Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 1975

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

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

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

Explosives Act 1952–1974.

Harbours Act 1955–1972.

Beach Protection Act 1968–1972.

The Commissions of Inquiry Acts, 1950 to 1954.

Regulations under—

Ambulance Services Act 1967–1975.

Health Act 1937–1974.

Explosives Act 1952–1974.

By-law under the Education Act 1964–1974.

Report of the Brisbane Market Trust for the year 1974–75.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. AVAILABILITY OF PORTRAITS OF THE QUEEN

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

(1) Is he aware that portraits or photographs of the Queen in her robes are not available for purchase?

(2) Is he aware that the former Prime Minister issued instructions that no more portraits or photographs of the Queen in her robes were to be printed?

Answers:—

(1) Yes. I am aware that portraits and photographs of Her Majesty the Queen in her robes are not available for purchase in Brisbane. However, while this is primarily a responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, when my department became aware of this situation it obtained a very limited supply of such photographs from the United Kingdom and now makes copies available to reputable organisations which can demonstrate that they can make good use of such photographs. Of course, it would be interesting to know if Mr. Whitlam, as the former Prime Minister, would accept that photographs of him in Commonwealth Government departments should now be replaced by those of Mr. Fraser.

(2) I am sure that whatever instructions the former Prime Minister issued in this regard will no longer apply after 13 December next.

2. A.L.P. TO PAY GOVERNMENT SECURITY COSTS

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

In view of the fact that, as the direct result of criminal action incited by the many pugnacious, truculent speeches and statements made by A.L.P. members, such as the branding of the Premier by the Prime Minister as a "Bible-bashing bastard", police are employed in large numbers in and around Parliament House and Government offices, incurring considerable expenditure, will an attempt be made, even by court action, to compel the A.L.P. to pay the huge expense involved?

Answer:—

Without question, the situation that we find ourselves in today throughout Australia has arisen because of speeches and incitement to violence by many prominent A.L.P. leaders. The necessity to provide appropriate security measures in and around Parliament House and Government departments involves my Government in considerable expenditure. These A.L.P. tactics are, of course, to be deplored and I am confident that the electors will also register their disapproval in the appropriate way on 13 December.

3. ACCOMMODATION FOR APPRENTICES, TOWNSVILLE

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

Has any decision been reached following representations made by the Townsville Branch of the Master Builders' Association for accommodation facilities for out-of-town apprentices or block release training and, if so, can the House be informed as fully as possible on the matter?

Answer:—

It is proposed that the Townsville Technical College Hall of Residence be constructed on an 11 hectare site in Dearness Street, Garbutt. The funds available from either the State loans or the special allocation made under the States Grants (Technical and Further Education) Acts 1974 have proved to be insufficient to allow the planning of this project to be commenced before December 1976. The first stage of this project (60 student places) is now programmed for completion by December 1979, subject, of course, to the availability of finance.

4. GRAZING SELECTION TENURES CONVERTED

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

Since the Land Act and Another Act Amendment Act 1975 was assented to on 15 May, how many grazing selections have been converted under the new provisions to (a) grazing homestead perpetual lease or (b) freeholding tenure?

Answer:—

Since the Land Act and Another Act Amendment Act 1975 was assented to on 15 May 1975, 31 applications to convert grazing selections to grazing homestead perpetual leases have been received and are being processed. During the same period, applications for conversion to freehold have been received and are being processed. Included in the 31 applications to convert to perpetual lease are three applicants previously applying to freehold who now have preferred perpetual lease tenure.

5 and 6. LOAN INSURANCE, CITY SAVINGS BUILDING SOCIETY AND GREAT AUSTRALIAN PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETY

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) With reference to the taking over of the City Savings Building Society by the Great Australian Permanent Building Society and as he has indicated in answer to a question that some of the loans made by these societies were not insured, is he aware that some of the societies involved in the rescue operations of the City Savings Building Society and the Great Australian Permanent Building Society emphasise in their advertisements that all of their loans are insured?

(2) Will he take steps to see that the advertisements are changed as they can no longer claim that all loans are insured?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am aware that some societies do emphasise in their advertisements that all their loans are insured. The honourable member for Archerfield will be aware that the Building Societies Act prescribes that all advertisements must first receive the approval of the registrar, who ensures that the information contained in such advertisements is not misleading.

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) Is he aware that some investors in reputable building societies are concerned to find portion of their funds now being used to prop up the City Savings Building Society and the Great Australian Permanent Building Society by take-over of loans made by those societies, some of which, he has indicated, were not insured?

(2) Can he give an assurance that action will be taken to ensure that funds invested in societies as a result of advertisements featuring the names of highly regarded building societies cannot be diverted to taking over of loans of other building societies which have been guilty of deceptive accounting, misleading their members, making large advances to corporate bodies and engaged in other business trickery, to which I referred in my speech on 11 November?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am not aware that any building society, at this point in time, is taking over loans made by any other building society. The Building Societies Act provides that a society shall not make an advance to a member which exceeds 75 per cent of the value of the land to be mortgaged by the member together with the paid-up value of his shares unless the whole repayment of any advance has been insured by a mortgage insurer.

7. SUSPENSION ON BUILDING SOCIETY LOANS

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) Has he seen the report in "The Sunday Mail" of 23 November, wherein it was stated that the State Government is believed to be considering a submission from Queensland building societies which could result in an interest rate rise to borrowers?

(2) Does the submission deal with the early payment penalties?

(3) Does the submission suggest that a penalty charge should be levied on all borrowers rather than the individual penalty applicable at the present time?

(4) By what percentage will interest increase?

(5) When will he be making an announcement on this matter?

Answer:—

(1 to 5) Certain submissions have been received by the Government from the Association of Permanent Building Societies of Queensland Limited and these are still receiving consideration.

8. TAKE-OVER BY COMMONWEALTH SERUM LABORATORIES

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

(1) Was the firm of Fawns and McAllan, manufacturing chemists, of 65 Montpelier Road, Bowen Hills, purchased by Commonwealth Serum Laboratories?

(2) How many drug or chemical producers have been taken over by C.S.L. in Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) Fawns and McAllan Pty. Ltd is a company incorporated in Victoria and is a recognised company in Queensland. Under these circumstances, particulars regarding the shareholding of the company are required to be filed in Victoria. They are not recorded at the office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs in Queensland.

(2) Separate records are not kept of drug or chemical producing companies in Queensland. To enable the question to be answered the name of the companies concerned will have to be supplied by the honourable member.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of the honourable member for Nudgee to the fact that he is not correctly dressed in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House. I also take strong exception to the rude remarks that he made on leaving the Chamber. I hope he will obey the Standing Rules and Orders of the Assembly.

Mr. Melloy: I made no rude remarks, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I rise to a point of order. I found difficulty hearing the Minister for Justice replying to my question No. 8 because of the noise being made by the honourable members for Rockhampton and Nudgee.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

9. MR. J. SINCLAIR, ADULT EDUCATION OFFICER, MARYBOROUGH

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

(1) As he stated, in answer to a question from the honourable member for Maryborough regarding the time off granted to Mr. John Sinclair, Adult Education Officer, Maryborough, that time off was granted in lieu of overtime, who verified the overtime alleged to have been worked by Mr. Sinclair and was it an officer of the Education Department or Mr. Sinclair himself?

(2) Is he not aware that, notwithstanding anything said to the contrary, Mr. Sinclair is abusing his position as an Adult Education Officer in Maryborough by spending a great deal of his time carrying out instructions from the A.L.P. to disrupt the economy of Maryborough because the A.L.P. has still not forgotten 1971 when the seat was won by Mr. Alison for the Liberal Party, on which occasion Mr. Egerton and Mr. T. Burns, the Leader of the Opposition, referred to the people of Maryborough as racists and Fascists?

Answers:—

(1) Mr. Sinclair completes a weekly diary of his activities and submits it to his district organiser, who verifies it and forwards it to the State headquarters of the Board of Adult Education for further perusal. This is the procedure for all officers. The diary includes the amount of overtime worked.

(2) Whilst I am well aware of the Australian Labor Party's continuing resentment over the loss of the Maryborough seat, which had always been considered one of the safest Labor seats, I am not aware of any evidence that Mr. Sinclair is using his position to carry out Labor instructions to disrupt Maryborough's economy.

10. POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION IN HIGH SCHOOLS

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

(1) Should high school teachers be attempting to influence children to advise their parents how to vote in the forthcoming Commonwealth election?

(2) Is he aware of any instructions given by Mr. Costello of the Teachers' Union to A.L.P.-indoctrinated teachers to push Labor's case regardless and to attempt to indoctrinate as many children as possible with their filthy socialist propaganda?

Answers:—

(1) No teacher should use his or her position to influence the political views of students or of the students' parents. However, in such a large teaching service as ours, I would be surprised if a few teachers, carried away by the political heat of the moment, have not voiced their opinions at school. If this has occurred, I doubt very much whether these teachers would have much influence on parents, but they could influence students. I should make it clear that I do not approve of any teacher using his or her position to politically influence youngsters, and I am sure the vast majority of teachers would join me in condemning such unprofessional conduct.

(2) I am not aware that the President of the Queensland Teachers' Union (Mr. R. Costello) has issued any instruction to teachers to push Labor's case.

11. NEW POLICE STATION IN PINE RIVERS ELECTORATE

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

As there are now 4,500 houses in the Arana Hills, Ferny Hills and Everton Hills areas of the Pine Rivers electorate, is any action to be taken to provide a permanent police station in this district?

Answer:—

There is no provision at this stage for the establishment of a police station in the Arana Hills, Ferny Hills and Everton Hills area, but this aspect will receive attention at the appropriate time should the necessity for a new police station be established. The strength of the police division concerned has been increased within the last 12 months to provide an adequate police service in the area and the workload of this police division, as is the case with all police divisions throughout the State, will continue to be reviewed and staff adjustments made when necessary, consistent with availability of trained personnel.

12. DAIRY EQUALISATION SCHEME

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

(1) Under the equalisation scheme, does the Commonwealth Dairy Equalisation Committee continue to separately average returns from the domestic and export sales of butter, cheese, casein and skim-milk powder?

(2) What is the position with manufacturers whose returns either exceed or fall below the equalisation values of the relevant product and are they allowed to sell their output in any available market?

(3) Is it a fact that, because equalisation is conducted on a product basis, manufacturers producing commodities other than butter and dried milk products have been able to offer farmers a higher price for their whole milk, thereby diverting milk away from traditional butter manufacturers?

(4) Is he aware that for many years equalisation has taken revenue from manufacturers in States producing mainly for the domestic market and benefited those in the major exporting States of Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia?

(5) In view of this, has he ever advocated equalisation on a State by State basis or has he ever suggested a two-price quota scheme for manufacturing milk, whereby producers would receive a premium price for all output within a quota based on the estimated domestic consumption of butter, cheese and other processed products and output in excess of the quota would thereby be paid for at the export price?

Answers:—

(1) Yes. There is a separate pool for each product. The question of the transfer of funds between pools is currently under consideration.

(2) If a manufacturer's return exceeds the equalisation price, payment is made to the equalisation fund and if the average return falls below, a payment is received from the fund. Manufacturers of butter and cheese are not allowed to market wherever it suits them.

(3) Yes. The relative returns from butter and skim milk products on the one hand and cheese on the other have fluctuated considerably over the last two years. Currently cheese returns are better and there may be some diversion of milk into cheese manufacture.

(4) Equalisation operates between manufacturers and not between States. In the past there has been considerable outflow from manufacturers in deficit butter States to exporting manufacturers in Victoria and Tasmania. However, the equalisation system has been modified in the last two years and consequently there has been a reduction in outflow of revenue to exporting manufacturers.

(5) This State has for some years supported a two-price quota scheme based on State entitlements.

13. BUTTER PRICES

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

(1) What percentage of the 5 cent increase in the wholesale price per lb. of butter approved by the Prices Justification Tribunal will the farmer actually receive and what is the price per lb. in the shops?

(2) What is the break-up of the price with regard to the dairy farmer, the manufacturer, the packager, the carrier and the retailer?

(3) Did the tribunal indicate that the bulk of the 5 cent increase should go to the farmer rather than the factories, and is the Government going to take steps to make sure that the tribunal's recommendation is followed?

Answers:—

(1) It is estimated the farmer will receive over a full year's production an increase of about 3 cents per pound-butterfat, or about 60 per cent.

(2) The new retail price is 81 cents per lb. commercial butter. Of this the dairy farmer gets 53.75 cents/lb. commercial butter; the manufacturer 11.00 cents; packaging etc. 6.25 cents and the retailer 10 cents.

(3) Yes. The State Government has no power to intervene as this is a national industry matter.

14. USE OF QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY FACILITIES FOR A.L.P. PROPAGANDA

Dr. Crawford, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the fact that a university group is still soliciting money for A.L.P. political purposes on university-watermarked paper?

(2) As this group is not led by Denis Murphy and as the process is to publish three copies of a newspaper (20,000 copies circulation) for $1,700, would only the university printing facilities be involved for such a cut-price sum?

(3) Will he therefore once again contact the vice-chancellor and the university senate to ensure that university facilities are not used illegally for A.L.P. propaganda?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) I have contacted the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland and he has advised (a) when it was discovered more than a week ago that University watermarked duplicating paper was used, payment was requested and made; (b) University printing facilities are not being used.

15. BUILDING COMPLEX FOR MARCHANT PARK, CHERMSIDE

Dr. Crawford, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) What is the current situation regarding the complex proposed by the lord mayor to be constructed in Marchant Park, Chermside?

(2) Is he aware that the local citizens neither need the proposed facilities nor wish to see their local park vandalised by buildings replacing grass?

(3) What action will be taken to maintain the park unspoiled for the use of these citizens?

Answers:—

(1) It is understood that the Brisbane City Council proposes to call tenders for the first stage next month. The first stage is stated by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor to involve construction of a swimming pool, gymnasium, tennis courts, etc., being uses which the council considers are recreational uses and permissible as of right in the existing open space zone.

(2) I understand that there is some opposition to the proposal.

(3) I am keeping the matter under review.

16. MOTOR-CYCLE SAFETY HELMETS

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

(1) Is he aware of reports in the Channel 9 "A Current Affair" programme and by the motor-cycling magazine "Wheels" raising doubt as to the validity of quoted standards used on motor cycle safety helmets?

(2) Is there any basis in fact in this current controversy regarding the validity of such quoted standards and the possible danger in wearing one of these helmets?

(3) Is the "Protector" model B4 helmet validly certified by the Snell Memorial Foundation?

(4) If this helmet or any other helmets are invalidly certified, will he take such action as will ensure that the companies involved recall all such helmets and make the necessary compensation to those persons affected?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) No substantial evidence has been submitted to me nor, as far as I am aware, although this has been sought, has any authoritative statement been made as to the safety of helmets presently being used in Queensland. So far as helmets bearing the Australian standard mark are concerned, advice received only yesterday of recent tests show that these helmets meet the requirements of the Standards Association of Australia under which they are certified.

(3) This information is not available to me. I understand the Snell Memorial Foundation is a reputable American organisation but in Australia the standards required are those of the Standards Association of Australia. This particular helmet does bear the Australian standard mark and, as indicated, does meet the Australian standard.

(4) This is a question which can only be resolved if discovery is made of such helmets having regard to all legal aspects involved. I might add that the honourable member would be aware that the Commonwealth Minister for Customs and Police has recently banned the importation of safety helmets which do not meet approved standards. As far as I am aware, helmets manufactured in Australia do meet the standards for the time being prescribed by the Standards Association of Australia. In view of my concern for the safety of all road users, this matter has been listed for special examination at the next meeting of the Queensland Road Safety Council.

17. MOTOR-BIKE NOISE NUISANCE, PROMENADE AREA, CAMP HILL

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

(1) Is he aware of the increasing and continuing nuisance caused by motor-bike riders in the Promenade area of Camp Hill?

(2) Will he take such action as is necessary to ensure that unregistered bikes and unlicensed riders are not allowed to be the cause of continued law-breaking and nuisance in this area?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) All possible attention, consistent with the proper performance of other police functions, has been and will continue to be given to offences committed on roads in the area.

18. NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT EFFECT ON SWINGING VOTERS

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

(1) With reference to the advertisement in "The Courier-Mail" of 19 November which carried the words "inserted by the Queensland Government as a public service" and the answer given by him on 25 November to a relevant question by the honourable member for Nudgee, is he aware that such advertising is unnecessarily antagonising the thinking swinging voter in the Commonwealth election?

(2) Is he aware that if our parties are to gain extra seats in the coming election, we will need the support of the swinging voters?

(3) Will he give an assurance that Queensland Government funds will not in future be used to finance party-political advertising?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) I suggest that the honourable member closely peruse the actual text of the answer I gave yesterday to the question to which he refers.

19. ACCURACY OF PETROL BOWSER PRICE CALCULATORS

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

(1) Has his department made any check on whether computers in petrol pumps are correctly set?

(2) Can computers show one price per gallon while still calculating a price at a higher rate?

(3) Is it an offence in Queensland for a service station operator to use pumps which do not currently display the price being charged for petrol?

Answers:—

(1) Yes. The officers of the Weights and Measures Branch of my Division of Occupational Safety are continually checking the accuracy of computers on petrol pumps to ensure that they are correct with the price per unit shown.

(2) No, unless the unit is defective or fraudulently manipulated.

(3) There is no legislation under the Weights and Measures Act requiring the price per gallon of petrol to be displayed. However, when such price is displayed as a part of the petrol pump mechanism, then the Weights and Measures Act requires that the computed price for the quantity delivered be correct and based on the unit price shown on the pump.

20. STATE FIRE SERVICES COUNCIL WAGES

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

Have all persons working for the State Fire Services Council been paid award rates since the new award was gazetted in March 1975?

Answer:—

It is not known to which award the honourable member is referring. However, clerical staff of the State Fire Services Council are employed under the Public Service Award (State). Other employees are not covered by any award. Therefore, their salaries are determined by the council with the approval of the Public Service Board in accordance with the provisions of section 24 of the Fire Brigades Act.

21. EVANS DEAKIN INDUSTRIES LIMITED AGREEMENTS AND WAGE INDEXATION

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

(1) What form is the State Government's challenge going to take to the three industrial agreements involving Evans Deakin Industries Limited and the four relevant unions?

(2) Is he quite convinced that if agreements breaching indexation went unchallenged, then unbridled inflation could result?

(3) Should wage indexation be supported by all parties at the present time?

Answers:—

(1) Rules of Court under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act prescribe the form in which documentation is necessary to initiate proceedings before the Industrial Commission. The documentation will be in the prescribed form.

(2) I am quite convinced that if agreements breaching wage indexation go unchallenged, unbridled inflation will result, and the main contributors to it will be those unions which have consistently flouted wage indexation guide-lines and principles—unions which have set out deliberately to wreck indexation. In August I attended a conference of State and Federal Ministers for Labour. At that meeting, the then Federal Labor Minister (Senator J. McClelland) was emphatic that his Government supported the guide-lines enunciated by the Federal Arbitration Commission and affirmed that these should not be prejudiced by private arrangements between employers and unions. There was unanimous agreement at that conference that the guide-lines should be observed, and all States agreed to amend their industrial legislation to give authority to this decision. The amending Queensland legislation is currently before this House.

(3) Of course I agree that wage indexation should be supported by all parties. The Liberal and National Country Party coalition, which will be the Federal Government after December 13, certainly subscribes to it—and to tax indexation. I do not know whether the Labor Party will stand by its promise of endorsement, because it just cannot be trusted. The Labor Government postponed tax indexation—after saying it would introduce it—for at least 12 months so as to rip off the extra tax yield flowing from wages rising in consonance with cost-of-living adjustments. Federal Labor applied this money to reducing the shocking estimated deficit of $4,000 million. It was a base betrayal of the Australian people and a brazen theft without equal in our political history.

22. REORGANISATION OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY INDUSTRY

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

(1) With reference to the proposed reorganisation of the electricity supply industry and in view of the effect which the uncertainty of this scheme is having on the morale of many employees and the concern expressed that last-minute panic projects to meet construction deadlines could result in inefficient and more costly works, is it definite that this reorganisation will take place and, if so, when?

(2) Will he explain the benefits of this reorganisation programme to the community, as it is being claimed by sceptics and opponents that the quality of supply will not improve and costs to the consumer will not be any more favourable than can be achieved with the present arrangement?

(3) How will the reorganisation affect employees throughout the State in terms of (a) enforced transfer, (b) job opportunity and (c) job satisfaction?

(4) Do the proposals envisage any effective worker-representation in the management of the new authorities and what are the details?

Answers:—

(1) It is proposed that the enabling legislation be introduced as soon as possible.

(2) The benefits to be derived from the proposed reorganisation of the electricity supply industry have already been explained in reports approved by the Government which have been widely circulated.

(3) The Honourable the Premier, my predecessor and I have already given firm assurances on these matters.

(4) The constitution of the new authorities is an integral part of the enabling legislation and will be fully debated when the Bill is before Parliament.

23. UNIVERSITY STUDENTS BRIBED TO DISRUPT ELECTION RALLIES

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. Gygar,** pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

(1) Is he aware that students at the University of Queensland are being bribed to attend Liberal-National Party election rallies and disrupt them with pro-Labor chants?

(2) Can he inform the House how much is being paid to the students to carry out these disruptive tactics and where the money is coming from?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am not aware that students are being bribed to disrupt National and Liberal Party election rallies. If the honourable member has any evidence of this, I feel he should pass it to the proper authorities. Might I also say that I am reliably informed that, in addition to directing their members to take a day off to attend Labor Party rallies and filling them with beer, certain unions, instead of handing over their funds in bulk to the A.L.P., are passing out money to unionists and getting them to hand it over when television cameramen and other representatives of the media are present, to make it look as if they are being very generous. I have very reliable information to that effect.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PUBLIC MEETINGS IN ANZAC PARK, TOWNSVILLE

Mr. AIKENS: I ask the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads: Is he aware that the Leader of the Opposition, with two persons named Hawke and Rockett, proposes to address public meetings in Townsville tonight? If so, can he inform the House if any of these meetings will be held

in Anzac Park, which until the A.L.P. gained control of the Federal Parliament was a beautiful area, frequented by hundreds of people, particularly women and children, who are now afraid or ashamed to go there?

Mr. HINZE: When the honourable member referred to the Leader of the Opposition was he referring to Whitlam or Burns?

Mr. AIKENS: Burns, of course.

Mr. HINZE: He also referred to two of Burns's Commo mates in Townsville. It is probably a function of local government. It would probably come under the Townsville City Council or the Police Department. It seems that a rash of these meetings are being held all over Australia. When I was watching TV last night, I was interested to see something like 20,000 people in the square in Melbourne. I asked myself, "Where would they come from?" It is very simple. Melbourne has about 1,000,000 electors of whom 2 per cent are Communists. That means that it has 20,000 Communists and the lot of them were there!

That is happening all over Australia. They are trying to impress people. The greatest actor of all time, Gough Whitlam, gets up and goes through the same old dialogue about democracy. Imagine that rotten crew ever talking about democracy! Whitlam throws his hands up in the air and says, "Save Australia! Save democracy!" They don't know what the word means. It is the first time since I have been in State politics that I have seen a great demonstration by people calling themselves members of the A.L.P.—socialists and Communists to the backbone—referring to democracy. They are going up to Townsville tonight. The same old crew will be talking to the dole bludgers.

When I was in Dirranbandi the other day with my friend from Balonne, I had to sit and listen to my colleague Ralph Hunt talking to a group of dole bludgers who were saying, "What about social service? We want Gough." That is all we are getting in Australia today. At all those functions half are Communists and the other half are dole bludgers. There are two groups that have something to fear if a Fraser-Anthony Government is elected, and they are the dole bludgers and the Communists.

Mr. Marginson interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member for Wolston does not behave himself, I will have to deal with him under Standing Order 123A.

BRISBANE CRICKET GROUND PITCH

Mr. KAUS: I direct the following question to the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport: Did he read the report in the "Telegraph" of 25 November concerning the use of guard dogs to protect the Woolloongabba cricket pitch? Is there any truth in the rumour that international and State players obtained the use of the guard dogs for the express purpose of keeping the temporary groundsman off the wicket? Further, is it true that, in spite of the fact that Queensland has had its best wet season for years, the pitch at the Gabba is the only place in Queensland where grass will not grow? In view of the fact that the Queensland cricket team is placed in a very favourable position in the Sheffield Shield competition——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! What is the honourable member's question?

Mr. KAUS: I am coming to that. Does the Minister agree that Queensland's chances of winning the shield will be jeopardised by playing on badly prepared pitches? Finally, can the Minister offer any advice to the trustees of the cricket ground in relation to the preparation of pitches?

Mr. HERBERT: This is an extremely serious situation because Queensland is in very grave danger of losing major matches and tests. The Brisbane Cricket Ground has the worst pitch in Australia. The members of the trust must wake up to themselves and get rid of this megalomaniac who is ruining not only the grounds at the Gabba but also our reputation. The West Indians will go home with a very poor view of Queensland's facilities. The trust simply has to get rid of him. Cricket is a game, but the care of a cricket pitch is not. It is a job that should be carried out by professionals. I cannot see why Alderman Jones desires to spoil the Brisbane Cricket Ground. We have to get rid of him and replace him with a man who is capable of looking after the grounds. If we do not do so, our reputation in the cricketing world will be totally lost.

REFERENCE TO ITALIAN COMMUNITY BY LABOR PARTY

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: I ask the Premier: Has he seen a newspaper report depicting the ex-Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, at an election rally surrounded by a number of people carrying a banner, the caption of which read, "Italians stand for democracy"? As most Italians feel that this is a piece of political effrontery in tying the Italian community to the socialist, anti-Royalist Labor Party, will he consider sending a copy of the portrait of Her Majesty the Queen to the Italian club at Townsville, which has expressed its loyalty to this country and to our Sovereign?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I can appreciate the honourable member's concern and the concern of very many Italian people in our State, and indeed in other States, about the way in which the Prime Minister has tried to capitalise on them as a race. They are very fine people who have played a vital role in the development of Queensland, particularly the sugar areas. They are very loyal supporters of democracy, a free and

democratic way of life and constitutional Government. They would be the last people to come out in support of the former Prime Minister. I appreciate the suggestion of the honourable member and would be glad to take the matter up with him to see what can be done about it.

REHABILITATION OF DRINK DRIVERS

Mr. GUNN: I ask the Minister for Transport: Is he aware of a rehabilitation programme being initiated in the New South Wales Parliament for certain drink-driving offenders? In view of the number of recurring cases of drink-driving in Queensland, would he agree that such a scheme would have merit if introduced into this State?

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: I am aware of the programme as announced by the Premier of New South Wales only yesterday and also an indication given by the Premier of Victoria that that State is examining a similar system. I think the introduction of rehabilitation programmes for people who commit drink-driving offences on a number of occasions is an excellent idea.

A report in "The Australian" this morning mentioned that Mr. Lewis had indicated that an educational programme would also be introduced. I inform the House that we are doing this at the moment. Allocations from the Liquor Trust Fund allow us to carry out this programme. The Queensland Road Safety Council, too, is doing an excellent job. The suggestion made by the honourable member will be followed up and studied closely. I think it is an excellent suggestion.

FORMER PRIME MINISTER'S RADIO STATEMENT ON LIBERAL POLICY ON CHILD ENDOWMENT AND AGE PENSIONS

Mr. LANE: I ask the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport: Has his attention been drawn to a broadcast on Labor radio station 4KQ on Sunday night last by the Federal Leader of the Australian Labor Party (Mr. Whitlam) in which he alleged that any future Liberal Government would reduce child endowment and apply a means test to age pensions as its first means of reducing Government expenditure? Is he aware from his consultations with Federal members of Parliament of any proposal by the Federal Liberal Party to move in this area?

Mr. HERBERT: I am aware of this lie. It is a despicable one because it is aimed at people who are worried about their future. Many old people are incapable of assessing the full situation. They look at the pension in isolation. Whitlam is aware of this and he is lying.

I have spoken to Mr. Chipp, the Liberal spokesman on this matter. He has made several statements on pensions. What he hopes to do is take pensions out of the political arena and stop the lies that are made in every election campaign by tying them to increases in the cost of living. Of course, this is to the pensioners' benefit. We cannot do anything about lying Federal politicians. A.L.P. politicians have been noted for this for a long time.

I should like to issue a very stern warning to certain social workers employed by the Federal Government in this area who are spreading this rumour and frightening pensioners, particularly pensioners who they believe will vote for the Liberal-National Country Party Government. We have asked these pensioners to supply us with statutory declarations on the information that has been given to them by these social workers. Immediately after the election and irrespective of who wins it, these statutory declarations will be handed to the head of the Federal Government department responsible for those officers so that we will be able to ferret out the liars who are battening on old people.

MR. COPE'S COMMENTS ABOUT THE QUEEN

Mr. LANE: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: In referring to the statement of the former A.L.P. Speaker of the House of Representatives (Mr. Cope) in which he made certain comments about Her Majesty the Queen, does the Minister see the possibility of Mr. Cope contravening the provisions of the Criminal Code in this State in respect of treason?

Mr. KNOX: The question of whether Mr. Cope would be charged with the offence of treason is of course a matter for the Federal authorities.

But let us have a look at what Mr. Cope is saying. He is talking about the Queen having double standards. The A.L.P. is dedicated to wiping out the Queen's representative in this country and the Queen's representation in this country.

The honourable member for Archerfield is one of the most ardent supporters of that view.

The A.L.P. pleads to the Queen to try to upset the decision of the Governor-General. After having rubbished the Governor-General from the steps of Parliament House in Canberra, it petitioned the Queen. The Queen decided that she could not interfere with the authority of the Governor-General in this country. Because it is a decision that the A.L.P. does not like, it promptly wants the head of the Queen chopped off as well. These are the sort of antics it is going on with. The people ought to know that the people with double standards in this particular matter happen to be members of the A.L.P.

It is quite obvious in this election campaign that the A.L.P., led by Mr. Whitlam, is determined to destroy not only the Queen's standing in this country but also the standing

of the Governor-General so that, should it win the election by some mischance, it will have a mandate to abolish these constitutional positions in this country. It is leaning heavily on the ignorance of the people regarding the position of the Governor-General. The Governor-General is not only the representative of the Queen as long as there is a monarch but also the head of State according to the Constitution whether there is a Queen or not. The reason for having a Governor-General was that, at the time of the founding of this nation, the people of Australia were strongly republican-minded and many of them looked forward to the day when there might not be a monarchy.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: That won't be long.

Mr. KNOX: The people of Australia should understand perfectly well that the A.L.P. intends to abolish this constitutional position irrespective of whether there is or is not a Queen, because the only person standing between the private citizen and the tyranny of government is the constitutional head of our nation, namely the Governor-General.

POLICE INVESTIGATION OF DOG-POISONING

Mr. JONES: I ask the Minister for Police: Is he aware of a report from the Cairns area that a dog was found dead with a poisoned chocolate-coated biscuit in the immediate vicinity? In view of the concern of parents in the area for their children's safety, will he have an immediate police investigation undertaken to apprehend the crank who perpetrated such a despicable act with a bait that would be so tempting to a small child of unsuspecting mind?

Mr. HODGES: The police will carry out their duty anywhere they are required and on any occasion.

CONDITION OF FLINDERS HIGHWAY

Mr. KATTER: I ask the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads: In view of the fourth serious road accident on the Flinders Highway this year directly attributable to the state of disrepair of this highway, can he say whether the deterioration of this highway, an outlet for 50,000 people, is the result of its being down-classified to the rural arterial category by the Federal Government and whether he considers that the blame for these accidents can be laid at the feet of the centralist socialist former Transport Minister, Mr. Jones?

Mr. HINZE: One would almost think this was a Dorothy Dixer! I have to say that I am concerned about the serious accidents that have occurred on the Flinders Highway, which is one of the most important highways in the State. I have given the responsible authorities to understand that it is the intention of this Government to have the road completely sealed by December 1976 and allocations for that purpose have been set aside.

Concerning the attitude of the Government in Canberra—I think it would be far better if we had a look at today's national poll that indicates a complete swing away from the former Government. I think the years 1972-75 will be a part of Australia's history that we will never be able to look back on with any pride at all. Instead we look forward objectively in the knowledge that it will be only another month or two before we will be able to have discussions with somebody in authority in Canberra from whom we will obtain sufficient finance to look after all the rural arterial roads and highways in this State.

ABOLITION OF MONARCHY FOR AUSTRALIA

Mr. LAMONT: I ask the Premier: With reference to the statement made by the honourable member for Archerfield a few moments ago that "it won't be long before the Queen is done away with", firstly, is it true that the honourable member who prophesied the demise of the Queen is in fact the campaign director for the former Federal Treasurer, Mr. Hayden, and secondly, what is the attitude of this Government to the suggestion by an A.L.P. spokesman that a future Federal A.L.P. Government would somehow "do away with the Queen"?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I rise to a point of order. I did not make all those remarks attributed to me by the honourable member for South Brisbane. By way of interjection all I did was use four words—"That won't be long".

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member has highlighted the fact that he is now a little concerned at his remarks——

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I'm not concerned.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: You are not concerned?

Mr. K. J. Hooper: No.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: In reply to the honourable member: Yes, I have been informed that the honourable member who made that remark is the campaign director for Mr. Hayden. I have heard with my own ears the honourable member in this House say by way of interjection, in effect, "We will get rid of the Queen." He said. "It won't be long before we get rid of the Queen." That is the attitude not only of the honourable member but of all honourable members opposite and, indeed, the Commonwealth Labor people. I think the people of this State and this nation should heed the remarks of the honourable member. I can assure him I will give them due publicity and that the people will act accordingly.

A.L.P. OPPOSITION'S SUPPORT OF CENTRALISM

Mr. GIBBS: I preface my question to the Premier by stating that at the last Federal election the A.L.P. Opposition in this State failed to fight Canberra centralism. I now ask: Has the situation changed?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: In common with the honourable member, we are all concerned about the general trend of events in Australia, particularly in Queensland. The latest figures available, which appeared in the Press today, are very edifying. They show that Queensland will have much better representation in both the House of Representatives and the Senate after the election on 13 December. The figures show very clearly that in a Senate poll 50.7 per cent of voters in Queensland would support the Liberal-National Country Party candidates and only 35.8 per cent would support A.L.P. candidates. They also show that 46 per cent of Australian voters would give their first preference to the caretaker Fraser Government and 44 per cent to the A.L.P. I think that indicates clearly the present trend, which will accelerate rapidly as people realise what are the real issues of the campaign and what is at stake for the nation. The Liberal and National-Country Parties are well and truly on the road, under Malcolm Fraser and Doug Anthony, to again becoming the Commonwealth Government.

ORDER IN CHAMBER DURING QUESTION TIME

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) having given notice of three questions—

Mr. Hinze: Who's dribbling all that rubbish to you?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I know all about you, too.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I'll give you some if you're not careful.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Archerfield under Standing Order 123A, and also the Minister.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) proceeding to give notice of a question—

Government Members interjected.

Mr. DEAN: Have they finished?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DEAN: I will repeat the question.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. DEAN: When I have the attention of the House I will continue.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will continue. I will run the affairs of the House. I ask the honourable member to continue with his notice of question.

Mr. DEAN: If they want abuse, they'll get it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Sandgate will obey the ruling of the Chair. I ask him to continue with his notice of question.

Mr. DEAN: I shall repeat the question for the next 24 hours if they keep going.

Mr. Moore interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Windsor under Standing Order 123A.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

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

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the receiving of Resolutions from the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means on the same day as they shall have passed in those Committees and the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day."

Motion agreed to.

AUCTIONEERS AND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971–1974 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

URBAN PASSENGER SERVICE PROPRIETORS ASSISTANCE BILL

INITIATION

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to authorise the Minister for Transport on behalf of the Government of the State to guarantee the repayment of moneys borrowed for certain purposes by proprietors of urban passenger services and to pay to those proprietors subsidies and for matters incidental thereto."

Motion agreed to.

MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Main Roads Act 1920–1972 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

VICIOUS TREATMENT OF RURAL SECTOR BY WHITLAM LABOR GOVERNMENT

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.2 p.m.): I am sure that all honourable members would acknowledge the mammoth contribution that people living and working in the rural areas of Australia have made towards the development and the economy of this great nation. As this is a time set aside for debate on matters of public interest, I feel that I would be failing in my responsibility to the people of Australia if I did not at this particular time bring to their notice the importance of our rural industries and the people who serve them.

In a little over a fortnight the people of Australia will be required to elect a new Government which will adopt policies having an effect on our rural industries. Therefore I believe that the people of Australia should be reminded of the savage policies inflicted on those in rural industries over the last three years of Labor Government. I should hope that that will not occur after 13 December 1975.

I voice my deep concern and disgust—and, indeed, my strongest condemnation—at the vicious treatment of the rural sector by the sacked Whitlam Labor Government throughout its blundering and shameful term of office in Canberra.

Labor acted with indecent haste in approving a series of ruthless decisions that shattered the confidence of farmers in their future and created undesirable and detrimental side-effects in business activity in the country towns serving the farming community. I never believed that in my lifetime I would see the confidence of country people shattered so quickly as I have seen it shattered because of the policies of the socialist Labor Government in Canberra. In some cases the damage wrought could be irreparable. This wholesale rape and plunder of the rural sector was, in my view, a deliberate act by the Whitlam Government against a section of the Australian people whose vote Labor knew it could not buy at any price.

It filled me with disgust to watch this savage onslaught against primary industry while at the same time Labor bowed and scraped ignominiously to the militant Communist-led unions, the university radicals and rat-bags, the conservation cranks and the professional loafers.

Mr. JONES: I rise to a point of order. I draw the attention of the House, as it was drawn when I was speaking yesterday, to the fact that the Minister is reading from a prepared script. Is this permitted under Standing Orders?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is allowed to refer to notes, as is any other member. I will not allow any member to read a prepared speech, as I have seen certain members doing. My ruling stands.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I point out to the honourable member for Cairns that it is against my nature to read from a prepared script. However, I want these facts to be correct. I would cut the bloody Whitlam Government to pieces much better without a prepared speech; I can tell him that.

What other memorable "benefits" did this deceitful Labor Government achieve for the people of Australia during its few years of office? It played them as suckers to promote grandiose socialist ambitions, threw private enterprise into a state of turmoil, discouraged exploration by overseas firms of our rich resources, restricted development investment and fawned upon former enemy countries at the expense of traditional allies. It made no attempt to contain industrial lawlessness, reduce soaring prices or increase production to offset shortages of goods. It raised interest rates, post office and fuel charges and decreed, in true socialist fashion, that "God Save the Queen" no longer would be the national anthem and that school cadet corps would be discontinued. All this from a political party that is asking the people of Australia to reinstate it for another three years!

While the inflation rate and unemployment total soared, Mr. Whitlam and his often-changing team of Ministers—33 changes in three years, I understand—stood by and watched it happen. I sympathise with the thousands of unemployed men and women who genuinely want to work. Obviously Labor did not want them to work. There did not appear to be any real effort made by the Government to co-operate with the business community to achieve rationalisation.

I charge the former Labor Government with having planned and implemented a ruthless campaign against the rural sector. It has been calculated by farmer organisations in many States that this campaign has ripped out of farmers' pockets the sum of at least $1,000 million, with currency devaluation taking the largest slice.

However, the rural sector has suffered many other losses in the multi-million-dollar category. Some of them are: $80,000,000 by way of cost of interest-rate rises in the rural industry debt; $39,000,000 by way of

the abolition of the school free-milk scheme and the phasing out of butter and cheese bounties; $58,000,000 by way of the lifting of the phosphate fertiliser bounty; $12,000,000 by way of accelerated depreciation in taxation; and so on. Added to this list are Labor's actions in raising tariff barriers—which did not result in a reduction in the price of imported goods, anyway—increasing fuel, telephone and postage charges, lowering educational expenses concessions and closing some rail links. All these moves were designed to affect and hurt the people in rural industries. So farmers cannot be blamed for claiming that during Labor's term of office they became the nation's poor relations.

Last month the Industries Assistance Commission recommended a $152,000,000 programme to rescue the depressed Australian beef industry, a recommendation that I described at the time as "welcome and realistic". I was leader of the Queensland Government's beef committee, and many of the recommendations made by the Industries Assistance Commission stemmed from that committee.

Over the years of office of previous Federal Governments the Agricultural Council has been the body that has virtually drawn up their policies in primary industry. In my opinion, under the Labor Government the Agricultural Council was a waste of time. Decisions on matters on the agenda have been taken on the recommendation of the 27-man Labor Cabinet, which contains nobody of any practical knowledge. We have heard about Dr. Patterson being the man to advise the Federal Government. I cannot think of anything he has ever done to assist the rural community or any occasion when he has spoken out in its support. He may have done so in the Cabinet meeting, but there are 26 other Labor men in Cabinet who are unheard of in the rural sector and who take no notice of him.

I shall quote what was said by Mr. Jack Egerton, President of the A.L.P. in Queensland. At the Brisbane Exhibition one day—and this was not in confidence; there were other people there—he said to me, "Vic, do you know what's wrong with our Government in Canberra as far as the rural sector is concerned?" I said, "Jack, I do, but it would take a long time for me to tell you." He said, "It won't take me long. I can tell you in a few words." He said, "They're being advised by too many bloody academics." How right he is! He is the leader of honourable members opposite.

An Opposition Member: He told you in confidence.

Mr. SULLIVAN: He didn't tell me in confidence. There were half a dozen standing there. I do not betray a confidence.

(Time expired.)

PREMIER'S AVOIDANCE OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC MONEYS ON POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (12.12 p.m.) I refer further to the Premier's flagrant misappropriation of public moneys for his own political uses. In the last few days I have submitted questions to him about the cost, source and composition of them but he has refused point blank to provide any answer whatever to the questions I have asked.

The Premier should be the last man in the world to moralise about Government activities. He is only too willing to criticise the Commonwealth Government, yet in his own Parliament he is prepared to act in a way that the public regards as dishonourable. I do not know what the Premier has to hide, but apparently there is something. He always boasts about his openness, his frankness and his willingness at all times to back up anything that he does by explaining to the public just why he did it; but not on this occasion, because he is behind something that could not be regarded as democratic.

There has been no judicious use of public moneys on this occasion. He is using purely for party-political purposes the finance available to him. He has absolutely refused to explain the source of the finance for these purposes, although the report he laid on the table yesterday indicated that $65,000 had been expended in the Premier's Office on advertising and publicity. So far this financial year, over $40,000 has been spent in party-political advertising by the Premier in "The Courier-Mail" and "The Australian".

We do not mind advertising if it is fair dinkum, but when he is prepared to forge the signature of another Premier to support his case, as he has done in these advertisements, it is time that a halt was called and some investigations were made into the genuineness and sincerity of the Premier in his attack upon the Federal Government.

Mr. LAMONT: I rise to a point of order. As a member of the Government parties, I find it offensive that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition should use the word "forge" when speaking about the signatures of Premiers that appeared in that advertisement. To the best of my knowledge, no Liberal or National Party Premier has claimed that his signature was forged. I ask that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition withdraw the word.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr. MELLOY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I shall enlarge a little on that matter. The Victorian Premier denied absolutely that he had given any authority for his name to be shown in that advertisement. He said that he had no knowledge of the advertisement, and yet his signature was there. It was not just his name that appeared but what purported to be the signature of the Victorian

Premier. That signature could have appeared there only if it had been taken from a document that the Victorian Premier had signed previously. It was removed from a letter he had signed quite unrelated to this advertisement and was used by the Premier to deceive the public and try to convey to the public that the Victorian Premier supported what was contained in that advertisement.

The Victorian Premier said that he would not have said those things, and that he did not go along with them. He said that he would not have used public money for an advertisement such as that. He dissociated himself completely from the advertisement that the Premier inserted on 19 November and yet we have his signature there. Therefore, if it purports to be his signature and if he did not provide it for that purpose, the signature must have been forged.

I directed questions in this House to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General in which I asked him to interest himself in this matter which was apparently illegal. The Minister's reply was a complete cover-up of what had happened. He made no attempt to answer the questions I asked him. He tried to clear up the situation concerning that signature because a member of the Premier's staff must have arranged for it to be inserted. In fact what the Premier is doing is deserting the member or members of his own department whom he instructed to carry out the preparation of that advertisement. The Premier sits in his seat smugly and tries to be sanctimonious and so honourable and just about this business, yet he cannot justify his action.

Even the honourable member for Everton has felt moved to question the Premier's action in inserting this advertisement. I am sure that many other Government members are not happy with the way that the Premier is conducting his campaign against the Labor Government by misusing public funds.

The Minister for Justice said that if the persons aggrieved took action over this advertisement, he would do something about it. Judging by the number of phone calls and letters I have received, I inform him that the people of Queensland are aggrieved. He should take note of this if he is as concerned for the people of Queensland as he pretends to be. The people of Queensland are aggrieved that the Premier should stoop so low in political propaganda as to forge a person's signature in an advertisement of this nature.

I want the Minister for Justice to approach the Solicitor-General or the Crown Law Office to have an investigation conducted into who abstracted this signature from a previous letter signed by Mr. Hamer and attached it to this advertisement. Surely someone did it and surely someone is responsible, and he knew what he was doing. I think that the Minister for Justice should investigate the matter.

I wrote to the Solicitor-General this morning and asked him to conduct an inquiry into how Mr. Hamer's signature was inserted into this advertisement without Mr. Hamer's knowledge. I am quite sure that the Solicitor-General will be genuine and not influenced by any political consideration and that he will make a proper decision on whether an illegal act has been committed. I think it is important that he does so. I was about to say that I am sure that the Attorney-General will not influence him. I certainly hope that the Attorney-General does not attempt to influence the Solicitor-General. I think he should be left alone to prepare an opinion, and, whatever that opinion is, I hope the House will be satisfied with it. I also hope that the Premier has second thoughts about the type of campaign that he is conducting.

LABOR'S POLICY ON DRUG USE; GOLD COAST REFERRAL CENTRE

Mr. GIBBS (Albert) (12.21 p.m.): I rise to speak on some important matters this morning, but I should like first to touch on a matter referred to by the honourable member for Nudgee. He mentioned the forging of signatures. In all my life I have never heard as much rubbish as was put before us by that member—and he is not even correctly dressed for the House.

There was a signed agreement by the Queensland Premier and other Premiers to allow that material to be used. It was certainly re-used. Mr. Hamer had no knowledge that it had been re-used, but an agreement had been made and he has since said that he was quite happy about its appearing in the newspaper.

I think it is wonderful that there is someone who is prepared to stand up and be counted by the insertion of an advertisement in a newspaper in an attempt to protect the people of Queensland from the socialist mob in Canberra who, of course, have the support of the honourable member for Nudgee. I have with me a parliamentary paper which shows that in 1973-74 $8,556,000 was spent on the media by the socialist Federal Government. And that does not include the salaries of 200 Press officers whom the sacked Prime Minister had around him. These are statements that I have to make in the face of what was just said by the honourable member for Nudgee.

I should now like to bring to the notice of the House the mounting problem of drug addiction and the tremendous temptation being placed in the way of young people. There are two broad aspects that I wish to cover. The first is that the drug problem is in fact one of the greatest social evils that society faces today. The second is that if some sections of the A.L.P. had anything to do with it, the blatant misuse of drugs would drag our society to new and more frightening depths.

To examine some of the aspects of drugs that may take even some members of the Government by surprise—I wish to turn to the work of the dedicated faceless body of people on the Gold Coast who operate the Drug Referral Centre. The Gold Coast, a place where the population is constantly swelling and where the naturally attractive life style beckons all kinds of people, is an area which does have to cope with a mounting drug problem. In December 1973 the Drug Referral Centre was formed, with the aid of a small grant from the State Government. It is manned by people who have been given special training in drug problems and who are prepared to be on call at all hours of the day and night to help those unfortunates who have withdrawn from the normal gamut of society because of continual abuse and misuse of drugs.

In 1973, when the centre began its work, it averaged three calls a week. In May of this year it was averaging 60 calls a month or about 15 a week. And the figure is mounting. In September of this year there were 66 calls for help, and 73 in October. One of the frightening aspects to come to light is that there has been a 100 per cent increase in the number of heroin users seeking its help in the past two months.

Another frightening aspect is that the average age of those seeking help has decreased. A much younger age group is now involved to the degree that they need and seek help so badly that, after ringing the Drug Referral Centre from a public box, they will cling to the telephone, waiting for help to arrive. In the past month the centre has handled cases of drug users aged 15, 16 and 17.

Mr. JONES: I rise to a point of order. I draw attention to the fact that the honourable member is reading from a prepared script.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of the honourable member for Cairns to the fact that I will decide whether a member is reading from a prepared script or from notes. I advise the honourable member that I do not need any assistance in conducting the operations of this House.

Mr. GIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A summary of the cases handled between January 1974 and September 1975 shows this picture—

Legal drugs	.. .. ..	302
Illegal drugs	.. .. ..	333
(of this number, 20 were heroin-users)		
General drugs (including overdoses and sniffing)	..	63
Not related to drugs	..	28
		726 cases

That was the total number of cases handled by the Gold Coast Drug Referral Centre. The "not related to drugs" figure in the table refers mainly to V.D. sufferers, a disease which is closely associated with the drug scene all over Australia.

Among the facts of life which we must face up to as a Government are that four out of six children will be offered some sort of illegal drug by the time they are 15 years of age, that the life expectancy of the hard drug user is only seven years, and that curiosity, group pressure, boredom, personality problems, depression, pleasure, and desire to buck authority and the overuse of legal prescriptions are among a variety of reasons for people accepting drugs. While drugs might provide an artificial sense of enjoyment of life, there is still no real substitute for active and creative encounters with real life experiences. As adults we tend to believe that the problem of drugs is a new and youthful one and that if we turn a blind eye to it then it will all go away.

The number of calls that are now received every month at the centre is ample justification for its establishment, and it most urgently requires some financial assistance to keep going. If the people conducting the centre turn one young life away from the grip of drugs every month, their efforts are justified. It is heartening that the Minister for Health has taken a deep and real interest in the drug problem as it affects the community. He has set up a panel to evaluate the situation and too look at ways and means of combating the drug menace. He is to be commended for this attitude. The people of the Gold Coast are becoming more aware of the dangers and the insidious evils of drug-taking, and they have responded well to the campaign to keep the Drug Referral Centre open. More financial help will be needed to make sure the centre stays open.

I would like to speak now about A.L.P. policy on drugs. With the background of mounting drug abuse, especially among our young people, it is frightening to see how the A.L.P. views the scene. The former Federal Government even had a plan to reduce drastically the penalties for use of marijuana. While it wanted to jump on traffickers in hard drugs, it made a laughing stock of itself by wanting to introduce a token fine for convicted marijuana users. The classic of all was the gallant attempt by the Young Labor Party to force their elders into an incredible acceptance of pot-smoking at last year's State A.L.P. Convention. These are the young people who will one day have control of the A.L.P. They wanted to legalise pot and, even worse, wanted a Government agency to grow and produce it, with the profits being applied to research into problems related to drug abuse. That is an incredible line of thought, but it is fairly typical for A.L.P. types, who seem to be for ever drifting in a smoke haze of their own making.

We had the spectacle in the Australian Capital Territory of youngsters finding a loop-hole in the drug laws and thumbing their noses at the police. The Federal Government was holding the law in contempt because it had promised to plug the holes in the law and failed to do so.

I wish to refer to a "Courier-Mail" editorial of last year which correctly blasted the thinking of the Young Labor Party on the drug question. The editorial said that it would be dangerous nonsense to advocate lowering the penalties for people found in possession of illegal narcotics. It said that the Young Labor Party's stupidity should be laughed off the convention's agenda. And to give the older State A.L.P. stalwarts their due, they did virtually laugh it off the agenda. But there will be a next time, and we cannot afford to let such people gain control of Government so they can spread their insidious ravings. Let's face it, these are the people who will be the future leaders of the A.L.P.

It is the general attitude of the A.L.P. that worries me, the party that has been in power in Canberra and has recently been sacked. We have seen statements made by the ex-Prime Minister's wife, Mrs. Whitlam, promoting the use of marijuana and in fact giving tacit approval of its use by the young people of Australia. Honourable members can imagine how this sort of statement encourages the pedlars behind the scenes. Statements like this by our so-called leaders must result in a greater acceptance of drugs by the young people of Australia, almost in the same way as do similar statements by pop singers trying to create an image of themselves as the big boys of the drug scene and men of the world.

I wish to quote now from an article in "The Courier-Mail" of 18 April 1975. The headline states, "Plans for easier 'pot' law". The article reads—

> "The Federal Government is planning national legislation to reduce drastically penalties for the use of marihuana.
>
> "Under the proposed law, convicted marihuana users would face at most a token $100 fine."

That is a maximum fine, not a minimum. The article continues—

> "The legislation has been drafted by the Attorney-General (Mr. Enderby) and the Health Minister (Dr. Everingham)."

Fancy a Health Minister making a statement like that!

(Time expired.)

LABOR MISMANAGEMENT

Mr. LAMONT (South Brisbane) (12.30 p.m.): In addressing the House on this Matter of Public Interest, I should like to preface my remarks by reading from the editorial in "The Sydney Morning Herald" of 13 June 1932, the day after Jack Lang, the Premier of New South Wales, was defeated at the polls. He, of course, was the Premier who was sacked as leader of his Government by the Queen's representative, and that was the precedent which Sir John Kerr followed very recently. The editorial was very prophetic. It said—

> "While New South Wales is finding its own especial causes for rejoicing in Saturday's great victory, the shattering defeat of the Langists will arouse elation throughout the Commonwealth. The united parties' great victory followed the signal defeat of the Lang faction at the federal and state municipal elections. As in Victoria, where the Labor Party compromised itself with our local revolutionaries, the Labor losses on Saturday amounted to more than half the Party's total strength. The New South Wales people have reiterated their earlier verdicts against Langism; and they have notably upheld the Governor's action in dismissing an outlaw and rebel government. Mr. Lang's own misrepresentations, deliberately false, of the issues upon which the Governor acted, of the issues at Saturday's elections, of the Premiers' Conference resolutions, and of the declared intentions of his election opponents, have been treated by the people with derision. The organised demonstrations intended to flatter mobs as to their strength; the processions of driven enthusiasts with hired brass bands; the threats, overt and covert, of retribution against those citizens who being trades-unionists and thereby exposed to Langist 'persuasion', should not support Langism—all these things failed utterly. The debacle was foreshadowed six months ago at the Federal elections; and after that poll the Langist organ called the electors of this state 'morons', 'feeble-minded', and 'mental infants'. There is, of course, no other retort left for the propagandist who has built up his pretensions upon the slogan simply that he 'is right', and then finds that the whole country joins in showing him how completely he is wrong."

How prophetic! Unionists intimidating decent workers; drummed-up crowds and brass bands; people taking to the streets; Labor uniting with revolutionaries. And then the people showing how completely wrong a man is when his only election slogan is that he "is right" simply because he happens to be who he is. As I said, that was in 1932.

Recently another leader of a Labor Government was sacked—quite rightly—by the Queen's representative because, just as the editorial of 13 June 1932 said of Jack Lang, he was a rebel and an outlaw. That is precisely what happened in Canberra on 11 November this year. The Queen's representative, once again defending the Constitution and defending democracy, took the necessary action.

I see slogans on cars—probably they are the cars of some members of the radical trade unions—which say, "Save democracy. Vote Labor." The trade union slogan for this election is, "Save democracy. Vote Labor." In spite of that, the unions say that if the people vote in a Liberal-National Country Party Government—if they return the Malcolm Fraser Government—they will not co-operate with the Government. That is the sort of democracy that they consider is worth saving. They say, "Go out and vote and save democracy, but if you don't vote the way we want you to, the show is over. We won't co-operate." The Labor Party and its colleagues in the Trades Hall are trying to hold Australian voters to ransom. I ask this question: how can it possibly be an attack on democracy when all that the Liberal and National Parties have done is take people to the ballot-box? That is what the A.L.P. is afraid of, and it is not prepared to talk about the real issues.

The Budget that the Senate so properly blocked, the Budget that was headlined in "The Courier-Mail" yesterday—"Mr. Whitlam's feeble cry of 'Give Mr. Hayden's Budget a go'."—has totally failed. Financially, it would not have stood up to a careful audit on the day on which the Senate first decided to block it. Senators took one look at it and said, "It is already grossly overspent. How can we possibly approve it?" That was a very proper decision.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. LAMONT: The honourable member for Bulimba interjects. If his wife came home day after day, just as the Labor Government has gone to the people year after year, and said, "Here is a budget. I want you to approve it for me. Will you sign cheques for Myers, David Jones and all the others? I have overspent my budget, but will you sign the cheques?", I suggest that he would say, "I will do it once, but I warn you that I won't do it again." But the Labor Party has come in three years in a row with a Budget that has been overspent by the time the Federal Parliament has been asked to pass it. The Senate simply said, "Look, we did it twice, but we won't do it again. You can't constantly overspend."

Mr. Malcolm Fraser used the household as an analogy. He said, "No household can constantly overspend its budget. If it does, it will go bankrupt." Three Adelaide academics, three so-called economists, said that Mr. Fraser was using a naive analogy because national economics cannot be compared to household economics. They said that the householder is in debt to someone else, whereas the nation is only in debt to itself. How naive are those academics! We know very well that deficit budgeting over a period of years without variation incurs a generational debt. It is a debt that other generations cannot afford to carry. That is the answer to those so-called Adelaide economists who really are squealing merely because the Federal Labor Government has bought off academics, just as it has bought off Federal public servants and the A.B.C. It is unfortunate that those academics are out campaigning for the Labor Party merely because their intellect has been bought by a Government, but those are the facts of life.

There is a clear answer to the argument of those academics. The clear answer is that deficit budgeting constantly year after year is as dangerous for a country as it would be for a family. One cannot socialise a country where there is a healthy free-enterprise economy. In 1972 the Labor Government tried to socialise a healthy free-enterprise economy. It cannot be done, for one reason. There are too many strong elements—businessmen and others with guts, get-up-and-go and know-how, who fight the Government that is trying to socialise the economy. So what has to be done first is to bring about the destruction of those opponents. Small business has to be destroyed. An attempt must be made to destroy the multinationals. Those people who are trying to provide jobs in Australia for Australia's prosperity must be destroyed. When enough of those factions have been destroyed, then an attempt can be made to socialise the economy. That is precisely what the deficit budgeting of the Labor Government was doing. It is precisely what its mandate mania was causing in this country. By refusing to face these issues, Mr. Whitlam was clutching at straws. Unfortunately for him, the one he failed to clutch was the last straw—the straw that broke the camel's back—and that was that Budget, which already was a deficit Budget, which was totally overspent at the time when the Senate so properly said, "Never again. We can't afford it. The nation won't take it."

How did Mr. Connor react to deficit budgeting? He decided he would take $4,000 million of Arab money, and sell Australia for that sum. He is the man who said, "We don't want to be in debt for years to multinationals." He was going to have us in debt for 20 years to the tune of $4,000 million, and Lord knows what interest rate we would be paying. He was going to have us in debt for 20 years to a nation which at that point he had not even identified to the Australian people.

In 1943 Adolf Hitler deliberately forged U.S. and U.K. bank-notes with which he was going to flood America and England to wreck their economies. The reason it would wreck their economies was that it would be money circulating in excess of the real wealth of those countries. That would have broken the economy of Britain if Hitler had got away with it. If we had got $4,000 million from Saudi Arabia, or whichever country it was, and the Government had spent it, with that amount of money in excess of the wealth of the country circulating, the effect of Mr. Connor's proposition

would have been exactly the same as the effect of Adolf Hitler's plan for wrecking the English economy. Mr. Connor wanted to wreck the free-enterprise economy because a healthy free-enterprise economy cannot be socialised. The free-enterprise economy has first to be made unhealthy and then it can be socialised. That was his plan, and that is exactly what he said he was going to do.

Members of that rebel, outlaw Government now stand up and say, "There is only one issue. Save democracy." At the same time, their own adherents say, "If you don't vote Labor we will hold you to ransom. We will not co-operate in the economy." Even as I say this, I am reliably informed by another honourable member that the members of that party and their supporters are at this moment out in the streets of the Brisbane electorate tearing down signs and showing exactly how they intend to save democracy in this State. They are tearing down the signs of Mr. Porter, the National Party candidate. They intend to tear down the economy and they have said that they will tear down the Government if the people of Australia choose Liberal-National.

I am confident that an editorial such as the one I read earlier will be repeated on 14 December. A rebel Government will be defeated. The people will tell the former Prime Minister, "You're not right just because you're Whitlam. You must have policies." That is what the Labor Party is totally devoid of in this nation today. It is utterly devoid of policies and utterly devoid of any understanding of economics.

SKIN CANCER

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (12.40 p.m.): It is my intention to get back to matters concerning the State of Queensland and the administration of its people for the benefit of the people. I speak in an attempt to have something done for those unfortunate Queenslanders who suffer from sun cancer. Because this dreadful malady seems to have become so prevalent over the years, little notice is taken of it.

Sun cancer manifests itself among fair and ruddy-complexioned Anglo-Saxon residents of northern and western Queensland by marks on the face and arms, occurring generally at an early age or in the early 20s.

I quote from Roche Products Pty. Ltd's publication "Image" No. 27 as follows:—

> "Until the comparatively recent emigration of large numbers of southern Europeans, the Australian population was predominantly of British and Irish extraction. Most of these immigrants were of fair complexion. They often freckled easily, and many had blue or light-coloured eyes. Together with these characteristics went the common finding that the ability to tan when exposed to sunlight was not marked. It was thus fairly evident that exposure to strong sunlight was probably the important factor in the greatly increased liability to develop cancer of the skin."

My experience with this complaint has been within the Railway Department. As a union advocate, I was in contact with fettlers and bridge and migratory gangs who worked all day every day in the sun. The classifications that were most affected were those of shunter and loco enginemen. Whether the steam locomotive accelerated the condition, I can only surmise. At some stage those skin cancer sufferers were fortunate enough to change their jobs and to work under cover, when the malady disappeared. The majority of sufferers, however, on having the cancer removed by either radium treatment or surgery, resume their normal duties. They are left with a scar on their face, such as I have on my right cheek. Such a mark seems to be the brand of all North Queenslanders of fair complexion who work in the sun and it is carried throughout their lives.

Mr. Moore: Why don't you wear a hat?

Mr. JONES: Not everyone can get out of the sun and enter politics as I did. The opportunity is just not available to every railwayman or, for that matter, to every other person who works in the sun. Workers cannot be expected to accept reduced classifications. That only means a lower salary, and that is certainly no incentive to them to get out of the sun.

Mr. Moore: I said to wear a hat.

Mr. JONES: Bigger hats do not seem to lessen the incidence of sun cancer. They may, however, substantially reduce the risk and retard the development of skin cancer. Exposure to too much sun on the beach or at sport is a serious hazard, and a hat seems only to delay the onset of skin cancer. In any event, the trend is to small hats or even no hats at all.

Investigations carried out by doctors show that the ultra-violet rays of the sun cause skin cancer, particularly in northern and western Queensland. Protection is not given by some of the so-called suntan lotions that are marketed in retail stores. The only preparation that I have found effective is zinc ointment. Skin cancer seems to be the penalty we pay for being the only Caucasian race inhabiting the tropic regions of the world.

In "The Sunday Mail" of 26 March 1972, Dr. Kynaston, who was at that time, I think, Director of the Queensland Radium Institute, suggested that people who live in outback Queensland should dress like Arabs or Chinese coolies. Perhaps he was being facetious. However, possibly that is the only way we will overcome it. He said that it will not only keep them cool but also prevent skin cancer. I cannot see any navvies working in Arab dress or Chinese coolie dress out in western Queensland. I

do not think that would be acceptable as part of the ordinary Australian way of life or to the inhabitants of the northern and western parts of our State in general.

Sun umbrellas, wide-brimmed hats, correct clothes and the right lotions are pretty hard to sell to the ordinary working bloke or the person on the beach. Sun cancers are prevalent in Queensland, particularly among those who work in the sun day in and day out.

I believe that, as a start, sun cancer should be made compensable under the Workers' Compensation Act for the benefit of people who contract the disease as a result of working day in and day out in the sun. I do not think that it would be too difficult to define. At present people suffering from skin cancer have to take sick leave for their treatment. It seems to become a problem when people who have been continually working in the sun reach their fifties. In the radium clinics of Far North Queensland, I have seen some horribly mutilated faces, ears, and noses, lost eyes and fingers, and grafted and scarred people.

I have in my hand Roche's "Image" No. 27, in which an article appears on sun cancer, headed "The Sun as Carcinogenic Factor". The publication is available for those honourable members who are interested. On pages 26 and 27 the horrible effects of sun cancer are shown. People who have been exposed to sun throughout their lives not only bear the ugly marks of the disease but also are subjected to ugliness as an aftermath of having the cancers burnt off. Many suffer from loss of lips or nose. The scarred features are——

Dr. Lockwood: A very, very good cream is now marketed which will allow these skin lesions to be taken off by its application over five, 10 or 15 days, which would prevent the need for massive surgey.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! I suggest that the honourable member for Cairns proceed with his speech.

Mr. JONES: I do not want a prescription from the doctor at this stage. I am quite sure that the Queensland Radium Institute is aware of it.

Questions have been asked in the House about this, but the point I am making is that, unfortunately, whatever the preventatives are, they are not taken; whatever the cures are, they are not obvious. The people who are subject to the malady receive no compensation benefits or payments. If they attend for treatment and they do not have any sick pay, they lose a day's pay. A person travelling from anywhere in the North to the radium clinic at Cairns has to lose a day's pay to get there. A person travelling to Brisbane for operative treatment loses his pay for all the time he is away. It is wrong that the disease is not compensable. If skin cancer were compensable in some way, at least that would be a start.

Today I advocate that, if it is accepted as a medical fact that the number of hours' exposure of the skin to the sun is more important than the intensity of each exposure—and that is a medical fact—those people who can prove that they have had to work day in and day out in the sun should be eligible for compensation.

(Time expired.)

WHITLAM THE PSEUDO-DEMOCRAT

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (12.50 p.m.): Democracy is alive and well and living in the ballot-box. Despite what we have heard from Mr. Whitlam about his endeavour to save democracy, we must indeed question Mr. Whitlam's own democratic structures. No doubt many people in Australia might be somewhat amused at the statement, "Whitlam the Democrat." Whitlam the democrat—the man who, if he had not been sacked by Kerr was himself going to sack Kerr when he had the chance. So while he condemned the Governor-General for having withdrawn his commission, if the situation had been in reverse he would surely have been there praising himself for his great democracy.

And yet the Federal Government itself had changed between the 1974 election and 1975. In 1974 the Government was returned and Mr. Whitlam was the Prime Minister of that Government. But what is left of that Government today? What was left of that Government when the Governor-General withdrew the Prime Minister's commission?

When the Prime Minister went to the people in the 1974 election, he took with him his Government, and his Government included Senator Murphy, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Cairns, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Crean, Mr. Cass and Mr. Connor. It included all of those men who the great democrat Whitlam believed and said were his great supporters. He said that these were the people Australia needed. Now, for some reason, he is such a great democrat that he not only sacks his own Speaker—or at least imputed motives to him that brought about his resignation—but he says to the people, "It is not the Government that is going to the people today; it is me. If the people want a Labor Government, then they want me; and if they want me, they want a Labor Government, because I am the Labor Government."

Nero fiddled while Rome burned, because there was no-one to sack him and, if the situation were allowed to develop in Australia where Mr. Whitlam could continue with his one-man band, we would indeed find ourselves in dire straits. Mr. Whitlam has told us that he was the best Minister for Foreign Affairs that this country had ever seen and soon no doubt he will be telling us that he was not only the best Minister for Foreign Affairs but, as he has sacked most of his other men, the best Prime Minister, the best Treasurer, the best Minister for Minerals and Energy, and the best Attorney-General and the best democrat.

A Government Member: The demagogue.

Mr. BYRNE: Yes, the great demagogue. We saw him delivering his election speech—the great demagogue, the man standing there with all the great beliefs in himself. Irrespective of what the people feel and irrespective of what the people might think, Mr. Whitlam knows that he is the person Australia needs. He is the solution to all of the problems and in fact if he is re-elected the problems will not matter. Mr. Whitlam will be there as Prime Minister; he will be there as Minister for Foreign Affairs; he will be there as every other Minister because there is not a single man who can last in his Cabinet and take a stand against him.

This is the man who went to the people in 1972, saying that inflation and unemployment were big problems. Inflation was then 4½ per cent and unemployment was 80,000. And he was elected. It was thought by the people of Australia at that time that they were sufficient reasons to toss out a Government, along with the fact that it was time for a change. A whimsical approach! Whimsical Whitlam came in at that time.

Now we have the same man saying to us, "I know that 4½ per cent inflation and 80,000 unemployed were the reasons we came to power in 1972. I know that inflation is now 16 per cent and employment is now over 300,000. I know that we were the Labor Government during the time that situation developed. But they are not the important matters. It does not matter about the country. The important thing is me. I have to be Prime Minister. I have to be the leader of this country." Of course, in ignorance, the Labor Party and all the people associated with it (including the very many academics who came out in support of them the people who depend upon them for their lurks and perks) say, "What a terrible situation has developed in this country. Democracy is being destroyed!" In fact, what greater supporter has Whitlam found in Brisbane than Vilma Ward, who, in effect, says, "Democracy is being destroyed. Terrible things have been done. The only way that democracy can survive is by the return of Labor.' "

Democracy exists in this country only through the ballot-box. Through the ballot-box people can make their own decisions and say what they want. I, and every other member of this House, can depend on the common sense of Australians to demonstrate what they want through the ballot-box. They do not have to be misled and treated as fools. They do not need to be treated by Whitlam as his playthings who will support him on polling day. I believe in the common sense of Australians, most of whom do not take part in great street meetings and riots. They do not take to the streets to express their feelings in such vehement ways. They know that democracy is decided at the ballot-box, not in the streets and not at mass meetings.

The front-page headline in "The Courier-Mail" of 13 November was—

> "Who's for Whitlam? . . . 3000 clenched fists. Against? . . . 15 were silenced."

How many ordinary decent people with common sense are going to attend rallies and meetings to be silenced? They know that they do not have to go to meetings to express their opinions. They know that democracy is alive and well and they know that, because it is, they can express their opinions at the ballot-box. They can therefore stay away from mass rallies and riots. They can say, "We know what's good for this country and we will see that that is what it gets. What this country has experienced over the last three years is not good for it."

Then we hear the great plea from Mr. Whitlam, "I haven't had my full three years." In fact, it is the same plea that he made in 1974. He said, "We haven't had enough time to show you what we can do." Well, they have had three years now. They have had the equivalent of a full term of office. And what situation has developed? After three years the situation is not only far worse than it was in 1974 and 1972; it is probably the worst situation in which this country has been in this century. And what does Mr. Whitlam say? He says, "That does not matter at all. The most important thing for democracy is that I, the quintessence of democracy, be returned and the people of Australia can speak of their democratic way in me."

Mr. Chinchen: What about the scandals?

Mr. BYRNE: The scandals are but minor things compared with the many great problems that now confront this country. There was the Murphy scandal, the Morosi scandal, the Gair affair, the removal of Barnard, the dropping of Cope—they just go on and on. Two deputy Prime Ministers—the Prime Minister's democratic representatives—were sacked. What did Mr. Whitlam say about those two, Cairns and Connor? He said, "I don't trust them. I'll have to remove them because they are a threat to me as Prime Minister."

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. BYRNE: Those whom the gods would destroy they first send mad. Indeed, we hear from the Opposition side the great shouts, ramblings and disbeliefs——

Mr. Doumany: And whinges.

Mr. BYRNE: And whinges. We hear them from Opposition members whom the gods also appear to be destroying, because they seem to have been sent mad. When Mr. Whitlam attends his rallies, he walks to the stage as the divinely appointed. When the gods see him walking up as the godly appointed, they obviously resent it. They have started to send him mad. He has forgotten about Australia and its future,

and he has forgotten about the people. I am confident that the people will forget about him. When they do, they will realise that for the stability and security that is essential in this country they need a Government that will pursue first, not personal interest, not the great "me", but rather the interests of the great people of Australia.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah —Premier) (2.15 p.m.): I move—

"(1) That this House do appoint a Committee to be called the Committee of Subordinate Legislation.

(2) That the Committee shall consist of six Members.

(3) That the following Members shall comprise the Committee:—

Roy Alexander Armstrong, Geoffrey Talbot Chinchen, M.B.E., D.F.C., John Ward Greenwood, B.A., LL.B., Peter Richard McKechnie, Edward Charles Row and Keith Webb Wright, B.A., A.Ed., M.A.C.E.

(4) That it shall be the duty of the Committee to consider all Regulations, Rules, By-laws, Ordinances, Orders in Council, or Proclamations (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations) which under any Act are required to be laid on the Table of this House, and which are subject to disallowance by resolution.

If the Regulations are made whilst the House is sitting, the Committee shall consider the Regulations before the end of the period during which any motion for disallowance of those Regulations may be moved in the House.

If the Regulations are made whilst the House is not sitting, the Committee shall consider the Regulations as soon as conveniently may be after the making thereof.

(5) The Committee shall, with respect to the Regulations, consider—

(a) whether the Regulations are in accord with the general objects of the Act pursuant to which they are made;

(b) whether the Regulations trespass unduly on rights previously established by law;

(c) whether the Regulations contain matter which in the opinion of the Committee should properly be dealt with in an Act of Parliament;

(d) whether for any special reason the form or purport of the Regulations calls for elucidation;

(e) whether the Regulations unduly make rights dependent upon administrative and not upon judicial decisions.

(6) If the Committee is of the opinion that any of the Regulations ought to be disallowed—

(a) it shall report that opinion and the grounds thereof to the House before the end of the period during which any motion for disallowance of those Regulations may be moved in the House;

(b) if the House is not sitting, it may report its opinion and the grounds thereof to the authority by which the Regulations were made.

(7) If the Committee is of the opinion that any other matter relating to any of the Regulations should be brought to the notice of the House, it may report that opinion and matter to the House.

(8) A report of the Committee shall be presented to the House in writing by a member of the Committee nominated for that purpose by the Committee.

(9) The Permanent Head of the relevant Department shall forthwith upon any Regulation, which is required to be tabled in Parliament, being approved by the Governor in Council, forward sufficient copies to the Clerk of the Parliament for the use of the members of the Committee.

(10) The Committee shall have power to send for persons, papers and records, provided that a Minister or members of the Public Service shall not be obliged to provide information, oral or written, which has been—

(a) certified by a Crown Law Officer to be information which, if it were sought in a Court, would be a proper matter in respect of which to claim Crown privilege; or

(b) certified by the responsible Minister, with the approval of the Ministers of the Crown in Cabinet assembled, to be against the public interest to disclose.

(11) The Committee shall have power to act and, subject to paragraph 10, to send for persons, papers and records and to examine witnesses whether the House is sitting or not.

(12) The proceedings of the Committee shall, except wherein otherwise ordered, be regulated by the Standing Orders and Rules of the Legislative Assembly relating to Select Committees."

As honourable members are aware, it has been the intention of the Government for quite some time to propose that this House should appoint a Committee of Subordinate Legislation. It may be recalled that I foreshadowed the establishment of such a committee in my 1969 policy speech and I fully appreciate the fact that there has been a considerable interval since then. However, it has been necessary to ensure that what has to be done is done in the most efficient, practical and, might I say, sensible way. A great deal of work has been done at Cabinet,

parliamentary and officer level over the intervening period and the motion I put before the House is the result of much careful consideration and deliberation.

Some of the activities involved encompassed inquiries in other States, complex legal advice, and a common-sense assessment of what would best serve the interests of this Legislative Assembly and the people.

I think the motion is to a large extent self-explanatory. The question of whether the proposed committee should be statutorily established has been looked at, but, as Parliament has the power to set up and give the committee all the authority required, we believe that legislation is not necessary. Initially it may be necessary for the committee to take steps to clarify and refine its modus operandi, but this will be left, of course, to the discretion of the committee and its chairman.

The committee initially appointed will operate on a sessional basis—that is, as a committee of the House. It will be necessary to reappoint the committee following the commencement of the next session of the Parliament.

I might add that it is intended that the committee will be serviced by a secretary, who will be an officer of the House, and that it will be authorised to seek legal advice from the Solicitor-General as and when required.

Finally, it is not intended that any provision will be made for the payment of fees or other emoluments to the members of the committee, and this would be in line with, for example, the New South Wales Committee.

As I said at the outset, I believe the motion is self-explanatory. I also believe that, properly established and conducted, the committee will serve a very useful purpose and that its objectives and activities will be welcomed by Ministers and their departments to the same extent as by the Parliament generally. Anything which produces not only more efficient government, but better government, will always have my whole-hearted endorsement and support.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (2.22 p.m.): The motion requires a seconder, Mr. Speaker, and I am happy to second it. It was planned, of course, that Sir Gordon Chalk would second the motion. Unfortunately, he is not able to speak on the matter, and so I support the Premier's remarks.

It is now about 14 years since I first became interested in having the Parliament establish a select committee to deal with subordinate legislation, and many honourable members know of my special interest in the matter. The fact is that, with the approval of this motion, every State Parliament in Australia will have set up a select committee of this nature. Of course, the Senate has operated in the field for some time.

If one goes back to the House of Commons, which is regarded as the mother of Parliaments, one finds that a similar body was set up in 1943. With its 600 members, the House of Commons thought it desirable that Parliament give much more attention to the regulations for which it is responsible and of which, under Standing Orders, it has the right of veto, and that it should play a more detailed and responsible role.

In the Parliament of Queensland, as honourable members are aware, from time to time members have seen fit to move for the disallowance of a regulation.

Mr. Houston: We never win, though.

Mr. KNOX: On the contrary, one of the disallowances moved by the honourable member was successful.

Mr. Houston: Afterwards; not at the time.

Mr. KNOX: The regulation was withdrawn and changed as a result of the motion the honourable member moved in the House.

Mr. Houston: It was withdrawn.

Mr. KNOX: Of course it was. That was the purpose of the exercise, not to have a final decision "Yes" or "No". The honourable member moved a motion to veto the regulation. Half way through the debate it was discovered that the regulation was improper and incomplete.

Mr. Houston: We were right.

Mr. KNOX: The honourable member was right, and the regulation was withdrawn and corrected. Isn't that the way the Parliament should function? The honourable member tries to suggest a political connotation there that the Opposition can never win. The honourable member did win on that occasion, and he has to admit it. It was the only one he did win, but he did! Apparently he knew more about the subject than a lot of other people in the House on that occasion.

After all, that is the purpose of Parliament. While we approve of legislation, we are also responsible for subordinate legislation. The tabling of it, the examination of it and the vetoing of it are provided for in the Standing Orders, and are an indication of that responsibility which has been there for some hundreds of years. It was the former distinguished member for Clayfield, who has been succeeded by another distinguished member for that electorate——

An Honourable Member: He was Chairman of Committees, wasn't he?

Mr. KNOX: He was Chairman of Committees. In his time as a back-bencher, he was the first member for many years to move for the disallowance of a regulation when the Labor Government was in office. The Government got such a shock it didn't know how to handle it.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: He was a Tory, wasn't he?

Mr. KNOX: He was a very respected member of the House. The honourable member was not a member at that time. I assure the honourable member that although he has no respect for the institution of Parliament, the Governor, the Governor-General or the Queen, there were people on both sides of the House at that time who had high regard for Harold Taylor. He was one of the most capable Chairmen of Committees in the lifetime of this Assembly, and was highly regarded by honourable members on both sides.

Mr. Houston: But you wouldn't promote him to Speaker when the Speakership became vacant. You dropped him when it came to that one.

Mr. KNOX: One thing about Harold Taylor was that he was never demoted, which has been the honourable member's fate.

It was recognised in the House of Commons in 1943 that the power of Parliament had to be entrenched in other ways, and a Subordinate Legislation Committee was set up. That became the pattern for similar committees throughout the British Commonwealth and those Parliaments which support the Westminster system. I will read from May's "Parliamentary Practice", at page 572 of the 18th edition, what the powers of that committee are.

> "This Select Committee's order of reference does not empower it to consider merits or policy, but enables it to draw the attention of the House to provisions which impose a charge on the public revenues, are made under an enactment which excludes challenge in the law courts, appear to make some unusual or unexpected use of the powers conferred by the statute, purport to have retrospective effect where the parent statute does not so provide, have been withheld from publication or from being laid before Parliament by unjustifiable delay, have not been notified in proper time to the Speaker in cases where they come into operation before being presented to parliament, call for elucidation of their form or purport, or the drafting of which appears to be defective. Before reporting an instrument under any of these heads, the Committee must give to the government department concerned an opportunity of making explanations orally or in writing. The Committee is also empowered to take evidence from representatives of Her Majesty's Stationery Office concerning the printing and publication of instruments or other documents. It is not expressly permitted to take evidence from any other person."

Those are the general powers under which the select committee in the House of Commons operates. That committee has become the model for most of the Parliaments of the British Commonwealth. When I was intensely interested in the subject I wrote to quite a number of the Parliaments, both national and State or provincial, in various countries that support the Westminster system, seeking information as to how their committees operated. There is a very impressive record in what we now regard as democratic countries supporting this parliamentary system. Many of the countries and some of the States of India have very lengthy and impressive records of subordinate legislation committees. It is a pity that in Queensland we have taken so long to accept this principle; but the fact is that we have accepted it. One of the special reasons why Queensland should be interested in setting up a subordinate legislation committee is that it has no Upper House.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Which is a good thing.

Mr. KNOX: The honourable member's comment is in accord with the philosophy of the A.L.P.

Mr. Wright: You haven't moved to try to get one back. In fact I think you stated you would never try to get an Upper House.

Mr. KNOX: The honourable member is distorting the facts. I re-state my view that if there were a popular move to restore the Upper House in this State, I would be happy to vote for it. When it was abolished, it was a House of privilege, consisting of people of very selective franchise. We certainly would not restore the Upper House along those lines. But of course there is no popular move for it.

People are coming to understand the check and balance in the system. Because there is no Upper House, there is room in this Parliament for an active and industrious select committee to concern itself with subordinate legislation. Such a check and balance is one of the many check and balances that can be applied.

It is rather interesting to note that, whereas when people of our philosophy occupied the Treasury benches in the Federal Parliament, numerous select committees, including the Senate Committee of Subordinate Legislation, were set up, the Whitlam Government in its three years of office appointed only three select committees. The Labor Party claims to be concerned with democracy. When it is in office it totally ignores democratic principles.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: It appointed 130-odd ad hoc committees.

Mr. KNOX: That is the situation that confronted us. The Opposition in this Chamber feels that the setting up of this committee might be a means of finding chinks in the Government's armour.

Mr. Wright: That's not so.

Mr. KNOX: I am delighted to hear it. I hope that the select committee will act in the same way as the Parliament may act.

Mr. Wright: As a committee of review.

Mr. KNOX: No, it will not be a committee of review. It will have special powers given to it under the motion moved by the Premier. It will have very limited powers, which will be determined in relation to the great body of the legislation under which regulations happen to be promulgated. At the same time it is important that the Parliament be informed, and I believe that no public servant or any Minister would wilfully go outside his Act. Of course, that happens from time to time. I say this because I am subject to such criticism myself. It is possible for a Minister by accident to go outside his Act in the belief that he has power to do so.

With the help of the Parliamentary Counsel, which is available to members on both sides of the House, and of the Solicitor-General's office, which is concerned with the rights of all people in the community, this committee will, I hope, perform a very valuable function for this Parliament. It will be a check not on the Executive—although most people interpret it as such—but on the bureaucracy itself, which so often, not wilfully but owing to a lack of understanding and knowledge of Parliament's function and of the Acts themselves, seeks to administer matters beyond the powers given to it. This is what this committee is all about; to make sure the bureaucracy in our democratic system does not get too big. We have enormous respect for our public servants. This has been revealed in recent weeks by members on both sides of the Chamber. Of course, they are not politicians. They are loyal to the Government in office for the time being, whatever political colour it may be. They carry out their duties faithfully, as they believe, according to law; but it is necessary for them to know that the Parliament is continuously interested in their actions.

We have taken some action about creating the position of an ombudsman to oversee administrative decisions. By this motion the Government supports a move to oversee the decisions made by Executive Government on the advice of public servants. The mere existence of the committee will have a levelling effect upon any public servant who might feel that certain things may be done or who might advise his Minister along certain lines. When he knows that this committee exists, he will have a second look at the matter. That is what the establishment of this committee will achieve.

I am pleased indeed that the Premier has moved this motion. I believe it will have the unanimous support of the Parliament. I trust that the members who are appointed to the committee will serve on it in the spirit in which parliamentarians serve on select committees, and in the spirit in which these committees have been established both in this nation and elsewhere.

Mr. Aikens: There are a couple of brumbies on the committee.

Mr. KNOX: Time will tell how much capacity they have for this task. A fair amount of drudgery is associated with the work of this committee. I am quite sure that some members will not find it to their liking; but those who have offered their services from both sides of the House will, I believe, carry out their duties faithfully and with credit. I hope that the committee will be successful and that, as a result of its establishment, this Parliament will be a better place.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (2.38 p.m.): This move is a good one in principle. It is desirable that we should have a committee that is able effectively to consider regulations, Orders in Council, proclamations and so on that are laid on the table of the Parliament. It is quite true that many things happen between sessions of Parliament. It is almost impossible for the individual member to make a fair assessment of the various regulations that are introduced not only when the House is not sitting but also when it is sitting. The facilities are not really available to him to investigate regulations, Orders in Councils and so on.

The authority of the committee is set out in the motion moved by the Premier. Of course, their investigations are made after the regulations have been laid on the table. It is hard to undo things that have already been done. I think the time of the committee would be better spent, if it were possible—I suppose that with the need for urgent action it may not always be possible—in considering proposed regulations and advising the Minister before their promulgation. That would be much more helpful. After all, considering regulations after they have been laid on the table is a bit like shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted.

Although I regard this as a good Bill in principle, I do not know that the committee will work very effectively. As the Minister said, a lot of drudgery will be associated with its work. Perhaps many of its members will not have the time to engage in that drudgery that is essential to doing their job properly.

As I see it, the Bill will not remove the threat of government by regulation that we have been fearful of.

Mr. Moore: You know that we are debating a resolution, not a Bill.

Mr. MELLOY: The honourable member can have his word if he likes. For his benefit I shall refer to it as a motion and not as a Bill.

We must look at the likely effectiveness of this committee and the time that its members will be able to put into the work that will be necessary if it is to be effective. The composition of the committee is lopsided. Perhaps there is nothing wrong with the individual members but the committee comprises one member of the Opposition and five members of the Government. It should be a non-political committee. I suppose it could be called an administrative

committee. However, the composition of the committee proposed does not represent Parliament but is politically weighted on the side of the Government.

Mr. Moore: Based on the ratio.

Mr. MELLOY: I am not talking about the ratio. The ratio could change from election to election and possibly from year to year. We should not have to change the numbers on the committee every time there is an election. If a committee such as this is set up and it is a non-legislative committee and a non-political committee, the Opposition and the Government should be represented equally on it.

For instance, from what we have been told so far, the motion contains no provision for proxies. If by chance one of the members is unable to attend a meeting—and it could be the Opposition representative, who may be engaged on work in his electorate for a week or so—the committee could meet and no Opposition representation would be on it. The Government should look into this matter. To be a fair committee, not looking at every regulation or Order in Council on a party basis, it should have equal representation from the Government and the Opposition. I think that the Premier should have a look at this matter because the pendulum can swing and the time could come when the balance of power is with the present Opposition and not the Government which, in Opposition, would be at a disadvantage. If this committee is simply going to be the Minister's echo, and that could be the case because of the way it is balanced——

Mr. Ahern: Rubbish!

Mr. MELLOY: My word it could be, because so many Government members are ambitious and seeking Cabinet rank that they are not likely to buck the party or the Government when they consider regulations. After all, the Minister will tell them, "We have given full consideration to this matter. We think it is desirable and we are putting it up for your consideration." Unless there are two strong sides of opinion on these matters, the committee will not function as it should.

As the Minister for Justice pointed out, the motion covers a very wide range of activities. Every department of the Government will come under the scrutiny of this committee. With all due respect to the members of the committee, we do not know that all of them are competent to cope with this wide coverage. It is true that they can call for papers, people and records. However, the motion contains no provision that the Government has to accept the recommendations or reports of the committee. All that the committee can do is report to the Minister.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: No, the Parliament decides.

Mr. MELLOY: Well, they report to Parliament but there is no stipulation that Parliament has to accept the committee's report.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: The Parliament can accept or reject it.

Mr. MELLOY: I still maintain that they do not have the power to enforce their recommendations.

Paragraph (10) provides—

> "The Committee shall have power to send for persons, papers and records, provided that a Minister or members of the Public Service shall not be obliged to provide information, oral or written, which has been . . .
>
> (b) certified by the responsible Minister, with the approval of the Ministers of the Crown in Cabinet assembled, to be against the public interest to disclose."

To a large degree that provision will hamstring the Committee.

Mr. Ahern: Didn't Whitlam tell you about Crown privilege?

Mr. MELLOY: I do not propose to engage in political propaganda, as seems to be the desire of the honourable member for Landsborough. I intend to confine my remarks to the motion before the House.

I point out that a Minister will have the right to deny to the Committee certain information if he and Cabinet consider that its disclosure is not in the public interest. But who is to decide, apart from the Minister, who obviously would have the support of Cabinet, what is in the public interest? The whole purpose of the committee is the protection of the public interest, and this can only be done if its members receive all the papers that are necessary to assess a situation and form an opinion. If a Minister is able to say, "We cannot give you this information because we do not think it is in the public interest to disclose it", the committee will be hampered in its work.

The motion is desirable because it is essential to have some control over the flood of regulations and Orders in Council that are promulgated during the months in which Parliament is in recess. If the committee is to act as a policing body in such periods, it will be able to do a good job provided it is given every facility and is not restricted in any way by the whims of Ministers or Cabinet. This is one of the weaknesses that I see in the proposal.

Mr. Lowes: It would have been in the days of Tom Foley.

Mr. MELLOY: It would be in anybody's day. The same motivations exist irrespective of the Government of the day. If we set up a body to improve the conduct of the business of Parliament and of this State, we have to ensure that every facility is

made available to it and that it is not restricted by the whims of any Minister or Cabinet.

Other Opposition members wish to speak on the motion. I think I have made some of the views of the Opposition clear and we hope that the Premier will give consideration to them.

Mr. AHERN (Landsborough) (2.49 p.m.): This is a very important day in the life of this unicameral Parliament. I say "unicameral" advisedly because this is particularly relevant. Certainly a mass of subordinate legislative material comes before the House, and often at a time when it is most inconvenient for members to give it comprehensive study. It is not even remotely reasonable to suggest that any member could give to that amount of subordinate legislative material adequate consideration and, if necessary, move for disallowance of any of it within a period of 14 days. That is just not on in any reasonable man's terms. A member with a particular interest in certain matters might be able to deal in this way with one or two items; but the task of perusing the wealth of material coming before us and seeking advice about it is—I think all honourable members would have to admit—completely beyond us. It is only when the regulation has been in operation out on the political ridges for too long for honourable members to take action in this place that we actually find out that there is a problem. So most of us—in fact almost all of us—opt out of trying to consider such matters. One or two Opposition members in the previous Parliament did have a cursory look at them, but it was a most difficult task.

Today most Parliaments in the British Commonwealth have appointed such a committee as the most obvious way of considering in an orderly fashion this wealth of subordinate legislative material. After today the implementation of subordinate legislation committees will be almost, if not totally, universal in the British Commonwealth. Such a committee is able in an orderly manner to take advice and use secretarial help to consider the legislative material under the terms of reference laid down by Parliament. Problems can be considered in an orderly and unemotional way. This is the only efficient and orderly way of going about solving these problems. It is worth saying that 99 per cent of the problems run into by subordinate legislation committees are handled by persuasion of the relevant Minister, and where the Minister's attention is drawn to a point of view of the committee about some regulation or Order in Council, the problem is immediately put right by the Minister concerned. Consultation and co-operation iron out the problems.

I want to make particular reference to the terms of reference of this proposed committee. Having had experience of other committees throughout Australia and overseas, I believe they are adequate. The honourable member for Nudgee in giving us a dissertation of what is and is not included revealed his total ignorance of the operations of these committees elsewhere. That is just no proper way of going about it, and to suggest that such a committee should have the power to change some aspect of a regulation is surely inconsistent when the power to recommend to Parliament and to the relevant Minister is all that is sought. If a Minister chooses to invoke Crown privilege, then that knowledge is available to the community as a whole as some sort of evidence and I think the Minister concerned would have to justify to the public his action on a particular issue. But it is a power that must be there. It is established in law, and certainly it was never suggested when I investigated other committees that any other power to change regulations should be included.

The fact is that the proposed terms of reference are identical with those of the Victorian committee in every respect. Honourable members should accept the proposition that we are not asking this committee to consider whether regulations are good or bad; we are asking it to consider whether they infringe the detailed terms of reference that are laid down in the motion before the House. I wish the committee well. It is, I believe, a reasonable basis upon which to begin. It is only a basis upon which to begin, because with experience there will almost certainly need to be some changes.

I suggest that one matter the committee will have to look at is its power to meet during a period when Parliament is prorogued. In terms of the law, it is difficult for a sessional committee to meet during a period of prorogation. That is why the Victorian Parliament chose to introduce enabling legislation to implement its subordinate legislation committee. However, this is a very grey area, and the advice of the Parliamentary Counsel is that there are some problems associated with a parliamentary committee's operating after Parliament has been prorogued.

Honourable members who have studied the matter will know that in Queensland Parliament usually is prorogued round about late May or early June. Therefore, from then till Parliament resumes in about August, there will be a hiatus and the committee will not be able to work properly. Probably this is one of the first questions at which the committee will have to look, because that is the time when honourable members have a chance to settle down and look at regulations that they have not had a chance of studying while the House has been in session. At the moment, it appears unlikely that the committee will be able to sit during a period of prorogation.

I suggest also that the committee have an early look at what the Victorian Parliament has done about statutory rules in that State.

It has implemented enabling legislation giving the Governor in Council power to declare certain statutory rules, which are then codified, bound and indexed and made available to the community generally, to the Parliament and to the various committees in the same way as statute law is made available at the moment. That action has been widely appreciated in Victoria.

In my opinion, the committee should make that one of its early tasks because of the massive volume of subordinate material that is in various hands all over the place and to which there are very few indexes. I am a member of the Parliamentary Library Committee, and that committee is endeavouring to provide a service of that type in the future. However, the task is a very difficult one, and I think that the committee should consider the matter carefully.

It is not my intention to speak at length on the motion. I simply point out that the committee will have many tasks, one of which will be to look at the regulation-making power contained in the parent Acts. Having been a member of this Assembly for eight years and having looked at the various pieces of legislation coming before Parliament, I think that it has become the fashion to invoke very wide regulation-making provisions in all sections of our statutes. That tempts departmental officers to use those powers, and I suspect, with eight years experience behind me, that a great number of regulations in Queensland go well beyond the terms of reference set out in the motion now before the House. That is not good for Parliament; it is not good for democracy. The consideration of that matter will be one of the more urgent tasks of the committee.

Mr. Aikens: Why were the regulations not challenged when they were laid on the table of the House?

Mr. AHERN: The honourable member must have come into the Chamber very recently. I have already explained that a great deal of this material is laid on the table of the House at a time which is very inconvenient to honourable members. They are not able to take advice on them and relate them to the original regulations, and so on. Therefore, I think that all honourable members would accept that there is inadequate perusal of regulations at the moment because the opportunity to peruse them thoroughly is not there. Anybody who thinks it is there is only dreaming.

Last year the honourable member for Chatsworth, Mr. Doug. Thorne from the Premier's Department and I were asked to visit the Parliaments of Victoria and New South Wales and study the operation of similar committees in those States. In consultation with Mr. W. D. Hewitt, I produced a report as a result of that visit. I have released a copy of that report to members who will be serving on our Subordinate Legislation Committee. We had an in-depth look at the operation of committees there, and I think that the detailed terms of reference here are the ones we suggested to the Premier.

The Government is a creature of Parliament, and not vice versa. It has to be said that this committee probably will not be convenient for the Government. Many people have suggested that such a committee will not be convenient for the Government, but I suppose Parliament is not convenient for the Government, either. Parliament is a central pillar of democracy. Parliament and democracy cannot exist apart. Parliament must have reasonable powers to peruse the various matters coming before it. At the moment those powers are not there in reasonable extent. We must have those powers if Parliament is to have reasonable respect and support from the public we are supposed to represent. The very existence of a committee to co-ordinate the consideration of the wealth of subordinate legislation coming before Parliament will in itself be a dampener and have a chastening effect on those whose responsibility it is to draft the various regulations.

I would suggest that we take up the offer of the Victorian Legislature of secondment of one of its officers very closely associated with its committee. The offer has been made to assist us in the early stages of the operation of the committee. They have a wealth of experience down there that we are going to need. In order to overcome problems before they arise, they prepare various people in Government departments by holding regular seminars at which they talk about the operations of the committee, what the committee is looking for and what it is asking for in the form of the various regulations. In that way problems are avoided before they arise. The operations in Victoria and New South Wales are cherished by all members down there. They have not been found to be inconvenient to Government. Confrontations in the Parliament of New South Wales have been limited to one occasion when actually the Government supported the committee's report and the relevant regulations relating to the New South Wales Water Board were changed. So I think fears about the committee are not necessary.

I return to my first premise and say that it is indeed a great day in the history of our Parliament.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT (Chatsworth) (3.3 p.m.): I am particularly pleased to follow my colleague and good friend the honourable member for Landsborough. He adverted to the fact that he and I, with the officer of the Premier's Department, Mr. Thorne, visited Sydney and Melbourne last year to look at the workings of the committees in New South Wales and Victoria. I am bound to say that the honourable member for Landsborough, in particular, applied himself

very assiduously to this subordinate legislation proposal, and his drafting is very heavy upon the report made to the Government. He is one of the reformers in this Parliament. I can assure him that there is a groundswell of support for those who now advocate reform in this Parliament. I hope that his influence in this regard continues to increase year by year.

The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party associated himself with this motion, and I think his comments were both valued and pertinent. His reference to standing committees in Canberra was probably a little unfortunate because, by any comparison at all, our own track record in Queensland is not a very good one. One select committee in 50 years is hardly good enough. But putting that indiscretion of the Minister's aside—he emerges from the Government ranks as a person who believes in reform. As recently as 21 April this year he addressed a Liberal Party conference in Rockhampton and stated that State Parliament faced the danger of becoming Cabinet's rubber stamp, but that he believed the Government was conscious of this and was determined to avoid it. He added that Government members must be more actively and positively involved in the making of legislation. If that is the Minister's attitude, it is a healthy one. We hope he will stick to it; but if he does not, there will be those of us who will remind him of it.

Today we take a progressive step, one that, as the Premier said, was first promised in a policy speech in 1969. Undertakings were given in fact earlier than that date. My own recollection goes back to the Pizzey administration early in 1968, when Mr. Pizzey said that a subordinate legislation committee would be set up. Notwithstanding the investigation and preparation that is needed in such a measure, it cannot be said that the Government has been expeditious in this matter. The enactment this afternoon is a tribute more to the tenacity of Government members than to the Government itself. But this is not the time to be churlish; rather it is the time to acknowledge that progress has been made. I would hope that this progress, which has started in recent years in relation to amended forms of questioning, of Sessional Orders and of Matters of Public Interest debates can be further expanded.

Those of our political complexion argue strongly that State Government itself is under attack and that we can withstand that attack only if we establish that we serve a useful role in the community—and that our procedures are updated to contemporary society.

Subordinate legislation gives a sense of involvement to all of those who participate in it. It is the Parliament—the members of Parliament—that approves of the laws of the land. It is the natural corollary, therefore, that the members of Parliament should be involved in the regulations that flow from those laws. There will be those who say, "But you have always had that right. Regulations are tabled, and you have the opportunity to move for their disallowance." My friend the member for Landsborough countered that argument very well indeed. While in theory that right is there, the sheer volume of regulations that hit the table day after day beat the best-intentioned member. It is not possible for the individual, with the best will in the world, to peruse all of those regulations.

A committee such as this should be concerned to see that regulations are consistent with their head of power, that they do not step beyond that head of power and that they do not become overobtrusive even though they are moving within that head of power. There is no reason why this committee should be in conflict with the Government—although it should not avoid dispute if it feels strongly on a matter.

What is important is that, when a motion comes from the committee to the Parliament for a disallowance or for an amendment, the members of the committee should not presume automatically that they will enjoy the support of the Parliament. If a recommendation comes from the committee, the Parliaments sits in the role of adjudicator and the Parliament will say either that the Government has not acted in excess of its charter and that therefore the regulations are reasonable or, conversely, that the point of view put forward by the committee should be sustained. The members of the committee must avoid the temptation to become nit-pickers. If they fall into that role, they will labour for ever and a day and will clutter up the Parliament with finicky amendments and resolutions. They must adopt a broad attitude to the regulations and avoid some of the pitfalls. But I say to the members of the committee, and with the utmost good will, that if on occasions their recommendations are rejected, they should not perform like spoilt boys who want to take their marbles home; rather should they say that Parliament has performed in its noblest role and has acted as arbiter. The Government likewise must accept the decisions when Parliament decides against it.

I hope I can reassure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who seems to worry a little about political divisions in the committee. I would remind the honourable gentleman about the structure of the Select Committee on Punishment of Crimes of Violence, which was an all-party committee. The final recommendations of that committee cut clearly across party lines. But better than that—and I say "better" because I think it is to be applauded—on a great number of occasions during our deliberations, we found ourselves grouping in different directions. On one occasion I would be quite strongly opposed to a proposal by my colleague from Toowong and strongly with the member for Rockhampton, while on other occasions he and I could not see eye to eye at all. But that is the essence of how a select committee should meet. I believe that that is proof positive to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that

the Committee of Subordinate Legislation likewise will not work on political lines but will take the broadest and most responsible attitude that it possibly can.

I have some fears only with regard to how clause 6 of the motion will work. It provides—

> "If the Committee is of the opinion that any of the Regulations ought to be disallowed—
>
> (a) it shall report that opinion and the grounds thereof to the House before the end of the period during which any motion for disallowance of those Regulations may be moved in the House;
>
> (b) if the House is not sitting, it may report its opinion and the grounds thereof to the authority by which the Regulations were made."

I do not refer to part (b), but I do refer to part (a). I think there is the risk that that would impose a rather unreal time limitation upon the committee. It means that it has 14 days from the time when the regulations are first tabled here to consider those regulations and make a recommendation upon them. On most occasions that could well be enough; but, if the regulations are complex, if they are involved or if they are controversial, the committee runs the risk of not having adequate time to properly peruse them and of submitting an incomplete report or not reporting at all. I think that is one of the problems the committee could well face.

However, it is because of those problems that we think in its teething days that it is wise not to legislate upon this. I believe that ultimately there would be strength in establishing such a committee by way of legislative process, but it would be wiser to let it go through the fire for a few sessions so that we can iron out any of these problems, if problems they prove to be. In the light of experience, the committee might then be established in perpetuity by way of legislation.

I underline the proposal of my friend from Landsborough, who said that we should take advantage of the people in Victoria who offered us their expertise. The committee in Victoria works wonderfully well. The Victorians have been at this for some considerable time now. Their parliamentary members are well versed in statute law and regulations, and the professional advice that they receive is of the top order. The Victorians were most generous when we spoke to them about this matter. I am sure the offer still stands. I would be very sad indeed if the new committee did not take advantage of that offer in its very early days.

I offer my congratulations to those who have been appointed. They are pioneers. They are being associated with something that is happening for the first time in Queensland. They see the result of long and constant battles by the reformers in this Parliament. I hope they enjoy their work; I hope they derive great satisfaction from it; but, most importantly of all, I hope they see the value of the work that they are doing and the role that they are playing in the parliamentary processes in this State.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (3.15 p.m.): With the previous speakers, I welcome the appointment of this Subordinate Legislation Committee. Most members would agree that its creation is somewhat overdue. It has been advocated by members on both sides of the Chamber for a long time and for very good reasons. The question that must be answered very quickly is exactly what it is we are talking about. The Premier said that it will be a sessional committee.

Inside the front page of "Hansard" are listed the sessional committees. You, Mr. Speaker, are the chairman of most of them. They are: the Library Committee; the Parliamentary Buildings Committee; the Printing Committee; the Refreshment Rooms Committee and the Standing Orders Committee. These are normally the sessional committees that we talk about.

However, the Premier said that the committee being set up is a sessional committee. The Minister for Justice then said that it is a select committee. I do not believe that it could possibly be a select committee because, under our Standing Rules and Orders—

> "A Notice of Motion for the appointment of a Select Committee shall specify the names of the Members proposed for the Committee, the Mover being one . . ."

This is the way that the honourable member for Toowong moved in 1974 that the committee to investigate crime and punishment be set up. For the clarification of everyone, we must ensure that it is not a sessional committee as the Premier might say and not a select committee as the Minister for Justice might say, but a parliamentary standing committee.

Mr. Greenwood: It is a sessional committee as was said by the Premier, and you do not seem to be able to understand it.

Mr. WRIGHT: I thought that the honourable member would come in. He usually does.

We have a special report of which I understand the honourable member for Landsborough was the basic author. It indicates clearly what are the sessional committees. They are the Library Committee, the Printing Committee, and so on. It also refers to select committees which are set up for a special reason, for instance, to investigate a special purpose as was the case with crime and punishment. One could have been set up, as other honourable members and I suggested, to investigate road safety.

Then the report refers to parliamentary committees, Mr. Greenwood, sir, and it lists regulation committees, privilege committees,

works committees, public accounts committees, and so on. The honourable member's colleagues in the National Party say that there is a difference and that this will be in fact a parliamentary committee.

If it is a select committee, it will be able to present only one single report, which is the task of a select committee. I wonder also if there will be many disadvantages if it is a sessional committee. In that case it certainly would not be in line with the original recommendations presented in this report to Parliament prepared by the honourable member for Landsborough and the other honourable members who worked with him on it. This question needs to be clarified.

The one question that does not need clarification is the need for this committee. There has been a growing fear in this State and throughout the Commonwealth that we can be overgoverned. There is the thought that there is lack of control by the Legislature in administrative procedures. Criticism has been levelled at members of Parliament for their lack of involvement in the parliamentary processes themselves and also the administrative processes.

We must realise that it is impossible for every member of Parliament—or in fact Parliament as a whole—to enact every detail of how the laws are to be administered. Surely it is our job to set out the objectives or the basic objects of legislation and then leave it to the Public Service—the bureaucracy—to draw up the regulations and forms and to deal with the matters of minute detail. This has worked extremely well for a long time. But government is becoming complicated. It is becoming rather technical. It is certainly adopting a somewhat octopus-like characteristic. It is important that the Parliament that is responsible to the people should be able to carry out its responsibility.

It is only right that we should appoint a committee of this Parliament to carry out that responsibility. We need some type of check system on the bureaucracy. The Minister for Justice thought that we would have a check system on the Cabinet. I do not believe that this is the prime aim or a very important aim of such a committee. It first and foremost provides a check system or counterbalance system on the bureaucracy.

One notes the procedures under Standing Orders for moving for the disallowance of regulations. We are allowed between 7 and 14 days to so move. The debate is restricted to two hours and that limits the number of speakers who can enter the debate. It has been pointed out by the Minister for Justice before today that it is rare that motions for disallowance of regulations are ever carried. Queensland does not have a House of Review —a Legislative Council. It is therefore important that the members of this single Assembly play an important part in review.

It would be almost impossible for members outside Cabinet to review everything, although we try to do this individually. The obvious answer is therefore the setting up of some type of committee system. This has been done, as was said by the honourable members for Landsborough and Chatsworth, in all other Parliaments of this nation. It has also been done in New Zealand and elsewhere throughout the British Commonwealth. We are, as it were, the last cab off the rank. But at least we have started.

I only hope that this will not be the end. This possibility has worried me from the time that the committee to investigate crime and punishment was set up. We were told that that committee would in effect be a test case for the appointment of further select committees. While there are many issues that could be investigated in this State, no further select committees have been appointed. I instance, for example, the growing drug problem which was mentioned only this morning in the Matters of Public Interest debate. There are problems of road safety. The Minister presently in charge of the House is very aware of the need to look into this question, following his studies overseas. Environmental aspects have also been raised as suitable matters for investigation. The honourable member for Isis, for instance, has referred to conflicts that have arisen as a result of comments made by the honourable member for Maryborough. There are so many issues that could be delved into by select committees, yet we have heard nothing more of their appointment.

It worries me that this, too, might become a test case, which means that there is a great obligation on every member of the committee to see that it works. It is vitally important to counter the bureaucracy. I do not cast aspersions on those who carry out these somewhat onerous and technical tasks, but they certainly must have some check over them because in the final analysis it is Parliament that must carry the burden of responsibility.

I also think that another very important reason for the establishment of parliamentary committees is that the portfolio committees, if I may so describe them, do not always work satisfactorily. When there were more than 11 Opposition members, our system was to appoint a shadow Minister for each portfolio and surround him with a group of members who were interested in that particular subject. Their job was to consider very carefully all legislation, regulations and Orders in Council brought before Parliament. The House will realise how difficult this task has now become for the Opposition as some members have to deal with up to three portfolios.

The same, I believe, is true of Government members. I am told that some serve on up to four or five committees, which means that their tasks are extremely heavy. As these committees do not always work, we have to tidy up the system in some way. Surely the best way is to give power back

to the Parliament, both directly and indirectly, by the setting up of a type of committee system.

I think it important that such a system be non-political. It concerns me, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, that this committee will be heavily lopsided with five Government members and one Opposition member.

Mr. Chinchen: I thought you said you didn't want to be political. Now you are becoming political.

Mr. WRIGHT: I think this matter has to be raised.

Mr. Chinchen: Why?

Mr. WRIGHT: If it was indeed to be kept free of politics, why could the composition not have been four Government and two Opposition members?

Mr. Chinchen: Why?

Mr. WRIGHT: I shall say why. I know of one member already who will be away for about three months next year. I shall not mention his name. I could be away. As a member said before, it is very easy to become ill. I think that the Opposition has a role to play on parliamentary committees and it would not have hurt to appoint two Opposition members to this committee.

I also think it is a pity that the honourable members for Landsborough and Chatsworth are not on the committee. When I think back to the times when we have been to the university to debate these issues and when we have raised them in the House, those two members, with the honourable member for Mt. Gravatt and the previous member for Baroona, were the ones who were constantly interested in them.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: I think I should point out that I declined because as Chairman of Committees it would not have been possible for me to attend meetings while Parliament was sitting.

Mr. WRIGHT: I accept that explanation.

Mr. Chinchen: If you want to get off to allow somebody else to go on, that is all right.

Mr. WRIGHT: There is nothing to stop the appointment of a larger committee. I try to give credit where I think it is due. The gentlemen to whom I have referred have contributed greatly to making this Parliament do something about committees. After all, it was the Minister for Justice himself who said 14 years ago that he wanted to do something about parliamentary committees. I do not know how many years he has been in Cabinet, but, if that is the case, one could say that he has been rather unsuccessful. Pressure has undoubtedly come from the honourable members for Landsborough and Chatsworth and a couple of other members.

Mr. Chinchen: That is only in your time.

Mr. WRIGHT: If the Minister for Justice was successful, why didn't we get this Committee a long time ago and others as well? Somewhere it fell down because it was back in about 1966 that the Government first promised to do something about it. That was nine years ago. I know that the wheels of government turn slowly, but in this instance they have moved at a snail's pace.

We must accept that bureaucracy is growing and that it will grow bigger and bigger and become more technical and more sophisticated, with greater dependence on regulations. There is no way in the world that every member of Parliament can play a part in this minute detail. There is no way in the world that we can expect Ministers to be bringing down great wads of legislation that detail out every point of the law. We have to delegate these powers to the bureaucracy, to the public servants; but there should be a check. The check should not only be in this area of subordinate legislation; it should also be in other areas.

The point was raised, again by the honourable member for Nudgee, that this comes back to a need for a parliamentary committee of public acounts, because when we start seeing the Premier using thousands of dollars of State money to put political advertisements in the newspapers, surely there is a need for some review, some system of checks or balances on this type of thing. If there is one man in this place who has shown he has guts, it is the new member for Everton, because, boy oh boy, he certainly showed that the other day and I think the Premier dealt with him rather unfairly. I am sure he feels, as other members would very quietly to themselves, that something is wrong when State money can be used for party-political purposes.

I have never questioned the idea of Governments coming out and saying what they have done. The Minister for Transport can give out reports; the Minister for Primary Industries can give out special reports at election time or during the year, saying exactly what the Government has done, because I believe the people have a right to be informed of what their Government has been doing. The Government has an obligation in fact to say how it has administered the State, but using this money for blatant political advertisements is clearly wrong. So if ever there was a case for a public accounts committee, surely this is it.

We can add to that a privileges committee. I have heard the question raised of what exactly are the privileges of the members of this Parliament. We have had some rulings by Mr. Speaker on statements made on the A.B.C. It seems to me we need to have a special parliamentary committee of privileges. We also need to have a special parliamentary committee of public works to ensure that money budgeted and appropriated is used in the proper

way. We could consider copying the New Zealand system of legislation committees, so that if there is difficult legislation coming up members of Parliament can get out and see about it. If it is an environmental question, the members go and investigate the area which the legislation will affect and come back informed on it. There is a greater part for private members of Parliament to play. Committees have the advantage of greater involvement of members. They put the responsibility where it should be, that is, on this Parliament and its individual members and provide a checking system.

Furthermore members have to be in touch with the administrative procedures that we have here. I do not know of any other career for which there is no training process as we see with ministerial rank. The system for this Government seems to be that, if the Premier likes a person, he is given his chance. If a member has done the wrong thing in the eyes of the Government, as the honourable member for Toowong seems to have done over the years, then his chances of getting into Cabinet are nil. Surely however a man gets there, when he does he should have some ability. Yet we find that very few Ministers have any administrative training. Some of them, no doubt, try very, very hard to gain this expertise, but most of them have to wait until they are appointed.

The parliamentary committee system would be a basis for training future Ministers from both sides of the House. It would give individual members of Parliament a greater say in administration. At the moment, it is a hit-and-miss show. O.K., we are going to get a Minister such as the Leader of the House, who is interested in road safety and has been for many years. He is interested in transport, and his counterpart here, the honourable member for Cairns, likewise. But what about another Minister who is suddenly thrust into a portfolio that he knows nothing about and for which he has never been trained? I feel somewhat sorry for such men because they flounder. So let us look at the advantages here. Members should be involved very much more than they are. If we are involved, if the people see we are involved in what is happening—we are having a say in the decision-making—we not only gain the respect of the public, but we gain the respect of the public servants themselves. It seems to me that underlying the attitude of some members of the bureaucracy is a belief parliamentarians should be seen and not heard—"You can have a lot of hot wind down there, but don't come near us, don't interfere." I think that attitude has to be changed. Admittedly it is not held by many, but certainly it is held by some. It is different, I must admit, for a Government member. He might one day become a Minister and they have to keep that in mind.

So I see many advantages in this move—advantages to the individual parliamentarian, advantages to Parliament itself, advantages to the overall State of Queensland. However, there will be a great responsibility on all members of the committee, because we are going to have to prove our worth.

As I said earlier about select committees, either we did not prove our worth or the National-Liberal Government was not really interested in setting up select committees. It may be, as was said at the time, that the proposal was to be torpedoed by putting a certain member on the committee. So we need to take a warning from what has happended in the past.

I would make one other comment, and it relates to the procedures of the committee. The honourable member for Chatsworth mentioned that a period of 14 days is referred to in paragraph 6. There is a limitation in paragraph 6. I only hope that, regardless of the recommendations of this parliamentary committee, the individual member of Parliament will still be able to move for the disallowance of a regulation if he sees fit to do so.

Mr. Ahern: Of course he will.

Mr. WRIGHT: That must be so, and I wanted that clearly understood. I thought it should be stated very early in the piece.

Mr. Ahern: That is in Standing Orders.

Mr. WRIGHT: I hope so. I did not know whether there were to be some changes in Standing Orders in the future after the setting up of the committee. That was not explained by any previous speaker. The rights of the individual member must not be eroded.

The honourable member for Chatsworth made a further point. Very often regulations brought down in this State are operative for five or six months before they are tabled in this Assembly. I should hope that not only will honourable members be able to see them and investigate them once they are tabled but that the committee will have a chance of looking at them immediately they are drawn up. That is vital, because we do not want them to be operating for six months, then have them tabled and suddenly be told, "O.K., fellows, it is now your turn. Go into the Legislative Council Chamber and have a look at them, then come back and give us a report." The moment regulations are brought down—in fact, the moment they are drawn up, or even when they are being drawn up—public servants should take the committee into their confidence and let it know what they are doing and, moreover, why they are doing it.

Mr. Greenwood: That happens in Victoria.

Mr. WRIGHT: I did not know that. I am pleased to know that it is happening. I certainly hope that what is being done today is only a beginning, Mr. Speaker. In my opinion, major changes are required, and you have spoken about privilege committees, and so on, yourself. More parliamentary committees of the type I have outlined are

needed; so are more select committees. Certain changes in Standing Orders also are needed. There should be a right for members to bring down private members' Bills.

As a member of the committee, I will be watching its activities very closely. My sole promise is that I will work as best I can to see that it is successful.

Mr. LAMONT (South Brisbane) (3.33 p.m.): Mr. Speaker, I have noted the words of the honourable member for Landsborough that this is a historic occasion. Because I believe it is a historic occasion, I seek the indulgence of the House to allow me to delve very briefly into the history of delegated legislation. Because there are broad terms of reference in certain sections of the motion, particularly in section 7, I believe that the remarks I have to make on the history of delegated legislation under the Westminster system, added to a piece that I wish to read out relative to the Scrutinizing Committee of the House of Commons, will be of some use to the committee when it is established.

When we are young, Mr. Speaker, we are taught that Parliament makes the laws. But on further examination we find that in fact that is not the case. It is not the whole truth of the matter: it has never been so. Legislation can be enacted by the Executive through Ministers.

The power to enact new legislation without reference to Parliament is something that has always been in the Westminster system, and this is the process that we, today, call subordinate or delegated legislation. It is a process that originated before the legislative power of the modern Parliament had been clearly established.

In Tudor times, Mr. Speaker, the Statute of Proclamations in 1539 established wide powers of legislation without reference to Parliament. Although that statute was short lived, the legislative functions it described were not effectively curbed until Parliament successfully asserted its rights during the 17th century over the arbitrary rule of the Stuart monarchs. From 1640 until the mid-19th century, Parliament did have complete control over legislation. During this time Acts of Parliament were lengthy, detailed and complex. The increasing social reform of the 19th century Parliaments in Britain meant a widening of the area of Government, and therefore a widening of the area of governmental responsibility, and with it the necessity for delegating a vast area of legislative responsibility to subordinate bodies. Most important, of course, were those which developed into Government departments.

Today, it is common to accept delegated legislation as inevitable. A variety of factors have brought this about, and I should like to refer to four of them. First is the question of parliamentary time. Parliament's primary function is to debate and determine broad social and economic issues. It is not equipped to handle the vast bulk of modern legislative needs. By delegating legislation to departments, therefore, Parliament saves its members the leg-work involved in researching every Bill, the time-consuming process of sorting the inherent legal technicalities is avoided, and the likelihood of Parliament being weighed down by a host of amendments to each Bill is thereby lessened.

The second factor is the nature and scope of the subject-matter of modern legislation. There are two factors in modern society, the combined effect of which makes it practically impossible for Parliament to deal with certain legislation in any amount of detail. These factors are the scientific and technological expansion of the 20th century, and the extension of Government activity into a greatly increased number of areas. Much of the new legislation is of such a technical nature that it is beyond the scope of Parliament to understand anything of it but the broad implications.

The third factor, of course, is flexibility. When a law is eventually put into practice, hitherto unforeseen contingencies often arise. These require minor adjustments. To refer all such cases back to Parliament would not be practicable. In fact it could well be mere humbug for the Parliament. Laws are continually being updated by amendments made necessary by changes in society, administrative improvements, new technical discoveries and so forth. The process of delegated legislation adequately copes with these moves.

The fourth factor, and possibly the most important one today for delegated legislation, is the case of emergency. In time of war, disease or natural disasters, the parliamentary process is too slow to react. Governments need to take immediate action in excess of normal powers. In most countries there is a provision, similar to the Emergency Powers Act 1920 in the United Kingdom, enabling the Executive to act swiftly, subject to certain parliamentary safeguards.

It is obvious therefore that there are quite cogent reasons for accepting the principle of delegated legislation. There are nevertheless certain qualifications to this general acceptance. Controls are essential to protect the individual from the bureaucracy. One such control resides with the Judiciary. If a Government holds an individual liable for a breach of a law enacted by delegated legislation, the individual may call into question the validity of that law. The courts retain the power to determine whether or not such a law exceeds in scope the power delegated by Parliament.

If this power of the courts is to be real, powers delegated to the Executive must be strictly defined. Clearly, any delegation of powers to the Executive to legislate on matters of principle or general policy, detracts from the ability of the court to protect the individual. Furthermore, cases have arisen wherein delegated legislation has sought the right to exclude the jurisdiction of the courts.

I cite the case of Administrative Courts, where we have seen that statutes can provide in certain cases that ministerial orders are to be regarded as final, and therefore out of the reach of judicial enquiry. Such a provision cannot be made by delegated legislation, and should not be made by delegated legislation, for this would enable the Minister to be a law unto himself. No man can be deprived of access to the courts except by the express sanction of Parliament.

Delegated legislation, dealing with matters of general policy, or excluding the jurisdiction of the courts, are two instances where heavy criticism of this device has been made in the past in certain Westminster-style Parliaments. Other types of delegated legislation which attract major criticism include the delegation of taxing power, subdelegation, laws which modify Acts of Parliament and laws which operate retrospectively. It is an unfortunate act of modern government that the tariff system, in particular, cannot operate without the assistance of delegated legislation. Accordingly, there are instances where taxing power must be delegated to ministerial departments. It is clear that courts will insist that there is no power to levy taxation without the express permission of Parliament. Where Parliament does delegate this authority, the terms of such authorisation must be so clear and precise as to leave no doubt concerning the limits of such power. The old adage "No taxation without representation" is as alive an issue today as it ever was.

The problems arising from sub-delegation of powers and from legislation which modifies an Act of Parliament, are similar in nature. Obviously, only Parliament should have the power to delegate legislative powers. Where the Executive wishes to sub-delegate legislative powers, it must do so only with the prior approval of Parliament. The same principle is involved in the second example. It would be odious for a situation to arise whereby the Executive could alter the effect of an Act of Parliament without Parliament's consent. Both of these examples could interfere with the doctrine of the supremacy of Parliament. Finally, it must be said that laws which operate retrospectively are intrinsically dangerous. To declare a past transaction legal or illegal, which was clearly not so at the time of its commission, is repugnant to all notions of justice. There are rare occasions when such adjustments might be made in the interests of justice. They are indeed rare, and must never be allowed to arise without the due deliberation of the representatives of the people, upon the element of justice involved. These problems have already raised the question which we must now move on to examine.

When considering parliamentary control of the modern bureaucracy, we must remember that it is not only delegated legislation which must be controlled. Almost all legislation comes to Parliament from the Executive. There are very few instances in the Westminster system of private members' Bills, and as far as I know there have been none in recent years in this Parliament.

When a Minister brings a Bill before Parliament, as is the practice in this Parliament, he is presenting the proposals of his department. The Bill may have originated from a policy discussed at Cabinet level, but just as easily it may represent a policy first suggested by a civil servant. In either case, the details will have been left to the bureaucracy, principally to the parliamentary draftsman who, I suspect, exercises a considerable influence in the drafting of Bills and therefore in the final form of legislation and its effect. When the Bill reaches Parliament, it will be in every sense the product of the Executive. In Australia, and in Queensland in particular, the problems of the bureaucracy's increasing influence over legislation has been intensified by the acceptance in 1964 of the Boyer report, which recommended the establishment of an administrative division responsible for advising Ministers on matters of broad policy.

Developments such as the report from the Boyer Committee are consented to by force of the necessity for increasing expertise at high levels of modern government. They need not attract the hostility and criticism that many academics and some parliamentarians have in fact served on the Boyer committee's recommendations. Nevertheless, it can never be taken for granted that any Government will, of necessity, operate for the common good. Therefore it is the function of elected representatives to exercise checks at every possible opportunity upon Executive Government.

I should like to read at this point the terms of reference of the Scrutinizing Committee of the House of Commons, which in the mother of Parliaments is a regulations committee of the type that we are discussing here. It is charged with bringing to the attention of the House any delegated legislation on any of the following grounds:—

"(a) that it imposes a charge on the public revenues;

"(b) that it is made in pursuance of an enactment containing specific provisions excluding it from challenge in the courts;

"(c) that it appears to make unusual or unexpected use of powers conferred by statute;

"(d) that it purports to have retrospective effect without specific statutory sanction;

"(e) that there appears to have been unjustifiable delay in the publication or the laying of it before parliament;

"(f) that there appears to have been unjustifiable delay in notifying it to the Speaker under the provision of the Statutory Instruments Act relating to instruments which have come into operation before tabling in Parliament;

"(g) that for any special reason its form or purport calls for elucidation."

The terms of reference as set out in today's motion are fairly broad and are by no means as specific as those of the committee of the House of Commons. I hope that the members of the committee will refer to the debate that has taken place today and will be advised in their judgment, particularly by the terms of reference of the Scrutinizing Committee of the House of Commons.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to indulge to some extent in the history of this matter. I congratulate the Government for moving this motion, which is designed to set up a most important committee in this Parliament.

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (3.45 p.m.): We are indebted to the honourable member who has just resumed his seat for telling us what the committee is, what it is all about and what it will do. Mind you, Mr. Speaker, I think I should mention for the benefit of the House—and it is desirable to place it on record—that the motion now before us is the culmination of many, many years of urging by and effort from some back-bench members of the Parliament. I know that I played my own small part in this as chairman of the first Government members' committee to look at it. I was joined very strongly by the member for Landsborough and others.

Of course, we recognise that, prior to our entry into this House in 1966, others had been fighting hard since the early 1960s in order to achieve this type of committee in Parliament—the honourable member for Clayfield and the honourable member for Mt. Gravatt, to mention two of them.

So the creation of this watchdog committee of Parliament shoud be on the record as a recognition that this is a tribute to those members who have been most anxious that in this and other areas, such as questions without notice, the Queensland Parliament should be a better Parliament and a more efficient Parliament. You, Mr. Speaker, will know quite well how keen we were on this, because before elevation to your august position you also were a part of it. We want a Parliament that is able to cope better with the problem which is the besetting problem for all Parliaments of the Westminster type, namely how to maintain an effective balance between the executive, that is, the Cabinet and the bureaucracy, and the constituent element of Parliament, that is, the elected back-bench members. That is a great problem and, without doubt, the creation of proper and effective committees of Parliament is one of the ways by which to achieve that balance.

I was sorry that the member for Nudgee, leading for the Opposition, saw fit to look for fiddling little points on which to base some vague old-maidish types of criticism. As the honourable member for Landsborough pointed out, he clearly does not understand how the committee works and what it is supposed to do, and he certainly does not know anything about the workings of similar committees in other Parliaments of the Commonwealth.

The Opposition "Deputy Leader", the honourable member for Rockhampton, also complained that the Opposition had only one of the six members. Of course, the Opposition has fewer than one-seventh of the members of the House, so on a proper arithmetical calculation it has done very well. The point is—and the member for Chatsworth made this—that surely members are not appointed to this committee to represent partisan party viewpoints. They are there as members of Parliament, representative of the whole of the Parliament, and I believe the committee will work infinitely better if that is done.

The member for Chatsworth referred to the parliamentary Select Committee on Punishment of Crimes of Violence. It did, indeed, work extremely well, quite free from the confines and shackles of petty party politics. If the regulations committee cannot do the same, then the extent to which it does not do the same will be the measure of its failure. I think it would be a disaster if it failed in any way. I certainly do not expect it to.

The honourable member for Rockhampton made reference to the necessity for a public accounts committee and saw fit to use this debate as an attempt to do a little bit of electioneering by attacking the Premier and the Government for certain advertising. Of course, no-one on his side of the House refers to the fact that the Federal Government, which was his party until quite recent events conspired to shift it from its place, spent some $8,000,000 a year on advertising. In two years there has been an increase in Federal Government advertising of 112 per cent. So, if there are any problems in that field, I would advise the honourable member for Rockhampton to look more closely at home for them first.

What we want on the regulations committee is not attitudes which are founded on party politics or on any particular political philosophy. We want common sense. We want people on the committee who have the ability to see what is a sensible and safe course for the common man. We want them to be able to ensure that public servants do not create unnecessary and large reserves of power in framing regulations. We most certainly do not want the setting up of steam hammers to crack nuts.

Our job is to ensure that citizens are protected. I would think that the largest part of the committee's task is to ensure that regulations do not exceed the legislative head of power which theoretically is supposed to provide the regulation, Order in Council or whatever it may be, or that these regulations do not go past the intent of the original Act.

This is a red-letter day for this Parliament, although in the political context of the times I might be safer in saying that it is a blue-letter day for this Parliament. I congratulate

those honourable members who will form the first committee. It is a good, well-balanced, sound and rational committee. I am confident that it will do a good job. I look forward to the successful work of the committee in formulating the guide-lines and determining the pattern of operations for committees of the future.

Mr. MURRAY (Clayfield) (3.51 p.m.): I refer to the closing words of the Premier in introducing this motion. He said that he wanted to see not only more efficient government but better government and that this would have his whole-hearted support. Those are really wonderful words coming from the Premier and I wanted to remind the House of them.

The real credit for reform of this type must go to the Premier. Without any doubt, unlike his predecessors, he is a Premier who has not resisted change or reform. I remind the House that the major reforms and changes that have taken place in the past 100 years of this Parliament have taken place while the present Premier has led this Government. That is very significant.

Those of us who remember Sir Francis Nicklin as Premier know perfectly well—and you, Mr. Speaker, would endorse this if you were contributing to this debate—that we had virtually Buckley's chance of getting this sort of reform under him. He just did not want it and without any doubt we would not have got it. The late Jack Pizzey was moving towards this ideal and no doubt had he continued as Premier we would have had this change and this committee established.

Nevertheless the House and the State must acknowledge that the Premier must receive the credit for such reforms as have taken place in this Chamber. Some of them have been mentioned. One is the introduction of questions without notice. Only as recently as 1963, when the honourable members for Mt. Gravatt and Mt. Coot-tha and I came into this Chamber, it was impossible to ask a question without notice.

It was also impossible for a Government member to ask a question upon notice without first getting the permission of the Minister. This situation lasted for a week or so; we soon broke it. The first I remember of the late Sir Alan Munro was his being furious because I asked a question upon notice without first seeking his permission. That was the result of this whole stifling attitude which had held this Parliament back for so long—probably the 100 years or more of its existence.

In 1963 I make a check of the questions asked and who was asking them. It might interest the House—and I think it might interest you, Mr. Speaker—that in 1963 there were 49 Opposition questions asked to one Government question; that was the ratio. The honourable member for Mt. Coot-tha and I counted them carefully in "Hansard". But what is the situation today? Government members today asked 13 questions to 10 asked by Opposition members. What a difference!

Most of us will recall how difficult it was to gain the reform of the introduction of questions without notice. This has done a great deal for the House and I am sure that no Minister would now want to revert to the old system. Once reforms, hard won though they may have been, have operated for some time, no-one would want them changed.

Mr. Moore: I see that the Press is getting all of this down.

Mr. MURRAY: I am sure that the Press does not have much interest in what I have to say.

As the honourable member for Landsborough said, this is a great day for the Queensland Parliament. This committee will soon be working very efficiently indeed. It is certain that it will have teething troubles but they will be remedied. I am quite sure that within a year or two it will be most efficient and of great value to the Parliament.

As the honourable member for Rockhampton suggested, and as has been advocated by members from all parties for a number of years, I hope that before very long standing committees on public works and public accounts will be established. They are absolutely essential. I recall some mention being made of the New Zealand Parliament. Only a few years ago the former member for Belmont and I, accompanied by the present Clerk of the Parliament, Mr. George, visited New Zealand to attend a meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. We were all extremely interested in the way in which the New Zealand Parliament worked. There is a unicameral system with fewer than 90 members—about 86, I think—and at that time there were 18 standing committees working in the Parliament. They were rendering tremendous service. I see this as the shape of things to come in this Parliament.

Dr. Scott-Young: An Upper House.

Mr. MURRAY: The honourable member for Townsville suggests an Upper House. I agree wholeheartedly with him, but in reality, as the Minister for Justice has said, before the Upper House could be restored there would need to be more indication of public support for it than there is now.

Mr. Houston: What you mean is that the Minister would be happy to get on the band wagon.

Mr. MURRAY: Quite frankly I advocate, and always have advocated, an Upper House. I think it is tremendously important.

Mr. Houston: You would look very well down the other end of the corridor.

Mr. MURRAY: When my hair is as silver and distinguished-looking as that of the honourable member for Bulimba, perhaps that would be the time for that.

Now that this reform has been achieved, I hope that others such as the introduction of adjournment debates will follow. We have had grievance debates and now we have debates on Matters of Public Interest. Who would have thought that we would achieve those reforms? The changes that we have seen in the last few years have been remarkable.

This is, as the honourable member for Landsborough has said, a great day for Queensland Parliament and the people will be better served by the constitution of the proposed committee. I feel that its members have been well chosen and that they will apply themselves very diligently to the problems that will confront them. There will be problems, but I am sure that before long the House will see the value of this committee.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of s.11; Jurisdiction of the Commission—

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (4 p.m.): I oppose the clause.

Clause 4, as read, negatived.

Clauses 5 and 6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of s. 29; Form, effect and tenure of award—

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (4.1 p.m.): I oppose the clause.

Clause 7, as read, negatived.

Clauses 8 to 12, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—Amendment of s. 97; Wages to be paid in full in money—

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (4.3 p.m.): The Opposition at this stage does not have any great objection to the proposed amendment to the Act. I feel that the extension of the period of 12 months is long overdue, but I do not think it goes far enough. I believe that any employee who has been underpaid, whether wilfully or through ignorance, is morally entitled to all arrears of wages. In my previous occupation as a union official I had occasion to draw the attention of some employers to the fact that they were underpaying their employees. I had occasion to draw the attention of a well-known furnishing firm, which I will not name, to the fact that it had been underpaying a female cleaner for four years. To his credit the employer paid this cleaner the four years' arrears. I think all employers should do this. I think they have a moral obligation to do so where they have been underpaying an employee either wilfully or through ignorance.

I also feel that it is logical to maintain a discretionary power in the hands of the magistrate as to the length of time over which arrears of wages might be claimed. The magistrate at present has the power to order payment of arrears over a certain period—in fact, it is mandatory. Surely it is logical for the magistrate to retain the power to order additional arrears in particularly culpable cases. I know from experience that a number of employers in the metropolitan and near-metropolitan areas wilfully underpay their employees. Up till recently this was particularly prevalent on the Gold Coast. It was known that there were two awards applying to the Gold Coast. There was one award, which was the official award, and there was another award known as the Gold Coast award under which some employers deliberately underpaid their employees. The award wage might be $100, but, with a lot of young people wanting to work on the coast because of the glamour attached to living there, some of the employers were underpaying them by $10 or $15 a week. I remember on many occasions going down to the Gold Coast and recovering arrears of wages.

Mr. Frawley: Rubbish!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It's not rubbish, it's true. As a matter of fact, I believe that down at Redcliffe, at the honourable member's garage, the Miscellaneous Workers' Union on two occasions had to prosecute him for a breach of the award.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. Houston: There is no point of order.

Mr. FRAWLEY: Oh, shut up!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will state his point of order and I will determine whether it is a valid point of order.

Mr. FRAWLEY: At no time was I prosecuted by the Miscellaneous Workers' Union. I have never employed——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Does the honourable member ask for a withdrawal?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I ask for a withdrawal.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I withdraw it, Mr. Hewitt. However, this does go on; it is not rubbish. A number of employers deliberately

underpay their employees. My experience is that not many breaches of awards are committed by large firms. They are usually committed by the little cockroach capitalists—the employers of one or two employees.

Mr. Houston: Like the honourable member for Murrumba.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: As the honourable member for Bulimba said, like the honourable member for Murrumba. They are the employers who deliberately underpay their employees. More industrial inspectors should be employed by the Department of Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs to police awards much more thoroughly and vigorously than they are being policed at the moment.

In conclusion, I say to the Minister that a clause should be written into the Bill to maintain the magistrate's discretion to double the basic period for arrears of wages sought by employees.

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14—Repeal of and new s. 98; Power to direct secret ballots—

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (4.6 p.m.): One aspect of the clause is that, presumably, 20 per cent of the empoyees at the establishment would be empowered to petition the commission to conduct a secret ballot. I take it that they would not have to be the strikers themselves. I ask the Minister to indicate whether or not that is correct. Therefore, the registrar would have to establish that all the petitioners were bona fide employees, including staff and executive personnel at the establishment, in order to calculate the 20 per cent. I ask the Minister who is going to check and organise the 20 per cent and obtain their signatures, and then persuade the employees to commit themselves openly as strike breakers, or in other words, to use the colloquial and proper term, as scabs.

Mr. Houston: Members of the Liberal Party would do it.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is possible. Not all members of the Liberal Party would do it; some would.

The petition will have to be submitted to the registrar, who will then have to check it in detail and verify the signatures. The commission will then have to determine when the ballot will be conducted. By then, of course, the strike probably will be over. In effect, it will be a race between the end of the strike and the completion of the ballot. If the ballot won the race and the vote was against the strike and the employees persisted in their strike action, what would the employer do? Would he dismiss all his staff?

The Bill contains penalty provisions that certainly will not work any better than the penalty provisions already in the Act. Therefore, the Opposition believes that the clause will never be implemented effectively.

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (4.8 p.m.): This particular clause is one that, either deliberately or otherwise, has been completely misinterpreted by the community at large. It has been introduced to clarify the rights of individual employees involved in a strike.

What the clause does, as distinct from the provisions of the existing legislation, is give the commission an initiative, and I think I could give an indication, without prejudging the way in which the commission will act under the legislation, of how I see that initiative being implemented. I remind the Committee that the Bill eliminates the existing situation in which, under State jurisdiction, any strike that occurs for which a ballot has not been taken beforehand is an illegal strike. I suppose it is only the practical mind of the Government that realises that that provision, which was initiated about 15 years ago, has in fact fallen by the wayside and is observed in the breach. Because the existing legislation is ineffective, and because we do not believe that ineffective legislation should remain on the Statute Book, we are repealing that aspect and providing a very desirable and necessary alternative, the need for which has been illustrated in the last couple of weeks.

I repeat what I said publicly last week prior to the political rally. I do not want to get involved in that other than to use it as an indication of the great demand in the work-place by the ordinary average worker, when situations like that occur, for the right to express his opinion whether observance of the requirements of the union official should be regarded as mandatory or whether he should have the opportunity to say if he desires to carry out the instruction issued by the union official. This gives the commission the initiative when a strike occurs.

I started out to give a run-down of how I see the provision operating. A strike will occur. The parties will be called into discussion. The import of the clause is that, if the commission believes that recourse to the opinion of the work-force is desirable, it can order and conduct a ballot-box ballot at the place of employment. There has been so much talk in the last few days about the importance of democracy. This is of the very essence of giving effect to democracy. It gives people at the work-place in an industrial disputation situation an opportunity to voice their opinion. As has been indicated to me, I am sure that the great majority of the work-force will relish and accept this opportunity to voice their opinion in certain circumstances. Perhaps it could be used as the exception rather than the general rule. I know honourable members opposite will say, "What is going to happen if it is a State-wide strike? It will be cumbersome." In that situation other circumstances will prevail.

Mr. Houston: What other circumstances would prevail?

Mr. CAMPBELL: In a State-wide strike the total union is involved, and it is in a widespread employment situation. I remind honourable members that the Queensland record compares more than favourably with the record in other States. I think I am right in saying that the average duration of strikes in Queensland in the last few years has been four days. So the Bill is not designed to deal with the general strike situation, but to meet the demand of members of the work-force in the case of a lightning strike or similar action, which they feel is being imposed on them, that they have an opportunity to express their point of view, and not merely have somebody else force his opinion on them. They have indicated that desire to members of the Government and to others generally.

Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumba) (4.15 p.m.): The only persons who are opposed to this clause are the union officials and their mouthpiece in this Parliament. This clause will give the rank-and-file members of all unions the opportunity to get rid of the Communists and bludgers who control the unions. When the member for Archerfield was in the Federated Miscellaneous Workers' Union, he fell into one of those categories—and I leave it to honourable members to decide which one. No longer will strikes be called by union officials; at least the rank and file will be given the chance to decide whether or not to go on strike.

Either yesterday or the day before, the Minister in answer to a question said that 10,800,000 working days had been lost through industrial disputes in Australia during Labor's term of office from December 1972. The vast majority of the strikes and stoppages that occurred were not supported by the rank-and-file members. Recently Mr. Pat Clancy, a member of the Socialist Party of Australia and the Federal Secretary of the Building Workers' Industrial Union, called for a national strike by all unions affiliated with the A.C.T.U. He would use this as the ultimate weapon against the opponents of the Labor Party. On 14 August, 44 unions affiliated with the Trades and Labor Council were asked to attend the rally in the City Square, a rally dominated by Communists. Some unions even called a strike to ensure that their members would be present. The daily newspapers and television interviews were full of complaints from union members who were not consulted about the matter.

Trade unions should be formed and conducted for the benefit of their members instead of merely for political purposes. Far too many unions are involved in politics, and too much of their members' money is channelled into the coffers of the A.L.P. Fortunately, some of the clauses in the Bill will stop this. I could speak about money from Mutual Home Loans that is going to certain members of the Opposition, but I do not wish to encroach on your tolerance, Mr. Hewitt. I have received plenty of complaints from people. Hughie Hamilton, the chairman of the Communist Party in Queensland, called for a 24-hour stoppage. He prevented men from working on the Institute of Technology, telling them that, if they did not go out on strike and attend the rally, they would be threatened with violence by one of his Communist strong-arm men. Any company for whom employees continued to work was threatened with black bans.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Do you hear voices, or do you answer them?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I hear your voice, and I wish to God I didn't. At the instigation of Hughie Hamilton, the Building Workers' Union hung a 50 ft. banner on the Wickham Terrace car park.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That has nothing to do with the clause.

Mr. FRAWLEY: If the rank and file had been given the opportunity, they would have put a stop to that. In conclusion—I heartily support the Minister on this clause.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (4.18 p.m.): I am afraid that the persons responsible for framing this clause have not had a great deal of experience of trade unions, trade-unionists and their reaction to certain situations.

The honourable member for Murrumba complained about short stoppages so that members could attend political meetings or for other reasons. This legislation will have no effect at all on short industrial stoppages. If workers decide to go on a 24-hour strike, by the time this legislation is put into effect it will be too late. Any claim that this Bill will affect short-term stoppages is ridiculous.

We must not lose sight of the fact that the major strikes that have occurred recently in Queensland have been initiated on the job. Our most recent big strike was the coal strike, in which coal miners on the job went on strike and, in a ballot, decided to stay on strike.

Mr. Miller: That is their right.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am not denying that. All I am saying is that they were not told by some standover union official that if they did not go on strike they would be bashed up. On the contrary, the men said they believed they had a legitimate case and would go on strike.

This brings me to the provision in the Bill covering a return to work by striking employees. I would be interested to learn what the Government proposes to do if workers decide to remain on strike. The Bill makes no provision at all for the holding of a second ballot, if in fact a second ballot can be held. What will happen to those who vote against the majority? Let us say that only a handful of men—say, 20 or fewer—are on strike and that they are key workers in the operations of a particular industry or establishment. If the commision in its wisdom

calls a ballot and decides to have other than the 20 people vote—there may be 30 or 40 people given the right to vote—and if the decision is to stay on strike, will those who participated in the ballot but were not on strike then go on strike?

What will happen is that, once a ballot is held and the decision is to stay on strike, those who were on strike will demand that the others who took part in the ballot join them. If they do not, they will not be men at all, because that is what men think and do—and women, too, for that matter, although I have not had as much experience in dealing with women union members. However, I know that, if men in workshops are involved, and others involve themselves by voting at the ballot, that is what will happen.

If a vote is to be taken, there will have to be a roll of voters. Surely it is not intended to have a ballot and say, "Come on, all you fellows. You can all come and vote." As the honourable member for Archerfield said, someone will have to decide who is to vote. There will have to be a roll of voters.

Dr. Crawford: Don't you have a roll of union members?

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, but a person does not have to be a union member to be given a vote. The legislation says "any employee". As we know, unionism is not compulsory. A person affected might not be a member of the union. The people affected could be spread over a number of unions. They could even be company executives.

Mr. Powell: The company would have a pay-roll.

Mr. HOUSTON: It could be conducted on that, too. I am not arguing about that—I am looking at the legislation and the realities of the Government's making it work. I say that it will not work as it has been drafted. I have an idea what the Government is trying to do, but it will not work.

Dr. Crawford: Surely it would be better to give the Industrial Commission some jurisdiction to work out those details.

Mr. HOUSTON: We have just passed a resolution, one of the paragraphs of which said that the committee would see whether or not regulations are in conformity with the relevant Act and whether or not regulations are realistic. I just forget the exact wording. We all heard it. I think it was laid down in paragraphs 4 and 5 that the by-laws, ordinances and so on have to be in conformity with the Act. One of the points was that the committee would have to decide whether or not it should be a regulation or included by amendment in the original Act.

What I am trying to tell the Government is that it has done all the things it thinks it has to do to get people back to work if the vote is for a return to work. It has provided for prosecutions and everything else. However, I am concerned about what happens if the ballot goes the other way and the men are to stay on strike. That is what I am talking about.

I spoke about the roll for the ballot. Perhaps, as the honourable member says, the list of employees could be used.

Dr. Crawford: The pay-roll is a good idea.

Mr. HOUSTON: Very well, but that is not set down in the Bill. If the commission decides to conduct a ballot, the people vote, and the result is that the strike continues—and among those who voted are men who were not on strike at the time when the vote was taken. Surely if they participate in a democratic ballot they should be bound by the decision. The Government lays it down that, if the decision is to go back to work, those who voted against going back to work are bound by the decision to return; so I argue that, if the decision is to go out on strike, those who voted for a return should be bound by that decision in exactly the same way. We are talking about a democratic decision.

Mr. Miller: A majority decision.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is right.

Mr. Miller: That is what we are wanting.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is what I want—in anything at all, not particularly in this legislation. I could argue on other points, but the point I make now is that there is no reality in the application of the clause under discussion. I say that it cannot work in its present form unless the commission is given, by regulation or some other means, powers that are far outside what should be included in regulations.

I do not want to labour the point, but these things are important. After all, as we are talking about having industrial peace, don't let us put on our books legislation that will promote industrial unrest. No man likes to be forced to do something. Working in a workshop is different from working in a place such as this Chamber, where we see each other occasionally. In a workshop a person is living with people and depending on them. He depends on his mate to lift something for him. He depends on the co-operation of his fellow workers. In industrial trouble if one man wants to do something and another man is agitating and actively voting against him, that will generate ill feeling.

Dr. Crawford: You would agree with the principle of secret ballots?

Mr. HOUSTON: I am not against the principle of secret ballots provided the application is reasonable and just. Under this Bill the Government will not achieve what it is trying to do, because it is in the wrong context.

In addition the Minister said that he was going to keep it down to the one shop. It will be very hard to have a State-wide ballot and I know what the unions will do.

Mr. Campbell: I did not say I was going to keep it to the one shop.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Minister further amazes me by saying that if this occurs in one shop he will allow it to extend to more shops.

If the unions feel that the Government is trying to get one section of their members to do something, it will be easy for them to extend the dispute into a State-wide stoppage. That will happen depending on what the Government does. I do not suggest that the motive of the Government is to create a State-wide stoppage. I am merely outlining the reaction of the unions when there is legislation such as this and the vote is taken to go on strike or to stay on strike. The Government is asking for an extension of it. The Minister is being very unwise. He should do what he did with clauses 4 and 7, which he opposed because he did not know enough about the situation. I claim that in this case either the Minister or his advisers do not understand the ramifications of what happens in workshops among men who are working together.

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (4.27 p.m.): That remains to be seen. I was heartened by the honourable member's comment that if the application is reasonable it would be fair enough.

Mr. HOUSTON: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Wavell asked me if I believed in secret ballots and I said: if they are reasonable and they are in the right context.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I took that point and I did not think that I was distorting——

Mr. HOUSTON: You did not say anything about secret ballots. You said that I said that the clause was reasonable. I did not say that.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I shall be more precise. The honourable member's attitude towards this secret-ballot legislation is that if it is reasonable, fair enough.

I said at the outset that we are giving the commission the initiative and everything will be in the hands of the commission. I draw the honourable member's attention to the final paragraph of clause 14 (1) which (in consonance with our giving complete jurisdiction and authority to the commission), provides—

"All matters or things with respect to secret ballots to which this section applies shall be as prescribed."

Mr. MILLER (Ithaca) (4.29 p.m.): I appreciate the attitude adopted by the honourable members for Cairns and Bulimba. In the past few days we have seen from the Opposition side a responsible attitude being adopted to this clause. Even though there are doubts in the mind of the honourable member for Bulimba, I believe that he is honestly trying to find some way in which there can be sanity in the holding of ballots for strikes.

Dr. Crawford: Very commendable.

Mr. MILLER: It is very commendable. The attitude has been completely different from that adopted by the Leader of the Opposition at the introductory stage. He took the line that this was an attack on the rights of union leaders. That rather amazed me because I thought that every member of the Opposition would have been fighting for the democratic rights of the workers so that they could decide for themselves whether or not they should work or stay out on strike.

Dr. Crawford: By secret ballots.

Mr. MILLER: By secret ballots. That is what this is all about. I remind Opposition members that it was not so long ago that the building workers had a meeting in Brisbane at which they called upon the president of the union three times for a recount following a vote. On the first occasion the president said that the decision was in favour of a strike. The mass meeting would not accept that decision and three calls were made before the president finally admitted that the meeting had voted against striking. If anything demonstrated the need for this legislation, it was that meeting. The building workers persisted on that occasion until finally they won through.

But some unionists are not as strong as the building workers were on that occasion. In a small factory of, say, 20 employees, how is it to be decided whether there will be a strike? Are they to be told, "Scabs to the right, workers to the left"? That is what has happened in the past and it will happen in the future.

I am very happy to support this clause. Workers will, of course, be bound by decisions made, and if they decide that they want to strike, that is their democratic right. But they should at least be given the opportunity to decide for themselves what they will do. The honourable member for Rockhampton North, who spoke as Opposition leader, castigated the Government for, as he claimed, attacking the rights of union leaders. Union leaders represent union members, and those members have the right to tell their leaders what to do. The electors tell us as their representatives if they want us to do something, and if we do not do it they toss us out at the next election. We do not tell the electors what they must do, and I do not see why union leaders should tell unionists what they must do.

I fully support the Minister on this piece of legislation. Let us at least see if it will work. The honourable member for Bulimba said that it cannot work. I believe that there

is only one way to find that out—let us try it. Surely we do not want a continuation of what has happened in the last three years. I do not mean to be political when I say that in 1972 the people were told that under a Labor Federal Government there would be less industrial strife. There has in fact been more. I am not blaming the Labor Government for that situation; what I am saying is that rank-and-file unionists have had no means of saying, "We don't want to strike." We have seen Communist leaders telling workers that they had to go on strike. I am not blaming the Federal Government for that, either; I blame union leaders who do not give their members the opportunity to decide matters for themselves. What the Minister is bringing down is sensible legislation under which the rank and file will have the right to decide matters for themselves.

Clause 14, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 15 and 16, as read, agreed to.

Clause 17—Amendment of s. 136; Power of inspection by union officials—

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (4.34 p.m.): I feel that this amendment is unnecessary. I do not think that the right-of-entry clause has changed since I was a union official 3½ years ago. I quite agree that a union official has an obligation to report to the employer or his delegate on arrival at the factory, office or workshop; but at the same time I also feel that the employer or his delegate has an obligation to meet the union official within a reasonable time. At some establishments I have been kept waiting by the employer for an hour. I do not think that that is fair. If the official has done the right thing by reporting to the office, I think that the employer should meet him as soon as possible.

Mr. Chinchen: Did you make an appointment?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Surely one does not have to make an appointment. That is a rather facetious interjection. Surely in most establishments the employer delegates responsibility to one of his employees if he has to leave the place.

Mr. Chinchen: He could very easily be busy for an hour at a conference.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am not going to answer that one; it is so ridiculous. It just shows why the trouble occurred at the Ford motor plant when the honourable member from Mt. Gravatt was the manager. I believe there was more industrial trouble at the Ford motor works——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are debating clause 17.

Mr. CHINCHEN: I rise to a point of order! There was not one spot of industrial trouble during the years when I was Ford manager for Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member with withdraw those comments.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I withdraw them.

I must say that common sense has to apply between union and management. I feel that a union official also has an obligation—and I think most awards stipulate this—that he shall not unduly delay or hinder the employee in the carrying out of his duties. However, if this were enforced many union officials would never carry out their duties. There would be a lot more industrial unrest as the Minister well knows. If a union official goes out to some of the large metal trades establishments and the management refuses to let him in at a certain time, I know what the employees would say. They would say, "If the manager won't let the official in to talk to us in the factory, we will talk to him out on the grass." This is what occurs.

Many of these problems occur because of the intransigence of the management. Some employers deliberately provoke and obstruct union officials in the carrying out of their duty. But at the same time a union official can demand to inspect the time and wages book and also demand to be taken round on an inspection of the factory or premises. So if the employer wants to be obstructive and unco-operative, the union official can do likewise. I do say in conclusion that I cannot see any need for this amendment. As I see it, the clause does not differ from what is provided already in the Act.

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (4.37 p.m.): I appreciate the reasonable approach by the Opposition in this matter. Indeed, this clause is typical of the reasonableness which should prevail in employer-employee relationships. If that situation prevailed, this nation would not be beset by the disgraceful industrial record that has obtained in recent years. I find it hard to understand why, on this question of industrial disputation, Australians, who in almost all respects are usually the most reasonable people in the world, always seem to end up in a grievous situation, whether it is caused by the individual putting his own point of view or by his being forced into the situation under duress.

This situation has not arisen during this debate this afternoon, for which I am grateful. But I want to say that, unless there is a reasonable approach to employer-employee relations, there is not much hope for the future prosperity of this nation. Even this clause is based on the hope that everybody will be reasonable, and I am glad to have the reassurance of the Opposition that a union representative has an obligation to act in a reasonable manner. Likewise, the employer has a similar obligation——

Mr. Houston: Why don't you tell some of them that.

Mr. CAMPBELL: If any union official finds that an employer is acting in an overbearing manner, I wish he would advise me or my officers. Likewise, I and my officers are not slow in taking action——

Mr. Houston: What do you do?

Mr. CAMPBELL: My officers and I are not slow in taking action when we find a union representative acting in an overbearing manner. I suppose in the past 12 months I would have personally intervened on a dozen occasions when a union official has acted in an overbearing manner. I do not know how many times my officers have done so.

Mr. Houston: That is a union official. What about an employer?

Mr. CAMPBELL: In the same context, I can recall two instances when an employer acted in what I considered to be a somewhat overbearing manner over the entry of a union official, and I did not hesitate to get in touch with him.

The legislation presumes that both employer and union representative will act as reasonable people. All that it asks from a union official is that he act with the same courtesy as salesmen or other persons who approach employers. I have not had any reaction from the trade union movement indicating that it thinks the provision denigrates its powers.

Clause 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18 and schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

MINERS' HOMESTEAD LEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (4.43 p.m.): I move—

> "That a Bill be introduced to amend the Miners' Homestead Leases Act 1913-1974 in certain particulars."

The proposed Bill has a twofold purpose. Firstly, it updates the present Act in the procedure for taking up miners' homesteads on mining fields, which, with the expansion of the State, are becoming more closely settled. Secondly, the Bill proposes routine changes, such as references to decimal currency, allowing for fees to be set by regulation rather than under the Act, and other formal alterations to make for ease of interpretation both by the department and by the lease applicant.

The status of applications for leases and for the approval of subdivisions made before the commencement of the amending Act are preserved, and references to coal-fields are deleted as these no longer exist as such.

A definition of local authority has been included to ensure that these bodies have full standing under the Act to allow them to hold leases or to be heard in the Warden's Court as objectors.

The present Act provides that a maximum of 10 acres only may be taken up as a miners' homestead within the boundaries of a city, town or township. This has proved to be restrictive, particularly in cities such as Mt. Isa where large areas are required for trucking terminals and for parking areas for shopping complexes.

With mining fields such as Herberton, Mareeba and Mt. Isa becoming more closely settled, the need for more detailed methods of marking out the land applied for has become apparent. The Bill tightens this procedure, which is intended to make the land applied for more readily identifiable.

Similarly, the provision for posting a copy of the application on the ground applied for has been changed for the convenience of the applicant.

At present only a resident of a mining field can object to an application for a miners' homestead. The Bill provides that any person, including a company, whether a resident of the field or not, may object.

The current Act allows the warden to reject an application for several reasons, including the public interest, but, although these reasons were obvious, the application still had to be heard in the Warden's Court. The Bill provides for the dispensation of the hearing in these cases, and also makes provision for the Minister to reject an application at any time in the public interest or if there are irregularities in the application.

At present, if the miners' homestead is over 20 acres in area, the lessee is required only to reside on the land and to enclose it with a substantial fence. If an applicant desires to take up land for a special purpose or for subdivision, the Bill empowers the Governor in Council to impose special conditions related to the purpose for which the land is required.

An important addition to the present Act is a special provision regarding payment of rent. At present, relief cannot be given irrespective of any extenuating circumstances that may exist. This could well include pensioners in poor circumstances or farmers or graziers who face difficult seasonal or market conditions. Power is given to the Governor in Council to reduce the rate of rent from 3 per cent per annum of the capital value for a particular year in which these circumstances exist.

Provision to convert a miners' homestead perpetual lease to a miners' homestead lease has been removed as the time has long since expired for such conversion to be made.

The current provisions relating to subdivision of a miners' homestead have been streamlined by the Bill. Delays have been occurring in the issue of subdivisional leases

after the plan had been examined and the subdivided areas transferred. This anomaly has been removed and the transferee can now expect his instrument of lease without delay.

The minimum area which can be transferred at present as a subdivision is 20 perches, which is also the area to remain as the balance of the original lease. This provision was very restrictive when subdividing leases in cities, particularly in Mt. Isa and Gympie, and the Bill provides that the minimum area now must be in conformity with the requirements of the local authority.

New sections have been introduced providing for the issue of a provisional instrument of lease in cases where the original document has been lost or destroyed or cannot be obtained by the person entitled to it for reasons beyond his control. The Minister may approve that a new instrument be issued where it is found that the original document has become mutilated.

Provision has been made for the correction of errors in instruments of lease and for the issue of fresh instruments, if necessary.

The current Act contains a provision for payment of compensation to the holder of a miners' homestead when the land is taken for mining purposes. As a miners' homestead is Crown land under the Mining Act 1968–1974, the provisions of that Act apply, and consequently there is no need for such provision in the Miners' Homestead Leases Act. The Bill repeals this section.

The power to make regulations to achieve the objects and purposes of the Act has been widened, and the other clauses contained in the Bill are formal.

I consider that the proposed amendments are necessary to update the administration of the Miners' Homestead Leases Act, and I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (4.49 p.m.): The Bill as presented by the Minister appears to cover a fair amount of ground. He said that it is now proposed that fees will be set by regulation instead of included in the Act. I hope this is not one of the first cases to be dealt with by the committee that the Premier is setting up. I suppose this is another instance of government by regulation, but it may be desirable in this case. We will not know until we have a look at the Bill.

The Minister also said that homestead leases will be more accurately defined under the provisions of the amending Bill. Perhaps that is desirable, too. It is something the Opposition has to look at. We will have to get certain advice on this matter because our shadow Minister for Mines (Mr. Hanson) is confined to hospital. When the Bill is printed, we will examine it in detail and then state the policy of the Opposition to the proposed amendments.

Apparently the Minister will have the power to reject applications containing any irregularities. Perhaps this matter calls for close examination. In various other Bills, provision has been made for the delay and even destruction of applications in which irregularities have occurred.

Apparently the Bill provides for relief in rentals in certain circumstances. This would appear to be desirable. As the Minister indicated, mining leases may be held by pensioners and relief may be desirable but cannot be given under the Act. I am sure that if the Bill provides for such relief to those in necessitous circumstances, the Opposition will be pleased to support that part of it.

The increase of the minimum area from 20 perches to a size provided for by a local authority would seem to be desirable. Such a provision would provide for uniformity in a local authority area. Previously discrepancies have arisen in the Act in relation to the areas of miners' homestead leases.

On the Minister's introduction it would appear that the Opposition would support the Bill. However, we will examine it in detail so that we can comment on it further at the second-reading stage.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (4.51 p.m.): The oratory of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is detracted from somewhat by the sloppiness of his attire; but I will let that pass.

I was hoping that the Bill would have embraced a much wider field and done a lot of the things that should have been done many years ago. I do not know of any law that is less cohesive, more disjointed and more difficult for the ordinary person to understand than that relating to miners' homestead leases, mining leases and everything connected with them. I was hoping that the Bill would introduce a provision that quite a lot of people have been wanting for years, namely, the right to convert a miners' homestead lease to freehold. Unfortunately that is something we will never see. The previous Labor Government would not touch it with a 40 ft. pole and the present National-Liberal Government walks round it as it would round a typhoid carrier. Some opportunity should be given to holders of miners' homestead leases to convert them to freehold.

We should examine also the most remarkable state of affairs under which a man can apply for, and be given, a mining lease and then apply for, and be given, a miners' homestead lease on which he can build a home. Believe it or not, there is no limit on the distance he can go from his mining lease to obtain his miners' homestead lease. I know of a mining lease located just off the northern railway line and held by a chap who, when looking for a nice block on which to build

his home, selected one 15 miles away, on the bank of a limpid stream and in the best agricultural land in the area. It had enough timber on it to build his bough sheds and what-have-you. He took 10 acres from a farmer, who naturally objected to losing that area of beautiful farming land, because the law said that he could get it.

Another thing I think we should look at under the Act is the remarkable state of the topography that applies to mining leases in Queensland. I suppose that the mining wardens' areas were drawn up many years ago when mining development was in a state of flux. I would not be exactly certain that this position still exists, but I would be prepared to have a small wager that it does. If a person wants a miners' homestead lease on the Ingham line, a few miles north of Townsville, that is all incorporated in the mining warden's area at Charters Towers—right over the hills and far away, a couple of hundred miles from the mining lease. I see no reason why there should not be a sort of conglomeration of these areas controlled by various wardens.

It certainly appears to be ridiculous. People come to me and say that they have found tin, bismuth or some other metal up towards Ingham, we will say, and they want a lease for it or they want to know something about the mining regulations, the mining leases and the mining laws. They have to make an application for a mining lease—they used to, and I think they still have to—to the mining warden at Charters Towers. Surely that is something the Minister could well have a look at.

There is another remarkable state of affairs. I do not know whether it exists in Mt. Isa. My mother had some property there, though I never had time to go into it fully enough. She had to dispose of it, of course, and it was sold just as it was. I can take honourable members to Charters Towers, which of course was one of the nation's greatest gold-fields in its day. A friend of mine happened to be a dentist, and he wanted a place right in the heart of Charters Towers on which to erect his dental surgery and his home. He died later and his widow inherited the land. Later she sold it to a woman who moved to Townsville and wanted to sell it. The people came to me about it and asked me to do the work for her, as I do—and other members do much the same thing. I asked her to let me have a look at her deed. When she produced the deed or certificate of title, I said, "This is not the certificate of title for your land." I knew the land well. I ran around there when I was a boy going to school at Charters Towers. "There must be another deed somewhere." Sure enough, she found the other deed. There was this very fine area of land right in the heart of Charters Towers with a boundary like a jigsaw puzzle, two-thirds of it on a miners' homestead lease and one-third of it on freehold title.

That piece of land is still on two titles. It has been bought. The big home is still on it. They are not joined together in one title—they are still two separate titles—but there is one area of land and one house on it. There we have a position where a miners' homestead lease cannot be converted into freehold tenure; but, if someone has a freehold tenure, under this Bill he can buy a miners' homestead lease adjacent to it and live on both of them. If he has a farm, he can work both of them. If he wants to build a home, he can build a home on both of them combined.

Mr. Wright: That's not unreasonable.

Mr. AIKENS: It is not unreasonable, but surely we can make some provision for the conversion of miners' homestead leases to freehold.

In a town like Charters Towers, for instance, where mining has gone out the same as the poor old Whitlam Government will go out on 13 December—it is finished with, just as the mining in Charters Towers is done—I understand that the miners' homestead leases have to remain extant so as to protect something that might be 2,000, 3,000 or 4,000 ft. underneath the ground, because apparently the levels and the mine workings are still down there, 3,000 or 4,000 ft. away. What good that does to the fellow who is living up on the surface, I do not know.

I feel sure the Minister knows all about it. He is probably one of the most competent and knowledgeable Ministers in the Cabinet. I feel sure that he will have a look at it and try one of these days to bring down a consolidation of the Mining Act, the Miners' Homestead Leases Act and all the other Acts which relate to land that is held in what are now mining areas or were once mining areas.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (5 p.m.), in reply: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his contribution. He indicated that he is prepared to wait until the Bill is printed, when he can study it in detail, before he makes any further comments.

The honourable member for Townsville South grew up in a mining area. This vexed question of converting miners' homestead perpetual leases and mining homestead leases to freehold has occupied the minds of the various officers of the Mines Department and Mines Ministers for many years since this Government came to office and the freeholding of land was allowed.

A person who really studies the Mining Act and the leases concerned is very impressed with the simplicity of it all.

Mr. Aikens: I think that "the confusion of it" would be a better phrase.

Mr. CAMM: That is because the honourable member does not study it objectively. It is not a very large or complicated Act.

A miners' homestead perpetual lease can only be taken up on a designated mining field in the first place. The land was issued under this title because many mining towns that have practically gone out of existence have come back into production. A classic exampie is Mt. Morgan. It went down and if the land had been freeholded, when the people came back to resettle, restart and revitalise Mt. Morgan, all of the land under freehold title would not have been available to those people. But the miners' homestead perpetual leases were still there. They had been abandoned and they had been cancelled. They could be reissued to the people coming back.

This is why in a mineral field it is always advisable to retain miners' homestead perpetual leases. It is the easiest title to get and it is the easiest way to get land in Queensland. If it went back to the Lands Department, there would be ballots or auctions for the land. But anyone can go onto a mineral field and just make application for a miners' homestead perpetual lease and it is granted. It does not have to be put up for public auction or ballot. This was a very sensible idea when the mining industry was growing in this State.

Mr. Aikens: Why can I have a miners' lease here and a miners' homestead perpetual lease 15 miles away?

Mr. CAMM: They are different titles. A mining lease is a working lease where a person mines for a mineral. A person can take out a mining lease anywhere in Queensland wherever he might find minerals. But he cannot take up a miners' homestead perpetual lease unless it is on a mineral field.

Mr. Aikens: Can I take out a mining lease in Mt. Isa and a miners' homestead perpetual lease in Mt. Morgan to build my home on?

Mr. CAMM: Yes. The honourable member could go and buy a miners' homestead perpetual lease in Mt. Morgan tomorrow.

Another mining title is miners' homestead lease. These leases were issued in the early days. The owners, after paying 30 years' rent, were not required to pay any more rent to the Crown. It was theirs until and if the Crown decided to demand rent. If the owner deserted the lease the Crown could demand a peppercorn rent or whatever else it wanted to demand. If no rent was paid the lease was cancelled. It would always be reissued as a miners' homestead perpetual lease because no miners' homestead leases are issued at present. They are all miners' homestead perpetual leases.

Mr. Aikens: You are different from some of the other Ministers. You know what you are talking about.

Mr. CAMM: I do not know about that. I am trying to convey my impressions.

In the city of Gympie, for instance, there are quite a number of miners' homestead leases and I am sure that the owners of those leases would not want to convert them to freehold. If they did, the leases would have to be released from the Mines Department and sent back to the Lands Department, which would then put a value on the land. Some of these leases are in the prime shopping areas of Gympie and no rent is being paid on them. In essence they are freehold.

The miners' homestead perpetual lease is different altogether. It is the same as a perpetual lease block under the Lands Department. An assessment of rent can be made every now and again by the mining warden, who would put another value on it mainly in accordance with the Valuer-General's valuation of the land, together with the capital improvements, and up goes the rent.

It is something that we have been looking at. The previous Minister looked at it and I have been doing so. So far there has been no big demand, with the exception of the Gympie area. We have some demand there for people to be able to convert miners' homestead perpetual leases to freehold.

Mr. Wright: Didn't you say you were going to change it to 10 acres?

Mr. CAMM: That used to be the maximum area that could be taken up in a town or city. Now we will allow larger areas because the city of Mt. Isa extends from Mt. Isa to Camooweal and there are areas in that mineral field where there have been depots for big trucking operators. There has been a need for parking facilities.

Mr. Wright: Wouldn't it be easier to take up two leases?

Mr. CAMM: Why ask them to take up two when we can expand the area and give a larger area under one lease?

Mr. Wright: Is there still to be a maximum?

Mr. CAMM: Yes—1280 acres. I think I have explained the points raised by the honourable member for Townsville South. Later, if he wishes, I shall elaborate a little on what I have said. It must always be remembered that a mining lease can be taken up anywhere in the State, whereas a miners' homestead lease can be taken up only on a mining field.

The honourable member for Townsville South said that the Charters Towers mining warden controls land around Townsville. Wardens' districts have been centred on mineral fields and places where mining operations are most likely to take place.

Motion (Mr. Camm) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Camm, read a first time.

The House adjourned at 5.7 p.m.