

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 1975

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

USE OF OFFICIAL AEROPLANE**RETURN TO ORDER**

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an Order made by the House on 20 August last, on the motion of Mr. Gunn, showing, in relation to the operation of the official aeroplane during the year 1 July 1974 to 30 June 1975, (a) total flying time, (b) total number of flights, (c) total number of passengers and (d) names of Ministers by whom the aeroplane was used.

MINISTERIAL EXPENSES**RETURN TO ORDER**

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an Order made by the House on 20 August last, on the motion of Mr. Porter, of expenses of Ministers for the period 1 July 1974 to 30 June 1975, inclusive, showing each separately and in detail.

OVERTIME PAID IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS**RETURN TO ORDER**

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an Order made by the House on 20 August last, on the motion of Mr. Marginson, showing the amount of overtime paid in each Government department (all funds) in 1974-75.

PAPERS

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

Report on the operations of the Agricultural Bank for the year 1974-75.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamations under the Forestry Act 1959-1975.

Orders in Council under—
Water Act 1926-1975.
Forestry Act 1959-1975.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE**1. RENTAL AGENCIES: AUSTRALIAN HOME-FINDERS AND BRISBANE LEASING SERVICES**

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

(1) Is he aware of the operation of a group called Australian Homefinders, a home and flat rental agency previously located at the Normanby Fiveways, and another group called Brisbane Leasing Services of Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, which operates a home and flat rental agency which asks respondents to part with \$20 before the address of a flat can be given and, even if the flat has been previously taken, there is no refund?

(2) Is it true that when Homefinders ceased business at the Normanby address, this new group, Brisbane Leasing Services, came into operation?

(3) Who are the directors and/or partners of Australian Homefinders and Brisbane Leasing Services?

(4) Are there any laws which apply to the operation of these agencies and, if not, what recourse is available to young couples to assist them in obtaining refunds?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware of an organisation called "Australian Homefinders" previously located at Normanby Fiveways. I am also aware of the operation of an organisation called "Brisbane Leasing Service" and that a fee is charged for the use of the services provided by this organisation.

(2) I am informed that Australian Homefinders vacated the premises situated at the Normanby Fiveways about mid-August 1975 and that Brisbane Leasing Service commenced business on 1 July 1975.

(3) Records at the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs show that the proprietor of Australian Homefinders is Andrew Jones and that the proprietor of Brisbane Leasing Service is Stuart Archibald Walker.

(4) Proposed amendments to the Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971-1974 introduced in the last session of the Parliament are designed to prohibit the activities of these types of organisations as they are presently conducted, unless they hold a Real Estate Agents Licence under that Act.

2. FIREARMS AND LICENCES

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

(1) What was the total number of (a) fatal accidents, (b) armed robberies and (c) murders or attempted murders involving firearms which occurred during 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974 and 1975?

(2) How many (a) firearms were sold and (b) firearm licences issued during the same years?

Answers:—

(1) (a) Accurate statistics are not available. (b) and (c) This information is not readily available. To obtain the data sought would require considerable research of individual files which it is not proposed to undertake.

(2) (a) No statistics are maintained by the Police Department in relation to the sale of shoulder arms. (b) Particulars of concealable firearm licences issued and renewed during the periods in question are listed hereunder:—

Year Ended	New Licences	Renewals
30-6-71 ..	1,078	6,206
30-6-72 ..	1,631	7,191
30-6-73 ..	1,437	7,185
30-6-74 ..	1,764	7,571
30-6-75 ..	2,500	7,814

3. EFFLUENT FROM TANNERY, HEMMANT-TINGALPA AREA

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

As he gave an assurance during his visit to the Hemmant-Tingalpa area on 19 September that there would be no further discharge from the tannery into Bulimba Creek, have steps been taken to see that the tidal effects of the creek will not wash polluted material into the creek and to ensure that ponding plants will not break down and allow effluent to discharge into the creek?

Answer:—

The company has been requested to close off the tidal inlet and to repair the walls of the ponds. Regular inspections will be made to ensure that the company is taking all reasonable precautions to prevent wastes entering Bulimba Creek. However, because of the nature of the area being irrigated with wastes, I cannot guarantee that there will be no discharge in wet weather. The whole problem of effluent from industries in this area will be the subject of a conference this afternoon chaired by myself, and attended by the Director of Water Quality and representatives of the companies involved and the Brisbane City Council. Discussion will include the subject of the Queensland

industrial sewer (scheduled for completion in June 1976) which will serve this area. As the Leader of the Opposition is the honourable member for Lytton, I extend an invitation to him to be present at the meeting.

Mr. Burns: I will be there.

Mr. HINZE: It will take place after the presentation of the Budget by our very capable friend Sir Gordon Chalk in this Chamber this afternoon.

4. LICENCES TO PISTOL CLUB MEMBERS

Mr. K. J. Hooper for **Mr. Jones**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) Is he aware that club members of the Northern Zone Queensland Amateur Pistol Shooting Association have recently been refused licences for new target pistols?

(2) Are members being restricted to holding a specific number of pistols and, if so, what is the basis and/or which section of the Firearms Act is being applied?

(3) Are proposed amendments of the Act being anticipated or is an incorrect interpretation being presently given by police officers concerned? If so, will he instruct officers concerned that section 4 (b) of the Act should not be utilised to limit numbers or refuse licences to approved members of pistol clubs already investigated and accepted as responsible to hold licences for target pistols?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) No. The issue of concealable firearm licences is at the absolute discretion of the inspector of police, Criminal Investigation Branch, Brisbane by virtue of his power under section 4 subsection 3 of the Firearms Act 1927 to 1967. However, right of appeal against his decision rests with me under section 4 (7A) of the Act and my decision on the matter is final and binding and without appeal.

(3) I have found it difficult to determine exactly the nature of the information sought by the honourable member and would ask him to rephrase his question.

5. RESEARCH INTO SINGLE HOSPITAL SYSTEM

Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Has he seen the report from Mr. J. P. Kelly, which states that more thought and research should be directed towards a single hospital system?

(2) Is his department engaging in any research towards rationalising the dual hospital system into a more convenient service to Queenslanders?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) The Government recognises the important role that private hospitals play in the provision of health-care services in this State and proposes no change in the dual system of public and private hospitals which has operated most successfully over a very lengthy period.

6. MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT, CALOUNDRA
GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Has the Caloundra General Hospital no medical superintendent at present?

(2) How many part-time superintendents of the hospital have resigned during the last three years?

(3) What plans does he have to direct a doctor to the position at the hospital?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Two.

(3) I am advised that the Maroochy Hospitals Board has invited applications for the position and that these close on 29 September 1975.

7. POLICE STRENGTH, BUNDABERG

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

As he stated in reply to my question on 17 September with reference to the police strength in Bundaberg that he had not seen the Press report but would obtain a copy and answer the question later, will he now answer that question?

Answer:—

No. I am awaiting a detailed report from the Inspector of Police, Bundaberg, and upon receipt of that report I will answer the honourable member.

8. FLASHING LIGHTS FOR RAILWAY
CROSSING, BEMERSIDE

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

In view of the reply given on 24 September by the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads to a question concerning the obligations of the Railway

Department and others to provide flashing lights at road level-crossings, will he take immediate action to have flashing lights installed by the Railway Department at the Bemerside railway crossing near Halifax?

Answer:—

As has been explained to the honourable member in response to his representations on this matter, the number of level crossings which can be equipped each year with flashing lights or other warning devices under the programme financed jointly by the Main Roads Department and the Railway Department is limited by the amount allocated for the purpose. It is accordingly necessary to formulate priorities in selecting crossings for attention, and there are other crossings so far unequipped with protective warning devices which it is considered attract a higher priority than the crossing at Bemerside.

9. CONSTABLE SGROI

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

(1) Was Constable Sgroi convicted and fined \$80 or thereabouts for assaulting a person whilst off duty about 1967 or 1968?

(2) Was Constable Sgroi dismissed from the Police Force as a result of this and was he subsequently reinstated?

(3) How many complaints have been laid against this officer and how many have been investigated since his reinstatement?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes. Constable Sgroi was dismissed from the Police Force on 3 November 1967 and re-sworn in as a member of the Police Force on 13 August 1968 following an appeal board decision upholding his appeal against his dismissal.

(3) No investigation requiring ministerial authority pursuant to the Police Act has been made in relation to Constable Sgroi's conduct since his dismissal. Without having considerable research carried out in the districts within which the constable has served, it is not known what complaints have been made against him. There are, however, on record at the commissioner's office on the constable's personal file four entries in relation to communications received from members of the public expressing appreciation for the efficiency of, and assistance rendered by, the constable.

10. HAZARDS OF PETRIE-DAYBORO ROAD

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

In view of the details supplied by the Minister for Police in answer to my question on 24 September, as the Pine Rivers Shire Council has now decided to issue a further quarry licence which will increase the number of gravel trucks using the Sideling Creek Bridge on the Petrie-Dayboro Road, as 60 to 70 school-children also travel across the bridge twice daily in school buses and as the road is now a tourist road used by motorists unaware of the danger existing, will he take action to remove the extreme danger to life caused by legally loaded 50-ton gravel trucks travelling at a legal speed of 80 to 100 km/h across the narrow bridge and generally along the road?

Answer:—

At the honourable member's request I will have the general state of this road, including traffic conditions, investigated, paying particular attention to the section in the vicinity of Sideling Creek bridge, and will advise him of the result in due course.

11. DISTRIBUTION OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA TO STATE SCHOOLS

Mr. Akers, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

(1) Did the Pine Rivers District State High School recently receive a letter from the Leader of the Opposition enclosing Labor Party propaganda and requesting that the propaganda be placed in the school library?

(2) Is it common for State schools to receive propaganda from the A.L.P.?

(3) What instructions have been issued to principals of schools to deal with such propaganda?

(4) Will he arrange for the compilation of unbiased information on the platforms of political parties for issue to all school libraries?

Answers:—

(1) A section termed "Political Parties" has been established in the library at the Pine Rivers State High School. All recognised political parties have been approached to furnish material for the section. The Queensland Branch and the Strathpine Branch of the Labor Party have furnished identical material to the school for use in the section of the library mentioned, but no material specifically furnished by the

Leader of the Opposition is contained in this section. (I think that would be under "Fiction"!)

(2) To my knowledge, it is not common for schools to receive propaganda from the A.L.P.

(3) Section 6 of the regulations made in pursuance of the provisions of the Education Act 1964-1974 stipulates that principals shall not allow schools to be used for propaganda purposes.

(4) It is not the policy of the department either to ban political discussion in high schools, on the one hand, or to allow the use of high schools as arenas for propagandising students. It is appropriate for schools to expose students to discussions of political ideologies. If schools wish to use representatives of established political organisations as resource people in such discussions, schools are free to do this. The important point is that the initiative lies with the schools. The involvement of any such resource people would be done on the terms of the school, and for the purposes established by the school for its educational programme. The schools would ensure that it was a balanced programme to give students, some of whom are of voting age, an understanding of political parties. There is no need, consequently, for the compilation and issue to schools of unbiased political information.

12. AID TO COUNTRY AIRCRAFT OPERATORS

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

As the Commonwealth Department of Transport proposes to spend millions of dollars on changing the Qantas flying-kangaroo emblem and repainting Qantas, T.A.A. and Commonwealth Railway rolling-stock, will he ask the Commonwealth Minister not to proceed with the project and instead to channel the proposed money to lessening fees for commuter-aircraft operators and private-aircraft owners in country areas and to helping country local authorities maintain country airports?

Answer:—

No. I am sure that the honourable member could achieve the same negative result by making the representations himself.

13. TRANSFER OF CANTEEN LIQUOR PERMIT, WEIPA

Mr. K. J. Hooper for Mr. Yewdale, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Has an application been made by Weipa Development, the licensee of the Albatros Hotel, to have the canteen permit at Evans Landing, Weipa, transferred to Weipa Development?

(2) Can a canteen permit be transferred to a hotel?

(3) Can a declaration be made by the Licensing Commission that the canteen at Evans Landing is an annexe of the hotel at Rocky Point?

(4) Do local residents have their views taken into account if such a transfer is contemplated?

Answers:—

(1) No. However, a canteen permit has been granted to Evans Landing Canteen Pty. Ltd. to sell liquor in a canteen at Evans Landing. It is understood that this incorporated body is a subsidiary of Weipa Development Pty. Ltd.

(2) No.

(3) No.

(4) There is no right of objection to the grant of an industrial canteen permit under the Liquor Act. However, the Court is required to take into consideration the location of the industrial undertaking or works concerned relative to any licensed victualler's premises. This canteen permit was granted by the Licensing Court on the recommendation of the Licensing Commission to assist in ensuring that the existing limited liquor facilities were maintained in the area for the benefit of workers in the area.

14. CLOSURE OF FISHING AREAS AT WEEK-END

Mr. K. J. Hooper for Mr. Yewdale, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries—

In view of the concern expressed by professional fishermen relative to week-end closure of certain fishing areas, what discussions have taken place regarding such closures and is it intended to vary the closure times in any way?

Answer:—

Discussions have proceeded with the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation, commercial fishermen and representatives of various angling organisations. The closed areas involve extensive recreational angling and it is not proposed to vary the closure times at present.

15. POLYUNSATURATED PRODUCTS OF BEEF, LAMB AND CHEESE

Mr. K. J. Hooper for Mr. Yewdale, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) Are the much-discussed polyunsaturated products of beef, lamb and cheese on sale to the buying public? If so, what has been consumer reaction?

(2) What is the price variation between these products and the natural product?

(3) Are these polyunsaturated products on sale in other countries? If so, with what success?

Answers:—

(1) These products are not yet available in Queensland. They have recently been launched only in Newcastle and Sydney and at this stage it is too early to assess consumer reaction.

(2) Definite prices are not yet available as the products are only in the initial phases of marketing.

(3) Development in other countries is only at a similar stage to Australia and no indication of the success or otherwise of these products is yet available.

16. PUBLIC SERVICE SENIORITY, FEMALE SENIOR CLERKS

Mr. M. D. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

With reference to a submission in May by the State Service Union to the Public Service Board, in relation to the matter of seniority of female senior clerks, what decision has the Government made in relation to the granting of seniority rights?

Answer:—

Following the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Status of Women, the Queensland State Service Union submitted three proposals to the Public Service Board concerning seniority of certain female officers. The Public Service Board and the Queensland State Service Union have conferred on these proposals. Of these proposals, agreement has been reached on the two which cover the vast majority of female officers. The approval of Cabinet has been obtained to their implementation and action is in train to effect the necessary changes in seniority under these two proposals and to make the necessary amendments to Public Service regulations. The remaining proposal is still under consideration and it is hoped that a decision will be arrived at in the not too distant future.

17. EXHAUST EMISSIONS FROM YABULU NICKEL TREATMENT PLANT

Mr. M. D. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to claims made by the Elphinstone Anti-pollution Committee, which is said to represent residents at Saunders Beach near the Yabulu nickel treatment plant, that exhaust emissions from the chimney-stacks

do not comply with provisions of the Clean Air Act and that water effluent discharged into the sea is dangerous to marine life?

(2) As I have been told that inspectors from the Environmental Control Department carried out tests at the treatment plant in relation to the Clean Air Act and water quality discharged into Halifax Bay and that the results of these tests were stated to be within the safety limits set by existing legislation, will he make public the findings of recent tests so that the fears expressed by environmental groups and nearby residents can be allayed?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am aware that claims made in correspondence by this committee concerning pollution near the Yabulu plant are being investigated by the statutory authorities established under the Clean Air and Clean Waters Acts. The plant has been designed so that emissions under normal operating conditions comply with both Acts. However, because of the sophisticated nature of the operation, the plant is not yet operating under stable conditions. Certain problems which have arisen are being progressively overcome. For example, dust emissions from a surge bin have been markedly reduced through changed operational procedures and redesign of certain parts of the plant. Yabulu has been inspected by officers of the Division of Air Pollution Control of the Department of Local Government but the plant conditions have not stabilised sufficiently for effective testing.

18. PIMLICO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL WORKS

Mr. M. D. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

As the Minister for Education has been able to make arrangements for Pimlico Senior High School students to be accommodated in sections of the Pimlico campus of the James Cook University as from 1976 and as alterations, additions and the construction of toilet blocks, estimated to cost \$260,000, must be carried out before the start of the 1976 school year, when will the works commence and can he guarantee that the works will be completed before February 1976, as the enrolment at the school is estimated to exceed 2,200 next year?

Answer:—

This is a major building conversion project. Action is well in hand for commencement of work as soon as practicable, with a view to providing progressive occupancy from the commencement of the new school year.

19. CATTLE GRAZING ON SOUTHWOOD NATIONAL PARK

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

(1) Is he aware that branded cattle are grazing on the Southwood National Park?

(2) Is it a breach of the law to have cattle grazing on a national park?

(3) Does the Director of National Parks and Wildlife Service have a sufficient number of inspectors to police national parks in Central Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Not if under the authority of and in compliance with a permit or licence or other authority granted under the Forestry Act or a lease, licence or other authority from the Crown. In actual fact, approval was given by me after discussions with the honourable member for Balonne, Mr. D. M. Neal.

(3) I answer this question by asking the honourable member would any national parks and wildlife service in Australia ever have sufficient staff to adequately manage and police all of the areas under its control? Available finance and the necessity to restrict public service growth are real constraints within which the new Queensland service must operate. I remind the honourable member that law enforcement in this area should be a joint effort between the service's full-time ranger personnel and honorary assistance from dedicated citizens.

20. CHEQUERS NITE CLUB, BRISBANE

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) Was a police warrant issued on Chequers Nite Club, Brisbane, for thousands of dollars in respect of stolen property found on the premises?

(2) Is this night club controlled by two brothers named Little, who were the former proprietors of the Whisky Au-Go-Go Night Club?

(3) Is this night club regarded as a receiving house for stolen property?

(4) Has his department received complaints that the night club is frequented by drug pushers and under-age drinkers?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) The night club is controlled by Gramons Pty. Ltd. through their nominee Brian Little. Kenneth Little, brother of

the nominee, is also associated with the business. Both of these brothers were formerly connected with the Whisky Au-Go-Go Night Club, Fortitude Valley.

(3) Not generally, although information received from time to time suggests that the club may have been used as a receiving house for stolen property.

(4) Yes. From time to time, confidential information is received that drug offenders and under-age drinkers patronise Chequers Nite Club. Appropriate attention is given to such premises.

21. LOCAL AUTHORITY GENERAL RATES

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

What are the present general rates in the dollar on the unimproved value of all rateable land within the city council areas of Bundaberg, Cairns, Gold Coast, Mackay, Maryborough, Redcliffe, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Townsville and the shire council areas of Albert, Landsborough, Maroochy, Pine Rivers, Redlands and Moreton?

Answer:—

Detailed as cents in the dollar, the information requested by the honourable member is as follows—

—	Urban	Rural
City Council—		
Bundaberg ..	5.10	4.5
Cairns ..	6.27	..
Gold Coast ..	4.40	..
Mackay ..	3.20	..
Maryborough	4.42	3.00
Redcliffe ..	5.60	4.55
Rockhampton	4.40	2.80
		(Flood area
		2.20)
Toowoomba	5.44	..
Townsville ..	5.672	4.102
Shire Councils—		
Albert ..	2.358	1.38
Maroochy ..	7.45	7.45
Pine Rivers ..	3.70	3.70
Redlands ..	5.80	..
Moreton ..	3.72	2.03
Landsborough		
Division 1	4.0	..
Division 2	3.1	..
Division 3	2.0	..
Division 4	2.7	..
Division 5	3.0	..

22. COMMONWEALTH FAMILY COURT

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) In view of the Government's often-stated anti-centralism stand, why has he agreed to the Commonwealth Family Court exercising jurisdiction in Queensland rather than set up a State Family Law Court, as in Western Australia?

(2) Is there a lack of consistency in the approach of the Government on this matter and the approach taken against the Commonwealth Companies Act?

(3) Do both initiatives of the Commonwealth Government stem from the same need to have one set of laws operating throughout Australia on divorce and company law matters?

Answers:—

(1) The State Family Courts envisaged under section 41 of the Commonwealth Family Law Act would be State courts in name only, as subsection (4) of that section ensures that any judge of such a court cannot be appointed except with the approval of the Attorney-General of Australia and, further, such judges may not hold office beyond the age of 65 years. The provision that these judges cannot hold office beyond 65 years of age would disorganise the whole of the Queensland judiciary as other State judges will retire at age 70. It must be remembered that judges must serve for 10 years before being eligible for a full pension.

(2) No.

(3) The Family Law Act replaces the present Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act 1959-1973. The hearing as far as possible of all family law matters in specially constituted courts is in accordance with a recommendation of the Senate Standing Committee.

23. ABORIGINAL HOSTEL AT 36 TRINITY LANE, WOOLLOONGABBA

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

(1) Do any of the residents at 36 Trinity Lane, Woolloongabba, have criminal records and, if so, for what offences?

(2) Do any of the residents draw social security benefits?

(3) Were any of the residents involved in a sit-in protest at Leighton House, the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs offices?

(4) Were other sit-in protesters accommodated in Apia Hostel?

(5) During the sit-in protest were Aborigines transported between Apia House and Leighton House at Commonwealth Government, that is, the citizens' expense?

Answers:

(1) It is understood there are 14 males and two females at present residing at 36 Trinity Lane, Woolloongabba. Five people of the same names as occupants of the premises are recorded as having been convicted of various offences. These offences include: arson; assault occasioning bodily harm; disorderly behaviour; unlawful use of motor vehicles; being under influence of liquor in charge of motor vehicle; stealing; stealing from the person; stealing with actual and personal violence; receiving; obscene language; resisting arrest; common assault; wilful destruction of property; unlicensed driver; possession of property suspected stolen; robbery; malicious injury; vagrancy; breaking and entering with intent; breaking, entering and stealing; placing injurious matter on roadway.

(2) One of the residents has stated that all of them, with the exception of three employees, are receiving social security benefits.

(3) Six of the residents, including the paid manager, Donald Davidson, took part in the sit-in at Leighton House.

(4) Yes. Fifteen persons resident at Apia Hostel, New Farm, are known to have taken part in the sit-in at Leighton House.

(5) Yes. A number of persons were observed being transported between Apia Hostel and Leighton House by Australian Government motor vehicles.

24. NATIONAL PARKS PROPOSALS

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

(1) Is he aware of a recent statement by the Commonwealth Minister for Conservation that none of the \$9 million provided in the Commonwealth Budget for 1974-75 for the States to carry out purchases of land for national parks was expended because the States lacked co-operation and failed to get proposals to the Commonwealth quickly enough?

(2) Were any proposals made from Queensland and what conditions were imposed by the Commonwealth authorities?

Answers:—

(1) I have seen the statement. Queensland's programme of land acquisition was submitted to Canberra in January 1975. Advice was received from the Federal

Minister, Dr. Cass, in letters dated 9 April and 26 May approving in principle the acquisition of certain areas with Commonwealth funding. However, up to the end of the financial year, the Commonwealth had failed to provide the draft agreements for the funding of the land acquisitions. In subsequent discussions between myself and the Honourable J. Berinson, M.P., Minister for Environment, the Minister did indicate that no funds had been made available to Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1975. Furthermore, the only contribution by the Commonwealth during this period was the purchase of Elanda Downs by the Commonwealth, and this has since been vested in the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service as distinct from the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service.

(2) As advised above, a programme of 12 proposals was submitted and approved in principle. As no draft agreements were received, it is not known what conditions the federal authorities would have imposed.

25. MAXIMUM TOWING SPEEDS

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

(1) Is there a maximum speed to which cars towing caravans, trailers or the like have to adhere?

(2) Is there a maximum speed to which semi-trailers, body-trucks towing dog-trailers, or semi-trailers towing dog-trailers must adhere?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The general speed restrictions apply to these vehicles as in the case of all other vehicles, and I refer the honourable member to regulations 49, 50, 51 and 53 of part 10 of the Traffic Regulations, 1962.

26. SUPERMARKET REQUIREMENTS ON SHOPPING BAGS

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Will he clarify the legal obligation of shoppers (a) to open shopping bags for inspection on request by employees at supermarkets and (b) to leave parcels, shopping bags, etc., outside the check-out area?

(2) What redress have shoppers against a supermarket when, while they are shopping, personal property left outside the check-out is stolen from the area set aside by the supermarket for such property?

Answers:—

(1) These questions relate to areas of law where the conditions of negotiating transactions are regulated by the parties thereto. Individuals should be guided by their own legal advisers as to the rights and obligations.

(2) The factual situation will determine the liability or otherwise of any person. Once again it is not possible to advise individuals on their private rights.

27. COMMONWEALTH SCHOOL LIBRARY GRANTS

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

(1) Did his department receive \$3,876,437 from the Commonwealth Government for school library funds in the last financial year?

(2) Which schools benefited from the funds?

(3) How much of the allocation was unused as at 30 June?

(4) Was an additional \$139,833 recently received by way of book-stock grants from the Commonwealth Government and, if so, what (a) Government and (b) non-Government schools benefited from the grants?

Answer:—

The collation of the information sought by the honourable member will take some time as a number of administrative areas of my department are involved. I will provide the information as soon as it is available.

28. DOOR TO DOOR SALES

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs—

(1) Has the special exemption given to paint sales under the Door to Door Sales Act now been removed and, if so, when was the exemption removed?

(2) Have any other changes been made to this Act by Order in Council and, if so, what are the details?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am not quite clear as to what the honourable member is seeking in asking these questions. Representations were received by me for household linen and bedding to be included in the list of articles prescribed to be “goods” under the Door to Door (Sales) Act, and this

was approved by the Governor in Council on 4 September 1975 and gazetted in the Government Gazette dated 6 September 1975. The Governor in Council approved that the then existing regulations be repealed and substituted regulations which incorporated the items listed in the previous regulations with the addition of household linen and bedding. This procedure was followed on the advice of the Solicitor-General that the most appropriate and suitable method of incorporating household linen and bedding in regulations under this Act would be to repeal the existing regulations and promulgate the new regulations referred to above. The latest regulations prescribe that paint is one of the articles prescribed as “goods”, and that the painting of any part of a dwelling-house is prescribed to be included in “services”. The new regulations incorporate the provisions of the repealed regulations and embrace also household linen and bedding.

29. SAND-MINING LEASES, STRADBROKE AND BRIBIE ISLANDS

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

(1) What were the dates of the applications for the granting of sand-mining leases on South Stradbroke Island, North Stradbroke Island and Bribie Island?

(2) Were there mining warden’s hearings and, if so, what were the dates of the hearings?

(3) Did the mining warden recommend the granting of the leases and, if so, what were the dates of the recommendations?

(4) Did the Minister determine whether or not to recommend to the Governor in Council that the leases be granted and, if so, what recommendations were made and when were they made?

(5) Did the Governor in Council grant the leases and, if so, what was the date of the grant and what was the duration of the leases granted?

(6) Who are the current holders of the leases or lease applications?

(7) What is the acreage of each lease?

Answer:—

(1 to 7) The research and presentation of material to answer these questions will require more time than is available for me to reply adequately today. Obviously the honourable member does not appreciate the magnitude of the subject. Some 37 lease files have to be searched and a great deal of typing is involved. When the desired information is marshalled I will transmit it to him by letter.

30. SUBDIVISION OF FARM LANDS FOR
RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES

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

(1) Is he aware of the concern being expressed in farming circles about the large areas of good farm land which are being subdivided for residential purposes and the threat to the farming economy from what is termed hobby farms?

(2) Has any investigation been made into the effects which these planning decisions are having on our farming community and, if so, what are the results of the study?

(3) Is the Government planning any action to ensure that first-class farming areas close to the city are retained for primary production?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Some time ago the Moreton Region Growth Strategy Investigations were initiated, sponsored by the Co-ordinator-General's Department and the Cities Commission. The general objective of task 5 of the investigations is to establish a broad regional strategy for land use to the year 2000 while giving full consideration to the allocation and preservation of land for a variety of non-urban uses.

(3) I understand that a report on task 5 is nearing completion and will be incorporated in the full report of the investigations. Any recommendations on non-urban land use emanating from the report will be given full consideration by the Government.

31. FARM-PRODUCE AGENTS' FIDELITY
BONDS

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

(1) Are farm-produce agents required to provide a fidelity bond against default in payment to growers sending produce on consignment and, if so, what is the amount of the bond and when was it last reviewed?

(2) If no bond is required, has any consideration been given to the introduction of a bond scheme to protect farmers from produce agents who default?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) Yes. The required bond is: For a corporation, \$12,000; for an individual or sole trader, \$6,000; for a partnership—for each partner, \$6,000, with a maximum for the partnership of \$12,000. The matter is under review at the present time and a decision is expected in the immediate future.

32. AID TO PIG FARMERS

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

(1) As there is a proposal to ban swill-feeding of pigs in Queensland and for associated costs to be borne by local authorities, were statements made by Dr. Patterson and Dr. Everingham that financial assistance would be given to pig farmers affected by the ban?

(2) Did the Australian Agricultural Council at its meeting on 14 February ask the Standing Committee on Agriculture about the possibility of providing finance for the abandoned pig farmers and was the report presented to a meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council on 4 or 5 August?

Answers:—

(1) I am unaware of any public statement by either Dr. Patterson or Dr. Everingham that financial assistance would be made available to pig producers adversely affected by the proposed ban on the feeding of garbage. However, Dr. Everingham has indicated publicly that local authorities which considered they would be disadvantaged by the proposed ban could apply for Federal aid.

(2) Yes. The standing committee reported that the Animal Health Committee considered it would not be appropriate to recommend adjustment assistance to the pig industry. The standing committee also noted that the Commonwealth Government was not at that time considering such assistance.

33. PRECAUTIONS AGAINST FOOT AND
MOUTH DISEASE

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

As 1400 Australian visitors travelled to the island of Bali and as some graziers' organisations and others are concerned that light aircraft are operating between Australia and Bali and nearby islands and are re-entering Australia without quarantine checks for foot and mouth disease or other animal diseases, are footwear and other clothing not being disinfected when the people who have been to countries with foot and mouth disease arrive at our overseas terminal?

Answer:—

People entering Australia who declare that they have been in contact with livestock or abattoirs whilst overseas are referred to an animal quarantine official. If they have been in contact with livestock in a country with a history of foot and mouth infection, the footwear they have been

wearing is treated with 1 per cent washing soda. Dirty clothing is forwarded to the Commonwealth Department of Health for washing, dry-cleaning or fumigation as appropriate. All light aircraft returning to Australia from overseas have to receive a customs and quarantine clearance at the first Australian airport at which they land. A more likely mode of entry of foot and mouth disease would be through introduced meat, and consideration is currently being given to restricting the possibility of such meat being used for pig feed. As the honourable member expresses such concern, no doubt I can anticipate his full support in these measures.

ORDER IN CHAMBER DURING QUESTION TIME

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) having given notice of a question—

Mr. Hinze: We had it in the project and your mate Jones took it out.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is interjecting.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! For the benefit of the honourable member for Archerfield and every other member of the House, I reiterate that I control the running of the House—I hope to the satisfaction of everybody. I do not want any assistance from the honourable member for Archerfield.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

LIBERAL-NATIONAL PARTY CONFERENCE ON STATE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr. BURNS: I direct a question to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. As the Premier attended yesterday's financial conference in Melbourne between members of the Liberal and National Parties and, at the public's expense, inserted in "The Courier-Mail" and other State newspapers a full-length, four-column advertisement in which he stated that on behalf of the Queensland Government he accepts the so-called new financial arrangements, I ask: Has the Treasurer been sacked from his position of Minister responsible for Queensland's financial operations? Secondly, will the Premier accept the odium for any increased charges and levies in the Budget, or will the responsibility for this still be the Treasurer's? Next, was he invited to the Liberal-National Party talks on State finances? Finally, does he accept the outcome of these talks?

Sir GORDON CHALK: First of all, I can assure the honourable member that I have not been sacked. I realise that Treasurers are a peculiar species of animal, but if I am to be sacked I am sure it will not be until after I have brought down my Budget

this afternoon. Only one Treasurer has been sacked without delivering his Budget, and he certainly was not a Queensland Treasurer.

As to the Premier's attendance yesterday at the meeting in Melbourne between the Federal Leader of the Opposition and certain of the State Premiers, I did receive an invitation. I have stated on one or two occasions that invitations to me to attend such conferences were somewhat belated, but I believe that was because it was overlooked that in Queensland the Premier is not also the Treasurer.

The Premier had earlier spoken to me about the invitation he received and I undertook to conduct the affairs of the House yesterday during his absence. From my point of view he received a full briefing before attending the meeting. As yet I have not had an opportunity of discussing the outcome with him, other than that he indicated to me his belief that the submissions I gave to him (which were passed on to the Leader of the Federal Opposition) were in broad principle approved of.

In relation to discussions that are taking place between representatives of the Federal Opposition and the various States, I for one want to say that I am really concerned about ensuring that, in the implementation of a financial policy when the Opposition parties in Canberra become the Government, adequate protection is given to the States with the smaller populations. That is vital. I am certain that with the passing of time, after we have had an opportunity of discussing these matters, Queensland will ensure that it is treated under the new formula as well as it is at the present time.

Some four years ago I had the opportunity of studying the Canadian system. I do not go along with some of the bases of taxation for the individual States. It has to be remembered that New South Wales has three times the population of Queensland and Victoria has 2½ times our population. If taxes are to be levied by the States themselves for their own benefit, it must be remembered that we, with our smaller population, have 6,000 miles of railway line to service whereas New South Wales has something like 2,700 miles of railway line and Victoria has less than 2,000 miles. The same type of argument applies in relation to roads. Almost every road in Victoria is bituminised. The same cannot quite be said about New South Wales, but we all know the situation in Queensland.

These things concern me. Because it has been said—and said in the Press—that I was somewhat opposed to the implementation of a combined approach, I thank the Leader of the Opposition, not for what could be termed a Dorothy Dixier, but for giving me the opportunity of expressing my viewpoint,

which I know was put forward by the Premier yesterday in the briefing that I provided for him as an argument on behalf of this State.

Mr. BURNS: I thank the Treasurer for a good answer.

PROPOSED NEW TAXATION FORMULA

Mr. MULLER: I ask the Premier: As he is well aware that claims are being made that the proposed new taxation formula will disadvantage Queensland and Western Australia, is an equalisation principle written into the policy and will the application of the new formula insulate Queensland from the effects of the Whitlam Government's socialist policies?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Deputy Premier and Treasurer has already given a fairly clear picture and outline of the discussions in Melbourne yesterday. It was a unique and indeed an historic occasion to have all the representatives of the non-Labor States together with the Federal Opposition Leader deciding on a basis that will become law when a non-Labor Government is elected to Canberra. It will change the whole attitude of the Commonwealth to the States. It will restore to the States their traditional rights and responsibilities. As the Deputy Premier and Treasurer said, steps will be taken to protect the smaller States. These details were discussed yesterday. It is interesting that representatives of the four non-Labor States and the Federal Leader of the Opposition were unanimous and that there was complete unity of purpose in achieving the best for Australia as was traditionally intended under the Constitution and also in presenting a united front and dedicated attitude and policy for the benefit of the people of Australia and in restoring their rights.

INTERCHANGE OF POWERS BETWEEN FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS

Mr. GREENWOOD: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: Has he seen reports of a statement made by the Prime Minister in Melbourne yesterday concerning the interchange of powers between Federal and State Governments? If so, what would be the effect of this proposal on the Constitution and what say would the people have concerning any interchange of powers?

Mr. KNOX: Yes, I have seen the reports to which the honourable member refers. This rump Constitution Convention which the

Prime Minister of Australia seems so keen to have is an indication of the suicidal course that the Labor Party is pursuing in this country at the moment in an endeavour to change, before it is emptied out, as many laws of the land as possible.

An Honourable Member: Scrambling the eggs.

Mr. KNOX: Scrambling the eggs is exactly what it is doing.

Mr. Hanson: You are being nasty.

Mr. KNOX: I am being nasty about it because if we are not nasty, this nation will be destroyed by these people. This nation will be destroyed by these people in their headlong rush to scramble as many eggs as possible before they are thrown out of office. The Attorney-General of Australia, supported by the Prime Minister, says that his Government is forced to break the law. The law by which the Federal Government has to abide is the Constitution of Australia. The Federal Government is not forced to break the law; but, in order to impose socialism on this country, it has to do so. We will stop it from breaking the law.

The interchange of powers, of course, requires special study. It is true that at the moment the Australian Constitution provides for the making of suitable arrangements for the transfer of powers, but it is open ended and has required study by Queensland and other States of how powers could be interchanged without the open-endedness that the Constitution presently provides. In normal circumstances, there would be room for a referendum on the transfer of powers; but when one sees what the Prime Minister and his supporters are trying to do, one has to question their motives. It was revealed in statements that apparently were made yesterday at the gathering in Melbourne to which I referred as the rump Constitutional Convention that the Federal Government wants to bypass the referendum procedure and make alterations by stealth to the Constitution of this nation by a mutual exchange of powers. The people of Australia would then be given no opportunity to say what the rules should be.

We in this State, and those in the other three States which withdrew from the conference, must regard the motives of the Prime Minister and his socialists with considerable suspicion. I hope the people of Australia will reject this move but if it is successful it will lead to collusion between

the socialists of this nation, wherever they happen to be in State Governments and in the Federal Government if it remains in office, for the transfer of powers to the detriment of the people of this nation. I warn the people of this State, as I think they should be continually warned, to examine the motives of the socialists in pushing this measure.

PROPOSED CHANGE IN COMMONWEALTH-STATES FINANCIAL RELATIONS

Mr. MELLOY: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to this part of his highly priced column in today's "Courier-Mail" headed, "Finance"—

"The critics will claim that the formula will benefit the larger States of New South Wales and Victoria against Queensland and the smaller States. We understand this area is covered."

Following the very significant remarks made this morning by the Treasurer, I now ask the Premier—

(1) Will he outline to the House how the formula will benefit the smaller States?

(2) Does he disagree with Mr. Kevin Cairns, M.P., who complained that the formula did not benefit the smaller States?

(3) How will the Grants Commission operate under the proposed system?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Is this a question or notice?

Mr. MELLOY: It is without notice.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MELLOY: The Premier is very vocal—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member proposes to continue in that vein, I think he should put the question on notice. I ask him to do so.

Mr. MELLOY: May I restrict it to the last two questions?

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member is restricted to the first question.

Mr. MELLOY: Then I will ask the Premier, without notice, if he disagrees with Mr. Kevin Cairns, M.P., who complained that the formula would not benefit the smaller States? I also ask how the Grants Commission will operate under the new plan.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: All I will say about Mr. Kevin Cairns is that he is a man who is doing a good job for Queensland. He is dedicated to doing his very best for the people whom he represents, and, indeed, the whole State. Mr. Cairns was not, of course, present at the discussion that took place yesterday, and there are certain angles with which he is perhaps not fully conversant. I appreciate, however, that he is anxious that States such as Queensland should not be disadvantaged. He is speaking and working towards that end, just as Sir Gordon and I have been doing. I can assure the honourable member that this is not the appropriate time or place to outline exactly how this is going to happen, but we have had discussions and very careful consideration will be given to this matter. The honourable member ought to let the matter rest there knowing he can trust this Government fully as far as the protection of Queensland's interests is concerned.

USE OF DAIRY WHITENERS IN MOTELS

Mr. ELLIOTT: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Is he aware of the increase in usage of dairy whiteners in motels as a substitute for milk, and would he inform me whether this product is actually based on milk extracts? If it is not, should the manufacturers be permitted to use the word "dairy" when referring to these products?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I thank the honourable member for the question because this matter is causing some concern to people involved in the dairy industry. My officers have done analyses of samples of the whitener in the laboratory and have found it contains milk proteins in exactly the same ratio and quality as in normal milk. Consequently it would appear quite in order to use the word "dairy" in this product.

ATTENDANCE OF QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARIANS AT CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, MELBOURNE

Mr. FRAWLEY: I ask the Premier: Is he aware that an attempt was made by the Prime Minister to bribe certain members of this Parliament, including myself, by offering them free air fares and accommodation to attend the semi-official Constitutional Convention in Melbourne? Is he also aware that the honourable members for Bulimba and Cairns availed themselves of that offer?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am aware, of course, that the Commonwealth Government, through the Prime Minister, would pay the fares of any member of Parliament who attended the convention. I am quite sure, too, that the Prime Minister—

Mr. Hanson: The honourable member for Murrumba used the word "bribe". That is serious.

Mr. Frawley: He did. He tried to bribe me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The question whether it was a bribe, or whatever term one might use, is perhaps a matter of opinion. The point is that the Prime Minister obviously knew that the four non-Labor States were not attending. They had very definite reasons for not attending, and these reasons have come very much to the fore in the last few days. It is obvious that the Commonwealth Government is trying to initiate certain aspects of policy that are dear to it and to amend the Constitution in certain ways relative to the transfer of powers and to the setting up of regional bodies—destroying local councils as such, replacing them by a greatly reduced number of local authorities and then dealing directly with them. Because the four non-Labor States disagree with that aspect of Labor's policy, they decided not to attend.

I admire the courage and determination of the honourable member for Murrumba in not falling for the offer that was made to him.

VISITS TO HIGH SCHOOLS BY MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Mr. FRAWLEY: I ask the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities: Is he aware that the honourable member for Rockhampton makes a practice of visiting high schools in the electorates of other members of this Assembly, including those in electorates represented by A.L.P. members, without first having the courtesy to notify the member concerned or even, in some instances, the principal concerned? As the honourable member for Rockhampton uses his time at these schools to espouse socialist philosophies, will he consider putting a stop to this unethical conduct?

Mr. BIRD: I am not aware of the activities of the honourable member for Rockhampton in visiting schools in the way outlined by the

honourable member for Murrumba. If he is doing so, I assume that he would at least have the courtesy to approach the member of this Assembly concerned and advise the Education Department and the principal concerned. I shall certainly have investigations carried out to ascertain whether the honourable member's statement is correct; if it is, I hope the honourable member for Rockhampton will pay the department that courtesy in the future.

RECEIPTS FROM PAY-ROLL TAX

Mr. JENSEN: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Why was he so far out in his estimate of pay-roll tax last year when he underestimated it by over \$50,000,000?

Sir GORDON CHALK: What a Dorothy Dixer! Certainly it would appear to be one.

I was so far out because of the inflation created by the Federal Government, which caused an increase in the total wage structure of Australia.

Mr. JENSEN: By way of a supplementary question I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Last year he said he had made provision in his Budget for the inflationary period ahead, so why didn't he take that into account?

Sir GORDON CHALK: The answer to that is very simple, too. No-one by any stretch of imagination would have been able to realise just what the Federal Government would do to the wage structure of Australia through inflation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The time allotted for questions has now expired.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.5 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced relating to the appointment, registration and functions of justices of the peace; to repeal certain provisions of the Justices Act 1886-1975; and for connected purposes."

The office of justice of the peace originated in a statute of Edward III in 1344. It was there provided that two or three persons of the best reputation in the counties should

be assigned by the King's commission as keepers of the peace and they, with others learned in the law, should hear and determine charges of felonies and trespasses against the peace. Some particular functions traditionally exercised by justices were first exercised at an even earlier time.

Various statutes since that time have given justices power to determine numerous matters, and today the Queensland Justices Act governs the power of justices in dealing with the less-serious criminal matters and ordains the procedure in Magistrates Courts.

The duties of a justice of the peace have, over the years, become largely administrative, and nowadays a person who may be termed a lay justice may be called on to discharge judicial functions only rarely. The modern-day justice of the peace in Queensland is charged with the performance of a multiplicity of duties, most of which he is empowered to perform by various Acts of Parliament. One of the most frequent and useful tasks performed by a justice is the witnessing of signatures to documents and the taking of statutory declarations and affidavits.

The Bill adopts, and embodies in separate legislation, those provisions relating to justices of the peace contained in the Justices Act in so far as they concern appointment generally or by virtue of office, removal from office, resignation, prohibition from acting, jurisdiction, acts done beyond the State, description, evidence of status, taking the oath of office and bringing actions against justices.

A number of additions to and clarifications of these provisions are also included in the Bill. Whereas at present the Act does not specify any qualifications for appointment as a justice of the peace, the Bill provides for the appointment of fit and proper persons of or over 21 years of age and under 66 years of age.

Every justice presently appointed or holding that position by virtue of his office will continue to be a justice and every appointed justice will be registered in the register of justices and be issued with a certificate of registration by the Registrar of Justices. This will enable a ready check to be kept on all appointed justices and on the locality in which they are resident. Where the registrar is satisfied that any person is no longer desirous or capable of being a justice, he is not required to register that person or issue a certificate.

At the present time members of the Executive Council, judges of the Supreme Court and of District Courts and chairmen of local authorities are justices of the peace by virtue of their office. It is proposed to extend the classes of persons who may be justices by virtue of their office to include stipendiary magistrates, Registrars of the Supreme Court and of District and Magistrates Courts, officers of those courts of or over 21 years of age and any person of or over 21 years of age acting in any of these capabilities.

In addition to the present provisions relating to resignation, revocation of appointment and prohibition from acting, any justice who becomes bankrupt or mentally ill or is convicted of an indictable offence, whether convicted on indictment or summarily, or of a drug offence under the Health Act shall cease to hold office.

A number of offences which can be dealt with summarily and in respect of which heavy penalties may be inflicted are created. These relate to wrongfully acting as a justice, demanding or accepting a fee or reward for acting as a justice, failing to notify the registrar of a conviction or of becoming bankrupt and failing to return a certificate of registration within 14 days of ceasing to hold office.

From time to time a list of justices will be published in the Gazette either generally or for a particular locality and such list will be displayed publicly at court houses and police stations. As well, the Principal Electoral Officer will be required to have the letters "J.P." placed against the name of every appointed justice appearing in the electoral rolls.

Upon the commencement of the proposed legislation the administration of the provisions relating to the appointment and registration of justices will pass from the Premier's Department to the Department of Justice and the administration of Justice and justices will come under the one departmental head.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (12.11 p.m.): It has been said for a long, long time that we need to upgrade the Justices Act because of the huge number of persons in our community who are justices but contribute very little to the community. One wonders exactly why people take on the position.

Mr. Moore: Why do you nominate so many?

Mr. WRIGHT: I am told the honourable member's list is already three years' ahead; so maybe he could answer that question.

People ask us as members of Parliament to nominate them, some simply because they desire to use the initials "J.P." after their names, and others because they hold a position in an office where people seek to have documents witnessed. That occurs in all types of offices—public accountants, solicitors and so on. The public waste a lot of time looking for a J.P. because of the requirement that documents, affidavits and so on must be witnessed by a J.P., so obviously a need exists for a number of justices.

Nevertheless, I believe we have too many in our community. I am not sure of the total figure, but recently I was told that it is something like 40,000. One wonders whether in a State with our population that number is necessary and whether we should have an assessment made as to how many of the 40,000 have witnessed documents in the last few years.

Mr. McKechnie: You are not suggesting that in isolated areas people should have to drive more than 10 miles, are you?

Mr. WRIGHT: No. I am not making the suggestion that we cut down nominations simply to reduce the number. I am suggesting that we look at the principle of nominations. No member of Parliament would refuse to send to the Premier's Department the name of a person who asked to be nominated.

Mr. Moore: You've got no guts.

Mr. WRIGHT: If any member has refused, I ask him to get up and be counted. I have never refused. I have simply asked the person for his name, the employer's name and the other details we are asked to obtain.

Mr. Moore: You are asking us to do something that you won't do yourself.

Mr. WRIGHT: I hope the honourable member makes a speech later on, because he is certainly antagonistic. I suggest that he get out of bed on the right side.

Mr. McKechnie: In the towns, you would not like to overload the people who are J.P.s, would you? Surely you would want as many as you could have, so that the burden placed on them would not interfere with their businesses or their jobs?

Mr. WRIGHT: That might sound all very well in theory, but the point is that we have so many justices who are doing nothing. I agree with the Minister's intention to have a public documentation of who the justices are so that they are able to be found. It is a good idea to have it indicated on the electoral roll. The Minister says that he will have the initials "J.P." after the appropriate names in the electoral roll. That at least will make it easier for them to be contacted, because it is obvious that, even with 40,000 in the State, often a known J.P. is not available. People frequently come to members of Parliament saying, "We cannot find a justice of the peace. Will you sign the document?" We have the ridiculous situation that, even though there are 40,000 justices, they are still not obtainable.

Mr. Casey: How many people do you think would have a roll in their homes?

Mr. WRIGHT: Rolls are obtainable at such places as police stations and court-houses. I think people can get access to the rolls. However, the Minister says that he will have a list published. I think that is the best way of doing it. I hope that is kept up to date, because people move from places of residence. Something like 2,000 people in my electorate have changed their addresses, and I am told that in some of the bigger electorates the number is up to 3,000 or 4,000. No doubt a number of those are justices of the peace.

I question the limited function of justices of the peace. It is ridiculous to insist that only justices may witness documents, sign affidavits and so on. I wonder why the ordinary citizen cannot act as a witness. For the number of forms that require a justice to be the witness, there are just as many that do not. The person witnessing does so merely as an elector or a mature person. We start to wonder why we have them. Is it simply a matter of prestige, so that someone can get up at a meeting and say, "I am a justice of the peace; I can write 'J.P.' after my name."? Where is the value in that?

Mr. McKechnie interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: I think that the honourable member would be surprised at the number who nominate simply for the sake of prestige. Because of the requirements today, I would say that they are certainly needed in the scattered and thinly populated areas of the State. But the greater need in those areas is for some type of training. The monthly

journal published by the Justices of the Peace Association always contains good hints for the appointees. I am afraid that not enough people read them, sometimes because they are detailed and sometimes because a person would need to have undertaken a first-year course in law to understand what is being suggested.

I ask the Minister to give some thought to this matter. When a person nominates for appointment to the commission of a justice of the peace, he should have to undertake some reading course. It is obligatory on him to at least understand what it is all about. As it is, a person simply takes an oath, and I am not sure that that is enough. I know that a check is made on the character of applicants, but surely a good character is not sufficient to qualify a person to carry out these functions. How many honourable members, being justices of the peace, could actually act on a bench? I think we are excluded, but could the ordinary person act in a judicial capacity? Who would want to? Most people shy away from it.

Stories are told of police sergeants in certain areas giving advice to justices of the peace on the bench. One story I heard recently concerned a justice of the peace who read out everything he was supposed to say and at the end simply said, "Fined \$10." The case had not even been heard. He simply read out what the police sergeant had given him to read.

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: I think it was the Leader of the Opposition who related that story to us.

Mr. Knox: I would say that it would be the honourable member for Bundaberg.

Mr. WRIGHT: Whoever it was, it was related as a true story that a justice of the peace simply read out what he was supposed to say—we know there are certain things he is supposed to say to people appearing before the bench—but he kept going right to the very end and imposed the fine before the case was heard. I would say that that is not a typical case, but most J.P.s have no training in this field. I suggest that a special course is required. I am not suggesting that all justices of the peace should be required to come to Brisbane and take a three-week training course; it may be possible for them to undertake a correspondence course and return the paper to the Justice Department.

I also ask why the Premier's Department and not the Justice Department makes the appointments. The Minister for Justice administers the Justices Act and it seems to me that there is no reason why the Premier should undertake this role.

Mr. Frawley: You don't think that it is because he is making sure that no Communists are appointed?

Mr. WRIGHT: I draw the inference from that statement that the Premier looks under his bed every night. Is the honourable member saying that the Premier has a thing about Communists?

Mr. Frawley: He has a comprehensive list of all the Communists in Queensland and I have a copy of it.

Mr. WRIGHT: That is very good. We have a very comprehensive list of the N.C.C. people in this Chamber and I am sure that the honourable member for Murrumba is well known in that regard.

The Minister said that the Bill contains a number of proposals. He said that an applicant must be between the ages of 21 and 66 years. Recently the age of majority was reduced to 18 years of age. I know that this matter has been considered by the Minister because questions have been asked by both Government and Opposition members as to whether the age for justices could be lowered to 18. Why has it been decided not to lower it? A person who is 18 years of age now has the legal capacity to own property, to fight, to marry and to do other things. If he can enter into a contract valued at \$6,000 or \$7,000, why can he not take upon himself the simple role of witnessing a document? I can understand the Minister's reservations about an 18-year-old sitting on the bench. I am not sure that this matter has been considered enough and I hope the Minister will explain it further.

Mr. McKechnie: You want a two-tier system?

Mr. WRIGHT: Maybe this is necessary. For instance an 18-year-old could be appointed as a justice of the peace but not allowed to sit on the bench until he is 21. Straight off the top of my head, that is one possible way round it. It seems to me to be ridiculous to say that a person is capable of doing certain things and of accepting certain responsibilities at 18 years of age but he cannot witness a document.

Dr. Scott-Young: There is a large grey area with eighteen-year-olds.

Mr. WRIGHT: The Government introduced the legislation, and the honourable member supported it.

Dr. Scott-Young: I disagreed with it.

Mr. WRIGHT: Does the honourable member still disagree with it?

Dr. Scott-Young: Yes.

Mr. WRIGHT: That is fair enough. I am sure there are many 18-year-old students who will be interested to hear that.

I return to the registration of justices of the peace. I agree that it is most important to keep an up-to-date list of justices, and I also support the idea of automatically extending nomination as justices to stipendiary magistrates and registrars of courts. I wonder why there should not be a similar automatic nomination of members of Parliament. It seems to me that we have a fair amount of responsibility that we are expected to carry out on behalf of many thousands of people. It would seem logical to include members of Parliament.

Mr. Frawley: I would not agree with that.

Mr. WRIGHT: That is the honourable member's right.

There is a need to toughen up the appointment of justices of the peace. It may even be worth while asking those who apply for such appointments why they do so. That question is asked of applicants for many other offices or positions.

Mr. Lindsay: Don't you do that?

Mr. WRIGHT: I am talking about an official request. I do not know whether the honourable member has ever spoken to police officers who interview applicants for the position of justices of the peace. They are not asked why they want such an appointment; a check is simply made from the referees about their role in society and those who recommend them.

Mr. Lindsay: I always ask why they wish to become J.P.s.

Mr. WRIGHT: I do not. Usually an applicant will say that people have called on him, or that his employer has requested that he apply. I do not interfere in this way. I do not regard it as my right to make the decision. I tell applicants plainly, "I will not be making your appointment. I simply nominate you to the Premier." If the honourable member for Everton decides that it is his responsibility to make a decision

based on the reasons given by the applicant, that is a matter for him; but I certainly do not think I have such a responsibility and I do not intend to take it upon myself to ask questions of that nature. If the honourable member wishes to be so subjective, that is up to him.

I have said that there is need for a toughening up in the appointment of justices. There are too many of them now. There should be a training programme and a culling-out process. If, after a certain time, it is seen that a justice of the peace has not been active, his name should be removed from the roll. I see no value in having J.P.s obtain their appointments solely for their prestige value.

I shall be looking closely at the Bill when it is printed. I feel sure that most members will agree that it is timely to clean up the Act and they will give their support to the legislation.

Mr. LESTER (Belyando) (12.23 p.m.): I take this opportunity to commend the Minister on the introduction of this legislation. There is no doubt that for some time the Act has needed overhauling and bringing up to date.

Without necessarily taking issue with the honourable member for Rockhampton, I should like to comment on his statement that he feels that there are too many justices of the peace in Queensland at the present time. I do not believe that that is so in many country areas. In some country electorates, such as mine, not many justices have been appointed in the last few years. Now, for various reasons, I am being rushed with applications. I am over my quota, and many people who have good reasons for wanting to become justices cannot be appointed as quickly as they would like.

I say quite sincerely that, because of long distances and the increase in the number of offices in my electorate, such as those of coal-mining companies, there is a need for more justices of the peace. I hope that in the future it will be possible to have applications dealt with more quickly than they have been in the past.

I agree with the honourable member for Rockhampton that there should be a toughening-up in dealing with future applications. Applicants should be required to be of the very highest integrity.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. LESTER: I did not say that I would be making the decision. I merely said that a toughening-up is needed to see that the very best people are obtained for this office.

I believe the idea of keeping a register of justices of the peace is excellent and that it is terribly important that their names be put up in court houses so the public can see who they are and where they live. Time and time again in Clermont before I became a justice, I found that people did not know where to go. Because of this deficiency I took the opportunity to have my wife nominated for the position as well so that people knew there were at least two people they could always go to for the services dispensed by justices of the peace. As at least one of us has always been reasonably accessible since that time, we have had a lot of work to do as justices of the peace.

I believe it is a little unfair that people over the age of 18 but under the age of 21 will not be able to become justices of the peace. I recall asking a question in the House on this matter and I think the answer was that at that stage it appeared that people of 18 years and over would be acceptable. However, it was pointed out by various people that they felt that those aged between 18 and 21 were just a little too young to have this responsibility.

Mr. Wright: If they are old enough to enter into contracts, surely they are old enough just to scribble.

Mr. LESTER: Yes. Well, everybody in this Committee can air his own views on this; I am merely putting mine. As 18-year-olds could go to Vietnam and fight for their country and face the possibility of having their throats cut, I cannot see why we in this Parliament should say to them, "No, you are not mature enough to be a justice of the peace". People over 18 and under 21 are being allowed to take on all sorts of responsible jobs and most young people today are playing a more important role in most community affairs and it is a form of insult to them that they are debarred from nomination as a justice of the peace. Applicants have to pass the most stringent tests, and if they can pass them I do not think they should be discriminated against because they are under 21. Many people aged 18 are much more intelligent than others aged 30, 35 or 40.

I reiterate that I would like further consideration to be given to the appointment of people aged over 18 but under 21 as justices

of the peace. I am not trying to fly anybody's banner; I am just looking for justice. If it is possible I would like members of this Committee to be empowered to nominate as many people as they wish for appointment as justices of the peace. I believe such appointments should be made on the basis of ability and after the most stringent tests. We should not be limited to nominating four people per quarter.

Mr. Casey: If I were you I wouldn't take too much notice of the honourable member for Rockhampton.

Mr. LESTER: My comments here this morning have had nothing whatever to do with the honourable member for Rockhampton. I am speaking on behalf of the people in my electorate, and the way I feel and whatever I have to say in this Committee on this question is not going to be seriously influenced by anything said by the honourable member for Rockhampton, the honourable member for Mackay, or the honourable member for Murrumba. I am a sincere member. I go about my job in the manner that I feel is best, and I believe that if justice is to be done it is my job to get up and say what I feel.

As I am trying to be a fair and honourable member I will now resume my seat and give others the opportunity to have their say in the limited time available for debate.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (12.29 p.m.): I rise to speak briefly in support of the honourable member for Rockhampton. I would like to ask a question of the Minister about a reference he made to 18-year-olds. I dug out a report of an address he made in November 1974 to the Queensland Justices' Association Seminar. I think that association represents 13,000 justices of the peace. That report reads—

"As a result of Government action to lower the age of majority in Queensland from March 1, men and women aged between 18 and 21 would become eligible for appointment as Js.P.

'I look forward with confidence to the first appointment of an 18, 19, or 20-year-old as a Justice of the Peace in Queensland early in 1975,' Mr. Knox said.

'This will help young people understand that the J.P. is not someone who is remote from them or that all Js.P. must be at least past 40.'

I read that because I should like the Minister to explain why, after he made that statement in November 1974, it has been decided not to do anything about the matter.

When the Oaths Act Amendment Bill was before the House in 1974, I raised some of the points that the Minister mentioned in his introductory remarks on this Bill. I share the concern expressed by other honourable members about the non-availability of J.P.s. When I became member for Lytton, I read in the local newspaper that the honourable member for Chatsworth produced a list of J.P.s in his electorate and distributed copies to police stations, schools and other centres where they would be of use to the people. I then wrote to the Premier's Department and asked for a list of the J.P.s in my electorate, and I was very politely told that the only one available covered only the last few years, and that they did not have a complete list. In view of that, I shall be interested to hear how it is proposed to compile a list of the 40,000 J.P.s in Queensland.

The Premier's Department gave me a list containing the names of people who had been nominated as J.P.s over a certain period. Since then I have done what the honourable member for Chatsworth has done; I have added as a supplement to that list the names of people who have been approved after I have submitted their nomination. That list has grown, and each year I roneo copies and send them to various centres in my electorate. The Minister has assisted greatly by introducing a proposal to make a full list available.

One of the biggest problems is that people cannot find J.P.s. If they wish to avail themselves of the services of a J.P., they usually end up at the police station or at the court house if there is one in the area. It is a little easier for people living in a country town than it is for people living in a Brisbane suburb, who in most instances have to go into the city to a court house.

Now that members of Parliament have electorate offices, it might be convenient to extend the J.P. service to members or to someone working in their office. Usually the office is in a fairly prominent position and well advertised in an area, and people would be able to say, "This is where I will find a Justice of the Peace." For that reason, I support some extension.

Another problem arises from the fact that honourable members are allowed to nominate for appointment as J.P.s only 16 people a

year, or four a quarter. The Minister indicates that he is extending that limit, and that is good.

One of the problems in my electorate occurred in the newly developed area of Wynnum West. When I became member for Lytton, there were few homes in that area. As it developed, people in various occupations who moved in made demands on me for nomination as Justices of the Peace because they required such appointments in their businesses. At the top end of the electorate, which had been well established since the mid-1930's, there was hardly a call for appointment of a J.P. Probably there were hundreds of people in that old-established area who were J.P.s and we did not know about them; similarly, probably J.P.s were moving into Wynnum West and we did not know about them. No doubt honourable members who represent provincial cities and developing outer-suburban areas in Brisbane have similar problems. They would certainly arise in Moranbah, Blackwater and other towns that have grown up virtually overnight.

Mr. Casey: In provincial cities, many people are transferred into and out of offices.

Mr. BURNS: I was about to make that point. The honourable member for Belyando spoke about J.P.s in his area. I remember Hughie O'Donnell, the former member for Belyando, taking part in the debate on the Oaths Act Amendment Bill in 1974 and making the point that the manager of Dalgety's, Primaries or the Bank of New South Wales could be appointed a J.P. and then move out of the area. The manager who takes his place then applies for and receives his appointment as a J.P. and later he, too, moves out of the area. There should be some way of overcoming this problem, and I am pleased that the Minister intends to remove the present limit of 16 nominations a year. If a member used up his 16 nominations each year in seeking appointments of managers moving in and out of the area, the permanent residents could be left without a J.P.

I mention also training. When my wife was to be appointed a J.P., she asked me to drive her to town. As a convenient parking spot was available, I went and watched the procedure. Those being appointed appeared before the magistrate prior to the opening of the court at 9 a.m. and they were rushed through fairly quickly. I often wonder what sort of advice J.P.s give to people who come to them. Working people do ask questions when they come to see a J.P.

They put in front of the J.P. the paper that they have to complete and ask for advice. My wife is as well educated as the average suburban housewife. She is fairly active in community affairs, but I do not know that she is any legal expert.

Mr. Knox: How does she get on with marriage guidance?

Mr. BURNS: She gets on with marriage guidance all right because she is involved in that field. But that is a specific field. I can remember an occasion when an old lady who was making some gifts to her sons and daughters came along with the appropriate forms covering gift duty and transfer of property. She was asking my wife a series of questions in our lounge room. I came into the discussion because I thought I knew a little more about it than my wife did. I can imagine that many people appointed to the office of J.P. have had very little training, yet they could have somebody come to their home or office seeking advice. The J.P. is expected to have some knowledge of various matters. Most J.P.s do not join the J.P.s association. According to the report of the meeting the Minister addressed, the association represents 13,000 J.P.s. The same report showed that J.P.s numbered more than 40,000. So only one in three join the association and get the booklets that are issued, and two out of three have very little contact with justice, legal matters or any sort of information to make them different from the person next door.

I suppose there is necessarily a kind of double standard in this. First of all, there is the J.P. who merely signs declarations as a witness. Then there is the J.P. who is called on to sit on the bench one day; no doubt he will be prepared to train in some way, and in that respect he is different from the person whose only job is to sign declarations and the like.

I read the Minister's statement with interest. I agreed with him then. I had previously expressed my concern in the Chamber. I felt that we were starting to move in the right direction, and I still believe that. The provision of lists generally, the change in relation to appointments, removals and resignations, and the proposal about actions against justices are all desirable revisions of the law, and I congratulate the Minister on them. But I wonder whether he has gone far enough.

Mr. Knox: Other matters you have raised are administrative matters. They are not matters for inclusion in legislation; they can be attended to administratively.

Mr. BURNS: By regulation?

Mr. Knox: No; just by doing it.

Mr. BURNS: I will accept that interjection. We will wait until we see the Bill.

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (12.38 p.m.): I rise to speak briefly in support of the Bill. Over some years of practice in law I have dealt with justices of the peace almost as a daily occurrence.

As to the problem raised by the Leader of the Opposition concerning the forwarding of publications to justices of the peace—when the register of justices of the peace is established, I think it will be found that there will be substantially fewer than the 40,000 referred to by the honourable gentleman.

Mr. Burns: There are 13,000 on the circulating list for the journal.

Mr. LOWES: I venture to say that if an attempt were made to circulate all the 40,000, many of the publications would be returned like many of the letters we send from time to time to so-called or presumed electors. Many of them are returned to us "Address unknown" or "Left address". In some cases it is indicated that the premises do not in fact exist.

However, the number of 40,000 will be substantially reduced. We may get to the stage of having to look for further appointees and extend the number at a greater rate than it has been extended in recent years. Members have had a restricted number of nominations, but I am pleased that the Minister has removed that restriction, if, in fact, there ever was a properly qualified restriction. I know it happened in fact, but whether or not it was justified is another matter altogether.

I am not concerned about any possibility of a low standard of justices of the peace. There is already and there will continue to be quite a worth-while and effective means of screening applicants for the position of justice of the peace. And there has to be the motivation on the part of the applicant.

It may be that a person wishes to become a justice of the peace because he feels there is some honour attaching to this position.

This is, in fact, quite so, because appointment is a recognition of a person's good character. Before appointment an applicant is screened and must receive the support of persons of merit in the community.

I have no fears whatever in that regard; nor have I any concern about the educational and intellectual qualifications of a justice of the peace. That comment is directed at the proposal put forward by the member for Rockhampton.

It must be remembered that justices serve the community and are appointed from a cross-section of the community. It is not proper for us to lay down educational or intellectual qualifications.

Justices of the peace perform varying functions. Not all of them, for example, constitute courts of summary jurisdiction. I venture to suggest that there is not likely to be any justice of the peace who could not at some time or other perform what is one of his most important functions, that is, the admitting of a person to bail. This is provided for by the Justices Act in a section that is used very seldom.

Some several years ago a person who, as was later found on appeal, had been wrongly convicted was placed, upon his conviction, in gaol, and it was necessary for me, as his legal adviser, to obtain the services of a justice of the peace and to take him to gaol to admit to bail this poor unfortunate person who had been wrongly convicted. I can assure the Committee that I had the utmost difficulty in convincing the gaoler that any justice of the peace, not necessarily one who was an officer of the Magistrates Court or some other court, was entitled to admit a person to bail.

Mr. Greenwood: Educate the gaolers.

Mr. LOWES: On that occasion we did just that, and it was quite a successful and personally rewarding endeavour on my part.

I would be opposed to any form of demarcation between the duties of justices of the peace. I do not believe in setting standards so that there would be those who may witness documents and those who may not; those who may sit on the bench and those who may not; and those who may admit persons to bail and those who may not. Any person appointed should be clothed with the over-all power to carry out all the duties entrusted to the position. I have no doubt that if

a justice acted in excess of his jurisdiction that excess could be put right and that if a justice errs there is power to correct his error. The appointment of justices of the peace should not be restricted in any way.

Sitting in summary jurisdiction and witnessing documents are only two of the active ways in which a justice of the peace performs his duty. He also plays a passive role in that he safeguards the liberties and rights of the community generally. Citizens are aware that in a justice of the peace they have a refuge and someone to whom they can turn if they believe their rights as citizens are being infringed. A justice of the peace, simply by holding that position, plays a very passive and worth-while role, and for that reason I am in favour of the Minister's proposal that a justice of the peace should have the fact that he is appointed to that position noted beside his name in the electoral roll.

That brings us to a further reason why the management of justices of the peace should come within the responsibility of the Minister for Justice rather than the Premier. It is the Minister for Justice who has control of the Electoral Act. It is the Minister for Justice who has the control of the Magistrates Courts Act and other Acts governing the various jurisdictions. Therefore, I think it is only fit and proper that he should have jurisdiction over the appointment and control of justices of the peace also.

The Bill represents a progressive step and one that is desirable. I support it.

Mr. LINDSAY (Everton) (12.46 p.m.): I rise to make a few brief remarks. First, I compliment the Minister on the introduction of the legislation, which is obviously long overdue. It is a further indication of the Minister's continuing attempts to modernise the legislation of the State of Queensland. On behalf of the silent majority in the Everton electorate, I thank him for the efforts he is making and will undoubtedly continue to make whilst he has the very important portfolio of Minister for Justice and Attorney-General.

My own limited experience in the field of justices of the peace was gained during Army service. In 1965 in South Australia, as a member of the Fourth Battalion, I was personally responsible for the movement of troops, their wives and families from Adelaide to Singapore and later to Malacca. Involved in that move were such things as

making wills, selling cars, storing furniture and being inoculated. Later on, when we returned home, I was involved in the relocation of families.

Regrettably, when I left South Australia to return to my home State of Queensland I was required to resign my commission as justice of the peace. If that still applies—and I understand that it does—I feel that Queensland is losing the benefit of a lot of experienced people in this area. The more experience one has in being a justice of the peace, obviously the greater one's contribution to the many hundreds of people who, as has already been stated here today, ask J.P.s for advice.

My present situation as the member for Everton gives me an electorate office and an electorate secretary, situated at 5 Sizer Street, Everton Park—in the heart of the Everton electorate. It is well known now by all my constituents, who realise that it is not a party-political office as such, but rather an office belonging to each and every member of the Everton electorate. Because of that, people come to me asking where the nearest J.P. is. I know where some of them are, but often it is difficult to get to them. I notice that by this legislation the Minister plans to prominently display a list of names of all justices of the peace.

I will detail what I do. Perhaps the Minister can tell me whether I am doing it rightly or wrongly. As members would know from their own experience, many people who approach parliamentarians are in a desperate situation. The last thing one wants to tell a deserted wife with four children is that the J.P. is three or four miles away across country. What I am doing is signing the document as a witness and placing underneath my signature the stamp "Brian Lindsay, member for Everton, Queensland State Parliament." So far—and touch wood it will continue—no document signed by me has come back to me. Obviously all deserted wives and other people in these difficult situations have been satisfied because there has been no come-back.

It would seem sensible to me—and in this regard I support the Leader of the Opposition—that perhaps a slight extension may be warranted so that electorate offices may be used in this regard. Those offices are non-party political. As I have indicated, they belong to the whole electorate. The people know where they are and that they are there for their use. It would be a very definite step

in the right direction if members of Parliament had the capacity to witness documents as I am doing at present legally or illegally—I am not sure. In this respect I ask the Minister for advice.

I was a little surprised to hear the honourable member for Rockhampton indicate—and by way of interjection I disagreed—that when people go to him and ask him if he would recommend them as justices of the peace, far from asking them why they want to be recommended, or attempting to make some decision himself on whether it would be good or bad for them to become justices of the peace, he simply sends all applications to the Premier's Department with his recommendation.

Mr. WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order. I think that the honourable member does not quite understand that we do not really make a recommendation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is not necessary for the honourable member to explain procedures. Is the honourable member personally aggrieved?

Mr. WRIGHT: I am personally aggrieved in that what the honourable member said is not correct.

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

Mr. Wright: I am just not in the mood to fight with you, Mr. Hewitt, or I would.

Mr. LINDSAY: I point out to every man, woman and child in the Everton electorate, who are the only people to whom I am responsible, that whenever I sign a piece of paper, be it a recommendation that someone become a J.P. or whatever else, it has my total support. I do not send the document along just to please a person whose vote I might or might not get on some future occasion. I conclude by expressing my absolute disgust with the attitude of the honourable member for Rockhampton.

Mr. Wright: You're a rat.

Mr. LINDSAY: I rise to a point of order. I did not spend whatever it took to get into this Parliament to come here and be called—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! What is the honourable member's point of order?

Mr. LINDSAY: I ask that the honourable member withdraw his reference to me, the honourable member for Everton, as a rat. I do not believe—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have heard the member's point of order. I heard the interjection of the honourable member for Rockhampton and I ask him to withdraw it.

A Government Member: Throw him out.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have asked the honourable member for Rockhampton to withdraw his interjection.

Mr. WRIGHT: Mr. Hewitt, the comments made by the honourable member for Everton were offensive to me and you took no action.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am not here to debate my rulings.

Mr. WRIGHT: I withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have asked the honourable member to withdraw his interjection and he will do so.

Mr. Wright: I have done so.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (12.54 p.m.): As far as I am concerned, this is a very timely amendment to the Justices Act. As pointed out by the Minister, the modern-day justice of the peace has many duties to perform. In many cases his principal duty, as has been pointed out, is to witness signatures. I have nominated many many persons for appointment as justices of the peace. Some of them have applied, believing the commission to be a social status and not from the point of view of giving assistance to the general community. The number of names on the roll of justices of the peace has reached a ridiculous level.

I think it is ridiculous too, that some members have long waiting lists of those who want to become justices of the peace. Throughout my parliamentary career, since 1960, I have never taken names of applicants unless I knew that, provided they were suitable appointees, they had a reasonable chance of being accepted within the period of time allowed. I have no waiting list. One member said that he had a waiting list for about two years ahead. I think that that is quite ridiculous. It cheapens this important office, and makes a mockery of it. I think that the Bill will bring some semblance of order and respectability to this high office.

I have often expressed regret that more use is not made of justices of the peace. Theirs is, I repeat, a very high office. They are citizens of high repute, and I feel that they could take a greater part in community life. I think that a justice should have a nameplate at his place of residence indicating that he is a justice of the peace. I am not so concerned about the position in city and near-city areas, because in such

places it is not so difficult to find a justice of the peace. But in outback areas, where there may be few justices, there should be some indication of their office on their homes. I cannot see that displaying a plate to that effect would be out of order in country areas.

I also feel that it could well be provided that bank officers, postal officers and council officers, who work in places where people congregate, become justices of the peace by virtue of the positions that they hold. The Bill might make such a provision; at the moment I do not know. I cannot see any reason why it should not be made easier for them to be registered or why they should not automatically become justices of the peace. It would be of great assistance to the public. With all the hundreds of justices who are registered, it is still difficult at times to find one at short notice. Sometimes a considerable search has to be made. I should like to see some form of identification displayed where justices reside so that people could readily avail themselves of their services.

Mention was made, I think by the previous speaker, of the giving of advice by justices of the peace. Justices should be very careful about advice that they give, especially where legal matters are concerned. From a layman's point of view a certain course might seem the correct one, and it might be common sense, but it still might not make legal sense. If incorrect advice is given, trouble starts. The same advice should be given to ambulance officers, as some of them might at times overstep the mark and give advice that should be given only by a medical man. They could then be in trouble. I think that little, if any, advice on legal matters should be given by justices of the peace.

Again I stress the importance of making known where justices can be found if they are needed. I hope the Bill will deal with this point.

Progress reported.

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

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL TABLES

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) presented the tables relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement for the year 1975-76.

Ordered to be printed.

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1975-76

Mr. SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor forwarding the Estimates of the probable Ways and Means and Expenditure of the Government of Queensland for the year ending 30 June 1976.

Estimates ordered to be printed, and referred to Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

OPENING OF COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL
STATEMENT

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

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (2.17 p.m.), who was received with Government “Hear, hears!”, said—

INTRODUCTION

MR. HEWITT,

This is the tenth occasion on which I have risen in this House to present the Budget of this State. Whilst in these times the preparation and management of a State budget are most onerous tasks indeed, I deem it an honour and a privilege to have been again entrusted with the responsibility.

At the outset however, I desire to express to the Honourable the Premier, my Parliamentary colleges, and the electors of Queensland, my sincere appreciation at being accorded, through their support, the honour to now set by the delivery of this Budget, a new record for the occupancy of the important portfolio of Treasurer of Queensland.

The most distressing aspect of current economic conditions nationally is the level of unemployment which is now about three times higher than in the period 1971–74. At the end of August 4.6 per cent. of the Queensland workforce or 39,070 persons were unable to obtain employment.

In addition to the human tragedy of unemployment at this level, from an economic viewpoint every unemployed person means a lost opportunity in the production of goods and services that go to make a better standard of living for the citizens of Queensland.

Of equal concern is the very high rate of inflation which if not corrected quickly will price Australia out of the world markets and cause a further downturn in our incomes and standards. A general lack of confidence persists in the business community. Company failures have increased significantly. Hence this State budget is subjected to extreme pressures arising from the costs of high interest rates, continuing inflation, rising wage levels, high unemployment and consequential lost production, much of which I consider could have been avoided had sound economic judgement been exercised at national Government level.

FINANCIAL RESULT 1974–75

I do not propose to dwell at length on the results of the past financial year. I believe that prospects for the current year are of more importance and relevance and I will confine my comments on 1974–75 to a summary of the major variations from the budget and the reasons for them.

The budget as originally framed provided for an expenditure program of \$1,081,043,147 to be financed by receipts of \$1,077,873,043 and a deficit of \$3,170,104.

Actual receipts for the year were \$1,112,865,504 and expenditures were \$1,121,218,490 leaving a deficit on the year's operations of \$8,352,986. With the accumulated surplus of \$2,409,593 as at 30th June, 1974 taken into account, the true deficit was \$5,943,393.

The increases of \$40,175,343 in expenditures and \$34,992,461 in receipts were attributable almost entirely to the two economic maladies of the times—inflation and unemployment.

In drawing up the budget for 1974–75, I made what I considered would be an adequate provision of 15 per cent. for increases in costs generally. It became evident by the middle of the financial year that this provision was insufficient and that substantial additional funds would be needed if Departments were to avoid a reduction in their services.

Likewise, it was soon apparent that the provision of \$93,418,000 that had been made to meet the cost of award increases would be inadequate. In fact, the cost of these increases was \$106,795,696 or \$13,377,696 more than was provided.

The position in other States was similar and all faced the prospects of substantial deficits. A joint approach was made to the Commonwealth for assistance from its expanding taxation pool towards the States' budgetary problems.

With the private sector also in the grip of the continuing economic decline and unemployment consequently on the increase, the States also sought funds to enable them to continue their works programs and institute special programs for unemployment relief.

Consequently, in February 1975, a special Premiers' Conference was held at which the States were allotted a total of \$60,000,000 as general revenue grants to assist them to meet their budget deficiencies and avoid staff retrenchments. Queensland's share of this amount was \$10,475,448. At the same time, the Commonwealth allocated \$40,000,000 as Special Unemployment Relief Grants, of which Queensland received \$5,600,000.

In addition to these special Commonwealth grants, other increases in State revenues resulting primarily from the effect of inflation itself were Pay-roll Tax which produced \$140,978,425, or \$8,078,425 more than the budgeted figure, and the Financial Assistance Grant which increased over budget by \$4,642,718 to \$414,445,562.

These items account for the major part of the overall increase in receipts. The remainder can be traced to numerous variations upwards and downwards from the original estimates.

The predominant item in the increased expenditures was salary and wage variations, which cost an additional \$13,377,696 as I have already mentioned.

Expenditures of Unemployment Relief Grants and funds advanced for R.E.D. Scheme projects of Government Departments accounted for a further \$7,438,598.

Due to the extreme shortage of Loan Fund moneys, a further \$2,000,000 was allocated towards subsidy payments to Local Authorities to enable them to continue their works programs and a contribution of \$1,800,000 was made towards the purchase of properties at South Brisbane for the new Cultural Complex.

\$3,500,000 was provided from Consolidated Revenue towards a total provision of \$10,000,000 to establish a Fund for assistance to beef producers in financial difficulties as a result of the depression in the industry.

The remainder of the additional expenditure, \$12,059,049, took the form of allocations to Departments mainly to meet increases in general costs beyond the level provided for in their budgets.

The annually increasing losses on railway operations remain a continuing concern and, although there was every justification early in the year for a substantial increase in charges to help overcome budget deficiencies, the Government refrained, as it had done for a number of years, from securing additional revenues from this source. The operating loss for the year was \$64,435,300 or \$21,473,300 in excess of the budgeted shortfall of \$42,962,000. A little over \$15,500,000 of this increase was due to salary and wage increases with the balance being accounted for by increases in costs generally. It must be appreciated that the overall loss of the Railway Department is reduced very greatly by the profits on the mineral lines operations. In 1974-75 these mineral line profits amounted to some \$29,000,000. The losses on general operations were therefore to the order of \$93,000,000 and with debt servicing charges included totalled \$114,000,000.

The decision to finance additional requirements over and above the level of available funds by going into temporary deficit to the extent of \$5,943,393 was not taken lightly. For State funding, if the moneys are not there, they cannot be spent and a deficit in Consolidated Revenue Fund must become a first charge in the succeeding budget or be funded from Loan Fund with a consequential reduction in works and employment in that area. In this instance, the alternative to the deficit was cutting of services and throwing hundreds more into unemployment. This was unacceptable to me.

However, to have finished the year in a relatively good position in spite of economic events is an achievement in which the Government has every reason to express satisfaction.

Expenditure from the Loan Fund was \$200,292,130 or \$15,577,097 more than the budgeted amount. This was provided from an initial Loan Council allocation of \$135,649,000, a special allocation of \$9,919,000 for upgrading flood prone assets, a further allocation of \$7,999,000 approved in February for employment purposes, loan repayments and other sundry receipts of \$18,470,641 and capital funds provided by the Commonwealth under education and health programs of \$28,254,489.

Details of Loan Fund transactions appear in Table 17.

Expenditure from Trust and Special Funds totalled \$1,128,372,723 compared with the budget estimate of \$1,080,871,477—an increase of \$47,501,246. Details appear in Tables 14 to 16.

The Public Debt at 30 June 1975 was \$1,441,023,097 which represents a real increase of \$88,368,337 for the year, offset by a reduction of \$132,600,000 being the State's share of the \$1,000,000,000 of the debts of all States which the Commonwealth has been progressively taking over during the last five years.

While the Commonwealth has met an annually increasing portion of the servicing cost of the debt being taken over, the book-keeping adjustment recording the physical transfer of the debt was not effected until 30 June 1975.

The cost of servicing the Public Debt in 1974-75 was \$102,220,985, of which \$7,627,152 was met by the Commonwealth Government.

THE GENERAL FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC BACKDROP TO THE BUDGET FOR 1975-76

As I mentioned earlier, the major problems facing the nation today are the very high levels of both unemployment and inflation. However, although I am most concerned about them, I do not raise them as a prophet of doom.

Greater effort has at last been directed to arresting inflation at the point where progress is more likely to be achieved, that is, the restriction of the granting of wage increases which are beyond the ability of industry to meet at existing price levels. This has been accompanied by an easier situation in the availability of credit. The rate of price increases though still at an unacceptably high level, was slowing in the last part of 1974-75. Approvals for new dwelling construction in the June quarter were significantly above those for the March quarter. I am hopeful therefore that as 1975-76 progresses, Queensland businessmen

and consumers will begin to regain that confidence which will allow the present slack in utilisation of resources to be taken up.

For almost two decades now, the Queensland Government has sought to achieve balanced growth of this State's economy. Large-scale mining, treatment and processing industries have been attracted to the State and encouraged to develop and expand particularly in northern and central Queensland, thus providing new employment opportunities.

Secondary industry expansion has also been fostered. Value added per annum in secondary industry has more than doubled in the last 10 years and is now significantly greater than the net value of rural production.

The rural sector has undergone most noticeable changes in recent history. Through its various industry organisations and aided by various Government programs our great rural industries have met the challenge of modern economic conditions by a remarkable increase in efficiency. Despite set-backs from time to time through market and seasonal conditions the rural sector is a very valuable part of the State's economy. Given sympathetic Government assistance at both the Federal and State levels I am confident that the State's great grazing industry will pull out of its present economically depressed situation.

The development and strengthening of our economy is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that in recent years Queensland's rate of population increase has been almost double that for Australia as a whole.

In 1975-76 therefore we have an economy which is structurally well balanced and basically sound in the long term sense, provided we can ride out the turbulent and troubled waters into which our national economy has been directed.

State budgets, because they rely for a substantial part of their revenues on fixed fees and charges, do not have the resilience to cope with the soaring inflation that has engulfed them. To compound this problem, salaries and wages, which have increased faster than any other element, predominate in State budgets. The problem is illustrated clearly in this year's budget where I have had to provide some \$260,000,000 to meet the full year's cost of increases in salaries, wages and associated costs that occurred during 1974-75 and the part year's cost of similar increases anticipated in 1975-76. In the area of general cost increases, where a few years ago the rate of escalation allowed on the general contingencies votes of Departments was around 5 per cent., we have had to think in terms of an average increase of 30 per cent. this year.

Whereas so much of State revenues depends on fixed charges which have to be varied deliberately by amendment of legislation or

regulation or by some other administrative procedure, the Commonwealth income tax pool, by contrast, increases automatically and at a faster rate than inflation. Last year the States collectively put a strong case to the Commonwealth for an adjustment of the Financial Assistance Grant formula providing for annual escalation of the grant at a rate similar to that of income tax collections. They also sought a substantial addition to the base grants to take up the deficiency in the rate of increase in past years.

Had the States' submission been accepted it would have resulted in an additional \$140,000,000 for Queensland in 1975-76 and would have allowed us to meet our budget deficiencies without recourse to major increases in taxes and charges or substantive cuts in expenditures or both.

However, the Commonwealth agreed to an addition of \$220,000,000 to the base grants of all States for 1975-76, of which Queensland's share was only \$38,600,000, and to only one improvement in the formula—an increase in the "betterment" factor from 1.8 per cent. to 3 per cent., effective from 1976-77.

Funds resulting from our approaches to the Grants Commission continue to be of real assistance to Queensland. The 1975-76 grant of \$36,300,000 represents a substantial increase over the \$24,750,000 for 1974-75. It includes \$11,300,000 as a completion grant for 1973-74 to bring the grant for that year to \$21,300,000.

The States' requests for capital funds met with an even less acceptable response than the Financial Assistance Grant submission. Queensland sought increases of approximately 55 per cent. in its basic Loan borrowing allocation and Semi-Governmental Debenture program. The States pointed out that the increases in the 1974-75 allocations had been insufficient to compensate for the effects of inflation and that the 1975-76 programs should therefore be increased sufficiently to catch up this back-lag and to allow for further cost increases in 1975-76.

The Commonwealth would not however go beyond a 20 per cent. increase leaving the States and Local Authorities many millions of dollars short of what would be required to restore the volume of work to its previous level.

Apart from the effect on planning and provision of the basic necessities of society—schools, hospitals, water and sewerage, electricity and so on—the impact on the economy of this capital restriction on State agencies, combined with a severe and sudden cut in the Commonwealth Government's specific purpose capital payments, will have severe effects on employment and the construction industry generally. With unemployment

already running at 4.6 per cent. this action must unfortunately throw more people out of the productive work force.

Compounding this is the Commonwealth's announced intention of phasing out its R.E.D. and special unemployment grants schemes.

What I have outlined were the features affecting our State's finances and the State's economy as the budget was being framed. They were external to the State's control but had to be taken fully to account and allowance made for them to the extent that the State's resources would permit.

In such circumstances, the Government made its budget decisions recognizing the following broad principles:—

- (a) that existing State services would not be cut;
- (b) that the impetus that the present State policies provide for education services would continue unaffected;
- (c) that a major program for improved hospital services would be instituted particularly in the rebuilding and re-equipping areas;
- (d) that emphasis would be given to high employment capital type expenditure of benefit to State development and the standards of service to the people;
- (e) that police strength would be increased to include a return of beat patrols in the metropolitan area and provincial cities;
- (f) that schemes for financial assistance to our Local Authorities would be continued and expanded;
- (g) that State taxes would be increased generally but to a level not higher than the 1974-75 rates in other States;
- (h) that State charges would be increased having regard to cost increases since they were last determined; and
- (i) that the budget would be virtually balanced.

The budget is therefore as follows:—

CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND

Receipts are estimated at \$1,394,422,526.

The liquidation of the accumulated deficit of \$5,943,393 has of necessity been effected and the provision for this and the expenditure program for 1975-76 requires \$1,399,973,740.

The Budget as framed therefore provides for a carried forward deficit into 1976-77 of \$5,551,214.

RECEIPTS

I have already referred to increased revenues emanating from the renegotiation of the Financial Assistance Grant formula and from our representations to the Grants Commission.

In 1974-75 a new method of assessment of mineral royalties was introduced based broadly on the value of the mineral. Royalty receipts increased from a little over \$4,000,000 in 1973-74 to nearly \$34,553,000 in 1974-75. With the export coal industry in particular receiving satisfactory prices and provided the industry is not subject to major industrial disruption, record shipments should provide a royalty return to the State Treasury in 1975-76 of \$43,750,000. It is as well to note that this figure takes account of the effect of the newly announced Commonwealth tax of \$6 a tonne on exported coal which will cost the State around \$3,000,000 in royalties in 1975-76 and \$5,000,000 in a full year at present production rates.

As from 1st September the State is entitled to Medibank reimbursements of half of certain of its hospital expenditures in lieu of the previous Commonwealth contribution towards patient payments and pharmaceutical costs. The additional revenue to the State this year under the new system is estimated at \$50,000,000.

Still the effect of inflation on the State budget is such that in addition to the increased revenues from the Financial Assistance Grant, the Grants Commission, Royalties and Medibank, substantial increases in State taxes and charges are needed to close the gap between expected receipts and expenditures if existing services are to be maintained.

In the review of tax rates and charges, interstate comparisons and cost increases since the charges were last fixed were the two criteria given most weight.

The new rates on the many State revenue items to be amended are expected to benefit the Consolidated Revenue Fund this year by \$44,850,000.

In general the effective date of increase will be as soon as possible after today but this will depend on the method required to effect the particular increase. In several cases amending legislation will be required and the necessary action will be taken as speedily as possible.

Stamp Duty on cheques will increase as from 1st December, 1975, from 6c to 10c, to provide an additional return of \$1,670,000 in 1975-76 and about \$3,300,000 in a full year.

The present flat rate for Conveyance Duty of \$1.25 per \$100 of consideration or value received will be replaced by a scale commencing at \$1.50 per \$100 and ranging up to \$3.50 per \$100 for that part of consideration or value in excess of \$500,000. Home buyers will pay duty at the lowest rate of \$1.50 per \$100 irrespective of the applicable rate on the respective scale. The increase in revenue expected for 1975-76 is \$5,000,000.

Stamp Duties on documents generally will be increased, with effect from 1st December, to yield an estimated \$1,760,000 in 1975-76.

Duty on General Insurance will be increased from 2½c per \$100 to 5c per \$100 of sum assured. On Motor Vehicle Comprehensive Insurance the duty will be increased from 45c per vehicle to 5 per cent. of premium. Duty on Workers' Compensation Insurance will be lifted from 3 per cent. of premium to 5 per cent. of premium. \$4,970,000 is expected as the additional revenue from increased duty in insurances which will apply from 1st January.

Liquor Licence fees will increase from 6 per cent. to 7 per cent. for General Licences and from 7½ per cent. and 9 per cent. to 9 per cent. and 10 per cent. respectively for Tavern Licences. Spirit Merchants' Licences will increase from 6 per cent. to 15 per cent. The increases will be effective for three quarters of the 1975-76 financial year, additional revenue being estimated at \$1,500,000.

From 1st November, 1975, Bookmakers' Turnover Tax will increase by one half per cent. to 2.5 per cent. for metropolitan courses and to 2 per cent. for others. However, due to the heavy costs that are also falling on the race clubs, it is proposed to lift the amount of this tax that is returned directly to them from 20 per cent. to 33½ per cent. This will have the effect of returning nearly all of the increased tax to the industry. Elsewhere in the budget there is also provided a sum of \$500,000 as a supplementation of the T.A.B. distribution to Clubs so that last year's distribution rates can be maintained.

Rail fares and freights will be increased by an average of 40 per cent. as from 1st November, 1975, to produce an extra \$24,300,000 this year.

It is as well to note that since the last rail freight increase in 1966 average weekly earnings, which reflect directly on railway costs, have increased by 184 per cent. I believe it will be recognised that the Government has done well to hold off rail freight increases altogether until now and even then the increase will represent less than one quarter of the cost increases.

During this period, of course, railway revenues have been assisted by the substantial profits being earned on the export mineral lines where freight rates move up automatically to cover cost increases and profit margins. The clear profit on haulage over these mineral lines in 1975-76 is expected to be to the order of \$37,000,000, all of which is retained in the Railways in support of rail charges elsewhere.

Despite the mineral line profits and the increased charges, railways are still expected to show an operating deficiency of almost

\$41,000,000 in the coming year. This shortfall will have to be met from Consolidated Revenue Fund, in addition to the Railway debt charges of some \$23,000,000 for the year.

In addition to those I have mentioned, all other Departmental fees and charges have been reviewed and most have been increased in line with cost increases since they were last set.

The major increases will be in Transport Department Licence Fees, Court Fees and Titles Office Fees. Examples of the main increases are—

Learner Driver Permits, previously issued free will cost \$2.

Drivers' Licence Fees will increase from \$4 to \$5 for original issues and the fee on renewal for a five year period, previously free, will also be \$5. Licences renewed for less than five years will cost \$1 per annum.

The annual Driving Fee paid with registration fees will be increased from \$2 to \$5.

Court Fees generally will increase substantially in line with cost increases since they were last set in 1959.

Titles Office Lodgment Fees will increase from \$12 to \$20 and the charge for the issue of a Certificate of Title will rise from \$7 to \$10.

After careful consideration the Government has decided that for the time being it will avoid the introduction of new taxes on consumption goods such as petrol and tobacco.

It has also been decided to grant tax concessions in certain areas of need.

Road Transport Permit Fees on goods will be reduced by one-third for all operations as the first step in the complete elimination of this tax at a cost this year of \$1,700,000 and an eventual annual cost of about \$8,000,000.

As a special tax relief measure for small businessmen, the Pay-roll Tax exemption level has been doubled from \$20,800 to \$41,600 per annum. For payrolls between \$41,600 and \$72,800 the exemption will taper down \$2 for \$3 until for payrolls at \$72,800 the present exemption level will pertain. This will mean that total exemption from Pay-roll Tax will be lifted from \$20,800 to \$41,600. For payrolls between \$41,600 and \$72,800 Pay-roll Tax will be less and no-one will pay any more than under the present arrangements.

As a major step in the Government's policy of easing the incidence of death duties I have provided for the total exemption from death duties of estates passing from husband to wife or wife to husband. By eliminating duty altogether in estates left to the surviving partner the Government has made the maximum impact in the area of greatest need.

Queensland with its total exemption on estates passing from spouse to spouse will now lead Australia in this reform. The cost to Consolidated Revenue is expected to be \$5,000,000 in a full year.

A complementary amendment will also be made to the Gift Duties Act to provide for exemption from duty on gifts passing from spouse to spouse.

Concurrently with the advent of Medibank, charges for private and intermediate beds in State hospitals will be reduced from the present \$40 and \$30 to \$30 and \$20, respectively. Although this is the cost to the patient, the hospitals will receive a payment of \$16 per patient day from the Commonwealth as part of the overall benefit of Medibank mentioned earlier.

EXPENDITURE

As can be appreciated, the major single item to be provided for in the 1975-76 budget is the increased cost of existing services.

The increased cost of salary and wage awards, the cost of supplies and services such as postage, telephone and so forth and the additional amounts needed for the maintenance of our continuing programs of improved services such as reduced student/teacher ratios in our schools, reduced patient/nurse ratios in our hospitals, effective enforcement of law and order, improvements in assistance to charitable and community organisations and so on, account for almost all of the \$319,000,000 increase in expenditure provisions.

Very small sums indeed remain for innovations and improvements to services. The unprecedented increase in costs and the insufficiency of access to the Commonwealth Income Tax pool leave little flexibility in State budgets.

However, to the extent that these restraints can be overcome, new and improved services have been introduced for the benefit of all Queenslanders with emphasis in areas of greatest need.

EDUCATION

Once again education takes the largest slice of State revenue funds and this year the provision to the Department of Education has increased from \$230,448,403 to \$329,081,878, an increase of 42.8 per cent.

Commonwealth funds from the Schools Commission, expected to total \$28,414,591, will assist in this program and are included in the above figures. Also included are funds totalling \$5,362,500 being our best estimates of payments likely to be forthcoming for Technical and Pre-school Education.

The major advance in education is the significant step that this budget takes in reducing student/teacher ratios in our schools.

Provision has been made for an increase of 2,024 or 11.5 per cent. over 30 June teacher strengths in primary, secondary and special schools bringing the teacher numbers to a maximum strength of 19,579 by February next.

It is expected that 1,850 new teachers will come in from Teacher Colleges during the year. Provision has also been made for the recruitment of 1,900 new State assisted student teachers in January 1976.

Teacher strength in Technical Education will be increased from 797 to 889 to cater for the increased demands in this sector of education.

The program of providing teacher aides in primary schools has been extended and it is expected that a further 500 aides will be recruited for these schools during the year, bringing the total teachers and library aides in State Schools to over 3,000.

Provision continues for the rapid institution of the State's pre-school policy and by the end of this financial year it is expected that some 350 units will have been provided, staffed and equipped. The program of pre-school facilities for the 4-5 year age group in Queensland will then be about 64 per cent. complete.

The degree of Commonwealth involvement in the kindergarten and pre-school fields is still somewhat imprecise. The Commonwealth provided \$3,764,727 for capital and \$1,733,560 for recurrent assistance in 1974-75. The full extent of their assistance in 1975-76 is not known because from 1 January new policies with respect to child care will be implemented, the full effect of which is still not clear.

In the meantime, so that affiliated Community Kindergartens will know where they are going and can plan for 1976, the State Government gives an assurance that it will continue to provide funds to 31 December 1975, at a rate which, with the Commonwealth's supplementation, will ensure the present level of Government assistance. As from 1 January next, for those kindergartens that cannot or do not wish to qualify for Commonwealth grants, the State will guarantee that its assistance will be at the rate of the basic State Government grant per unit, which is the annual salary paid a first year State school teacher plus \$500. Kindergartens that qualify for Commonwealth subsidy from 1 January next will receive a State subsidy of 25 per cent. of the cost of an approved teacher and one aide per unit.

The Government will continue its assistance to non-State schools and will increase payments as from 1 January 1976, from \$81 to \$111 per annum for primary students and from \$132 to \$177 per annum for secondary students. This will lift these payments by \$2,250,000 in 1975-76 and bring the total payments by the State for this form of assistance to over \$12,000,000.

In a further endeavour to provide for the education of children in isolated areas of the State, Remote Area Allowances will be increased as from 1 January 1976 by 50 per cent. from \$160 per annum to \$240 per annum for grades 6 and 7, from \$200 to \$300 per annum for grades 8, 9 and 10 and from \$250 to \$375 per annum for the senior grades 11 and 12.

In addition, and to assist private schools who are experiencing declining revenues, we will, as from 1 January 1976, and continuing during the period of the present economic decline in the rural sector, introduce a new senior secondary scholarship scheme. Up to 500 scholarships will be in tenure each year for grades 11 and 12 students qualifying for the remote area allowance and attending boarding schools throughout the State.

The scholarships will be equal to the value of board and tuition fees less any other Government grants that are payable, up to a maximum of \$1,000 per annum per student. Should a quota be necessary the scholarship will be awarded on the basis of academic proficiency. The provision of \$250,000 this year for this purpose will be of considerable assistance to rural families and boarding schools who are having financial difficulties because of the economic recession in the rural sector.

In recognition of rapidly increasing costs of wages, petrol and repairs, payments made to school transport operators will be increased as from 1 November 1975, by 33½ per cent. Rates for the carriage of up to 20 children will be increased from 21·1c per kilometre to 28·1c. Increases will apply throughout the range up to the maximum where over 80 children are transported where the present rate of 36c per kilometre will increase to 48 cents. The minimum daily rate will increase from \$7.50 to \$10.

For parents conveying their children by their own private vehicle, a further category has been added for those required to travel over 12 miles where the annual rate will be increased from \$84 to \$105 per child per annum.

A new scheme will be introduced as from 1 January 1976, for children in the metropolitan area who must travel on Brisbane City Council buses before 8.30 a.m. to get to their classes and who are now required to pay full fare. Provided schools do not alter their timetables, the State Government will

pay the difference between the 10c concession and the full fare for the children affected. In addition, the State will continue its \$900,000 transport subsidy to the Brisbane City Council in recognition of its school transport assistance and to ease the burden of the Council transport losses on ratepayers. The grant to Rockhampton City Council for a similar purpose in 1975-76 will be \$55,000.

The special allowance to smaller schools introduced in 1973 to meet the costs of a part-time janitor/groundsman and clerical assistance will be increased by 33½ per cent. from 1 January 1976. The allowance to grade VI schools will increase from \$225 to \$300 per annum, Grade V schools from \$300 to \$400, Grade IV schools from \$450 to \$600 and Grade III schools from \$600 to \$800 per annum.

The petty cash allowance to schools will increase by 100 per cent. from 1 January 1976.

Another major measure of assistance to State school administration to be introduced from 1 January next, is the payment of a general purpose grant to all primary schools to assist in the provision of items of equipment and miscellaneous services that at present are met from school committee funds. Payments will be made on the basis of \$100 per school plus \$4 per student per annum and will cost approximately \$1,000,000 a year.

Provision has also been made for the full operating cost of education services for handicapped children to be met by the Department of Education. Negotiations will continue with the associations at present providing this service with a view to finding the most acceptable method of implementation of this policy.

A new subsidy arrangement for Local Authority Libraries will be instituted so as to provide for much improved library facilities in all areas of the State. At present subsidies of about \$600,000 are paid at the rate of \$ for \$ on the cost of books and ancillary materials and the salaries of certain qualified staff.

It is now proposed to increase these grants by approximately \$900,000 to \$1,500,000 per annum by extending the \$ for \$ subsidy scheme to include the cost of unqualified staff and administration costs, subject to certain conditions designed to ensure that the additional subsidies are directed to the betterment of the library services.

HEALTH—HOSPITALS

The major new thrust in State Government policy this year will be in the Health and Hospitals area.

Expenditure on hospitals this year will increase by 65 per cent. from last year's provision of slightly under \$140,000,000 to \$231,000,000. As an indication of the importance of the new hospital policy, I

point to the fact that in addition to the further \$50,000,000 from the Commonwealth Medibank Scheme, the State will provide from its own resources for a contribution of \$134,123,351 which represents an increase of \$35,857,113 or 36 per cent. over the amount of \$98,266,238 provided last year.

Provision has been made for a total staff increase of 1,907 in the State's hospital system—137 medical, 1,064 nursing and 706 other staff. This will bring the total staff to 20,244, an increase of 10.4 per cent. over the numbers employed at 30th June, 1975.

New services and methods will be introduced in outpatient and casualty departments to reduce the waiting time for patients.

A new and concerted program of maintenance, repairs, remodelling and refurbishing and for the provision of new plant and medical equipment has been provided for at an estimated cost of approximately \$13,500,000.

In addition, all rebuilding and new hospital capital programs have been advanced and capital expenditure will increase from \$18,000,000 last year to \$45,000,000 in the coming year.

I will refer more fully to new hospital buildings in my remarks on the State capital programs.

Provisions for the Community Health Program, operating costs of which are financed 90 per cent. by the Commonwealth and capital costs 75 per cent., will virtually double this year to \$11,639,311.

The School Dental Service, also substantially supported by Commonwealth funds, will require \$8,913,034 this year compared with a provision in 1974-75 of \$3,931,421.

Assistance to the Mater Public Hospital where operating losses are met to a level not exceeding the costs in comparable State hospitals, will increase from a provision of \$7,057,720 last year to an expected \$11,293,800 this year. The State will be assisted this year in meeting this charge by reimbursement through the Medibank arrangements. Additionally, an amount of \$2,960,000 has been provided towards the Mater Hospital's redevelopment program. This compares with \$1,290,000 provided last year.

From 1st July, 1975, the State will introduce a new basis for determining its assistance to Home Nursing Services, which will necessitate a provision of \$1,263,603 for these subsidies. Instead of the previous basis of assistance which for 1974-75 set the State assistance at \$3,100 per nurse, the new basis will provide for a State subsidy equal to one half of the sum of the salary of a first year registered nurse and \$1,000. On 1st July rates this results in a State subsidy of \$3,630 which will increase automatically by one-half of any increase in the Nurses' Award. As the Commonwealth subsidy is

roughly equivalent to that given by the State, this will mean that virtually the full cost to these organisations of nurses' salaries will be met from Government sources.

Subsidies on furnishings of Homes for the Aged will also be increased by 50 per cent. as from 1st July, 1975.

The subsidy to Ambulance Brigades will increase from 75c in the \$ to \$ for \$ to apply to all endowable collections made by the brigades from 1st July, 1974.

This is a substantial improvement and will mean an additional State grant of \$1,175,000 per annum to our land ambulances and bring the subsidy payment to ambulance services in 1975-76 to an estimated \$4,849,000.

POLICE

Provision has been made for an increase of 75 in the civilian strength of the Police Department. The approved police officer establishment has been increased by 245 to 4,268. This will require the recruitment of an additional 315 officers, an increase of 8 per cent. over the 30th June strength.

The system of foot beats will be reintroduced in the Central City, Valley and South Brisbane areas and in the provincial cities of Ipswich, Toowoomba, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns and Mt. Isa and in other metropolitan and provincial areas as desired.

TRANSPORT

Three new schemes of assistance to private metropolitan bus services will be introduced as soon as possible after the 1st October, 1975.

A pensioner concession will be provided for travel on urban private buses to the extent of 50 per cent. of the adult fare normally charged.

To enable private bus fares generally to be held down and at the same time help to ensure that the services remain financially viable, the State will subsidise gross fare revenue of urban bus operators. The scheme is designed to lift the operators' return to a reasonable level with a maximum subsidy of 10 per cent. of the gross fare revenues.

In addition, in order to improve the urban bus system generally, the State will guarantee loans, under certain conditions, for the purchase of new buses. The State will also subsidise the interest on new loans for new buses to a maximum of 6 per cent. with such assistance decreasing by one-fifth of the original subsidy each year over a period of five years.

\$600,000 has been set aside for these purposes.

CROWN EMPLOYEES

No variations are proposed to the State Service Superannuation Scheme pending receipt of the actuarial valuation which is expected by the end of this calendar year.

Locality Allowances paid to employees stationed in high cost areas of the State will be increased by about 33 1/3 per cent. as from 1st October, 1975.

Provision has been made for an increase in the incremental pay for wage employees. The rate of the increase and the method of payment of it have been deferred until an examination has been made of the latest Commonwealth Arbitration Commission's ruling on indexation.

The Government is considering the establishment of a Crown employee housing authority and, if approved, the necessary legislation will be introduced, probably in the autumn session.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Grants to cultural groups towards their operating costs have been increased from \$1,120,000 to \$1,575,000.

In addition a major advancement is planned for the establishment of cultural centres throughout the State.

The Cultural Complex in South Brisbane to cost \$45,000,000 at 1974 prices and comprising the new Art Gallery, Museum, Public Library and Performing Arts Centre will be commenced this year. Already \$4,723,000 has been spent on the purchase of land and the preparation of plans.

The State at present subsidises on a \$ for \$ basis the construction of cultural facilities by local community groups.

To encourage Local Authorities in the provision of major facilities, it is proposed to introduce a new State subsidy of 33 1/3 per cent. of the cost to a Local Authority of construction of one cultural complex in its area. Where the facility the Local Authority provides is multi-purpose, subsidy of 33 1/3 per cent. will apply on the portion of the cost attributable to cultural facilities.

The funding of this new policy for the establishment of cultural centres will be assisted this year by a special allocation of \$2,000,000 and by the application in future of the full proceeds of the Golden Casket, which have hitherto been directed to hospital services.

OTHER BUDGET IMPROVEMENTS

One of the most successful State subsidy schemes introduced in recent years is that of subsidy to sporting groups and youth groups whereby up to 33 1/3 per cent. of the cost of approved capital works is paid to the clubs as a free grant.

As an indication of the way these grants have been received by the community, I mention that when they were introduced three years ago expenditure on sport subsidies was \$117,806. Last year we spent \$1,049,972 on sport and youth subsidies and, in this budget, provision has been made for total grants of \$1,770,000. Additionally, provision of \$125,000 has been made for Youth Leadership Training and an increased grant of \$500,000 has been provided for the Queensland National Fitness Council to enable it to extend its operations and expand its staff. Totally, \$2,395,000 has been allocated for direct payments for sport, youth and recreational purposes.

The maximum subsidies payable on a \$ for \$ basis on expenditure by Parents and Citizens Associations on approved school projects will be increased as follows:—

High School Assembly Halls from	\$60,000 to \$84,000;
High School Swimming Pools from	\$36,000 to \$50,000;
Primary School Activities Buildings from	\$25,000 to \$35,000; and
Primary School Swimming Pools from	\$30,000 to \$42,000.

Allowances paid to Student Teachers and other State Government scholarship holders which were last increased in October, 1974, will be increased from 1st July, 1975, by 15 per cent. at a cost of almost \$1,500,000.

The policy of rapidly increasing wages paid to Aborigines employed on State and Church communities will continue with increases of \$6 a week for adults and \$3 a week for juniors from 1st July, 1975, and again from 1st January, 1976. The estimated cost of these increases is \$720,000 in 1975-76 and \$960,000 in a full year and brings the total estimated payment this year to approximately \$4,850,000.

A special allocation has been made from Consolidated Revenue for the provision or completion of 38 urgently needed staff houses on ten aboriginal communities.

From 1st November, 1975 payments to foster parents of "children in care" will increase from \$15 to \$18 per child per week and for such children in denominational homes the weekly allowance will increase from \$20 to \$26. The cost of these increases will be \$353,000 this year and \$529,000 in a full year.

Because of the serious decline in the rural economy, it has not been possible for the industry to meet in full its proportion of the expenditure out of the Stock Fund on veterinary services. The Government subsidises stock assessments at the rate of \$2 for each \$1 collected. In addition this year Consolidated Revenue Fund will supplement this subsidy by the payment of a special \$2,589,022 to allow the services financed by

the Fund to continue. This will mean a contribution by Consolidated Revenue of \$5,271,434 towards a total program of \$7,530,948.

The special grant to the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations has been increased from \$300,000 to \$400,000 for 1975-76.

A new scheme of grants to Regional Tourist Associations will assist in fostering and expanding tourism throughout the State. The purpose of the grants is to assist each Association to finance the employment of a full-time tourist officer. The grants will be paid on a \$ for \$ basis on collections of the Associations with the maximum amount payable to each being \$5,000 per annum.

Grants to Regional Development Bureaux and certain Local Authorities performing a similar service, who employ full-time salaried staff and have a Crown Industrial Estate in their areas will be increased to \$3,500.

The State Government will institute this year a special inquiry into its capital subsidy scheme to Local Authorities. The provision for these subsidies is now in excess of \$30,000,000 per annum and the enquiry will up-date the scheme and recommend the best way to get this money to the Local Authorities.

The special State Government free grant to Local Authorities which was introduced last year to assist in the financing of their running costs will continue and \$5,463,000 has been provided for this purpose.

LOAN FUND

At the June Meeting of the Australian Loan Council, Queensland was granted a loan allocation of \$172,378,000 of which \$114,919,000 is a repayable loan and \$57,459,000 a non-repayable grant. The State's share represents 13.4 per cent. of the six States' total of \$1,291,000,000.

Loan repayments and other receipts to the Loan Fund are estimated at \$20,764,483. Additionally, as in the past two years, certain Commonwealth education grants will be transacted through Loan Funds. These are estimated at \$24,032,000 for this year.

The total Loan Fund program for 1975-76 provides for an expenditure effort of \$217,174,483 compared with \$184,715,033 provided in 1974-75.

TRUST AND SPECIAL FUNDS

Expenditure from the Trust and Special Funds in 1975-76 is estimated at \$1,481,320,879, while receipts are expected to reach \$1,451,238,009. This compares with \$1,080,871,477 and \$1,030,843,866 respectively in 1974-75.

Trust and Special Funds cover trustee accounts, construction funds, and certain Commonwealth funds. Full details are available in the Estimates.

SEMI-GOVERNMENTAL AND LOCAL BODY DEBENTURE BORROWING PROGRAM

The June 1975 Loan Council Meeting approved a Semi-Governmental Debenture Borrowing Program of \$142,694,000 which represents an increase of 20 per cent. on the basic allocations of \$118,911,000 for 1974-75. In addition, a special allocation of \$7,075,000 was approved to replace raisings previously made by the issue of Southern Electric Authority Variable Interest Stock. This brought the total allocation to \$149,769,000 compared with the allocation and Variable Interest Stock in 1974-75 of \$125,986,000.

In 1974-75, funds approved in addition to the basic allocations were \$9,584,000 for upgrading flood prone assets plus a special \$10,000,000 for the Brisbane City Council for employment purposes. The total amount available for works in 1974-75, including the Southern Electric Authority Variable Interest Stock, was therefore \$145,570,000.

The funds available in 1975-76 exceeded this by only \$4,199,000 or 2.9 per cent.

The Loan Council also approved that the limit on the borrowings of the smaller local bodies outside of the Semi-Governmental Debenture Program be increased from \$500,000 to \$700,000. These bodies raised \$39,854,318 in 1974-75 and the tentative program for 1975-76 is expected to be to the order of \$55,000,000.

Details of the Semi-Governmental Debenture borrowing allocation are shown in the Appendix.

CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM

The State's overall Capital Works Program comprises expenditure from Governmental loan funds, certain debenture loan borrowings, specific Commonwealth grants and other State funds.

I have already made comment on the severity of the limitations imposed by the Commonwealth through the Loan Council on the State and Semi-Governmental Loan Works Programs. The Commonwealth has also advised its intention of restricting allocations of capital funds for areas financed fully or partly by it.

For example, it has refused further assistance with such major and important water supply projects as the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme and the Julius Dam. It has limited funds for Welfare Housing to an amount which is nearly 30 per cent. below the 1974-75 approval and provided funds for roads at a level only 14 per cent. above the

1974-75 figure. It has decided not to approve new projects for tertiary education, schools and urban transport.

It is in the area of capital development particularly that insufficient allocations have been made on a national level and the effects on the economy of the country will be most adverse.

The Education capital program exclusive of tertiary education and other fully Commonwealth-funded programs is \$51,730,000. This will allow all current commitments to be met and new projects to be undertaken in State Primary, Secondary and Special Schools, Technical Colleges and Pre-schools, and is in line with the continuing policy of upgrading and adding to existing facilities and providing new ones where necessary to meet the demands of an increasing and more education-minded population.

However, the "stand still" policy adopted this year by the Commonwealth Government will have a retarding effect on the over-all progress we are striving for.

A program of \$55,800,000 has been set for Hospital and Health Services this year. The emphasis will be on the public hospital system where the building program will be vastly enhanced at a cost of some \$45,000,000 compared with approximately \$18,000,000 expended last year.

Major projects presently in hand will be advanced and brought to completion as soon as possible. As many new projects as can be physically and financially accommodated will be put under way.

Foremost amongst these are—

A further big step towards completion in 1977-78 of the new Block 7 at Royal Brisbane Hospital.

Completion of the extensions to the administration block, a start on the expansion of the X-ray department and the commencement of a new psychiatric ward at Princess Alexandra Hospital.

Completion of the outpatients department, commencement of a new neuropsychiatric observation ward, provision of further administration accommodation and a start on a new pathology building at Prince Charles Hospital.

Commencement of new ward blocks at Redcliffe, Gatton, Atherton, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Mackay, Mt. Isa and Toowoomba Hospitals.

A start on Stage 1 of the Mt. Gravatt Hospital.

Substantial progress on Weipa Hospital, Stage I of the Cairns Hospital, and redevelopment of Maryborough Hospital and a start on work planned for Yeppoon Hospital.

Further progress on the Mater Hospital redevelopment.

A number of major works are planned or in progress at the psychiatric hospitals, the major one being the ward for intellectually handicapped at Baillie Henderson Hospital at Toowoomba.

In the other health services areas, some \$8,300,000 will be expended on capital works for the Commonwealth-State funded Community Health and School Dental Services.

Electricity supply projects have received allocations totalling \$101,800,000 compared with \$78,000,000 in 1974-75. The major item is the Gladstone Power Station on which a further \$73,570,000 will be expended under a cost sharing arrangement with the Commonwealth.

The program for Irrigation and Water Supply works has been increased from \$26,800,000 to \$30,400,000. Major expenditures provided for are \$4,800,000 on Munduran Dam and associated works in the Bundaberg area, \$2,800,000 on Kinchant Dam in the Eton (Mackay) Irrigation Scheme, \$4,400,000 on Julius Dam near Mt. Isa and \$1,414,000 on the Bingeang Weir on the Mackenzie River.

The 50 per cent. increase in Motor Vehicle Registration Fees recently approved and a further \$1,000,000 special allocation from Loan Fund, together with the Commonwealth contribution from petrol tax collections, has enabled the State to mount a program of \$103,000,000 on roadworks and a total expenditure program of \$169,500,000 by the Main Roads Department for the year, compared with an expenditure of \$148,800,000 in 1974-75.

Total funds provided for housing are \$61,737,000. \$31,000,000 of this program is provided by the Commonwealth as a new allocation for welfare housing compared with \$43,800,000 provided for this purpose in 1974-75. This drop of 30 per cent. in Commonwealth funds represents an effective reduction of closer to 45 per cent. in terms of performance when cost increases are taken to account.

Included in the total is \$13,321,000 provided by the Commonwealth for Servicemen's Housing compared with \$5,200,000 in 1974-75.

Expenditure this year on the Urban Public Transport capital program for Brisbane is estimated at \$16,000,000, which will be financed on the basis of \$2 Commonwealth to \$1 State. This expenditure represents a substantial increase on last year's expenditure of \$3,187,982. However, a matter of concern is that the Commonwealth has decided not to approve any further projects under the scheme.

Although the projects presently approved do not form a viable public transport system, for this year at least the State will continue to finance its share of the reduced program

in the hope that the full program eventually can be implemented with joint Commonwealth-State funding.

Railway works are estimated to cost \$63,331,000. This includes \$29,948,000 for the new line and upgrading of existing line to service the Phosphate Hill development. Funds for this are being provided by the mining company.

Other major capital items warranting special mention are:—

\$8,049,000 for further land acquisitions and other ancillary work on the Wivenhoe Dam project.

\$3,260,000 from the Commonwealth for Area Improvement works by Local Authorities.

\$13,363,000 from the Commonwealth for Sewerage Backlog works by Local Authorities.

\$12,500,000 for purchase and erection of homes, land acquisition, educational facilities, health services, etc., for Aborigines.

\$4,858,000 for the development of Industrial Estates.

\$1,194,000 for Smallcraft Facilities projects.

\$4,503,000 for other works under the control of the Department of Harbours and Marine.

\$34,400,000 for Loans and Subsidies to Local Authorities.

\$5,540,000 for Flood Mitigation Works in Brisbane and Proserpine.

\$5,525,000 towards the cost of a new Police Headquarters Building.

Assistance totalling \$49,424,000 to Primary Producers for various purposes, is as follows:—

\$19,037,000 for assistance to Beef Cattle Producers.

\$17,634,000 as loans from the Agricultural Bank.

\$6,000,000 for Rural Reconstruction purposes.

\$3,700,000 for borrowers under the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme.

\$1,000,000 from the Assistance to Primary Producers Special Fund for dairy adjustment activities.

\$1,000,000 for further development of Brigalow Land in the Fitzroy Region.

\$653,000 under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Scheme.

\$400,000 for subsidy for Dairy Pasture improvements.

CONCLUSION

As I have already pointed out, the preparation of this year's budget has been the most difficult task of my political career, and here I desire to pay tribute to the loyalty and untiring efforts of my Under Treasurer

(Mr. Leo Hielscher) and his Assistant Under Secretary (Budget) (Mr. Vince Doyle) together with other members of my Treasury Department staff, many of whom have spent long and tedious hours over many nights and weekends to provide me with the answers I have sought. To each one of them I record a personal thank you, as well as the thanks of this Government.

With nation wide inflation, rapid cost increases, and an ever growing demand for expansion of services it has been necessary to examine every avenue of operation, and in many instances to apply the most stringent tests ever.

To make the task more complex, the State has experienced of late several jolts in the many areas of previous close co-operation with the Commonwealth Government. As late as four weeks ago we learnt of several severe cuts in capital expenditure for programs we had been closely working on together—urban transport, public works, schools, universities, dams and so on. I also say we have been denied \$10,000,000 in Medibank reimbursements because of shrewd advantage being taken of a technicality beyond our control and coal royalties at the rate of \$5,000,000 per annum have been lost because of the vindictiveness of the Federal Minister for Minerals and Energy towards overseas capital participation in the development of mining in Central Queensland.

Still within the limited flexibility available to me, I submit that this budget meets head on all the eventualities and problems I have outlined, and that it provides for the areas of greatest need with the absolute minimum possible effect on the Queensland taxpayers generally.

It is a "Press Ahead" budget which will ensure that when Australia's economic ills are overcome, Queensland will not have lost momentum, and it will be able to continue to maintain its place as the most progressive and developing State of the Commonwealth.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Sir GORDON CHALK: Mr. Hewitt, I move—

"That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1975-76, a sum not exceeding \$108,903 to defray Salaries—His Excellency the Governor".

Progress reported.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

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

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 7 October 1975."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.40 p.m.