and national presidents of the Nurserymen's Association, as well as a prominent local nurseryman, were reported as saying that Australia turned a blind eye to the application of sprays which were 100 times stronger than those permitted overseas, and in view of other statements by nurserymen that they have become sick and that others have ended up mentally ill, is any action planned to review previous decisions on this matter?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) It is entirely incorrect to say that Australia turned a blind eye to the application of sprays 100 times stronger than those permitted overseas. Pesticide registration in Queensland is based on minimum effective dosage for the particular pests concerned and the only way to achieve greater dosages than those permitted overseas would be to ignore label directions. These directions also show the necessary precautions to be taken in the use of the pesticide. The National Health and Medical Research Council has the subject of pesticides under continual surveillance and Queensland will examine any recommendation from authentic sources such as the council. It would be completely irresponsible to be stampeded into unwarranted action by alarmist reports.

WEDNESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 1975

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

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Reports—

The Nominal Defendant (Queensland), for the year 1974–75.

Beach Protection Authority, for the year 1974–75.

Orders in Council under—

Racing and Betting Act 1954–1974.

The State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1965.

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

Harbours Act 1955–1972.

Regulations under the Public Service Act 1922–1973.

By-laws under the Harbours Act 1955–1972.

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

(1) Has he studied the Queensland Conservation Council circular which highlights the dangers of chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides (CHCs) such as DDT, dieldrin, lindane and 2,4,5-T and related compounds?

(2) Can these CHC pesticides contaminate our foodstuffs, waterways, wildlife and body tissue?

(3) Are tests carried out in Queensland on the pesticide levels in food and, if so, with what result?

(4) Did the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council recommend in 1970 that chlorinated hydrocarbons be phased out over five years from 1 January 1973?

(5) Are we implementing such a programme in Queensland?

(6) Are better alternative pesticides and biological-control methods available, as suggested by the Queensland Conservation Council?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes, if used carelessly and indiscriminately.

(3) Yes. Regular testing is carried out over a large range of foodstuffs. A market basket approach carried out by the National Health and Medical Research Council has shown there is no risk to human health in normal diets and ongoing surveys show very few significant residues.

(4) No.

(5) No final phasing-out period has been laid down.

(6) The phasing-out programme is proceeding on the basis of acceptable alternatives being available as a result of research. Remaining uses will be phased out when acceptable alternatives are available, and in this regard, of course, we in Queensland will always be willing to examine any recommendations for alternative control methods.

3. INVESTIGATION INTO POLICE ACTIVITIES

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

(1) Is he aware of two conflicting newspaper reports, one of which said that the two Scotland Yard detectives are investigating only the Southport case, while the second said that the two detectives were going back ten years in the activities of the Licensing Branch?

(2) Which report is correct?

(3) Would not these investigations be best carried out by a proper judicial inquiry?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) As the Southport case is related to activities of personnel at the Licensing Branch, Brisbane, both reports are correct. The investigation includes the activities of personnel who have been stationed at the Licensing Branch during the last ten years.

(3) No.

4. WOMEN AND POLITICS CONFERENCE, CANBERRA

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

As a number of women speakers at the Women and Politics Convention recently held in Canberra used four-letter words

and as on some occasions speakers used swear words to describe people they did not like, will he endeavour to persuade the Prime Minister to publicly denounce such irresponsible behaviour?

Answer:—

I saw and heard on television one of these speakers addressing the conference in question. Her language did no credit to her and, in my opinion, was a blot on the standards of womanhood. It is incredible to think that these people were brought to Canberra at the instance of, I believe, Miss Elizabeth Reid, and with the Prime Minister's approval, at the taxpayers' expense. In reply to the honourable member, all I can say is that obviously there would be little point in my making representations to the Prime Minister in the matter.

5. LOW-POWERED MOTOR-CYCLES AND SCOOTERS

Mr. Byrne, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

In view of the fact that, since the determination of the regulations, there has been a marked increase in the proportion of vehicles over 100 c.c. and the average lower-powered cycle or scooter now made exceeds 100 c.c., will he consider rationalising the present anomaly in relation to the registration and provision of third-party insurance?

Answer:—

Third-party insurance premiums are fixed under the Motor Vehicles Insurance Act administered by my colleague the Honourable the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, to whom this question should be directed.

6. LAND ON CORNER OF CREEK AND GREENMEADOW ROADS, MANSFIELD

Mr. Byrne, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) Who is the present owner of the land on the southern corner of Creek and Greenmeadow Roads, Mansfield?

(2) Has permission been sought by the owners to construct a shopping centre there? If so, when will the construction commence?

Answers:—

(1) I am informed that the owner as recorded in the city council's ratebook is Stephenson Developments, of 19 Garie Street, Upper Mt. Gravatt.

(2) I am also informed that no application has been received by the council for permission to construct a shopping centre on the site.

7. FERAL PIGS

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

(1) In view of the expressed concern in recent Press articles about the effect of feral pigs on the grain and grazing industries, has he given consideration to the easing of this problem?

(2) What avenues may farmers pursue in order to ease the problems caused by these pigs?

Answers:—

(1) The Co-ordinating Board, at its recent meeting, recognised that the feral pig problem has reached such a degree of crisis as to demand immediate combatant action and thus recommended that the trials which it had been conducting using "1080" poison should be extended into eradication campaigns. Approval was given on 1 September 1975 to the Co-ordinating Board's recommendation that, for the immediate institution of these poisoning campaigns, a Co-ordinating Feral Pig Committee be established to act as a working party to carry out the decisions of the Co-ordinating Board. The Committee comprises the following board members—The Superintendent of Stock Routes, Mr. W. D. S. Harpham (representative of the United Graziers Association); Mr. V. J. Coggan (representative of the Council of Agriculture and member of the Grain-growers Association); Mr. D. C. Sturrock (representative of the Local Government Association); and Mr. K. M. Grant (officer of the Department of Primary Industries). The Superintendent of Stock Routes, the Chief Rabbit Control Officer and the Vermin Control Officer, all officers of the Department of Lands, will organise the campaigns. Initially, poisoning will be concentrated in grain-growing areas. Temporary regional committees will be established in areas where campaigns are to be undertaken to arrange for liaison between the participating landholders and the poisoning operators. Suitable regions for baiting are at present being determined but it is expected that very shortly baiting will begin in the Emerald region, as well as on the Darling Downs.

(2) It is suggested that all affected landholders approach their local authority office, either to contact regional committee or to assist in having such a committee established. No solution to the pig problem other than organised and supervised "1080" poisoning is in sight.

8. ACCESS ROAD TO MEANDARRA WHEAT DUMP

Mr. Neal, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

With reference to a request for the sealing of the access road through the

railway yards to the Meandarra wheat dump, as the commencement of wheat harvesting in that area is not many weeks away and as the road in its present condition creates a severe dust nuisance to fettlers' homes, what progress has been made with the Wheat Board to alleviate this menace?

Answer:—

I advised the honourable member on 21 August 1975 that preparatory to communicating with the State Wheat Board, I was ascertaining both the extent of the bitumen surface which would require to be provided to overcome the dust nuisance and the cost involved. The relevant details have now been obtained and in a letter directed to the board yesterday it was indicated by the Commissioner for Railways that he would be prepared to meet 50 per cent of the cost of the work if the board agreed to make a similar contribution to the cost.

9. TEACHERS' HOUSES AT ST. GEORGE

Mr. Neal, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

What is the anticipated completion date for the four teachers' houses at St. George?

Answer:—

It is anticipated that this contract, comprising the erection of four buildings, will be completed progressively by the end of October.

10. GOVERNMENT RAIL AND HOUSING COSTS IN CENTRAL QUEENSLAND COALFIELDS

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

What was the cost to this Government of the construction of rail lines, rolling-stock and housing in all coalfields in Central Queensland?

Answer:—

The short, broad answer is that these developments are financed by the coal companies and cost the State practically nothing in capital outlay. On the other hand, railway facilities provided by the companies become the property of the State, and provide a tremendous boost to the State's economy in addition to the profits from the railways operation and the mineral royalties. The State contributes to the infrastructure by providing some of the houses and the public utilities such as schools and police stations. It also subsidises the local authorities on costs of drainage, street works, etc. These costs are insignificant in relation to the benefits.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

BUS/RAIL INTERCHANGE FOR OXLEY AND DARRA

Mr. MARGINSON: I ask the Minister for Transport: Is there any truth in the rumour circulating in the Darra-Oxley area that the bus/rail interchange proposed to be established at the Darra Railway Station is now to be established at the Oxley Railway Station?

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: I, too, have heard something of this rumour, and I have prepared some notes in reply to it. My colleague the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport, who is the member for Sherwood, has been particularly interested in this matter, and he has put forward very strongly indeed the interests of Oxley in this project.

At Oxley a bus/rail interchange is being constructed, and work has commenced on phase 1, a new \$61,000 awning from the station to the existing stairs. The C.W.A. hall is to be re-located, and a covered bus stop will be provided for Tavistock Street. New car-parking facilities for Tavistock Street in the east, and Ardoyne Road in the west, are also planned for over 100 cars. A new subway entry and room to facilitate pram movement are to be provided. We are also going to demolish the old waiting room and provide a new brick waiting area. On present planning, Oxley will be our first bus/rail interchange, which should be completed in the next two years. The outstanding problem at Oxley is replacement of the Seventeen Mile Rocks Road bridge. The Brisbane City Council, of course, has this responsibility.

At Darra, similar works to those proposed at Oxley are being planned to cater for a major bus/rail transfer, as well as improved parking for about 84 cars. We plan to remove part of the trackwork east of the station and use the railway land along Railway Parade for a covered bus/rail interchange facility. In both these locations provision will also be made for taxis and "kiss-'n'-ride" patrons. Adequate provision will also be made for an improved landscape by the planting of trees, shrubs, etc. There is therefore no truth in the rumour.

BEEF INDUSTRY ASSISTANCE LEVY ON CONSUMERS

Mr. HARTWIG: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: As the livestock producers' share of the Australian beef dollar has dropped from 61c in 1971 to 30c in June 1975, and as it appears that producers have subsidised cheap meat to the consumers, does he believe that a consumer-tax levy would be justified in view of the Australian Agricultural Council's not agreeing to a floor-price scheme?

Mr. SULLIVAN: In answer to the honourable member's question—I believe I must be in favour of a beef industry assistance levy, which would entail a higher price to the consumer, because it would help relieve the present parlous economic plight of the beef producer.

I say I must be in favour of it because at the Agricultural Council meeting in Canberra last Friday I went into battle on behalf of the Queensland producers. The New South Wales Minister presented a minimum-price scheme, which had some merit but would not be very beneficial to Queensland as an exporter of large quantities of beef. Senator Wriedt was informed by the New South Wales Minister that I had a proposal to put forward on behalf of Queensland in relation to a beef industry assistance levy, and before I had the opportunity to outline my proposal Senator Wriedt said he would not be prepared to take it to his Cabinet. This did not surprise me, of course; we are well aware of the attitude of the Canberra Ministers to the beef industry.

I believe that if the situation is brought to the notice of the people of Australia—I consider I am capable of putting it before them correctly—they will be prepared to pay more for beef and its consumption will not decline.

There is presently a case before the Industries Assistance Commission, and the report on it will go to the Federal Government within a fortnight. How long it will take for the Federal Government to act upon it, I am not sure, and what notice the Federal Government will take of any recommendations contained in the report is a matter purely for conjecture at this stage.

STATE TOURS BY LEADER OF OPPOSITION

Mr. KATTER: I ask the Premier: Is he aware of tours of the State made by the Leader of the Opposition in an aircraft privately owned by a housing construction millionaire? Is he also aware of the fact that the aircraft with its party of tourists put down in one northern city, where a cheque for \$1,000 was donated to a local school? Finally, does the Premier believe that such Santa Claus-like tours by the Leader of the Opposition and his millionaire friend would have any effect upon his objectivity if in the future he were to become Premier and were called upon to decide who would secure State housing contracts?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I do not know who the millionaire friends of the Leader of the Opposition are, but I understand that he has several of them around Brisbane. That seems to be contrary to his generally expressed philosophy of being a Labor man. Be that as it may, he is entitled to move around the State. Whoever takes him around may be prepared to extend this gesture to the Leader of the Opposition, and that is his business.

On the matter of the \$1,000 cheque donation to the school, I should say that the school was lucky. I do not know whether the honourable member gave it out of his own pocket, or how the donation was made.

Mr. Burns: Ask me a question on notice and I'll tell you.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition suggests that I should ask him a question.

In reply to the last part of the honourable member's question, as to whether this could influence the Leader of the Opposition at some future time should he become Premier, as that situation will never arise there is no need to worry about it.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES BY MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Mr. FRAWLEY: I ask the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs: Is he aware that the honourable member for Rockhampton has spoken on consumer affairs at various centres, claiming that he is authorised by the Consumer Affairs Bureau to speak on its behalf? Can he inform the House if in fact the member for Rockhampton is an accredited speaker for the Consumer Affairs Bureau?

Mr. CAMPBELL: I am acquainted with the manner in which the honourable member for Rockhampton keeps very close contact with the consumer affairs organisation in his electorate. However, quite a number of members have alerted me to the concern they feel because the honourable member for Rockhampton has engaged in promoting the idea of consumerism in their electorates, and I know that those activities have occasioned considerable resentment.

ORDER IN GALLERY

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much noise in the gallery.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (11.53 a.m.), by leave: Did the Leader of the Opposition ask that caviar and champagne be included on the menu of the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms, and, if these are provided, will the resultant extra charge apply only to those A.L.P. members who order them and not to the plain corned-beef-and-damper type of politician like myself?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The question is facetious, and it is out of order.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (11.55 a.m.), by leave: I believe it is necessary to make some comments in view of the question without notice asked this morning by the honourable member for Murrumba of the

Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs. I wish to state straight out that I have travelled all over the State in the interests of consumer affairs, and wherever possible I have always contacted the members of Parliament in those areas. The honourable member for Townsville South sent his representative to a recent meeting in Townsville. I received telegrams of apology from the honourable member for Townsville West and other members, including the honourable member for Townsville. The honourable member for Maryborough was also sent a telegram inviting him to a meeting, and the honourable member for Isis made his time available to come to such a meeting. I have always promoted consumer affairs. I have always appreciated the assistance given by the Minister to consumer protection in this State and I have always acknowledged that assistance in publications such as the magazine "Checkout". I want to state in this House that I respect the Minister and thank him for the assistance he has given to both the honourable member for Rockhampton North and me in this matter. He has been in Rockhampton and assisted us in many, many ways. The only reason that the honourable member for Murrumba asked the question he did was that yesterday I was invited by the Caboolture school to go to that school to speak on consumer protection, not on behalf of the Consumer Affairs Bureau.

Mr. AIKENS: I rise to a point of order. I did send a representative along to the meeting called in Townsville. Since then my representative has pulled out and asked for his money back; he realised what an A.L.P. racket it is.

CHIROPODISTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

AMBULANCE SERVICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

MOTOR VEHICLES CONTROL BILL

THIRD READING

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

STATE COUNTER-DISASTER ORGANIZATION BILL

THIRD READING

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

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS ACT
AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

ACCOMMODATION CRISIS

Mr. HALES (Ipswich West) (12.1 p.m.): I wish to highlight the growing accommodation crisis.

It is an unfortunate fact that, because of the Federal Government's fiscal policies, the building industry is at a very low ebb indeed. Not only is the private sector operating at near half pace but also the Queensland Housing Commission will not now be able to continue to register record levels in its building programmes.

Last year the commission built a total of 2,283 homes. However, because of the decrease in allocation from the Federal Budget—in fact, \$12,000,000 less than last year—I estimate that only approximately half that number of homes will be erected this year.

Let us examine the figures. In 1974-75 Queensland's allocation for welfare housing was \$43,000,000; the 1975-76 allocation is \$31,000,000. If one takes into account the inflation rate of 16 per cent or more, \$50,000,000 would be needed by the Housing Commission this year to build the same number of dwellings as it built last year. It is very apparent that this year's allocation of \$31,000,000 will be similarly eroded by inflation and will have a purchasing power of approximately \$26,000,000 when related to the 1974-75 figures. Therefore, it is evident that the accommodation crisis will become more acute.

Let us go further, Mr. Speaker, and compare Queensland's allocation with that of other States in the 1975-76 year. The figures are—

| | \$ million |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| New South Wales .. | 123.4 (equal to 1974-75) |
| Victoria .. | 98.2 (equal to 1974-75) |
| South Australia .. | 56.4 (equal to 1974-75) |
| Queensland .. | 31.0 (reduced by \$12,800,000) |
| Western Australia .. | 33.4 (reduced by \$4,000,000) |
| Tasmania .. | 22.4 (reduced by \$4,000,000) |

This illustrates the shabby treatment given to Queensland by our own Federal Treasurer, Bill Hayden, particularly when one realises that the Oxley electorate takes in so many low-income earners desperately seeking low-rental accommodation. Areas such as Leichhardt, Dinmore, Riverview and Inala have substantial numbers of Housing Commission dwellings. In Ipswich alone 210 families are awaiting Housing Commission accommodation, and this figure grows daily. The total Housing Commission waiting list is some thousands. The commission has a land stock of 84 allotments and 135 hectares in the Ipswich area, which would allow a

massive building programme to take place in Ipswich alone, without taking into account the rest of Queensland. So much for the public sector, Mr. Speaker!

In the private sector, 1,783 skilled building workers were registered as unemployed at 30 June this year. That compares with only 116 registered at the same time last year. Private enterprise—especially the flagging building industry, which is always a barometer of the economy—needs a definite boost.

To illustrate the down-turn in the building industry—commencements in March 1974 were 7,140, whereas commencements in June 1975 were 4,826, a fall of 32 per cent, and it is significant that Queensland's figures are well below the Australian average. This can be attributed to perhaps two major factors—very high interest rates and lack of business confidence.

Let us have a look at the first of those factors, Mr. Speaker. Two years ago the rate for borrowing from building societies was stable at 8 per cent. Now that interest rate is 10½ to 11 per cent. Very recently building societies reduced interest rates by 1 per cent, but it is common knowledge in the money market that this rate will very likely rise again as the flow of money to building societies dries up. Few home-seekers can afford to repay loans at such high interest rates. An average loan of \$20,000 at 11 per cent interest entails a repayment of \$50 per week, and not many home-seekers can afford such repayments. Consequently, building societies are awash with money. In fact, the Mackay Permanent Building Society notified the public recently that it was suspending deposits for the time being, and some major Brisbane building societies have up to 40 per cent liquidity because borrowers cannot afford high repayments. Banks also are lending money at 10 to 11.5 per cent, and these high interest rates will not substantially fall until the inflation rate is brought under control and reduced to less than 10 per cent per annum.

Mr. Armstrong: All brought about by the Canberra Government.

Mr. HALES: Quite true.

I turn now to the second item, business confidence, which is built on the premise that reasonable profits can be achieved. All the jawboning of the Federal Ministers to try to engender business confidence will have no effect whatever.

In today's market-place the major bogey is inflation, whose unpredictability in relation to future rates makes it impossible to estimate future costs and revenues. Until the Federal Government establishes some new tax laws to incorporate inflation accounting and also takes more positive measures to lower inflation rates, business confidence will not quickly pick up again.

I wish to put forward to both the State and Federal Governments a novel suggestion to bring about an upturn in the building industry. My proposal is that the State Governments reduce building society interest rates to depositors to, say, 7 per cent; provided the Federal Government allows income tax exemption on interest on deposits. In this way the depositor would receive a return similar to that obtained presently after taxation, and the new lower interest rate of 8½ per cent to borrowers would certainly enable more young couples to purchase homes. If my suggestion is adopted there will be a major upsurge in the building and kindred industries thereby helping our economy along a new upward path.

To illustrate my concern I quote from a recent Queensland housing quarterly, as follows:—

“Commencements down 25 per cent due entirely to a fall in private starts.

“Reduced building activity particularly on speculative projects in south-east areas of the State; little resumption of work on previously abandoned projects.

“Orders to contract builders at a low level and few uncommenced orders on hand at end of quarter.

“Demand for rental accommodation high; rents increasing. Consumer and business confidence low.

“As yet, no indications of sustained overall improvement in building activity.”

The current issue of “Ryldges” states—

“Building Slump Bottoms Out

“Feeling among major building industry suppliers is that the home building slump has bottomed out and there should be a modest but steady improvement from now on. Crux of the problem is high interest rates on mortgages, coupled with the sharp rise in labour and material costs. Obviously interest rates cannot be lowered and other costs stabilised until the rate of inflation is substantially arrested. Nothing has come out of Canberra to indicate that Australian Government is capable of doing much to slow down inflation. Till this is done, however, the building industry will remain sluggish.”

The July issue of “Landline”, the journal of the Real Estate and Stock Institute of Australia, under the headline “Another Housing Crisis” states—

“There is now a critical shortage of rental accommodation throughout Australia. The renter faces not only longer searches to locate accommodation but also rising rents.

“What’s gone wrong?

“The cost of new homes has gone up enormously over the last year. Coupled with high interest rates, potential new home owners have had to defer purchases. This has added to the demand for rental accommodation.

“Inflation has also pushed up building costs and interest rates for investors. A potential investor must now look for rents far in excess of present levels to give a reasonable return. Add the low level of business confidence and the investor has deferred building.”

Those extracts from three articles reinforce my argument that interest rates are alarmingly high and business confidence abysmally low.

Finally, I submit that at this stage two measures are necessary to obviate the present housing accommodation crisis. The first is a short-term measure, namely, a massive influx of funds to the Queensland Housing Commission to enable that department to keep building at record levels. Secondly, and more importantly, the Federal Government should take more positive measures to arrest and lower the high inflation rate.

UNCONTROLLED USE OF CHEMICALS TO CONTROL PESTS

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (12.11 p.m.): I want to use this debate today to protest to the Government on its attitude towards the continuing and apparently unrestricted use of pesticides, insecticides, weedicides, fungicides, herbicides, etc., which is arousing more and more people in the community to voice their protest to me and my colleagues. No doubt Government members are also aware of public resentment.

Mr. Turner interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I heard the interjection made by the honourable member for Warrego. If I were he I would be very careful to keep away from DDT because it is sudden death to grubs.

Unlike Government members who are in a position to do something about it but have failed to do so, I take this opportunity to protest to the Government in the hope that I may rouse it from its apparent lack of interest.

Each day I get letters from persons expressing concern at the numbers of dead wildlife they observe in suburban areas. Only recently a prominent naturalist and writer, Ian Gall, stated that he had not observed the common peewee in his suburban garden for some three years.

There is mounting evidence that the unrestricted use of chemicals is causing a decline in the productivity of our land, and that marine populations are becoming extinct merely because they are no longer able to cope with increasing pollution of the environment caused by the build-up of chemicals.

Almost all wildlife species are affected by the use of chemicals, which, in many cases, are deadly poisons. Yet despite the warnings and speeches that have emanated from this

side of the House from time to time, no action by the Government has been discernible.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: In reply to the honourable member for Salisbury, I would like to say to her that if the theory of reincarnation is correct—

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

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Very well, Mr. Speaker. Through you I point out that, in that event, she will probably reappear as a spangled drongo.

Mrs. KYBURZ: I rise to a point of order. I object to the honourable member alluding to me in terms of being reincarnated. I would like to know why he thinks I believe in reincarnation. In any event I did not even interject.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Archerfield to accept that explanation.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I do so.

The Government's almost laissez-faire attitude seems to indicate that not only does it not know the answer but, indeed, it does not even understand the problem.

The whole crux of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is not only bound up with the obvious—

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I will not tolerate any more frivolity. I ask the honourable member to get on with his speech, and I ask honourable members to refrain from persistent interjections.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I appreciate your protection, Mr. Speaker.

The whole crux of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is bound up not only with the obvious destruction of wildlife species, which nobody in the community can applaud, but also with the hidden implications behind these examples that should and must give cause for concern.

The time has long since passed when the protests of persons who become agitated about the extinction of wildlife should be dismissed as the utterings of emotional cranks. There is far too much scientific evidence to show that the death of these species, far from being merely the end result of misuse of insecticides, etc., is the barometer of the chain reaction stemming from the uncontrolled use of chemicals to control pests. It is imperative that we understand the perils we create when we use insecticides.

It would be all so simple if what we were using were biodegradable and so disappeared after it had performed its work. But that is not the case. It would be all

so simple, too, if we were able to achieve the destruction of the particular pest species and nothing else. But the stark truth about modern chemical warfare on pests is that the chemical does not disappear, and that we cannot just kill the target species we are after. The chemical builds up in the ground as a residue, and through rain and the elements finds its way into the streams and oceans, contaminating every species it contacts on the way. It not only kills the target species but every other similar living species in the vicinity. That could well be likened to shooting the whole populace merely to kill one bandit.

Mr. Doumany: Who wrote your speech?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: These, briefly, are some of the known facts in regard to the use of DDT—

1. It accumulates in the body fats of all animals.

That includes the honourable member for Kurilpa.

2. It has been proved beyond doubt that it affects the reproduction ability of the lower order of animals.

3. It is found in the body fats of human beings, and, indeed, has reached such high proportions of incidence in human milk as to tempt scientists to suggest that babies in certain countries should no longer be breast fed.

I hope the honourable member for Salisbury takes particular note of that.

4. It can pass by ingestion down a complete food chain, that is, from algae to plankton, to minute fish, to large fish, to sea birds, etc.

5. By this method it can be ingested by man because of his part in the chain by consuming fish. No doubt that also applies to meat and vegetables.

6. Each time it passes to a further member of the food chain it doubles its potency.

I could go on indefinitely, Mr. Speaker, showing that little or no disagreement exists among scientists about the injurious effects of insecticides on wildlife populations. Suffice it to say that two of the most dramatic examples of their destructive effectiveness are to be seen in the extinction in America of the peregrine falcon and the decline in the salmon numbers in North America. Both of those have been traced to the effects of the excessive use of insecticides and related substances in the countryside. For some time many States of America have banned the use of DDT.

But what of Australia and, for that matter, our State? Some time ago, with a great fanfare, the Government introduced a body known as the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Board. It introduced an Act, not to prohibit the use of undesirable chemicals, but to legalise their use; to lay down the

procedure to control the bulk-spraying of poisonous chemicals. That Bill was one that, at best, could be described as the charter for the chemical industry. The legislation has become notorious for the number of times that it has been breached. There have been continual complaints of crop damage caused by spray drift. Indeed, I believe that these complaints are as frequent now as they were before the Act became law.

Local authorities apparently spray and poison birds, plants, and insects and, as long as no apparent harm is done to domestic animals, that is considered to be perfectly all right. Commerce sells highly concentrated forms of all types of potent, killer chemicals to all types of inexperienced persons, who can spray away to their hearts' content without knowing the potency of the chemical they are handling, let alone its effects. But the piece de resistance must surely be the warning on packets of garden seeds to the effect that, because they have been treated with some poisonous substance, they should be kept out of the reach of children. The common pea seed has now become a lethal weapon.

The plain, unvarnished truth, Mr. Speaker, is that today inexperienced citizens are handling by-products of chemicals that were developed during war-time for the extinction of human beings—by-products that have now been adapted for use in pest control. The obvious effects of this folly are shown in the death of wildlife, which is becoming an everyday occurrence. The hidden effects on mankind have yet to be discovered.

Mr. Doumany: What is your solution?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am coming to that. If the honourable member is patient, he will hear it.

I am not denigrating the correct use of chemicals in pest control. I am aware of the benefits that the correct use of those chemicals can bring. What I am protesting about, however, is that the Government apparently does not care a damn about the abundant evidence that their unrestricted use is having a deleterious effect on the environment. The Government is apparently prepared to accept the assurances of the chemical companies that their products are safe. It in no way monitors the effect on the environment of their unrestricted use.

There can be no doubt whatsoever that the continuing onslaught with chemical pesticides, etc., must pollute our air, land and water, and that eventually must affect the quality of life through its effect on food production. The obvious destruction of wildlife, examples of which are to be found in the poisoned carcasses of various species, should serve as a warning to us all. It is imperative that the Government act on this pollution problem.

I take the opportunity to refer to today's editorial in "The Courier-Mail", which is the epitome of crusading journalism in this State. Under the heading "Pesticides", it says—

"The Federal and State Governments should make a greater effort to find out if dangerous pesticides are being used in Australia, and where and why.

"They should do this through independent scientific authorities.

"It is alarming, for example, that Japan has exported to Australia agricultural chemicals which are banned for use in Japan.

"Equally alarming is the claim made last year by a Brisbane scientist that babies drinking mothers' milk are exposed in parts of Queensland to amounts of pesticides sometimes exceeding acceptable intakes established by the World Health Organisation.

"The public, which is not expert on these matters, must look to the authorities for guidance, and for protection—should investigation show that protection is needed.

"No one suggests that all sprays and poisons should be banned. The need is to make sure that dangerous ones are not used in a manner which can create a health problem. Certainly pesticides are necessary, both for food production and protection of housing.

"If scientific advice to the Governments confirms that there is a danger, then obviously control—probably at all levels of Government—are needed."

In conclusion, I suggest to the Government that the best way to control the unrestricted use of pesticides is to set up an environmental research laboratory to monitor the levels of insecticide pollution so that we may discover a way of dealing with the problem—a laboratory equipped and manned by persons who understand what it is all about, a laboratory whose findings could well sustain the advantages of the use of such chemicals without risking the destruction of the environment.

INCREASING UNEMPLOYMENT THROUGH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S MISMANAGEMENT

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (12.20 p.m.): The matter of public interest I wish to speak about this afternoon is the present level of unemployment compared with that of three years ago. I wish also to make some comment on remedying the current problem so that the records of this Parliament will show, and the people of Queensland will be made aware, how this State, which consistently and proudly led Australia up to three years ago in industries of growth, investment and expectation is methodically being destroyed.

To do this I shall look at the picture in the broad. The most dramatic illustration I can give is that, despite an increase in population in the past three years, the total of salary and wage earners in Queensland at the end of June this year was down 2,000 to 650,400. To say that this compared most favourably with an accelerating trend both in the growth and level of employment recorded in each of several preceding years is the understatement of the year.

Because of buoyancy in business and growth in productivity and job opportunity, our unemployment three years ago was the lowest of all States, plans for further development and industrial decentralisation were being drawn, resource exploration was in full swing and considerable investment capital was poised ready to come in. It was a picture—and a fact—that rightly gave sound cause for the greatest of optimism.

Now, because of shocking Federal economic mismanagement, 4.6 per cent of our work-force is actually unemployed and the percentage on a seasonally adjusted basis is 6.51, resource exploration is virtually nil, at least four major projects worth hundreds of millions of dollars have been either lost or deferred and investment capital, understandably, has taken fright.

The end result is, of course, that because of our larger available work-force, a further 2,000 have gone into unemployment, productivity has fallen and, with it, capital expenditure on expansion.

The paradox of the employment picture is that the most significant decreases have occurred in areas of real productivity—manufacturing, building and construction, and so on—and the most significant increases in non-productive sectors such as Government, hotels, entertainment etc. This unsatisfactory directional flow obviously must be reversed by constructive policies which encourage productive capacity through investment and minerals exploration and reduce inflation. Obviously, after it has been more than 2½ years in Government, these will not be forthcoming from a socialist party dedicated to the destruction of private enterprise.

Month after month the Federal Government continues to mislead the public through such vacuous statements as “Signs of stabilisation continue”, “The rate of increase in unemployment is decreasing”, and “The Government’s economic policies are starting to grip.”

It would appear that the Australian Labor Party, which in 1972 regarded the prevailing national unemployment figure of 1.5 per cent as scandalous, considers in 1975 that a figure approaching 5 per cent indicates a position of relative unemployment stability. So much for its 1972 boast of full employment.

This week it came up with a marvellous, new excuse for its abysmal failure to reduce soaring unemployment figures. It blamed the scaling down of the sugar-coated dole scheme, which it introduced merely to camouflage the real total of unemployed, for the transfer of 4,500 more Australians to the registered list. And there are a further 26,000 to come who are still employed on R.E.D. schemes.

What utter hypocrisy is this? The curtain is dropping on the most cynical farce ever presented in the name of practical government. Twelve months ago, the then Federal Minister for Labor (Mr. Cameron) attempted to dissipate national wrath and disgust over Labor’s abdication of its responsibilities by announcing a \$10,000,000-a-month scheme to throw crusts to the jobless. He endeavoured to “sell” to unemployed Australians that labouring on community works, no matter how worth while, was just as good as working in the secure jobs of their own choice (and in their own trades) that they held before.

Now, with unemployment still rising, the Federal Government has thrown out a scheme which at least permitted retention of pride, and has offered no substitute. It has discovered what all Australia has known for more than two years—that palliatives are no substitute for policies. It has come to realise that although swimming pools, tennis courts and city gardens are excellent, they make no contribution to the creation of jobs through higher productivity.

Mr. Jensen: Put it all into housing and they make a contribution.

Mr. CAMPBELL: At least the honourable member for Bundaberg acknowledges the validity of what I am saying.

Now we are back to square one. The present Federal Minister for Labor (Senator McClelland) has firmly predicted—

Mr. K. J. Hooper: He knows more about mosquitoes.

Mr. CAMPBELL: That is a very interesting comment from the honourable member for Archerfield.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I’m only trying to help, so don’t get nasty.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I take it that he regards the latest Minister for Labor in the Federal Government as having more knowledge of mosquitoes than he has of employment conditions.

The Federal Minister for Labor has firmly predicted that 400,000 Australians will be out of work in the New Year, and that 80,000 of this total will be school-leavers unable to find jobs immediately. And, of course, the figure will also include 26,000 who will be unemployed as R.E.D. schemes fold up.

The Queensland picture will echo this tragedy, as current figures clearly show. The number of registered unemployed in Queensland in August was almost five times that of August 1973, a mere two years ago. In August 1973, the actual figure was 7,998. Last month it was 39,070, and the seasonally adjusted figure, in one of our best employment months, was 55,318.

Mr. Hartwig: Shocking!

Mr. CAMPBELL: I agree with the honourable member, and that is a moderate comment.

What more can I say in registering the disgust of the Government and the people of Queensland than that this shocking apology for a Federal Government has everything to answer for in terms of fact and prospect in a State which, after the next national election, will assuredly resume its path to economic strength and employment opportunity.

OLD TOWN HALL, MACKAY

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (12.28 p.m.): The matter of public interest to which I wish to refer today is of great interest specifically to the people of Mackay, although the circumstances surrounding it are of interest to all the people of Queensland. It relates to the future of the old Town Hall site in Mackay. Many untruths and innuendoes have been circulated about this proposal, and I propose today to put the record straight.

The site of the old Town Hall in Mackay became the subject of controversy last year when the Mackay City Council, which then had a new civic centre and administration building under construction, decided to sell the site and surrounding parkland for commercial development. Following that decision, I convened a public meeting in Mackay, which filled the largest hall in the city to overflowing. A resolution was carried at the meeting and a petition was drawn up. Within a short time more than 8,000 residents had signed the petition, and this pressure forced the council to reverse its decision.

Then, surprisingly, came some of the strangest moves that I have ever seen in any area in Queensland. At their meeting in March of this year, members of the Mackay City Council took a decision to demolish the old Town Hall despite the fact that they had not fulfilled conditions to which they had agreed when the petition was placed before them. Although the mayor of the city now says that at the time the decision was headlined—if one can call a 5 in. single column in a newspaper a headline; perhaps it is—he stated that whilst the council was making that decision no date was being set for demolition.

All the people in Mackay thought the council was still awaiting the result of its discussions with the Mackay Historical Society and the efforts that the society was

making to get assistance from the State and Commonwealth Governments to help it recondition the old Town Hall. Despite the fact that the mayor had stated that no date was being set for demolition, the July meeting of the Mackay City Council made a decision to call tenders for the demolition of the building.

That was reported by the media on 30 July 1975.

Following requests I received from a number of people and a number of organisations in Mackay, I took immediate action to try to get an indication of the attitude of the people of Mackay regarding the future of the building. I agreed to organise a joint approach. I advertised on 31 July and received applications from ten organisations in the city which were prepared to use the building—organisations with a combined membership of almost 2,000 representing pensioners, youth groups and various other sections in the city. I made submissions to that effect to the Mackay City Council, and they were accepted.

At the August meeting of the council acceptance of a tender for demolition of the building was deferred until further inspections had been made. Why the council wants further inspections I do not know. It already has a couple of secret reports on the state of the building, which have not been published. I will come back to that point in a moment because I now want to mention an anomaly which I believe concerns all the people of Queensland. At the time of the August council meeting the mayor made a public statement about discussions he had with the secretary of the National Trust of Queensland. The relevant newspaper report stated—

“Mr. Peter Forrest, the secretary of the National Trust of Queensland told him (the mayor) in Mackay on March 24 that the trust had been asked to classify the building, but after inspection, had reported that the building had no historical or architectural merit, and recommended that it should be removed to provide additional open space in the city . . .”

I accept the statement regarding the attitude of the National Trust—that a representative of the trust had said it was of no historical value—because it is exactly the same attitude as that expressed in a letter I received from Mr. Forrest on 23 August 1974, some 12 months prior to the date on which he discussed the matter with the mayor. In that letter he said—

“This building has been inspected by the National Trust’s Field Officer. The building is not considered to be of sufficient interest to justify listing as a component of the Nation’s Heritage.

“In the light of this, the Trust would not be in a position to support any moves for its preservation on the grounds of architectural or historical significance.

However the Trust would be disposed, in principle, to supporting in a general way, steps which might be taken to secure the preservation of the building with a view to its being put to a socially desirable use. For example, if the circumstances were appropriate, the Trust would be in favour of the building being made over for the use of local voluntary organisations."

That is the very thing I sought following receipt of this information from the trust and the announcement by the council that it was going to demolish the building. That is completely contrary to the statement Mr. Forrest apparently made to the mayor that the building should be removed to provide additional open space in the city. Here we have a direct conflict in recommendations from the National Trust.

It is a little more intriguing when we know that Mr. Forrest was in Mackay in March of this year after the Mackay Historical Society had made representations to both the State and Commonwealth Governments to support the retention and renovation of the building when it was vacated by the city council. It was vacated only in June or July of this year when the city council moved to the new administration building.

A submission was sent to the Minister for Urban and Regional Development (Mr. Uren) in 1974. In reply Mr. Uren said that he would get Mr. Forrest to go to Mackay and see the members of the historical society about this matter. Mr. Forrest came and went, but apparently he came and went in slinking silence because, except for certain sections of the Mackay City Council, nobody knew he was there.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Miller): Order! Honourable members must not walk between the Chair and the member on his feet.

Mr. CASEY: He was there on the day the council made its infamous decision to demolish the old Town Hall. He made no effort whatsoever to approach, call on or even phone the Mackay Historical Society, the members of which he had been sent to see. He did not make any effort to get in touch with me, despite the fact that I had been in touch with him some months previously on this very matter and that, in the same letter to which I referred earlier, he had offered his co-operation on the plan and proposal that had been put forward—not by me, but through me by the people of Mackay—for the retention of the Town Hall site for certain purposes. He did not see any of those people. As far as I am aware, he did not see many of the aldermen of the Mackay City Council, either.

But we come to more intrigue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we see a copy of the reply that was finally received from Mr. Newbery, the State Minister for Tourism and Marine Services. His reply to the request of the

historical society was not received by that society until 15 August this year—a fortnight or more after the matter blew up into a major local controversy in Mackay. The reply did not give the opinions of his department, as one would expect seeing that the submission had been sent by the historical society to the department for its opinions; it did not even give the opinions of the National Trust.

Although conflicting opinions had already been received from the secretary of the National Trust, the National Trust is in fact under the legislative control of the Minister for Tourism and Marine Services, and one would have thought that, if the Minister's department had not been prepared to give an answer, he would have been in touch with the National Trust and obtained an answer from it. But no, what did the Minister's answer contain? It contained the opinions of the Mackay City Council—the very body against which the historical society is fighting for the preservation of the building. Why on earth the Minister should get in touch with the Mackay City Council and transfer its opinions, which were, of course, well known to the people of Mackay and to the historical society, I will never know.

The historical society was interested in what the State Minister and his department were prepared to do in support of a proposal that is of vital importance to the Mackay area. The old Town Hall might not mean much in the nation's heritage, but it means a great deal in Mackay, where there are very few old buildings and, in particular, very few architecturally worthy of preservation.

To me, the whole matter reeks of political conspiracy, particularly when one knows the connection through the National Party of all the persons concerned in the episode to which I am referring. I believe that the facts have been kept from the people of Mackay through that political conspiracy. However, right is might. As I said, the old Town Hall is important to the people of Mackay. The building has been inspected by four local architects and a structural engineer, as well as by the president of the Townsville branch of the National Trust, who is an architect. All have reported that only minor repairs to the building are needed. They have also agreed that the building is of an architectural style that will never be repeated, and, because of the area of Mackay in which it is situated, they have recommended its retention and use for other public purposes. The Premier's Department even featured the building in one of its recent publications and the caption states clearly that it is a photograph of a beautiful old-style building in a provincial city.

This is a day and age in which there is a great demand for community facilities and all local authorities are seeking more money with which to provide them. I believe it is a crying shame that the Mackay City Council wants to demolish a building that

will cost \$750,000 to replace to provide facilities that could be provided in the existing building. Queensland is receiving only about 7 per cent of the national estate, and I believe that the Minister in charge of this section of the administration of the State should be looking after the people's interests and giving weight to their requests rather than playing politics with the historical heritage of Queensland. The National Trust was set up as a body independent of Government control and it should continue in that way. It should not be allowed to become a political plaything, which some local authorities are now attempting to make it.

I believe, too, that an attempt has been made to draw a red herring across the trail by suggesting that because 1,200 pensioners are among the groups of people wanting to use the hall, the construction of a senior citizens' centre in the future may be affected. That is a lot of rot. It will not have any effect on the current proposals for the construction of such a centre. I believe that the mayor would show more concern for old people if he had electronically-operated doors installed in the new civic centre, where pensioners now have great difficulty in pushing open the large, heavy doors.

DISPOSAL OF EFFLUENT AND SOLID WASTES

Mr. GIBBS (Albert) (12.39 p.m.): I wish to speak about public attitudes to the disposal of effluent and solid waste, and events during the past few months in my electorate of Albert lead me to make this submission. The lowliest of products is involved—waste, including sewerage effluent and solid waste. The problem of its disposal is increasing at such a rate that in the very near future the occasional cry of the conservationist and the environmentalist will grow to a deafening roar upon the ears of all members of Parliament.

The problem of Gold Coast and Albert Shire sewage effluent and its ultimate disposal is only one aspect of the never-ending waste disposal battle. The deepening piles of waste from humans and factories, together with the State's incredibly large force of litterbugs, threaten to bury all of us unless we take firm and strong steps now to stem the flow.

It is unfortunate that the Government and its various studies into these human problems do not seem to move fast enough and that the reports on these studies are brought forward at the wrong time. Even as I speak, a Government-appointed firm of engineering consultants is engaged upon a major sewage disposal study in the area of the Gold Coast and the Albert Shire.

Public opinion is even now being moulded by the various schools of thought, and it is obvious from the deliberations in the two local authorities that even the most informed of us are struggling to reach a reasoned decision on effluent disposal, including ocean

outfalls and disposal by irrigation. I draw the Government's attention to this present study and beseech those responsible to have it proceed at full speed. Its findings must offer not merely scientific notes on the possible chemical and biological dangers of various wastes but positive solutions that will satisfy the vast majority of the people.

We as representatives of the people face more than an environmental problem, because every decision that is arrived at from now on will cost money, and I am talking in terms of millions of dollars.

In areas of Queensland where planning was undertaken without taking into account the State's growth-rate, the waste disposal plants that were built, say, one or two decades ago are unable to cope with the present suburban populations growing up around them. This is the basis of the problem confronting the Gold Coast. It has a sewage treatment plant that was probably quite sufficient to meet the needs of 10 years ago, but it is now almost in the heart of the city. Moving it would impose a crippling financial burden on the Gold Coast City Council, and expanding it would not completely rectify the situation.

Future long-term planning must not permit urban growth to occur close to disposal plants. As for those that are already established, I do not believe that people should go to the extent of demanding that they be removed. We must look for another solution to the problem.

The present study being undertaken into the disposal of solid waste in South-east Queensland is moving far too slowly. We are running out of room in the urban growth centres, and the people are demanding that more and more rubbish be carted away. The problem is aggravated by modern packaging methods in which everything is becoming disposable. The study is making projections to the year 2000, and it has estimated that the volume of solid waste reaches 2,270,000 cubic yards each year, which represents an annual increase since 1971-72 of approximately 400,000 cubic yards. "Disposable" might be a good term to apply to consumer items; but where are we going to dispose of this mountain of rubbish?

The Gold Coast-Albert Shire sewage study is co-ordinated by the Local Government Department, and the solid waste study is being co-ordinated by the Co-ordinator-General's Department. In each instance the steering committee comprises elected representatives and departmental officers. Both studies are being carried out by consultants. By conducting these studies the Government is on the right track, but for heaven's sake let someone in authority have the determination to make sure that they do not become public fob-offs. Let us hope that the studies result in positive recommendations without fear or favour. Let us also conduct our anti-litter campaign in the manner suggested so ably by the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads.

The litter problem is a very serious one, and its solution will entail a cost of millions of dollars. I believe that heavy fines should be imposed on those persons who flagrantly litter the State. The public should be made aware of the gravity of the problem by a State or even nation-wide educational programme.

Heavier fines and more laws may seem harsh, but as I drive up the highway each day and see the fresh litter (especially after a week-end or a public holiday), I think they are the only cure. Unfortunately, the litter comes mostly from visitors, but it is left to the councils or the Department of Main Roads to clean it up. To the litterbug, it is out of sight and out of mind. That is not good enough.

I hope that when we receive the reports, responsible people will have the wisdom to adopt a positive attitude and implement the findings as soon as it is humanly possible to do so. One of our greatest single problems is posed by motor-cars. Without planned recycling yards to process them, they will find their way into council tips and it will cost local authorities a great deal of money each year to dispose of them. Worse still, they will fill up valuable tips that cannot be replaced, or be dumped on back roads or in bush paddocks. They seem to appear all over the place creating problems for the community. Within 60 miles of Brisbane it is not a great problem to dispose of vehicles by recycling, but in western areas, because of costs, it is impossible to get rid of this surplus scrap. Some level of government will have to take a long-term look at the problem. Maybe one solution would be to impose a tax of \$5 on each new vehicle, the proceeds to be used to assist authorities in some areas to offset the freight charged to transport the vehicles to recycling depots and the export market-place.

Let us put teeth into all our legislation and all our good intentions to preserve the environment and the ecology. Local authorities everywhere are looking to the State Government, its departments and committees for a lead to a better and healthier future. I implore all Ministers involved to provide these guide-lines before the subject gets completely out of hand. Let us get busy and make Australia a cleaner and better place to live in.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. GIBBS: Let us educate the public—and people like the honourable member for Port Curtis and other Opposition members, so that they will not carry on as they are doing now when we are considering a very serious matter. The honourable member for Archerfield no doubt adds to this problem on some of this city's suburban roads.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Collect your thoughts.

Mr. GIBBS: The honourable member should collect the rubbish.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Miller): Order! The honourable member for Albert will continue his speech.

Mr. GIBBS: I rose today to bring to the attention of honourable members this very serious matter, which affects my electorate particularly, but also Queensland and the rest of Australia. I urge the Government to take a very serious view of the problem and to bring some positive thinking to bear on it.

(Time expired.)

TREATMENT OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS

Mr. YOUNG (Baroona) (12.49 p.m.): I rise today on a matter of great importance to me personally, namely the double standards that are being set in Queensland in the treatment of youth. On the one hand the Education Liaison Section has an incentive to "grab 'em and charge 'em", and on the other hand the Juvenile Aid Bureau has as its main aims initially the prevention of crime and, secondly, the rehabilitation of children who have temporarily fallen foul of the law.

I am greatly disturbed to hear the children of our State refer to some police officers as "the goodies" and to others as "the baddies". I believe that this problem was created by the administration for its own ends. The situation is totally unacceptable because we cannot have people thinking that there are double standards in our Police Force. As members of this Parliament, we must choose and adopt the right and proper course of action. Should we charge all juveniles who come under police notice, or should we accept that all children can make mistakes? If the latter, should we then take the sympathetic, understanding approach that all children are entitled to one chance of being cautioned and counselled by the police?

I congratulate the Premier upon the strong and firm stand he has always taken in the past on giving the children of our State a chance—an opportunity of mending their ways before being charged, placed before a court of law and then forced to try to live down a criminal conviction. Once a person has a criminal conviction, even as a child, the stigma remains for ever; it does not even die with him.

I trust that no honourable members in the Chamber today will fall for the line that the Commissioner of Police and his Education Liaison Section are trying to sell that a court conviction does not leave a permanent blot on a child's future. I assure them that it does. An A.L.P. member of Parliament in Victoria lost his seat because of a conviction in the Children's Court.

We are faced with an extremely difficult situation today, and we must speak out to protect the rights of the children of our State. I wonder how many honourable members wandered off the track in their early childhood days and committed an offence such as taking an apple from the next-door neighbour's tree. A minor offence such as that would lead the Education Liaison Section to charge a boy. To me that is totally unacceptable.

This matter has been a live one for many years. On Friday, 3 November 1972, the Premier, when answering a question about the policy of the Juvenile Aid Bureau, said on the 4BH "At Your Service" programme—

"No. As a matter of fact, there was a long question answered on this matter in the House this morning by Mr. Hodges, when he pointed out to Mr. Murray that there was no change—no change has been made—and that the same system will continue."

Continuing, and speaking of Mr. Whitrod, the Commissioner of Police, the Premier said—

"He is a man who is very dedicated to trying to help people. He gave me the assurance that there is no intention of trying to bypass the opportunity to help these people."

On a similar programme, however, Mr. Whitrod himself said—

"No, we don't give counselling. It is not our function."

That was the Commissioner's comment on the Education Liaison Section, which he formed immediately after he managed to off-load the Juvenile Aid Bureau onto the Children's Services Department. I will let honourable members draw their own conclusions from those comments.

On the same "At Your Service" programme the Premier went on to say—

"I think there has been some confusion on this."

That was certainly an understatement. He continued—

"As I said, Mr. Hodges gave the assurance this morning that there is no change in policy in this regard."

The Minister's reply to which the Premier referred appears on page 1616 of "Hansard" on 3 November 1972. The concluding comments are—

"I repeat emphatically that there has been no curtailment whatever of the activities of the bureau. On the contrary, they have been expanded to enable the officers of the bureau to assist the wayward children of this city and State."

The Minister for Police then gave Parliament this assurance on the Juvenile Aid Bureau—

"I have already given that assurance. Counselling will continue. It will not be curtailed in any manner whatsoever."

But there was a general policy change over all. The Juvenile Aid Bureau was drastically cut in numbers and the department introduced the Education Liaison Section in an endeavour to boost its crime clear-up figures—at the expense, I feel, of the youth of Queensland generally. The Education Liaison Section has but one concept—to ferret out as much juvenile crime as possible, irrespective of its magnitude or importance, to rustle up as many children as possible, place them before a court (which is already overburdened) and have them admonished and discharged. Obviously, they will return to the same environment, with no guide-lines from anyone to give them assistance in their future development. It is little wonder that they commit further offences. Consequently, the Education Liaison Section has an ever-increasing flow of children through its hands—children who become more and more disillusioned with society.

Mr. Speaker, we must all accept the blame for this. It would appear that the police administration has forgotten that one of the main facets of police duties is the prevention of crime. I feel that, if the administration paid a little more attention to prevention and showed a little less zeal in laying charges, the Queensland Police Force would have a higher morale and a greater public acceptance in the State. Obviously, it is about time the Queensland police administration returned to the middle of the road with sound, basic, acceptable policies for the treatment of the bulk of our average, law-abiding citizens. That brings me to my main reason for rising to speak today. Last Sunday morning the Liberal Party's State Convention passed a motion dealing with the treatment of juveniles in Queensland, establishing once and for all its belief that all children deserve a chance. The motion, which was unanimously carried, stated—

"That this convention realises as a matter of urgency that the individual rights of the youth of Queensland are of paramount importance. The Liberal Party believes it is the right of every child in Queensland to be given the opportunity of being cautioned and counselled on the first occasion of being detected for a simple offence instead of being charged and placed before a court. Supporting this ideal this convention urges that

(1) the Juvenile Aid Bureau be retained in its present structure as a detecting, counselling and rehabilitating bureau and

(2) that its personnel be increased so that its operation may be effectively carried out in the metropolitan and country areas of our State."

I have already pointed out to the House that the Commissioner of Police does not believe that counselling comes within the ambit of the Queensland Police Force. On the same 4BH "At Your Service" programme, when

asked a question about the Education Liaison Section and its role in the community, the Commissioner replied—

“The new squad do not charge if the person is a first offender. They refer the child to the Children’s Services Department for counselling and that’s happened consistently.”

The only consistency that the Education Liaison Section shows with referrals to the Children’s Services Department is that it does not refer children anywhere for any help whatsoever.

The police administration has continually misled the Parliament and the people of Queensland with this dual treatment of children. We must set exact guide-lines for the juveniles in Queensland. It is most unfortunate that the Juvenile Aid Bureau is continually criticised because it cannot give the follow-up to its counselling as effectively as it would like to. I feel that that is not the fault of the Juvenile Aid Bureau; it comes back to the administration; the criticism should be levelled at the administration. Despite the number of hard-working, dedicated and very efficient police officers attached to the Juvenile Aid Bureau, the administration continually uses it as a nursing home for ill and ailing police officers and a rest home for troublesome unionists.

This is just not acceptable to us generally. We must be prepared to take a firm stand on the treatment of juveniles and ensure that their best interests are always paramount in our minds. The youth of Queensland are in the palm of our hands.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

Mr. LAMONT (South Brisbane) (12.57 p.m.): Originally it was not my intention to speak during this debate today, but I was provoked into doing so when I saw the totally irresponsible and nonsensical headline in the “Telegraph” today derived from a statement by the Leader of the Opposition reading, “Pollies running out of puff.”

It seems that the Leader of the Opposition has yet to learn—and he has plenty of time to do so before he’ll ever be Premier—that there’s more to being a good Government than merely making new laws. We on this side of the House are non-socialists. We believe that we should minimise legislation that results in the regulation of people’s lives both as individuals and as a community. I believe that a Government should be judged not by the quantity of its legislation but rather upon the quality of its legislation. This is something that the socialists in this country have a lot to learn about.

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Our philosophy is to minimise Government interference both in the life of the individual and in the life of the community, whereas it is the socialist philosophy—the philosophy of those two gentlemen who are the only two representatives of the Australian Labor Party presently in the Chamber and the other nine outside who make up the cricket team—to stifle us with the heavy aura of over-government, to mummify the people of this country in red tape and to stultify development with over-regulation. That is what prompted the Leader of the Opposition to make such an irresponsible statement to the Press. It seems that he thinks a Minister is not doing his job unless his department is forever spewing forth legislation that will regulate and govern the lives of individuals and hinder their access to freedom of choice in their enterprises. I should like to quote a couple of the ridiculous statements by the Leader of the Opposition. He said—

“There hasn’t been much to talk about except other issues such as the coal dispute . . .”

Of course the Leader of the Opposition would not want us to talk about the coal dispute! He knows very well that the root of that trouble lies right with the socialist parties—not the majority of members of the trade union movement, mind you, but the irresponsible handful of unionists who put up that sort of candidate to represent the people of Queensland. So he said that we have nothing better to talk about than the coal dispute. What an irresponsible Leader of the Opposition he is and what an irresponsible parliamentarian!

He went on to say—

“There is next to nothing on the business paper.”

There are 10 Bills on today’s Business Paper. I will not waste my time by enumerating them. However, I point out that the Leader of the Opposition obviously has not read them. He said also that we draw out debates. If he compares the contributions from this side of the Chamber with the nonsensical statements made by members of the Opposition as they appear in “Hansard” he will see who drags out debates.

It’s not Government members who are running out of puff; it is a case of the Leader of the Opposition running out of issues. And if he does not find one soon, he might not be Leader of the Opposition much longer.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Miller): Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House, the time allotted for the debate on Matters of Public Interest has now expired.

The House adjourned at 1.1 p.m.