

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 1975

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. E. H. Houghton, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 10.58 a.m.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. SPEAKER: As this day is being commemorated as Remembrance Day, I ask honourable members to please rise and observe the customary two minutes' silence.

Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

REPORT OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations of his report for the period from 1 October 1974 to 30 June 1975.

Ordered to be printed.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

State Electricity Commission of Queensland, for the year 1974-75.

Metropolitan Transit Project Board, for the period 5 September 1974 to 30 June 1975.

Licensing Commission, for the year 1974-75.

Literature Board of Review, for the year 1974-75.

Queensland Industrial Institution for the Blind, for the year 1974-75.

Apprenticeship Executive, for the year 1974-75.

Department of Commercial and Industrial Development, for the year 1974-75.

Queensland Radium Institute, for the year 1974-75.

Operations of the Sub-Departments of the Department of Health—"Eventide" (Sandgate), "Eventide" (Rockhampton) and "Eventide" (Charters Towers), for the year 1974-75.

Builders' Registration Board of Queensland, for the year 1974-75.

Queensland Fish Board, for the year 1974-75.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamations under—

Gladstone Power Station Operation Agreement Act 1975.

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

Forestry Act 1959-1975.

Motor Vehicles Control Act 1975.

Queensland Marine Act 1958-1972.

Orders in Council under—

The State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1965.

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

State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971-1974 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923-1973.

Industrial Development Act 1963-1975.

Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act 1959-1974.

The Banana Industry Protection Acts, 1929 to 1937.

The City of Brisbane Market Acts, 1960 to 1967.

Dairy Products Stabilisation Act 1933-1972.

Hen Quotas Act 1973-1975.

Meat Industry Act 1965-1973.

The Milk Supply Acts, 1952 to 1961.

Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act 1923-1974.

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926-1973.

Water Act 1926-1975.

Irrigation Act 1922-1973.

Forestry Act 1959-1975.

Harbours Act 1955-1972.

Ambulance Services Act 1967-1975.

Regulations under—

Coal and Oil Shale Mine Workers (Pensions) Act 1941-1975.

Children's Services Act 1965-1974.

Farm Produce Agents Act 1964-1974.

Hen Quotas Act 1973-1975.

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926-1973.

Sugar Experiment Stations Act 1900-1973.

Irrigation Act 1922-1973.

The Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act of 1963.

Health Act 1937-1974.

By-law under The City of Brisbane Market Acts, 1960 to 1967.

Rule under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1961-1974.

Notification under The City of Brisbane Market Acts, 1960 to 1967.

Reports—

State Stores Board, for the year 1974-75.

Public Defender, for the year 1974-75.

FEES PAID BY CROWN TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS

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. Miller, showing all payments made by the Government to barristers and solicitors during the 1974-75 financial year, stating the names of the recipients and the amounts received separately.

PETITION

APPLICATIONS FOR MINING LEASES, EAST END AND BRACEWELL AREAS, MT. LARCOM DISTRICT

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) presented a petition from 119 electors of Port Curtis praying that the Parliament of Queensland will reject the mining lease applications by Darra Explorations Pty. Ltd. in the East End and Bracewell areas of Mt. Larcom District and allow this district to remain a productive and viable agricultural area.

Petition read and received.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. SKATEBOARD-RIDING

Mr. Marginson for **Mr. Burns**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Does the Government have any plans to set aside special areas for the exclusive use of skateboard riders?

(2) Could a service station operator be liable if a skateboard rider was involved in an accident on his property?

(3) Is it necessary for the service station operator to chase these children away in order to make himself legally immune from action?

(4) Has any approach been made to school principals to allow school yards to be used for skateboard riding?

(5) As this matter is causing concern to local parents, what rules and regulations under the traffic and road-safety laws apply to this growing, popular activity?

Answers:—

(1) I am not aware of any proposals to set aside special areas for the exclusive use of skateboard riders.

(2 and 3) These are matters concerning legal liability and it is not my function to express opinions on questions of law.

(4) This would concern my colleague, the Honourable the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities, and I suggest the honourable member direct this portion of the question to him.

(5) I also share the concern of parents as stated by the honourable member. So far as my responsibilities are concerned, I am advised that the use of skateboards on roads is covered by regulation 151 (2) (b) of the Traffic Regulations, which provides that a person shall not upon any road play or take part in any game.

2. PROPOSALS BY QUEENSLAND COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN'S ORGANISATION

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

(1) Has the executive of the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation placed before him regulations for inclusion in the Fisheries Act before fishermen at branches have had a chance to consider the proposals?

(2) Will the criteria for the holding or renewal of a master fisherman's licence for 1976 be altered before a 12-months' notice to fishermen?

(3) Will a person presently holding a master fisherman's licence, whose sole occupation is fishing, be compensated in any way if he is refused renewal of the licence because of new criteria?

(4) Will a person who is at present the holder of a master fisherman's licence and whose sole occupation is fishing be refused renewal of a licence because he will not pay the levy or annual per-capita subsidy to the Q.C.F.O. as a result of his dissatisfaction with the operation of the organisation?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) The Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation is a body established to sponsor fishing as a significant industry in Queensland. The State Council includes responsible, competent and successful fishermen who have been closely studying the needs of the fishermen. Since I assumed responsibility for the portfolio, they have been in regular and close consultation with me and are of considerable assistance in providing advice. I can assure the honourable member the Government will carefully consider all of the representations of the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's State council with confidence that they are the elected voice of the commercial operators, have a responsibility in the industry and will do all possible to enhance it. The requirements relating to master fishermen's licensing as well as legislation covering the fisheries generally is currently under consideration by the Government and when decisions have been made they will be publicised. Existing requirements are well known throughout the State and current details are available from Queensland Fisheries Service. I will be pleased to arrange for the honourable member to be advised if he so wishes.

3. CONTROL OF SALE OF USED CARS

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

(1) Will he accede to the suggestion of the R.A.C.Q. to pass legislation similar to that in South Australia to control sales by used-car dealers?

(2) Is it a fact that in Queensland there is no onus on a dealer to give details of defects in a vehicle other than those revealed in a roadworthiness test?

(3) Will he urgently undertake a review of the relative legislation with a view to protecting purchasers from unscrupulous dealers who may cover a defect so well that a roadworthiness check will not reveal it?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The suggestion by the R.A.C.Q. has been examined but it is not proposed to amend the legislation at this time.

4. TRADE UNION BUILDING SOCIETY

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the fact that people who are inveigled into becoming subscribers to the Trade Union Building Society complain that they have been fleeced, inasmuch as, after investing an amount of, say, \$900 in the society and asking that their account be closed and their money refunded, they receive only \$583.21, the remainder being commandeered by the society for a withdrawal charge and for closing the account?

(2) If he is aware of this practice, will he take steps to either (a) ensure the refund of the full amount to the lenders, or (b) seek to have it made possible for the lenders to sue the society in the Small Debts Court?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware that a number of persons have entered into 10-year savings plans operated by the society named, and signed agreements which provide that, in accordance with the rules of the society, they would only be entitled to a reduced amount of all payments made if surrendered or terminated within the above period. I am also aware that a few of these members now appear to have misunderstood the conditions of the agreement they have entered into.

(2) The Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs is studying possible amendments to the Building Societies Act and because of the above the matter of the Bowkett-type societies will be specifically examined. The suggestion of possible action through the Small Claims Tribunal is one for consideration by my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General.

5. FINANCIAL AGREEMENT AND PUBLIC DEBT

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

(1) As the various Government Loan Acts passed since the Financial Agreement of 1927 require the Treasurer to make Sinking Fund payments prescribed under the Financial Agreement in respect of moneys raised by these Acts, can he inform me of any recent review or amendment of the Financial Agreement making substantial alterations to provisions of Sinking Funds operated on by him as Treasurer?

(2) As securities cancelled on repurchase or redemption by the National Debt Commission carry a further contribution of 4½ per cent per annum with respect to these securities, can he inform me of the value of any securities which have been repurchased or redeemed during the last three years and have these amounts been written off against the public debt of the State?

Answers:—

(1) A review is currently being undertaken of the provisions of the Financial Agreement with the object of simplifying the determination and recording of Sinking Fund payments relative to the numerous loan borrowings raised by the Commonwealth on behalf of the States over a period of many years. Such review will eventually result in legislation in the Commonwealth Parliament and the various State Parliaments to authorise the detailed amendments to the existing agreement. However, at the present stage the amending provisions have not been entirely agreed upon between the States and the Commonwealth.

(2) The information which the honourable member seeks in the second part of his question is readily available in the annual reports of the Auditor-General on the Loans Sinking Funds which are presented to Parliament. The information is also set out in Table 23—Statement of Variations in the Public Debt of the State of Queensland—as included in the Tables Relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement. The honourable member will see from that table that the amounts of the securities so repurchased and redeemed have been subtracted from the Public Debt of the State. The honourable member can pass that information on to his friend and ask him to write another question.

6. ERRORS IN TELEPHONE ACCOUNTS

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

Has he seen an article in "The Courier-Mail" of 30 October indicating that 600 telephone accounts for Coorparoo telephone numbers had been undercharged

for metered calls and that subscribers affected by the error would be told by letter? If so, and because I have evidence that subscribers who have been overcharged, sometimes by up to 100 per cent, have no right of appeal, will he approach the Postmaster-General requesting that these overcharged subscribers be granted amended accounts, as is being done in the cases of undercharged accounts?

Answer:—

I did see the Press reference to undercharging by Telecom Australia but I am unaware of that authority's policy in relation to adjustment of undercharged or overcharged accounts. However, if the honourable member cares to let me have the documentation in his possession concerning overcharging, then I will be prepared to make appropriate inquiries through the customary channels.

7. HOME HILL AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Dr. Scott-Young, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) As considerable concern has been expressed to me by members of the medical profession that it is the intention of his department to close down the Home Hill and District Hospital, will he confirm or deny the reports?

(2) If it is the department's intention to close this hospital, will the decision be reconsidered until full consideration is given to the role which northern district hospitals will play in the establishment of a medical school in Townsville?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The Ayr Hospitals Board has submitted a report in respect of the future role of the Home Hill Hospital which is presently being examined within this department. I have of course received many representations from the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities, the member for that area, regarding this matter and recently during a visit to North Queensland met a deputation from Home Hill residents introduced by the Minister.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

FREE EYE TESTS IN HAMILTON INDUSTRIAL AREA

Mr. LANE: I ask the Minister for Health: Is he aware of the free eye tests being offered by an optometrical company to men in the Hamilton industrial area during their working day? Is it true that the company is bulk-billing Medibank for those consultations, which are operated from a mobile van? If so, what steps can he take to check on that activity?

Dr. EDWARDS: I am aware of the activities of a well-known optometrical firm in Brisbane that is offering free eye tests to any workers in the industrial areas of Hamilton and New Farm. I have also been informed by certain people in that area that this particular company is then asking the workers to sign a form, which is a Medibank claim form. This concerns me a great deal because it is an unethical practice and is being conducted in the pretence that it is an offer to the people in that area of a free test, whereas the company is bulk-billing Medibank and charging the Commonwealth Government for the services that have been rendered. I have drawn the attention of Medibank in Brisbane to what I consider is a most unethical and irresponsible attitude of the company concerned. I am informed that that agency has received a number of complaints and that action is being taken in regard to this optometrical firm. The name of the company is Fraser Edmiston. This concerns me a great deal. Another company is adopting a similar practice. To me, this is both irresponsible and unethical. As I have already indicated, I have drawn the attention of the Medibank organisation in Brisbane to this matter.

Two steps can be taken. The first is that the Federal Minister can be asked to stop all payments to this company until every aspect of its claims is investigated. The second step is that the people concerned must be warned that this is not an ethical practice and is frowned upon by every responsible optometrical firm in Brisbane. I thank the honourable member for drawing this matter to my attention and I hope that this particular firm will adopt ethical procedures in the future.

FEDERAL GRANT TO MR. CHARLES PERKINS

Mr. AIKENS: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Can he ascertain and inform the House if Charles Perkins, a highly paid Commonwealth public servant, was recently granted leave of absence and provided with a generous grant by the Whitlam Government's Arts Council for some purpose as yet not completely disclosed? If so, could information be obtained if the Arts Council grant was made to Perkins to organise and execute a primitive bone-pointing ceremony which had as its object the physical and mental deterioration of the Premier followed by his premature death? If so, will a request be made for a full public inquiry into the circumstances of this grant by the Arts Council and others no less flimsy, such as the grant by the same body of \$100,000 to Germaine Greer allegedly for public dissertations on sexual deviations and excesses?

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Be careful, Chalkie. They'll point the bone at you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I might point the finger at the honourable member.

Sir GORDON CHALK: There is one thing that I can confirm in reply to the honourable member's question and that is that the Premier is well and hearty and has returned from Alice Springs. The balance of the question will be examined and I shall ask the Premier to reply to it tomorrow morning.

A.L.P. SENATE PRE-SELECTION OF
MR. HARTLEY

Mr. PORTER: I ask the Premier: Does he consider that the A.L.P. Senate pre-selection of Hartley, probably the most powerful and the most dangerous Communist in Australia today and a backer of the bloodthirsty Palestine Liberation Organisation, a terrorist organisation, proves beyond question that today the Australian Labor Party and the Communist Party are, for all political purposes, one and the same thing, and that this reveals with frightening clarity the destructive path down which the leader of these A.L.P.-Communist forces, Prime Minister Whitlam, is desperately trying to lead Australia?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: There is certainly no doubt about where Mr. Hartley stands. He has made his attitude and policy quite clear. He is part and parcel of the A.L.P. organisation; they back him, he backs them. He has made it quite clear that he supports the Palestine Liberation Organisation, to which the honourable member has referred. He has also indicated quite clearly that he will do his very best to have the Senate abolished—the same attitude as was expressed by honourable members opposite during the recent debate on Senate representation. The Prime Minister also has said that he will do what he can to destroy the Senate—to curb and curtail it and then, eventually, endeavour to eliminate it. It is with men such as these, and with the Communists, that the A.L.P. is operating today, and honourable members opposite cannot deny that.

I say to the honourable member for Toowong that it is very significant that the A.L.P. is now going to put within its ranks in the Senate a man who espouses these causes and is very well known for his extreme Left-wing views and that it is working with him. I am amazed that some honourable members opposite, such as the honourable member for Port Curtis, does not stand up and disown the A.L.P. and resign. I thought better of the honourable member for Port Curtis than that he would support a man such as Hartley, who is highly dangerous.

LATE ARRIVAL OF PRISONER FOR COURT
HEARING, MARYBOROUGH

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I preface my question to the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport by referring

to the criticism of a magistrate in Maryborough relative to the late arrival of a prisoner for a court hearing in that city last week. I now ask: As the Minister has said that the prisoner left the Brisbane gaol under escort on the evening prior to the hearing, what was the reason for his late arrival?

Mr. HERBERT: I would not have the faintest idea why he arrived late. I simply pointed out that he was released into police custody the night before and, therefore, any late arrival in Maryborough would not come within the responsibility of my department.

BANK CREDIT TO COVER FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Mr. HARTWIG: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: As he is aware that Prime Minister Whitlam recently called in members of various banking companies (both trading and private) to discuss the financing of various Government departments of this nation because Supply has not been granted, can he inform the House whether it would be constitutional or not for Mr. Whitlam to take over depositors' funds or negotiate with banks in relation to using them to carry on government.

Sir GORDON CHALK: A question of this nature must be given a considered reply. I should not like to comment upon the Constitution without consulting the legal advisers available to me. I therefore ask the honourable member to put the question on notice.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—
SIXTH AND SEVENTH ALLOTTED DAYS

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

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1975-76

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND MAIN ROADS

DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Debate resumed from 30 October (see p. 1672) on Mr. Hinze's motion—

"That \$2,992,955 be granted for 'Department of Local Government'."

Mr. GUNN (11.52 a.m.): When the debate was adjourned I was about to deal with the West Moreton Water Authority.

An Opposition Member: That's a long way off.

Mr. GUNN: It might me, but it will be extremely important for the State. Seventeen local authorities in the area will be given an opportunity to be represented. In view of the difficulties caused in the area of Somerset Dam when the Lord Mayor of Brisbane took control of it, such representation is absolutely essential. We do not want a repetition of that at any price.

The Main Roads Department has played an extremely important part in the development of Queensland, as I am sure every member would agree. In a State as vast as Queensland, it is imperative that there be a good road system. However, prior to 1957, when the National-Liberal Parties took office, the roads throughout Queensland were a disgrace. It is admitted that there is still much to be done, but the amount of road work that can be done is governed by the finance made available. At present the States receive only 57 per cent of the petrol tax, which for us is \$152,000,000.

We are now in the sad situation where the majority of our roads have been classified as rural arterial. As the finance available for roads within that classification has dropped dramatically, that action has caused us grave concern. And in the next couple of years we will be in an even worse position.

I refer the Committee particularly to the Brisbane Valley Highway, which is a rural arterial road. It has been the scene of some very grave road accidents and deaths. Some work needs to be done in this area within the next 12 months. I appreciate that, since I became a member of Parliament, work has been done in the Blackbutt Range area at a cost of approximately \$500,000. That stretch of road has caused a great deal of concern over a period of years.

An extremely large amount of main roads work has to be done in Queensland to bring our roads up to the safety standard that is required these days when the vehicles being produced are more powerful and speedy. It is absolutely impossible to have enough policemen on the roads to control road safety. It seems that, whenever people get onto a country road where they know they are in the wide open spaces, they are inclined to speed.

I could not praise the Main Roads Department enough. However, at times, its public relations could be a little better. For instance, the people should be given more consideration when land is resumed, for example, for road truncation. This gets down to the individual who is doing the work. Drainage is another area about which I am very concerned. Whenever roads are built up, natural dams are formed.

Mr. Burns: Some people suffer flooding under their houses.

Mr. GUNN: That is the point I am getting at. It is absolutely essential that adequate drainage be provided. Before I entered Parliament I had experience with the Main Roads Department. One of my properties was on a flood plain and the road was built up.

Mr. Burns: How many properties have you got?

Mr. GUNN: I have enough. The point is that unless adequate drainage work is done along our roads, a good deal of damage can be done.

Mr. Burns: Did the department consult you when you were a local government chairman?

Mr. GUNN: The department was good, but this happened before I entered local government. As a matter of fact, it happened when the A.L.P. was in power. That is when the road was originally put down. My hope is that when new roads are being constructed, as they are at present, adequate drainage will be provided.

Mr. Burns: Is there any chance of compensation?

Mr. GUNN: I think there always should be. I do not think we should be mean in this respect, and the Main Roads Department has not been mean. A four-lane highway is being provided in my area and there has been a good deal of resumption. I would say that the department has been fairly generous. And it should be whenever it takes a person's property either out in the country or even in Brisbane, particularly when it turns a person out of his home. This Government has been reasonably generous in that respect and I applaud it. As I said, it gets back to the individual and his attitude to this matter.

Whilst I have had satisfaction in some areas, there are others in which I have had a certain amount of dissatisfaction and have had to approach the Minister. Usually the department is willing to discuss the matter with the people affected. If flooding is caused in an area, a terrific amount of damage is suffered.

In a number of cases, truncation work has removed access to a piece of ground. I know of people who have lost quite a lot of money in such cases. Some 10 or 20 acres could be closed for development. Before truncation, the land could possibly have been sold for market-garden purposes, which seems to be a fairly popular pursuit at present. But once the land has no access, its value decreases dramatically. The main problem is that the Main Roads Department does not recognise that it has lowered the value of a particular piece of ground. This is a problem that should be looked into. Recently, half an acre of one of my 25-acre blocks was taken for truncation work. I readily gave the department the ground without any qualms, but after signing the document I discovered that there was no access to the remainder of the land. That meant that the value of that piece of land fell by about \$10,000. I should say that I lost \$10,000 and, if I wanted to sell the land, I probably would not be able to do so. But one does not stop progress.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (12.1 p.m.): In speaking to these very important Estimates, I should like, as is my custom, to express my appreciation of the work done by the officers of the Departments of Local Government and Main Roads. I cannot speak too highly of them not only as public servants but as people who are always ready to assist

members with their requests. This morning I propose to confine most of my remarks to the Third Annual Report of the Water Quality Council of Queensland, and I preface my comments by quoting this passage that appears as the introduction to the report—

"The year just concluded has been one of steady achievement. The Water Quality Council has endeavoured to appraise the wide range of water quality problems without bias or favour and has pursued a course of persuasive argument based on scientific investigation. There is reason to believe that gross pollution of our waterways is being eliminated and that with co-operation from all quarters an overall improvement will continue."

I agree largely with that paragraph. However, as I have said on many occasions, including an address that I delivered recently to a gathering, the report is in many respects inadequate. I do not blame the staff altogether for this situation; they can do only what time will allow.

Mr. Burns: Lack of staff.

Mr. DEAN: As the Leader of the Opposition has interjected, there is also a lack of staff. The officers engaged in this work have only one pair of hands and they can do only so much in eight hours each day. I cannot understand why the Minister allows this state of affairs to continue. If he has been attempting to improve the situation and I am accusing him wrongly, I am sorry. I feel, however, that he could press a little harder for extra staff for this very important section of his administration. The control of water quality is a very important part of his portfolio because, in many parts of Brisbane and the rest of the State, pollution of streams is becoming a hazard to the health of the people.

I took the trouble to extract brief references to the report, and I have them before me in the form of notes. It is, of course, virtually impossible to cover the whole ramifications of even this section of a department in only 20 minutes. In making these comments on the Third Annual Report of the Water Quality Council of Queensland, I wish to emphasise a number of points. There have been no prosecutions under the Act. Discharges are not being monitored for compliance with licence conditions. Licence conditions remain secret. The council has not processed or investigated over 100 applications for licences. No mention is made of fees collected. There has been a decrease of 25 per cent in pesticides submitted, and a decrease of 49 per cent in bacteriological samples. The council reports selected water quality parameters only, and there are no results of biological monitoring.

Control of the extensive water pollution in Queensland is beyond the resources and staff of the Water Quality Council. This is a very serious matter. The council

includes members appointed from many Government departments, as well as representatives nominated by secondary and primary industry and the Queensland Institute of Technology. But why is there not wider representation on the council? Why cannot its influence be extended to other sections of the community in which, despite what some people may think, greater knowledge exists? Why should there not be on the council a representative of the Trades and Labor Council and a representative of the conservation movement? The director of the council is required to present to the Minister only an annual report on the administration of the Clean Waters Act 1971 and the regulations. There is no other obligation to publish details of the council's work or findings. Each function of the council is defined under section 20 of the Act. There is ample evidence to show that the council does not or cannot fulfil these functions. The council is required to carry out surveys, investigations and research into matters relating to the quality of waters and report and make recommendations to the Minister thereon.

The third annual report also contains results of surveys on 15 parameters, 10 of these for the first time. The council has been measuring all of these parameters since its formation. The first and second annual reports contained results from only six parameters although the council measures over 20. That is why I repeat that many sections of the report deal inadequately with this very important subject of water quality.

Another aspect that concerns me greatly is the amount of pesticides in fish. The council has investigated this for three years but the results have not been published in any of its annual reports. Why? Section 20 (b) states that it is the council's function "to collect and disseminate information relating to quality of waters;". The council cannot effectively undertake this function because it does not have a data storage and retrieval system; it has only a manual filing system. It refuses some requests for information because they are beyond its resources. Again, this arises from a lack of staff. For example, I have information that a request by the Australian Littoral Society for results of bacteriological tests in the Brisbane River was refused on these grounds.

Section 20 (c) states that it shall be the function of the council "to maintain surveillance over discharge of wastes;". The council does not check whether persons or companies comply with the water quality conditions and the effluent standards of their licences.

Mr. Burns: In this case the council cannot tell you whether that discharge is good or bad.

Mr. DEAN: That is one of the weaknesses I found in the report. The director of the council reported that the standard of operations of many existing treatment plants is disappointing. Page 2 of the report indicates that inspectors visited 25 sewage treatment plants; but there are over 150 local authority treatment plants in Queensland. Officers from other Government departments or authorities may report on some of these plants, but they are not authorised inspectors under the Clean Waters Act. During 1975 two full-time inspectors made 94 inspection visits of industries. Five hundred applications for licences were received by the council and 300 have been granted to date. Clearly the third annual report shows that the council fails to maintain an acceptable degree of surveillance over discharge of waste.

Section 20 (d) states that it shall be the function of the council, "to advise other organizations and persons regarding the prevention, mitigation or abatement of water pollution and matters related thereto;". As far as I am concerned, the information contained in that section of the report is very, very meagre.

Dealing with that section of the report relating to licensing—over a two-year period the council has received 500 applications for licences and, as I said earlier, granted 300. From the wording of the report it appears to have dealt with 343 applications out of 508. Again, the staffing is insufficient. I want it to be plainly understood that I am not casting any reflection on the integrity of the staff or the work they perform; in the circumstances they perform good work. They do the best they can but they need more help. The staff is insufficient to process and investigate the applications, let alone monitor their conditions, as I mentioned previously.

There is also the threat of economic closure if harsh conditions are imposed. There are no provisions in the Act to assist financially the industry or persons affected by these circumstances, and I think it would be a logical step to provide such assistance. Some manufacturing industries and commercial enterprises are very small, and some men are in business in only a small way. If difficulties arise in, say, a small manufacturing industry because of pollution of a waterway and it seems likely that the industry will be closed, I think it is the bounden duty of the Government to assist that industry in every way possible, within certain limits.

Let me turn now to the section of the report dealing with fees. The annual reports, including the third, contain no record of the amount of fees collected under the Act for applications and annual licences. It is specified in the Act that the fees shall be paid into the Clean Waters Trust Fund for administration and research purposes. The Clean Waters Trust Fund is not mentioned in the third annual report except for a \$6,000

equipment grant to James Cook University. Simple budget details of this fund should be included in annual reports of the council.

The calculation of annual fees is based on the volume of discharge. This concept ignores the quality of the discharge and its effect on the receiving water or treatment plant. For wastes discharged from premises to water, the Act provides a penalty of \$15 for each 100 cubic metres per day or part thereof, with a minimum of \$60.

Another thing I noticed—in fact, I saw a newspaper comment relative to it recently, and I think it was also mentioned by another honourable member in this Chamber—is the lack of prosecutions under the Act. Surely at some time during the year the council must have had ample evidence to enable it to deal with some of the people who are flagrantly and blatantly refusing to recognise the Act and carry out their responsibilities under it. Since 1971, the Water Quality Council of Queensland has failed to prosecute any person under the provisions of the Clean Waters Act. No one can convince me, Mr. Hewitt, that someone has not transgressed to such an extent that the law can be used against him. I do not want to see everyone prosecuted, but in some instances there is a deterrent effect if an example is made of someone and he is pulled into gear. It makes some of those who are very lackadaisical in their attitude to this very important matter sit up and listen and take action to prevent pollution. However, as I said earlier, there has been no prosecution since the proclamation of the Act in 1971.

In contrast, newspaper cuttings that I have read indicate that other Australian States have successfully carried out prosecutions of various water polluters. Even the Queensland Department of Harbours and Marine has successfully prosecuted persons for oil pollution. So, Mr. Hewitt, I pose this question: Why has the council neglected to initiate a prosecution of some kind to show that the Government means business under the Act?

It is clear, also, that industry is causing a fish kill. One needs only to read the third annual report to see that a number of accidental discharges are mentioned briefly. In my opinion, some of these discharges are not accidental; they are simply the result of negligence. In such circumstances, I believe that the provisions of the law should be applied very severely.

There has been a great deal of talk in the daily Press recently about pesticides. In fact, I think I read a Press report in the last day or two in which it was stated that the Minister intends to introduce legislation next year to deal with the pollution of waters and streams by pesticides.

The third annual report also contains considerable evidence of widespread faecal and pesticide contamination of many Queensland rivers and creeks. The large decreases in sampling are unjustified. Cabbage Tree

Creek, in the Sandgate electorate, has been shown to be very badly contaminated. The position is very serious because there is heavy residential development along the banks of the creek. People generally in the area, and especially the younger generation, are exposed to very serious health hazards because Cabbage Tree Creek is contaminated to the extent mentioned by officers of the Water Quality Council. In my opinion, if the council had more staff it could look into the question more closely, discover who is causing contamination of creeks and streams and deal with them very severely.

As I have time available to me, I feel impelled to again pose a question relative to the Gold Coast. Although it is not my electorate, Mr. Hewitt, I have certain interests down there. The stage has been reached where local residents are writing to my party complaining about this matter. On earlier occasions in this Chamber I have protested about the dust problem arising from the development undertaken by Lae Enterprises. I am condemning not the development that has occurred but the manner in which it is being undertaken. Although the area has benefited greatly from this development, the homes of local residents are being damaged by the dust and I am sure that their health is being threatened. The worst problem arises in the Hollywell area.

The Gold Coast City Council should have insisted that the company comply with the council's by-laws and ordinances and complete the project as soon as possible. Admittedly the company has spread grass seed over certain areas and some growth is now in evidence; nevertheless a major dust problem exists, particularly when south-easterly winds are blowing. The paintwork of nearby houses is damaged and, more importantly, the fine dust poses a health hazard to nearby residents.

The Gold Coast City Council should be taken to task for not having insisted that the company meet its obligations by completing the development project. I could not imagine any local authority such as the Gold Coast City Council not imposing such conditions on a development company.

This morning I asked a question concerning the canal development that is occurring in the area. The company involved is deliberately diverting waste material from its development through another area. I speak not only for people who have properties on the Gold Coast but also, and more particularly, for the children of the area. Their health will suffer greatly from this terrible dust nuisance. I ask the Minister how much longer the company will be given to complete its project. It seems that it is concentrating on development projects in other areas. Again I ask the Minister to direct his departmental officers to ascertain from the Gold Coast City Council what action it has taken in the matter.

Unfortunately the local residents are talking about taking direct action. Because I believe that we should all keep within the limits of the law, I do not support such a course. A community that is left without law and order is in a very sorry state indeed. Local residents have suggested that they should withhold payment of their rates. It is scandalous that they should be forced even to contemplate such drastic measures.

I am aware of the interest shown by the Minister in local government throughout the State; nevertheless I ask him to take a keener interest in local government on the Gold Coast. He should see that steps are taken to have the company comply with any conditions that might have been imposed on it by the Gold Coast City Council. As I say, if such conditions have not been imposed, the council should be taken to task. The company should not be allowed to engage in such a project, which will benefit its shareholders, without first being required to observe the council's by-laws and ordinances.

I am all for good development; but I am also for the people and their comfort. Those persons whose homes have been affected by the dust nuisance should be paid compensation towards the cost of restoring damaged paintwork and fittings. The paintwork on some new homes in the area is now in a shocking condition as a result of the dust nuisance.

I do not know whether the Minister has visited the area. If he has, perhaps he has not taken a close look at it. I urge him to do so and, in conjunction with the member for the area, to examine this problem that is causing so much distress to the residents of the Hollywell area. Lae Enterprises should be brought into line.

(Time expired.)

Mr. TURNER (Warrego) (12.20 p.m.): In speaking to the Minister's Estimates, I congratulate him on their presentation and also convey my appreciation and thanks to members of his personal staff, namely, Mr. Wade and Mr. Walker, for the assistance and co-operation they have extended to me since I entered this Chamber. I also pay tribute to other members of the Minister's staff who were known to me for four or five years before I entered Parliament while I was in the local government field. I refer particularly to Mr. Hansen, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Jacobs, Mr. Darmody, who is an assistant commissioner, and Mr. Pickard, Mr. Agnew and Mr. Leeson, district engineers who have been in my area in the West. I thank them for their co-operation and assistance, and congratulate them on the job they have done.

I knew most of those men when I was associated with the Murweh Shire Council. At that time Mr. McKechnie was the Minister for Local Government. He had a wonderful record. It was unfortunate that a man with his undoubted capabilities should

be stricken with an illness that necessitated his retirement and cut short a brilliant career in politics. I am thankful that his son (Peter McKechnie) now represents the same electorate; he is doing a good job and is following in his father's footsteps.

I shall deal first with the Main Roads section of the Minister's portfolio. Over the years tremendous advances have been made on the Warrego Highway. It is one of the major highways that I use in travelling to and from Parliament. In the early '50s it was little more than a wagon track. A great improvement has been effected by the completion of the Rocklea overpass and the Ipswich bypass, and the construction work on the Minden and Marburg Ranges and other sections of the highway. A good bitumen road now extends to beyond Longreach. By the end of 1976 a bitumen road will be completed from Brisbane, along the Flinders Highway, to Mt. Isa. I hope that it will not be long before a bitumen highway extends right through to the West.

Anyone who has read the Fifty-fourth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Main Roads must realise the tremendous work and planning that is required for main roads jobs. I recommend the reading of that report to everyone. In the past year 753 miles or 1,212 km of declared roads was constructed and bitumen surfaced; 39 new bridges were constructed and 33 had major repairs effected. We should all realise that, with rising costs and the constraints imposed by the new Commonwealth roads legislation, the shortage of funds for road-building has an adverse effect on the extent of the work that can be done.

While I concede that more money is being spent on roads than in the past, under the Federal Government's road policy more money is allocated to national highways to the detriment of rural arterial roads. Last financial year about \$3,000,000 was spent on roads in the Warrego electorate, but a tremendous amount of work remains to be done in the area. In the past, I and other honourable members have referred to the deplorable state of the road between Cunnamulla and Wyandra. That road is not just for local use. It is of State and national importance for defence, tourism, trade and many other uses. Just recently the Minister announced that \$300,000 is to be spent on it. With the recommencement of that work, I am hopeful that the department will continue towards the completion of the bitumen surfacing of this road. Another \$600,000 has been allocated for the Balonne-Cunnamulla road, \$300,000 of which is to be spent in the Balonne electorate and the other \$300,000 in the Warrego electorate.

Many other roads in my area need work carried out on them. I mention the Charleville-Quilpie road, the Charleville-Adavale road, the Tambo-Springsure road, the Blackall to Isisford road and the Blackall-Jericho road, to list just a few. They all

need to have work done on them. I am quite sure that the Minister is well aware of the condition of the roads, as he has travelled into the area. The provision of finance for road works is necessary not only to make the roads more reliable but also to provide local government employment in those areas.

I turn now to the Local Government side of the Minister's portfolio. As the third tier of government in the three-tier system, local government is the one most intimately concerned with the people. It covers practically all fields of everyday living, as it is concerned with town-planning, air and water pollution, the Litter Act, sewerage, drainage, flood mitigation and other fields too numerous to mention.

Local authorities in rural areas have problems peculiar to their areas. They are responsible not only for the distribution of electricity but also for its generation. They must look after stock routes for travelling stock and, as well, they must carry out all the road works in the area. The cost of electricity is one matter I wish to raise in this debate. The cost of generating electricity in western areas has risen dramatically as a result of the withdrawal of the fuel subsidy and increases in costs generally. Councils have entered into contracts right throughout the western areas to supply electricity to rural consumers, and with escalating costs they have been caught in an ever-worsening situation. I hope that something can be done to alleviate their problem.

Local government is one of the most sensitive and important areas of public administration. Rapid development and change are continually occurring throughout the State. The many Bills introduced by the Minister are evidence of the volume of work carried out by local government and its importance in our everyday life.

In the short time available to members it is not possible to deal with all aspects of this important debate. The Minister is very capable, as indicated by his introductory speech. Doubtless he will give a further indication of that when he concludes the debate.

I spoke before about the flood mitigation problem for local government. I point out that in Charleville we have a flooding problem that is just as serious as any in Brisbane or anywhere else. Bradley's Gully floods quite easily. The council has had a feasibility study conducted into the diversion of the gully into the Warrego River. The consulting engineers have produced a report, which I will receive soon, and I am hopeful that as a result of discussions with the Minister we may be able to receive some State Government assistance for the alleviation of that problem. I repeat that flooding in western areas affects people just as much as it does anywhere else.

Whilst speaking about local government, I mention the perilous plight of local authorities in the West. On various occasions in the past the Minister has spoken about the necessity for a more equitable system of rating throughout the nation so that local authorities will have a chance to carry on. I completely support that statement. I believe that we should receive a greater share of the common pool of taxation. Local authorities in our areas are heavily burdened with high interest and redemption charges and arrears of rates. I hope that in some way the Minister will be able to induce his Federal counterparts to enter into an agreement whereby a more equitable system of rating is evolved. I do not advocate doing away with the present system of rating but more assistance must be given to local authorities if they are to continue as they have done in the past.

Last Thursday week, the Leader of the Opposition spoke about pollution in Brisbane. Rural areas do not suffer this problem to the same extent as city areas. Basically, I agree with him. Something has to be done to control pollution in the cities.

In today's "Courier-Mail" the Federal Health Department Victorian director (Dr. R. C. Webb) is reported as follows:—

"He said that although the Federal Government had no control over environment protection within States, it could use economic sanctions to encourage protection.

"These could include:

"Tax incentives or tax credits for equipment which was bought to control pollution or which operated in accordance with official standards.

"Subsidies or direct grants to buy pollution control equipment or to encourage the adoption of control procedures.

"Duty free import of pollution control equipment."

Those measures could be looked into and, if we have a sympathetic Government that would give incentives to industries, they might assist in cleaning up the problem associated with many industries in the more closely settled city areas.

No doubt the Minister will reply to the speeches that have been made in this debate, but I cannot let the occasion pass without making reference to the remarks of the honourable member for Bundaberg. On some occasions he makes a sensible and worth-while contribution to a debate. However, on this occasion, his attack on rural councils and chairmen was typical of what I have come to expect from him when he refers to rural areas. He made a bitter attack on chairmen in rural areas and branded them as National Party members, as little kings interested only in their own prestige and as men interested only in the prestige of the jobs they are doing. He also said that they were all opposed to amalgamation.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. TURNER: He said, "That's right." He has admitted it. I thank him for putting it into "Hansard" twice. I inform him that there are six shire councils in my area. They are Booringa, Murweh, Paroo, Tambo, Blackall and Barcaldine. I do not know the political affiliations of all of the chairmen of those local authorities, but one chairman who cannot be said to be a National Party member is Mr. Jack Tonkin, chairman of the Paroo Shire Council. Many years ago, he stood as an A.L.P. candidate in the Federal sphere. He sought A.L.P. endorsement for Warrego for the State election when Mr. Jack Dufficy retired. Had Mr. Tonkin secured endorsement, possibly I would not be here today. I know him very well.

Mr. McKechnie: He won't vote Labor again; seeing you are doing such a good job, he will be moved to support you in future.

Mr. TURNER: I wouldn't know about that.

Mr. Hanson: You wait till Jack Aiken gets hold of you.

Mr. TURNER: That will be terrible!

The chairman of the Paroo Shire Council (Mr. Tonkin) has, like all chairmen in my area, given a tremendous amount to the community and district. These chairmen do this work for little or no remuneration. I find it offensive for the honourable member for Bundaberg to regard them as men who are interested only in their own prestige. I have the greatest respect for Mr. Tonkin. I have even recommended him for inclusion in the Queen's Honours List.

I must confess that I join with the honourable member for Townsville South when I hear remarks such as those that emanated from the honourable member for Bundaberg. I felt like going outside the Chamber and vomiting. That is what we have come to expect from the honourable member for Bundaberg. Both in this debate and in the debate on the Estimates for the Department of Primary Industries, he made particular reference to National Party people who represented only the wool and beef barons. I shall enlighten him. I do not represent only wool and beef barons, and I am not myself a wool or beef baron. If it were not for the votes of ordinary working people, I would not be here today. I think that I can say without fear of contradiction that 75 per cent of the electors in Warrego are working people. The honourable member is quite well aware of that. The area was represented by the Labor Party for many years. Hopefully, all A.L.P. politicians are not as biased as this member.

I have only one suggestion to make to the honourable member for Bundaberg following the speech that he made the other night in which he made references to the Treasurer. I suggest that, when he loses his seat at the next election, he make application for a job as script writer for Flo Kennedy.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Minister on the presentation of his Estimates and on his administration of the portfolio of Local Government and Main Roads.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (12.36 p.m.): I have several points to make in my contribution to this debate. In the first place, I thank the Minister for the courtesies that he has extended to me since assuming his portfolio. Although I do not say that he is always correct in what he does, he is a considerate Minister. We have had a few differences. I will say for him, however, that if he sees that a mistake has been made, he is prepared to do something about it rather than merely cover it up.

If I had not had a discussion with him a few weeks ago, I would perhaps have spoken at length in this debate on the problem of local government boundaries. As I now have a clear understanding of his attitude towards this matter, it would be a complete waste of time if I dealt with it at length. He indicated clearly that he will not sanction any alteration of local government boundaries unless such alteration has the approval of the local authorities concerned. Such agreement is virtually impossible to obtain in problem areas—perhaps for the reasons outlined by the honourable member for Bundaberg.

I should like to point out that most local authorities that are in trouble, financially and otherwise, are those that, whether they like it or not, need boundary alterations. Their problems have not been caused solely by financial considerations. In fact, many local authorities have never been better off financially. They have suddenly found themselves with money virtually flowing out of their ears. They have money quite undreamt of for work for which finance had been sought for years.

One aspect of local government to which I wish to refer is town-planning. All who are connected with local government know that today town-planning provides most of the work for aldermen and council staffs. They are now much more involved than they were previously in discussions on town-planning matters and they are taking up a considerable amount of their time. Ours is becoming an increasingly urbanised society, and many so-called rural shires are finding themselves confronted with planning problems as their townships increase in size. Such planning includes the siting of small industries, especially those that produce noxious odours, and even installations of the local authority itself such as sewage treatment works. With increased education has come a realisation of a better quality of life that can be enjoyed in rural townships, and this has caused in some areas problems that have never arisen before. Unfortunately, with the system operating in Queensland today, under the Local Authority Act each local authority has the right to implement its own by-laws, or, in the case of the Brisbane City Council, its own ordinances, as it deems fit on planning and town-planning procedures.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Row): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. CASEY: Of course, in most cases those local authorities which do have properly gazetted town-planning schemes insert a little escape clause which states that the council can do something at its discretion—they are sometimes referred to as discretionary clauses—so that each and every one of the 131 local authorities in Queensland has the right and privilege to effect changes in a town-planning scheme. We find what I call spill-over areas, such as the area controlled by the Brisbane City Council and the bordering areas controlled by the shires in the Moreton region. A similar situation exists around cities such as Bundaberg, Maryborough, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns, where urban areas have developed out into areas controlled by other local authorities. Suddenly, within a matter of two city blocks, one local authority can, under its by-laws and town-planning measures, allow industries to be established whereas the other local authority wants the area to remain residential. Although all town plans have to be perused and inspected by the Department of Local Government, then approved by the Minister for gazettal by the Governor-in-Council before they can be implemented, in actual fact the councils can virtually do as they please administratively in their own areas.

So what do we find? We are getting a tremendous variety of ideas about town-planning with the development of town plans at the whim of the various aldermen concerned. As I said before, there is a growing awareness of the need for proper planning for regionalisation, the siting of industrial areas and the creation of areas free from noise pollution—something that is causing great problems in most communities these days.

I believe that what is required fairly urgently in Queensland is an over-all State planning authority. Honourable members might say that I am advocating the centralising of a procedure that is in fact the right and prerogative of people who know what is best for their own areas; but I am not in any way whatsoever trying to take away from local authorities the rights that they now have in town-planning or their rights to introduce by-laws. I believe that, when we look at what is happening today throughout Queensland, now is the time to establish this over-all State town-planning authority, which would act as an advisory and supervisory body administering all town-planning legislation in Queensland.

Because of the way our town-planning legislation is framed, ordinary people face great problems because they cannot afford to take their objections to the Local Government Court. The ordinary working man who suddenly finds that somebody has a licence to establish a clubhouse alongside him faces a great problem. Initially it does not seem

to be a problem—not until the club starts holding Saturday night cabarets, Sunday night socials and all the other things associated with a club, such as the noise of bands playing night after night and traffic going in and out, which become unbearable. If he knows that this is proposed, he can object to the council. The council can waive his objection and his next step is to proceed to the Local Government Court. He goes to see a solicitor to find out what it will cost to go to court, and as soon as he finds out how costs are awarded he says, "We'll leave it" because he simply cannot afford to go on with it. Consequently he has either to sell up and move away from the area or put up with a poorer quality of life because of a decision made by an authority, perhaps incorrectly as in the case I am discussing.

Every member of this Assembly would know of countless instances in his own electorate in which local authorities have made mistakes in town-planning. I certainly am aware of instances in which mistakes have been made in my electorate, and I have visited other areas throughout Queensland in which town-planning blunders have occurred. Perhaps a number of them have been made because of a lack of knowledge by a local authority of what is required in certain areas or because its ordinances do not set out clearly the town-planning requirements. On the other hand, in many instances action has been taken deliberately because of the personal interest and involvement of the people concerned and their association with aldermen, councillors or other members of local authorities. I regret that I have to say that, Mr. Row, but I think that, because of your own knowledge of local authority matters, you would agree that my statement is correct.

In addition, of course, many town-planning blunders have been made under interim town-planning regulations. So that they may control town-planning, some local authorities have laid down a number of interim by-laws covering their own areas. These have not included a proper scale or schedule clearly defining areas in which certain buildings may or may not be constructed. Consequently, personal interest has entered into certain matters and a number of people have been hurt.

As I said earlier, people can lodge objections and go before the Local Government Court. If they can afford to do that and their objection is upheld, in many cases the simplest way out for a local authority is to apply for a rezoning of the area involved. Local authorities have been known to do that, and the persons concerned then have to go through a similar procedure again. In some instances, of course, local authorities apply for rezoning to cover up their own mistakes. When such rezoning procedure gets under way, the person who has lodged the initial objection and taken the case to the Local Government Court has to go before the court again; so he faces

the prospect of having to meet the cost of not one but two court cases, and the ordinary person just cannot afford to do that. Under the existing legislation, the little man really cannot get anywhere.

In my opinion, there should be an overall State town-planning authority to act in an advisory capacity. I would also suggest to the Minister that it could well work along the lines already provided under the Building Act. That Act makes provision that, where objections are lodged against the decision of a local authority on a building, the matter goes before a building advisory committee that is set up specially by the Minister. I envisage the use of a provision of a similar type to cover town-planning in Queensland. A referee could be appointed in certain areas to hear objections from the people involved. After a decision had been given, either the local authority or the person concerned could appeal to the Local Government Court. There would not be an immediate blocking of some poor person in the community who is trying to obtain a better quality of life in the area in which he lives or to prevent the existing quality of life from deteriorating simply because the local authority concerned does not have his interests at heart. In my opinion, such a provision is long overdue. As I said, the Minister already has a provision of a similar type available to him under other legislation, and I think that he should now consider including such a provision in town-planning legislation.

The next matter to which I refer relates to main roads. Considerable delay has occurred in beginning the construction of the Rocleigh Bridge in Mackay. The time taken in the planning and design of the bridge is an utter disgrace. I refer honourable members, without giving specific dates, to questions that I have asked in this Chamber over the last five years on this matter. Construction of the bridge was supposed to be under way by the 1975-76 financial year. Instead, only the design of the piers is getting under way.

I am aware that a model has been set up by the University of Queensland to test the flow of the Pioneer River and for other purposes, and the obtaining of better information for pier design for the Rocleigh Bridge is probably only a secondary consideration. I agree that perhaps some of the delay is attributable to that. However, from information that I have received on this matter, it would appear that some months ago sufficient data had been obtained by the Main Roads Department from test flows on the model at the University of Queensland to enable it to get plans under way for the design of the piers of the bridge.

Over the past four or five years, while all this delay has occurred, nearly \$400,000 has been spent on repairs undertaken to the Forgan Bridge as a stopgap measure. Much of that money was spent on underpinning in an attempt to strengthen the bridge. The bridge should have a hot-mix bitumen surface.

Unfortunately, it would appear that it is not strong enough to allow such a surface to be laid. From information supplied by the previous Minister for Main Roads it is apparent that the Forgan Bridge has certain weaknesses in its structure. In spite of the huge expenditure incurred on it, the traffic problems in both the inner-city area and North Mackay are compounding day by day.

North Mackay is the fastest-growing area in the Mackay region, containing also the port of Mackay and large industrial areas. A heavy volume of traffic passes from North Mackay into the inner-city area every day, and with the increase in production in all the sugar mills in the Mackay region has come a heavier flow of sugar-carrying traffic from the mills on the southern side of the river. It passes through the heart of the city and the main intersection at the southern end of the Forgan Bridge on its way to and from the harbour.

It is proposed that all sugar traffic will use the Rocleigh Bridge when it is completed. In the meantime, however, it causes traffic chaos in Mackay, particularly during peak hours. Traffic is brought almost to a halt.

If the Rocleigh Bridge is not completed within two or three years at the most, congestion in the city of Mackay will be so bad that traffic will be brought to a standstill. Delays of one hour or more in both the morning and the afternoon peak periods will be quite common.

I am aware that the approaches to the Rocleigh Bridge are at the planning stage, as are two new crossings of the river at an area known as the Goose Ponds, in North Mackay. At the suggestion of other persons and myself, the Main Roads Department has looked at the possibility of having the road through the Goose Ponds declared an export road so that it will be eligible for Commonwealth Government finance under its export roads programme. If these new crossings are constructed, they will help overcome the traffic problems in North Mackay, but they will not reduce the volume of traffic that crosses the Pioneer River. If Commonwealth finance is forthcoming for the construction of a connecting road from Malcolmson Street, through Hamilton Street to Harbour Road, the traffic problem will be alleviated to some extent.

I am grateful to the Minister for having come to Mackay to examine this section of the roadway with me. Might I suggest to him that further work, such as filling, be carried out on the southern side of the proposed Rocleigh Bridge so that at least the approaches will be in the course of construction when work on the bridge proper commences. It appears that the size of the Rocleigh Bridge is such as to require three years' work for its completion. That means that even if a start is made next year on the construction of the bridge, it will not be completed probably until about 1979 or 1980. In the meantime there will be utter traffic chaos in the inner-city area of Mackay. The

construction of the Rocleigh Bridge should be given top priority and should proceed as a matter of urgency. I hope that work will commence this year, but it appears that such a hope is fading fast.

Finally, I raise again the matter of allocations to maintenance of roads. As I said in my speech in the Budget debate, this year's allocation is almost the same as last year's. Of course, in his reply the Treasurer said that this was due to the high cost of repairing flood damaged roads. I point out to him that all but \$2,000,000 of the high cost of flood work was met by the Federal Government; therefore that cannot be used as the main reason. It is as simple as this: construction costs are up 30 per cent on last year and, if our maintenance allocation is equal to that of last year, by the end of this year roads throughout Queensland will be 30 per cent worse.

Any honourable member who has read regional newspapers in the Parliamentary Library will have seen letter after letter of complaint. Shire councils, too, have complained. People are upset and disturbed about road accidents and fatalities attributable to poor road maintenance in Queensland. If, as has been said, this is a result of lack of Federal funds, the matter has to be straightened out between our Minister for Local Government and Main Roads and his Federal counterpart. Whether that is so or not, if the Main Roads Department were honest with itself and stopped the construction of certain new work in Queensland, it could then spend more money on the reconstruction and maintenance of road sections that are poorly maintained.

Last year 52.9 per cent of Queensland had a rainfall of over 500 mm.

(Time expired.)

Mr. KAUS (Mansfield) (12.57 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the presentation of his first Estimates, and on the work that he has done since his elevation to his office. I also congratulate the officers in his departments on the work they have done in the last 12 months and I thank them for the help and information they have given me in that period. On many occasions officers in the Department of Main Roads have been very helpful to me and my constituents when I have referred problems to them.

After the luncheon recess I shall enlarge on a facet of development in my area. At this stage I ask the Minister when funds will be available for the development and widening of the Cleveland subarterial road from Creek Road to past the rifle range. I understand that this project was included in the programme, but that, in the light of problems experienced with the Federal Minister (Mr. Jones) and a lack of money, it has been postponed.

I congratulate the department on the new prestressed concrete bridge over Bulimba Creek, which is nearing completion. The

road to Cleveland is very busy and this was a much needed facility on this part of the highway. However, further down the road, there is a problem opposite the Belmont school in the form of a big drain, which is worrying quite a number of people who have built houses very close to it.

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

Mr. KAUS: Prior to the recess I spoke about the prestressed concrete bridge over Bulimba Creek, which I am very pleased to say is practically completed. The other point I made was that there should be development of that road right through to the Belmont Rifle Range or, if not to there, at least through to Belmont Road. I know that the department is short of money.

Mr. Hinze: You did hear that Whitlam is trying to deny the Governor-General—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I am trying to hear the honourable member for Mansfield.

Mr. Houston: Whitlam is Prime Minister.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KAUS: Much has been said and written recently about the policy of the Brisbane City Council on parks.

Mr. Jensen: He's a mug, that Fraser.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the honourable member for Bundaberg.

Mr. KAUS: There have been city-wide protests, park defence organisations have been formed and there has been an overwhelming rejection of a poaching policy which will penalise present and future generations.

Mr. Houston: What on?

Mr. KAUS: On parks.

Mr. Burns: Oh, get out! There are dozens of parks.

Mr. KAUS: That applies not only to the use of parkland but also to its sale. You, Mr. Miller, have had problems in your own electorate, and the Leader of the Opposition has had problems in his electorate as well.

Mr. Burns interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Persistent interjections will not be tolerated.

Mr. KAUS: Honourable members would appreciate, of course, that I am talking about the proposed sale of an area in Mt. Gravatt that we know as the Upper Mt. Gravatt Showground. They will recall a statement by the secretary of the Mt. Gravatt Community Central Planning Committee (Mr. Arthur Scurr), which appeared in "The Courier-Mail" recently, in which he claimed that perusal of council minutes had confirmed that the council had no right to dispose of the land. Honourable members will also recall that no answer by the council has been published.

I will now spell out the reasons for that. The Mt. Gravatt Community Central Planning Committee obtained the minutes of meetings of the Upper Mt. Gravatt Show Society for 1937. On 17 February of that year the minutes recorded, among other points of agreement on the take-over of the showgrounds by the council, this fact—

"The Brisbane City Council hereby affirms that the property shall be held by the Brisbane City Council in perpetuity as a showground and recreation park."

I mention this because the Main Roads Department will be confronted with the problem of the traffic generated by the development if it is allowed. I will outline the business centres already in the electorate. Mt. Gravatt has a big shopping centre. A mile further south is Garden City. A six-storey development has been proposed by Westfields on the same highway. If the Main Roads Department is further deprived of money for continuation of the freeway construction beyond Marshall Road, when the freeway finishes there most of the traffic will be diverted along the present main highway.

I might add that many supporting references occur in other parts of that minute book in relation to the showground area. However, as a double check, two members of the staff of a firm of solicitors spent two days examining the minutes of Brisbane City Council meetings between 1937 and 1941. Needless to say, the agreement detailed in the show society minutes is repeated in those of the city council. There was a difference in only one word, and that does not alter the undertaking. The show society used the word "perpetuity" and the council used the word "permanent".

It will be apparent to all honourable members that the Brisbane City Council breached a written agreement by rezoning the land to permit its sale to a department store, and it said nothing about it. It betrayed its trust and demonstrated its preparedness to sell out the people's rights to help balance its accounts.

Mr. Houston: That's a prepared brief.

Mr. KAUS: It is not. These are facts that should be recorded in "Hansard" for the benefit of the people of our community in Mt. Gravatt.

Mr. Burns: They are not correct.

Mr. KAUS: They are.

Naturally, after the Mt. Gravatt committee discovered the minutes which, no doubt, the council had thought lost, it took immediate action, because it is preparing its appeal case to the Local Government Court on 24 November. This is one of the reasons why I am bringing this matter to the notice of the Minister. In that court, he will have to contest the problems of traffic and city-planning.

This set in train the search of council minutes, and I arranged appointments for the committee with the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and the Minister for Local Government. On their advice, an opinion is being sought from a very honourable Queen's Counsel. This is the current situation.

What I should like to know is why the people of Mt. Gravatt and district should be forced to raise a required amount of money to fight for the retention for the public of land that the council must have known is not its to sell. This is one of my arguments. Why do the people of Mt. Gravatt have to go to court and pay vast sums of money to retain something that was left in perpetuity for them and future generations?

I think this is a shocking indictment of the Brisbane City Council, and I think that this Parliament should record its disgust. If the Local Government Appeal Court finds in our favour, I hope that there is some way in law by which the Brisbane City Council can be forced to reimburse these thousands of citizens—and our committee represents 10,000 people—or, alternatively, to contribute this amount towards the cost of the community centre, which is our objective.

So that the records of this Parliament might be complete on this issue, I should like to canvass the history briefly. On 2 September 1937, the Lord Mayor received a deputation from the Mt. Gravatt Show Society proposing that the society hand over to the council, for park purposes, the freehold deeds of 20 acres of ground on the main Logan Road, with all improvements thereon, the total value of which was only £1,500. That was a very cheap price for 20 acres of open space, which it should be at present.

The third of the show society's conditions for transfer was "that the ground shall be held in perpetuity as a recreation reserve and showground." The Lord Mayor promised that he would bring the matter before the finance committee that day.

On 19 October 1937, the Brisbane City Council accepted the finance committee recommendation on the proposed acquisition of the Mt. Gravatt showground. According to the minutes, the land was never sold; responsibility for it was simply handed over to the city council of that day.

I quote from the decision—

"The proposal, in effect, is that the show society will hand over to the council the fee simple of the land comprising the showground at Mt. Gravatt in consideration of the council—

(a) setting the land apart permanently for showground, park and recreation purposes."

Mr. Lane: Do you know that the Leader of the Opposition throws his prawn shells into Norman Creek?

Mr. KAUS: That might be so, but he is always complaining about pollution of the creek.

On 25 October 1937, the town clerk wrote to Mr. Will H. Clarke, who, as secretary, led the deputation to the Lord Mayor, advising that one of the conditions under which the council had agreed to take over the showground was that the area be set aside permanently for showground, park and recreation purposes. On 4 May 1938, Mr. Clarke wrote to the city council on behalf of his society formally agreeing to the conditions of take-over.

On 24 August 1938, the city council officially submitted to the society for completion documents such as a memorandum of transfer. The letter repeated, "The council undertakes to hold the land for the purpose of a public park, recreation reserve or showgrounds, or other purposes not inconsistent therewith."

The story now resumes 32 years later. On 30 May 1970, the Brisbane City Council invited tenders for the purchase of Mt. Gravatt showground. This is all tied up with main roads planning and city planning. Myers tendered \$1,010,000 and applied to the council for permission to use the site for a shopping centre. The Local Government Court, the Full Court and the High Court heard appeals, and the High Court upheld the appeal on the ground that the Myer application had not been properly advertised. We know the answer to that problem; there has since been amending legislation. The High Court, although it made no decision on it, also appeared to favour the appellants on their second ground—that rejection of evidence by the other two courts on lack of open space was wrong.

Myers then made a further application. There were over 800 objections. The council decided to allow the proposal, and certain objectors appealed. This is the appeal that will be heard by the Local Government Court later this month.

Now comes the punch line. After the Myer application was lodged, the new town plan was put on display. I ask the Minister to have a close look at the proposed zoning of the area. I ask him also whether certain departmental officers could be subpoenaed to attend the court hearing to give an account of their wishes for the development of the area. I do not know whether that would be possible, but I should like to see it done.

Under the new town plan, the council proposes to zone the showground site in a manner that will permit its use as a shopping centre as of right. Over 140 persons objected to the proposed zoning and requested that the showground be zoned "existing or proposed open space."

As I said earlier, the Brisbane City Council acquired the showgrounds and improvements, of a total value of £1,500, in return for which it undertook to complete ground improvements and to liquidate an overdraft

of £450. That is a fairly low price for such a valuable block of land. So the position, with the discovery of the show society minutes, could have been altered considerably. Only the court can determine this. But it is obvious to all the citizens of Mt. Gravatt and district that the council either did not know of its commitment to retain the area as open space or it deliberately concealed the fact in order to sell the people's heritage for \$1,000,000. Whatever the reason, when a search through council records confirmed the show society's minutes, the council sought to rezone the land. A Labor council's interest in doing everything possible to help big business at the expense of little people is confusing, to say the least. To me it is a pathetic action by a totally incompetent and possibly near-bankrupt council.

I hope that, when this area comes up for rezoning, the Minister will have a good look at it. I know that on the 24th of this month the case will go before the Local Government Court. We have the evidence to support us in our fight for a community centre for the people of Mt. Gravatt. In addition, I hope that the Minister and his officers will look at the traffic hazards that will be created if the proposed development of the area as a shopping centre is accepted by the Brisbane City Council. We already have traffic problems further up the road and I am sure the Minister's officers know this. We know that the proposed freeway will not be completed, so most of the traffic coming off the completed section of the freeway will be diverted through this area not only on week days but at the week-ends, which, I am sure, will create problems for the Minister's traffic engineers.

(Time expired.)

Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumbidgee) (2.32 p.m.): First of all, I draw the attention of honourable members to the fact that there are only two members of the A.L.P. present in the Chamber. Honourable members know why. It is because every time I rise I belt hell out of them. They are panic-stricken and leave the Chamber before I begin to speak. They have left behind the two weakest members of the Opposition to take me on.

There is no doubt that the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads has a very important portfolio.

A Government Member: Is your microphone turned on?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I don't care if it isn't, because I can still go without it. There are three local authority areas within the electorate of Murrumbidgee—part of the Pine Rivers Shire, almost all of the Caboolture Shire (with the exception of Bribie Island, which is within the electorate of Landsborough) and the western part of the city of Redcliffe.

In the debate on the Estimates for the Department of Local Government today I want to speak predominantly about the city of Redcliffe. I am very concerned about the

present constitution of the Redcliffe City Council. As honourable members are probably aware, there are no wards or divisions in the city of Redcliffe. It is an all-in council and aldermen may be elected from any part of the city. This may be all right in some cases, but four aldermen and the mayor reside in the area south of King Street and West of Maine Road and the other four aldermen all reside east of Oxley Avenue. In other words, the greater part of the city of Redcliffe is not represented by any alderman. Not one alderman resides west of Oxley Avenue or north of King Street. I submit that the city of Redcliffe should definitely be divided into wards. If it were divided into wards, this would make some of the aldermen get off their backsides and do a bit more work than they are doing at present. I receive a lot of phone calls from people asking me where they can get in touch with their aldermen and when I tell them that the city of Redcliffe is represented by eight aldermen and the mayor and that most of them reside in the south-east corner of Redcliffe, they seem to be very disappointed. They say to me, "Why can't Redcliffe be divided into wards instead of being all in as it is?"

Mr. Marginson: Why don't they make application to the Minister?

Mr. FRAWLEY: The council will not do it. The people of Redcliffe have tried to get this done before, but the Redcliffe City Council will not have a bar of it for the simple reason that the aldermen know that three-quarters of them would not be re-elected. That is why they want things to remain as they are.

Now we see that the council intends to introduce parking meters. I was a member of the Redcliffe City Council for six years and I was one of the five aldermen who consistently voted against the introduction of parking meters into the city of Redcliffe because we do not need them down there. Redcliffe is a city which caters for all-day Saturday shopping, and on a Saturday afternoon there is a large amount of trade from Brisbane and the surrounding districts. If parking meters are introduced to Redcliffe, they will kill the main shopping centre. Recently the engineer of the Redcliffe City Council was instructed by the council to draw up a plan for parking meters. That is a lot of rot. There are so many parking spaces in Redcliffe that have not been utilised that it is absolutely disgraceful for the council even to contemplate the introduction of parking meters.

When I was an alderman of the Redcliffe City Council, from 1967 to 1972, a plan for parking in Redcliffe was formulated. Only recently, that complete plan was printed in the Redcliffe newspaper so that the people of Redcliffe would know just what parking facilities were to be made available to them. I do not intend to bore honourable members by reading out the whole project—it appeared

in the editorial in last week's "Redcliffe Herald"—but I cannot see any reason for installing parking meters in the main street, Redcliffe Parade, and also in Sutton Street, which is the centre of the business area. If that does occur, the shoppers, particularly those who come to Redcliffe on Saturday afternoons, will be driven from the main streets of Redcliffe to Kippa-Ring, where the new shopping centre and K Mart was opened recently—I shall have something more to say about that later, too, Mr. Miller—or down to Woolworths at Margate.

This seems to me to be an attempt by the Redcliffe City Council or someone in the council to kill the main Redcliffe shopping centre. A similar proposal was mooted some years ago, as I said earlier, and I was one of those who were instrumental in preventing the installation of parking meters in Redcliffe. I am not opposed to the use of parking meters for a specific purpose or in areas in which parking could be allocated more equitably, but I do not think there is any need for parking meters in the city of Redcliffe.

Recently, in part of the western area of Redcliffe, which is in my electorate of Murrumba, the Redcliffe City Council rezoned land in Anzac Avenue to enable a shopping centre to be erected by Security Projects. It is a fairly large shopping complex, and the plan was submitted to the Redcliffe City Council for town-planning approval. After the necessary advertising had been done, and so on, the plan was approved. The plan that was approved did not show an exit from one of the car parks to MacFarlane Street, a quiet suburban street on the western boundary of the shopping centre. Actually, the Redcliffe City Council had a three-link strip of land dedicated to it by the former owner to ensure that nobody could use MacFarlane Street as an inlet or an outlet to the Kippa-Ring shopping complex.

During the construction of the shopping complex, trucks and other vehicles made an exit through the car park. They broke up the kerbing and channelling in MacFarlane Street and used it continually as an exit and an entrance.

When a building permit was applied for by the builder for Security Projects, he submitted to the Redcliffe City Council a plan which differed slightly from the original plan in that it showed an opening from the car park into MacFarlane Street. The builder slipped the plan in and a permit was granted to build the shopping centre. That plan showed, unnoticed by the building inspector or the city engineer, an entrance and an exit from the car park to that quiet suburban street.

People have come to see me about this because they do not want all the traffic, or a large proportion of the traffic, from the shopping complex using MacFarlane Street. On the day that the K Mart opened, the

Redcliffe City Council erected a row of posts across the exit from the car park to MacFarlane Street. Unfortunately, it did not do this a day before or a week before. Within an hour, someone from either Security Projects or K Mart tore them out again while the cement was still wet. The Redcliffe City Council then sent a gang of workmen back and they re-erected the posts.

The latest information I have is that Security Projects are going to take legal action against the Redcliffe City Council to make it remove these posts and allow an exit to be created from the car park to MacFarlane Street. If that does occur, it will be nothing less than blackmail. As I said earlier, the original plan was submitted and town-planning approval was given. It showed this as a closed area. However, when the plan was submitted for the building permit, it did not show it as a closed area. In other words, someone slipped a fast one over the Redcliffe City Council, and it looks as if he might get away with it.

While I am on the subject of local authorities, I should like to speak about political parties in councils, which I think is pertinent to the debate. With local authority elections to be held in four or five months' time, once again political parties are talking about running teams for various councils. I state here and now that, with the exception of the Brisbane City Council election—the Brisbane metropolitan area is more or less a State within a State—I am opposed to any political party (I do not care whether it is the A.L.P., the Liberal Party or the D.L.P.) standing for a local authority election. I am opposed to all political parties nominating teams for local authority elections.

Local authorities are governed by the people and are for the people. Aldermen and councillors live in the areas they represent and are much closer to the people than are members of Parliament, whose electorates are, in many cases, quite large. Naturally, a member lives in only one portion of his electorate.

For an illustration of what happens when a political party gains a foothold in a council, we need look no further than the Brisbane City Council. Politics have ruined the Brisbane City Council. With all sincerity I say that no good can be obtained from the entry of political parties into local government, particularly in country areas. I deplore the entry of any political party into local government.

The A.L.P. has, of course, got its team ready to contest the Pine Rivers Shire Council and the Redcliffe City Council elections. In passing, I would comment that an ordained minister of religion is standing as a member of the A.L.P. team contesting the Redcliffe City Council election. I do not wish to state the religion to which he belongs; nor do I wish to name him.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Didn't the Reverend Alan Male stand for the Country Party in Pine Rivers in 1972?

Mr. FRAWLEY: That's right, for Pine Rivers, and I am not complaining about that. I am complaining not about a minister of religion standing for election but about a minister of religion being associated with the A.L.P. and with all the filthy, rotten things it does. How could a man of the cloth ever lend his name to the A.L.P.? I don't mind if a minister of religion stands as a member of a respectable and decent political party. But fancy wanting to be associated with a rotten mob like the A.L.P., which wants to legalise homosexuality and incest.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: What's all this objection about legalised homosexuality? You told me quite definitely out in the lobby that the only time you would vote for it was when it was made compulsory.

Mr. FRAWLEY: What a lot of garbage! That's a laugh. As everyone knows, I am a very strong opponent of all of these way-out ideas of the A.L.P. I am against homosexuals, and when the university people write to me asking what I would do with homosexuals I throw their letters in the waste-paper basket.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! The honourable member will come back to the Estimates under debate.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I am sorry, Mr. Miller. Once again I was distracted by members of the Opposition. They try to upset my contribution in all debates because they know I am a danger to them.

One of the major highways of the State, the Bruce Highway, runs through part of my electorate. At the present time a deviation, known as the Bald Hills-Burpengary deviation, is under construction. It will bypass Bald Hills and the town of Kallangur. Work is fairly well advanced and the deviation is nearing the Redcliffe road. Over the years work undertaken by the Main Roads Department has been of tremendous help in alleviating the traffic problems in Queensland. I hope that certain information given to me by Main Roads Department engineers is correct, and I intend to test it. When this deviation is completed as far as the turn-off point on the Redcliffe Road at Mango Hill, each day, I have been told, approximately 3,000 cars will be taken from the western part of Redcliffe and, instead of crossing the Hornibrook Highway, will use the deviation road.

I sincerely hope that this does occur, because there is no doubt that since the lifting of the toll on the Hornibrook Highway and the opening in Redcliffe of K Mart, traffic over the Hornibrook Highway has increased tremendously. As well, a greater number of trucks are using the highway. The drivers are doing this to avoid the weighbridge at Burpengary. They proceed

through Deception Bay and up to Caboolture and thereby dodge the weighbridge. I am sure the honourable member for Sandgate would agree with me that more traffic crosses the highway now than ever before.

I know that the construction of the deviation behind Deagon is a little bit behind schedule, but on a recent flight over it I saw that progress was being made and that the work was coming on quite well. I realise, however, that even with its completion the traffic problems in the Redcliffe-Brisbane area will not be alleviated greatly.

A very serious problem is created by the traffic lights near the old people's home. I can see that the honourable member for Sandgate is starting to get his hackles up.

Mr. Dean: I had the lights put there.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I am not objecting to them at all; in fact, I agree that the lights should be there.

I draw the Minister's attention to a practice engaged in by certain drivers when returning home in the evening. The honourable member for Redcliffe raised this matter with the former Minister. Many drivers use 17th, 18th and 19th Avenues and take their right of way in the line of traffic on Sandgate Road. Give-way signs were erected at 18th and 19th Avenues, but motorists ignore them and disrupt traffic flow. The pedestrian traffic lights contribute to traffic hold-ups. I have seen a newsboy press the pedestrian-actuated signal to hold up the traffic so that he can sell newspapers. The attention of the police was drawn to this practice.

Mr. Marginson: He hasn't a monopoly on that.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I know it happens in other places.

Old people from the home cross the road early in the morning. I know that we cannot impose restrictions on them, but I wish that we could persuade them not to cross the road until about 9 a.m. Most of the people who use the traffic signals come from the old people's home. One of the main causes of traffic hold-ups would be eliminated if the pedestrian lights remained green until about 9 a.m. The lifting of the toll on the Hornibrook Highway has resulted in traffic moving faster.

Mr. Marginson: Are you always through by 9 o'clock?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I would be through before 9 o'clock. I am not trying to arrange it to suit my own convenience. As I go through earlier than that, it would not benefit me. I want this done for the benefit of motorists who travel from Redcliffe to Brisbane daily.

The bridge is not half as bad as it was made out to be by A.L.P. members before the 1972 election. At that time, the former Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Bulimba, misled the people of

Redcliffe when he said that if the A.L.P. became the Government it would take over the bridge immediately, abolish the toll and build a four-lane bridge. We know that was not possible.

Mr. Marginson: Have you got rid of your shares?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I had no shares in the toll bridge company, but I wish I did have them. In the light of the 85 per cent dividend last year and the 100 plus dividend this year, I am sorry that I did not buy them. I do not begrudge anyone his shares in that company. When the debentures first went on sale, they could scarcely be given away. People would not buy them. I have always admired people who in 1935 invested their hard-earned money in this company, because in the early years it did not pay much of a dividend. Incidentally, the toll, in money value, declined. A toll of 10c today is far less in money value than the 1s. toll that was levied in 1935 or 1936.

Mr. Dean: The company had to maintain the highway.

Mr. FRAWLEY: It was maintained, but not as well as it could have been. I kept a check on it and thought that it was well maintained. It was swept every couple of days by the Redcliffe City Council street sweeper and it was in a clean condition.

I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that the Redcliffe City Council has applied for telephones to be installed on the Hornibrook Highway so that there will be direct communication with a tow-truck operator. I raised a similar plea in this Chamber on more than one occasion. When the present Minister for Mines and Energy was Minister for Mines and Main Roads, I asked him to organise a closed line on the Hornibrook Highway to the Redcliffe Police Station so that when a motorist broke down on the highway he could easily walk to the nearest telephone. As the highway is only 1½ or 1¼ miles in length, a motorist in trouble would not have to walk very far if four telephones were placed in strategic positions. If that had been done, a motorist could have dialled the Redcliffe Police Station direct.

The present proposal is to have a direct telephone to a breakdown service. That is fair enough, but it does not seem right to give preference to one tow-truck operator. I do not know which breakdown service is being considered—whether an R.A.C.Q. service or some other service—but in Redcliffe the R.A.C.Q. service is allocated to individual garage proprietors. It is not right that all breakdowns on the highway should be directed to a breakdown service in Redcliffe. The business should be spread out. If the telephones are connected direct to a garage or breakdown service, the position will not be as fair as it would be if the phones were connected to the police station, which

could allocate calls in strict rotation so that all those in Redcliffe who run breakdown services would get equal consideration.

I see that the honourable member for Wolston is looking at me. I do not run a breakdown service. I disposed of my tow-truck before we dealt with the tow-truck legislation. I disposed of my service station in 1973 and therefore have no axe to grind. My brother, who has a service station, does not run a tow-truck service. None of my friends run such a service, and the man to whom I sold my service station does not run one. I repeat that I have no axe to grind. I think it is a little unfair to connect a telephone from the bridge to any particular garage or service station instead of to the Redcliffe Police Station, which could give all breakdown operators a fair deal.

Mr. Marginson: We are told here that tow-truck operators never know there is a breakdown or a collision, yet they can always be there.

Mr. FRAWLEY: Not on the Hornibrook Highway. For some strange reason, when a breakdown occurs on the Hornibrook Highway a tow-truck never seems to be there for quite some period. That causes a fair bit of congestion. When somebody breaks down on the bridge, which has only a 20 ft. pavement, cars in one lane have to be stopped to allow those in the other lane to pass the stationary vehicle. That makes the delays longer.

Since the Minister has taken over the portfolio of Local Government and Main Roads he has treated all applications from members, as far as I am aware, with due consideration. I have not heard any complaints about him. In presenting the Estimates, he has done a fairly good job. I sincerely trust that before long he can see his way clear to getting something done about a new bridge to Redcliffe. I know that I will be opposing him on any suggestion for a new Gold Coast railway. Although I am not opposed to it in principle, I do not want to see it constructed before one is constructed to Redcliffe.

Mr. Goleby: There should be one to Cleveland.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I do not mind one to Cleveland, as long as it is built after the one to Redcliffe.

Mr. Dean: We need a railway line.

Mr. FRAWLEY: We need a bridge first, but after the bridge we need a railway line. However, if we cannot get a bridge, we need the line. One or the other will do. Redcliffe has been neglected in the provision of means of transport. With a population of 41,000 people, we certainly need a new bridge.

As I have said before, since the lifting of the toll, the traffic over the bridge has gone much more smoothly than before. I was opposed by many of the aldermen on the

Redcliffe City Council when I claimed that the toll on the bridge contributed to delays. I think what I said has been borne out since the lifting of the toll. Especially for traffic heading home of an evening, the toll collection seemed to cause hold-ups.

I say in conclusion that over the years the Main Roads Department has had a very hard task in maintaining all roads throughout the State.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DOUMANY (Kurilpa) (2.52 p.m.): The Estimates presented by the Minister range across a very wide sphere of activity. It is probably one of the largest operations under any portfolio of this Government. However, I would like to concentrate on issues relevant to the environment—a subject about which the Minister has displayed a very keen interest and, more than that, a very active demonstration of his willingness to do something concrete and practical. That is in contrast to the type of environmental broadsides and propaganda that emanate from all sorts of councils, commissions and bodies that have proliferated since December 1972.

Our Minister is practical and is prepared to come to grips with problems that can be overcome in the short run with tasks that the ordinary person in the community can tackle. That is particularly important. That attitude of the Minister has been displayed in his willingness to listen to the points of view of people, and that has been a very apparent feature of his administration since he took over his portfolio.

I shall speak about the problems of litter and noise and the need for beautification in our community. There is no questioning that the practical environmental problem that worries the ordinary citizen is not whether exactly the same set of species will survive in a given forest or mineral sand-mining lease. The ordinary citizen is worried about what affects his everyday living 24 hours a day and seven days a week—the roads he is travelling on, the footpath outside his house and the air that is flowing through his house. They are the matters that the Minister is concerned about because he has foreshadowed noise legislation and a much tougher attitude to the problem of litter in the community. I speak on the problem of litter with particular vehemence because I am chairman of the Queensland branch of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council.

Mr. Goleby: The Litter Act is not effective.

Mr. DOUMANY: I agree. The Litter Act is certainly not strong enough as it stands. But it goes further than that. The Minister recognises that the problem is not simply enforcement and penalty but eliciting from the community, and particularly the young people, an interest, a responsibility and a concern in this matter.

I think it is starting in the young of today. They are reticent about throwing an ice-cream container or an ice-block stick onto the side of the road. They do look for a bin. Probably they are a lot different from my generation and the older generation. There is no questioning that an enormous area is challenging us today in this country and particularly in Queensland. Our problems tend to be exacerbated by the humid conditions associated with intense rainfall along the coastal strip, which bring about a tendency towards outdoor living.

In addition, the tourist industry must be considered. It is appropriate that the Minister for Tourism is in the Chamber. The tourist industry will depend on Queensland's tidying itself up and presenting the very best image to people from other States and overseas. This State has an enormous potential for tourism.

The Minister for Local Government has struck the first blow in the war against litter. He has initiated a competition in the secondary schools for an anti-litter slogan. I think he is offering something like \$250 to the school attended by the winning entrant. This is a great start, because I think the problem begins with the young. I am certain that the Minister will look very closely—and is already looking closely—at the litter legislation as it affects penalties for individual citizens, as it affects the regulations that should govern the container industry and as it affects the responsibility of local government to do its share in tackling this problem.

There is no doubt that local government has given some of the greatest leads in overcoming or controlling the litter problem. For three years in Queensland, under the auspices of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council and the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau, a Tidy Towns Competition has been in existence. Where this competition is being conducted outside Brisbane, there has been an enormous and growing awareness of the need to beautify our environment and the need to make the street where we live, the place where we live, the roads we drive on and the parks our children play in decent, clean places that are wholesome, so that we can instil in them a sense of pride of citizenship and a sense of responsibility—something that will clear us of the scourge of the vandal who will spread broken glass along school verandas over week-ends, desecrate public places and defecate and urinate in public facilities without any thought for the comfort of others. This is a disgusting business. I am very happy that we have in charge of this portfolio a Minister who is determined to do something about the litter problem. He can be assured of my absolute support both as a member of Parliament and as chairman of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council. I believe that a practical man such as the Minister is needed to lead the drive.

I should like to point now to some commendable community efforts. I am sure that all members could point to similar activities. In my electorate a group from the Girls' Brigade at Annerley and a group of Rangers at Fairfield, which is in the same general area, have, quite separately and independently, undertaken clean-up projects in their suburbs on Saturday mornings and afternoons. This is a fine trend and we should encourage it. The Scouts, Girl Guides, church youth organisations and other groups of young people can do an enormous amount in tackling the litter problem. More than that, they can instil a sense of shame and concern in their elders. These young people are doing these things now, and I am sure that we can, by some catalytic activity such as the Minister is pursuing, have this activity spread right throughout Queensland.

Another group with whom I am pleased is the Yeronga Lions Club. Its area overlaps my electorate and that of the Minister for Works and Housing. It is tackling a tree-planting programme in its area. If there is one thing that Brisbane needs, it is a vast increase in the number of trees. Apart from several select suburbs that I shall not name, the city is as bare as a badger. There have been so many vandalistic developers and citizens who have regarded trees as bad. Unfortunately when the Labor Party took over the city administration in the early 1960s, in their allocation of priorities they gave up the planting of trees. Lately they have again started to plant trees because an election is coming.

Let us make no mistake about it—Brisbane needs 500,000 trees. That is the figure to be aimed at. A tree-planting programme on a gigantic scale is needed in this city. At the moment a major sponsor is negotiating with the Keep Australia Beautiful Council for 100,000 trees to be brought into the Brisbane area. When these negotiations are finalised, they will be announced.

There is no questioning that this city needs beautification by the provision of trees, the maintenance of road sides and median strips, and, by private citizens, tidiness and thoughtfulness for others. This is where beautification begins. Untidiness, dirt and public filth is assuredly the result of selfishness. It is essentially selfishness, self-interest and disregard for others.

I now pass to the question of noise. I doubt that there is any member who has not felt the blood rush to his head in anger when sitting at home at, say, 11 o'clock at night while some thoughtless person roars past on one of those abominable new motorcycles without adequate muffling. All of us know what noise these monstrous machines can generate. We have all been in suburban shopping centres and felt the vibrations and smelt the fumes as large trucks have roared through. Something has to be done about noise, and I am sure that the Minister will take this problem by the scruff of the neck,

as it were, in his proposed legislation. We should have very little pity on the noise-makers, because noise is undoubtedly a cause of tremendous disruption in the community. It both causes and aggravates ill health. It is something we cannot tolerate.

I hope that when the Minister's proposed noise legislation is introduced, it will have the full support of every honourable member. Let us hope, too, that a formal and tidy procedure will be adopted for regulating noise. I would like to see a decibel meter in the hands of responsible people in the community, such as our Police Force, so that we just do not have people saying, "Well, this does not make very much noise" and nothing is done but that in fact we measure the noise and, if it falls outside the limit, then a piece of equipment of an approved specification and design has to be installed. This applies particularly to road vehicles and motor-bikes. There is no question that today we have the technology to produce muffler and exhaust systems that give nothing like the decibel readings of those on the machines that are running round on our roads now. It is a disgrace that suppliers of these wretched pieces of equipment are permitted, for the sake of so-called performance, to sell quite openly some of the greatest noise-producing contraptions that one could wish for, and something has to be done about it. Noise is a big problem and, like litter, it is a product of selfishness, a product of self-interest and a product of a citizenry who do not care about their fellows and have no regard for what happens in the long term.

A Government Member: The lunatic fringe.

Mr. DOUMANY: That's right, and we are going to do something about them. Every time I see one of these monstrous motor-bikes that are deliberately revved up, often around midnight, I say to myself, "Just wait till the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads does his bit. He'll put you in your place."

A Government Member: He'll sit on them.

Mr. DOUMANY: And it will be a very good thing if he sits on them: excellent!

Mr. Frawley: Every night in the Redcliffe cemetery, the motor-bikes roar up and down past the graves and nobody does anything about it.

Mr. DOUMANY: I would say that every honourable member could cite example after example of this problem. Unfortunately, it is becoming more and more common and something has to be done about it.

I would like to comment specifically about the litter problem in Brisbane. At the moment Brisbane is an untidy city. I know that Alderman Brusasco, who as the health committee chairman has an obvious concern about this problem, often says that it is not as bad as some people think; but, unfortunately, there are so many times when one

goes through the main streets of the city and past King George Square and Anzac Square and sees litter, newspapers and congealed food on the footpaths. In suburban shopping centres the situation is even worse.

There was a time when shopkeepers hosed their footpaths every morning before they commenced trading. It was a clean habit and complemented whatever the local authority did. Today that is not happening except in the major shopping centres, where there is an obvious need, for competitive reasons, to maintain a good image. In the ordinary street-side shopping centres, there is a very serious neglect of an obvious area of hygiene and tidiness. I hope that the Minister looks at this problem. There is no reason why it cannot be solved and no reason why our suburban and street-side shopping centres cannot be maintained in a far cleaner condition than they are at present.

I reiterate that the solution is with the people themselves. No matter what the Minister does, unless we can effectively inculcate in our young people and our children, through the system of education, and through their development as citizens, a keen responsibility and interest in these areas, we will get nowhere—unless, of course, we are prepared to have a totalitarian society. Just yesterday I heard on the news that the authorities in Singapore are about to make littering punishable by imprisonment for a first offence.

Mr. Marginson: Lee Kuan Yew would shoot them.

Mr. DOUMANY: Apparently he has modified his stance slightly. We cannot go to those lengths—nobody wants us to—but we all want results.

I draw the attention of the Committee to a section of the Report of the Commissioner of Main Roads for the year ended 30 June 1975 headed "Visual Environment Planning". It appears on page 30. I intend to quote from it because it demonstrates that, in addition to the new frontiers of litter and noise legislation that the Minister has in mind, in its every-day activities the Department of Main Roads obviously is giving increasing attention to beautification and to making the environment better to live in, not in an airy-fairy way but in a practical way. The report says—

"Accelerated revegetation of disturbed areas on roadworks is proving economically practicable. More stable cross sections result from this activity which is being carried out on most of the important routes where the cross sectional shapes have a more gentle slope. The overall effect is that roads tend to blend into the surrounding landscape.

"With this standard of treatment extending for lengthy sections adjacent to the roadways the visual quality of the man made environment, although variable, will be appreciated by road users. In conjunction with conservation, in areas of natural

vegetation it will provide transition in land forms and vegetation. In agricultural areas the development of formations incorporating safety shapes will, when vegetated, provide a wide field for visual appreciation.

"Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to demonstrate the success or otherwise of propagating natural woody species for revegetation by the method of seed scarification and incorporation in prepared mulches."

I believe that the paragraphs I have quoted indicate the beginning of highway beautification. There is already evidence that it is taking place, and that is something for which the Minister should be commended.

(Time expired.)

Mr. MARGINSON (Wolston) (3.12 p.m.): I am very happy to participate, if only for a short time, in the important debate on the Estimates introduced by the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads.

Again I return to the question of the assessment by local authorities of rates on properties. I contend, as I have over the years, that the assessment of rates on unimproved value is not the best method, because of the many anomalies that arise under it. As an example, I mention that one has only to refer to the situation where an ordinary home adjoins a building in which there are, say, 36 units. In that situation, the general rate for the whole of those 36 units—and I emphasise "the general rate"—is the same as that paid by the private property owner next door with a piece of land similar in size.

Mr. Lickiss: That is not true. Section 11 (1) (vii) exempts the small landholder.

Mr. MARGINSON: It does now, but it does not reduce the difference as much as it should.

Mr. Lickiss: It does. It is valued as residential A, not residential B.

Mr. MARGINSON: As I said when the Minister introduced the amending Bill, the rental value of the property is a far better basis for the assessment of rates than the unimproved value of land.

In my opinion, local government generally has received a very raw deal financially from National-Liberal Governments in this State. I remember when a former Minister holding the Local Government portfolio, and even the Premier himself, said that if local authorities—and I was a member of one for some time—put forward a case, he would support its transmission to the Tory Government in Canberra—this was before 1972—in the hope that some financial assistance could be given to local government. What happened? When an attempt was made by the present Australian Government to see that loan funds were made available—

Mr. Hinze: Which one? The past one?

Mr. MARGINSON: The present one. It attempted to ensure that local government would be able to approach the Loan Council direct. However, the Premier went out of his way to ask the people not to allow that to be done. That is the type of treatment we were given. I remember that Mr. Behan, who was the president of the Local Government Association for many years, reported to one local authority annual conference that if the State Government—I mean this one; I won't muddle up the State Governments—had given local authorities the same financial assistance on a proportional basis as that given by the Australian Government to the State Government, local authorities would have been far better off than they were.

Mr. Porter: That's history now.

Mr. MARGINSON: So it is, but it is very good history. It proves that the Queensland State Government is very hypocritical in providing assistance to local authorities. Although they are in serious financial trouble, the State Government is not prepared to help them at all.

I shall deal now very briefly with main roads. My electorate contains a stretch of 14 miles of the busiest highway in Queensland.

An Honourable Member: Four lanes.

Mr. MARGINSON: A four-lane highway, with two lanes each way. Again I appeal to the Minister to have steps taken to eliminate the death-trap at the junction of the Centenary and Cunningham Highways at Darra.

Mr. Row: That's only one.

Mr. MARGINSON: There are a number of death-traps, and I have been told unofficially that steps will be taken to eliminate others, such as those at Progress Road, Wacol; Church Street, Goodna; and Scotts Road, Darra. However, the worst death-trap of all, the junction of the two highways, is not to be attended to. Numerous fatalities have occurred there. I urge the Minister to do something about it.

As long as eight years ago a proposal was put forward to construct a bypass around the southern suburbs of Ipswich, on the road extending to Warwick. This proposal was put forward in an attempt to reduce traffic congestion in Ipswich. Yet now, eight years later, the bypass remains unconstructed. The Government has avoided this issue year after year and has taken no steps whatever to construct the bypass.

Finally, on the matter of clean air—I have undertaken to speak for only a few minutes so that the Minister may wind up the debate on his Estimates—I refer to the serious air pollution that occurs in the suburb of Darra. I know that attempts have been made to lessen the rate of fall-out that is occurring. However, even since my return last Friday

from overseas I have received further complaints from local residents about the fall-out from the cement and lime works.

This afternoon I addressed a communication to the Minister in the hope that he can tell me the results of the fall-out tests conducted in the area over the past two years. I am assured by local residents that the rate of fall-out is increasing and that the position is becoming worse each month.

I express my appreciation for the work that has been done in my electorate, particularly on the highway. The installation of lights at Riverview has proved to be of tremendous benefit to local people, and I thank the Minister for his prompt attention to my request for their installation. I am also pleased to see that lights have been installed at the intersection of the highway and Rudd Street. I have no doubt that someone will claim that my requests for the installation of lights will result in the stopping of traffic every 100 yards or so; but what is that when compared with the loss of life that occurs on that highway every year?

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (3.20 p.m.): It is always a great thrill to follow the honourable member for Wolston, who was a good friend of mine in local government for many years. As he said, he agreed to speak for only a few minutes. It is well to see him back in good health after his overseas visit on behalf of his party. I hope that his good health continues and I say in all sincerity that I hope we see him taking part in many more debates in this Chamber.

Today, 11 November 1975, will not go down only as Remembrance Day in the history of Australia. It will also have to be regarded as deliverance day because we have a Governor-General with sufficient intestinal fortitude to do what the vast majority of Australians wanted him to do. At this particular time we in Australia were at the brink of going overboard into the socialist camp. Fortunately, the Governor-General, using his constitutional powers, sacked the man who only recently appointed him to office.

At Talwood last week, when I opened a road in remembrance of Harold Hungerford (another very good personal friend of mine in this Assembly), I said, "Even if the Governor-General sacks this man, he will not take any notice of him." What has happened in the last hour in the Australian Parliament? Having been told by the Governor-General that his commission no longer existed, he tried to override the authority of the Governor-General and, in fact, tried to make a fool of the Governor-General of Australia. Fortunately, the people of Australia, within the next few weeks—I hope it will be before Christmas—will have an opportunity to indicate to the rotten Government that we have had in Canberra since 1972 just

what they think of it. Thank the Lord our Governor-General used the powers entrusted to him under the Constitution of this land to do what the vast majority of Australians have indicated they wanted done.

I hear from my colleagues who have just returned from Queen Street that people are jubilant; they have never been so jubilant in the past three years. They tell me that the stock exchange is jammed. Confidence will come back to this nation after the worst three years in Australia's history.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! I would like the Minister to deal with the Estimates.

Mr. HINZE: I will gladly come back to them, Mr. Dean. I have said what I wanted to say.

I have listened with a great deal of interest to Government and Opposition members who have spoken at some length on my department's estimates, and I thank all honourable members for their contributions. I feel that they reflect a general realisation among members on both sides of the Chamber of the achievements and problems of both the Local Government and Main Roads departments. Several points made by speakers on both sides of the Chamber raise questions which I feel warrant further elaboration or reply, however, and I will deal with local government matters first. The honourable member for Nudgee, who led for the Opposition, did local government less than justice in setting out to downgrade the vital role that local authorities have played, and are still playing, throughout Queensland. He preferred to dwell on local government's very obvious problems, but did not offer anything in the way of solutions. He said that this Government is not providing funds to match the functions demanded of local government, forgetting, or overlooking, that the Commonwealth Treasury, not the State Treasury, has the resources to ensure the flow of more adequate funds for local government.

All States consistently get much less than they need and ask for, and are entitled to, from the Commonwealth coffers for such vital things as local government services and facilities. Queensland is no exception. Despite this, Queensland has built up a reputation throughout Australia and overseas (even in some Labor circles, incidentally) for the dedication, the calibre, and the efficiency of its men and women in local government. Local government in Queensland enjoys greater autonomy than in any other State—this is a well-recognised fact—and the level of State assistance it receives (by way of grants, subsidies, and other means) is also the highest in Australia.

Of course, it is no secret that local government as we know it today would go by the board if the A.L.P. had its way in Government. Its autonomy would be very greatly reduced as the first step, and it would be replaced very quickly by more unwieldy,

less democratic regional government, with Big Brother in Canberra calling the tune. However, today fortunately we can see that that will not occur.

Already, we see Commonwealth-inspired regional groups, which are not answerable to the public but are dependent on Canberra for their ideas and money, taking over some local government functions. Quite unashamedly, they are using Commonwealth money which should be going to local government direct.

On the broader front, we see many examples of A.L.P. "front" groups receiving Commonwealth backing (by way of legal aid and other means) to harass and frustrate the plans for development by local government, State Government and private enterprise. In many cases, as honourable members know, it involves development which would benefit the community at large—but it does not fit into the A.L.P. socialist pattern and scheme of things, and so it is opposed.

The Queensland Government sees considerable benefits to be gained in properly co-ordinated regional planning and development, and it has a very active Co-ordinator-General's Department which works with and through other departments and local governments to this end. However, the Queensland system of regional planning, which aims at strengthening the autonomy and role of local government, is a far cry from the Federal Government's concept of regional government, controlled from Canberra, which would nullify and eventually destroy local government as we know it.

The honourable member for Nudgee criticises what he terms "piecemeal hand-outs" by the Queensland Government. Well, regrettably, I can only describe that comment as hypocrisy. For this past three years, the Labor Government in Canberra has been using piecemeal hand-outs, grants with strings attached and other ploys to win over people—and to keep them at the mercies of Canberra and the Labor machine.

Mr. Melloy: You're passing the buck again.

Mr. HINZE: I won't have to pass it any more, thank the Lord. By the time the honourable member listens to my Estimates next time, the story will be totally different.

Mr. Melloy: You will be on your own feet then.

Mr. HINZE: The honourable member agrees with me that we have put the skids under Federal Labor members. He agrees with me that they are finished.

The result of the policy adopted in Canberra over the last three years has been a bureaucratic nightmare of overlapping programmes and red tape. Many people, including me, have warned about such measures (including the now shelved R.E.D. scheme) because they just do not solve anything. They are a palliative—a short-term and tenuous

prop, at best—and certainly not a cure for local government's financial ills. We are being proved right.

The Commonwealth has consistently ducked the issue of giving the States more equitable financial allocations for local government—a point raised very well by the honourable member for Albert. The Federal Opposition and this Government have made it clear that they support the concept of channelling to local government an agreed equitable share of Commonwealth taxation revenue. The Federal Government has been strangely silent on this question. Clearly, it does not want to commit itself to improving local government so that it can stand on its own feet. Its silence on this very important issue condemns it.

The honourable member for Nudgee talks about costs of administering the Clean Waters Act. It would be appreciated that licence fees cover only part of the costs—the remainder being covered by contributions from Consolidated Revenue to the Clean Waters Trust Fund. On the question of subsidies for local authority works to comply with the Clean Waters Act, he and other honourable members would know that the whole question of State subsidies to local authorities is to be reviewed this financial year. And this question will be taken into account in that review.

In reference to the Litter Act, I think most members would agree that the present \$10 on-the-spot fines and the maximum fine of \$400 under the Act are insufficient in this day and age to act as effective deterrents. Members would be aware, I think, of a State-wide anti-litter education campaign which I have launched. A review of the Litter Act which I have already indicated should result in much stiffer penalties, and other measures to materially improve the litter situation.

The Opposition Leader, the honourable member for Lytton, has been a shade more realistic, I feel, in his assessment of the problems confronting local government and my department, especially on environmental matters. I accept his criticism that more staff are needed to provide more effective supervision of the Clean Waters Act and the Clean Air Act. I think that the honourable member for Sandgate made much the same point. The Government also recognises this need, and provision has been made in the Estimates for additional inspectors under both Acts, including the appointment of staff to decentralised areas.

The Opposition Leader would be aware also that under both Acts certain officers are ex-officio inspectors, and can act as inspectors when required. There is no intention, however, to provide an army of inspectors to maintain constant supervision over every discharge. Consideration has been given previously to the question of a 24-hour pollution control service, and it is considered that this cannot be justified at present.

In all forms of law enforcement today, there is a trend to preventing things from happening rather than waiting for a breach before acting. The old adage "prevention is better than cure" is as relevant today as ever. I believe that an officer's time is better spent in visiting industries and local authorities with the aim of preventing pollution, than in sitting in an office waiting for complaints. However, at any time that my directors consider it necessary, I am prepared to authorise the working of overtime at nights and week-ends.

I believe most honourable members would appreciate that the absence of a multitude of prosecutions for air and water pollution breaches does not necessarily indicate that the Government's pollution control measures are not working. I would submit to honourable members that in fact the controls and pollution prevention programmes are working, and the fact that we do not have to prosecute often is proof of it.

In the fields of both air and water pollution, the level of co-operation between councils, other authorities, industries and other prospective polluters has never been higher, and the results are very evident. All honourable members would have to be impressed by the condition of the Brisbane River today compared with what it was a few years ago. I understand that fish are coming back into the upper reaches of the river. It looks much cleaner and I am sure that all honourable members will agree that the Clean Waters Act is having a very beneficial effect on the Brisbane River. We still have our problems, to be sure, but I think most reasonable people would acknowledge that the Brisbane River today is more pollution free than it has been for years, largely because of the efforts of the Water Quality Council and the co-operation I have already referred to.

Similarly, the air pollution picture—with a few exceptions which the Opposition Leader drew attention to, and which I acknowledge and am doing something about—is brighter than it is painted in many quarters. Let there be no doubt in anyone's mind, however, that where the spirit of co-operation in pollution control breaks down, and where the requirements of the relevant regulations are blatantly ignored, I will not hesitate to approve of prosecution. What happens after that is largely a matter for the courts. But we will not tolerate situations in which people continue to flout regulations which have been brought in for very good reasons. Fortunately, examples of this have been rare.

On the question of sewerage for industrial areas, it is the policy of this Government that any new Government-sponsored estates be sewered. The provision of sewerage for the harbour industries on the south side of the Brisbane River currently is being discussed among officers of my department, the

Department of Harbours and Marine and the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development.

The points made by the Leader of the Opposition on the wide range of industries that may be established "as of right" near the mouth of the river in the harbour activities zone are accepted and well made. However, I would question his statement that large areas have been proposed for inclusion in the harbour activities zone. When the new Brisbane Town Plan comes into force, there will be a requirement for a proposed development to conform to a development control plan for the areas in such a zone, and this will be a prerequisite to establishing such a use.

As the Act now stands, these development control plans will form part of the town plan and will have to be processed as an amendment of the plan, with final approval resting with the Governor in Council. Such plans will have, as a primary objective, protection of the environment of the area.

I think anyone who lives anywhere near the Brisbane Airport, or who goes there or near it, is aware of the noise factor the honourable member refers to. Airport noise is a world-wide problem affecting people in most major cities. Honourable members will recall that at one time I argued that the airport should be shifted to an area somewhere between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, and east of Beenleigh. I still hold that view.

In regard to airport modifications, or prospects of shifting it, I can only say to the honourable member, "Your guess is as good as mine". Certain studies have, of course, been carried out by the Commonwealth Government, and others have been undertaken jointly by officers of the State and Commonwealth Governments. I understand that these reports are in Canberra awaiting a decision. When this is made, no doubt we will be told whether the airport is to be shifted or extended, and we will be given more details of the proposal. Here is another matter in which Charlie Jones will not be having any say. He has had it. He is like a cockatoo in a biscuit tin—all he can do is squawk. I predicted this. The last time we were in conference with him I told him, "This will be short lived. You won't be there much longer." Charlie has had it.

Mr. Jensen: If he's not there, you won't get as much money.

Mr. HINZE: I won't be able to pick on him any more. I'm really upset about that!

I am told that in certain major airport centres overseas similarly placed to Brisbane, there is a firm requirement for aircraft to turn out to sea (or elsewhere) immediately after take-off to avoid noise problems over residential areas, and the same procedure is adopted with landings. Perhaps this is something that could be looked at more closely by aviation authorities as an interim measure to reduce airport noise nuisances in Brisbane.

The honourable members for Albert and Pine Rivers raised the question of the inequalities and anomalies of Commonwealth grants.

Mr. Hanson: He could shift that car yard, too.

Mr. HINZE: If the honourable member for Port Curtis can talk about the car yard, I suppose he could talk about his own dirty old pub at Gladstone.

The **TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Dean): Order! There is too much cross-firing in the Chamber. I am finding it difficult to hear the Minister.

Mr. HINZE: Yes, Mr. Dean. The next time he shouts will be the first time.

There is no doubt, as the honourable member for Albert pointed out, that some local authorities have very largely missed out on any significant Commonwealth assistance of any form. Of course, others—with very obvious political ties to the Labor Party—have gained very handsomely.

The honourable member for Pine Rivers talked of the tremendous preliminary work—the red tape—which councils have been put to to qualify for Commonwealth assistance, with little chance, in many cases, of getting any significant aid. This very point has been raised with me by many councils in many areas on my visits to different parts of the State since I became Minister last year.

I turn now to a few points made by the honourable member for Ithaca. Firstly, the honourable member's reference to a resumption of certain land at Bardon in Brisbane and subsequent auction by the Brisbane City Council is of concern to me. It is clear that the facts of the case have been misinterpreted—at least in part—in some quarters. Both the section of the Local Government Act dealing with town-planning, and the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act, contain provisions for the resumption of land for any purpose of the plan. This applies to all local authorities—not only in Brisbane. Such a provision is essential if effective planning and/or development control are to be achieved. I refer particularly to the Spring Hill area.

As stated by many members in this Chamber—and I agree—town-planning must be positive, but it must be recognised that redevelopment is an essential part of planning in cities. Any such resumption can only be undertaken with the approval of the Governor in Council, and then only in accordance with the Acquisition of Land Act, which is administered by my colleague the Minister for Lands. The owner of the land acquired must receive certain notices. He has rights of objection to the resumption, and, if the resumption is approved by the Governor in Council a right of appeal to the Land Court on the amount of compensation payable by the local authority. He may claim on advance against compensation

pending settlement of his appeal. Provided the approval of the Governor in Council is obtained, the authority taking the land may dispose of it by public auction after it has been redeveloped. On the other hand, with the prior approval by the Governor in Council, the land may be sold by the authority for redevelopment in accordance with a plan prepared by the authority.

The area referred to by the honourable member for Ithaca, I understand, was acquired for redevelopment, including (among other things) the amalgamation of titles for small lots to provide a site of sufficient size to permit good quality redevelopment. In this case, I believe that criticism of the Brisbane City Council has been something less than fair and reasonable, considering the right of appeal to the Land Court that is available to the owner. The honourable member referred to objections to the Brisbane Town Plan, and in particular to the provisions relating to parks and the proposed new zone "sports and recreation".

The point that there needs to be some close watch on the potential misuse of parkland is well taken, and the honourable member can rest assured that my recommendations on this matter to the Executive Council will remove any ambiguity which might now exist and, I hope, settle this controversy once and for all. With regard to existing structures on, or existing commitments relating to, parkland, I am unable to give any undertaking to intervene, unless some bountiful source of funds is provided for acquisition. In many instances, I would prefer to see many of these areas remain as they are, as they serve a vital community social need.

On the question of cash contributions for parks in Brisbane, it should be pointed out that the amount per lot allowed to be taken by the Brisbane City Council is very small when compared with current land prices. Such contributions are in the order of \$100 to \$200 per acre.

Our northern colleague the honourable member for Townsville South referred, in his usual inimitable style, to "concrete boxes" joined together and housing some 45 to 50 people in Townsville. Presumably, he refers to blocks of flats. I think the honourable member would agree that flats, as such, fulfil a valuable role in the over-all accommodation scene in cities, and areas with numbers of flat buildings can be—and mostly are—made quite attractive.

One has to recognise, of course, that the city of Townsville has experienced rapid growth over recent years and these circumstances create a situation whereby buildings which satisfy the requirements of council by-laws are often put up quickly and, often, to meet a pressing demand. I would agree that the end result can be objectionable in some eyes, as the honourable member points out, but I believe that this could still occur if the development were undertaken by a Government agency, given the same conditions.

Another of the northern members, the honourable member for Barron River, referred to delays in approving and printing new sets of general by-laws. As outlined previously, this is largely because of costs and other pressures involved, and it is something the department is looking at closely to see if we can significantly hurry up the process.

The honourable member for Merthyr referred to apparent confusion in some quarters about who is responsible for urban planning in Queensland and how far it goes. I hope I can clarify the position for the benefit of the confused. The local authority has the prime responsibility for preparation and implementation of town-planning schemes in this State. However, such schemes and any amendments to such schemes must be referred to me as Minister for Local Government for recommendation to the Governor in Council, with whom the power to approve (or otherwise) rests.

The local authority is thus the urban planning authority, with certain overriding powers reserved to the State Government. The exercise of such overriding powers takes place pursuant to Acts which are within the portfolio of the Minister for Local Government. It must be acknowledged that the Co-ordinator-General has certain limited powers relative to land-use planning, but these are confined to "State development areas" declared under his Act. To my knowledge, no such areas have as yet been declared. It is clear, then, that as Minister for Local Government I have the responsibility for town-planning in this State.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: What about the notification of your own land down the Coast? You are sitting on that land down at Oxenford. Did you fix that up with the local authority?

Mr. HINZE: There is one difference between you and me, of course; I have got some land.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: That's right. How did you acquire it?

Mr. HINZE: I worked for it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! The Minister will proceed with his speech.

Mr. HINZE: The honourable member for Archerfield does not even know the meaning of the term "work".

Mr. Frawley: You should watch that he does not tip a load of garbage on your land as he did at Inala.

Mr. HINZE: The honourable member for Archerfield can try to tip garbage any time he likes. He will get bigger buckets back from me.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister will proceed with his speech.

Mr. Hanson: He will knock some gravel off from the river bank.

Mr. HINZE: Don't you upset me any more, Marty, or I will do you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HINZE: It is my contention that land-use planning should always be a function of local government, and that the Minister responsible for local government should always be responsible for town-planning.

It would be naive of me to suggest that problems do not arise as a result of development being undertaken by various State Government departments which are constructing authorities in their own right. It is my view that the co-ordination of State Government activities is the responsibility of the Co-ordinator-General's Department, and that greater emphasis on this aspect of development would assist all bodies concerned.

With regard to water resources in the Moreton Region, it is true that a possible site for a water supply storage was located on the South Pine River. However, as the honourable member would be aware, studies undertaken by the team working on the Moreton Region growth strategy have indicated that the South Pine River should not be required before the year 2000. As the land in the area is largely freehold, development can be prevented only by the State acquiring the land for water supply purposes. I would submit that we do not have sufficient funds to take such action, as there are more pressing demands for one very limited resource, namely, money.

The honourable member's reference to my "supervisory role" in respect of the Brisbane Town Plan needs to be considered in perspective, and I thank him for raising the point. Of course, my planning role, as Minister, goes much further than that, and I can assure the Committee that the approved final plan will bear witness to the extent of my interest, involvement and responsibility. Any so-called "sins" in the plan will be eradicated before the proposal has force at law.

The honourable member for Merthyr referred, also, to the Moreton Region growth strategy investigations. These will produce a plan which is a strategy plan, not a statutory document.

If the members for the Moreton Region Co-ordination Council accept the plan as being reasonable, and if Cabinet adopts the plan as a general statement of policy for future development, it would not be unreasonable to expect local authorities to tailor their policy plans to suit. It should be stressed, however, that the scale of presentation of data on the strategy plan will be such that only the broadest proposals could be identified. Where existing statutory town-planning schemes confer certain development rights in areas which are in conflict with the strategy plan, these rights cannot be ignored unless the

State is prepared to compensate those injuriously affected by a downgrading of zoning.

As is the case with all aspects of town-planning, we have to tailor our coat to suit the cloth. It is no use formulating planning problems unless we have the financial resources to meet any possible claims for compensation for injurious affection. The Moreton Region strategy plan, if adopted, will be a guide for future development, and it will not override existing commitments. It would be used to assess future development proposals if the necessary data can be gleaned from maps at such a scale.

I turn now to my Main Roads Ministerial responsibilities. The members for Isis, Pine Rivers, Barron River, Somerset, Gregory, Warrego and Balonne have all mentioned road works that I agree are in need of construction. Some of the works are on this year's programme, and I can assure the honourable members that the others will be considered in the preparation of future programmes.

The condition of the Albany Creek Road was raised by the member for Pine Rivers and my colleague the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs. The road is now gazetted, and the Main Roads Department will shortly begin upgrading it in the Brisbane city area. I know that the matter has been under consideration for a considerable time, and I am pleased that the department has now accepted some responsibility for it. I am sure that the Brisbane City Council will also be pleased.

The honourable member for Albert drew attention to litter on our roads. Recently an increased effort was made to thoroughly clean our major roads. The motorist, however, is still continuing to litter the roads, and there are no signs of major improvement to date.

It was heartening to receive more than 2,000 submissions from school-children on a suitable anti-litter slogan. The entries were of a very high standard, and the children have shown that they are prepared to give much thought to the litter problem. I think the honourable member for Kurilpa referred to this matter this afternoon. It is good to see the litter problem raised in schools as well as in Parliament. I am convinced that only by educating the public, particularly our young people, will we overcome this serious environmental problem.

The member for Townsville South quite rightly raised the matter of overloaded vehicles. He referred to damage done to a bridge north of Townsville. The repairs have been paid for by the insurers of the firm concerned.

Recently Cabinet approved of an increase in penalties under the Main Roads Act from \$200 to \$1,000. This will shortly be considered by the joint parties, and I hope

that the necessary amendment to the Main Roads Act will be passed as soon as possible.

There is no doubt that much stronger action will have to be taken against overloaded vehicles. Recently several local authorities have complained about excessive overloading and damage by irresponsible persons to their roads.

It may be of interest to honourable members to learn that a 10 per cent overload increases the potential for damage by 40 per cent; a 20 per cent overload doubles the potential for damage; and an 80 per cent overload increases the potential for damage 10 times. Some of the huge trucks that come down to the south-eastern corner of Queensland from Darwin and Mt. Isa and are authorised to carry a load of 20 tonnes are carrying as much as 40 tonnes. They have broken up our roads and have caused serious damage to our bridges. We believe that their operators are highly organised and even make use of spotters who can advise them as to the whereabouts of our officers so that the trucks can bypass them by using unpatrolled roads.

Mr. Frawley: They drive in scout cars.

Mr. HINZE: They certainly have scouts. Recently I was at Talwood, where the Deputy Commissioner of Main Roads indicated that this is happening.

I intend to have the regulations amended to give more direct powers to the police and weight-of-load inspectors to enforce off-loading so as to prevent unnecessary damage to the road system by irresponsible operators. I must agree with the remarks of the honourable member for Townsville South on this matter.

The honourable member for Isis mentioned that only 10c was returned to the States of every 28c collected by the Commonwealth for roads. It is clear that the States are getting less now than previously. I will be making every representation I can for a greater share of the tax for roads, and now I will be pleased to be able to make my representations to a Federal parliamentary colleague, who most likely will be Peter Nixon. He is a most intelligent gentleman and one who will be able to understand my submissions to him. I think this Parliament can now look forward to a period in which instead of abusing Charlie Jones I will be able to answer questions without notice by saying, for example, "Yes, it will be possible for me to undertake certain road works in Bundaberg"—or in any other place, such as Port Curtis, Cairns or Belmont—"because I have been successful in my representations to the Minister for Transport in the Australian Government, Mr. Peter Nixon."

The honourable member for Warrego quite correctly referred to the shortage of Commonwealth funds for roads in the rural

arterial category. This matter has concerned me greatly over the past 12 months and I might add that it has worried all Roads Ministers in all States. Incidentally, in addition to Queensland's rural areas rural communities everywhere have got the chop from the Federal Government over the past three years.

Mr. Houston: Who are you going to blame after Nixon?

Mr. HINZE: I won't have to blame anybody. We will be getting a fair go for a change.

Mr. Houston: Nixon won't be in it. You haven't heard the latest news.

Mr. HINZE: The honourable member is out of touch and simply cannot understand.

The honourable member for Mackay referred to the need for greater spending on roads in his area and particularly on a new bridge to help relieve Mackay's traffic problems. Recently I had the opportunity to examine these problems with him and I would agree that an export road from the Rocleigh Bridge is required. This will pass through an area that he represents. I hope that it will be possible for some construction to be undertaken in this area in the near future.

I point out that maintenance funds for 1975-76 are the same as for 1974-75, but in 1974-75 \$6,000,000 was allocated for flood-damage repair and relief of unemployment. For 1975-76, the State has provided \$6,000,000 for direct maintenance work. The State Government could transfer construction funds to maintenance but that would have a very serious effect on local authority plant used for construction work, such as heavy dozers, scrapers, gravel trucks and graders. Not all of these can be used on maintenance. The real need, of course, is for at least a 50 per cent increase in Federal funds, and the State Government has moved to get that.

The Rocleigh bridge project at Mackay is very high in the State's priorities. As the honourable member knows, this is a national highway. It will be recalled that I wrote to the councils in the area to make sure that it is named after our friend and colleague Mr. Ron Camm, who was Minister for Mines and Main Roads in this State for 10 years. I hope it is not too long before the construction of that bridge is under way. The Federal Transport Minister (Mr. Jones) or, thank goodness, I should say the former Minister, has said that these funds must be concentrated between Marlborough and Sarina. However, I am hopeful that in the near future, some of the national highway funds can be made available for the Rocleigh bridge. The work on the Forgan Bridge had to be undertaken to strengthen the piers. The bridge will be needed even when the Rocleigh bridge is built.

The honourable member for Mansfield raised the matter of the use of the Mt. Gravatt showground. An appeal is pending in the Local Government Court over the use of these grounds. In view of the legal issues involved, I am not inclined to comment at this stage other than to say that the views of the honourable member have been noted and will receive consideration.

The honourable member for Murrumba referred to the introduction of wards in Redcliffe. This, of course, is a matter for the Redcliffe City Council. I agree with him that, at times, in view of the voting system in some local authorities, people believe they are not getting the representation to which they are entitled. Sometimes four or five members come from a particular area in a local authority. A ward system, for electoral purposes only, might be better. It might introduce a little parochialism but it would at least give complete representation. I repeat that this is a matter for the Redcliffe City Council. If the council approaches me (with the assistance of the honourable member for Murrumba), I shall certainly consider introducing the ward system in that local authority.

I commend the contribution made by the honourable member for Kurilpa. He is one of the bright lights among the newly elected members of the Queensland Parliament. All honourable members who heard the honourable member for Kurilpa speak would have to agree with that. His contribution today gave an indication of the ability of the people associated with the Liberal and National Parties in Queensland. It is very pleasing to have in this Assembly members of his calibre who can deliver such an interesting address in their first year here. Their contributions can be regarded only as a breath of life.

I have already commented on my determination to do something positive on the score of pollution control, involving clean water, clean air, litter and noise. I reiterate that I intend to review the Litter Act to increase penalties and make the Act more effective. The honourable member also said—and I agree—that education of our young people is necessary if we are to deal effectively with litter.

The honourable member for Wolston dealt with support for local authority finances by the Government. I have referred to this matter previously. It is generally accepted that Queensland's local authorities get better support from the State Government than do local authorities in any other State. The honourable member referred to traffic lights. He can be assured that traffic lights at the intersection of Centenary Highway and Ipswich Road are programmed for installation this financial year. The southern Ipswich bypass is being proposed as an extension of the national highway system and is being followed up actively by me with the Federal Government.

Before concluding I wish to refer to remarks made by other speakers in tribute to my predecessor, Mr. Henry McKechnie. I can only endorse them. The other day, at Talwood, I met Henry and his wife. I am very pleased to be able to report that he is getting better. He is speaking quite well. It was a great thrill to see him again and speak to him and to know that he is returning to good health. Mr. McKechnie was an outstanding Minister for Local Government who gained the respect of everyone who had any dealings with him as Minister. He set a high standard, and he achieved results. His contribution to the cause of sound local government has placed the third tier of government in Queensland on a very sound footing—to the extent that Queensland's local government system is cited, in many quarters, as a model for others to follow.

Mr. Dean and honourable members, I now commend my department's Estimates to the Committee and further move that provision be made for the following authorisations for the purposes specified:—

\$25,680 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for payments authorised by special Acts, by the Minister, and from Trust and Special Funds;

\$27,767 for the Commissioner of Main Roads;

\$326,555 for the Air Pollution Trust Fund;

\$465,088 for the Clean Waters Trust Fund;

\$9,214,000 for the Commonwealth Aid, Local Authority Roads, Fund;

\$152,365,936 for the Main Roads Fund, including funds advanced from the Commonwealth and the Consolidated Revenue and loan funds;

\$3,000,000 for the Main Roads Department Special Standing Fund;

\$5,000,000, for the Roads Maintenance Account; and

\$1,000,000 for the Main Roads Loan Fund.

At 4 p.m.,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 22 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Local Government and Main Roads.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

Local Government and Main Roads—
\$

Department of Local Government	2,992,955
Balance of Vote, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account ..	171,371,579

WORKS AND HOUSING

CHIEF OFFICE

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (4.2 p.m.): I move—
 “That \$7,216,149 be granted for
 ‘Works and Housing—Chief Office.’”

Mr. Houston: What are you going to do with that?

Mr. LEE: Spend it much more wisely than the Federal people did, anyhow.

It will be noted that the total amount appropriated under Chief Office is \$1,094,395 in excess of that expended in 1974-75. This increase is due in the main to the necessity to provide for increased expenditure on salaries occasioned by a general increase in the Public Service Award, operative from 8 July 1974, basic wage increases in September 1974 and May 1975, the national wage increase in May 1975 and an increase in the number of officers employed in administrative, technical and supervisory sections of the department to handle the increased volume of work being undertaken by the Department of Works. Provision has been made for increased expenditure in the contingencies subdivision over the amount expended in 1974-75. This is necessary to cover related increase of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in pay-roll tax from 1 September 1975, in allowances following salary increases, in wage rises of cleaners and watchmen and a general escalation in costs.

In moving this resolution, I would deem it appropriate to review the activities of the Department of Works since this department's Estimates were debated two years ago. Expenditure on public buildings during this two-year period increased from \$60,286,559 in 1972-73 to \$112,622,840 in 1974-75—a very significant increase of 86.8 per cent.

Mr. Houston: All due to the Federal Labor Government.

Mr. LEE: It is no such thing, as the honourable member will notice from my later comments. Because of the way members of the Federal Government have handled their finances, they are now out on their thick ear. That is the reason for what has happened to them.

Included in those figures is an amount of \$27,062,692 from Special Grants made available by the Commonwealth Government for educational purposes. There is a clear indication to the honourable member of the part played by the Commonwealth Government. Out of \$112,000,000, it has provided only \$27,000,000. The major item of expenditure from Commonwealth funds appertained to a grant known as Karmel funds. The “Karmel” designation followed a report to the Commonwealth on the educational needs of the States. The Commonwealth also allocated funds for pre-schools, libraries at

both primary and secondary schools, technical colleges and other nominated educational buildings.

A highlight of expenditure by my department must assuredly be on education buildings. This is best illustrated in the amount of \$115,918,317, spent during the two financial years 1973-74 and 1974-75, against the amount of \$67,999,036 expended in the previous two financial years 1971-72 and 1972-73, the increase here being a notable 70 per cent. In the last financial year, 1974-75, expenditure on education buildings represented 63.63 per cent of the total expenditure on Government buildings.

Other noteworthy building expenditure occurred on Government hospitals and institutions and on Aboriginal establishments. In these categories spending has increased significantly. Expenditure on Government hospitals and institutions during the past year exceeded that of 1973-74 by 65 per cent, and expenditure on Aboriginal establishments of \$4,620,278 in the financial year 1974-75 was 83 per cent greater than the amount of \$2,520,970 expended in 1973-74.

In the two-year period 1973-74 and 1974-75 an amount of \$4,783,505 was spent on police stations. This figure exceeds expenditure in the previous two financial years by \$796,154—an increase of 20 per cent.

During our 18 years of office from 1 July 1957 to 30 June 1975, expenditure on State Government buildings amounted to \$614,574,265. That indicates the record of this Government.

The functions of the Department of Works cover quite a wide field ranging from the maintenance and preservation of State Government buildings to the planning, construction, furnishing and equipping of new Government buildings, payment for rented accommodation for Government departments, provision of cleaning and watching services, payment of local authority charges, electric light and power, gas where applicable, grants towards local authority swimming pools, interest grants to non-State schools and school improvements subsidies to State school organisations. The annual report of the Department of Works compiled by my under secretary illustrates in greater detail the various functions I have outlined. I do not suppose that the honourable member for Bulimba has read it.

Mr. Houston: I have.

Mr. LEE: Each year my department is charged with the over-all responsibility to construct the maximum economic building accommodation possible with available finance and within its financial limitations, and to maintain and preserve the Government's capital assets, which increase each year with the erection of new buildings so necessary to cope with my Government's programme of development in this State.

EDUCATION

It is in the education field that my department has a great deal of responsibility to ensure there is classroom accommodation available at the beginning of each new school year. During the past two years this was achieved through the concentrated efforts of the department on this accommodation provision.

Providing permanent classrooms to meet requirements is not always possible owing to the restricted funds available for work of this nature and the time in which accommodation is required. This situation has, however, been overcome with the provision of demountable classroom buildings which are widely used throughout Australia and other countries. The standard of these demountable buildings has been steadily improved over the years and they have proved most effective in fulfilling accommodation requirements where no other accommodation could be provided for this purpose.

Continual changes are occurring at all levels of education, from primary to tertiary, with the result that a need arises for the continuity of reassessment of design of compatible educational buildings. These changes in educational philosophy, with the subsequent need for rapid and progressive development of new teaching methods, have involved my department in the development of new designs. Emphasis was placed on the development of a new prefabricated building system for both primary and secondary school applications. These units can be erected to give single-storey structures of varying lengths and layouts suitable to specific functions.

Modernisation of furniture, landscaping and added fire-prevention techniques have featured prominently in the development planning of more recent school buildings. In primary schools the trend has been to continue emphasis on development of single-storey buildings. However, where there are site restrictions, two-storey structures of the same type have been necessary. Separate covered play areas still feature favourably in the design of these schools. In the financial years under review, a total of 17 new schools and five replacement schools were erected, incorporated in a total construction programme of 502 primary and 369 secondary classrooms.

To meet the continued growing demands, free-standing library buildings have been provided at various primary schools throughout the State. These individual buildings feature attractive furniture, carpeted library areas, floor-tiled work room and ventilation by ceiling fans.

It is now the policy of the Government to meet the cost of supplying a suitable source of water for the installation of septic systems in country schools. Parents and citizens' associations, who were previously responsible for obtaining water for these purposes, have been relieved of a financial burden, and my

department has been able to accelerate the replacement of existing E.C. toilet accommodation with modern septic facilities.

In the field of secondary education, the faculty system for various subjects is now paramount in the planning of new high schools. Libraries, manual training, science and administration blocks are now being constructed to new designs. During the past two financial years, new high schools were completed at Craigslea, Mansfield, Bundaberg North and Glenmore. In the design of new high schools, emphasis has been placed on providing outdoor landscaped teaching courtyards to complement teaching methods of the present syllabus. "First Year Centres" are being established at new and existing high schools. These centres are self-contained units which provide all the facilities necessary to meet the education requirements for Grade 8 students.

Considerable progress has been made in the past two years in the planning and development of new technical colleges and extensions to existing colleges. The erection of new buildings on new sites at Bundaberg and Cairns will permit buildings on the old sites to be modified for use by the adjacent secondary schools. Decentralisation of technical training facilities has been responsible for the provision of major construction work being undertaken in provincial cities and the metropolitan area. It is our policy to accelerate the provision of facilities for technical training and to this end planning is in hand for the continued development of new and existing colleges. Negotiations are proceeding for the acquisition of sites in the metropolitan area and country centres for the establishment of additional technical colleges.

The programme of providing science blocks at high schools was continued. The amounts expended during the past two financial years from these grants were \$1,692,560 for science blocks and \$1,260,655 for libraries. New schools and facilities for special education have been provided to basic designs applicable to varying site considerations. In the period under review, 11 opportunity schools were completed or are under construction. Remodelling has been undertaken at various primary schools to provide remedial rooms, speech therapy and hearing-handicapped accommodation. The Buranda Opportunity School and the Narbethong School for Visually Handicapped Children—two of the three schools that occupy the Buranda complex—are being rebuilt on the present site.

Major works were completed at the Queensland Institute of Technology, Brisbane, the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education and also teachers' colleges in Townsville and Brisbane. It is most pleasing to be able to inform honourable members that the Administration and Psychology Building at Mt. Gravatt Teachers' College was awarded the

Royal Australian Institute of Architects' Citation for Meritorious Architecture in 1974. I think honourable members will agree that this is quite a feather in the caps of the architects of the Works Department.

Planning and construction of pre-school centres has been continued at an increased tempo. In liaison with the Department of Education a series of designs were approved for the State-wide programme. Owing to rising costs and the availability of materials, it has been necessary to effect modifications to construction. The self-contained "Open plan" has been retained with the play area enlarged. Some equipment has been redesigned and new types added for both indoor and outdoor use. My department has paid close attention to the provision of facilities for the physical development of school-children. My department is also continuing a programme of ground improvements to schools throughout the State.

An in-service training centre for teachers is to be established at Bardon and construction has commenced on stage I of this project. The complex generally consists of one and two-storey concrete-block buildings interconnected with covered ways and courtyard areas. Future stages of development of the site includes residential accommodation and, when completed, will provide all necessary in-service training facilities. While the erection of buildings for educational purposes constitutes the major part of the building and maintenance activities of my department, other Government sectors have not been neglected.

COURT-HOUSE BUILDINGS

An area in which the department has been actively engaged is the provision of court-houses. The construction of the new Courts of Law complex at Townsville has been completed. These law courts consist of two buildings—one of five storeys and the other of two storeys—and were designed as an integral part in the Townsville City Council's scheme for the development of a new civic square.

Accommodation has been made available for the District and Magistrates Courts at 179 North Quay, Brisbane. This high-rise building which has been completed and occupied will afford interim relief pending the erection of stage II of the Courts of Law complex. Twelve Magistrates Courts and 13 District Courts rooms have been provided. Extensive remodelling was undertaken at the Rockhampton Court House in providing additional office requirements. A tender has been accepted for the erection of a new court house and Government office block at Dalby on the site of the present single storey court house. Accommodation in this building will also be provided for the Departments of Lands and Primary Industries.

POLICE STATIONS

The development of the Oxley Police Academy has been continued. This establishment must rate as the most modern of its type in Australia when one considers the extent of facilities made available for training purposes and the accommodation provided for cadets who are required to live in.

New police stations have been erected at Murgon, Greenvale and Karumba. A new police station is under construction at Cairns to replace the existing structure.

HOSPITAL BUILDINGS AND INSTITUTIONS

My department has undertaken a considerable amount of work at Government hospitals and institutions during the last two years. Emphasis was placed on design and construction of new buildings to meet the specific requirements of intellectually handicapped, mentally ill and aged persons. In this particular area of building activity, upgrading of existing buildings and replacements of substandard accommodation was continued.

At Wolston Park Hospital, a new female recreation building is being erected to replace a building which was damaged in the 1974 Australia Day flood.

The development of a new nursing-care unit at Wynnum is being continued. Following the completion of the first stage, which provides for 80 beds for aged people, a tender was accepted for the second stage, which will cost \$3,500,000. The third and final stage of this complex is being planned at present and will provide accommodation for 72 intermediate nursing-care patients.

The maternity block extension at Redcliffe Hospital providing new nurseries, new delivery room and operating theatre has been completed. A new maternity section at the Innisfail Hospital is under construction. The work involved comprises construction and equipment for a 24-bed maternity section, nurses training school, dental clinic and storage space. The building will be two-storeys, fully air-conditioned and of fire-resistant construction. Alterations and additions at the Brisbane Royal Women's Hospital are nearing completion.

New Maternal and Child Welfare Centres were completed at Goondiwindi and Barcalodine. The clinic at Gayndah has been replaced with an air-conditioned building of brick construction, with provision of residential accommodation for two sisters. The headquarters of the Maternal and Child Welfare Services at St. Paul's Terrace, Brisbane, are being updated and the first stage of redevelopment is approaching completion. In the metropolitan area, a new clinic with no residential quarters is being erected at Upper Mt. Gravatt.

My department has been most active in recent years in providing buildings for the continuing development of homes, training and rehabilitation centres for children.

At Warilda Children's Home in Brisbane the construction of stage II of the new dormitory accommodation is nearing completion. This building is the last stage in the rebuilding programme undertaken at this institute, which caters for children and babies (cared for by the State) awaiting adoption or fostering.

A remand and reception block and a new chapel were completed at Westbrook Training Centre. New quarters for the matron and a residence for the deputy superintendent have also been erected at this centre.

The first stage in the development of a residential training centre for boys is under construction at Boonah.

PRISONS

During the past two years work has been undertaken at prison establishments to provide additional administrative services and detention areas.

H.M. Prison Brisbane has been refenced with a new wire compound and security lighting provided. A new three-storey block containing 174 cells is under construction at the rear of the new compound.

At H.M. Prison Wacol a new sick bay was completed and a new chapel is under construction.

Work continues on the services building at H.M. Prison Rockhampton. Other projects for which tenders have been accepted at this prison comprise sewage treatment works and provision of an emergency power installation.

At H.M. Prison Townsville, tenders have been accepted for the erection of six staff residences.

The development of a new prison at Woodford is continuing. The complex consists of five cell blocks, each of which houses 48 men. Two services block and a staff residence are under construction at present. This prison is designed for younger prisoners with the object of disciplinary training, education and work potential assessment and a quick return to community life.

ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDERS ADVANCEMENT

There has been a considerable increase in the amount of work my department has executed in providing accommodation for Aborigines and Islanders in the past two years. Kindergartens have been completed at Cherbourg, Palm Island and Yarrabah, whilst others are under construction at Bamaga and Tamwoy (Thursday Island). At Doomadgee a maternal and child welfare clinic was completed and similar clinics are being erected at Mornington Island and Bamaga. Tenders have been accepted for like structures at three other centres. A dormitory block is being provided at Bamaga High School. Libraries at this centre and Cherbourg are under erection, whilst libraries at Palm Island and Yarrabah have been completed. The department has been actively

engaged in providing houses for Aborigines and Islanders. Houses have been completed or are under construction at many centres.

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

In the two-year period under review my department has undertaken both major and minor works for the Department of Primary Industries. Development of the research station at Indooroopilly has been continued. The major building at present under construction at this establishment is for the Entomology Branch, the cost of which will be in excess of \$1,500,000. Major projects were completed or are in the course of erection at research stations at Hermitage, Kingaroy and Wacol.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

The accommodation needs of the Public Service have increased in line with the rapid growth of our State. My department has been actively engaged in providing administrative offices and buildings of a particularly high standard of construction and finish.

Decentralisation of certain Government facilities within the metropolitan area has resulted in the development of a services centre at Zillmere. The first stage of the complex, a new Government Motor Garage, is now fully operational. The second stage is a stores building, which will provide accommodation for the State Stores Board and the Department of Works stock holdings. Construction of this building, to cost \$1,600,000, is nearing completion.

New office buildings for the Department of Main Roads have been completed at Townsville and Bundaberg. In Toowoomba a modern office building has been erected to house the Department of Works district office staff.

My Government has made a commitment to erect a complex of buildings to be known as the Queensland Cultural Centre. The site for this complex is in South Brisbane and the complex will comprise the art gallery, the museum, the library and performing arts centre. A master plan of the whole development is being prepared, with the construction of the art gallery as the first stage of this development.

A new administration, members' office and accommodation block at Parliament House is to be constructed. All members present will no doubt be very interested in this proposal, so I will outline in detail the accommodation etc. that will be provided. The building comprises two basements, a four-storey podium complex and a 14-storey tower. Accommodation to be provided in the basements consists of parking facilities for approximately 150 cars, plant and equipment rooms, storage areas and provision for the future installation of a fall-out shelter. In the podium, provision has been made for general office and staff areas, facilities for social and parliamentary functions, kitchen and dining areas, library

and media facilities, committee/seminar rooms and provision for a temporary Legislative Assembly Chamber. Conversion of the Legislative Chamber to a 350-seat lecture theatre is envisaged on completion of future renovations to the existing Chamber. The tower block of 14 storeys will provide office accommodation for 82 members and staff, office/bedroom accommodation for four Ministers and staff, bedroom accommodation for 40 country members and two V.I.P. suites, associated staff and lounge areas. Provision has also been made for recreational and service areas throughout the complex.

In this review of the activities of my Department of Works, I have endeavoured to place before the Committee the more important projects that were undertaken in the programmes of building during the past two years. Areas I have not dealt with in detail comprise Public Service housing, provision of buildings and facilities at National Fitness camps, preservation of historical buildings and many others.

HOUSING

I turn now to another of my responsibilities, that of housing. The Minister for Housing is not only the Minister for the Housing Commission as a Government instrumentality, but also is concerned to an increasing degree with many aspects of housing within the field of private enterprise. I refer particularly to co-operative terminating housing societies and permanent building societies. By the same token, the Commissioner of Housing, although responsible for all the activities of the Queensland Housing Commission, is by virtue of his office also the adviser to the Minister over the much wider field of housing as a whole.

The Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement affects both the Housing Commission and the terminating societies and each cannot be considered in isolation. In this connection I place on record the complete impartiality displayed by the commissioner in his advices to me. The relationship between the commissioner and the terminating societies is that of partners associated in a major problem, and not as competitors for business.

The annual report of the commission is available to honourable members and I do not intend to go into it in detail. While I must agree that statistics and financial statements are essential tools of trade, so to speak, there is much more in the report than figures. Housing is closely interwoven with the fabric and quality of life, both of individuals and of the community as a whole. A study of the report will reveal a very sincere and sympathetic approach by the commission in its mammoth task of accommodating families of low and moderate means. But the report also shows an intense awareness of many matters of community interest, such as sound policies in land subdivision and provision of parks and sewerage. The report also discusses flood-prone land,

building by-laws, and co-operation with many organisations in research and standards, and many other matters. I suggest to the honourable members that a careful perusal of the report could be a worth-while exercise.

The past financial year set a number of records which I refer to only to illustrate the scale of some aspects of the commission's business. The number of houses provided, 2,283, is an all-time annual record except for 1952-53 when the figure was 2,314 including imported houses. The latter figure included all the imported houses and, as is well known, most of them were built at Zillmere.

A further record was the payment of \$2,700,000 to local authorities for rates. Other records were the expenditure of \$4,200,000 on maintenance and \$1,000,000 on improvements to existing rental houses. The number of families receiving a rental rebate (or subsidy) on account of low income was also a record, 3,639, and so was the cost of rebates, \$633,589.

However a most unpleasant figure, notwithstanding the outstanding production of houses, is the number of applications on the waiting list, which increased from 7,666 in June 1974 to 8,193 in June 1975. I might say that there has been a further increase since then.

While I do not wish to encroach on the time of honourable members, I have no option—in fact it is a duty—but to again bring to the notice of the Committee the shocking and, I feel, biased treatment handed out to Queensland by the Commonwealth for welfare housing loan money in 1975-76. I do not belittle, and in fact I commend, the Commonwealth for the low interest rate which it charges on welfare housing money. Nor do I deny that, after much arguing and haggling, we did receive extra loan finance in 1974-75.

With a State election in progress, the Prime Minister said, as reported in "The Courier-Mail" of 5 December 1974—

"For welfare housing, the Queensland Premier (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) was assured of a blank cheque by me at the Premier's conference in June.

"I told him that we would pay for every Housing Commission house for which the Queensland Government could let a contract."

I should have said the "ex-Prime Minister".

Mr. Aikens: They won't believe you.

Mr. LEE: It is in black and white. Surely they must agree when it is in black and white.

Whether that statement was born of generosity or of desperation—in the light of today's events, I think it must have been desperation—I leave it to honourable members to judge. In the light of subsequent events, I say that it was certainly not generosity. He cloaked his purpose in a mask of double-talk not normally expected between responsible Governments.

When, in June 1975, the new Commonwealth Housing Minister announced that a request from Queensland, in March 1975, for extra money to meet commitments based on the Prime Minister's statement would be granted to the extent of \$6,400,000, he said (and I quote from the conference proceedings)—

"The funds that will now be available to Queensland and Western Australia are clearly advanced on the basis that they will be considered in the light of next year's commitments in the same way as funds that have been made available to the other States will have to be considered

next year in the light of what has been achieved and what has been made available in the last year."

So far so good. All States are to be treated in the same way—I repeat "in the same way"—in respect of extra money they received during 1974-75.

On the night of the last Commonwealth Budget, the balloon went up; but for Queenslanders—just as with the Commonwealth Government today—the balloon burst before it actually left the ground. For the benefit of honourable members, I quote the following figures—

—	Initial Allocation 1974-75	Further Allocations in 1974-75	Total 1974-75	1975-76	Comparison with 1974-75
	\$M	\$M	\$M	\$M	\$M
New South Wales	71.4	52.0	123.4	123.4	equal
Victoria	61.4	36.8	98.2	98.2	equal
South Australia	38.4	18.0	56.4	56.4	equal
Queensland	20.9	22.9	43.8	31.0	reduced 12.8
Western Australia	22.9	14.5	37.4	33.4	reduced 4.0
Tasmania	20.0	6.2	26.2	22.2	reduced 4.0
Total	235.0	150.4	385.4	364.6	20.8

The reduction in Queensland's allocation compared with 1974-75 is iniquitous and one of the most unjust things I have ever seen in political history. New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia received the same as for 1974-75, with no penalty for extra funds received in 1974-75. I ask the Committee: is this treatment "in the same way"? That is what Whitlam said: "We will treat you in the same way." Queensland's allocation has been savagely cut by \$12,800,000, or 29.2 per cent.

So much for the Prime Minister's generosity! He may be a tall man, but his stature does not grow at all as a result of this affair. As an election gimmick—and people will not accept gimmicks this time, though they accepted them last time—he repeated a promise to find money for Queensland, yet concealed his Government's intention to take back the money in 1975-76. I ask honourable members how in these circumstances this State can maintain the magnificent housing effort it made in 1974-75. Not only do we not receive the inflation factor necessary to maintain the number of houses built, but we find that our allocation is cut to ribbons.

The situation with the Housing Commission is so bad at this early stage of the financial year that it virtually cannot let further contracts of any consequence for welfare housing. It means that our finances will virtually come to an end before this Christmas. Certainly our contractors will be completing the

work they have on hand, but they are grinding to a halt as far as further work is concerned.

Some contractors who have served the commission well, and have specialised in commission work for many years, are already reducing their work-forces. Only the other day the honourable member for Cairns wrote a letter on this matter. I answered it today. One contractor has had to sack men he has employed for eight years. This is because of the cutback of \$12,800,000, and for no other reason.

This is a "stop and go" attitude at its worst. For Queensland it is all "stop" and no "go". It is one of the fallacies of this kind of thing that some people in authority think that they can turn a financial tap off and on to suit their whims and fancies. They found out today that they cannot do that. They are now going back to the people and will soon find out what happens when they cut welfare housing expenditure in Queensland by \$12,800,000 or 29.2 per cent. There is no doubt that a lot will be said about that matter on the election stump.

Mr. Jensen: You couldn't spend it.

Mr. LEE: That is a complete and utter untruth. It is typical of the honourable member for Bundaberg. I have not heard one sensible word from him this session.

They just do not know what they are doing. To all those honourable members who are submitting such excellent reasons

for more houses I regret that I can give no satisfaction. To me it seems a sin that honourable members on both sides of the Chamber are putting forward very good submissions that are worthy of consideration but, because of our financial position, I am unable to help them in any way. As the year progresses, we may be able to squeeze an odd house here or there; but at this stage the outlook is black indeed.

I turn now to co-operative terminating societies. Several members on both sides of the Committee have a keen personal interest in the society movement. This year Queensland requested \$24,000,000 under the Housing Agreement for these societies. The very least which could have been expected was the same as 1974-75 plus an inflation factor. As a result of the reduction in agreement finance we have only \$8,800,000 plus \$1,200,000 from an older account. I understand that some States are cutting their societies back to 20 per cent of the total—the minimum under the agreement. I felt very strongly that Queensland should retain the 28.5 per cent which had applied in 1974-75. I am pleased that the Commonwealth Minister—or ex-Minister—has agreed to my request for this.

Permanent building societies had an unsatisfactory year to the extent that they were forced by market conditions to increase their borrowing and lending rates. This placed home-ownership outside the capacity of many persons. I am pleased that there has been a recent small reduction in society interest rates. This will help a few people but we need much lower rates yet. However, societies must have regard to the money market generally. They must maintain a balance. If funds cease to come in, then the societies have no capacity to make housing loans.

I wish to convey my appreciation to Mr. Bernie Kehoe, the former registrar, who has retired, and to his staff for their assistance to me. I also extend my thanks to Mr. Don McKirdy. Thanks and appreciation are also due to my Societies' Advisory Committee and to its chairman (Mr. Lloyd Olsen) for their consideration of, and advice on, many matters of detail during the year.

Before concluding this review, I should like to convey my appreciation to my Under Secretary for Works and his staff for their efficient and loyal service to both my predecessor and me. To Mr. Houston I say, "Sincere thanks not only for your loyal service but for your assistance to me in the days when I first took over this Ministry." The pressures on me were then very great, and I give my sincere thanks to Mr. Houston for his help. In my short term as ministerial head of the Department of Works, I am proud to have been associated with its achievements and I look forward with confidence to its future accomplishments.

I should also like to pay tribute to Mr. George Campbell, my Commissioner of Housing, and the staff of the commission for their serious endeavours in carrying out the housing programme during the period under review. Mr. Campbell will be retiring on 31 December 1975 after almost 50 years in the Public Service of this State. He has served in the capacity of Commissioner of Housing for a long period of 12 years. I say to Mr. Campbell, "Thank you very much indeed for the co-operation and help that you have given me."

Mr. Marginson: A very good officer.

Mr. LEE: A very good officer indeed. The honourable member now likes to jump onto the band wagon. He has been thumping and belting him for the last 12 years, but as soon as someone says something nice about him the honourable member wants to jump onto the band wagon and agree with it. That is exactly what he is doing. He does not see members of the Government parties doing it.

On the retirement of Mr. Campbell after such service, I am sure honourable members on both sides of the Chamber will agree with me that the State has benefited from his long and distinguished career. I wish George Campbell and his wife a long, healthy and happy retirement.

The Government Printer and staff of the Government Printing Office are deserving of commendation for their loyal and efficient service to the Parliament, Government departments and the general public. Mr. Reid has given dedicated service to the State as Government Printer over a lengthy period and he is due to retire in June 1976. I also wish Mr. and Mrs. Reid a long, satisfying and healthy retirement, with which sentiment I am sure all members will concur.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (4.48 p.m.): I should like to take the opportunity during the debate on the Works and Housing Estimates to speak about building societies, and in particular some of the serious failings of the Minister in relation to the control of these societies. I should also like to make some suggestions for the better control of building societies. Today they are important as providers of finance for the purchase of homes, and they are here to stay.

The Opposition do not oppose building societies as such. What we are opposed to, and what causes us serious concern, is the action of the Minister in relation to abuses by directors of some permanent building societies. I should really say the inaction of the Minister, because he has fallen down in his duty to enforce the law or to improve it where necessary so that dishonest directors and their cronies cannot continue to rob the investing public. He has done nothing about the many abuses in some societies to which Opposition members have consistently drawn his attention. In his short time in this portfolio, the Minister has allowed the crooks in building societies to get away with all

sorts of skulduggery. He is just as weak in the administration of this portfolio as the Minister for Justice is in relation to companies. Whilst one allows corporate crooks to plunder companies, the other closes his eyes to large-scale dishonesty in some building societies.

Mr. BYRNE: I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention, Mr. Hewitt, to the fact that the honourable member is obviously reading from a prepared speech. Mr. Speaker has given a ruling that this is not to be done.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I notice that the honourable member is referring to copious notes. I ask him to refrain as far as possible from reading.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Thank you, Mr. Hewitt.

It is a bit hard to say how much weaker and indecisive the Minister for Works and Housing is than his colleague in the Justice portfolio. Perhaps it would be fair to say that they run a dead heat for last when it comes to protecting the interests of the investing public. Perhaps they should combine their portfolios into one department under a Minister who could be described as the protector of white-collar criminals.

Let me emphasise that I am referring to serious malpractices in a few societies. I do not for one minute suggest that all societies, or most of them, are crooked. In fact, I believe that most of them are run by honest and efficient people. But that is no excuse for the Minister—or the Minister before him—failing to enforce the laws for which he is responsible. It is his job to use the legal powers at his disposal to stop dishonesty and rackets wherever they occur in building societies. His failure to do so after we have drawn his attention to these abuses time and time again is a shocking dereliction of duty.

Unfortunately, his attitude is consistent with that of the whole Government to white-collar crime. They prosecute with full vigour a poor person who falls to the temptation of stealing a few dollars, but they do nothing about the calculating crooks in the grey flannel suits who rob the investing public of thousands of dollars.

There are three major areas of concern in building societies on which I wish to speak. The first is the need for proper enforcement of existing laws and some improvement of the laws to protect the investors and borrowers from the parasites who can prey on them. The second point is the need for better controls on advertising and business promotion to prevent building societies passing themselves off as banks or misleading investors about the nature of their investments and restrictions on the withdrawal of funds. The third point is the need for the finances of building societies to be placed on a sounder basis than the present system. This system is a bad example of borrowing short and

lending long, which is contrary both to the principles of sound finance and to common sense.

Mr. Lee: What would you know about finance?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I know more about finance than the Minister knows about his portfolio. One has only to listen to him read.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am not taking interjections as I have only 20 minutes.

Firstly, let us look at where the Minister has failed to enforce the law. The legislation requires that the accounts of permanent building societies shall be audited and that members should receive a copy of the financial statements and auditors' report. Taken together, these measures should give members proper warning of any problems in relation to the accounts.

Mr. BYRNE: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Hewitt. I must draw your attention to the fact that the honourable member rarely raises his eyes from the page and is obviously reading his speech.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that he has already raised a point of order on the same matter. The honourable member for Archerfield.

Mr. Jensen: The evil friar.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is true—the evil friar.

But what happened in one case was that a society which had made a loss for the year attempted to cover up by paying a dividend out of a property revaluation reserve. The company was the United Savings Building Society—a society associated with the Great Australian Permanent Building Society. The auditors had quite correctly reported that this had been improperly done. Had the law been enforced, members of this society would have been made aware of the fact that this accounting trick which the auditors had discovered was an attempt to cover up that a loss of about \$140,000 had been made.

Had the law been enforced properly, the members of the United Savings Permanent Building Society would have known of this improper action through the auditors' report. But here again there emerged a conspiracy of silence and neglect in that the officers responsible to the Minister apparently told United Savings that it need not send annual reports to members on that occasion. The very weak excuse used to justify this complete disregard of the rights of members and legal requirements was that United Savings was merging with the Great Australian Permanent Building Society soon after that date. The fact that a merger was taking place is all the more reason for this improper action being properly brought under public scrutiny.

Because of the merger, both the members of the United Savings (in which the directors had taken the improper action of paying dividends out of capital to cover up a loss they had made) and the members of Great Australian which was involved in the merger should have been informed of this fact.

In business, and indeed in company legislation, a fundamental principle is that when a merger, take-over, or amalgamation is under consideration, there is a greater need for information than would otherwise be the case. Yet the Minister has allowed a situation to exist whereby serious improper action of the directors of a society to which the auditors quite correctly referred in qualifying their audit report caused members of the society and the members of the other society who were soon to be asked to vote on the merger to be denied the opportunity of reading the auditors' report.

It is a public scandal. What earthly good is there in having a law which requires that there must be an audit if the Minister—even a novice Minister like the present Minister—allows building society crooks to deprive members of information to which they are entitled? What is the good of auditors doing their job properly and of taking the courageous stand of qualifying their audit report, no doubt under heavy pressure from fast-talking, unprincipled directors of the kind involved in this example, if the members to whom that report is addressed do not receive it—because a ruling is made on the flimsiest of grounds that the report does not have to go to members?

What makes this unsavoury situation even worse is that there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that United Savings—the society which made the loss and overcame it by paying dividends out of capital—was used as a bucket operation by the Great Australian Permanent Building Society. The losses of the first society were increased substantially by that society being forced to absorb a number of charges from Great Australian. The purpose of this was to bring to the balance sheet of Great Australian—with which the merger was to be effected—an amount shown as balances due by other building societies. This virtually enabled Great Australian to pay some of its dividends out of capital and to cover up a loss that would have been reported if normal, honest accounting principles had been followed.

The next chapter in the story of dishonesty and deception by unprincipled directors of permanent building societies came in relation to another permanent building society with which Great Australian merged—the City Savings Permanent Building Society, 119 Redcliffe Parade, Redcliffe. Members of the Great Australian Permanent Building Society had to wait well over a year before they received the annual report for the year ended 30 June 1974.

Mr. Hanson: Shocking!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: As the honourable member for Port Curtis says, it was shocking. The story given for this delay was that some records had been lost and had had to be reconstructed.

Mr. Frawley: Do you think I should get my money out?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I think the honourable member should get it out quick smart.

Eventually, when the report for 30 June 1974 arrived at a time most other societies had reported for 30 June 1975, the financial statements contained two serious qualifications to the auditor's report. One related to the highly unusual practice of the society in increasing the revenue for that year by an amount arising from bringing into the balance sheet an amount of about \$131,000 for establishment expenses—a nice old lurk! The highly unusual aspect of this is not that the establishment expenses were brought to account but that the report and the auditor's comments made it quite clear that these were not expenses which had been incurred in that financial year.

Mr. MURRAY: I rise to a point of order. Are you ruling in effect, Mr. Hewitt, that members in Committee may read their speeches? I would like your ruling on that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the honourable member wants a ruling, I point out to him that the Standing Orders of this Assembly are silent on that precise matter. If we invoke Erskine May, we find that the best he does is indicate that members are referring to copious notes and that they should desist. There is no obligation upon a Chairman to insist that a member desists. So, until Standing Orders are made clearer than they are at present, that is as far as I am prepared to take the matter.

Mr. MURRAY: If Mr. Speaker has ruled at other stages of debate that members are not allowed to read their speeches, are we then to have a different situation in Committee? That is all I ask.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Archerfield.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: As I was saying, Mr. Hewitt, before I was so rudely interrupted, they were expenses incurred in the previous year, charged in the profit and loss account for previous years for which the directors and auditors had reported on as being correct, and then suddenly brought back into the balance sheet simply to boost the profits for that year. It is quite apparent that some honourable members on my left are in sympathy with some of these white-collar crooks.

There was another item of about \$180,000 shown as owing by associated companies and permanent building societies, the validity of which the auditors stated they were unable to establish. The effect of this bit of accounting trickery, coupled with the trickery in relation to establishment expenses, really

meant that the profit for the year was about \$300,000 less than that shown on the profit and loss account. As virtually the whole of the profit had been paid out in dividends, this really means that, on the basis of fair-dinkum accounting, about one-third of the total dividend payments really came out of capital. This is not just a matter of technical accounting interest because, when dividends are paid out of capital, it really means that the members of the society, instead of being paid a dividend earned by their money are, to that extent, being paid back some of the capital they invested which is disguised through this accounting trickery as a dividend.

The reward for the auditors of the Great Australian Permanent Building Society, who were courageous enough to qualify their report, was that the board sought to have them replaced as auditors at the annual general meeting by supporting the nomination of another auditor, Joseph Justin O'Shea. Mr. O'Shea is the father of Desmond Paul O'Shea, the former chairman of Great Australian Permanent Building Society and also one of the masterminds behind all sorts of shuffling of money into companies associated with him and some of his cronies rather than lending to the general public in the way that is followed by more reputable societies.

These cronies included Neville Keith Meredith, who was appointed a member of the board of the Great Australian Permanent Building Society on 28 August this year, and the present chairman of the company, Clarence Edward Coulson. Coulson is also chairman of United Savings Permanent Building Society and City Savings Permanent Building Society—which I have mentioned—and of Finance and Commerce Co-operative, which is administered by Great Australian Permanent. Desmond Paul O'Shea himself has had his membership of the Institute of Chartered Accountants suspended for three years for breach of professional ethics. This is the type of gentleman this present novice Minister allows to handle public money. The three gentlemen bandits—Meredith, Coulson and O'Shea—are so crooked they could easily hide behind a corkscrew.

The Minister is aware of the details I have outlined. It is of some concern to me, however, that in his answers to my questions he has appeared to be less than frank. To put it bluntly, I have been fobbed off by experts in my attempts to expose these white-collar racketeers. With all due respect to the Minister, however, he has inherited a large part of this problem; the Minister before him, too, must share the blame for this public deceit and cover-up.

In the case of Great Australian—because of the pressure from questions I had asked in the House, and by strong arguments at the annual general meeting against the replacement of auditors who had done their duty so well in qualifying the audit report, the directors took fright. They adjourned

the annual general meeting for 10 minutes to discuss the matter. They then announced that their nomination of Joseph Justin O'Shea, the father of one of the crooks who were pulling the strings behind the management of this society, was withdrawn. They stated they had a nomination from another auditor, but it had not been received in sufficient time for the meeting as is required by the rules. A motion for the reappointments of the auditors who had qualified the report was defeated—not surprisingly, as the meeting was fairly heavily stacked by employees, agents and other close associates of the directors. At the adjourned meeting the board, relying on a technicality, stated that a casual vacancy for the position of auditor existed. This attempt to get rid of the auditors who had done their duty properly is no longer possible under the Companies Act. That legislation was amended a couple of years ago to provide that auditors no longer need to be re-elected each year. This was to remove the threat of appointment of another auditor as a form of pressure against an auditor who found it necessary to qualify his audit report. In reply to a question I asked some months ago, the Minister said he had given this matter consideration. So far he has done nothing.

Under the circumstances I have just outlined, the Minister should have responded to a suggestion I made in a question a couple of months ago. He should have immediately taken steps to amend the legislation relating to permanent building societies so that auditors to those societies enjoyed something of the same sort of security of tenure and freedom from pressure which they now enjoy under the Companies Act. We saw what he did—precisely nothing!

I now wish to stress the urgent need for improved legislation and for better enforcement of the present legislation relating to advertising and business promotion by some building societies. The Minister should remember the old saying that a half-truth can be worse than a lie. Unfortunately, in advertising and business promotion for building societies, it seems that all of the societies, including the more reputable ones, are guilty of this half-truth technique. All of the advertisements prominently feature passbooks and describe the societies as "savings institutions". This is a classic use of the half-truth in an attempt to create the impression that the building society is a bank. That impression—that attempt to masquerade as banks—is also carried on by the practice of the cashiers in building society offices being described as tellers. As banks are the only other places in which the people dealing with cash are described as tellers rather than cashiers, this is another attempt to create the impression that the building societies are a form of bank. This half-truth technique has apparently been very successful, because people are often heard to refer to banking money into the building society when in fact they are doing no such thing. When they put money in a building society they are putting it into a

co-operative society, which does not have the solidity of the trading banks nor the ability to borrow from the Reserve Bank, if necessary. This places all of the trading banks in a situation quite different from other financial institutions. Equally misleading is the fact that advertisements describe the money as being invested without any fixed term and implies or states that the whole amount can be withdrawn at any time at call. What the advertisements do not tell the people is that there is provision in the rules of the society by which repayments can be deferred for substantial periods under certain circumstances. As far as I know no societies in recent years have made use of that provision, but the plain fact of the matter is that it is there.

Mr. Lee: What do you think of this headline in today's "Telegraph"—"Whitlam sacked"?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The Minister should be sacked, too; he is incompetent.

Another point that should be made clear is that investors in building societies do not lend money in the same way as they lend it to finance companies, banks or other institutions. They buy shares and, as such, they are making a risk investment. In a well-run and honestly conducted society the risk is relatively small because the housing loans are insured. Hence, to that extent, they are not exposed to the risk of bad debt. They are at risk in the event of dishonesty by staff or fraud, or if costs get out of hand and the margin between lending and borrowing rates is insufficient to cover those costs. Moreover, as an answer by the Minister to one of my questions revealed, not all of the advances are insured. The example again involved the City Savings Permanent Building Society. Some societies follow the practice of insuring loans only when the amount advanced is more than 75 per cent of the value of the security. This is a serious matter today when the recent sale of a Queen Street property indicated that values had declined 48 per cent in three years.

The society knew what it was doing. It sold the building at a loss. I have been told—I cannot prove this—that there was a profit motive of about \$250,000 in it. In that event, the amount advanced in the more realistic values existing today, which amounted to 75 per cent a few years ago, could now be 100 per cent to 150 per cent. This could apply particularly when the valuations are done by people involved in real estate or others with a vested interest in putting the highest possible value on a property. I say quite frankly to the Minister that legislation should be introduced whereby real estate men or land developers would be precluded from sitting on building society boards. Such legislation is needed because, in my book 98 per cent of land developers are crooks.

It is about time that the Minister insisted on adequate controls over advertising, including a clear indication that the building societies are not banks; that they do not enjoy the borrowing facilities from the Reserve Bank which are enjoyed by the trading banks; that investors are not lending or depositing funds but purchasing shares; that repayment can be deferred; that, in the event of problems of fraud or serious cost problems, investors—namely, the shareholders—face reduced dividends and/or capital loss. As they are shareholders, as distinct from lenders, they do not enjoy the buffer or margin of safety provided in loans to other institutions by the amount of funds of shareholders who rank behind the creditors, even unsecured creditors, in the event of a liquidation.

(Time expired.)

Mr. POWELL (Isis) (5.7 p.m.): In addressing myself to these Estimates, I shall deal firstly with the Works section of the Minister's portfolio. The Minister has an extremely difficult portfolio as it combines Works and Housing. He is very diligent in his attempts to iron out the very serious problems that are brought to his notice, but it is impossible for any one man to follow up all the complaints made about the Works Department. As a former teacher, at any school to which I was attached I always received the utmost co-operation from Works Department officers.

I shall bring to the Minister's attention some matters concerning my electorate. No doubt he is a little sick of the correspondence he receives from me and the questions I ask him from time to time, but I believe I have a duty to raise these matters. Certain areas in my electorate require urgent attention. One of these is the Hervey Bay area, which seems to be a lost area in the matter of Works Department efforts. I do not know if that can be attributed to lack of representation of the area in the past six years, but I am experiencing extreme difficulty in getting the Works Department and other departments to come to the Hervey Bay area to do as much work as I want done. I know that there are financial limitations and that the Minister, even with the best of intentions, could not do all that I asked.

A serious problem encountered at the Hervey Bay High School and the Pialba Primary School relates to lack of toilets. At Pialba one toilet is provided for 27 female teachers. To say the least, the toilet accommodation is inadequate. The parents and citizens' association at the school publicised the problem and the principal was asked to comment. Although he merely backed up the attitude of the p. and c., he was castigated by various people for entering into the argument. It is a very poor deal when the principal of a school finds himself under a cloud simply because he states the truth and merely confirms figures announced by

the president of the p. and c. He did not seek publicity of his own accord and I think it is very unfair that he is being treated as he is.

The Hervey Bay High School, which is adjacent to the Pialba Primary School, also has a problem with toilets. The number of toilets per student seems to be abnormally small. I have questioned the Minister on this issue, and before long he will probably have an answer in the mail for me. However, it is a serious matter. Upkeep of the buildings at Hervey Bay also seems to be lacking a little. The police station certainly needs an infusion of funds for upkeep as well as extension.

The Hervey Bay area is growing—and growing very rapidly. Apparently the planners have not considered that. The permanent population in the area is now about 9,000, and it is estimated that it will reach about 15,000 by 1985. If those figures are correct, the Works Department has a tremendous amount of planning to do in the area.

Mr. Jensen: They are mostly retired millionaires from down South who have gone up your way.

Mr. POWELL: That is not right. The population of the Hervey Bay area is growing through natural increase as well as from an influx of people who recognise what a delightful area it is and decide to settle there.

Other schools in my electorate lack facilities such as libraries and library rooms. However, before I leave the Hervey Bay area, I mention the new building that was very capably opened last Saturday week by the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries. That building, I understand, is called a Jennings building. I do not know who supervised the job, but it is quite apparent that the building has been constructed the wrong way round. Had somebody shown a little more diligence in siting it, the Works Department would not have had to incur considerable expense on the erection of awnings to cut out the western sun. Had the building been turned 90 degrees so that the veranda section faced the north, as I presume it was originally designed to do anyhow, the problem of the sun entering the building would not have occurred.

As everybody knows, in the southern hemisphere the southern side of a building does not receive any sun. I suggest that a mistake has perhaps been made in supervision of the siting of the building on the block. It is quite obvious that it is facing the wrong direction. We all know that it is impossible to pick it up and turn it through 90 degrees in order to solve the problem, but I suggest that the department should ensure that greater supervision is exercised in these matters. The use of a simple compass would have obviated that fault.

As I mentioned earlier, a number of schools in my area require the provision of extra facilities. However, let me also congratulate the Works Department. It would be a sad thing if I did nothing but castigate the department for its work. I congratulate it for the excellent job it has done on other projects—the Mungar State School, which is a delightful country school that the children and teachers are very proud of; the opportunity school in Bundaberg, which was opened last week-end by the Minister for Education; the pre-school centre at Walkervale, which was also only recently opened; and the library centre at Walkervale. They are prime examples of what the Works Department can do when it really puts its mind to it.

While giving that little bit of praise, I mention a policy that I must find fault with. When a new school is built, landscaping is usually taken into consideration and the job is done in a really fine fashion so that it turns out to be one that everybody is proud of. At Pialba, where a new building was erected, no landscaping was done. The building was plonked on the site and the groundsman was then told, "You landscape it. You do something about it." The building needs a path from the main school building. In wet weather the conditions are almost intolerable. In the past month, thank goodness, we have had some rain in that area. It has been proved that problems exist there.

Whilst I can give great praise to the Works Department for the fine job that it does with new buildings at completely new schools and institutions, I find something wrong with the way it adds buildings to existing schools. It does not clean up to ensure that the new buildings fit into their environment. I emphasise that personally I have had very cordial relationships with the Works Department. I hope that that situation continues.

As the Minister knows, since my election to Parliament last year I have made repeated representations for more Housing Commission homes in the Bundaberg part of my electorate. Honourable members should be aware by now, because I tell them often enough, that my electorate takes in a third of the city of Bundaberg, goes down the coast and takes in Hervey Bay, takes in all of Fraser Island, although some people do not know that, and surrounds but does not include Maryborough. It has grieved me to find that I come up against an almost blank wall when I try to obtain further Housing Commission houses for the people of Bundaberg.

I have done some research into this subject and would like to put forward facts for the benefit of the Minister so that, when further planning is done in the allocation of Housing Commission houses in my area, he might take into account the rapid growth of the city of Bundaberg. In 1961 the population of Bundaberg was 22,839 whereas the population of Maryborough was 19,126,

or approximately 3,500 fewer. In 1966 those figures had risen to 25,400 and 19,600 respectively. The estimated 1973 population of Bundaberg was 28,000 and that of Maryborough was 19,050, which was a decrease over that period. The estimated 1975 populations of those cities are 32,000 and perhaps 19,100. Between 1961 and 1975 the population of Bundaberg has increased by about 10,000 while that of Maryborough has remained roughly the same.

Honourable members might wonder why I am taking great pains to point out that Bundaberg has grown while Maryborough has not. On 21 and 24 October this year I asked questions of the Minister. He replied that Bundaberg had a total of 88 houses available for rental and, considering only people in the 100, 80 and 60 categories, it had a need for 17 houses. Maryborough had 103 houses available for rental and had a need for six houses for people in those categories.

According to the Press releases by the Minister, Maryborough is to get about 20 houses and Bundaberg is to get either five or seven—I think five is the correct figure. To me, this seems totally unfair. I was told that the reason is that Bundaberg had not been able to establish a need. That may be because representations have not been made from that place, but I understand that the Bundaberg City Council and the development board in Bundaberg have made representations for extra houses in that city.

A deplorable situation exists in regard to pensioner units. In Bundaberg, 32 people have applied for them and only 12 are available. A comparison with a number of cities shows that Maryborough has 22 available compared with 12 in Bundaberg. When one looks at the available figures, it becomes obvious that planning dictates that in the allocation of Housing Commission homes and pensioner units in the Wide Bay area the majority must go to Bundaberg.

I am also aware that the Housing Commission has recently purchased land in the Bundaberg district. I congratulate it on doing so, but I suggest that it has left its move too late. There is now a necessity to catch up on the demand, and catch up quickly. Perhaps the authorities in Bundaberg have not informed the Housing Commission of the way in which that city is growing. If that is in fact the case, I think that the planning section of the Housing Commission should be doing something about finding out what is going on in the State. In any consideration of population growth figures, the number of houses allocated, and the number of people applying for housing under stress of need in the provisional cities of Queensland, Bundaberg shows up near the top of the list. I hope the Minister will take note of these figures that I have gone to great trouble to collate. I also hope

that, because of the extreme need in Bundaberg, in the next 12 months or so there will be a greater number of houses allocated to that city.

It is very difficult at the moment to give similar population figures for Hervey Bay because they are hidden in the figures of the Burrum Shire. Next year, with the establishment of the new local authority in Hervey Bay, those figures will be available. I venture to say that Hervey Bay will show, in percentage terms, as great a need for houses as Bundaberg. I suggest that the Housing Commission should look seriously at buying land very soon in the Hervey Bay area, because land prices there are escalating. If this were done, the commission would in the future be able to provide rental housing for people in need in Hervey Bay.

I move on to deal with housing planning. I do not presume that I am the first person who has looked into the relevant figures. I assume that the Housing Commission has at its disposal figures from which it is able to predict the number of houses that will be needed in the future. If we look at population figures over a period of time, we find that in 1967, 1968, 1969 and 1970 the greatest number of people were in the 5 years to 9 years age group. In 1971, 1972 and 1973, they became the 10 years to 14 years group, and in approximately seven years it is reasonable to assume that those 20 years of age to 24 years of age will be the largest population group. In 11 years' time, the largest group by age will be those from 25 to 29 years of age. It is those in the 25 years to 29 years age group who will be the main purchasers of houses, and about 78 per cent of those in that group are married. A projection of the figures in the way that I have suggested shows that by 1986 that age group should reach a peak of approximately 178,000, and I conservatively estimate that within that group 60,000 homes would be required.

We must also consider the population decrease through deaths. By 1986 there would be perhaps 30,000 deaths, from which one could assume that there would be, as a result, about 15,000 houses vacant. That means that by 1986 there would be a net requirement of 45,000 homes. Last year only 16,000 homes were completed in Queensland. I do not suggest that that is the fault of the Minister or his department. I know that there are some in Canberra who can be blamed very solidly for the downturn in the building industry. In 1971-72 the number of houses completed increased by about 18 per cent. That rate of increase continued until 1973. In 1973-74 there was a decrease of 1.6 per cent and in 1974-75 a decrease of 19 per cent, which reflects the funding of the Federal Labor Government and its ideas on housing. The Federal Labor Government believes that we should all rent houses and not own them.

It is our Government's policy, and certainly my policy, that we should be doing all we can to give people the opportunity to own their own home. We should be doing everything in our power to make money available for home-ownership rather than home rental. If we look at the figures and project them through to 1986, it is reasonable to assume there will be a net requirement in Queensland alone—I am not talking about the rest of Australia—of 45,000 more houses than we have at present, and if that is the case then something has to be done now to plan for that event so that we do not have the situation which exists now in my electorate. The Minister knows well and truly how I have hammered him and the Housing Commission for houses for people in my electorate. We will not be faced with that situation in the future if we plan now.

The cost of housing is another thing that appals me. In 1970-71 the cost of a brick house was just over \$12,000; today it is \$22,000. This is the way inflation has ruined the chances of young Queenslanders for home-ownership. It is a deplorable situation. I know the Minister agrees with me on that point at least, and I hope that he, being a far-sighted person, will guide his department towards planning in such a fashion that houses for everybody will be a real possibility in the near future.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (5.27 p.m.): In rising to speak in this debate, I wish to concentrate on that section of the Estimates which deals with the Housing Commission. The reason I choose to concentrate on that area is that within the Belmont electorate there are some 3,000 to 3,500 commission-constructed homes. That, indeed, means that it has one of the largest concentrations of Housing Commission homes of any electorate in Queensland. These are not newly constructed houses; many of them are 27 years old. Today's Housing Commission house is very different in standard from those which are now 27 years old. This raises various issues, the major one being that of equity. People moving into a recently constructed Housing Commission rental home find that it is built to a certain standard and maintained at a certain level. However, people also move into Housing Commission rental homes which may be 10, 15, 20 or even 30 years old and they find that those houses are of a standard somewhat different from the standard of homes which are being constructed today.

The inequity exists in that the newer houses are of a much higher standard, and if it is the belief of the commission that the houses that people move into today should be of that standard, then there is just as much reason for the Housing Commission to believe that houses which were constructed 20 or 30 years ago should be maintained at the same level. If it does not accept that, the Housing Commission is

working in a discriminatory fashion. It is working in an inequitable manner. However I am pleased to say that in my electorate and in many other areas in Queensland there have been vast improvements in the field of housing since the present Minister took over this portfolio and since I became the member for Belmont. Arguments we have had in relation to maintenance have proved to be successful in that slowly but surely the Government is beginning to comprehend that there are difficulties and problems in Housing Commission estates of some years' standing that need to be solved and that conditions need to be improved.

Maintenance took up a fairly large proportion of the Budget in 1974-1975—\$4,200,000, which was a record—and for the first time \$1,000,000 was set aside for improvements. I point out, however, that the improvements that were designated are not essentially the improvements that I consider will raise Housing Commission homes to a level of equity with new houses being constructed. They assist towards that, but I do not believe that the provision of things such as sewerage, stoves, hot water systems, electricity, kitchen sinks, fences, clothes hoists, rain-water drainage, ramps and open sleep-outs necessarily raise the standard of a home. They do, indeed, improve the basic services of that home, but they do not essentially raise the standards in an environmental sense.

For any person who drives or walks through the Housing Commission areas in my electorate—at Carina Heights, Mt. Gravatt East, Holland Park and Seven Hills—and visits the people there, it is easy to see that Housing Commission rental homes are the worst-maintained of Government buildings. That is not necessarily a serious or surprising condemnation. A family in a Housing Commission rental home is pleased to at least have a roof over its head, because a home is so difficult to acquire in the first place.

Let us look at other public buildings—and Housing Commission rental homes are Government buildings. Let us look first at schools. The schools in my electorate do need servicing and maintaining, and they need improved maintenance; but the standards of painting and the maintenance of plumbing and of the grounds of the schools and all the other things in which the Government plays some financial part are indeed of a much higher level than those of the houses from which many of the children who attend those schools come.

I hold that the most essential unit within our society is the family and the most important external structure in our society is the home. If there is not economic security and stability within the home, circumstances are provided not only for insecurity of the individual and social problems at a later date but also for juvenile delinquency, vandalism and crime. I have only to walk through the Housing Commission areas in my electorate to see that that is the case. I have only to

answer my telephone each day and hear from residents in these areas complaints about young children who find themselves in circumstances in which crime, vandalism and delinquency are a normal part of their day.

The child is often blamed in this area. But we are all the products of our environment, and people put into a depressed environment cannot but themselves be depressed at least in some sense. In my speech in the Address-in-Reply debate earlier this year, I said—

“A depressed environment is self-perpetuating; a depressed society is self-destructive. People for whom the material side of life has been fraught with misfortune often cannot rise from their misfortune to change their society. There are those who try and succeed; there are those who try and do not succeed; there are those who do not try; and there are those who cannot try.”

It is towards the latter group that the Government must show its greatest responsibility.

It is unfortunate that we find ourselves in this situation and in these circumstances, and there are many anomalies within the Housing Commission that perturb me daily. It has always been my belief that National-Liberal Governments in this State have stood for home-ownership. Indeed, they have encouraged the purchase of Housing Commission rental homes. At least, they did until the recent housing agreement was imposed on this State by the Federal Government. It was only by the determined fight put up by the State that we were able to get agreement to allow 30 per cent of houses to be purchased.

But these are not the houses that I find within my area. Those that I find are totally subject to the capacity of home purchase. Ten or 15 years ago a family—a father, a mother and a few children—who were living in a Housing Commission home were entitled to purchase that home if they could afford to do so. With the passage of the years, the children have grown up and the mother and father now live in that home by themselves. Theoretically they could remain there until they die. They may now find themselves in somewhat better economic circumstances than before and they may now be able to afford to purchase that home. But what happens when they make application to purchase it? They are told they are no longer eligible as purchasers of a home. Eligibility is determined apparently by the economic circumstances of a family at a particular time, and the fact that parents no longer have their children living with them seems to indicate that they no longer need or require the security and stability offered by home-ownership.

I can well appreciate the arguments put forward by the Housing Commission to the effect that it cannot give away a family home, or sell a family home, to two pensioners, and that if it did it would deprive the

housing market of a home. But this is a fatuous argument in that such a couple will remain in that house, into which they have poured large sums of money over the years, in a rental situation. In many instances such people have spent their life's savings on improving their home by doing both interior and exterior painting—which has not been done by the Housing Commission—by laying paths and walkways, by digging gardens and by doing many other things. They stay there, paying their rent, perhaps until the day they die, and their house will not come onto the market until they die or leave it.

Suppose they were eligible for a purchase house. What is the situation? If they purchase it and pay off the debt, they are putting money into the State's coffers, from which money can be paid towards the development and purchase of more homes. I realise that costs are rising, but that should not deter us from appreciating what home-ownership means.

When those two people either die or leave the area, the home becomes vacant. It comes onto the market in an area in which there is free competition. So the market has not been deprived of a house; rather has security been provided to two people until the day they die. In this area there is need for change or for rethinking.

We seem to have missed the vital point that the Government's most crucial responsibility is the provision of housing and security for the family. If a family have security and stability, we can hope and expect that the children who are reared in a secure and stable environment will not become a social drain upon the community in their later years. If more money is put into housing, we might find in future years a drop in the rate of social and communal crime. We may not need to spend quite so much on welfare problems. To some extent, they will have been avoided by the security that is afforded by a stable, secure home.

Why is it that, in relation to the rental homes which do exist, such things as external painting, broken-down fences, rusty guttering, rotting windowsills and so on are of no immediate importance? Why is it that the Housing Commission believes there are more important priorities? While the Housing Commission is constructing more homes of a much higher standard—which are well painted, have good guttering, windowsills, fences and other essentials—there is a step backward in the maintenance of homes?

St. Augustine once said, “Unless we move forward, we move backward.” If we try to stand still, we move backward, because progress takes place while we stand still. Without a continuing programme of maintenance and improvement, the equity in homes in Housing Commission estates will fall behind that of the general housing that the commission provides.

When people living in Housing Commission homes approach me, whenever possible I try to get improved standards. I have tried to get houses repainted and rusty, rotten guttering replaced. But when I visit many of these homes I find the occupants in unfortunate circumstances. One home I visited had recently had internal repainting carried out. But the contractors had not bothered to clean down the walls or even move the furniture to paint behind it. They did nothing at all to prepare the walls; they simply painted over what was there. They stood on beds and dressing-tables to paint the walls and ceilings, and the paint dripped down onto the floor, beds and other things. Because the walls were not properly prepared, the paint blistered within a short time. When an inspector came to look at the job he said, "That's not good, is it!" But nothing more was done about it.

It is not surprising that people in such unfortunate circumstances draw the conclusion that Governments don't care, or that no-one really cares what happens to them. It is not surprising that they say to themselves, "Why should I try; why should I show any initiative? Why should I do anything to improve this house when I will receive no economic benefit for doing it? I cannot leave it to my children or do anything with it."

The provisions for home purchase are not as advantageous as they could be. When finance is available to people later in life, they are told that they are ineligible. The level of maintenance and improvement of older Housing Commission homes is indeed deplorable. However, I am but one of two or three voices that cry in the wilderness against bureaucracy, trying to get some changes effected in this area.

Perhaps many of the people living in these homes do not appreciate that they can have them improved and maintained. Many others have purchased their homes and are trying to make them worth-while places to live in, places where their families can grow and develop. Whose houses are in the worst and most deplorable condition? Whose houses are they which make the environment appear to be so depressed? They are the houses of which the State is the landlord! Indeed, that is a serious condemnation. Even within the provisions of the agreement for rent, the amended clause 16 reads—

"To keep the land clear of refuse and noxious weeds and the land and house clean and with a neat and tidy appearance; to keep grass cut and to improve appearance by planting and care of gardens and shrubs; to abate health nuisances (not involving physical, structural or capital works) as required in writing by an authorised Health Inspector of the Local Authority."

Why does the Housing Commission not endeavour to see that those provisions are enforced? Other people who live in the same area must walk past those houses.

They endeavour to improve the appearance of their own homes. When either the Government fails itself in maintenance or the tenants themselves do not possess any initiative, these people find themselves in circumstances where they say, "Why should I even try?" I do not think any of us would blame them. How many of us would like it if our neighbours or the tenants of four, five or six or eight houses in the street did not care very much about their circumstances if the landlords of those houses did not care very much for the external appearance or for the maintenance of those homes? People in that situation would either not stay there very long or would be outspoken about it.

The people about whom I am talking find themselves in different circumstances. It is my hope that in years to come we will see a much-needed improvement and more concern shown to the areas of older Housing Commission homes in the realisation that those homes and the people who live within them are entitled to the same circumstances, the same standards, the same rights and equalities and the same improvements as the people who find themselves living in the newer Housing Commission homes.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (5.47 p.m.): In rising to speak on the Estimates of Works and Housing, I wish mainly to elaborate on the remarks of the member for Isis about houses for Bundaberg. He said that in the 10 months since he entered Parliament he has complained about the position in Bundaberg and some other parts of his electorate. However, I remind the Committee that his predecessor, Mr. Blake, and I have been raising these matters over the last six years.

It was very interesting to hear the Minister's reply to a recent question from the member for Isis on the points rating and how the various cities and towns compare. I have the answers to two questions, and I want the Minister to listen carefully. In about July I wrote him a letter asking why tenders were being called for 20 houses in Maryborough and none in Bundaberg. The Minister for Industrial Development stated quite clearly that only one other city in Queensland was growing faster than Bundaberg. He indicated that that had been the position for the last few years. The industrial development estate at Bundaberg was filling fast. Bundaberg was growing. However, the Housing Commission seemed to know nothing about it when I wrote to it in July. I asked why tenders were called for 20 houses in Maryborough but none in Bundaberg, when Maryborough was going backwards or standing still and the population of Bundaberg was increasing by over 1,000 a year. The statistics show that.

An increase in population is not the only factor affecting housing. Inflation has caused a considerable increase in the price of land and houses. Firms coming to Bundaberg do not build houses for their staff. They buy up existing houses for their managers

and other staff. I know that the sugar mills always provide houses. Some months ago, when there was talk about the scarcity of houses, the manager of the Bundaberg Development Board spoke about getting low-rent houses. He complained to the Housing Commission about the supply of houses. I said, "It's about time that Toft, Massey Ferguson and other industries that are shifting in and lifting their employment put something into houses." They can put an extra million into increasing the size of the factory, but not one penny into houses.

In reply to a question on 21 October the Minister gave figures on Housing Commission accommodation. Dealing with people with a points rating of 100, only Mackay with 15 and Gympie with 13 exceeded Bundaberg with 11 who were waiting for accommodation. Maryborough had three, yet 20 more houses are to be built in Maryborough. The houses have not been built yet; the contracts were let only recently. In addition, Maryborough had only three people with a points rating of 80 who were waiting for accommodation.

Bundaberg has 32 pensioners awaiting pensioner units. It is the highest figure for all the towns that were listed—Bundaberg, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Maryborough, Gympie, Mt. Isa, Biloela and Gladstone. Maryborough had only 16.

Mr. Casey: Mackay?

Mr. JENSEN: Mackay had 15 people on the list with a points rating of 100, and 23 pensioners awaiting pensioner units. Bundaberg had 32. Maryborough already had 22 pensioner units compared with 12 in Bundaberg. Mackay had—

Mr. Casey: Eleven.

Mr. JENSEN: Yes, but the waiting list in Bundaberg was 32.

Maryborough has a population of 20,000 compared with 32,000 in Bundaberg, yet the department could call tenders for only five houses in Bundaberg. I repeat that in June tenders were called for 20 houses in Maryborough.

Mr. Alison: It has a better member.

Mr. JENSEN: I do not care what the member is like. The record of what the honourable member has done in Parliament is in "Hansard" for anybody to read. If Ministers crawl to members on their side of the Chamber, that is their business. I want to bring to the notice of the Committee the inadequacies and inefficiency of the department according to the figures.

Let me now outline the number of houses and units that have been provided in various cities throughout Queensland. Townsville has 2,307. I am not criticising Townsville. Many of those houses were built when the city was growing fast. Gladstone, which is half the size of Bundaberg, has 1,024 houses. It had to have houses provided quickly because it was growing fast. Bundaberg has 221 houses

compared with 2,307 in Townsville, which is twice as big as Bundaberg, and there are 1,024 in Gladstone, which is half as big as Bundaberg. Maryborough, which is two-thirds the size of Bundaberg, has 237. In addition, it has 22 pensioner units compared with 12 in Bundaberg.

The Minister should look at those figures and, as I pointed out to him in a letter, contact the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development to find out where Bundaberg stands in Queensland. It has great potential. Nearly every site on the Bunda Industrial Estate is occupied and the size of the estate will have to be increased again. The Minister for Works and Housing has done nothing about housing accommodation. The Housing Commission did the right thing in Townsville and Gladstone when those places were growing. Gladstone has no vacancies at present.

Mr. Alison: We have 90 people waiting.

Mr. JENSEN: I have the figures for Maryborough and it has nothing like 90 people waiting.

Bundaberg has no vacancies, Gladstone has six houses and Townsville has two houses and three flats. These figures supplied by the Minister show that the department has never looked into the growth of these cities. Nothing has been done about it even though I wrote to the Minister and raised the matter in Parliament time and time again.

The Bundaberg Development Board was reported in Friday's newspaper as making a statement on low-rent building plans. We in Bundaberg have heard for a few months now that a Sydney company intends to build low-rent houses in Bundaberg. The latest proposal (the Minister should listen to this; it's a beauty) is that Bundaberg residents put up \$60,000, with no interest, to help a company raise \$130,000. It wants Bundaberg residents to put up \$130,000, with no interest. It must be joking.

Mr. Lee: You said \$60,000 a moment ago. Make up your mind.

Mr. JENSEN: \$60,000 of the \$130,000, with no interest. It must be joking. This is the type of thing that is going on. Massey Ferguson has about 800 employees in Bundaberg, and Toft Bros. employ about 600, but they have done nothing to provide low-rental houses or units for their employees. As I have said before, they should have been providing accommodation for their workers. Mrs. Toft, the lady in charge of the Citizens Advice Bureau, was reported in the Press as saying that low-rent accommodation was almost impossible to find, and that landlords were "putting things over people." She cited a case of one man who had rented a home for five years receiving seven days' notice to vacate because the house had been sold. That is happening in Bundaberg every day. People are buying houses at inflated prices, and putting pensioners and other aged people out of their homes.

A similar situation is found in the case of terminating building society finance. Most of it is used for the purchase of old homes, whereas it should be used for the construction of new homes. With inflation, the price of old homes has increased considerably, and putting housing money into old homes is doing nothing for Bundaberg. If one compares the present position with that obtaining a couple of years ago, one finds that rents in Bundaberg have risen almost as high as those in Mt. Isa. It is ridiculous that the people of Bundaberg have to put up with this situation whilst the Housing Commission does nothing about it.

I have said that industries are moving into Bundaberg, and that can easily be proved. But no authority is insisting that such companies provide houses for members of their staff. The sugar mills have always provided housing, and they still do so. Today large companies are constantly squealing to the Housing Commission for the provision of houses for their employees. They do not provide their own accommodation. I am completely opposed to the provision of housing for such companies by the Housing Commission. I want to see them do something towards relieving the housing situation.

I was about to mention terminating building societies. I spoke to Mr. Campbell this morning about one society in Bundaberg. Mr. Campbell has always been very decent to me, and any time I ring him he immediately gives me the information that I want. In this respect he is not like the Minister. I would not waste time approaching him; I like to go to those who know their job. I get on to the right man in the right place, and I always get the facts and figures that I want.

A person in Bundaberg obtained an option on a house in Bundaberg a month ago. It was inspected by the Minister's department on, I think, 10 or 15 October, but nothing has been done since then. The building society blamed the Housing Commission for holding up the sale of this house to the lady who wants to buy it. I therefore telephoned Mr. Campbell this morning to ascertain the facts. After being told the position, I immediately telephoned the manager of the building society and told him what Mr. Campbell had told me. I said, "Approval from the department has been in your hands, but it has not reached Brisbane, and the lady has one week of her option left."

Often such people leave the matter in the hands of their solicitors. The money is made available, and approvals are sent out. But instead of getting the papers down to the department immediately, the societies tell the people anything at all and blame the Minister's department. This type of thing has to stop. When cases such as this occur, it is about time that the Minister told the terminating building societies to get off their backsides and look after the people a bit better. I have made many approaches to

building societies. I think I was one who gave the Minister the opportunity to change the legislation when interest rates were going haywire. At that time the Minister introduced fixed interest rates for the societies. I know what has been going on with building societies. I know the honourable member for Archerfield took a few more apart today. When I took them apart four or five years ago, the Minister supported me and altered the legislation.

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

Mr. JENSEN: Before dinner I mentioned the need for houses in Bundaberg and I quoted the Minister's figures to show that that need has been proved by the Minister's department. I mentioned that the former member for Isis, the present member for Isis and I, as well as the city council and the development board, have asked for these houses but the department has overlooked the matter. Departmental officers have not kept up with the progress of the city of Bundaberg. Just recently they were trying to purchase land in Bundaberg. It was only two years ago that somewhere round 30 allotments were sold by the Lands Department. Only eight allotments were reserved and tenders have just closed for the building of five houses on those allotments. The department did not do anything about land at that time. Now it is starting to look for land when land values have escalated 200 or 300 per cent.

In order to prove what I said about pensioner units, I want to quote a question I asked of the former Minister (Hon. A. M. Hodges) on 28 August 1973. Because he gave me a wrong answer, I repeated the question the following day. It was—

"In view of his Answer to my Question on August 2 that there were only two applications currently on hand for pensioner units in Bundaberg, will he have this figure checked as the city council has over 20 applications for such units to be constructed by that authority?"

His answer was—

"My Answer to the Honourable Member was correct on the figures at that time." (That is how he got out of it.) "The number has now increased to 3 couples and 12 singles. As I indicated on 2nd instant Bundaberg will be kept under notice and I will have a check made to see whether there is duplication in the applications held by the Commission and by the council."

Whether there was duplication or not, the need was there. People went to the council to get units because the commission was too slow building them. The commission built 12 units—four double and eight single—yet it built 22 in Maryborough.

The Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries would support me on this question because he knows the council has written to him and to me on

many occasions about this. But the commission is now starting to look at the purchase of land. It is about time the commission looked at the development of cities and contacted the Department of Industrial Development to find out what is going on in Queensland, not just take notice of a few figures that are sent down from certain cities and say, "The need is not there." The need is in the future and if a city like Bundaberg is developing faster than any other city in Queensland, the commission should look at the need next year and the year after, not the present need. Bundaberg is now in a serious position with people being pushed out of their homes by new industries coming to Bundaberg, bringing new employees, advertising about the new industries and then buying houses at over twice their value. The position has got so bad that people are being kicked out of the homes they have rented for five or 10 years. They are told by the owner, "I am selling the house next week because some society has produced money and can pay \$20,000 for the house." The people are then told to vacate.

Bundaberg is second in the need for homes in Queensland with about 100 points so this is an urgent need. When we look at the homes that have been built over the years in Bundaberg compared with those built in other cities such as Cairns, Townsville, Mt. Isa, Mackay and Gladstone, the position is serious. As I said before, Gladstone, with half our population, has 1,024 commission homes and units compared with 221 in Bundaberg. At the time they were built, Gladstone was advancing considerably and houses had to be built. But the commission should know that now Bundaberg is advancing considerably and the commission should have been looking to the future and not at the present position, or even two or three years ago when I raised this matter. Questions have been asked in the House since 1973 but the commission has never looked to the future. The position in Bundaberg is becoming critical.

As I said earlier, it is not only the Housing Commission but also the industries coming to Bundaberg that are not doing anything about providing housing for their employees. It is their responsibility to put money into houses or units for employees coming to Bundaberg, not just to buy up old houses and put people out into the streets. That is the situation at present. It is all very well for the development board to skite about the industries it is bringing to Bundaberg; but it should be remembered that people are being put out of their houses as a result. For the last six months, the board has been disseminating propaganda that it intends to provide low-rental houses in Bundaberg. The latest information is that the board wants the people of Bundaberg to provide at no interest \$60,000 of the \$120,000 required. Would the Minister be investing money at

no interest? He would be putting it into the building societies that he controls, at an interest rate of 9½ or 9¾ per cent.

Somebody said that money in building societies is risky. Certainly, it is not as safe as money in a bank, but I do not think it is very risky. It is risky to the extent that, under the rules of building societies, they can hold back payment. I do not say that a person who invests money in a building society will not be paid. However, if a real depression or a war occurred tomorrow, he might not get his money back for 20 years. I brought this matter up in Parliament three or four years ago, and it has been raised time and time again since then.

Let me talk for a moment about the insurance offered by building societies. I raised this matter in Parliament, too, and on 29 August 1974, Mr. Hodges, who was then Minister for Works and Housing, said in his reply at the introductory stage of the Building Societies Act Amendment Bill—

"The point made by the honourable member for Mackay about insurance—"

Mr. Aikens: What do you think about Whitlam being sacked?

Mr. JENSEN: If I may speak for a second, Mr. Kaus, about Whitlam being sacked, I point out to the Committee that there will not be any money for housing if the other parties come to office. Land values will increase continually because the sharks who engage in land dealing will get all the assistance they need from the Tories.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HALES (Ipswich West) (7.22 p.m.): The Department of Works and Housing has a large budget and covers many fields of construction. I should like to delve for a moment into the workings of the Queensland Housing Commission.

The commission had a record year in 1974-75. However, because of the cutback in Federal funding this financial year, its record-breaking run will come to a halt. That is a pity, in my opinion, because Australia is in an accommodation crisis. It is as plain as the nose on one's face that it has been coming on for some time.

It is a well-known fact that, in today's market, the private developer is not proceeding with either subdivisional work or the provision of private rental accommodation. No developer will subdivide land in today's inflationary climate because development costs are equal to the market value of the land he is selling. So what is happening, of course, is that when a developer sells his land his profits are illusory. In fact, his capital investment decreases in value because he is taxed on his illusory profits.

Mr. McKechnie: Is it a fact that welfare housing is known as Hayden's folly in your electorate?

Mr. HALES: We all know that Mr. Hayden savagely cut back welfare housing money for Queensland. As honourable members are aware, last year Queensland received \$43,000,000; this year the amount has been reduced to \$31,000,000. I have made numerous speeches on the subject in this Chamber and issued numerous Press releases on it at Ipswich.

Mr. Houston: How much did you get in 1972?

Mr. HALES: The issue is what is happening now. We all know that business confidence is at a record low. If the honourable gentleman opposite has any brains, he will know that himself. What the community needs is a Government that will restore business confidence, not an inept and corrupt Government such as that which was sacked today in Canberra.

Mr. Houston: You'll have your chance.

Mr. HALES: We certainly will. We'll see how far the Federal A.L.P. goes at the ballot-boxes in a few weeks' time. It will follow the Labor Party in this Chamber; it will be flat out having a cricket team in Canberra after the election. I hope members of the Opposition saw Mr. Whitlam on television tonight. He wasn't so arrogant then. He had had his chips and he was a very poor performer indeed.

Over recent years the Queensland Housing Commission has provided a lot of homes for a lot of people. Particularly over the last 18 months or so, it has taken the opportunity to buy from private developers land at a cost virtually equal to that paid by the developers. This has been an opportunity to buy from private developers who have been squeezed in the current economic crisis. As I said before, very little development is going on at present. The developers just did not have confidence in what was until today the Federal Government. I contend that the Housing Commission will not be able to buy any privately developed land this year, so I urge the Minister to subdivide as many blocks as possible.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! The honourable member for Archerfield will return to his usual place in the Chamber if he wishes to interject.

Mr. HALES: As I was saying, the Housing Commission should subdivide as many areas as funds will allow. Today's contract prices are the cheapest they have been for a long time, and I know that contractors' quotes are very competitive indeed. In fact, for the first time to my knowledge, contractors' quotes are well below engineers' estimates. It is quite evident that now is the time to develop land, not only so that the Housing Commission can provide homes but so that private enterprise may be brought back to a viable economic position as well.

Although I realise that 1974-75 was a record year for the Housing Commission, I am disappointed at the fact that the Queensland Government did not allocate more funds towards the provision of welfare housing. The Federal Labor Government did not shoulder its responsibilities of funding welfare housing, so the State Government should have done so. If it had done that, it would have shown the socialists in Canberra that we care for the people. They certainly do not care for the people.

In the early 1960s 62 per cent of Australians owned their own homes. In the early 1970s the level had risen to 70 per cent. But now it is back to the level of the 1960s. The blame for this lies at the feet of the socialists in Canberra. Under today's conditions and high interest rates, people simply cannot afford to borrow money to purchase homes.

We must not lose sight of the fact that people must be housed; nor should we fail to promote home-ownership. But home-ownership will become a reality to many people only if a general reduction in interest rates is brought about by the new Federal Government that I hope will be elected to office. Such a hope would indeed have been a forlorn one under the socialist Government that held office in Canberra for the past 18 months or so. It consisted of inept, corrupt and ignorant financial fools—the monetary maniacs and economic idiots. It is passing strange—

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Your reputation is not too good.

Mr. HALES: It is passing strange that many of the socialists on the Opposition benches who are now interjecting and complaining bitterly own their own homes or are paying them off. Yet they are the ones telling everybody else that Big Brother should own their homes and that they should be paying rent for them. How many Opposition members own their own homes or are paying them off? It is not a matter of their saying, "Do what we do" but "Do what we tell you to do."

In these depressed economic times it is good common sense for the Queensland Government to house people and promote home-ownership through the Housing Commission or low-interest co-operative housing societies.

I note that the Federal Labor Government allocated \$20,000,000 this financial year for low-interest home loans, but that is a mere drop in the bucket. The Queensland Government should show the Federal Government how sincere it is about housing people. It is my considered opinion that the Government should reconsider the Brisbane cultural project. Because people are important, the \$45,000,000 that the Queensland Government is considering spending on the cultural project at South Brisbane should be devoted to housing people. Like many other honourable members, I write letter after letter to the

Minister inquiring about Housing Commission houses. It is unfortunate that there is not enough money to go around.

Mr. Houston: The money is being wasted on trips to Alice Springs and Darwin.

Mr. HALES: The honourable member has raised the matter of trips. If Gough had stayed home, we might have been able to build a few more houses for the people.

At times I am amazed at the conditions under which people live. Recently I wrote a letter to the Minister for Works and Housing pointing out that nine adults and three children were living in one house, but it has come to my notice that some people are living in even worse conditions.

I wonder where we were going with the Federal Labor Government? If we examine its Budget closely, we realise that if it had had any sense at all it would not have allocated so much money to certain areas. Before I start on my next point—

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You have not started.

Mr. HALES: I have not started, but before I finish I will show what I think of the Labor Government.

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. HALES: I will get my piece across. I believe the honourable member for Lytton to be the most incompetent and worst Leader of the Opposition ever to be in this Parliament. He is the lightweight from Lytton. If he were not held down by the heavyweights from Port Curtis and Rockhampton, he would float away in the balloon of his own hot air.

Mr. Lamont: Did you take Mr. Houston into account when you said that?

Mr. HALES: Yes. The honourable member for Bulimba was a much better leader.

I am not a racist, but the Federal Government allocated \$45,000,000 for Aboriginal housing throughout Australia, and \$31,000,000 to Queensland. It allocated \$45,000,000 for 180,000 people as against \$31,000,000 for over 2,000,000 people. Let us examine this allocation a little more closely to see how the money was to be spent. An examination of the Federal Budget reveals that four houses on Thursday Island were to cost \$310,000—that is, \$77,500 a house. On the other hand, the State Government built 20 houses for \$530,000. It cost us \$26,000 to build a house on Thursday Island. It cost the Federal Government \$77,500—three times as much as the State Government, or \$50,000 more for each house.

A Government Member: Gough might have built a house for himself up there.

Mr. HALES: That's probably right.

One wonders what would have happened if the Federal Labor Government had stayed in office. That is just one instance of the way in which they wasted money.

Mr. LAMOND (Wynnum) (7.36 p.m.): In speaking in the debate on the Estimates for Works and Housing, I stress that we have been through an incredible period in the history of Australia, particularly with the problems that have confronted us recently as a result of the dictates of the Federal Government. We should have learned a lesson from the events of this period and, irrespective of the Federal Government in power, we must not allow a situation to develop in the future which has such a devastating effect on housing in any State. As I develop my address, I shall stress that point.

First I comment on the unfair funding of housing as between the States. While the Whitlam Government has put forward many and varied reasons for the difference in the amounts allocated to the States for specific purposes, I cannot be convinced that the need for housing in Queensland can be any less than it is in other States. And I am quite sure that it would be difficult to convince the many thousands of young people in Queensland who are homeless today that it is any less.

The Minister commented in his speech on the bias of the Federal Government in the disbursement of funds to the State. Its unfair allocation of funds to Queensland, particularly in the field of housing, had a devastating effect on housing as a whole.

Taxation collected by any Federal Government—and I stress "any Federal Government"—must be disbursed to the States on a fair and equitable basis, irrespective of the political party in power in any State. It would appear from figures made available to me that Queensland, because its people saw fit to elect a Government of a different political colour from the one in Canberra, fared badly and received an unfair distribution of funds.

With a population of some 2,000,000 as at March 1975, Queensland had 14.8 per cent of the total population of Australia but received only 10 per cent of the 1974-75 funding allocation, representing approximately \$37 per head of population. South Australia, on the other hand, with a population of some 1,300,000, representing 9.2 per cent of the total Australian population, received 15 per cent of the funds for housing in the same period, or some \$91 per head of population. Tasmania, with a population of fewer than half a million, representing some 3 per cent of the total population of Australia, received 6.5 per cent of the funds allocated, or \$118 per head of population. In the same period, New South Wales, with a population of some 4,800,000, representing 35.5 per cent of the Australian population, received only 32.9 per cent of the housing funds available, or some \$51 per head of population. This pattern of allocation of funding throughout all States appears to be fairly constant. It is an unfair method of

distribution based purely on political consideration. Every Government in Canberra, irrespective of its political opinions, must watch these figures very carefully.

Mr. Burns: The real estate agents in Wynnum wrote this for you.

Mr. LAMOND: This address was not written by any other Wynnum resident. I wrote it myself.

The people in Canberra responsible for this unfair distribution have seen fit to tell us that the availability of funds to Queensland prior to 1972 was less for a comparable period than the funds made available by the present—or past—Government in Canberra. They saw fit to overlook inflation and the devastating effect it has had on the purchasing power of the dollar. It is difficult to draw a comparison between figures for two periods—prior to 1972 when the rate of inflation was at a given figure and after 1972 when there was an increased rate of inflation. It is indeed one of the first responsibilities of whatever Government is in power in Canberra—and I repeat, “Whatever Government is in power in Canberra”—to distribute housing finance fairly among all States irrespective of the political colour of any State Government.

In introducing his Estimates, the Minister commented on various points and I want to deal with one of them. He said that, in the forthcoming year, because of the squeeze, the future looks very black indeed and that the commission may be able to build only a few houses. I should like to bring to the Minister's notice the Priorities Review Staff Report on Housing, which was sent to the Prime Minister. The Minister's portfolio has far-reaching effects. He reaches to the very basis of the family unit. In the field of housing his portfolio extends into private enterprise and into benefit housing, both of which produce houses for our people. In this regard the Minister is responsible for creating the first and possibly the most important basis of government, that is, the family home. A family that is adequately and securely accommodated is the basis of stable government in any community. It is because of this very point that I am concerned about certain sections of the Priorities Review Staff Report on Housing, which came out in August of this year. It seems to be one of the most socialistic and dangerous documents ever presented by any Government.

I refer to three specific points: taxation on valuation of rent for those people who through initiative own their own homes; abolition of tax deductions for rates of privately owned homes; and abolition of tax deductions for interest on house mortgages. Incidentally the last of them was brought in recently by the now former Federal Government. Even though this document was compiled at incredible cost, we have been told by some people in Canberra that the recommendations may never be used. If that is so, it seems quite ridiculous to have had the

report prepared. These are forms of taxation that could surely not be adopted by any Government.

Unfortunately all too frequently what I might call left-overs pass from one Government to another. Irrespective of the political colour of the Government elected to Canberra at some time in future, I hope and trust that the Minister will do his utmost to see that this document is thrown out and does not become one of those things that are left from one Government and picked up by another as something that seems reasonable. Believe me, Mr. Kaus, this is a most dangerous document, and it could do very much harm to the right of the people to own their own homes. There is no doubt in my mind that if the Government that has been in office in Canberra had exhausted all its other avenues of finance, it would certainly have used this method of taxation. That is why I again stress that, irrespective of the Government elected, I hope that this document will be thrown out and never used as a means of taxation against the people of Australia.

I now wish to deal with unemployment in the building industry. This industry is probably one of those hardest hit during the present period of unemployment. The effects on the industry have been far reaching, and those who read “The Courier-Mail” this morning no doubt saw the reference to the frightening slump that has hit builders in the last year. It is stated in the report that in 1972-73 the number of new houses built in Queensland totalled 22,549. I shall not quote the figures for Brisbane. During the financial year just ended, the number was reduced to 14,221. This is a frightening reduction, and that report in “The Courier-Mail” tells much of the far-reaching effects of the recession on all sections of the building industry.

The far-reaching effects are not restricted to carpenters, builders and labourers. There is also a heavy toll of professional workers employed indirectly by the building industry. I refer to architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, draftsmen and those employed in other callings associated with the building industry. These effects extend beyond the day and age in which we live, because the trades and professions have great difficulty in employing apprentices and trainees. This in itself is destructive of the future of the building industry, because in years to come there will be insufficient qualified people to carry out this work.

Planning for the future in housing has always been a most complex problem, and it frequently falls short in its aim of supplying houses of a type and standard suitable for the masses. The destruction of the industry is far reaching in the measurement of time, and it is the responsibility of every Government to ensure that this problem does not continue into the future.

Young people today seek a higher standard of education, and for this reason I feel that the Minister's portfolio goes hand in hand

with the Education ministry. The building of schools and colleges to provide adequate accommodation for students is having, and will continue to have, a basic effect on education. It is disturbing to teachers, staff, students and parents to find inadequate accommodation in schools and colleges.

I think there would be few members indeed who are not at this stage being affected by a lack of finance for very necessary maintenance of school buildings in their electorates. In my own area I am able to refer to three specific instances. At the Manly State School the simple job of extending a library cannot be done because of lack of finance. At the Wynnum State High School the administration section cannot be extended, for the same reason. At Wynnum North school, once again lack of finance is holding up the extension of the administration section. This is disastrous for the schools. They are only small jobs but they have an effect in those areas. While those points concern me greatly, I am conscious of the restrictions placed on the Minister by the lack of finance.

However, I gain some confidence and pleasure from the achievements of the department in the field of housing in 1974-75. I congratulate the Minister and his staff on the development that has taken place throughout the State with modern architecture and technology employed in building schools, hospitals and public buildings and the common-sense approach in constructing buildings suited to the Queensland climate. In a very practical way the Minister and his department have changed the skyline of Queensland.

I want to refer to the Wynnum Nursing Care Unit, which is mentioned in the Annual Report of the Department of Works. This represents an expenditure of \$3,500,000, supplying some 80 beds for the aged. A further 72 beds will be provided in the future. While the unit is not in my electorate, it does service my electorate and the Minister is to be congratulated on development of this type.

I ask him to give consideration to the setting up of a committee to investigate the part-time use of public buildings or rooms by interested sections of the community. I refer specifically to unused classrooms in both primary and secondary schools now lying idle for long periods during the day while sections of the public search hungrily for places in which to meet to promote cultural activities.

My contact with the Minister and his officers during the past 12 months has led me to believe that they are looking to the future. Recent developments and a general face-lift in the planning of Housing Commission homes is a refreshing breeze blowing through the Housing Commission because for too many years we have seen a tentative Housing Commission which appeared to change little over a long period. This fresh approach by the Minister and his officers

with new designs is very pleasing to me and very pleasing to those people who live in Housing Commission homes.

I trust that in the coming year the Minister will be able in some way, although he is subject to these financial controls, to provide more rental housing. The lack of such housing is causing incredible hardship to young couples. I think most honourable members have visited young couples living in accommodation which displeases them. I think this is a pressing problem. As I said earlier, if we take away adequate and suitable rental accommodation from the young people of Australia, as was recommended in that dastardly report on housing brought down by the Federal Government in August, we take away the right of the people of Australia to own their own home. That is certainly a very backward step because we are proud of the fact that the percentage of home-ownership in Australia is among the highest in the world. Any action taken by the department to upgrade the Housing Commission is most certainly a forward move. I congratulate the Minister and his staff on their work.

I conclude my speech by congratulating the Premier on the excellent job he has done in holding back the tide of socialism while those in Canberra, from the Governor-General down, had time to stop and think and regroup their forces and give the people of Australia the opportunity to decide whether they wanted socialism or sane government. My congratulations also go to the other members of the Ministry who have assisted the Premier to hold back the tide of socialism.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (7.56 p.m.): This afternoon the honourable member for Archerfield delivered an hysterical speech about permanent building societies. In case the Press prints some of that speech, I believe that I should answer it now and rebut the allegations made.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Just don't protect crooks.

Mr. LEE: People in the gallery listening to the honourable member this afternoon would have gained the impression from his remarks that responsible permanent building societies throughout Queensland, which provide a public service, are nothing but criminals and crooks.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I did not say that.

Mr. LEE: Yes, the honourable member did. He said that the executives had shady dealings.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I rise to a point of order. Apparently the Minister has been smoking opium right through the dinner break.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order!

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I did not accuse all the building societies of being crooks. What I said was that some building societies were crooks, and I named the ones that I was criticising—United Savings Permanent Building Society and the Great Australian Permanent Building Society.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

Mr. K. J. Hooper: My point of order is that what the Minister said is untrue.

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

Mr. LEE: The honourable member for Archerfield said that there had been shady dealings by executives, and that these executives, myself, a former Minister for Works and Housing and the Minister for Justice had conspired together to defraud the public in some weird way that is difficult to understand. I really do not know why the honourable member should say such a thing.

Perhaps one of the best answers that I can give to his wild, irresponsible allegations is to state the record of building societies to date. In these days of economic hardship, how many building societies does the honourable member know of that have gone into liquidation? Admittedly, there has been some regrouping of activities to bring about more stable operations, but that is normal business practice, as the honourable member knows. He was too busy calling everybody crooks and criminals to advert to normal business practices. He ought to be ashamed of himself.

Over all, the fine record of building societies in this State and the provision of finance for housing, of which so many young married couples have taken advantage, is self-evident and destroys most of the statements made by the honourable member earlier in the debate. The way building societies throughout the State have performed destroys virtually every word he said.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: May I ask you one question?

Mr. LEE: No, the honourable member cannot. I am sick of listening to him tell lies, as he did this afternoon.

Mr. Campbell: He just wanted to empty a can on all the building societies.

Mr. LEE: That is all he wanted to do. The honourable member mentioned the United Savings Permanent Building Society. It is now only a shell. That shows how little he knows about it.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I beg your pardon?

Mr. LEE: It is only a shell. It exists in name only and will shortly be removed from the Register of Permanent Building Societies.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: It has been merged with the Great Australian Permanent Building Society.

Mr. LEE: As I said before, that is a normal business practice. The honourable member would not understand it.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. LEE: The honourable member should keep quiet. He has had a go. Not one previous member has suffered any loss to date as a result of the transfer of these engagements.

I shall deal also with one or two other points raised by the honourable member. The auditors are appointed by members of the society at an annual general meeting, and I see no validity whatever in any criticism of this procedure. After all, the societies are basically the property of the members.

The honourable member made very strong allegations against the very good societies throughout the State, and I do not think that I should allow his comments to go unanswered.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. LEE: I am not interested in what the honourable member has. All I am interested in doing is defending the societies throughout the State. They do not operate on socialistic principles, as the honourable member is used to doing. They choose to work on a democratic principle. Members of the Opposition, of course, would not understand the meaning of "democracy". The building societies operate on a private-enterprise approach.

Mr. Houston: Those are not your words.

Mr. LEE: Of course they are. The members are the ones who should, and do, have the right to appoint auditors and, for that matter, directors.

The honourable member for Archerfield spoke about what he termed the proper enforcement of the law.

Mr. Alison: A proper terror.

Mr. LEE: Not a terror; he's a goner. The terror has gone out of him.

By June of this year the Corporate Affairs Office had been wholly reorganised.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Because of the questions I asked you last year.

Mr. LEE: What a lot of rot! The honourable member wouldn't know how to ask a sensible question. The office had been upgraded with the appointment of many professional and qualified accountants and legal officers. The results of this reorganisation are already becoming clearly evident.

The honourable member also mentioned control of advertising. In Queensland there are rigid controls on advertising. All advertisements must first receive the approval of the

registry before publication and must not give the impression that the organisation concerned is a banking organisation. It must not misrepresent its role in any way.

The honourable member also spoke about liquidity. I shall tell him about liquidity. The liquidity reserves of the permanent building societies in Queensland are far in excess of the minimum required by the Act, which is 7½ per cent of shareholders and depositors' funds in a readily available form. In fact most societies at present have liquidity reserves of up to 20 per cent. Yes, that's what they have.

Mr. Hodges: Including the trade union societies.

Mr. LEE: That is right, yet Opposition members are knocking them, too.

Finally, I assure the honourable member for Archerfield that there is no truth in the slur he has placed on all directors of permanent building societies in Queensland as well as on myself and two other responsible Ministers. Anyone who breaks the law will be dealt with by due process of law.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Oh yeah!

Mr. LEE: Well, listen to this. In fact, one former director of a society has already been charged under the Criminal Code for malpractice.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I flushed him out.

Mr. LEE: The honourable member couldn't flush anybody out. He couldn't even flush a toilet.

I had to answer the charges tonight so that the Press would be aware of my comments, which refute the untruths and misstatements made this afternoon by the honourable member for Archerfield.

Mr. YEWDAL (Rockhampton North) (8.4 p.m.): It is certainly obvious that the member for Archerfield has succeeded in flushing the Minister out of his shell. He has tried to rebut the speech made by the member for Archerfield, and very early in his remarks he made the comment that he wanted to speak while the Press reporters were still in the gallery. I would suggest that his conscience is troubling him. It seems that the Minister got to his feet and did what he said the honourable member for Archerfield did; that is, he blanket-covered things by saying that everybody in the trade union building area is a good fellow, that all are honest and none of them are thieves and cheats. If he had been honest he would have elaborated a little on the difficulties and the problems confronting the Government and the Justice Department.

I took the trouble to go through the Minister's speech. I noted that, very early, he spent a little time in advising the Committee of the increased expenditure on public buildings in 1974-75. In doing so he indicated that the money spent increased from

\$60,000,000 in 1972-73 to \$112,000,000 in 1974-75. He said that included in the increase was an amount of \$27,000,000 in special grants made by the Commonwealth Government for educational purposes. He also said that the major item of expenditure covered by Commonwealth funds appertained to grants from the Karmel fund, which was set up following a report to the Commonwealth on the educational needs of the States. He said that the Commonwealth also allocated funds for pre-schools, libraries, primary and secondary schools, technical colleges and educational buildings.

Mr. Lee: I didn't deny that.

Mr. YEWDAL: The Minister could not deny it; it is in print. I accept that as justified comment.

On looking at the 86.8 per cent increase in that period we see that it represents about \$50,000,000, of which \$27,000,000 was provided by the Commonwealth Government. In that two-year period the Commonwealth Government was certainly very generous in providing funds.

The Minister's portfolio is one of the most important in the Government. It covers a host of areas. It is responsible for all State public buildings, housing through the Housing Commission (which includes pensioner cottages, "Eventides" and other homes constructed by the department) and buildings for education, which are very important.

Although the Minister indicated that the Government was providing libraries throughout the State in both the secondary and primary areas—and while that could be accepted as a factual statement—on making a visual examination of what is happening in this field, I find that the Government constructs these very picturesque and costly buildings very close to the front fence, particularly at high schools. This matter has been brought to my attention by school-teachers and principals. From talking to people who are responsible for education, it is obvious that they are being sited in the wrong place for best school use. Pupils at secondary schools have to go right through the school area to get to the library. In my mind the Government is intentionally displaying prestigious buildings in the front of high schools, not for their best use, but for prestigious presentation of the building. People in the Department of Education have told me that that is what actuates the Government. Children have to go right through the school to the front to get to the library and, in doing so, disturb everybody else.

I have also looked into the use of school facilities. The Works Department is providing certain facilities at both primary and secondary schools such as tennis courts, basket-ball courts and cricket pitches. Nobody is kicking this activity, but I can give an example right in the middle of Brisbane of a new set of basketball courts being recently constructed at a high school

for the sole use of the school. They are quite good courts; nobody is arguing about that. But only a few weeks or months earlier, within a stone's throw of that school, a brand new set of concrete or bitumen basketball courts had been constructed by a group of people following that sport. To my mind, somewhere along the line, there was a waste of resources, because during the afternoon the basketball courts across the road from the school are not being used. During the night teams or clubs use them.

This pattern of wasted resources is repeated throughout the State. Cricket pitches are being built on school grounds—good concrete pitches for practice and competitive games, with all the facilities that go with cricket pitches. A few miles away other people put down similar pitches and expend the same amount of money. We do not use those resources fully.

Last week I had an example of that. I attended a seminar in Rockhampton at which the principal of the Collinsville school—I cannot remember his name—delivered a paper on community involvement in schools and indicated very clearly that when a cricket pitch was needed at the Collinsville school for the use of the children, the cricket clubs at Collinsville decided to assist the parents and citizens' association to put the pitches on the Collinsville school oval so that the cricket club as well as the children could use them. To my mind, that is a good, sensible use of resources. It seems to me that very often we duplicate facilities and so waste money.

One of the earlier speakers in this debate—I think it was the member for Isis—referred to the rather drastic situation about the toilet facilities in some schools. He gave what to me was an alarming figure when he mentioned that there was one toilet for so many female staff. It seems to me that this is a pattern throughout the State.

Just recently I took the opportunity to ask the Minister the Works Department formula for toilet facilities. He gave me a very clear and detailed answer to the question but he added that last line which is always the crunch in an answer—"depending on the availability of finance." One has to accept that, but it seems to me that in recent times in Queensland, particularly in Central Queensland, male and female trainee teachers are coming out of the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education in quite considerable numbers and being pushed out into the schools to do their prac. training within the schools. Because that was a forward programme, the department should have known. Not only are we getting a greater use by the increased numbers of children in the schools, but we are also getting an increase in the teaching staff, particularly with the addition of prac. teachers from the college. That probably applies all over Brisbane as well. I cannot go into the specifics of it but there does not appear to have been any forward planning for the provision of such vital facilities as toilets and

hand basins. Honourable members may argue about my other submissions, but I suggest that that is one area that has distinctly been neglected by the department.

Another matter that that department should look at closely is the siting of new schools, whether they are primary or secondary. I feel that the department tends to site buildings on land owned by the Government or the department. They are not necessarily put in the best place.

In my own electorate new primary and secondary schools are being constructed at Glenmore, as the Minister mentioned in his speech. They are alongside one another. They are both new and both very good but they are situated very close to a major highway. Further along on the other side of the highway is a Catholic school. There is a fairly heavy traffic flow. The siting of those schools indicates insufficient forward planning.

With the great use of bicycles by children, Rockhampton now has a major problem in this area. Every day the school-children ride along this road to and from school. The State school primary students have to cross the highway to get to Glenmore and the Catholic primary and secondary students have to cross the highway to get to their schools. The siting of both of those schools was based primarily on the availability of Government land and not on the best interests of the kiddies getting to and from those schools. I think the decision was based on expediency rather than the best interests of the children.

The Minister referred to departmental activity in court-house construction throughout the State and mentioned the Rockhampton Court House. I concede that the Government has done a very good job with the Magistrates Court in Rockhampton. It has been completely renovated. In the Supreme Court, however, the work done has been in the form of painting and a few minor adjustments. The facilities for people called for jury service, who can be held there for long periods, are far from satisfactory, and something should be done to improve them. These people should have a rest room in which they can have a drink of water or rest while waiting to be called forward and also during breaks.

The Minister spoke about new police stations. I can readily bring to mind the police station now being used for the new police district in my electorate. The building that had been there for many years and had been used as a police station cum sergeants' dwelling-house was renovated at a cost of some \$20,000. The complete district force is housed there on a three-shift basis. I have been through the building. I have looked at the lockers and the crib and toilet accommodation. To my mind, the \$20,000 has been wasted because it will not be very long before pressure will be put onto the department to improve the facilities generally, and no doubt it will start erecting a new

building. There is plenty of room on the site to do it, but the department took a short cut and renovated the old building.

The Minister also referred to terminating housing societies. Quite a lot has been said about them today. I shall mention one of the problems I have been confronted with concerning terminating housing societies. A person goes through the normal channels and fulfils the necessary requirements to obtain a loan. Inevitably, after the local authority approves the plans—whether they have been prepared by a qualified architect or somebody else—the plans have to come to Brisbane for approval. Nobody really argues that they should not be approved in Brisbane. After all, the department is protecting the money of the borrower. However, as from a certain date, the borrower from these societies is expected to commence repaying the loan. This happens very often before the plans are approved and returned from Brisbane and also before the first sod is turned. Nobody can deny this. I am making a factual statement. I had a complaint over the phone today about the very same thing.

Something must be wrong in Brisbane when the approval of the plans cannot be expedited. These people are making their loan repayments and are also paying rent where they are living in a house or flat, or with their family. They are up for their present accommodation costs and repayments on their loans, but have no house because the plans are delayed in Brisbane.

I do not know whether this results from insufficient staff or whether too many plans have to be approved. But many people who are waiting on the approval of their plans are experiencing great hardship. I have had practical experience in this. I must admit that whenever I have made an inquiry or a request the matter has always been attended to. I have no complaints about that. But a member should not have to make the request or lodge the complaint about the delay in order to have the matter expedited. It should be done without that happening.

Mr. Marginson: It should be automatic.

Mr. YEWDALE: It should be near enough to automatic. I do not know what the hold-up is. If the Minister has been listening to me, perhaps he will look into the matter. If he has been talking to his colleague, he might be given advice by his officers. If he does look at the matter he will find that it is a genuine problem.

I am also concerned about the position that arises where the Housing Commission has over a period of time acquired an area of land only some of which is serviced by the local authority. This is in accordance with arrangements for servicing the allotments made between the department and the relevant local authority. But it seems to me that development on the allotments is primarily based on servicing of them. If allotments are not serviced, the tendency is for the department not to build on them.

In what is probably the major Housing Commission area in Rockhampton, there were up to 50 or 60 allotments available, but there was a considerable lag in construction because the local authority had not serviced them. Accordingly the department would not move in. The position eventually was rectified.

The Minister will, of course, continue to say that development depends on the availability of finance; that is the argument that is always put forward. But I do not know how the Minister really allocates his housing finance in an area based on population and application priorities. Although I cannot quote actual figures, I know that one of the problems constantly confronting members is housing. People approach their member and say, "I have applied for a Housing Commission home. Can you help me to get one?" Everybody knows that we cannot wave magic wands and fabricate houses, and everybody wants to push his own barrow. I shall probably take the opportunity of asking the Minister, either in the House or by means of a letter, what really is happening in the various areas in the allocation of finance for housing.

Another matter that I wish to mention concerns the accommodation of elderly citizens. I refer in particular to those who are not catered for by religious groups. Although I am in no way denigrating them, religious groups tend to cater for people who are mentally and physically capable of caring for themselves fairly well. There is such a project being undertaken just outside Rockhampton which everybody is applauding. There is, however, an increasing call for accommodation for people who are not fully active physically and are having some problems with the approach of senility, which I suppose comes to us all at some time. "Eventide" homes are not catering for them, either.

Mr. Moore: It's reached you now.

Mr. YEWDALE: You and I alike.

I think that the "Eventide" home in Rockhampton is saturated with people who are calling for accommodation of this type. Although I am not able to use the correct departmental terms, it seems to me that in the "Eventide" home there is a section for those who are mobile, a section for those who are semi-mobile and a section for those who require intensive care. The demand is for accommodation for those who are semi-mobile yet fall short of a need for intensive care. People have difficulty in catering for their immediate family needs, and are unable to cater for older relatives in this condition. I believe that the Minister should give attention to the problem of providing accommodation for such elderly people.

I should now like to refer to the situation that arose in early July this year when the Minister decided, for a number of reasons on which he elaborated publicly, to disperse

with some 300 workers in the Works Department. I know that this matter has been raised in this Chamber, in the Press and in other quarters.

(Time expired.)

Mr. KAUS (Mansfield) (8.24 p.m.): I should like to congratulate the new Minister for Works and Housing on the introduction of his first Estimates. I know that he has so far done a very good job. I should also like to thank the officers of the Works Department and the Queensland Housing Commission for the assistance that they have given me and my constituents in the inquiries with which I have bothered them during the last 12 months.

It is very pleasing to be able to ring up these gentlemen, ask them about certain problems and have them give one an answer almost immediately.

There are a few things I would like to bring to the Minister's notice. Unfortunately I was not prepared for the debate tonight on the Estimates for the Department of Works, but I am sure that the Minister will not mind answering a few questions. I know that the Housing Commission does a very good job. Housing Commission tenants in my electorate have not referred many problems to me. They have been pretty well catered for over the years, although there have been some difficulties with gas fittings. That has been one of the main problems I have faced over the years, but I think it has been resolved of late. It was a worry for some of these people. Of course, one finds with complaints that one gets only half of the story. This is where the commission comes in. One gets in touch with the person in the commission who handles this job and within a matter of minutes he certainly puts one right.

I would like to thank the Minister for arranging the painting that is being done in certain sections of the Housing Commission estate in my electorate. These houses are fairly well looked after. One can drive around the estate and differentiate between the houses of good and bad tenants. The houses in five streets in the estate are now being painted by the commission's contract painters. I thank the commission for tidying these homes and keeping them in very good repair. I still have one or two problems with some of the Housing Commission homes at Kuraby. I know the commission is doing a good job in upgrading the homes in that area. Unfortunately, there are not enough but, of course, the number depends on the blocks of land available in the area.

I would like to comment on the sale limitation set out in the 1973-74 housing agreement. This is an agreement with the Australian Government that has just been deposited by the Governor-General. I do not like the tenor of the agreement at all. For the sake of about \$1.30, one or two families in my electorate cannot buy a home. Under

the December 1973 agreement the Commonwealth stipulated that not more than 30 per cent of the houses provided under the agreement in the five years commencing from 1 January 1974 shall be sold. Sales are subject to a means test described as—

“(a) for a family, which shall consist of not less than a couple, with or without children, or of a parent or guardian with one or more children—that the average gross weekly income of the main breadwinner (exclusive of any overtime and child endowment payments) during the six months immediately prior to the allocation of the dwelling does not exceed—

(i) where the family does not include more than two children—85 per centum of average weekly earnings;

(ii) where the family includes more than two children—85 per centum of average weekly earnings, plus \$2 for each child beyond the second;”

I have written to the Minister about this, but the people I have in mind have been knocked back. One of the persons concerned, who I think was a railway worker, had included his overtime for six weeks. Under the agreement, overtime was not supposed to be included. In effect, he has been denied a home for his wife and children for the sake of \$1.30 a week. I said to him, “The only thing you can do is reassess your weekly wage over the next six months.” I think he has now changed his job and is coming back down the scale because he is not doing so much overtime. I am sure the Housing Commission will consider the problem facing that particular person, and I will simply pass it on to the Minister.

I do not like the agreement at all. It denies a home to a man who wants to do a bit of additional work and climb the ladder in his vocation. In my opinion, that is a shocking indictment of any Government, and I would make that comment regardless of whether a Labor Government or a Liberal-National Country Party Government was in office. Such an agreement could only have come from the socialists in Canberra. I know that the State Government is trying to assist people such as this, but unfortunately the agreement works against them.

I wish to mention also loans for additions to homes to provide accommodation for elderly relatives. I do not know how many people have taken out loans to assist elderly relatives in the two or three years since I first put forward this suggestion. The report does not appear to state how much money has been lent for this purpose. However, my original suggestion was included in the Government's policy speech for the election in 1972, and I also passed it on to Mr. Kevin Cairns, who was Federal Minister for Housing at the time.

There are no Housing Commission units for aged persons in my electorate. I doubt whether any suitable land would be available to the commission. If it were, I doubt whether the commission would be able to pay the price being asked for land there. That is the reason why there are no aged persons units in Mansfield. However, a number of elderly people in the area are looking for accommodation close to shopping centres and the transport systems operating in the area, and, as the city develops, I should like to see provision made, if possible, for older people in outlying areas. I know that the commission is doing a magnificent job in certain areas such as my old electorate of Hawthorne, but I think that aged persons units in any area would be at a premium now. A social problem has arisen because so many old people have difficulty in getting along with their in-laws, and more accommodation for aged people must be provided.

Mr. Frawley: Don't you think many people throw their parents into old people's homes instead of looking after them?

Mr. KAUS: In some instances that would be true. That was one of the reasons why I suggested that loans be made available to married couples who wished to provide accommodation for their elderly parents. After all, it is the responsibility of children, no matter how old they might be, to look after their parents. It is tragic to see such a large number of elderly persons confined to nursing homes or institutions. Under the Commonwealth Government's social welfare programme many elderly persons are denied accommodation in nursing homes, and in some instances their plight is made worse by the fact that they do not have relatives to care for them.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: (Mr. Row): Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I would appreciate it if honourable members respected the member on his feet.

Mr. KAUS: I now wish to raise a matter concerning the old school building at Kuraby. I am not sure whether this matter comes under the control of the Minister's department or the Department of Education, but I know that the two departments work closely together, so I am sure that my remarks will not fall on deaf ears. The building is used at present by the Scouts and Girl Guides, but it is left unattended for lengthy periods. Recently two fires broke out in the building, and it is thought they were lit by vandals. The Scouts and the Girl Guides have no objection whatever to sharing the building or even to shifting their headquarters to another building, so I should like to see the building converted for use as a special school. If it is used in that manner it could be kept under fairly strict supervision, and the risk of destruction by vandals would be greatly lessened. Public transport passes very close to the building, and it could be used to

provide worth-while facilities for children from adjacent areas as well as my own. I would ask the Minister to examine this matter and to take steps to have it protected from destruction by vandals.

I thank the Minister for the work that has been done in the schools in my electorate. It does not miss out on a great deal. It has good representation and, as well, the p. and c. associations at the various schools are very active. Their efforts are acknowledged by the department. Of course, we don't win every battle. I would hope that all members would lose some of their battles with the Education and Works Departments. As I say, I am quite happy with what my electorate has received in the past.

The Mt. Gravatt South School was recently given an area for the provision of sporting fields. The project is a very large one, and I doubt very much whether the p. and c. association will be able to meet the cost involved. For a start, the area needs to be drained before any other work can be commenced. It is important that the area be developed for the benefit of the pupils at the school. I hope that in the very near future funds will be allocated to this project.

Similarly, the Mansfield High School, which will be one of the best high schools in Brisbane, is in need of sporting fields. I am being pushed by my electors to have essential drainage work done, and I should like to know when the work will commence on the block that the Works Department was not in a position to complete approximately four months ago. In the past 12 months the Minister has been hard pressed as a result of the Commonwealth financial arrangements. I hope that he may soon see his way clear to complete this partly constructed building.

The library building at Macgregor High is magnificent. As I am in no way biased, I am quick to point out that the money for this project was provided by the Commonwealth Government. Unfortunately, one of the companies went broke and could not complete the air ducts that are required in the building. What is the use of a half-finished library that cannot be used by 1,600 high school students? A library is the heart of a school. When completed it will be one of the best high school libraries in Queensland. I give credit to whoever was responsible for constructing the building and can only hope that it will be completed in the very near future.

I am very grateful that most of my schools have pre-schools attached to them. I cannot forget that Father Christmas is just around the corner, and I would like to see one or two additional pre-schools in my area. However, I know that other areas are in a worse situation, and that Mansfield is not doing too badly.

A little while ago the honourable member for Rockhampton North said that there were not enough sporting ovals in the community. I thought that the responsibility for sporting ovals lay with the local authority. In one square mile of my electorate there are 15,000 children attending half a dozen schools. In the same area there are senior sports clubs which can use playing fields only on certain days. With the midgets in soccer, cricket, Rugby League and Australian Rules, we would have about 45 teams in each sports division. Some of the clubs use school-grounds. In an area five to seven miles farther out, one soccer club has 95 junior teams. In all that area the council has not provided one playing field for the benefit of these children. In my area, headmasters allow juniors—and only juniors—to use school ovals. That is commendable from the point of view of children in these sporting bodies. All our schools and school buildings have been upgraded and most of my p. and c. associations are very happy with the department and what has been done in the past three to four years. I am looking to the future. When more money is available, probably in the new year, I will be bringing forward a few more little problems.

Mr. ALISON (Maryborough) (8.44 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the way he has carried out his job as Minister for Works and Housing in the short time that he has held the portfolio. Obviously he understands the working of the building industry in particular and he has a good grasp of his departments. At the same time, he understands what is going on in Brisbane and throughout the State.

I am greatly appreciative of the assistance he has given to me in the problems I have had in my electorate over the past nine months. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Under Secretary and his officers. I have been in contact with many of them personally, apart from the many letters I have written to the Minister. I have always been received in a cordial manner and been helped to the best of their ability. Their information is greatly appreciated.

One of the biggest problems that have developed in my electorate over the last 12 months is connected with housing. At present there are something like 90 applications for Queensland Housing Commission homes for rental.

Mr. Lee: You wouldn't think so to hear Mr. Jensen speaking, would you?

Mr. ALISON: No, you would not. I will have a few words to say shortly about the honourable member for Bundaberg.

One of the things that shocked my electorate recently was the news that the allocations for the two co-operative housing societies in my electorate were to be cut. The Minister gave advice earlier this financial year that each housing co-operative had been allocated \$270,000 for welfare housing this

year. As a result of the conniving and misunderstanding—or lack of understanding—of the Federal Government, the allocation had to be reduced to \$205,000, which is a combined reduction of \$130,000.

Mr. Lee: It was misrepresentation by them, not a lack of understanding on my part.

Mr. ALISON: I well understand that. There is no problem about that. The Minister made the position quite clear on a number of occasions. The Minister, however, allocated funds to the Maryborough Co-operative Housing Society, as no doubt he would have for other co-operative housing societies throughout the State, on a reasonable assumption—

Mr. Lee: In good faith.

Mr. ALISON: Yes, in good faith, on the reasonable assumption that the Federal Government would fulfil its obligations.

Mr. Moore: The new one will. We will be right from then on.

Mr. ALISON: Yes. I have every confidence in that.

The Minister made it quite clear that he asked the Federal Government for \$24,000,000 for the co-operative societies for the current year. But in fact, when the Federal Budget was brought down, we were allocated only \$8,800,000. That is a shocking state of affairs. It could be said in all fairness, I think, that 20 or 30 years ago the Australian Labor Party had the welfare and the benefit of the working man at heart.

A Government Member: When the bears were bad.

Mr. ALISON: Yes, possibly the bears were bad, too.

That was in the distant past. Of course, things have changed dramatically since then. The Australian Labor Party has become imbued with the socialist philosophy—the take-over by Big Brother. It is an exercise of “To hell with the little man. To hell with the big man. To hell with everybody. The State is all-important. The State will look after everybody.” It is the concept of the welfare State. Of course, that is crumbling around our ears.

One would have thought that the Australian Labor Party Government would have at least kept up its commitment and its obligation for welfare housing in Queensland and other States. But, no! What do we see? We see the request for \$24,000,000 slashed to an actual allocation of \$8,800,000. I have made it quite clear in my electorate how all this came about, and in the forthcoming Federal election I will continue to make it clear.

As I have said, housing has become a very serious problem. Only yesterday a lady whom I do not think I have ever met before rang me about it. I get at least one or two calls a week and a couple of people coming in in sheer desperation to see

whether I can assist them. I do my best, of course. I get them to make sure they have applied to the Housing Commission for a house and to make sure that they obtain their right priority if they are entitled to a priority. Apart from approaching real estate agents for private accommodation, that is probably the best I can do.

I will continue to make it known in my electorate and elsewhere just why the housing position is so critical. It is no good trying to hang this behind the door of our Minister or the State Government. The Minister has made quite clear the amount of money he wanted spent in the State—not only through co-operative housing societies, which do such a wonderful job in the welfare housing field, but also through the Housing Commission. However, his plans have been frustrated. I predict that there will be a mini Budget brought down by the new Government, if not in December, then in January. I would like to see a more enlightened approach to welfare housing as well as to a lot of other things.

Mr. Lee: \$80,000,000 back to \$31,000,000.

Mr. ALISON: Yes. It is an absolute disgrace.

One of the things that stuck in the craw of my electorate, when it became known that the allocation for our housing co-operatives was slashed by \$130,000, was the purchase by the Federal Government of three homes for the exclusive use of Aborigines. I do not know what the houses cost but whatever it is it would have made quite a hole in \$130,000.

I have made it quite clear in my electorate—and I make no apology for saying this here or anywhere else—that it is just not on as far as I am concerned. Buying houses especially for them is not the way to try to help Aborigines or anybody else. I had this experience in my electorate before the Federal Government bought these houses. In the main this creates problems for the Aborigine in that before he goes into a house he knows that his neighbours are waiting for something to happen. They are waiting for the worst and hoping for the best and usually something in between happens.

When the three houses were purchased by the Federal Government in its typical manner, it tried to dip out from under by appointing three trustees in Maryborough to accept the responsibility of what happens in these three houses and to attend to their letting and general maintenance. I understand that the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement officer has nothing to do with the letting and maintenance of those houses.

We are in trouble already. I have had probably half-a-dozen decent residents from near these houses come to see me and I have made certain representations. Here we are in strife again. I am making the point that what sickens the Maryborough people is

that as soon as the housing co-operative money was slashed by \$130,000, three houses were bought especially for Aborigines.

From talking to people who know more of the Aboriginal housing problem than I do, I believe that the way out of the problem and the way to assist Aborigines in the long run is to provide hostels in which they can be shown what is expected of them. If they want to come and live in our community, they should make every effort to live up to what is required of them. I believe that the way to help them is to have hostels in which they can be shown what is expected of them if they want to live, for want of a better term, in the white man's community. If they do not want to live there and prefer to live in their traditional way, that is all right. But I will not tolerate or take lying down this business of Aborigines coming into the community and creating one hell of a problem for all concerned. I will take whatever action I think is necessary.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. ALISON: I am delighted to see that the honourable member for Bundaberg is making one of his infrequent appearances in the Chamber.

Mr. Jensen: There he goes. He's a smart bastard.

Mr. ALISON: I have a certificate to prove that I am not one of those.

At present contracts have been let for 20 Housing Commission homes in Maryborough. I am a little concerned that the progress is not what I would have hoped. If my memory serves me correctly, the Minister advised me that some of them would be ready for occupancy by December this year. I do not think that this will be so. I would appreciate the Minister's taking this matter up in due course. I do not know what is going on—I have not had the opportunity to track it down myself—but the progress is not what I thought it would be.

Earlier this year the Minister advised me that, apart from the nine developed sites in Maryborough, there is land that requires development and will provide an additional 22 sites. This causes me serious concern. I urge the Minister to take a good look at this matter because, from 1 July next year, the area of the Maryborough City Council will be greatly enlarged. I strongly and respectfully request that the Minister look at this matter. I have no doubt that, over the next five years, there will be a big increase in the population of Maryborough because of certain projects that are under way or are being looked at. As I say, it has a reserve of only 22 sites in Maryborough. I know that there is a shortage of space in the present local authority area, but the boundaries are to be greatly extended and now is the time for the Housing Commission to consider buying suitable residential areas for development in what will be the

Maryborough City local government area. There are still approximately 90 applicants for Housing Commission homes in Maryborough. That is considerably more than last year, and is a matter of serious concern.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Row): Order! I would appreciate far less audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. ALISON: Thank you, Mr. Row. Although I am sure that I am not Robinson Crusoe in this regard, I find it pathetic to see some of the domestic situations produced by a lack of housing. Families are living with in-laws and other relatives in overcrowded conditions. This creates serious problems and often leads to friction between the members of the family, the owner of the home and the mother-in-law or some other person. It is just not good enough. Hopefully, in the New Year there will be a mini-Budget as a result of which the Minister will be able to allocate more funds for housing throughout the State.

The honourable member for Bundaberg made a lot of noise about the contract for 20 homes in Maryborough and he attempted to rubbish my efforts as the member for Maryborough and also the city of Maryborough.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Bundaberg is welcome to interject, but I do not allow any speeches by way of interjection.

Mr. ALISON: Thank you, Mr. Row.

I take exception to that attitude. I do not think it proves much. If the honourable member is deficient in some way and is unable to obtain homes for Bundaberg, I do not think it right that he should rubbish my efforts. I have never rubbed him or any other member. I would not do anything to obstruct the interests of Bundaberg, and I think that he should be a little more constructive and look to his own submissions to the Minister. I am quite sure that he could improve them and get the message across in the interests of the people of Bundaberg instead of worrying about Maryborough, Hervey Bay or anywhere else.

There are quite a few other problems with which I should like to deal. They are in the main minor, but one is more serious. I refer to the position at the Maryborough State High School. At present a three-storey building is under construction and I have been advised that it will be ready for occupation in July next year. There are at present serious problems at the school and I am inclined to think that we went off half-cocked in bringing pupils over from what was the boys' high school to establish a co-educational school in what was the girls' high school. The facilities are quite inadequate for the number of students who have to use them.

I should like the Minister to ensure that the three-storey building is completed as soon as possible to relieve this situation.

However, even when it is built, there will still be additional facilities required for all of the children on the one side of Kent Street. At the present time quite a number of children still occupy part of what was the old boys' high school, while the rest are accommodated in what was the old girls' high school. This situation creates serious problems for the teachers, particularly in supervision. Time is also lost by students going back and forth to attend classes. I should like the Minister to look into this problem and to see that the new building is completed as quickly as possible so that all the children will be accommodated on the one site.

During the last two or three years there has been a considerable amount of work done through the Works Department, and that is much appreciated. Quite a number of units for the aged have been built, Housing Commission homes, the new Aldridge High School (which is the equal of any in the State and we are very proud of it), the high school library, additions to the Technical College, additions to the Opportunity School and the library at the West State School. One thing we do need is the Central Pre-school Centre. I know this is planned. I expect it will be built this year subject to the availability of funds.

One school that certainly needs some attention and which seems to have been overlooked for a pre-school centre or library is the Albert school. There is certainly a continuing need for the Albert school even though it is at the end of the town which is not developing. I hope the Minister will look at the addition of a pre-school centre or library for the Albert school, whichever is needed most, when the next allocations are made.

One thing which has caused me great concern is the operation of the Builders' Registration Act. This Act has been in force for a year or two and I believe it covers a wider field than was originally intended. I was under the impression that this Act was introduced to protect the home builder from the jerry builder. I understood it was mainly for the purpose of stamping out the practice of people in their ignorance employing jerry builders to put up a house for them and having them not do the job expected. I was not aware that it was to go further than that. This Act has caused quite a few problems in my electorate. There are two cases to which I would like to draw the Minister's attention. I was quite shocked when I took them up with the Builders' Registration Board and I had it made plain to me that the people concerned had breached the Act and I had to accept this. But, as I say, that is when the moment of truth came and I thought, "This Act goes a bit further than I thought it was meant to go." I will quote the cases I referred to.

One was the case of a sawmill proprietor, who, after getting the proper permission from the local authority concerned, had a building erected. It was not erected by a registered builder, that's for sure, and that is where he breached the Act. As I understand it, the building was erected and was inspected by the local authority building inspector, who found that it was built to the standards set down in the local authority by-laws. I understand from people who know more about buildings than I do that there was nothing wrong with the structure. It was simply a shed over stored timber. I just could not see what was wrong with it or where there had been any, shall we say, sin committed; but the proprietor was taken to court, found guilty under the Act and duly fined. As I understand it, this was simply because he did not employ a registered builder. As I say, I did not understand that the Builders' Registration Act was to go so far that it would stop a sawmill or business person from erecting a simple structure such as a roof over timber.

Another perhaps simpler instance was that of a firm of used-car dealers down near the river who had the roof over their used-car lot severely damaged in the January 1974 flood. As I understand it, they engaged somebody on a day-labour basis—obviously he could not have been a registered builder—who set himself up in business as a builder to restore this roof covering the used cars. I was again staggered when the men concerned brought the problem to me to find that they were convicted in the Maryborough Magistrates Court because they apparently did not engage a registered builder. They were horrified and indignant, and I think I would have been just as upset about it because, although they had breached the Act, again no house was involved; it was simply a roof over a used-car lot. Again, as I understand it, the structure complied with the local authority by-laws for that type of building.

I would ask the Minister to have a close look at this because I think we have probably over-legislated here, possibly unwittingly, because I did not understand the provisions of the Act would be as broad as this. I thought it was to protect the home builder, not to cover this type of activity. I respectfully request the Minister to investigate the matter.

In conclusion, I again thank the Minister for the many courtesies he has shown me and the assistance he has given me. I look forward to working with him for the benefit of my electorate.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (9.6 p.m.): First, I express my thanks to the Minister for the co-operation he has extended to me on certain matters that I have taken to him since he took over his portfolio. One that I recall well was the halt that he called to the sacking of men in the construction workforce of the Department of Works in

Mackay. When those sackings took place, I came to Brisbane and pointed out certain things to the Minister. He took action to ensure that there were no further sackings. Problems had arisen in Mackay as a result of the employment of a large number of temporary staff and the development that was taking place in the district.

I also thank him for the consideration that he, through his department, has given to the report that I compiled, following discussions between us, on school buildings in Mackay and the Mackay district. My report set out the requirements of my electorate for a period of three years. I think the Minister will agree that it was quite a comprehensive report and that it has been well accepted by the various departments involved. In fact, some action has already been taken on it.

In common with most other honourable members, I suppose, I must say that I am not getting all I wanted. However, I think I have a good knowledge of the problems that the Minister faces in the running of his department, and I appreciate that he is making at least some effort to adhere to the report that I forwarded to him, which he accepted as being a responsible document. Although I compiled it myself, I believe that it is a responsible document. It does not exaggerate; it sets out clearly and starkly facts and situations as they exist today in the school-building programme in Mackay.

I urge the Minister to give further special consideration to the building problems of both the North Mackay Primary School and the Mackay High School. These two schools are in an area that is developing four or five times faster than any other area in the Mackay district. It is the area in which virtually all suburban development is currently taking place. Recently I attended the opening of a new pre-school that has been built on a site on which construction of a new primary school should have commenced last year. It is hoped that it will be commenced during the next school year so that it will be available for the 1977 school year at the latest. The existing North Mackay Primary School is absolutely bursting at the seams. It is on a restricted area and it is distressing to see the 1,200 or 1,300 students at that school during the lunch hour. They have not even sufficient standing room in the schoolgrounds, much less sufficient room to play.

The North Mackay High School site is cluttered with temporary buildings. A new classroom block was to have been begun there two years ago. Unfortunately, because of an error made by a certain person in the Education Department, incorrect figures were sent to the Works Department and requirements were assessed on the basis of those figures. Consequently, construction has been delayed, and I think that the problem at that school should now be dealt with.

While I am speaking about the efforts of the Works Department in my electorate,

I thank specially Mr. Jock Laird, the District Supervisor of Works, and his staff for the excellent job they have done for the department in Mackay. I also express my thanks to Mr. Tom Muir, who preceded Mr. Jock Laird and is now in Rockhampton, and before him Mr. Gray Ballard, who, unfortunately, died not long after taking up a position in Rockhampton.

When introducing the Estimates, the Minister commented on the financial problems of housing throughout the State. I think these have been covered fairly well in the Budget debate in this Chamber, and even since the Federal Budget was brought down. In many areas the situation has become fairly desperate, as figures given in answer to questions in this Chamber have shown. I suggest it is time that the Housing Commission reviewed some of its policies and looked a little harder at some of our developing areas, especially those on the new coal-fields. I realise that the Housing Commission enters into agreements with development companies, particularly the mining companies, and it is important that in addition to negotiating with the companies the Housing Commission look at the problems that arise in the areas of indirect development.

It is all very well to assess the housing needs of new townships, such as Moranbah, Dysart, Nebo and Hail Creek, but attention must also be paid to the overflow of people into areas, such as the Mackay region, which provide the service industries for the mining projects, the transportation and, in many instances, the permanent residences for employees engaged in the planning and construction stages of the projects. The areas of indirect development suffer considerably from the lack of housing.

Figures were quoted by the honourable member for Bundaberg to illustrate this problem. He did not, however, quote the whole of the figures. He omitted to mention that in Mackay there are 31 applicants with 80 points or more looking for Housing Commission homes. In other words, 31 families either have an eviction order against them—this is indeed very serious—or are living in accommodation that is considered by the local authority or the Housing Commission inspector to be unsatisfactory. In Mackay the total number of persons at the top of the points scale is twice that of any other city of comparable size. In fact, the total is higher than that in several Queensland cities twice the size of Mackay. The city of Mackay is faced with a very serious housing problem.

I realise that some delay has occurred in the commencement and completion of the Slade Point scheme and that this delay was not occasioned by the Housing Commission. I remember that some years ago I took the former deputy commissioner, Mr. Redwood, out to Slade Point to show him the area that I felt the Housing Commission should next look at with a view to providing homes in Mackay. This was at a time when the

South Mackay estate was just getting under way. He agreed with me, and a commencement on the scheme was made. However, it became bogged down in the Pioneer Shire Council for almost two years and unfortunately the scheme has not moved ahead at a sufficient rate to keep pace with the demand for houses in the Mackay area.

The commission took up six allotments initially and has forecast that it will take up an additional 41 allotments in the next stage of the Slade Point reclamation scheme implemented by the Land Administration Commission. Unfortunately, however, that scheme, too, is lagging behind schedule, and the provision of sewerage is well behind. Again it is a local authority problem.

Nothing could be more frustrating for a member of Parliament than interviewing desperate widows with young families living in very poor circumstances. Widows are paying as much as \$30 or \$40 a week for tiny flats or rooms. Very recently a young woman told me that she was paying \$30 a week from her widow's pension for one bedroom for herself and two children. Nothing is more frustrating than seeing the look on the faces of such women and having to tell them that absolutely nothing can be done for them, that they must take their place on the priority listing of the Housing Commission. The whole housing problem generally is frustrating. A member of Parliament has an invidious task when such people approach him with a housing problem.

I said earlier that we should look into some new ideas. We must start looking at changing trends in house construction. The cost of homes as we know them is escalating, and it has been said that the normal type of home in Queensland may eventually disappear. Certainly an ordinary working person and the commission cannot afford to build the old style home on high blocks with rambling verandahs. As a result, we are building low-set homes which in wet areas are very unhealthy, particularly those with slab-type construction. We must look at changing trends overseas. In many overseas countries there is a move to multi-storey blocks of flats, but I would not like to see them in Queensland. They create overcrowded urban situations. They may be all right in Singapore and Hong Kong where there are tremendous populations in small areas, but I would much rather see us develop new townships because we have plenty of space for them.

We must investigate the new type of modular constructed homes. I do not mean "modular" in the sense of the modular classroom blocks provided at schools, but prefabricated dwellings that can be mass produced in a factory. I recently read an article—I think in the B.H.P. "News Review"—which said that over a period of 12 months B.H.P. spent a considerable sum on research, in conjunction with another company, into

this type of construction. They have devised a system of 1 in. reinforced concrete walls as opposed to the type of construction that requires 4 in. walls. The Minister would appreciate the transport problems with the thicker walls. If housing is to be factory produced, it must be transportable and, as well, it must be easily fitted together on site, without a great deal of cost and fuss. Some companies which are considering tenders for Darwin construction had buildings of this type in mind. I suggest that close liaison be maintained between the commission and the Darwin Re-construction Authority to see what is done at Darwin.

I am disturbed that, in some respects, the Housing Commission is no better than some of the land developers in the community. The Auditor-General's report reveals that the surplus from sales of properties by the Housing Commission in the 1974-75 financial year was almost \$6,500,000. In 1973-74, the surplus was just over \$3,000,000. Those figures represent the gross profit on property sales. In the last financial year, the \$6,500,000 included just over \$4,000,000 on account of sales of land at the price determined by the commission. That is only pushing up the cost of land and homes in certain areas.

In the new South Mackay Estate the sale price of a house two years ago was \$15,160. People wanted to enter into a contract of sale with the commission at that price but it has now been increased to \$23,810. In other words, the commission has imposed more than a 50 per cent increase in 18 months. I do not believe that the commission's charter was designed to let it operate in exactly the same way as an ordinary land developer. The commission is one instrumentality that the State Government can use to keep down the sale price of land and houses and so reduce the rate of inflation.

There is one other point I wish to raise while I am speaking about the Housing Commission. Some co-operative housing societies are not being properly administered in the State. Others do a very good job indeed. The Minister and the commissioner will probably know better than anybody else the ones to which I am referring. They are behind with their returns. They cause considerable trouble to the Housing Commission. They cause considerable trouble in the areas in which they are established, too. Those that have been offending for long periods should be taken in hand by the commission and told to set up their administration properly—to administer their co-operatives properly—or else hand over to somebody who will do so.

Earlier in the debate there was mention of the Bowkett-type building societies. I know that the Minister has already replied in part to some of the problems of building societies in Queensland. I have canvassed this myself previously in the Chamber. I again wish to raise especially tonight the problems that are created for many people

by the Bowkett-type building society. I am not referring to the permanent side of those organisations. Certainly not all of them are to blame. I will be very quick and brief about this. People who enter into a savings plan with a Bowkett society fill out a form that simply says—

"I hereby apply for a shareholding and 10 year minimum membership in such-and-such a society and agree to abide by its Rules. I agree to save at the rate", which is prescribed. They never see a set of rules. They never know what a set of rules looks like. They go ahead and sign a form that shows that they are abiding by a set of rules. They may have a brochure which sets out that the savings plan may be reduced in size at any time. They are never told the true story. The savings plan may be reduced in size at any time, but they say—

"For plans reduced in size before 2 years of operation a small fee is charged."

That appears in the brochure that is put out. However, if one peruses the part of the set of rules relating to the withdrawal of savings, it states—

"the Society shall, subject to certain sections of this Rule pay the member the value of such shares as determined by the Board from time to time."

That is as open as the gates of Parliament House—at such value as may be determined from time to time.

In actual fact, people who sign these things in innocence suddenly find that they cannot withdraw their savings, which are held for 10 years, and that they cannot make use of their funds. If they do want to surrender their savings plan, they lose 25 per cent and sometimes up to 50 per cent of the very savings they have placed in these Bowkett-type societies. I am not completely knocking the system of Bowketts. They have certainly been a tremendous advantage to some people. There are some other aspects that I have complained about before. I do not intend to touch on them now.

I am talking more about the withdrawal aspect, but I think there is sufficient proof of the problems being encountered to ensure that the Minister introduces better legislation. There must be an improvement in legislation, and in particular I suggest that one way in which these societies can be much better controlled is to provide that when people sign up to enter into a Bowkett-type building society, a form be completed along somewhat similar lines to those required under the Hire-Purchase Act, where somebody is borrowing money and whereby the borrower must show the full extent of what has to be paid, how it has to be paid, when it has to be paid, and what can happen by way of default or something like that. It is not sufficient for a person to just sign a form that says he must abide by the rules of the society, when the smooth-talking salesman who sells it to him probaly does not

know the rules himself. He would have no idea of the rules. That is what has to be done in the interests of the people themselves and in the interests of the good name of building societies. There must be tighter legislation. The Act for permanent building societies has virtually no provision for controlling Bowkett societies. It simply says that they are allowable in the State of Queensland. That is where the problem is.

There are so many things. In some instances people who enter into them are under the idea that when they are ready to start building themselves they can borrow from them. Suddenly they find that under one of these so-called rules of the society, they cannot borrow until they have been a member for at least two years. This is contrary even to what the permanent building societies do. The permanent building society side of the same building society does not place this restriction on people. This is one aspect that the Minister must look at in the interests of the running of building societies.

(Time expired.)

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (9.25 p.m.): In this debate I should like to make some comments on an aspect of the Minister's area of responsibility which is very rarely mentioned in this Chamber but is something that has been concerning me for some time. It is the manner in which this historic building that we meet in as a Parliament has been treated by the Department of Works over three or four generations. This is an area of responsibility that has been administered by dozens of Ministers so that no single Minister, public servant, administrator or architect is to blame.

Nevertheless, some things have been happening progressively for probably 50 years and this quite beautiful building has plainly been butchered by a series of insensitive workmen and architects. I am speaking of those things that have happened not only in the past few years that I have observed personally but also some years ago under previous administrations. All of them have been guilty for the treatment that this building has received, to the extent that its restoration will surely run the public purse into considerable expenditure.

Many of the things I am speaking about have, in my view, been quite unnecessary. When we have raised these matters at party meetings or in discussions with various Ministers and officers we have been told, "Don't worry about it. There is a big restoration scheme on the way. It will all be restored." Apparently, based on that excuse, it does not matter what is done to the building now because later on it will be restored. I take it that the holes in the cedar woodwork will be filled with some sort of putty and varnished or stained so that we will not be able to see what has happened. I am not happy that this damage has been done to the building in the first instance.

One excellent example is the recent installation of heavy-duty wiring which runs to a switch-box in the lobby. I understand that the type of wiring that has been used is pyrotenax. The wire is contained within an inert compound which is contained within half-inch copper tubing. As I said, it runs into a switch-box on the back of the wall a few feet behind your head, Mr. Row. The copper tubing is then nailed to the beautiful cedar skirting board and around the architraves with copper plumbing clips and great clouts. A hole has been drilled through the architrave at the edge of the rear doorway and the copper tubing disappears through the wall and then follows the skirting board and architraves to outside Mr. Speaker's rooms. It looks disgusting. I see no necessity for those wires to have been put where they are on show and where they do so much damage to the appearance of the building.

Mr. Frawley: When I was the maintenance electrician here in 1949, none of that occurred. All of the wires were hidden.

Mr. LANE: I am sure that the work carried out by the honourable member for Murrumba when he was the maintenance electrician in this building was of the highest standard.

Mr. Frawley: The division bells were installed by me and they are still working.

Mr. LANE: The division bells, yes.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Row): Order! One honourable member is making a speech.

Mr. LANE: His colleague the honourable member for Windsor has also had occasion to supervise some of the electrical work in this building. He, too, has pointed out some of the anomalies that have been created.

Another disgusting example of butchery on this building was the addition of the great metal monstrosities that appeared a year or two ago on the verandas at the front and rear of this Chamber. They are large galvanised iron structures that have been painted a ghastly yellow, presumably to blend with the light colour of the sandstone of the building so that they would not be obvious to anyone viewing the building from the street.

There is another affixed to the rear wall of this wing of Parliament House on an angle-iron structure bolted to the wall. I take it that when the building is restored these fittings will be removed and concealed air-conditioning units will be fitted into the building. But there seems to have been no necessity to put them there in the first place. The ducting placed within this Chamber, under the supervision of the Minister's department, interferes, I think, with the beautiful lines of the plasterwork carried out by master craftsmen in years gone by.

Mr. Houston: All because they wouldn't let us take our coats off.

Mr. LANE: The honourable member for Bulimba will have plenty of occasion to take off his coat in the next few weeks when he goes down in a screaming heap with his Canberra colleagues during the election campaign. It will not do him a bit of good, either.

Another example of butchery on the building is something that obviously was done some years ago. I refer to the sewerage pipe that is connected to the back wall of the building on the veranda near the telephone box. It is a pipe that runs down from Mr. Speaker's private room upstairs. I invite one of the Minister's professional officers to have a look at this pipe.

Honourable Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Row): Order! The Chair would appreciate it if the Chamber would now settle down.

Mr. LANE: Anyone who looks at this pipe will see that when it was leaded together in the prescribed fashion lead and solder were spilt down the stonework on the outside of the building. The lazy plumber who did that job did not even have the common sense to brush away the lead and solder that was spilt down the outside of the building and it has remained there for years.

Near that pipe is another air-conditioning unit that is also bolted to the building in a most clumsy fashion. The electrical wiring for the unit is in conduit, and in plastic piping which is secured with heavy nails and bolts to the back of the building. Here is another thing that will have to be restored. Everywhere we see examples of the harsh, heavy hand in construction work on Parliament House.

It is not only the intrinsic aspect of the work that perturbs me. I see a number of things that concern me from the angle of safety. For example, the staircase to the high dome of the building, which has to be climbed by one of the attendants each day to fly the flag, is in three tiers, and it is so old and rickety that some of the attendants who are forced to do this job are quite terrified that they will be on the stairs when they collapse and cause injury to someone.

Another matter of concern to me is the lack of fire-safety provisions in the building. I am sure that all the decaying paper and the dirt by rats and other vermin constitute a fire hazard. We have seen some examples of dreadful fires in this city in recent times and I think it would be a terrible thing if Parliament House were to succumb in this way. I know a year or two ago there was an attempt made by some officer of the Fire Services Council to survey the building. One of his proposals was to do away with the chimney effect of the ornate staircases within the building. It was proposed to erect heavy fire doors across the front of the staircases throughout the building, the cumbersome sort of structure which would be erected in a

warehouse or something like that. Fortunately, one of the members who are here frequently was able to short-cut that proposal and ensure that the staircases were not hidden behind massive fire doors.

Another aspect which I consider requires some attention from the safety point of view is the doors of the telephone boxes provided for members on the front verandah of the building, the panes of which are only 26-oz glass. If they slam shut the arm, elbow, or some other part of the body of a member could go through the glass and he could be badly injured. I do not know how they were put there in the first place. They were probably installed back in the days when Johnno Mann was the Speaker and I suggest the Minister's officers could well look at that aspect.

Another point is that this building is inadequate from the point of view of housing some of the historical documents and books which the library is required to keep. Those of us who have been interested enough in the history of this city and this State to look back into some of the old volumes of newspapers and journals of the early part of this century have noticed foxing of the pages—that brown mark that appears across the pages of newsprint. Newsprint is a type of paper which requires special attention to preserve it for any length of time. It has to be preserved in an environment which has a temperature of something like 70 deg. Fahrenheit, so in our subtropical climate it would be necessary to have them stored in an air-conditioned room. Yet we are forced to keep many of these volumes here in this building which has resulted, as I say, in foxing appearing on the pages and, to some extent, mould and fungi of other kinds, and I think it is up to the Works Department to take some urgent action so that many of the marvellous volumes that are held here in the Parliamentary Library can be kept for our children and grandchildren to study in later years.

Of course, the Works Department employees are not the only ones who butchered this building. One sees examples of very rough work carried out by the Postmaster-General's Department. When a member has asked for a telephone to be installed in this place, there have been many occasions when I have seen P.M.G. staff arrive and nail a white telephone line along the dark red cedar skirting boards and architraves in our rooms. If they must nail things into skirting boards—and I suggest that is not the way to handle a building on this kind—what probably should happen (and I am no expert in this field) is that the skirting board or architrave be removed, rabbeted out the back and the wires run along there or that there be a rabbet or trench cut along in the plaster wall and some provision made for concealing the wires, perhaps by plastering back over them. There could perhaps even be some permanent track throughout the building along which these wires could

be run. No-one seems to care. I understand that it is part of the responsibility of an architect in the department to attend to this particular building. He must be a very busy man, because if he had been here and if he had any sensitivity for an old and historic building such as this, he would not have permitted the work to be carried out.

I hope the Minister will ensure that more attention is paid to the preservation of Parliament House in future. If he cannot obtain in his department the expertise needed or if he does not share my concern, it may be necessary to set up a special committee or advisory group, perhaps including representatives of the National Trust, to supervise the work carried out in this building.

Mr. Yewdale: That is where the brief came from—the National Trust!

Mr. LANE: That is where the brief came from—the National Trust! That's what the honourable member says. That's lovely, Mr. Hewitt, isn't it? I know that all the briefs the honourable member brings here are from the Rockhampton branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation. When one listens to them, it is obvious who has written them, too—some wharfie up behind a toilet block on the waterfront at Rockhampton. The honourable member can stay out of my speeches and I will stay out of his. He is not worth powder and shot, anyway!

This is a matter that really concerns me, and some other honourable members have expressed similar concern about how this building has been treated over the years, not only by the present officers of the department or even the present Minister. The former Minister never impressed me, I must say, as being much of a "culture vulture" or as having much sensitivity in these matters. Let us hope, Mr. Hewitt, that something better will be done in the future now that the matter has been aired in the Parliament.

Before resuming my seat, I compliment the Minister on the work that has been done in my electorate to provide housing for aged people. A beautiful block of units has been completed in Kent Street, New Farm, and it is really a credit to the Queensland Housing Commission. It provides accommodation for approximately 50 aged pensioners, and accommodation of this type is very badly needed in central city suburbs such as New Farm, where many old people like to live so that they can have ready access to medical and hospital facilities, transport, churches and so on. They are well catered for in New Farm, and I indicated to the Minister recently that I would be very happy if he constructed a further block of this nature to accommodate another 50 people in the future.

There is certainly a need for more housing to be provided for aged people, despite the remarks made by the Federal Treasurer, Mr. Hayden, who said that no longer is there any need for further money to be

spent on housing. I do not know how he reached that conclusion. He must have lived too long in an ivory tower or spent too much of his time outside this State. How he would explain such a remark to the people in the Ipswich and Inala areas of his electorate, who are aware of the desperate need for additional housing and further housing money to be provided by the Federal Government, is quite beyond me. However, that becomes Mr. Hayden's problem, and it also becomes the problem of the honourable member for Archerfield, who is his campaign director. That probably accounts for the fact that the honourable member for Archerfield and his colleagues, with the possible exception of the honourable member for Port Curtis, have been looking quite dismal today. I see that the honourable member for Rockhampton is attempting to laugh now in order to pretend that he is happy with what has occurred in Canberra today.

(Time expired).

Mr. WARNER (Toowoomba South) (9.45 p.m.): Over the past 12 months the Department of Works has made considerable progress, limited only by the funds available. However, it now faces the ensuing financial year with a reduction of 12.8 per cent in its housing allocation, which will, of course, cut the home-building programme and result in unemployment. Possibly the State's overall building programme will be put back many years.

As the Minister said, it is alarming that the State should be left in ignorance for so long about its housing allocation. The task confronting his department is enormous enough without being aggravated by such a reduction in funds. The continual rejection by the previous Federal Government of our rightful allocation has added greatly to the problem. Naturally, however, a change came about today, and I hope that next year the Minister will be able to make more funds available to all electorates.

Without an increase in funds, essential projects such as the acquisition of land for the establishment of schools will be given little consideration. Land is in short supply at the present time. In many areas throughout the State overcrowding in classrooms is already causing a headache for the department. Additional classrooms are desperately needed, as are pre-schools, libraries and school dental clinics. It is unfortunate, however, that the great majority of the buildings in which these facilities will be housed are to be erected on primary school grounds. In many instances, school grounds are already too small, and in some schools the pupils' play periods as well as their lessons are staggered. This policy calls for immediate change. It is wrong to place all amenities and facilities in primary school grounds.

It is time that we demanded from local government plans showing future developments so that the department, in conjunction

with the Education and Health Departments, can select sites suitable for future schools, etc. Naturally, with this purpose in mind, the department could set aside by resumption such areas, thereby saving the department a great deal of money in the long run. Areas could be set aside specifically for education purposes, to be used when development occurred and the necessity for schools became apparent. It is to be hoped that if this policy is ever adopted, adequate areas of 20 acres or more are set aside for the establishment of schools. It is alarming to think that, owing to lack of foresight in the past, the Works Department is now forced to buy land adjacent to school areas on which expensive structures have been erected.

Mr. Jensen: Don't they need sporting facilities?

Mr. WARNER: The children need sport these days, that's for sure.

Mr. Jensen: They don't even ride bicycles or walk to school any more; they get buses.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WARNER: These areas have now to be resumed at enormous cost to provide the barest playing area for students.

It is quite obvious to me that many pre-schools have been built without giving a great deal of thought to the safety of the children.

Mr. Wright: Are you condemning the Works Department?

Mr. WARNER: In some ways I suppose I am.

The entrance to some of them is sometimes on a highway which is certainly not safe for children to cross when their mothers and fathers pick them up after school. Off-street parking is essential for the safety of these children. Future thinking must take into account these details if we are to cater for the safety needs of future generations.

Future pre-schools do not have to be built on primary school grounds that are already overcrowded. It has been proved that pre-schools can be built up the road, or around the corner from schools, and still be available to the primary schools.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! For the last time. I ask the honourable member for Bundaberg to come to order.

Mr. WARNER: I come now to the design of school buildings and in this context I speak of buildings as libraries, schoolrooms and completely new schools. Apart from the fact that the style of new buildings in many instances bears no relation to the existing style of school buildings, it bears no relation to the climate. Toowoomba is one area that is consistently cold and subject to cold, high winds. It is extraordinary to note that schools built in Toowoomba, which

would be completely acceptable for Surfers Paradise, Goondiwindi or Cairns, should never have been designed for the Toowoomba climate. In some Toowoomba schools, children sit in classes or libraries full of fog. The deterioration of books and furniture has to be seen to be believed. The buildings themselves are well designed, well built and sound, but they are not designed for Toowoomba's climate.

Of late, a standard type of library has been used in most schools. It is modern in design and its interior is completely adequate, but obviously it should not be part of the design of the school where it has been built. Surely with the enormous architectural expertise at our disposal this should not happen. I am sure that many designs are available within the financial range of the department. They should be forthcoming from our architects, who seem to have become bogged down with certain types of buildings in the past 30 years. These library buildings should be more in keeping with the age and architecture of the schools. Architects should take time off to see the schools where these buildings are to be constructed.

My remarks also apply to Housing Commission homes, which are well designed and adequate for most situations, but the design is 30 years old.

Mr. Wright: That's untrue.

Mr. WARNER: If the design is not 30 years old, it is near enough to it.

In some areas these houses are completely out of keeping with new trends in architecture and that comment applies particularly to the new suburbs in Queensland. It is important that many new designs be provided within the price range of the department. At the same time they must be suitable for different areas in Queensland.

At 9.55 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307, progress was reported.

EXPLOSIVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (9.56 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Explosives Act 1952-1974 in certain particulars."

The Act makes provision of the manufacture, sale, carriage, storage and use of explosives and seeks to reduce to a minimum the hazards associated with explosives. However, there has been concern for some time that better provisions could be made, and Cabinet approved the establishment of a representative committee, under the chairmanship of the Chief Inspector of Explosives, to examine all aspects of control of the

use of explosives with a view to updating local authority by-laws and ordinances on a uniform basis.

Arising out of the recommendation of this committee, Cabinet approved, *inter alia*, of an amendment to the Act and/or regulations to provide for the issue of a shotfirer's licence to persons who are engaged in the use of explosives.

A provision in this Bill provides the necessary head of power to make regulations relating to the conditions under which a shotfirer's licence may be issued. Briefly, such conditions will provide that a person who applies for a shotfirer's licence must either hold a prescribed certificate or be able to satisfy the chief inspector that, prior to the commencement of this amending Bill, he used explosives and is competent in their use.

Another provision contained in this Bill is to redefine the meaning of "manufacture" to cover a situation which has arisen recently and which is providing some concern. The Act presently prescribes that an explosive cannot be manufactured at other than a licensed factory. At a certain mine, a licensed factory is situated above ground and an explosive manufactured therein. In its manufactured form it is a semi-viscid liquid and is transported in that state into the mine where it is used for blasting purposes. However, prior to its use, in some circumstances an inert substance is added to give it a "gel" form. This is considered to be an extension of, but still part of, the manufacturing process and the definition has been amended to include this.

A further clause included in the Bill, however, exempts the mine, as such, from the necessity to be licensed in these particular circumstances, but enables an inspector of explosives otherwise to apply the provision of the Act to that situation.

When explosives are stored in a Government magazine, details of such storage are available to the chief inspector, but when storage is otherwise provided, as in a licensed factory, such details are not made available to the chief inspector.

A provision is included in this Bill to enable the chief inspector to require a licensee to furnish details of the manufacture, sale, disposal and storage of explosives. This will enable the chief inspector to ensure that excessive quantities of explosives are not stored in any circumstances.

At the present time the Chief Inspector of Explosives may issue a licence to a person to transport explosives, but he has no powers to specify the type and the condition of the vehicle in which such explosives are carried, or to prescribe the conditions under which explosives may be carried on a vehicle. A clause has been included in this Bill to empower the chief inspector in this respect.

The chief inspector and other inspectors of explosives are frequently called upon to test explosives and this is normally carried

out in the laboratory of the Government Analyst. In carrying out such tests, it is commonly necessary to store those explosives for a short time and this presents a problem because the Act limits the storage of explosives to specified places and the Government Chemical Laboratory is not so specified.

Another provision within the Bill seeks to remedy this situation by providing that explosives held for testing by an inspector of explosives may be stored at any place for such purpose.

Explosives imported into or exported from Queensland are frequently transported in stages—ship to lighter, lighter to shore and shore to storage. The actual transfer from lighter to ship or vice versa is usually supervised by the harbour master or one of his officers, who are, in terms of the Queensland Marine Act, inspectors of explosives for this purpose. However in practice their supervision usually does not extend to the lighter-to-shore and shore-to-lighter situation, and provision is included in this Bill to enable an inspector of explosives to supervise this section if it is not supervised by the harbour master or his officers.

Amendments to the definition of certain terms, provision for the adoption of standards and the upgrading of penalty provisions in line with present money values are also included in the Bill.

While some of the provisions of the Bill are for purely administrative purposes, the Bill nevertheless seeks to reinforce the present provisions of the Act aimed at the reduction of hazards to safety to the absolute minimum.

I commend the motion to the Committee.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (10.3 p.m.): The Bill, as outlined by the Minister, apparently relates mainly to the conveyance and storage of explosives. I think we can regard it as commendable because apparently there has been some degree of looseness particularly in the storage of explosives. The Minister is taking action to tighten up that looseness and, to some degree, the conveyance of explosives.

Apparently the Bill relates to bulk explosives and does not deal with the handling or availability of explosives in the community generally. Owing to the spate of robberies assisted by explosive devices today, it is necessary that there be a large degree of tightening up in the availability of explosives by the community.

Queensland imports approximately 4,000 tonnes of explosives annually. They are sold far and wide and are available to practically any section of the community. Most of the explosives go to mining organisations but a large amount of gellignite is readily available to the public. Every year there is an increasing use of explosives for illegal purposes. Over the past few years, the Minister

for Police has been talking about the introduction of legislation to control firearms. This is because of their widespread use in robberies and offences against the person.

It is just as important to ensure that explosives are not readily available to anybody who goes to an explosives retailer. We must consider who buys these explosives on a small scale and what they do with them. Anybody can go to a retailer of explosives and without a permit buy over the counter up to 180 sticks of gelignite merely by stating his identity. It is not possible to buy more than a case of gelignite in this way unless the magazine in which it will be stored is recognised as a magazine and registered by the department.

But the point is that at present these explosives are available to the general public in stores in Brisbane. I understand that over a ton of explosives is bought in this manner every year from one specific dealer. It is easy to see the risk caused to the public by looseness in the control of the sale and distribution of gelignite.

Let us cast our minds back to the explosion that occurred some years ago in the Wilston shopping centre. Fortunately that occurred on a Sunday when there were not many people in the vicinity. Several people were injured, but there were no fatalities.

Mr. Burns: We have not had that report yet.

Mr. MELLOY: No, nor has any arrest been made or any reason given for the occurrence. I understand that the Army bomb squad established that it was caused by gelignite. Here was an instance in which gelignite was readily available to somebody who was able to use it to destroy an entire shopping block.

The Minister must give serious consideration to this matter. There is nothing in the Bill to indicate that there will be any control over the sale of gelignite or any other explosive to the general public. One does not need 180 sticks of gelignite to cause a terrific explosion and fatalities. At present the criminal element has an open go to obtain gelignite to blow safes or commit robberies or offences against the person. There has been a spate of bombings in the southern States in the last 12 months, and these could occur in Brisbane if explosives are readily available to all who have any ideas of starting wars in which one gang of criminals seeks to destroy another. At present gelignite can be bought over the counter. What is the answer to the problem? Do we allow the present position to continue, or is the Government prepared to bring down legislation to control the sale of gelignite? These are matters that I should like the Minister to deal with.

The Bill is certainly desirable. It tightens up control of bulk explosives. It ensures that those dealing with explosives in mines such as the Mt. Isa mine are properly supervised.

It provides for a supervisor to enter magazines to inspect the storage of explosives. It ensures that explosives manufactured at large mines are conveyed safely to the various points where they are used. But it provides no protection for the general public. This is a most important aspect of the Explosives Act to which consideration must be given.

I shall go no further at the present stage. I have made it clear to the Minister that we are concerned about the availability of small quantities of gelignite to those who may want to create havoc. I have pointed out that 180 sticks of gelignite is no small amount, and tremendous damage could be done with it. I should like the Minister to indicate in his reply whether he has any intentions or views on this aspect of the sale and use of explosives.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (10.10 p.m.): I agree with the honourable member for Nudgee when he says that there should be more control over the sale and storage of explosives. As one who worked in the explosives industry for five years during the war, I know a little about explosives.

Mr. Alison: That's a long time ago.

Mr. JENSEN: Yes. I made the bullets for you blokes who went over there. The Army would not take me. When I tried to join the Army in 1939, they said I was in a reserved occupation and when I went to join in May 1940 with a letter from the manager of my company to say that I could be spared, they still said I was in a reserved occupation. My reserved occupation was that of a chemist and I had to go into munitions production. In January 1940 I was sent to the fuses section of the Maribyrnong explosives factory and from there I went to the St. Mary's explosives factory as technical assistant to the production planning officer for that factory and I finished up as production planning officer with the St. Mary's explosives factory. I know a little about explosives, and the first thing one is told is that familiarity breeds contempt. One hears about the bloke in the old days—the shotfirer as they called him—who could put a detonator in a fuse with his teeth, but those were the chaps who had their hands or their faces blown off because of their familiarity with explosives.

The same thing relates to the storage of explosives in magazines. I do not think we have enough control over magazines. I saw two people blown into little bits in a detonator magazine at Maribyrnong. They did this while throwing a box of detonators into the magazine. They were used to just throwing them around until one day there must have been a weak detonator in a packet; the magazine blew sky high and so did the two people. The chief chemist in the lead aszide section of the detonator section, where detonators were made with lead aszide and fulminate of mercury, blew himself up in the laboratory.

The Minister was talking a moment ago about controlling laboratories. I do not know whether he said there was no control at the moment. I saw many other blokes blown apart when we were pressing TNT and CE pellets and they forgot to take a shoe out. They would not bother walking behind the safety break because it was familiar to them and they thought it would not go off till somebody left a shoe under when they were pressing a pellet and the whole machine went up. This sort of thing goes on.

We did not even know that ammonium nitrate was an explosive until Halifax was blown up. A ship bringing in the fertiliser ammonium nitrate exploded and blew up half the township of Halifax. Today ammonium nitrate is mixed with TNT to make amatol, one of the most powerful explosives used in bombs and shells. Bombs used to be made with picric acid, which we used to put on ourselves for sunburn. It is one of the most powerful explosives obtainable but it takes a good detonator to send it off. It takes a fairly good detonator to send ammonium nitrate off. A few years ago a truck loaded with ammonium nitrate blew up on one of our country roads. This was probably caused by the petrol tank exploding and setting off the ammonium nitrate. It blew the truck to pieces.

Mr. Dean: You're highly explosive!

Mr. JENSEN: The honourable member for Sandgate says that I am highly explosive. I am generally highly explosive about these things, but I can tell honourable members all about detonators, fuses, whether they are percussion or time fuses and what is used in them, and whether they are CE tablets or TNT tablets or whether it is gunpowder that is used for time fuses in anti-aircraft shells. It just depends on the type of shell one is making, the type of fuse and the explosive pellet one is using.

Mr. Gygar: Do you want a blackboard?

Mr. JENSEN: No, I don't need a blackboard. I have taught kids like you something about explosives because it was my job in munitions to know something about explosives and to teach others, especially workers who came in and thought it was an easy job and that explosives were nothing. I did not blow myself up. Some honourable members opposite would have blown themselves up. It is easy to blow oneself up if one treats explosives with contempt.

As the Minister has said, he is altering the provisions of the Act relating to the conveyance and storage of explosives, and this aspect is most important when one is working in a munitions factory. But today, as the honourable member for Nudgee said, a person can go into a shop and buy gelignite, a fuse and a detonator. These used to be stored in a little bit of a magazine at one end of a grocery shop. Magazines of that type are not worth tuppence. The explosion in the shopping centre about which

the honourable member for Nudgee spoke earlier probably occurred because detonators or gelignite were stored in a magazine that was not suitable for the storage of explosives. Magazines have to be properly mounded so that, when an explosion occurs, they will go sky high but will not go sideways.

The Minister said that he knows something about explosives. I point out to him that for five years I worked with explosives and had to know all about them. I remember that each day Flying Fortresses came to St. Mary's with a load of bombs. We had to change the detonators and make the bombs into daisy-cutters, and next day they were flown back to Guadalcanal.

I remember, too, when thousands of grenade 68s were brought back. They were blowing the heads off our soldiers up in New Guinea because the spring on the detonator was too weak. We had to change that spring in the grenade 68s, which were put on the end of the rifle and fired at tanks. We had to do things such as that, especially when the war was at its height, so I know a little about explosives and their storage.

As the honourable member for Nudgee said, the Minister may not have gone far enough in controlling the sale of explosives in this State. One reads in the papers every now and again of people—in some cases it may be children; in other cases it may be men—stealing detonators and gelignite from mining companies or from stores in which explosives are kept. That happens because the magazines are not under strict control. They are not secure, and people break in and steal detonators and gelignite. One might say that that occurs fairly regularly. It certainly does not happen only once in 10 years; it happens once or twice a year. I remind honourable members that detonators are dangerous in the hands of children. Although they are only small—they contain only about 5 grammes—they can blow a person's head off if they are in the right place for it.

Mr. Alison: You'd look sillier without your head.

Mr. JENSEN: I have seen men without heads. Plenty of people in munitions were blown up in that way. They were killed because of their ignorance of explosives and because they were careless in handling them. They became too familiar with them and threw them around, and one cannot do that with explosives.

I support the argument of the honourable member for Nudgee that, in changing the Act, we should make its provisions so tight that it will not be possible to buy explosives without a permit. A person should have to show that he has a valid use for explosives. It is no good a farmer buying 140 lb. or 180 lb. of gelignite if he wishes to blow out only two stumps on his farm. It seems to be the normal thing for cane farmers and others who have obtained gelignite to blow up trees to use it to blow up fish in the

rivers. I know of some people in my electorate who have lost hands while using gelignite to blow up fish in the river. That type of thing should be stopped.

Frequently changes to Acts in this Chamber do not go far enough and it is necessary to bring down a further amending Bill a year or two later. Let us be strict right from the beginning, Mr. Hewitt. If people are to handle explosives, we must ensure that they know what they are doing, and I hope that the Minister will make sure that the Act is sound in every respect—in catering for the cartage and storage of explosives, and especially for their sale.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (10.20 p.m.): As the representative of an electorate containing an extensive magazine, adjacent to the township of Bajool, naturally I would wish to participate in this debate. Some years ago I asked questions concerning the inadequacy of storage facilities at that magazine, which caused considerable concern to residents in adjacent areas.

I think it would be agreed that technology has advanced at a very fast rate and that both the variety and transport of explosives and hazardous chemicals have increased enormously. The transportation of dangerous goods is always a matter of concern to those charged with the responsibility of carrying them. It is heartening to know that very stringent regulations are laid down governing the transportation of dangerous goods in aircraft. In fact, the transportation of large consignments of explosives in Australian-registered aircraft is governed by section 33 of the relevant air navigation regulations. Similar conditions are applied on an international basis, and are drawn up with the safety of the public in mind.

The Navigation (Dangerous Goods) Act lays down certain provisions covering the shipment of explosives, and the guide-lines laid down therein are followed by shippers. Naturally that Act has the approbation of all Australian port authorities.

Queensland has two ports, namely Bowen and Port Alma, at which explosives are permitted to be handled. Explosives are imported through Bowen to meet the needs of industry in the northern part of the State, while Port Alma handles explosives for Central and Southern Queensland. It is interesting to note that many years ago, owing to the location of oil refineries and large industrial and chemical plants near the mouth of the Brisbane River, the handling of explosives in the port of Brisbane was prohibited.

The legislation governing the handling of explosives contains certain provision in relation to the number of employees who may be engaged at any place where explosives are handled. State marine authorities have specified rules governing the handling of dangerous goods in dock areas, and in some instances these rules have been widened to cover the transport of dangerous goods

in other than dock areas. The harbour boards throughout the State are permitted to maintain explosive storage areas at locations far removed from the wharves. Furthermore, the Australian Transport Advisory Council lays down certain guide-lines for the carriage of explosives by road. The United Nations committee of experts that designed that code made recommendations on the transportation, classification, labelling, etc. of those goods, and those are now embodied in the various regulations under State and Federal Acts.

I referred to aircraft, shipping and transport generally because of the very definite sense of responsibility displayed by the various committees responsible for the transportation of these goods. They have a high respect for the very dangerous commodity they are controlling.

We listened to a very excellent technical submission by the honourable member for Bundaberg who has a wide, universal knowledge of explosives. It was very interesting to note that he has a profound respect for the very dangerous industry in which he was once engaged. Let there be no doubt that many years ago people in industrial concerns handled explosives in a blase or haphazard way. I have met a considerable number of them who suffered lip and other facial injuries after deciding to crimp detonators and fuses with their teeth. I well recall one man in my town who was asked by an American controlling a meat company if he knew anything about explosives. In reply he said, "Where do you think I got this from?", pointing to his lip, only half of which was there. He became the explosives man for that plant.

I am happy to note that the legislation provides for the licensing of shotfirers. When a man requires a qualified shotfirer he should not have to go around looking to see if a person has lost his hand or has a facial disfigurement from an accident with explosives, and then say to him, "Apparently you have some experience. You will do." But that is what happened in the past. I am pleased that, finally, a sense of responsibility is coming to those who should give the lead. Industry generally should benefit through these qualifications.

Today, many towns and provincial cities are undertaking sewerage expansion contracts. Considerable quantities of explosives will be required in those undertakings. The town in which I live contains a lot of auriferous country. When we want to put a plant in our garden we may find rock just beneath the surface of the soil. If we want to fracture that rock it is only correct that a qualified person should perform the job.

I said initially that, in my electorate, a considerable quantity of explosives is stored at Bajool. Many months ago a very grave situation occurred in that area. I referred to the matter in an earlier session of this Parliament. The magazine plays a major part in the electorate but, because

of industrial expansion in many mines, the explosives storage capacity is overtaxed. The Minister probably knows—if he doesn't he should take cognisance of the fact—that old, disused farm-houses in my electorate were used to store explosives. Blind Freddie could have got through the door, taken the explosives and blown half this city apart. Fortunately not too many people knew about the practice. It could still be on. I intend to investigate it. Explosives were stored in at least two or three farm-houses, and a very dangerous situation was created. I mention it now in the hope that someone got the tip when I referred to the matter about six months ago. The homes were not occupied. They were not baled. That is something that should be taken cognisance of by the Minister so that we do not have a repetition of that state of affairs in Queensland.

The Minister mentioned blasting in mines. I do not want to expand on that or address myself to the Mines Regulation Act, which relates to explosives in mines, because of the inquiry presently being held in Rockhampton into the Kiangra mine disaster. However, I agree with the honourable member for Bundaberg that vigilance is essential when dealing with such a dangerous substance. The provision in the Bill to enable the chief inspector to require a licensee to furnish necessary details when making a sale is also desirable. There will be at least some form of evidence that will enable the substance to be traced when that is considered necessary.

I now wish to draw attention to an article that appeared some four years ago when the chairman of the Bowen Harbour Board (Mr. H. Darwen) mentioned that, with the likely industrial expansion in North Queensland, a special explosives wharf should be made available at the port of Bowen. As I said initially, no explosives have come into the port of Brisbane owing to certain circumstances and to industrial establishments at the mouth of the river. The economics of running a port would naturally count against having a special explosives port.

I remember that years ago explosives from southern States came to the port of Port Alma. They were brought in under sail and meticulously handled. They were placed on rail and sent onto a branch line into the magazine at Bajool. Everything was correctly handled. When I was chairman of the port authority—we had to use a considerable amount of explosives—I asked the chief executive officer one day what form of transportation was involved in securing the explosives from the magazine. He said, "Oh, we send up the old Mack truck with Ernie and he takes it out of the magazine and brings it down to our storage place." If anything had happened and someone had crashed into that explosives truck in a town, there would have been a great tragedy.

I hope that the amending regulations relating to transportation will bring about a state of affairs that is a little better than that.

In the coal areas of Central Queensland many industrial concerns operate today. With the expansion of local authority activity, particularly in sewerage, drainage, irrigation and other matters, it is necessary that extreme vigilance be observed in the handling of explosives.

With the shadow Minister, naturally the interested members of the Opposition will closely scrutinise the amending Bill, and naturally we will be addressing ourselves to the measure at the second-reading stage.

Mr. BERTONI (Mt. Isa) (10.34 p.m.): I commend the Minister on introducing this Bill to amend the Explosives Act. A number of amendments are of a machinery nature and tidy up certain legalities. We all realise that Mt. Isa uses a large quantity of explosives. Some provisions of the Bill refer to the mine.

It is good to see, too, that the section relating to manufacturing has been amended. Under this provision the mine will not have to be licensed as a factory but will be allowed to carry out the manufacture of certain explosives above ground. The explosive referred to is molanite, which is manufactured on the premises at Mount Isa Mines by a representative of the I.C.I. company, which supplies the material. As indicated, it is brought into the mines in certain containers and is pumped into drill holes. The importance of this particular explosive is that it is extremely strong and dense. As is indicated in the Bill, it can be formed into a gel. It is not only used in downward slope holes but is certainly used in upward slope holes also.

Prior to the actual explosive being set, it is formed into a gel by another compound. The importance of this is that the compound itself is impregnable to water. This is important in a mining operation. The previous types of explosive used, such as ammonium nitrate and other forms of that compound, dissolved in water. It had to be placed in the hole and exploded fairly quickly.

Recently Mount Isa experienced its greatest mine blast. This was achieved by using molanite. Certain areas had been pre-charged six weeks before the explosion. This is certainly very advantageous.

The Bill will allow Mount Isa Mines Limited to manufacture this explosive at its premises. The chief inspector will still have certain privileges under this Act. I sincerely hope that the chief inspector or whoever is given permission to police the Act will not go underground checking out the mine but rather will enforce the Act above ground. We would not like to see inspectors underground checking out slurry holes to see if everything is correct.

Another provision refers to shotfirers and the licensing of them. It may be a radical suggestion at this point of time, but I wonder if that name could be replaced by "blasting firers" because a shotfirer may be thought to be a person using guns and pistols. The Minister's comments on that would be appreciated.

Tonight I have referred to matters that affect Mount Isa Mines Limited. At the second-reading stage I will go into the matter more thoroughly.

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (10.37 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions. It is very pleasing that the Opposition in general agrees with the objects of the Bill. I assure honourable members that when they see the Bill and study it in detail they will be quite satisfied in regard to the points that they raised.

Replying to the remarks of the honourable member for Port Curtis, I point out that security of transport, storage and handling of explosives are at present under inquiry by a committee appointed by Cabinet. I hope to have a report from it in the near future. I am informed that the situation at Bajool has been rectified completely. At present no disused farm-houses in and around Bajool are used as magazines, and owners have been told that they may not use them for that purpose. I am sure that the honourable member's concern is ill founded at this stage. As usual when something is brought to the attention of the department, it has done the right thing.

Motion (Dr. Edwards) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (10.41 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Traffic Act 1949-1975 in certain particulars."

Wide coverage has been given in the news media over recent weeks to Full Court judgments in relation to certain drink-driving charges. The result of these decisions has been twofold. Firstly, the whole principle of obtaining a proper specimen of breath for analysis by a breath-analysing instrument has been undermined. Secondly, a doubt has been created as to the authority and identification of persons who make or sign certificates for which provision is made in the Act.

I have always been, and will continue to be, a strong supporter of the British adage, "A man is innocent until he is proven guilty". The basis of the Full Court judgment in each case was a legal technicality, and I regret to say that, on information available to me, counsel for the persons concerned at no time submitted or even hinted that these persons were not guilty as charged.

I make no apology for the severity of the penalties which apply to convictions for drink-driving offences. The penalties which these offenders have to bear are minor compared with the penalties imposed by the suffering inflicted on the victims of families of those involved in death or serious injuries resulting from accidents which can be attributed in any way to drink driving. However, we must accept the opinion of the courts, and it is now necessary that the relevant provisions of the Traffic Act be amended in order to effectively implement the intention of the legislation.

For this purpose, the Bill will provide for several amendments to section 16A of the principal Act which is the machinery section enabling the requisition, as well as the taking and analysing, of specimens of breath or blood. Some of the amendments proposed are merely a redrafting of some of the existing subsections of that section so as to eliminate any further possibility of ambiguity which may arise because of the present drafting.

The principal amendments will provide for the manner in which a specimen of breath is to be provided for analysis on a breath-analysing instrument and for the tendering and acceptance as conclusive evidence by a court of certificates provided for under the Act as evidentiary aids.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (10.44 p.m.): The necessity for the Government's action as outlined by the Minister follows a Full Court ruling that an elementary part of the evidence of proof was missing in the prosecution of drink-driving cases over a specified period of time. There is some doubt about the authorisation of certain persons to sign certificates and a legal technicality has arisen. The judgments that were given by the Full Court heralded the need for the Minister to introduce yet another amendment to the Traffic Act on the operation of the breathalyser.

Just as an aside, I might mention that we invariably have these amendments to the Traffic Act introduced into this Chamber at a late hour and sometimes in the early hours of the morning. It always seems to be after the pubs have closed that we debate this type of legislation. I do not know whether this is to create atmosphere. Perhaps it is considered that the legislation is not important or the portfolio is a minor one or perhaps the Government seeks to hide its light under a bushel or rectify errors about this time of night, but it seems that

we have to make another review of the section of the Traffic Act relating to drink-driving.

The breathalyser legislation was first introduced in 1968 and I commend as an exercise for the new members who interject the reading of what was said by the Minister when introducing the Bill at that time. It is quite funny when we see the nature of the amendments coming before us at regular intervals, the most recent of which was only in April of this year and the occasion before that was March 1974. It seems to me that this Parliament is from time to time called upon to amend this Act, particularly in regard to section 16A because of a legal opinion which says that it is an inoperative law. At one time this Government used its numbers to force the passage of a measure containing punitive provisions which cast people in gaol through the use of mandatory prison sentences, and, of course, that had to be repealed. Yet I think it was the night before we went into recess only recently that we again saw the same errors being blindly repeated, and now, instead of throwing drinkers into gaol without an option, we are going to impose mandatory prison sentences on bookmakers.

It was interesting to read the remarks of the honourable member for Chatsworth, I think in March 1974, about amendments to the breathalyser legislation. I think he spoke after me on that occasion and had many things to say, but if honourable members read our remarks they will see who was right and who was wrong and in the same "Hansard" they will see who set themselves up as judge and jury to incarcerate those damned sinners.

I believe in rectifying errors and the Minister has said that we must accept the decision of the courts. It would appear from his remarks that he does so reluctantly. Of course, we have not seen the proposed amendments but we do know that he experienced some difficulty within his own party during the course of the compilation of these amendments. However, the same Minister introduced that amendment, and it is reported that, in effect, his intention was to quash the right of motorists convicted of drink-driving—

Mr. K. W. Hooper: You should take notice of what is said in this Chamber, not of what is said in the newspaper. You are completely off the beam, and the newspaper was, too.

Mr. JONES: I will accept what the Minister says at this stage. However, what the Minister said tonight indicates to me as I am sure it also indicates to other honourable members, that he was reluctant to accept the court's decision on this matter.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: I have not said that. It is your interpretation.

Mr. JONES: Well, I have taken that interpretation because the Minister's words were, "We must accept the decisions of the court."

Mr. K. W. Hooper: That is correct.

Mr. Lindsay: Of course we accept the decisions of the court.

Mr. JONES: I am pleased to hear that, because members of this Assembly make the laws and this is the highest court in the land. The Government ignores the advice of the Opposition when legislation is initiated, but it eventually has to accept the ruling of the court that interprets the law that is made here. Apparently a number of the laws made in this Chamber are wrong, because the Government continually has to introduce amending Bills as a result of interpretation of the laws by courts.

I am reliably informed—not by the Press, Mr. Hewitt—that to close the loop-hole in the law it was originally proposed to legislate for retrospectivity and make the new law apply from 1 September 1974.

Mr. Lindsay interjected.

Mr. JONES: I do not know that the honourable member for Everton was not one of those who voted with the Minister for Justice against the proposal of his colleague the Minister for Transport.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: He didn't take any notice of a newspaper article.

Mr. JONES: I may not be quoting from a newspaper article. I may be repeating something that I have heard in the lobbies of this august Assembly. It may have been the member for Brisbane, the member for South Brisbane, the member for Windsor, the member for Mt. Gravatt, the member for Belmont or the member for Merthyr, or it may even have been the member for Hinchinbrook or the member for Cunningham who told me, because they were all mentioned in the Press.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: You need not have quoted the Minister for Justice. You are completely off the beam.

Mr. JONES: The Minister seems to be a bit prickly about it.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: I am not a bit prickly about it. I just don't like people—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Cairns.

Mr. JONES: The Minister does seem to be a bit prickly about it, Mr. Hewitt. He is reacting to my comments.

Apparently the door was closed on that occasion, but the proposed amendment now leaves room for about 2,000 people who were convicted between 1 September 1974 and 12 May 1975 to be eligible for Crown pardons. I believe that is rather important. It has been stated that quite a number of them—not the majority—have already applied for pardons. Because of the introduction of

this legislation, such applications may not now be necessary. Of course, we have not yet seen the legislation, but we understand that it will overcome the situation that arose under the earlier legislation. If the original proposition had been accepted on the recommendation of the Minister who introduced this legislation—if it had not been defeated in caucus—these things would not have occurred.

On occasions certain people have spoken about random breath tests. I wish to make my position and that of the Opposition clear. In our opinion, random breath tests are an incursion into the rights of individuals. The Minister has not mentioned this matter tonight, but it has been referred to on earlier occasions. Random breath tests could be used as a prop for over-zealous action by law-enforcement agencies and, if taken to the extreme, could result in the harassment of individual citizens or groups of citizens. The principle that I and my colleagues are directly opposed to is the use of random breath tests as a whipping-post for a minority of unscrupulous persons who might delight in using unwarranted power that they should not have in the first place. Random breath tests are diametrically opposed to the principles enunciated by members of the Opposition.

I do not agree that slamming the motorist, either drunk or sober, with increased penalties after accidents have occurred will reduce the road toll. I have expressed such a view on previous occasions. In spite of the breathalyser legislation, the carnage on the road has increased. Government members are only having themselves on if they persist with the view that the situation is otherwise.

The putting on a vehicle of an "L" plate to denote a learner, a "P" plate to denote a fledgling, a "B" plate to denote a breathalyser miscreant or an "A" plate to denote an alcoholic will not lessen the road toll, nor will it educate the alcoholic. As has been said in this Chamber on earlier occasions, a drunk cannot be educated with literature. It might help a defensive driver, but it is not of much benefit to the drunken driver.

The other point I wish to raise concerns the authorised person. During previous debates on this legislation, a number of divisions occurred among both Opposition and Government members on the use by doctors of the breathalyser. The legislation was amended to allow police officers to operate the instrument. Now, of course, we are getting to the stage where an authorised person will operate it. However specially trained police officers may be to operate the breathalyser, I do not think they are happy at being saddled with this duty. Whoever operates the breathalyser, he should be a competent officer who has proved his ability to operate it. Furthermore, his knowledge should extend beyond the mere operation of the instrument.

Mr. McKechnie: Don't you believe that the police are competent?

Mr. JONES: If the honourable member had been listening, he would have heard me say that I do not think the police want to do it. I do not think that the medical practitioners wanted to do it and, to be quite frank, I do not think any authorised person wants to do it. If the provision for "other authorised persons" was not in the original legislation, why do we need these authorised people to sign certificates?

Mr. K. W. Hooper: We are talking about police officers.

Mr. JONES: The Minister did not quite define it.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: You will see the Bill.

Mr. JONES: The Minister said that authorised persons would sign certificates. I thought it was intended to depart from the former procedure. We made the change from doctors and I thought it was intended to make the change from doctors to police officers and now to other authorised persons.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: No.

Mr. JONES: I have the Minister's assurance on that.

The Minister for Justice, as the former Minister for Transport, said that this field placed a considerable strain on medical resources. Making payments certainly put a strain on Government resources, and that is probably the main reason for the change. Police officers, like local authorities in other instances, are a cheap medium to be used in various areas. The police officers are to continue carrying out breathalyser tests, without being paid a fee. We will keep this in mind, but I wonder how long it will be before there is a further change in this legislation. However highly trained and proficient police officers may be in taking a reading from a machine—I do not know whether the Minister referred to this matter, although I think he said initially that there was some new scheme dealing with taking specimens of breath and blood—will they eventually be taking blood specimens, or will that be a medical officer's job? The Minister nodded his head to indicate that taking the blood samples will remain with the medical profession. Medical officers will have to be called in to report on the examination of persons for medical reasons. To ensure that the law applies equally to all persons, will medicos now be required to take blood samples at a hospital or a police station?

(Time expired.)

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (11.4 p.m.): The honourable member for Cairns, having obtained his information from rather misleading and, in many instances, inaccurate newspaper reports and having listened to hearsay around the lobbies of Parliament, is somewhat confused about what is incorporated in this legislation. For his sake, and

for the sake of other members of Parliament, I point out that two specific, misleading articles appeared in the Press on Thursday, 23 October—one in "The Courier-Mail" and the other in the "Telegraph". The report in the "Telegraph" was not only far from the point; it misrepresented to a large degree certain members of the Parliament by stating that the State Government was under strong pressure to relax drink-driving laws. The misreporting that occurred in this instance by Mr. Ian Miller is indicative of other reporting we have seen by him.

I wish to point out for the sake of the Parliament that there is no pressure on the State Government—at least certainly not from Government members—for relaxation in any shape or form of drink-driving laws. Any imputation to that effect would be grossly incorrect.

What prompted this legislation initially was a very small legal point—an element of proof. It was a failure to prove that police operating the breathalysers were qualified to do so, with the result that the evidence in the case was not sufficiently substantiated.

It is not correct that thousands of people are in prison because of this and therefore are subject to pardon. Most of the people charged with this offence pleaded guilty. As a result, no submission of a failure of proof on an evidentiary provision has any worth whatsoever. Therefore, the only relevant cases for the granting of pardons are those in which the people pleaded not guilty but were found guilty on the basis of an evidentiary proof that has been found to contain a weakness. That is the first point to be made.

The second point is that people who are in prison because of this offence will, contrary to what the honourable member for Cairns seems to think, have to seek a pardon. They will indeed still have to seek a pardon. That is the process of our courts. That is the process of our legal system. The person who believes himself dealt with unjustly must proceed through the usual processes—through the process of the court or, in this case, through the Governor to seek a pardon. It is certainly not one of the provisions of the Bill that all those convicted of this offence will with the passage of the Bill thereby be pardoned.

It is important to realise that the Bill reflects the desire of the Minister and the Government, too, to see that this provision is clarified. In the actuation of all legislation that is introduced, especially measures dealing with breathalysers and other scientific equipment, certain points need to be ironed out. This was one about which the Government surely cannot be blamed for an oversight, as thousands of solicitors and barristers in advising their clients to plead guilty also overlooked this specific but minor clause. However, now that it has been brought to light, it is important to realise that the Government is endeavouring to pursue the correct lawful process to bring about justice.

The only element that I was specifically opposed to was the concept of retrospectivity—and I am pleased to say that the Minister himself was not in accord with it. In other words, he himself, as he said in his introductory speech, believed that a person was innocent until proved guilty and that, in accordance with one of the tenets of Liberal philosophy, retrospective legislation is something which should not be incorporated as it imposes a law at a later date upon people who therefore find themselves in a situation of indirect injustice. It is not something that we in this Parliament—or anyone in any Parliament—should put their names to.

That does not in any way imply that many of the people who will now be pardoned were not guilty of other than the offence for the weakness of this clause. However, it is important to realise that the Government prizes justice above the concept of trying to prove and sustain a basic guilt against the person without sufficient and just proof.

This is one of the statements in the Press—

"An influential Liberal said today"—whoever that might have been—

"The breath analyser machine should not be the sole decider of a person's sobriety. We must come up with something more sensible."

The point that is made there, I suppose, is quite relevant. It is true of many laws relating to traffic offences which Governments have to impose.

As rational beings, people find it difficult to respect a law in which they cannot see any rationale. When different people, consuming the same volume of alcohol in the same amount of time, can register different results in breathalyser tests, the situation develops where the people consider that perhaps this procedure is in some ways unfair and unjust. However, it is the only means that is presently available to try to sort out what a person's alcohol reading is. Obviously there is need for rationalisation of this law.

For instance, when a person can drink the same volume of alcohol in the same amount of time on different occasions and still record different blood-alcohol levels, it would appear that something is not quite specifically correct. What happens is that certain people may consume a small volume of alcohol and because of their physiological make-up and metabolism find themselves recording an illegal blood-alcohol content while another person who drinks far more does not.

So it is difficult for people themselves, when they are in a situation where they are entitled to drink (it has not been prohibited), to determine themselves what is the correct, sufficient, fair, right or equitable amount of alcohol that they can consume in a certain period and not be affected by it or not have a certain blood-alcohol content.

This brings us to the situation, as mentioned by the honourable member for Cairns, of random breathalyser tests. Following on from what I have just said, I believe that random breathalyser tests would be an infringement of human rights. If a person shows no signs of being in any way influenced by alcohol, there is no reason for that person to be waylaid on the side of the road or to have his normal access interrupted. Although there are not many of them, I am assured that some unscrupulous policemen may endeavour to use this for certain improper reasons. Anything that would enable the development of that situation would be undesirable and unjust.

I establish further the concept that there is a need to rationalise the laws relating not only to drink-driving but also to safety. I establish the necessity for rationalisation by making reference to the situation that exists concerning the speed of vehicles in certain areas.

It is difficult, as I said, for a rational person to understand why a driver travelling along the cluttered roads of Lutwyche is subject to a maximum speed of 60km/h while a person on an open road, which has no other roads entering it and is not specifically in a built-up area, although it may join two built-up areas, is subject to the same maximum speed, although the safety conditions are very different.

It must be considered that there are many aspects dealing with road safety. For instance, a broken down, unsafe FJ Holden can be driven by a newly licensed driver at 100 km/h along our highways whilst an experienced driver in a new and very safe vehicle—for instance a Volvo—is subjected to exactly the same maximum speed. There would appear once again to be a breakdown in the rationale of the two. No person could say that it is just as safe to drive an old broken-down FJ Holden at 100 km/h as it is to drive a safe, new, modern vehicle at the same speed. There is therefore room for questioning the rationalisation of laws relating to safety. If they seem to have a greater degree of rationale behind them, I am sure that they would be more respected by the public than some laws are now.

In essence, the legislation is an endeavour to correct the weakness in the law that has been revealed by the Full Court. The people concerned will still be able to follow the proper course of justice and receive pardons in the usual manner. It also enables us to bring before the public the possibility of rationalising not only breathalyser testing but also many other laws dealing with safety on the roads.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (11.16 p.m.): I rise principally with a feeling of disappointment at the Minister's remarks concerning this legislation. I do not know why he was not more specific in his introductory speech,

particularly in his reference to section 16A. It is very difficult to make the reply that one would like to make to such an address.

The Minister said—

"Firstly, the whole principle of obtaining a proper specimen of breath for analysis by a breath-analysing instrument has been undermined."

I think the Minister could have gone a little further and given reasons why it has been undermined. In his reply he may say that we will know this when we see the Bill. But when we receive Bills, we often find that they do not contain what we are looking for. As for regulations—we never see them.

I have never objected to testing by breathalyser. In fact, I do not think that its application is severe enough. I have said on previous occasions that I think the instrument should be located where the real trouble begins. I think that the apparatus for testing drink-drivers should be in every hotel, bowling club or other sporting organisation where liquor is sold. I have no quarrel with breathalyser testing, nor have I any sympathy for drink-drivers.

I think that the drink-driver is one of the greatest evils in the community today, and I personally do not care what means are used to catch him—or her. In fact, there are just as many "hers" as "hims" affected by alcohol today. I see them at many functions, and in many cases the female of the species is far worse than the male in the consumption of alcohol. The women do not seem to go so much for beer; they go for hard liquor such as brandy and gin.

Recently I read a report by a medical practitioner overseas that other drugs are as much an evil as alcohol, and many men and women are driving motor vehicles whilst under heavy sedation. I do not know whether the breathalyser detects such drugs. I have been told by some medical friends that the breathalyser does not function in a wide field to pick up some drugs that people are taking.

Mr. Jones: They are developing such an instrument in Britain today.

Mr. DEAN: Good. With motorists we may have to face problems not only from alcohol but from drugs. I am trying not to stray from the Minister's introductory remarks about this measure but I feel that consideration should be given—I hope it is being given—to this problem of the general taking of drugs in the community. As honourable members know, we even see people today walking along the street swallowing tablets of all kinds. This may be necessary. They may have a heart complaint and have to take a tablet, but I think a lot of the taking of Bex powders and tablets obtainable without a prescription is mere habit. But again it could be dangerous when it comes to a person's powers of concentration and ability to drive a

motor vehicle on the highway so I hope the Minister's department is giving consideration to that point.

Some parts of the Minister's introductory speech puzzled me. He said—

"For this purpose the Bill will provide for several amendments to section 16A of the Principal Act which is the machinery section enabling the requisition as well as the taking and analysing of specimens of breath or blood."

That is a rather ambiguous statement. Again, I think the Minister could have enlarged a little on that point. I hope that the Bill will contain a little more substance which will enable us to really consider this amendment.

Again calling on my memory, I think I saw somewhere that 70 cases relating to this particular weakness in the Act have been reviewed. I sincerely hope that it has not been so widespread that the defect will allow many of these menaces on the road to escape on a legal technicality. I think it would be tragic if a smart barrister finds these legal loop-holes and enables these people to get off scot-free.

Again I say that the introductory remarks of the Minister were not wide enough or full enough to really give us some idea of what might be contained in these amendments. At this stage I would like to know why the weakness existed and in what form. I do not know now. I cannot make it out. Tests can be taken and they must be analysed in the proper way. Even if they are taken by a police officer—this has generally been the case—they are supervised by a medical practitioner. I know one in my area who has been kept very busy in this regard—not that my area has more drinking drivers than any others, but I have a fair share of them. I have more than my share sometimes because importations arrive and cause trouble in the area creating a lot of work for the police at the Sandgate station. However, I will reserve further comment and I hope that the Minister amplify to some extent what he has in mind or what the Bill will do about this apparent weakness he says is in the present Act.

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (11.24 p.m.), in reply: I am pleased that at least all the Opposition members do not support the drink-driver, and judging by his remarks the honourable member for Sandgate certainly does not. I was amazed to think that the honourable member for Cairns is a supporter of the drink-driver. He declared this attitude very clearly this evening in his remarks when—

Mr. JONES: I rise to a point of order. The point of order is that the Minister is trying to be facetious—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Just state the point of order.

Mr. JONES: The point of order is that the Minister is misrepresenting what I said and misquoting what I have said.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the honourable member asking for a withdrawal?

Mr. JONES: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I wish when members rise to points of order they would get to the point. The honourable member has asked for a withdrawal.

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: I withdraw the remark but it was the impression I gained.

The honourable member for Cairns criticised the Government for bringing amendments to the Traffic Act before Parliament as frequently as it has done. Thank God we can still do that! It is a democratic country, and the Government can still suggest amendments to the law when it thinks it should do so.

The honourable member for Cairns is critical of the Government, but he voted for the legislation previously. He cannot have it both ways. He obtained all his information from the newspapers. On the other hand, the honourable member for Sandgate said that he could not get sufficient information although the newspapers were full of the matter. I say here and now that neither the Minister for Justice nor I made any statement to the newspapers.

Mr. Jones: I agree with you.

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: The honourable member for Cairns based his argument on what he read in the newspaper or on information he received, as suggested, from an informed source behind a tree—or in some other kind of "tree". As I have said earlier, he cannot have it both ways. Either he supports the drunken driver or he does not. Because of his comments in the Chamber tonight, I am doubtful about his attitude.

The honourable member for Cairns also criticised the fact that police have authority to operate breathalysers. He said they were not properly trained to do so. Let me inform him and other honourable members that police trained doctors to operate breathalysers. In Queensland, the police who operate breathalysers attend a special school and are specially trained, which is more than is done in other Australian States or in other parts of the world. So much for the honourable member for Cairns!

The honourable member for Belmont made a very fair contribution to the debate, in which he made known my attitude to retrospectivity. The newspapers might take note of that; the honourable member for Cairns might also take note of it. I have always been totally opposed to it.

Mr. Jones: Why didn't you contradict it at the time?

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: I am contradicting it now, when I should contradict it. When I comment on legislation, I do so when it comes before the Chamber, not before. This is the correct place to do it.

The honourable member for Belmont also said that the Government was not relaxing drink-driving laws. Again I say that the honourable member for Cairns obtains his information from uninformed sources. The honourable member for Belmont made the point—it was an important one—that the Government certainly will not relax the laws relating to drink-driving. He put the honourable member for Cairns on the right track, which was exactly what was needed.

The honourable member for Sandgate mentioned that in my opening remarks I said that the Act was being undermined. I did say that. The honourable member for Cairns can read newspaper articles; surely the honourable member for Sandgate can also read them. The newspapers carried authentic reports of what happened in the courts of the land, and that is why the information was not repeated by me. It was not something that was heard behind a wall or a tree; it was factual. I did not think it was necessary to bore the Committee by repeating it.

I made the point that Queensland is the only State of any country in the world in which legislation such as this is effective. One has only to go to other parts of the world to see how effective our legislation is. In fact, it is the envy of many countries that do not have similar legislation. Although honourable members may criticise the Government for amending the Act from time to time, the Government will continue to amend it when it is necessary to do so.

Before I resume my seat, I commend the honourable member for Sandgate on his attitude. I do not always go along with him, but at least he is consistent. Probably he knows of some of the fatalities and has seen some of the casualties left behind as the legacy of the drunken driver. For his attitude, I commend him.

Mr. Hanson: You've only got to look at the junk yard at Southport.

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: It would be a pretty good reminder of the toll of the road. Wrecked cars stand there like tombstones.

I thank the Committee for agreeing to the printing of the Bill, and leave further comment to the second-reading stage.

Motion (Mr. Hooper) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 11.33 p.m.